

# Consumer Attitude: Some Reflections on Its Concept, Trilogy, Relationship with Consumer Behavior, and Marketing Implications

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## Abstract

This paper is an attempt at providing some reflections on consumer attitude. It examines the concept of consumer attitudes toward marketing efforts of businesses. Furthermore, the paper identifies the trilogy of consumer attitude, including samples of their measurement scales; and how attitudes connect to the behaviors of consumers, but notes that the companies would have difficulty influencing the purchasing behaviors of their consumers directly. To indirectly influence the behaviors of prospects, the paper therefore, suggests that firms should provide credible evidence of their product benefits, correct their customer misconceptions, offer free samples, engage new technologies, and bring in new innovations in value defining, developing, and delivering processes. Specifically, this paper recommends that the behaviors of consumers can be effectively changed to firm desired behavior by altering the tri-components of their target consumer attitudes. Knowledge and application of these can enable a firm effectively design rent-yielding strategies

**Keywords:** Attitude, attitude change, attitude components, attitude function, consumer attitude.

## 1. Introduction

A consumer thinks, perceives, and learns and is a psychological being, which has motives, personality, and attitudes. These psychological forces affect the behavior of the consumers; and marketers seek to influence or capitalize on them. Businesses and social agencies alike frequently succeed in altering behavior by changing attitudes towards a product, service, or activity; and these changes can result in injurious or beneficial consumption decisions. This paper recognizes that attitudes can only be indirectly changed by altering its components. It tries to show some illumination on the concept of attitudes, its functions, its measurements, its components, the modification of its components, its strategic marketing implications. A good grasp of these will most likely enable businesses design far-reaching rent-yielding strategies.

## 2. Theoretical Underpinnings

### 2.1 The Concept of Consumer Attitude

Originally, the term attitude derived from the Latin words for posture or physical position. The general notion was that a body's physical attitudes suggested the types of activity or action in which a person would engage (Wilkie, 1986). In the words of Allport (1935), an attitude is "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". In other words, consumer perception of the product determines the consumers' readiness to accept and adopt the product, or otherwise. An attitude, according to Hawkins et al (2001), is an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of our environment. This means that attitudes are developed from environmental stimuli, such as the products offered to consumers and how they are communicated. According to Fishbein and Aizen (1975), it is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object. Krech et al (1962), define an attitude as a person's enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies

toward some object or idea. Bearden et al (1995) and Kotler (2004) observes that people have attitudes toward almost everything: religion, politics, food, music, clothes, and others. Attitudes put them into a frame of mind of liking or disliking an object, moving toward or away from it.

Attitudes lead people to behave in a fairly consistent way towards similar objects. Boone and Kurtz (2004) describe attitudes as a person's enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluations, emotions or action tendencies toward some object or data. As they form over time through individual experiences and group contacts attitudes become highly resistant to change. Berkowitz et al (2000) maintain that attitudes are shaped by our values and beliefs, which are learned. Values vary by level of specificity. Bearden et al (1995) describes values as shared beliefs or cultural norms about what is important or right. Values, such as the need to belong or to succeed, represent important goals to which consumers subscribe. Values are transmitted to the individual through the immediate and remote environments such as family, organizations (school, religious, institutions, businesses), and other people (the community, the social environment). Kahle et al (1986) observe that cultural values directly influence how consumers view and use individual products, brands, and services. Values influence the goals people pursue and the behavior used to pursue those goals. Many marketing communication campaigns recognize the importance of values as advertising themes and justification for purchase.

A belief, according to Bearden et al (1995) and kotler (2004), is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something. In marketing context, a belief is a thought about a product or service on one or more choice criteria. Markets are interested in the beliefs that people formulate about specific products and services because these beliefs make up product and brand images that affect buying behavior. If some of these beliefs are wrong and prevent purchase, the marketer will want to launch campaign to correct them. Berkowitz et al (2000), therefore, define beliefs as a consumers' subjective perception of how well a product or brand performs on different attributes. Beliefs are based on personal experience, advertising, and discussions with other people. Beliefs about product features are important because, along with personal values, they create the favorable or unfavorable attitude the consumer has towards certain goods and services. People's beliefs about a product or brand influence their buying decisions. Marketers are interested in the beliefs people have in their heads about their products or brands.

Baron and Bryne (1987) describe an attitude as a lasting, general evaluation of people (including oneself) object, advertisement, or issues. An attitude is lasting because it tends to endure overtime; it is general because it applies to more than a momentary event such as viewing an advertisement, though one might overtime develop a negative attitude toward all advertisements. Consumers have attitudes toward a wide range of attitude objects, from product-specific behaviors (e.g., using BiC ballpoint pen instead of Ambassador Pen) to more general consumption-related behaviors (e.g., how often one should cut one's finger nails). Thus, Petty et al (1997) conclude that an attitude is the way we think, feel, and act toward some aspect of our environment such as a retail store, television program, or product. According to Chisnall (1975) attitudes may be acquired or modified by influences arising from four principal sources: information exposure, group membership, environment, and want satisfaction.

Attitudes are an expression of inner feelings that reflect whether a person is favorably or unfavorably predisposed to some 'stimulus' or 'object' (e.g., a restaurant, a brand, a service, a retail establishment). Attitudes are viewed as outcome of psychological processes. This implies that attitudes are not directly observable, but can only be inferred from what people say or what they do. In consumer research the data collected on attitudes are the state-of-mind type. According to Hair et al (2000), state-of-mind data represent the mental attributes of individual that are not directly observable or available through some type of external sources. There are no other

means of authenticating related responses. They exist only within the minds of respondents. Therefore, attitudes are assessed by asking questions on or making inferences from behavior. From all these attitude definitions, it apparent that attitude has three important characteristics – the attitude “object”, attitudes as a learned predisposition, and that attitudes have consistency.

### **2.1.1 The Attitude “Object”**

An attitude object is anything toward which one has an attitude (Solomon, 2002). In the consumer-oriented definition of attitude, the word object should be interpreted broadly to include specific consumption or marketing- related concepts, such as product, product use, advertisement, service personnel, price, physical evidence, medium process or retailer, and others. In carrying out attitude research, it is important for the research to be object-specific.

### **2.1.2 Attitudes as a Learned Predisposition**

Most scholars believe that attitudes are learned. This implies that attitudes relevant to purchase behavior are found as a result of direct experience with the good or service, information acquired from others, and exposure to mass media. Attitudes might result from behavior but are not same with behavior. They are a reflection of either a favorable or an unfavorable evaluation of the attitude object. As a predisposition, attitudes have a motivational quality, that is, they might propel a consumer toward a particular behavior or repel the consumer away from a particular behavior.

### **2.1.3 Attitudes Have Consistency**

Consumer attitude-behavior consistency describes the extent to which attitude leads to purchase (Berkman et al, 1999). Attitudes are relatively consistent with the behavior they reflect, although they are not necessarily permanent, they do change as the individual is exposed to new stimuli. Sometimes situational influences on consumer intervene and disrupt the consistency between attitudes and behavior of a particular individual. Attitude-behavior consistency describes the extent to which attitude leads to purchase (Berkman et al, 1996). This is determined by a variety of consumers factors (resource, experience, state vs action orientation), situational factors (intervening time, unforeseen events, message repetition, and social influences), and measurement factors (level of specificity, timing of measurement). Each of this can be affected by marketer actions.

## **2.2 Functions of Attitudes**

Three research and models describes the determinants of affective response. The functional theory of attitude explains functions: adjustment, ego defense, value expression, and application of prior knowledge. The fishbein model relates consumer beliefs and evaluations to affective response. If beliefs are strong and desirable, affective responses are positive. The belief-importance model analyses affective responses across competing brands. Attitudes perform some important functions for individuals. Katz (1960) identifies four key functions, which attitudes serve for individuals. These include utilization, value-expressive, ego-defensive and knowledge functions.

### **2.2.1 Utilitarian Function or Adjustment Function**

The utilitarian function is related to the basic principles of reward and punishment. We develop some attitudes toward products simply on the basis of whether these products provide pleasure or pain. Put differently, we tend to form favorable attitudes toward objects and activities that are rewarding and negative attitudes toward those that are not. If a person likes the taste of fish pile, that person will develop a positive attitude toward. Adjustment serves the purpose of helping on individual intelligently to adjust our likes and dislikes to the realities of our external environment. Thus, the adjustment function is “utilitarian” in nature as it helps consumers to maximizing their pleasure and minimizing their pain as they wend their ways through the environment.

Marketers promise rewards in advertising and conduct extensive product testing to be sure the products are indeed rewarding. Ads that stress straightforward product benefits (e.g., "Ribena children are healthy children") appeal to the utilitarian function.

### **2.2.2 Value-Expressive Function**

A value-expressive function is an expression of the consumer's central values and self-concept. A person forms a product attitude not because of its objective benefits, but because of what the product expresses about him or her as a person. Thus, consumers who value nature and the environment are likely to develop attitudes about products and activities that are consistent with that value. These consumers are likely to express support for environment protection initiatives, to recycle, and to purchase and use "green" products. This calls for green and social marketing. Value-expressive attitudes are highly relevant to lifestyle analyses, which focus on how consumers cultivate a cluster of activities, interests, and opinions to express a particular social identity.

### **2.2.3 Ego-Defensive Function**

Attitudes sometimes protect consumers' ego from threats to their self-identities and feelings of personal worth. Attitudes are formed and used to protect and defend one's egos and images against external influences and internal feelings of short-coming. Products that promise to help a man project a "macho" image (e.g., Stout or Rub may be appealing to his insecurities about his masculinity. Also another example is Deodorant campaigns that stress the dire, embarrassing consequences of being caught with underarm odor in public. Individuals would be likely to have favorable attitudes toward popular brands and styles of clothes and to use personal care products such as dandruff shampoo and mouthwash. In marketing, ego-defensive attitudes are likely to be operating for some consumers in such areas as social attractiveness, physical fears of injury, or harm. Therefore, markets of such personal care products as deodorants, pomade, tooth-paste, or fruit juice, non-alcoholic drinks expect this attitude function to be at work in their target market.

### **2.2.4 Knowledge Function**

Some attitudes are formed as a result of a need for order, structure, or meaning. This need is often present when a person is in a confused state or is presented with a new product or service. Some attitudes serve primarily as a means of organizing beliefs about objects or activities such as brands and shopping. These attitudes may be accurate or inaccurate with respect to "objective" reality, but the attitude will often determine subsequent behaviors rather than "reality". For example, a consumer's attitude toward fruit drinks may be "they all taste the same". In this case, the consumer would likely purchase the least expensive or most convenient brand.

An attitude can serve more than one function, but in many cases a particular one will be dominant. By identifying the dormant function a product serves for consumers - what benefits it provides - marketers can emphasize these benefits in their communications and packaging. Ads relevant to the function prompt more favorable thoughts about what is being offered and can result in a heightened preference for both the ad and the product.

## **3. The Trilogy of Attitudes**

Many scholars have been motivated to understand the relationship between attitudes and behavior. To achieve this, they sought to construct models that capture the underlying dimensions of an attitude, focusing on specifying the composition of an attitude in order to better explain or predict behavior. Some of the most important attitude models are: the tri-component attitude model, multi-attribute attitude models, the trying-to-consumer model, and attitude-toward-the-ad models. Each of these models provides a somewhat different perspective on how the parts are arranged or interrelated. The focus of this paper is on the tri-component attitude model and how its link with consumer behavior. The underlying view of human

behavior has been that all behavior is actually a combination of mental, emotional, and physical dimensions (popularly referred to as the think-feel-do perspective) which resulted in the classical “three-component” or “trilogy” view of attitudes.

According to the tri-component attitude model (Howard, and Sheth, 1969), attitudes comprise three major components: a cognitive component – awareness, knowledge, belief; and an affective component – feelings, emotions; and a conative component – response tendencies. The tri-component attitude model also referred to as the trilogy, CAB model, or paradigm of attitudes for easy notation. These three components are shown in Figure 3.1 are independent but interrelated.

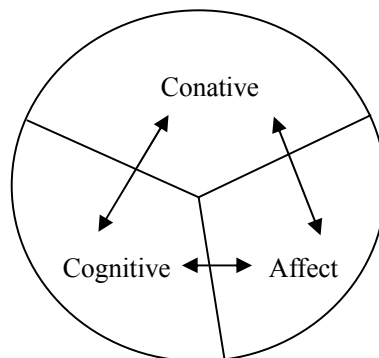


Figure3.1 A Simple Representation of the Tri-component or Trilogy Attitude Model

Source: Leon G. Schiffman and Leslie Lazar Kanuk, *Consumer Behavior*, Fifth Edition, New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited, 1995. p 242.

### 3.1 Cognitive Component

The cognitive component refers to the knowledge, beliefs, and opinions the person has about the attitude object. The cognitive component is the individual’s information and knowledge about an object or concept. A person’s cognition is the knowledge and perceptions that are acquired by a combination of direct experience with the attitude-object and related information from various sources. This knowledge and resulting perceptions commonly take the form of beliefs; that is, the consumer believes that the attitude-object possesses various attributes and that specific behaviors will lead to specific outcomes. Beliefs are the cognitive component of consumer attitude. Positive brand associations enhance brand equity and are achieved through a number of positioning strategies. Through brand associations, marketers establish and influence favorable beliefs about a brand and unfavorable beliefs about competitors (Berkman et al, 1996). Asch (1965) argues that attitudes are directed towards phenomena that are known to exist: an individual cannot have an attitude towards an object if this is missing in the natural or social milieu. The beliefs about an object tend to control the change that may take place in an attitude. Hair et al (2000), advocate that measurement objective focus should be on using scale descriptors that reflect the cognitive component of attitude.

### 3.2 Affective Component

The affect component of an attitude reflects feelings (“affect” is the technical term for positive or negative feelings), evaluation, or emotions regarding the attitude object. Affect refers to the way a consumer feels about an attitude object. It relates to the emotional content and arouses either likes or dislikes of a particular object. Chisnall (1975) observes that these feelings may derive from personality traits, motives, social norms, etc. A consumer’s emotions or feelings about a particular product or brand constitute the affective component of an attitude. Consumer researchers frequently treat these emotions and feelings as primarily evaluative in nature. That is, they capture an individual’s direct or global assessment of the attitude-object (i.e., the extent) to which the individual rates the attitude-object as “favorable” or “unfavorable”, “good”

or “bad”. For example, Table 3.1 shows a series of affective evaluative scale items that might be employed to assess consumers’ attitude toward a particular fast food restaurant, such as Best Bite.

Table 3.1 Selected Evaluative Scale used to measure Consumers’ Attitudes toward Best Bite Fast Food Restaurant.

Question: Compared to other Fast Food Restaurants, Best Bite is:

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	Good
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	Positive
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	Pleasant
Unappealing (disgusting)	1	2	3	4	5	Appealing

Affect-laden experiences also manifest themselves as emotionally charged states (e.g., anger, sadness, shame, happiness, distress, guilt, surprise). Johnson and Zinkhan (1991) observe that such emotional states may enhance or amplify positive or negative experiences and that later recollections of such experiences may impact what come to mind and how the individual acts. In addition to utilizing direct or global evaluative measures of an attitude-object, consumer researchers can also use affective response scale (e.g., that measure feelings and emotions) to determine a consumers’ overall feeling about a product, service or ad. Table 3.2 gives an example of a five-point scale that measures affective responses. It is an attempt to measure consumer feelings and emotions with regard to Happy Bite restaurant.

You have just tasted Best Bite’s food, we would appreciate it if you would identify your feelings concerning their food and services offerings. For each of the incomplete sentence listed below, we would appreciate it if you would put an “X” in the box that corresponds with your feelings with regard to Best Bite’s food and service offerings. .

Table 3.2 Selected Evaluative Scale Used to Measure Consumers Feelings and Emotions with Respect to a Particular Restaurant.

	Very Little 1	Little 2	Indifferent 3	Much 4	Very Much 5
I felt - - relaxed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - bored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - stressed-out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - lonely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - creative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - sad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - inspired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - depressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - happy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - aroused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - nourished	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt - - (others)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A consumer who states, “I like Joy soap,” or “Joy soap is horrible toilet soap,” is expressing the results of an emotional or affective evaluation of the product. This overall evaluation may be simply a vague, general feeling developed without cognitive information or beliefs about the product. Or, it may be the result of several evaluations of the product’s performance on each of several attributes. Thus, the statements, “Joy Soap suits my skin”, and joy soap is not good for my skin,” imply a negative affective reaction to specific aspects of the product that, in combination with feeling about other attributes, will determine the overall reaction to the brand. Since products, like other objects we react to, are evaluated in the

context of a specific situation a consumer's affective reaction to a product may change as the situation changes. While feelings are often the result of evaluating specific attributes of a product, they can precede and influence cognitions. In fact, one may come to like a product without acquiring any cognitive beliefs about the product. Indeed, our initial reaction to a product may be one of like or dislike without any cognitive basis for the feeling, Zajonc (1980) argues that this initial affect can then influence how we react to the product itself.

### 3.3 Behavioral or Conative Component

The conative component reflects behavioral tendencies toward the attitude object. Conation refers to the act of attempting something. Conation is concerned with the likelihood or tendency that an individual will undertake a specific action or behave in a particular way with regard to the attitude-object. This conative component of attitude may include the actual behavior itself.

In marketing and consumer research, the conative component is frequently treated as an expression of the consumer's intention to buy. Buyer intention scales are employed to assess the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a product or behaving in a certain way. Behavior intention scale is the most widely used scale formats in commercial marketing research (Kalwani and Silk, 1982). Generally, behavior intent scales are found to be good predictors of consumers' choices of frequently purchased and durable consumer products. (Siciliano, 1993). Behavior intention scales include purchase intent, attendance intent, shopping intent, usage intent, willingness to refer others etc. Table 3.3 provides examples of common intention-to-buy scales.

Table 3.3 Two Examples of Intention-to-Buy Scales.

Example 1: Which of the following statement best describes the likelihood that you will go to Best Bite Fast Food Restaurant when next you want fast food?

- I definitely will go
- I probably will go
- I am uncertain whether I will go
- I probably will not go
- I definitely will not go.

Example 2 How likely are you to patronize Best Bite Fast Food Restaurant when next you want fast food?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Not certain (or undecided)
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

Behavior involves the person's intentions to do something with regard to an attitude object. The behavioral component of an attitude is one's tendency to respond in a certain manner toward an object or activity. Consumers are asked to make a subjective judgment on the likelihood of buying a product or brand or taking a specific action in the future (Hair et al, 2000). A series of decision to buy or not buy Joy Soap or to recommend it or other brands to friends would reflect the



behavioral component of an attitude. The behavioral component provides response tendencies or behavioral intentions. Our actual behaviors reflect these intentions as they are modified by the situation in which the behavior will occur.

#### 4. The Attitude - Purchase Behavior Relationship and Marketing Implications

All three-attitude components maintain a relatively stable and balanced relationship to one another. Boone and Kurtz (2004) maintain that together these components form an overall attitude an individual has about an object or idea. Hawkins et al (2001) also argue that all three-attitude components tend to be consistent. This means that a change in one attitude component tends to produce related changes in the other components. According to the principle of cognitive consistency cited in Solomon (2002), consumer's value harmony among their thoughts, feelings and behaviors; and they are motivated to maintain uniformity among these elements. This desire means that, if necessary, consumers will change their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors to make them consistent with their experiences. The consistency principle is an important reminder that attitudes are not formed in a vacuum. A significant determinant of the way an attitude object will be evaluated is how it fits with other related attitudes already held by the consumer. Dabholkar (1994) views this tendency to be basis for a substantial amount of marketing strategies. Hawkins et al (2001) provide the critical aspects of attitudes and their interconnection as shown in Figure 4.1

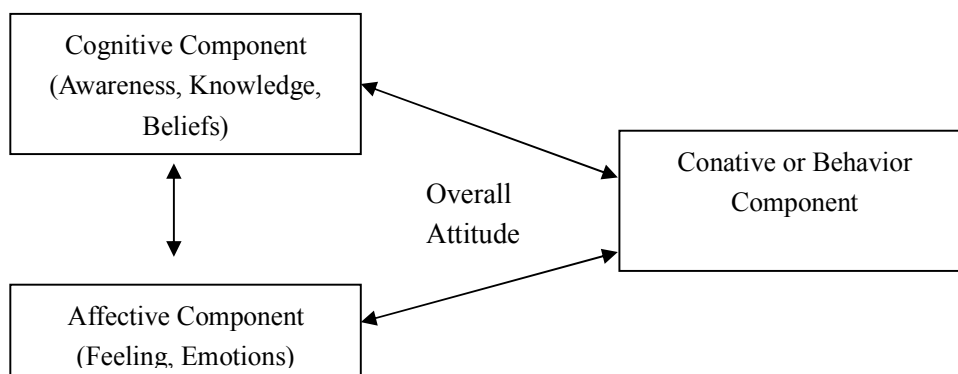


Figure 4.1: Attitude Component Consistency

Source: Hawkins, Del I., Best, Roger J. and Coney, Kenneth A. (2001), *Consumer Behavior; Building Marketing Strategy*, Boston: Irwin McGraw-Hill.

According to Hawkins et al (2004), the field of consumer behavior refers to the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. Thus, an understanding of consumer behavior is very important for developing effective marketing strategy, regulating a marketing practice, or bringing about socially desirable behavior. Marketers being users of consumer behavior utilize their knowledge of behavior consistency in designing effective competitive strategies. Marketing managers are ultimately concerned with influencing consumer behavior. However, it is often difficult to influence behavior directly. That is, we generally are unable to directly cause consumers to buy, use, or recommend our products. However, consumers will often listen to our sales personnel, attend to our advertisement, or examine our packages. We can, therefore, indirectly influence their behaviors by providing information, music, physical evidence, personnel, delivery processes or other stimuli that influence a belief or feeling about the product if the three components are indeed consistent with are another. Boone and



Kurtz (2004) observe that attitudes frequently change in response to inconsistencies among the three components. According to them, the most common inconsistencies result when new information changes the cognitive components of an attitude. The implication is that marketers can work to modify attitudes by providing evidence of product benefits and by correcting misconceptions. Also, free samples can change attitude by getting consumers to try a product. Sometimes new technologies can encourage consumers to change their attitudes. Marketers may rely on new innovations to help change components of consumer attitudes.

#### **4.1 Altering the Cognitive Component**

Smith and Swinyard (1988) suggest that a common and effective approach to changing attitudes is to focus on the cognitive component. Four basic marketing strategies are used for altering the cognitive structure of a consumer's attitude.

- (a) Increasing the strength of an existing positive belief (Grossbart et al, 1987). Marketers can increase the strength of consumers' beliefs about positive attributes and consequences; or they can decrease the strength of beliefs about negative attributes and consequences (Peter and Olson, 1999). This strategy involves shifting beliefs about the performance of a brand on one or more attributes. For example, many consumers in Nigeria believe that imported electric cables from Korea are of lower quality than Nigerian made cables. It will require a substantial amount of advertising to change this belief.
- (b) Improving evaluation of a strongly held belief about a salient attribute. This requires constructing a new means-end chain by linking a more positive, higher-ordered consequence to that attribute. (Frank, 1991). Most consumers consider some product attributes to be more important than others. Marketers often try to convince consumers that those attributes on which their brands are relatively strong are the more important.
- (c) Adding a new salient belief about the attitude objects-ideally, one with a positive evaluation. Sometimes, this strategy requires a physical change in the product itself. Another approach to changing to cognitive component of an attitude is to add new beliefs to the consumer's belief structure. By making a product or brand have the capacity to solve more of consumers' problems, the consumers will have an additional belief that the product's or brand's value has increased.
- (d) Making an existing favorable belief more salient, usually by convincing consumers that the attribute is more self-relevant than it seemed. Creating such means-end chains increases both the salience of consumers' beliefs about the attributes as well as the evaluations of those beliefs (Peter and Olson, 1999). The final strategy for changing the cognitive component is to change the perceptions of the ideal brand or situation. Thus, many conservation organizations strive to influence our beliefs about the ideal product in terms of minimal packaging, nonpolluting manufacturing, extensive use of recycled materials, and nonpolluting disposition after its useful life.

#### **4.2 Altering the Affective Component.**

It is increasingly common for a firm to attempt to influence consumers' liking of their brand without directly influencing either beliefs or behavior. If the firm is successful, increased liking will tend to lead to increased positive beliefs, which could

lead to purchase behavior should a need for the product category arise. Or, perhaps more commonly increased liking will lead to a tendency to purchase the brand should a need arise, with purchase and use leading to increased positive beliefs. Marketers use three basic approaches to directly increase affect: Classical conditioning, affect toward the ad itself, and "mere exposure."

**(a) Classical conditioning:** One-way of directly influencing the affective component is through classical conditioning. In this approach, a stimulus the audience likes, such as music, is consistently paired with the brand name. Grossman and Till (1998) observe that over time, some of the positive affects associated with the music will transfer to the brand. Other "liked" stimuli, such as pictures, are frequently used for this reason.

**(b) Affect toward the Ad.** Celuch and Slama (1995) observe that liking the advertisement generally increases the tendency to like the product. Positive affect toward the ad may increase liking of the brand through classical conditioning, or it may be a more high-involvement, conscious process. Using humor, celebrities, or emotional appeals increases affect toward the ad. Huang (1997) notes that ads that arouse negative affect or emotions such as fear, guilt, or sorrow can also enhance attitude change. For example, an ad for a charity assisting refugees could show pictures that would elicit a variety of unpleasant emotions such as disgust or anger and still be effective. Also France and Park (1997) discovered that recent research has also found that affect aroused by the programming surrounding the ad influences how the ad is processed and its impact on attitudes.

**(c) Mere Exposure.** Hawkins and Hoch (1992) found that mere exposure might also increase affect. That is, simply presenting a brand to an individual on a large number repetition of advertisements for low involvement products may well increase liking and subsequent purchase of the advertised brands without altering the initial belief structure. In this regard, repeated tagline and point of purchase display (p.o.p) are suggested.

Classical conditioning, affect toward the ad itself, and mere exposure can alter affect directly and, by altering affect, indirectly alter purchase behavior without first changing beliefs. This has a number of important implications for marketers.

- (i) Ads designed to alter affect need not contain any cognitive (factual or attribute) information.
- (ii) Classical conditioning principles should guide such campaigns.
- (iii) Attitudes (liking) toward the ad itself are critical for this types of campaign
- (iv) Repetition is critical for affect-based campaigns. For example, repeated exposure helps to overcome the effect of ad clutter.
- (v) Traditional measures of advertising effectiveness focus on the cognitive component and are thus, inappropriate for affect-based campaigns.

#### **4.3 Altering the Behavioral Component.**

Behavior or conative attitude component, specifically purchase or use behavior, may precede the development of cognition and affect. Or, it may occur in contrast to the cognitive and affective components. For example, a consumer may dislike the taste of fruit drinks and believe that artificial sweeteners and/or preservatives are unhealthy. However, rather than appear rude, the same consumer may accept a diet drink when offered one in a social function by a friend. Drinking the beverage may offer the consumer perceptions of its taste and lead to liking; this in turn may lead to increased learning, which changes the cognitive component. Marks and Kamins (1988) found that attitudes formed as a consequence of product trial are strongly held. Kempf (1999) notes that

behavior can lead directly to either affect or cognition, or to both simultaneously. Consumers frequently try new brands or types of low-cost items in the absence of prior knowledge or affect. Also, firms can change consumer behavior by optimizing and monitoring service system performance (Asiegbu et al, 2011a; Asiegbu et al, 2011b).

Changing behavior prior to changing affect or cognition is based primarily on operant conditioning. Thus, the key marketing task is to induce people to purchase or consume the product while ensuring that the purchase and /or consumption will indeed be rewarding. Coupons, free samples, point-of-purchase displays, tie-in purchases, discounts and price reductions are common techniques for inducing trial and impulse purchase behavior. Since behavior often leads to strong positive attitudes toward the consumed brand, a sound distribution system and celebrity endorsement advertising are important to prevent stock out and current customers from trying competing or switching to rival brand.

## 5. Conclusion

No doubt, there is a growing need among marketing strategists to better understand their customers' attitudes towards their companies's products, services, and delivery systems. In some scholars' opinions, "attitude" is a derived composite outcome of the interaction between a person's beliefs (cognitive thoughts) and expressed emotions (affective feelings) with respect to those beliefs. Knowledge of these interactions can help to predict a consumer's behavior (conative action). Other scholars who do not endorse this trilogy approach to attitude measurement, hold that an attitude is a global indicator of a person's feelings (i.e., affect alone defines attitude; or affect = attitude) towards an object or behavior. These different views notwithstanding, the two approaches provide both the academics and practitioners with valuable means of understanding the different scale measurements to be used to capture consumer's belief structure (cognitive thoughts), emotional feelings (affective thoughts), and behavior tendencies (conative action).

The goal of attitude research in marketing is to increase sales by better satisfying customer needs. Awareness of consumer attitudes is of paramount importance to both goods and services marketers in designing strategies. Suffice it to say that measurement of attitude is part and parcel or rather an indispensable aspect of consumer research. This explains why reporting of attitude research is rife in the consumer behavior literature. An understanding of consumer attitudes has very basic implications for marketing, for two reasons. Firstly, attitudes are based on beliefs consumers hold about the attributes or features of the products being evaluated. In many instances, these attributes form the basis for the development of marketing strategies. Secondly, attitudes are primary causes of behaviors which makes them very relevant to marketers who want to understand why consumers buy or do not buy their products. One organizing principle of attitude formation is the importance of consistency among attitudinal components – that is, some parts of the attitude may be altered to be in line with others. In this regard, customer buying behavior is indirectly influenced by directly altering any of their three attitude components. The complexity of customer attitudes is underscored by multi attribute models, in which a set of beliefs and evaluations is identified and combined to predict an overall attitude. A good knowledge of these is essential for business executives in the design of rent-yielding marketing strategies.

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