MOTIVATION AND PERSONALITY ASPECTS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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One of the internal and psychological influences which affects individual's choice of different market items is motivation. Internal motivating processes effectively operate on individual's purchase choices within the framework already set by the determinants of demand. For marketing managers, an understanding of the motivations affecting consumer behavior will usually be more important than measuring the determinants because marketers are directly concerned with choices consumers make between competitive products. Understanding different aspects of motivation can help them taking appropriate marketing programs to influence those choices. What consumers purchase, when, where and how depend largely on their personality types. An understanding of personality types and their influences on consumer behavior will help marketers in shaping their policies appropriately.

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Lesson - 1: An Overview of Motivation

Objectives of this lesson

After reading this lesson, you will be able to:

* Define motive and motivation
* Identify and explain different types of needs motivating people to buy different products and services
* Identify and explain different theories of motivation
* Understand the role of subconscious motivation
* Know the refinements of the Freud's theory of motivation

Introduction

You should realize that, the starting point in the purchase decision making process is the recognition of a need or buying motive. Why a person acts? The answer is, "As he experiences a need". Motivation is of crucial importance in contributing to consumer decision making process. To understand why and how consumers buy, marketers must first grasp motivation. Motivation is related to expectations, needs, and wants. Individual purchases an article as a consequence of certain mental and economic forces creating desires or wants, which he understands can be satisfied by the articles offered for purchase. A Marketer should identify the motives that prompt or move consumers to purchases so that he can offer a complete article satisfying their needs. A need must be aroused or stimulated before it becomes a motive.

> Motivation is related to expectations, needs, and wants.

Motive and Motivation Defined

It is well understood that the buying motives prompt the consumer. Number of buying motives may prompt a consumer to purchase an article such as fear, desire for money, vanity, pride, fashion, possession, affection, comfort, sex or romance. Thus, his inner motives direct him to behave in a particular fashion. Marketers should, therefore study and analyze consumer motivation. But, what is a motive? It can be defined as a drive or an urge for which an individual seeks satisfaction. Motives are all those inner striving conditions variously described as wishes, desires, needs, drives, and the like. It is basically a need sufficiently stimulated to move an individual to seek satisfaction. A motive becomes a buying motive when the individual seeks satisfaction through the purchase of some article. It is, thus, an inner urge that moves or prompts a person to some action. Consumers purchase any good as a result of certain mental and economic forces that create desires or wants that they know can be satisfied by the goods offered for purchase. Berelson and Steiner have defined a motive as the inner state that energizes, activates or moves (hence motivation).… and that directs or channels behavior toward goals. For consumer behavior purpose, it may be defined as the drive to satisfy perceived needs by purchases and to alleviate self-image by specific

product and brand selection. It is thus related to a force that drives the consumer toward a specific goal.

A consumer's actions at any time are affected by a set of motives rather than just one motive. At a particular point in time, some motives in the set are stronger than others, but the strengths of motives vary from one time to another. For example, a person's motives toward having a cup of tea are much stronger during breakfast time than just before going to bed. Motives can reduce or increase tension in individuals. When motives prompt us toward our goals, they reduce tension, but, if some motives impel us toward one goal while other motives pull us toward a different goal, tension may increase because we cannot reach either goal. At a particular time, many different motives may influence consumer behavior. For example, an individual who is buying a television set might be attracted by several characteristics, such as brand name, design, and economy. If a marketer appeals to consumers by focusing only on one feature, his effort may fail to yield desired level of sales. Three theoretical assumptions about human motivation are particularly important to marketers. They are: A consumer buys a particular product because he is influenced by certain motives. Every human activity is motivated, and is not spontaneous. Consumers are goal seekers who satisfy their needs by purchases and consumption. *In other words, needs are the motivational elements behind purchase*. Let us now highlight on the hierarchy or levels of different human needs affecting their behavior.

Hierarchy of Consumer Needs

Different studies on psychology indicate that, all human activities including consumer behavior are directed toward satisfying certain basic needs. But, all individuals do not act exactly in the same way in their efforts to fulfil their needs. These actions not only depend upon the nature of the basic needs but they are modified by the individual's particular environmental and social backgrounds. Whatever action the individual takes is directed towards reducing tension built up to satisfy basic needs. There is no unanimity among the psychologists in regard to a list of basic needs. Abraham Maslow enumerates these basic needs in their order of importance. His hierarchy of needs approach is based on four assumptions. They are:

- Through genetic endowment and social interaction, all humans acquire a similar set of motives.
- Among the motives, some are more basic or critical than others.
- An individual must satisfy his more basic needs reasonably before he thinks for motives next in order.
- More advanced motives come into play as soon as the basic motives are met.

Abraham Maslow classifies motivational life in terms of fundamental needs or goals, rather than in terms of any listing of drives in the ordinary

sense of instigation. He lists the following five levels of needs, arranged in order of their basic importance to the individual:

- *The Physiological Needs:* These needs are to satisfy hunger, thirst, sleep, etc. These are the most basic needs, and until they are satisfied, other needs are of no importance. Food, cloth, and shelter are most popularly known as basic needs.

- *The Safety Needs:* The need for physical protection from others and from accidents, for financial security, and family stability. Overall, people like to be safe from physical danger and prefer to have a general orderliness in their lives. In modern societies, these needs are more often for economic and social security rather than for physical safety.

- *The Belongingness and Love Needs:* The need for affectionate relations with individuals and a place in society is so important that its lack is a common cause of maladjustment. It is filled by religious organizations, clubs, and family associations. Thus, these needs are reflected in a desire for love, affiliation, group acceptance, and identification.

- *The Esteem Needs:* People need both self-esteem, a high evaluation of self, and the esteem of others in the society. Fulfillment of these needs provides a feeling of self-confidence and usefulness and their non-fulfillment produces feelings like inferiority and helplessness. They are basically related to the individual's feelings of usefulness and accomplishment.

- *The Need for Self-Actualization:* This is the highest level of need. It basically means realizing one's full potential and achieving all one is capable of. It involves the desire for self-fulfillment, that is, to become all that one is capable of becoming. In other words, it is the desire to achieve the maximum of one's capabilities. This implies doing something to develop the talents of the individual. Although it may be present in every person, its fulfillment depends upon prior fulfillment of the more basic needs. Relatively few individuals have the opportunity to satisfy this need. Most never reach the point where the first four levels of needs are satisfied.

Maslow also identified two classes of cognitive needs, which are not definitely located in the need hierarchy, but which are believed to exist, perhaps as a function of intelligence and of gratification. These needs are fairly high, up the scale of lower-order needs. They are:

- *The Desire to Know and Understand:* These needs refer to the process of searching for meaning in the things around us. They are thought to be essential precondition to the satisfaction of basic needs.

> Food, cloth, and shelter are most popularly known as basic needs.

> This is the highest level of need.

- *The Aesthetic Needs:* These may not appear to be present among many individuals because of failure to satisfy more basic needs, but among some, the need for beauty is very strong.

Maslow believes that the five basic needs develop in such a way that the most important – that is, the physiological needs – must be satisfied before the safety needs, which are next in importance, can fully emerge in a person's development; and so on up the ladder from the lower needs (most important) to the higher needs (least important) in the hierarchy. Maslow also believes that the physiological needs are the most prepotent of all needs. What this means specifically is that in the human being who is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any others. It is quite true that man live by bread alone when there is no bread. But what happens to man's desires when there is plenty of bread and when his belly is chronically filled? At once other and higher needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the individual. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new and still higher needs emerge, and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency.

Maslow explains that the need hierarchy is not as rigid as may be implied by the above explanation. While most people feel the needs in about the order indicated, there may be exceptions in individual cases. Also, it would be a mistake to conclude that each need must be satisfied fully before the next need emerges. Instead, all the basic needs of most normal members of our society are partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied at the same time.

Marketers should note that any consumption behavior can satisfy more than one need.

The knowledge of Maslow's need hierarchy could be a good guide to general behavior. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is not a rigid system, and individuals may operate on several levels. Marketers should note that any consumption behavior can satisfy more than one need. Similarly, the same consumption behavior can satisfy different needs at different times. Products can therefore be sold to fill a variety of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs "is a useful tool for understanding consumer motivations and is readily adaptable to marketing strategy, primarily because consumer goods often serve to satisfy each of the need levels. For example, individuals buy houses, food, and clothing to satisfy physiological needs; they buy insurance and radial tires and vocational training to satisfy safety and security needs. Almost all personal care products (cosmetics, mouthwash, shaving cream) are bought to satisfy social needs. Luxury products….. are often bought to fulfill ego needs, and college training and financial services are sold as ways of achieving self-fulfillment"[1]. Marketers should note that, very often, the marketing success of a brand depends on its ability to satisfy several needs at once.

[1] Schiffman L.G., and, Kanuk L.L., Consumer Behavior, Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, 1998, pp., 100-101.

Theories of Motivation

There are quite a few numbers of theories explaining human motivation. A thorough review of all theories of motivation is not possible in this short span of our book. We shall concentrate on three of the important theories explaining consumer motivation. They are: (1) Psychoanalytic theory; (2) Gestalt theory; and, (3) Cognitive theory. Let us now discuss them in turn:

Psychoanalytic Theory of Motivation

The psychoanalytic theory of motivation was conceived by a famous psychologist Sigmund Freud in late nineteenth century. His work was basically on individuals of disturbed minds. The concept of irrational people, lacking control over their own behavior, was central to the development of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of motivation. His theory placed the motivational emphasis on sexual and aggressive instincts. Working with the disturbed personalities, Freud identified that there are three fundamental forces work in every human mind. They are: *Id*; *Superego*; and *Ego*. The *id* refers to the free mechanism that leads to strong drives. Id is present in human minds right from their birth. Such drives or motives are not influenced by morality or ethics. It is a force that prompts an individual toward aggression, destruction, and pleasure seeking. It motivates one to satisfy his basic needs as and when they are created without caring to social norms, morality, or ethics. If the individual does not undertake efforts to satisfy his basic needs as and when they are created, id tries to take him toward destruction. Thus, it is an extreme of one's mind – the devil's part of the psyche.

Another force that works in an individual's mind is '*superego*'. It is a person's conscience which compels him to conform to all of the moral standards. It is highly rational and tries to keep the activities morally right. It basically motivates the individual forgetting his basic needs, thus, behaving like an angel or superman. But, we are neither devil nor angels. We are human beings. As human beings, we have to satisfy our basic needs, but, that should be in ways acceptable to our societies. Here comes the role of ego. As you understand that id and superego are two extreme forces of our minds, and as a result are in conflicts. Ego makes a balance between these two extreme forces of our psyche or mind. Ego basically is a reality principle. It refers to the act of weighing consequences and tries to reconcile with the reality. It is an equilibrating device that leads to socially acceptable behavior and imposes rationality on the id. It weighs the consequences of an act rather than rushing blindly into the activity. It tells us the way of satisfying our basic needs in a way that is socially and morally acceptable. In essence, the id urges an enjoyable act; the superego presents the moral issues involved and the ego acts as the arbitrator in determining whether to proceed or not. According to Freud, an individual's behavior is dependent on how strong one of the above forces in his mind. If ego is stronger than other two forces, one's behavior will be treated as socially and morally unacceptable. If superego is stronger than

Three fundamental forces work in every human mind. They are: Id; Superego; and Ego.

Ego basically is a reality principle.

id and ego, the individual will behave like a superman or angel. On the otherhand, if ego is stronger in his mind, his behavior will be like most of the other humans in the society.

The Role of Subconscious Motivation in Consumer Behavior

Freud believed that the interaction between the three forces basically takes place at the subconscious level of the individual's mind. In his subconscious mind, he uses the defense mechanisms to resolve the conflicts created between the id and superego, and, thus protects his self-image. There are four defense mechanisms one may use. They are: repression; displacement; projection; and, identification. By using repression, he sends back the unacceptable feelings created by the id to the unconscious part of his mind. Displacement is a technique that allows one to substitute an acceptable object for a socially or morally unacceptable one in search for pleasure seeking or tension reduction. By using projection, an individual basically attributes his own disliked characteristics on to others. And, using identification, he tries to justify his unpleasant behavior, by associating or comparing him with someone popular in the society for his image or personality.

> There are four defense mechanisms one may use.

Refinements of Freud's Theory

Freud's theory was later challenged by three of his followers. They are: Alfred Adler, Erich Fromm, and, Karen Horney. According to Adler, the basic human motive is the urge to achieve superiority. He thought that from the very childhood, an individual develops inferiority complex. Latter part of his life, thus, is shaped by the desire to become superior. Fromm thought that, individuals have urges toward love, affection, and companionship. According to him this urge is the strongest motivation of individuals. Horney thought that individuals develop anxieties from the very childhood, and the rest of the lives is shaped by the struggle to reduce anxieties developed in the childhood.

Gestalt Theory of Motivation

According to the Gestalt psychologists, motivation of an individual is determined by all of the forces present simultaneously in his mind or psyche. They consider motivation and corresponding behavior as a function of all of the forces of an individual's mind. They believe that an action or behavior is the outcome of the individual's experiences, past, goals, as well as the environment surrounding him. Thus, it is the totality of forces work in the person at the same time. To them, one's motivation may be understood by taking into account all of the forces in the life span of an individual. They include his desires, fears, and inhibitors. When a need remains unmet, an individual feels tension, and he tries to reduce it by taking into account the combining force or valence of the act. It includes both positive and negative consequences involved in the satisfaction of the unmet need. He makes an equation in his mind on the positive and negative consequences. His ultimate behavior is dependent on

the result of his mental equation. An individual, for example, will be motivated to buy an item if the positive valence outweighs the negative valence.

The Cognitive Theory of Motivation

Cognitive theory is known as the contemporary or modern theory of motivation. According to the cognitivists, motivation is an inseparable part of an individual's mental structure. They believe that, an individual's motivation is the result of information processing and evaluation of problem related aspects by using his mental frame. Mental or cognitive frame or structure is composed of one's beliefs, values, images, experiences, attitudes, and perceptions. Cognitivists, thus, see human behavior as problem solving in nature. According to the cognitive theorists, motivation of consumers should be studied in terms of the total aspect of their behaviors. Moreover, they believe that, purchase of an item may involve more than one motive instead of a single motive, that we have pointed out before.

Cognitivists, thus, see human behavior as problem solving in nature.

This has led to the motivation research and has proved to be useful in analyzing consumer behavior. Thus, in turn, has contributed some useful insights in the advertising and packaging fields.

Self Evaluation

Objective Questions

1. Motivation is related to –
    a. Expectations
    b. Needs
    c. Wants
    d. All of the above.

2. Number of buying motives may prompt a consumer to purchase an article such as –
    a. Fear, desire for money and vanity
    b. Pride, fashion and possession
    c. Affection, comfort, sex or romance
    d. All of the above.

3. Motive can be defined as –
    a. A drive for which an individual seeks satisfaction
    b. An urge for which an individual seeks satisfaction
    c. Both a & b
    d. None of the above.

4. Consumers purchase any good as a result of certain mental and economic forces –
    a. That create desires that they know can be satisfied by the goods offered for purchase
    b. Wants that they know can be satisfied by the goods offered for purchase
    c. Both a & b
    d. None of the above.

5. Hierarchy of needs approach is based on –
    a. Four assumptions
    b. Three assumptions
    c. Two assumptions
    d. Six assumptions.

6. Abraham Maslow classifies motivational life in terms of –
    a. Fundamental needs or goals
    b. Any listing of drives in the ordinary sense of instigation
    c. Both a & b
    d. None of the above.

7. Belongingness need is filled by –
   a. Religious organizations
   b. Clubs
   c. Family associations
   d. All of the above.

8. Luxury product are often bought to fulfill –
   a. Ego needs
   b. Self-esteem needs
   c. Self-actualization
   d. None of the above.

9. Ego drives or motives are –
   a. Influenced by morality
   b. Influenced by ethics
   c. Both a & b
   d. None of the above.

10. Which of the following is a defense mechanism?
    a. Repression
    b. Displacement
    c. Identification
    d. All of the above.

Answers:

1. d, 2. d, 3. c, 4. c, 5. a, 6. c, 7. d, 8. a, 9. d, 10. d.

Descriptive Questions

1. Define motive and motivation. Identify and explain different types of needs motivating people to buy different products and services.

2. Discuss different theories of motivation. Explain the role of subconscious motivation in consumer behavior.

Lesson – 2: Motivation Research Methods

Objectives of this lesson

After reading this lesson, you will be able to:

- Know why motivation research is required
- Identify different techniques of motivation research
- Explain the techniques used in conducting motivation research
- Criticize motivational research techniques.

Introduction
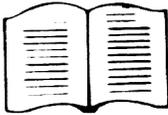
Identifying or revealing consumers' hidden motives may help marketers to add features in products best appealing consumers' motives. Few widely used techniques of motivational research are available. Knowledge of these techniques helps marketers to undertake motivational research to explore consumers' motives.

Justification of Motivational Research

The greatest strides toward finding out why consumers behave as they do have been made through motivational research. Research into consumer motivation lets marketers analyze the major motives that influence consumers to buy or not buy their products. We know that, motives, which often operate at a subconscious level, are difficult to measure. People usually do not know what motivates them. Therefore, marketers cannot reveal consumers' motives by simply asking them questions. They need to undertake structured research to find out consumers' motives. In other words we can say that, it is evident that the marketing executive cannot infer motivation directly from consumer behavior, and that behavior cannot be predicted in a simple way. Realization of these complexities has led to the use of motivation research as an aid to gaining an understanding of this important influence upon consumer behavior.

> People usually do not know what motivates them.

Abraham Maslow, while discussing the basic needs that motivate human behavior in all spheres of living, made the point that these motives are more often unconscious than conscious. While this may not be equally true when we restrict our analysis to consumer behavior, the problem of getting behind the superficial reasons people give in response to direct questions about their buying motives has long been recognized. From G. H. Smith, in his article titled "Motivation Research in Advertising and Marketing" published in 1954, clarified the problem by discussing three levels of awareness in the range from consciousness to unconsciousness. Among them, the first level deals with conscious and public material that consumers are willing to discuss with an interviewer. The second level includes rarely discussed material – that is, motives only slightly outside awareness (preconscious level). The third level deals with material that is unanalyzed by the individual and not discussed with other people

(unconscious level). It was to gain access to material in the preconscious and unconscious levels of awareness that marketers turned to the research methods of the behavioral scientists.

Marketers generally require two types of information regarding consumers – quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative information may be collected very easily through secondary data, but qualitative information cannot be collected without much difficulty. The information like - why people respond to a particular product or brand or when, how, and where consumers purchase the product, are not easy to collect. Thus, motivation research is to get the qualitative aspects of consumer behavior through psychological methods. Marketers come to know the hidden and unknown qualities, habits, attitudes of consumers through motivational research. According to Lawrence C. Lockley, motivation research is the currently popular term used to describe the use of psychological and psychiatric techniques to obtain a better understanding of why people respond as they do to products, advertisements, and various other marketing situations. Such research helps to predict how people react in a given marketing situation or how they receive a new product design. Through an array of techniques, researchers endeavor to ascertain the motivations behind a purchase, the reading of an advertisement, or the reaction to a brand name.

> Marketers generally require two types of information regarding consumers – quantitative and qualitative.

Techniques of Motivation Research

Motivation research is an approach that draws on the Freudian psychoanalytic model of consumer decision making. It assumes that important buying motives are subconscious in that a respondent cannot elucidate them when asked an opinion of a brand or product class. Motivation research (MR) made a strong impact on marketing in the 1950s. Many saw it as a decisive and powerful marketing tool. Major types of motivation research used in marketing are:

*   Experience and Knowledge Technique
*   Traditional or Questionnaire Technique
*   Interview Technique, and
*   Projective Techniques

Let us now discuss the above techniques in brief:

- **Experience and Knowledge Technique**

In this technique, consumer behavior is estimated on the basis of experience and knowledge gained by the marketing executives because of their closer association with customers. This is, thus, based on marketers' own experience and intuition. Through experience, marketers come to know what are the main buying motives for their products and what are the reasons for such motives to work. Different marketers may be consulted and results may be drawn from the discussion for the questions.

The results of such endeavors affect the decisions concerning advertising, product designs, pricing, and distribution.

- **Traditional or Questionnaire Technique**

Under this method, a questionnaire is prepared by the marketer with the help of psychologists to conduct interview with the respondents. Once the questionnaire is prepared, it is sent to the selected consumers for their return to the firm after the questions are duly filled in. The filled in questionnaire received by the firm is analyzed and results are extracted about the consumers' motives and behavior. This is a formal and structured technique used to identify the overt or direct motives. No matter what kind of sampling method is used or what kind of techniques used to collect data under this method, the questionnaire must be designed in such a way that information on consumers' motives can be collected methodically and completely. The structured questionnaire is tightly designed, and respondents are to answer on the basis of "yes" or "no" or to select one answer from a series. The problem with this technique is that, some of the respondents may not be willing to disclose their actual buying motives just to prove them smart or to protect their self-images. This is, you know, a basic human tendency to exaggerate their positions to others, and as a result the findings of such studies may mislead marketers.

- **Interview Technique**

Interview technique is one of the most popular motivational research techniques. Researchers may use both group interview and depth interview techniques to reveal consumers' motives. Under group interview technique, the interviewer – through leadership that is not highly structured – tries to generate discussion on one or several topics among the six to twelve people in the group. Through what is said in the discussion, the interviewer attempts to uncover respondents' motives relating to some issue, such as the use of a product. He usually cannot probe as deeply in a group interview as in a depth interview. To reveal subconscious motives reflected in the interviews, motivation researchers must be extremely well trained in clinical psychology. Their skills in discovering subconscious motives from what is said in an interview determines the effectiveness of their research.

The depth interview technique is the most widely used and popular technique of psychiatry in motivation research. It is described as casual, conversational, and free-flowing technique of motivation research. Here the researcher tries to get the interviewee to talk freely about anything to create an informal atmosphere. The researcher may ask general, non-directed questions and then probe the interviewee's answers by asking for clarification. It may last for several hours. Such a techniques may yield a variety of information on respondent's buying motives. Here "the respondent is encouraged to talk at length in the subject area of interest

and to express whatever thoughts or feelings come to mind"[2]. Generally, there is no list of questions that must be asked in a prescribed way. No direct question is usually asked by the interviewer but he talks with the consumer in free atmosphere so that the interviewee may express his views intensively. It is possible for a skilled interviewer to go deep and reveal motives burred below the conscious mind. The focus is on letting the respondent lead the way in order to find out what is important to him and why and to give opportunity for unanticipated responses to be made. It is a time consuming technique and requires lot of patience on the part of the researcher.

One of the depth interview techniques is the open-end questionnaire. Here the researcher starts the interview by asking a formal question. After the question is thrown to the respondent, the interviewer waits expectantly for the respondent to react. To help the interviewee, he may repeat the respondent's answer or make a brief assenting comment to probe more deeply.

- **Projective Techniques**

The projective techniques have two principal characteristics. They are: (1) their specific purpose is not apparent; and, (2) the projective device is ambiguous – that is, it contains no specific meaning; it can be interpreted in two different ways. The object is to find out what meanings the respondent will read into it. The underlying assumption is that in responding promptly, the consumer will disclose something of himself – his thoughts, feelings, values, and needs. The fundamental principle which is assumed to be at work is that of projection, or unconscious imputation to others of the characteristics of oneself. Free association may also come into play, so that the resulting chain of thoughts is related in meaning and revealing about the respondent. These techniques provide the subject with a stimulus situation that gives him an opportunity to impose upon in his own personal needs and his particular perception and interpretation. The respondent projects the inner aspects of his personality whilst interpreting the circumstances and unconsciously reveals the covert aspects of his motives and behavior which could not be revealed through the normal questionnaire method. The major projective techniques used in marketing are: (a) word association test; (b) sentence completion test; (c) the thematic appreciation test; (d) paired picture test; (e) the cartoon test; and (f) psychodrama. Let us now have a look at them in turn:

- ***The Word Association Test:*** This is a method wherein a list of stimulus words is read to a respondent who answers each one with the first word that comes to mind. The information is required to say immediately what other words come into his or her mind. In this way a whole series of individual words can be gone through. The test may be written or verbal. It may require words with similar meaning or

The test may be written or verbal.

[2]   *Newman J. W., Motivation Research and Marketing Management, Harvard Business School, Boston, Division of Research, 1957, p. 406.*

opposite meaning and so on. Marketers may use this method, particularly in selecting the most appropriate names of their products which they have planned to launch.

- *Sentence Completion Test:* This technique is considered as most useful and reliable of all the projective tests. In the motivational aspects of marketing research the test is used to uncover emotional responses to products or marketing activities. The reliability of this test depends on the skills of the researcher. Here the respondents are given incomplete sentences on the product or service in question, and they are requested to complete those. For example, the manufacturer of a small car want to reveal the motives of people who buy and ride small cars. He may select a group of respondents, and give them an incomplete sentence like "people who drive small car ……..", and request them to complete this incomplete sentence. The way respondents complete the sentence will reflect their motives.

- *The Thematic Appreciation Test:* This test uses a series of pictures of people in some unstructured doubtful form of action. The respondent is shown these pictures one at a time and asked to narrate the story of the picture. The answers are than interpreted by an analyst who is having skill in such test. Seeing a picture of a lady, one may say that she is an active lady with high degree of interpersonal ability.

- *Paired Picture Test:* In this test, for example, two individuals are shown in the pictures opening television sets of two different makes. One picture, for example, shows a woman opening a popular brand of refrigerator and another picture shows a similarly dressed woman opening a refrigerator of another brand. The respondents, thereafter, are asked to tell any story about these two individuals opening television sets and women opening the refrigerator. The difference in interpretation tells their different attitudes they have about the set of pictures.

- *The cartoon Test:* This test presents people conversing. There are balloons over each of the picture of the individuals conversing. Balloon of one individual is filled with a comment affecting the other individual whose balloon remains blank. The respondent is requested to fill in the empty balloon. The way respondent fills in the balloon reveals his motive.

- *The Psychodrama Test:* Here respondents are arranged in pairs and given the chance to play different real-life roles. For example, in the pairs, one may play the role of a husband and the other wife. They are then requested to discuss on some real life purchase problem. The

The reliability of this test depends on the skills of the researcher.

way they play their respective roles gives researcher an indication of their buying motives.

Criticisms of Motivational Research Techniques

In marketing research the motivational research techniques are utilized to provide information of qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. Though these techniques can be reasonably effective, but, they are, however, far from perfect. Marketers who want to research consumers' motives should obtain the services of professional psychologists who are skilled in the methods of motivation research. One of the criticisms of motivation research techniques is related to the size and composition of the sample of consumers interviewed in such research. By direct questioning, no correct answer is expected especially in sensitive areas. Another criticism is that, most of the motivation research techniques were originated in the offices of clinical psychologists dealing with the people of unsound minds. Thus, they may not be applicable to most consumers who are of sound minds.

Though motivation research techniques are subject to criticisms, they may be applied in marketing practices successfully, provided the test results are verified, and the test is conducted on a representative number of samples. Where the nature of the product and the nature of the marketing mix permit, it is good practice to incorporate the findings of a motivation research study in actual selling or advertising campaign and conduct a test to determine the relative effectiveness of the new advertising appeal as compared with that previously used.

Self Evaluation

Objective Questions

1. Motives, which often operate –
   a. At a subconscious level are difficult to measure
   b. At a conscious level are difficult to measure
   c. At a unconscious level are difficult to measure
   d. None of the above.

2. Marketers generally require two types of information regarding consumers. They are –
   a. Quantitative and objective
   b. Quantitative and qualitative
   c. Qualitative and subjective
   d. None of the above.

3. Motivation research is the currently popular term used to describe the use of –
   a. Psychological techniques to obtain a better understanding of why people respond as they do to products
   b. Psychiatric techniques to obtain a better understanding of why people respond as they do to products
   c. Both a & b
   d. None of the above.

4. Motivational research helps to predict –
   a. How people react in a given marketing situation
   b. How people receive a new product design
   c. Both a & b
   d. None of the above.

5. Major types of motivation research used in marketing are –
   a. Experience and Knowledge Technique, and Traditional or Questionnaire Technique
   b. Interview Technique, and Projective Techniques
   c. Both a & b
   d. None of the above.

6. Experience and Knowledge Technique is based on –
   a. Marketers' own experience
   b. Marketers' intuition
   c. Both a & b
   d. None of the above.

7. The depth interview technique is described as –
   a. Casual technique of motivation research
   b. Conversational technique of motivation research
   c. Free-flowing technique of motivation research
   d. All of the above.

8. Which of the following is a principle of the projective technique?
   a. Their specific purpose is not apparent
   b. The projective device is ambiguous self-actualization
   c. Both a & b
   d. None of the above.

9. The major projective techniques used in marketing are –
   a. Word association test and sentence completion test
   b. The thematic appreciation test and paired picture test
   c. The cartoon test and psychodrama
   d. All of the above.

10. Which of the following is a defense mechanism?
   a. Repression
   b. Displacement
   c. Identification
   d. All of the above.

Answers:

1. a, 2. b, 3. c, 4. c, 5. c, 6. c, 7. d, 8. c, 9. d., 10. a.

Descriptive Question

1. Discuss why motivation research is required in marketing. Identify and explain different techniques of motivation research.

Lesson - 3: Personality Affecting Consumer Behavior

Objectives of this lesson

After reading this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand the concept of personality
- Reveal and explain the properties of personality
- Identify and explain different personality theories
- Understand marketing implications of the concept of personality.

Introduction
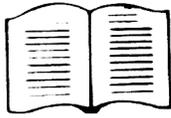
Many products consumers buy are reflection of their personalities. Every type of personality involves certain characteristics. There are theories that explain different types of personalities. Knowledge of such theories will help marketer to identify what product features are demanded by different personality type.

The Concept of Personality

Personality is one of the factors that influences one's behavior in the marketplace.

One individual is not different from the other not only in physical aspects, but also in personality type. It is one of the factors that influences one's behavior in the marketplace. What a consumer purchases, when, and how he purchases are influenced by his personality type. This is why marketers are particularly interested in understanding the meaning of personality and traits of personality as well as identifying how these traits affect consumer behavior.

Meaning of personality varies according to whose theory we consider. There are so many explanations of personality by so many authors that there is no major agreement on exactly what personality is. According to some, personality of an individual is sum total of his hereditary characteristics and childhood experiences. To others, it is the result of the social and environmental influences on the person concerned. Generally speaking, it is the total of many personal or individual characteristics that determine his response tendencies to the environmental stimuli. Harold H. Kassarjian defines personality in the next few words "since individuals do react fairly consistently in a variety of environmental situations, these generalized patterns of response or modes of coping with the world can be called personality." It is the sum total of an individual's patterned, enduring, and interacting characteristics. How a person responds to different stimuli is determined by how these characteristics or traits are organized. In any one person, certain personality traits dominate others as a result of which people are labeled as aggressive, compliant, aloof, friendly, charismatic, or obnoxious. Lawrence A. Pervin defines personality as a concept which accounts for the apparent consistencies

and regularities of behavior over time and across a variety of situations. Thus, personality includes those aspects of behavior which are relatively stable across situations and, as a result, predictive of future behavior. In the words of Melvin H. Marx and William A. Hillix, "personality has also been understood as the unique way in which traits, attitudes, aptitudes, etc. are organized in an individual and this draws attention to the ways in which individuals differ from one another through the peculiar configuration of traits and other characteristics each possesses. Each consumer is unique in terms of his or her ambitiousness, competitiveness, conservatism/liberalism, degree of extroversion, and so on"[3]. Together, these primary character traits constitute the individual's personality. These characteristics are developed over time from the experiences the individual gathers and from his reference groups. For the purpose of consumer study, personality also implies the same meaning. For consumer behavior purpose, it may be defined as a person's set of more or less consistent response tendencies to items in his market domain.

Properties of Personality

Analyzing the consumer behavior related definition of personality as well as other definitions cited before alongwith the interpretation, one can identify following few properties of an individual's personality. They are: (1) it reflects individual differences; (2) it is consistent and enduring; and (3) it can change. Let us now have a look at them in turn:

- **It Reflects Individual Differences:** No one in this earth is like the other as the snowflakes and fingerprints. But, there may be similarities among individuals on certain dimension(s) of personality traits. You may find a group of individuals more compliant than others, and another group that is more aggressive than the others. Thus, using the personality concept, we may categorize consumers into different groups, and, can segment market and develop different types of products for different personality types.

- **It is Consistent and Enduring:** Personality deals with long-lasting personal qualities that allow individuals to cope with and respond to the world around them. It means that personality of an individual does not change in a short time span. It represents a dispositional consistency in the person. One's behavior occurs in a context where his personality is reflected in his reactions to the environment.

- **It Can Change:** The concept of personality indicates that, an individual's personality, though is fairly consistent, but it is not a static one. That is, personality of a person may change as the circumstance changes. Though personality is subject to change, but it

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[3] *Raymond L. Horton, "Some Relationships Between Personality and Consumer Decision Making", Journal of Marketing Research 16 (May, 1979), pp.233-246.*

takes time or certain abrupt or unusual thing must happen for an individual's personality to change. For example, a man's personality may change once he loses his mother or father at a very early age. His personality may also change with the elapse of time, as he gradually becomes mature because of his exposures to new things or acquisition of new experiences.

Personality Theories

As you know that, unanimity lacks among the researchers on personality traits, there are quite a few theories of personality developed by researchers based on their own interpretation of personality traits. Since there is no universally accepted theory on personality, here we shall focus on some of the major theories of personality. The major approaches to the study of personality to be discussed here are: (1) psychoanalytic theory or orthodox Freudian theory of personality; (2) sociopsychoanalytic theory of personality; (3) Gestalt theory of personality; (4) stimulus-response theory of personality; (5) cognitive theory of personality; and, (6) trait theory of personality. We shall now discuss these theories one by one:

Psychoanalytic Theory or Orthodox Freudian Theory of Personality

The most widely used theory of personality is one developed by Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that there are three forces that work in an individual's psyche. They are: *id*; *superego*; and *ego*. He thought that an individual's personality is determined by the interaction of the id, ego, and superego. Id includes the instincts and is present at birth, which pushes an individual toward the immediate gratification of his needs. Superego, on the otherhand inhibits the impulses of the id, and influences the individual toward conforming to all of the moral principles. Ego mediates between the impulses of the id and the inhibitors of the superego, and shows the individual ways of satisfying his needs in socially acceptable ways thus creating balance in the individual. He also believed that individuals pass through a number of sequential stages from his birth to the first few years of life. One's personality develops on the basis of the amount of frustration and anxiety he faces at each of these stages. If he cannot resolve these anxieties and frustration successfully, he becomes fixated at that stage of development – that is he continues to react to the world in the same way as during that particular stage of development. The stages identified by Freud are: oral, anal, phallic, and genital. The *oral* stage starts from the birth and continues approximately up to eighteen months. The child basically eats, sucks, and swallows during this stage. If he experiences excessive anxiety and frustration, and cannot cope up with the situation, he becomes either talkative, selfish, passive or greedy or all at a time. The *anal* period starts from approximately eighteenth month and continues up to three years of age. During this stage, parents train the child on certain aspects, such as using toilet. If the child experiences anxiety and cannot successfully cope up with the situation, he becomes

stubborn, authoritarian, stingy, excessively neat, messy, disorderly, or destructive. The third stage, *phallic* stage, starts at the age of three and continues up to four and one-half. Sexual pleasure begins at this stage as the child's main focus is sexual at this stage. One may find boys of this stage fantasizing sex with their mothers by becoming very close to mothers and vice versa. If the child is fixated excessively at this stage, he is likely to develop abnormal sexual attitude or developing deviant attitude toward authority. "Finally, with adolescence the healthy individual learns to derive pleasure from relationships with the opposite sex and is able to begin to love and care for other people. This mature sexuality becomes evident during what is referred to as the *genital* stage. The crisis of this last stage is the conflict we face all over our lives"[4].

Sociopsychoanalytic Theory of Personality

This theory of personality has been put forwarded by Karen Horney, one of the disciples of Sigmund Freud as a modification of his theory. Horney believed that personality of an individual is determined by how he interacts with others in the society. The nature of interaction will dictate one's personality. From her study, she identified three personality types found in different individuals. The first type is 'compliant'. One whose personality is of compliant type, he want to love others and expects that others will accept, need, and appreciate him. To be accepted by others such a person can even go up to the last extent of sacrifice. He always conforms to others just to avoid conflict and to receive friendly treatments from them.

Another type of personality as identified by Karen Horney is 'detached type'. Individuals of this type of personality normally avoid responsibility. They also do not like to be dependent on others. They cannot trust anyone surrounding them. They thing that they are rational, intelligent, and possess talents. They expect others to recognize their talents no matter whether they display their talents or not.

The third type is 'aggressive'. Individuals of this personality type are highly achievement motivated. They are keen for gaining prestige, achieving things, and getting recognition from others for their achievements. They consider everyone as their competitors and believe that everyone acts on the basis of self-interest. They also act on the basis of reality and rationality, not on the basis of emotion or sentiment. Horney believed that, the particular type of personality develops in an individual because of his attachment with persons of similar personality type.

Gestalt Theory of Personality

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[4] *Zaltman G. and Wallendorf M., Consumer Behavior – Basic Findings and Management Implications, John Wiley & Sons, USA, 1979, p. 367.*

In discussing different aspects of motivation, you were given the idea on the Gestalt theory of motivation. The same explanation may be given with regards to the description of the Gestalt theory of personality. According to the Gestalists, personality of an individual should not be viewed in terms of independent personal characteristics, rather, separate personal characteristics together determine an individual's personality. The internal characteristics of an individual interact with his life space forming his personality. Moreover, Gestalt psychologists believe that, the valence or the combining force of an element (including both negative and positive aspects of the element) interacts with his motivation and attitude determining his personality and behavior. That is, the Gestalt psychologists talk about the totality of a situation, and are of the opinion that, personality is sum total of the factors or personal characteristics as they interact with each other.

Stimulus-Response Theory of Personality

The stimulus-response theory holds that organisms respond to stimuli coming from the environment. Those responses that are reinforced usually become permanent, and ones that are negatively reinforced, are extinguished. Some of the learned responses may extinguish also because of the lack of positive reinforcement. And, an individual's personality is the sum total of these response habits learned over time. Thus, according to the stimulus-response theory, one's personality pattern may change over time. The reason is that, the combination of learned responses change over time as the person gathers new experience, and, as some of the previously learned responses may be eliminated by the person because of the lack of positive reinforcement. Thus, this theory of personality gives us the idea that an individual's personality is a flexible concept which slightly contradicts with the definition of personality, where it was termed as more or less consistent and enduring set of characteristics.

Cognitive Theory of Personality

Cognitive theory of personality was developed out of the failure of the stimulus-response theory in predicting and explaining consumer behavior. According to the cognitivists, stimulus-response theory of personality is a total failure in explaining the complex nature of consumer behavior because of inaccurate proposition of this theory regarding personality and its influence on behavior. Cognitive theorists see personality as a system or structure consisting of two sets of aspects. They are: the directive aspects of personality; and, the dynamic aspects of personality. The directive aspects help the individual processing incoming stimuli through a number of stages, viz. exposure, perception, comprehension, agreement, retention, retrieval, and decision making. Once the person is exposed to a stimulus, he tries to perceive it and understands the meaning of it, that is, his comprehension happens which motivates him to accept the message. He retains the messages that he comprehends and retrieves those to help him in the decision making and taking appropriate actions. The dynamic

aspects basically play the role of motivation. They lead him toward certain goal-oriented behaviors. Thus, according to the cognitive theorists, personality is a mental structure consists of the perceptual process and the forces of different motives that work in an individual's mind.

Trait Theory of Personality

"Trait theory represents a quantitative approach to the study of personality. This theory postulates that an individual's personality is composed of definite predispositional attributes called traits. A trait is more specifically defined as any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from another."[5] In Trait theory, personalities typically are described as having one or more of such characteristics as compulsiveness, ambitiousness, gregariousness, dogmatism, authoritarianism, introversion, extroversion, aggressiveness, and competitiveness. Generally, how these traits are organized determines how a person responds to stimuli. As certain traits dominate others, we commonly label people as aggressive or compliant, impulsive or dominant, friendly or aloof and so on. These traits are formed at a very early age and are relatively unchanging over the years. Number of personality scales have been developed by researchers to measure the degree to which an individual displays a given trait. Psychologists and marketing researchers measure people's psychographic traits or characteristics using dimensions such as confident or diffident, gregarious or loner, conscientious or happy-go-lucky, assertive or submissive, neurotic or well balanced, tense or relaxed, adventurous or unadventurous. Marketers may use these dimensions in product formulation and in developing promotional messages.

Marketing Implications of the Concept of Personality

It is logical to assume that personality differences should correspond with differences in products purchased by consumers. Confirmation of this logic, however, has been difficult because of substantial research findings supporting this logic. Researchers tried to find relationships among personality types and buying behavior. Though a few relationships were identified, but the results of many studies have been inconclusive. Despite the lack of good number of research findings supporting personality relationship with buying behavior, marketers believe that personality does influence the types and brands of products purchased by consumers. Consumers purchase products to reflect their personality. The type of house, cloth, furniture, appliances, automobile, jewelry people buy may reflect their personalities. Marketers, therefore, develop their products and advertising and promotional campaigns keeping in mind the personality types of their target consumers.

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[5] *Engel J. F., Blackwell R. D., and, Miniard P. W., Consumer Behavior, CBS College Publishing, The Dryden Press, USA, 1986, p,. 249.*

In terms of purchasing behavior for example, the ego and superego act in a constraining manner, satisfying the needs most deserving attention. A marketer, therefore, must not appeal strictly to the raw needs of buyers, but instead focus on the importance of need fulfillment through buying his products. He must try to match his product or service to the personalities of the target market. According to the psychoanalytic theory of personality, people are motivated by both conscious and unconscious forces of their psyche, and, as a result, purchase decisions are based at least to some extent, on unconscious motivations. Marketers should, therefore, not only consider the conscious, rational aspects of the products in developing appeals, but also the consumers' unconscious motives.

> There is a general agreement among the marketers that personality traits influence consumer behavior.

There is a general agreement among the marketers that personality traits influence consumer behavior. Number of studies have been made of personality traits in relation to the product and brand preferences in a wide variety of product categories. Personality traits may help marketers predict the type of cloths people may wear, automobiles they drive, shops they prefer to buy or the restaurants they prefer to eat. Marketing interest in the personality is based on the assumption that, in spite of their uniqueness as individuals, members of groups and aggregates may posses a given trait or type in common with each other. Such grouping might be the basis of separate market segments and justify special marketing program. Two classic research which attempted to link personality traits with product use concern the ownerships of different brands of cars. These two research studies were carried in the US and, among other things, involve car owners' preferences for Fords or Chevrolets. While mechanically and in terms of design, these makes of car were almost identical, marketers had tried to create very different brand images for each, based on what they assumed were the profiles of car buyers. Studies revealed that Ford owners were independent, impulsive, masculine and self-confident in terms of personality traits, where prospective Chevrolet buyers were found to be conservative, thrifty, prestige-conscious, less masculine, and moderate in their personality traits.
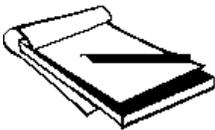
Activity:

Find and cut two newspaper advertisements, one that is based on an aggressive personality and the other based on detached personality. Discuss how the advertisement copy and illustration each contributed to the personality of the advertisement. Also, discuss what you feel might have been the marketers' rationale in using each personality in positioning each product.

Self Evaluation

Objective Questions

1. One individual is different from the other –
   a. In physical aspects
   b. In personality type
   c. Both a & b

    d.   None of the above.

2. Personality influences –
    a.   What a person buys
    b.   Where he buys from
    c.   How he buys
    d.   All of the above.

3. According to some, personality of an individual is –
    a.   Sum total of his hereditary characteristics
    b.   Sum total of his childhood experiences
    c.   Both a & b
    d.   None of the above.

4. Personality is the sum total of –
    a.   An individual's patterned characteristics
    b.   An individual's enduring, interacting characteristics
    c.   An individual's interacting characteristics
    d.   All of the above.

5. In any one person, certain personality traits dominate others as a result of which people are labeled as –
    a.   Aggressive or compliant
    b.   Aloof or friendly
    c.   Charismatic or obnoxious
    d.   All of the above.

6. Each consumer is unique in terms of his or her –
    a.   Ambitiousness
    b.   Competitiveness
    c.   Conservatism/liberalism and degree of extroversion
    d.   All of the above.

7. Though personality is subject to change –
    a.   But it takes time for an individual's personality to change
    b.   But an unusual thing must happen for an individual's personality to change
    c.   Both a & b
    d.   None of the above.

8. Superego –
    a.   Inhibits the impulses of the id
    b.   Influences the individual toward conforming to all of the moral principles
    c.   Both a & b
    d.   None of the above

9. Ego –
   a. Mediates between the impulses of the id and the inhibitors of the superego
   b. Shows the individual ways of satisfying his needs in socially acceptable ways thus creating balance in the individual
   c. Both a & b
   d. All of the above.

10. One whose personality is of compliant type –
   a. He want to love others
   b. He expects that others will accept him
   c. He expects that others will need and appreciate him
   d. All of the above.

12. Detached type of individuals –
   a. Normally avoid responsibility
   b. Do not like to be dependent on others
   c. Cannot trust anyone surrounding them
   d. All of the above.

13. A trait is more specifically defined as –
   a. Any distinguishable way in which one individual differs from another
   b. Any relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from another
   c. Both a & b
   d. None of the above.

Answers:

1. c, 2. d, 3. c, 4. d, 5. d, 6. d, 7. c, 8. c, 9. c, 10. d, 11. d, 12. c, 13. c.

Descriptive Questions

1. Explain the concept of personality. Discuss the properties of personality.

2. Critically discuss different personality theories. Show how personality affects consumer behavior. Discuss the marketing Implications of the concept of personality.