

Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioral Factors that Influence Consumer Behavior

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Abstract:

Investing in understanding consumer behavior is one the approaches companies can reliably use to thrive in the highly competitive business environment. In a fiercely competitive business environment, understanding consumer behavior is essential for companies aiming to succeed. While traditional studies emphasize social, cultural, economic, personal, and psychological influences on consumer behavior, this study delves deeper into the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors that also play significant roles. Analyzing Apple's iPhone purchase behavior reveals that cognitive factors, such as rationalizing the purchase, are crucial in justifying the decision to buy. Emotional factors, including the feelings and motivations that drive consumers, are key in triggering the purchase. Behavioral factors, on the other hand, encompass how the product is consumed and how customers interact with it and with each other. Marketers should carefully examine each of these factors and utilize their insights strategically. Businesses should foster close collaboration between marketing and product development teams to ensure they not only communicate the brand's promise effectively but also deliver on it consistently.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior; Cognitive Factors; Emotional Motivation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

It's clear that marketing goods in the 21st century no longer relies on the push strategy but rather the pull strategy. Companies have to invest to attract customer to buy their products and services. Within this context, companies have invested in various measures and efforts to attract and retain customers on their ends [1]. Among many efforts made is to understand consumer behavior and how they make their purchase decision to devise strategies on how to get them to buy their products but more importantly retain them and also get referrals from loyal customers [2]. Previous studies have argued that consumer behavior is influenced by social, cultural, psychological, personal, and economic factors [3]. Recent studies have however raised concerns about whether there could be emotional, cognitive, and behavioral factors that influence consumer behavior. The goal of this study was to explore cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors in consumer purchase decisions.

With the intensification of market competition and the diversification of consumer demand, sellers in the market need to understand the factors that affect consumer pur-

chasing decisions. The goal of this study was to explore cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors in consumer purchase decisions. Through the analysis of consumer behavior, the key factors and rules that affect consumer purchasing decisions are explored. Consumer purchasing behavior is not just a simple transaction behavior, but a complex psychological process that is affected by many factors. These factors include consumer cognition, emotion, behavioral characteristics, brand influence, and social factors, which are explained in detail in different purchasing decision models.

1.2 Overview of consumer behavior

Consumer behavior refers to how prospective customers make decisions about what they want to buy and act toward a company and its products [4]. It's often influenced by various factors including demographic, personal, and social cultural factors. Studies on consumer behavior have shown four major types of consumer behavior depending on the nature and type of products the customers buy. Complex buying behavior occurs when customers are buying very expensive and infrequent products [5]. Dissonance-reducing buying behavior is when customers find difficulty choosing the brand to buy because there is a very small difference between products offered by the

various companies. Habitual buying behavior is displayed when customers buy products regularly and are not attached to the brand. Variety-seeking buying behavior on the other hand is observed when customer desires to try something new not necessarily because they were disappointed by their previous choice [5].

1.3 Importance of understanding consumer decision-making

The purchase decision-making is part of the buyer journey that should culminate in conversion. Understanding consumer behavior and how they make decisions helps companies tailor their marketing messages to their specific target group in a way that increases the possibility of conversion [6]. This is because understanding consumer behaviors helps the business identify the needs, preferences, and motivations that drive consumer behavior and leverage them when creating a persuasive marketing message [7]. Understanding the consumer behavior for the specific products the company sells helps the business understand what the customers are looking for thus leveraging them as business opportunities.

1.4 Objectives of the Study, Scope and Relevance and Significance

This study aims to explore the role of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors in consumer purchase decisions. The scope of the study covers decision-making models, brand influence, social factors, and individual characteristics, and focuses on how these factors jointly influence consumer purchasing behavior. The results of the study will provide new insights into the impact of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors on consumer behavior, which will not only enrich the knowledge system in related fields but also provide valuable references for companies and marketers to improve marketing strategies and enhance customer satisfaction.

1.5 Methodology

The research method for this research was an iphone case study. The study explores how iphone users connect with the product and examine whether there are emotional, cognitive, and behavioral factors that influence their purchase decisions. Iphone was selected because it is one of the leading smartphones in the world with strong brand loyalty.

2. Case Description

Since its launch in 2007, Apple's iphone remains one leading smartphone in the world today [8]. In 2023, the iphone became the leading smartphone with 20% of the global market share and surpassing Samsung [8]. The company has so far launched 42 models that have been successful

in the market making Apple one of the most profitable companies in the world. As of December 2023, the company has cumulatively sold over 2.3 billion units and 1.5 billion users [8]. This sustained success over the years has been attributed to brand loyalty and effective customer relationships. Apple has successfully built a loyal fan base of customers who are eager to buy the latest version of the phone at the launch price.

2.1 Key Observations

iphone appeals to tech enthusiasts, early adopters, and innovators who are eager to experience the latest version of the phone even when the iphone they have is working effectively. Most customers do not buy because the previous phone has a fault but mainly because of the hype, anticipation, and excitement about the new version that is being released by the company. These launches are often hyped by the company on the functionality and features the customer will experience. The second observation is that Apple products users including iphone users ascribe to themselves a certain social status. They consider Apple to be a premium product. Owning and using an iphone comes with a sense of pride and belonging high social status in society. Third, there is a lot of buzz created around Apple products either through word of mouth or social media that makes customers hooked to the product and any new experience the company has to offer.

2.2 Findings Summary

Decisions to purchase Apple's iphone are significantly influenced by cognitive, emotional and behavioral factors. The customers have strong emotional connection with the Apple products and its ecosystem. Users gain a sense of pride and esteem. Additionally, the purchase decision is also influenced by behaviors aspects such as usage habits of the apps and ecosystem, word of mouth and upgrade patterns.

3. Analysis on the Problem

3.1 Consumer Decision Models

Consumer behavior models help understand how, when, and why customers buy products and services. There are different models that are used to explain consumer behavior. The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) Model of consumer behavior explains that consumers go through a five-stage process before making a purchasing decision. Initially, the customer becomes aware that they have a need or want they need to satisfy [9]. This could be triggered by an advert or a problematic situation they have. After the customer recognizes the existence of the problem, they begin to seek information about how they can solve the problem [2]. Sometimes customers search and

read widely about the problem and different ways it can be solved, and sometimes they can enquire from their friends and families about possible ways to solve them. Once they have settled on the most ideal solution, they begin to consider the different companies that can offer them the best deal or perfect solution to the problem given their context [10]. Customers at this point gather as much information about the differences and similarities between products offered by different companies. They take advantage of every source of information at their disposal to them [11-13]. The purchase decision refers to the final selection of the company from which to buy the product. After buying the product, customers form their judgment of the company and its products. If satisfied, they can make repeat purchases, refer, and spread word of mouth.

According to the Planned Behavior Theory (PBT), purchase decisions are based on motivations or interests and the ability to achieve the intended goal. The decision is influenced by aspects such as attitudes, behavioral intentions, subjective norms, social norms, perceived power as well as perceived behavioral control. In summary, the purchase intention and decision are influenced by how customers perceive the product, brand loyalty how tech-savvy they are, social trends and peer influence, as well as affordability.

3.2 Cognitive Factors

Cognitive functions such as information processing, perception, and knowledge help the customers to think through all the information they have relative to the interests, needs, and preferences they have to ascertain that a certain decision will give the highest value possible. Cognitive functions are therefore essential in justifying a decision. In the case of Apple's iphone, users think through the information they are provided with whether from the company, their peers, or social media as well as their personal experiences to justify whether they should buy an iphone or not. Since they associate the product with high quality, reliability, cutting-edge technology, and exceptional user experience, they find it easy to justify why they should buy a highly priced product in the market despite there being many offers. Specifically, people like the iphone because of its innovativeness and the hype around its exclusive features and user experience. Thinking through all information accessed and its implication on the interest, needs or preferences helps justify the purchase decision.

3.3 Emotional Factors

The inner desires and predisposition towards a product make it to be perceived as attractive or not. Products are aimed at meeting deep-seated desires in customers and

these needs are fulfilled by some aspects of the products. In consumer behavior, attitudes often depend on whether the customer believes that the company or the product can deliver the value they promised proactively. In addition, consumers evaluate the image and status the product will ascribe to them. Premium products like the iphone are symbols of status expression. Customers buy them as a means of expressing their status to those around them. Using the products comes with a sense of pride and achievement in life. Additionally, some users are eager to experience the next new thing the company has to offer. They are therefore driven by the fear of missing out on buying the latest version of the phone. Third, customers find the Apple ecosystem reliable and friendly to use. As tech-savvy people, they are not worried that they might not be able to use the phone and enjoy the new features. The absence of fear of the unknown and enthusiasts motivate them to buy iphones. The findings from the case study indicate that emotions are key factors that drive the intent and decision to buy an iphone.

3.4 Behavioral Factors

Behavioral factors refer to the habits or mannerisms associated with product users that either promote or inhibit purchase decisions. The upgrade patterns among iphone users make them frequent buyers of the product. A significant proportion of iphone user upgrade their phones when a new version is launched simply to enjoy the new experience. Second, there is often hype created about the products, features, and experiences. Customers often share their experiences that keep the customers on their edge eager to experience the product and all it has to offer. The extensive and interconnected ecosystem has created a sense of brand loyalty because of the apps that customers use for their daily activities such as messaging and paying. Customers will therefore prefer buying an iphone to keep using the apps they are familiar with and have found reliable.

3.5 Brand Influence

Brand perception, brand loyalty, and brand equity form the basis on which the customer evaluates the value they are likely to get from the product if they make a purchase. From the case study, it's clear that iphone users have a highly positive brand perception of the iphone and thus are confident buying it. The brand perception determines the confidence the customer has in their purchase decision.

3.6 Social Factors

Social influences such as family, peers, and culture are not only sources of information but also model life or behavior others can emulate. Social dynamics affecting consum-

er decisions in the case of iPhone is the desire to belong to the high social status in society and be a respected member of society. In addition, the hype shared about the products prompts customers to buy iPhones.

3.7 Individual Characteristics

The influence of personal factors such as age, gender, income, and lifestyle subtly influence the needs and preferences that people have when making purchase decisions as well as the power to effect the decision. From the case study, the findings indicate that income and lifestyle are major individual factors that influence purchase decisions. iPhone appeals best to tech enthusiasts who are often early adopters and innovators.

4. Suggestions

Marketers should invest in identifying strategies that leverage the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral insights gained from this study. Apple has become successful with the iPhone because the company made a bold promise to offer an exclusive experience to its customers and hyping the promise with cutting-edge technology to offer products that offer great functionality, features, and experience for the customers. iPhone is not for people who seek the basic functions of a smartphone but rather who seek exceptional experience with the phone. The marketing team should invest in approaches to keep the customers on the emotional hook by sharing relevant content and finding the means to keep the word about the product alive in the society they target. To achieve this they can leverage platforms like social media and fan base communities they have built over the years. The marketing message must capture insights such as the value that the product offers to help justify the purchase of the expensive and differentiated product in the market. Brand managers and marketers must also investigate the aspects of their brands that can be tapped into to help leverage these three factors.

At the business level, the major insight is on the role of a product development team in consumer behavior. The features and design of the iPhone as well as the overall experience of the Apple products mainly reside with the product development team which creates the product concept and the marketing team communicates the same to the target market. The case study and research show the need for the production team to create an innovative product and keep their promise to the customers if they seek to build brand loyalty and attract more customers. If users found the product to underperform, they would have a negative perception and attitude thus negatively affecting the sales. Features such as frequently launching new and improved versions of the phone are a strategy that has built customer loyalty, and emotional connection with the

brand as well as the basis for purchase justification. The decision to create an exclusive and reliable ecosystem of apps has not only made the product reliable but also attractive to the target customers. The overall success of the company is thus collaborative efforts between the product development team and marketing team. Over and above, product performance and features are critical to the success of the company.

The specific cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors that influence consumer behavior remain one of the under-researched areas in consumer behavior. While this research hints at the powerful influence of these factors, there is still much to be investigated and learned. For example, future studies can explore whether any of these factors are more impactful for certain types of products or can be universally applied across all products. iPhone is considered a premium product with a lot of prestige associated with it. However, it's not clear whether this observation would also be made on products that are non-premiums such as electronics. Further research would help provide more insights into how similar observations have been made on other brand categories, similarities, and differences observed. The findings in this study can also be enhanced through the use of other methodologies such as in-depth interviews and questionnaires among others where customers can have the opportunity to provide more insights into how they make decisions. Such methodologies would help uncover other drivers that were missed out on as a result of using case studies.

5. Conclusion

Although previous studies have shown that consumer behavior is influenced by social, economic, personal, and psychological factors, this study indicates that how consumers make their purchase decisions is also affected by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors. Cognitive factors play an important role in helping find justification for the purchase decision and action. The emotional factors drive the customer to make the decision to satisfy subconscious emotional desires such as pride and achievement. The behavioral factors include the behavior of customers as they use the product and how they engage with other customers who use the same product as them. Marketers should identify the specific cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors that drive sales for their products and leverage them. Businesses on the other hand must realize the role of the marketing team and the product development team in creating brand loyalty and keeping the customers hooked to the product. While the marketing team communicates what the company offers and creates hype around it, the production team must be

creative enough to ensure that they keep the promise made to the customers. The concept idea of the product must be aligned with the product promised.

Consumer behavior remains one of the complex marketing phenomena that businesses and marketers cannot claim to have fully understood. Through exploratory and investigative research approaches, more and new insights can be unearthed and leveraged for better performance. Businesses and marketers must take into account the different types of purchase behavior exhibited by customers as they buy new products as well as the fact that every company sells a product that is unique in its rights. Companies must be keen to adopt the strategy that best suits their product concept.

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