CHAPTER - II

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CHAPTER II
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

1. Historical Perspective Of Consumer Behaviour:

Consumer behaviour was a relatively new field of study in the mid 1960's. With no history or body of research of its own, the new discipline borrowed heavily from concepts developed in other scientific disciplines such as Psychology (the study of the individual), sociology (the study of groups), social psychology (the study of how an individual operates in groups), anthropology (the influence of society on the individual), and economics. Many early theories of consumer behaviour were based on economics. The later theories had a base in sociology and then psychology. (The theories of consumer Behaviour are discussed at a later stage in this chapter).

The initial thrust of consumer research (In America in early 1950's) was from a managerial perspective: Marketing Managers wanted to know the specific causes of consumer behaviour. They also wanted to know how people receive; store and use consumption
related information, so that they could design marketing strategies to influence consumption decisions. They regarded the consumer behaviour discipline as an applied marketing science; if they could predict consumer behaviour they could influence it. This approach has come to be known as positivism, and consumer researchers primarily concerned with predicting consumer behaviour are known as positivists.¹

Given the interdisciplinary background in which the consumer behaviour discipline is rooted it is not surprising that academicians from a variety of contributing disciplines, including marketing itself, have become interested in the study of consumer behaviour, not necessarily from a managerial or applied perspective, but simply to understand the consumer better. The study of consumer behaviour from the point of view of understanding the consumer behaviour and the meaning behind such behaviour is called interpretivism, (sometimes referred to as post modernism).² Interpretivists have expanded the boundaries of study to include many subjective aspects of Consumer Behaviour, such as the effects of moods,
emotions and types of situation on consumer behaviour; the roles of fantasy, of play, of rituals, even of the sensory pleasures that certain products and services provide. Many interpretivists consider each purchase experience unique because of the diverse set of variables at play at that one particular moment in time. Because of its focus on the consumption experience, the interpretists approach is also known as experientialism.

Despite of the apparent diversity of these two major approaches to the study of consumer behaviour, each can be seen to complement the other. Marketers to make better strategic marketing decisions use the study of both these approaches.

The study of consumer behaviour can also be related to the growth and development of the Approaches to marketing. Marketing has passed through various approaches referred to as the production concept, the product concept, the selling concept, the consumer oriented concept or the marketing concept and finally the Socially oriented marketing concept or Social Marketing.
The scope of Consumer behaviour expanded with the expansion of the scope of Marketing Operations. Consumer behaviour became more and more complex with the increase in the choices available to the consumer. During the Production Orientation Concept of Marketing, the choices available with the consumers were few. In fact not only were a few choices available with the consumers but marketers were faced with problems of how to accelerate the manufacturing process to meet the demand of the consumers. During this stage as Production was limited and the demand was in excess of production, consumers' choices too were limited, and this put a limit on consumer Behaviour too. However after the industrial revolution and with the development of transport, communication and financial systems, as marketing evolved to have a 'Selling Orientation' and from there to 'Consumer Orientation' and finally to 'Socially Oriented Marketing', the demands and expectations of the consumers have been ever increasing and so has the scope and importance of the study of Consumer Behaviour.
3. Important Concepts And Definitions:

i. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR:

Consumer Behaviour reflects:

The totality of decisions about the consumption of an offering of decision making units over time

- Whether
- What
- Why
- How
- When
- Where
- How much/
- How often
- How long

- Acquisition
- Usage
- Disposition

- Product
- Services
- Time
- Ideas

- Information gatherer
- Influencer
- Decider
- Purchaser
- User

- Hours
- Days
- Weeks
- Months
- Years

MARKETING STRATEGIES AND TACTICS
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR (Definitions)

❖ "We define consumer behaviour as those actions directly involved in obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services, including the decisions process that precedes and follows the action".  

❖ "The behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs."  

❖ The study of consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items. It includes the study of what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, and how they use it."  

❖ Consumer Behaviour reflects the totality of the consumers' decisions with respect to the acquisition, consumption and disposition of goods and services, time and ideas by (human) decision making units (over time) .  

❖ Consumer Behaviour involves not just understanding what consumers acquire, use, or dispose of. It also includes
understanding whether, why, when, where, how, how much, how often and how long consumers will buy, use, or dispose of an offering.  

(ii) ADVERTISING:

- Any, paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor”.  
- “Salesmanship in print”.  
- “Advertising is a substitute for the human salesman.”  
- “A persuasive media communication designed to respond to and help achieve marketing objectives”  
- “A form of communication intended to promote the sale of the product / service, to influence public opinion to gain political support or to advance a particular cause.”  
- “Advertising is a means of communicating information pertaining to products, services or ideas, by other than direct personal contact, on an openly paid basis with intent to sell or otherwise obtain favourable consideration.”
(iii) **SALES PROMOTION:**

Sales promotion is a broad term, which has come to have several meanings. It is frequently used to designate those activities, which are closely related to, but not strictly speaking, classed as either advertising or personal selling. This will include the use of samples, premiums or contests, and efforts to build enthusiasm and loyalty among dealers. The development of sales kits, sales literature, and sales training materials is also frequently considered as part of this function. There are some who use the term "Sales Promotion" to include both advertising and personal selling, as well as any other means used to stimulate or secure sales. As used in this way it becomes synonymous with the entire selling function in marketing.\(^{15}\)

**Forms Of Sales Promotion Techniques**

a. **Premiums:**

A premium is an item offered as a special inducement for purchase of a given product. A washcloth with a bar of soap or a measuring cup with a sack of flour are examples of
premiums. The premium is used primarily as an immediate sales stimulant. Premiums are used with low-priced, frequently purchased items in highly competitive fields. They may also be used in introducing new products of this type.

The premium may be used to stimulate sales within the store by being attached to the product itself or it may be used as an advertising device in which it will be offered directly to the consumer in return for some action on his part. Preferably this should include purchase of the product. Premiums, which are offered directly, frequently require submission of labels or box tops obtained from the product as a basis for acquiring the premium. It is even better if the premium can be made self-liquidating—that is, a nominal charge can be placed upon the premium which, in terms of the large quantities in which it is purchased by the manufacturer, covers its cost. Care must be taken, however, not to set the charge too high, or the value of the premium as an incentive device may be seriously reduced.

When premiums are offered with the sale of the product in the store it is desirable that they be attached to the package in such a way as to discourage removal. Otherwise some
retailers may sell the premiums separately. Sometimes premiums are contained within the package of the product itself. This is a favorite device of the breakfast-food manufactures.

b. Contests:

Contest may be used in many ways. The advertising itself may feature a contest which consumer may enter. Purpose of the contest may be to encourage reading of the consumer ads and to further the interest in the product. If the contest is to provide a sales stimulant, it is desirable that purchase of the product be necessary for entering the contest. This is rather common in the case of many low-unit-price items. Accompanying the contest entry with a label, wrapper, or box top is a frequently used means of stimulating sales volume.

Where purchase of the product cannot readily be made an entry prerequisite, as in the case of items of high unit value, contact with the dealer in some manner may be required. Entry forms may be available only at retail stores handling
the product. Thus the contest entrant may be exposed to the dealer’s sales presentation when he picks up the entry form.

Contest may also be used among dealers as a device for stimulating their sales effort. Prizes may be given to those stores increasing their volume by the greatest amount during the contest. The contest may feature competition among the sales personnel of the retail store. Prizes may be awarded to the sales people achieving the greatest sales volume for the manufacturer’s product.

The contest can be a valuable sales stimulant but it must be recognized that its effects may be only temporary. It is most valuable in stepping up sales in a highly competitive field or during dull seasons. A large part of the gain achieved during the contest may be lost later as sales drop to the normal pattern. When contests are used with product of infrequent purchase, there may even be a drop in sales to a below-normal pattern after the close of the contest.
c. Price Deals:

The use of the two-for-one or other price deal may be a strong stimulant to sales. It can be used as a part of a price promotion in both national and local advertising. To the dealer it may represent a means of attaining additional store traffic, particularly in non-food fields where a regular buying pattern is not established. In the sale of audio cassettes, for example, the price deal is used periodically to stimulate sales and increase traffic in music shops. Many people are attracted to these stores during such promotions who might not otherwise enter them for months at a time.

The price deal is also used extensively for food products. Here it does not serve primarily as a traffic device, but purely as a sales stimulant for the product. The purpose of such promotions is usually to build a temporary competitive advantage for a brand in certain markets, or even on a national scale. The price deal is also frequently used in introducing new products. The consumer is encouraged to try the new product as a result of the favourable price. At the same time it is desirable to use the deal, rather than mere low pricing, since otherwise there may be a negative reaction if the price is subsequently raised to a higher figure.
Other Sales Promotion Techniques:

Exchange Melas, Scratch cards, competitions, and dinners with famous personalities are all used to promote the sales of various products. The latest trend is for car dealers and other dealers of consumer durable products to not only supply cars / Consumer durable product with free accessories but also supply finance at low rates of interest and sometimes even at zero rates of interest. All such schemes are used to lure consumers into making a purchase.

(iv) Repetition:

Some researchers believe that repetition works by increasing the strength of the association and by slowing the process of forgetting, which is seen as a process of decay. However, there is a limit to the amount of repetition that will aid retention. The evidence suggests that some over learning, or repetition beyond what is necessary to learn, aids retention. But with exposure beyond a certain point, an individual can become satiated, and attention and retention will decline. This effect, known as advertising wear out, can be decreased by
varying the advertising message. Some marketers avoid wear out by repeating the same advertising theme in a variety of format. This type of advertising variation strategy has been described as a *cosmetic variation*, because there is no real change in message content across the ads. Cosmetic variation strategies may use different backgrounds, different print types, or different advertising spoke persons. *Substantive variation* is defined as changes in advertising content across different version of an advertisement, with no changes in cosmetic features. A recent research study found that individuals exposed to substantively varied advertisements process more information about product attributes and have more positive thoughts about the product than those exposed to cosmetic variations. Attitudes formed as a result of exposure to substantively varied advertisements were also more resistant to change in the face of attack.

Although the principle of repetition is well established among advertisers, not every one agrees on how much repetition is enough. Some researcher maintain that the optimum numbers of exposures to an advertisement is just three: one to make consumers aware of the product, a second to show consumers the relevance of the product and a third to remind them of its benefits. According to
this *three-hit theory*, all other advertisement repetitions are wasted effort. Other researchers suggest that an average frequency of eleven to twelve exposures is needed to increase the probability that consumers will actually receive three exposures.

One study that related the viewing of TV commercial to product purchase found that, in the short term, advertising had much greater influence in attracting new buyers (e.g., encouraging brand switching) than encouraging repeat purchases. The study also showed that the greater the number of commercial shown, the more likely a product is to attract new buyers. Generally, the largest incremental value was attributed to the first ad seen, although additional benefits were noted in seeing four or more ads between consecutive purchases of the product category.

(v) **Stimulus Generalization**

According to the classical conditioning theorists, learning depends not only on repetition, but also on the ability of an individual to generalize. Pavlov found, for example, that a dog could learn to salivate not only to the sound of
a bell but also to the somewhat similar sound of jangling keys. If we were not capable of stimulus generalization—that is, of making the same response to slightly different stimuli—not much learning would take place. Stimulus generalization explains why imitative “me too” products succeed in the marketplace: consumers confuse them with the original product they have seen advertised. It also explains why manufacturers of private label brands try to make their packaging resemble the national brand leaders.22

(vi) **Stimulus Discrimination**

Stimulus discrimination is the opposite of stimulus generalization and results in the selection of a specific stimulus from among similar stimuli. The consumer’s ability to discriminate among similar stimuli is the basis of positioning strategy, which seeks to establish a unique image for a brand in the consumer’s mind. Imitators want consumer to generalize their perceptions, but market leaders want to retain the top spot by convincing consumers to discriminate. Major marketers are constantly vigilant concerning store brand look-alikes,
and they quickly file suit against retailers that they believe are cannibalizing their sales. For example, Chesebrough-Pond's, the Unilever division that markets Vaseline Intensive Care, filed a suit against Venture Stores in St. Louis, alleging that the Venture store brand infringed on Vaseline Intensive Care's copyright, trademark, packaging.

Conventional product differentiation strategies prescribe distinguishing a product or brand from that of competitors on the basis of an attribute that is relevant, meaningful, and valuable to consumers. However, many marketers also successfully differentiate their brands on an attribute that appears valuable but on closer examination is actually irrelevant to creating the implied benefit. For example, Procter & Gamble differentiates Folger's instant coffee by its "flaked coffee crystals" created through a "unique, patented process" - implying that the coffee crystals improve the taste of the coffee. However, this "attribute" is irrelevant for instant coffee.

For companies that offer generic-type services (such as supermarkets or airlines, fast-food restaurants or credit
card companies), stimulus discrimination is often the key to survival.

It often is quite difficult to unseat a brand leader once stimulus discrimination has occurred. One explanation is that the leader is usually first in the market and has had a longer period to "teach" consumers (through advertising and selling) to associate the brand name with the product. In general, the longer the period of learning — of associating a brand name with a product — the more likely the consumer is to discriminate, and the less likely to generalize the stimulus. In our over communicated society, a key to stimulus discrimination is effective positioning.24

(vii) Positive and Negative reinforcement

Skinner distinguished two types of reinforcement (or reward) that influence the likelihood that a response will be repeated. The first type, positive reinforcement, consists of events that strengthen the likelihood of a specific response. Using a shampoo that leaves your hair feeling silky and clean is likely to result in a repeat purchase of the shampoo. Negative reinforcement is
unpleasant or negative outcomes that also serve to encourage a specific behavior. An advertisement that shows a model with wrinkled skin is designed to encourage consumers to buy and use skin creams. Negative reinforcement should not be confused with punishment, which is designed to discourage behavior. For example, parking tickets are not negative reinforcement; they are a form of "punishment" designed to discourage drivers from parking illegally.

Fear appeals in ad messages are examples of negative reinforcement. Many life insurance commercials rely on negative reinforcement to encourage the purchase of life insurance: the advertisements warn husbands of the dire consequences to their wives and children in the event of their sudden death. Marketers of headache remedies use negative reinforcement when they illustrate the unpleasant symptoms of an unrelieved headache, as do marketers of mouthwash when they show the loneliness suffered by someone with bad breath. In each of these cases the consumer is encouraged to avoid the negative consequences by buying the advertised product. Either positive or negative reinforcement can be used to elicit a desired response. When a learned response is no longer
reinforced, it diminishes to the point of extinction that is to the point at which it no longer occurs. 25

3. Theories Of Consumer Behaviour / Understanding Consumer Behaviour:

Various theories have been promulgated by various thinkers in order to explain: Why consumers behave in a particular way. In this context the researcher attempts to examine these theories and find out how exactly advertisements carrying sales promotion messages fit in with these theories.

A) The Economic Model of Consumer Behaviour:

This model assumes that man is a rational human being, who will evaluate all the alternatives in terms of cost and value received and select those goods/services, which give him/her the maximum satisfaction (utility). It is assumed that with limited purchasing power, and a set of needs and wants, a consumer will allocate his/her expenditure in
such a way over different products that he gains maximum utility.

This model of consumer behaviour is unidimensional. This means that the buying decisions of a person are based on the concept of utility alone. This model is based on certain predictions of buying behaviour:

1. Price Effect: Lesser the price of the product, more will be the quantity purchased.
2. Substitution Effect: Lesser the price of the substitute product, lesser the quantity of the original product that will be bought.
3. Income Effect: More the income more will be the quantity purchased.

Behavioural scientists have challenged this model. According to them the economic model explains how a consumer ought to behave and not how he actually behaves. The economic model is incomplete, as the economists have assumed a homogeneous market. They have also assumed that the buyers will think and act alike; and will concentrate only on one aspect that is income. This model ignores all other aspects such as perception,
motivation, learning, attitude, personality and socio cultural factors. It has always been agreed on that man is a complex entity and hence it is very essential to have a multidisciplinary approach to understanding consumer behaviour. In today's environmental setup not only is man influenced by the socio cultural factors but also by the various marketing variables like product, effective distribution network and marketing communication. Thus man cannot be assumed to be a rational person and price is not the only factor, which influences his purchase decisions. Behavioural scientists have opined that a broader perspective has to be taken while trying to analyze buying behaviour.26

If we look at the "Economic Model", we find that advertisements carrying sales promotion messages in a way have taken something from this model. In the sense that, they focus at the rational human being driven by income and utility. These messages focus on giving more for less and thus it could be said that their base is in the Economic Model.
Behavioural theories are sometimes referred to as stimulus-response theories because they are based on the premise that observable responses to specific external stimuli signal that learning has taken place. When a person acts (i.e., responds) in a predictable way to a known stimulus, he or she is said to “have learned“. Behavioural theories are not much concerned with the process of learning as they are with the inputs and outputs of learning; that is, in the stimuli that consumers select from the environment and the observable behaviour that results. Here we will discuss two behavioral theories that have great relevance to marketing, “The Classical Conditioning Theory” and “The Instrumental (or operant) Conditioning Theory”.

(i) The Classical Conditioning Theory:

Early classical conditioning theorists regarded all organisms (both animal and human) as relatively passive entities that could be taught certain behaviour through repetition (or “conditioning”). In everyday speech, the word conditioning has come to mean a kind of “knee-
jerk” or automatic response to a situation built up through repeated exposure. If you get a headache every time you think of visiting your aunt Meena, your reaction may be conditioned from years of boring visits with her.

Ivan Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, was the first to describe conditioning and to propose it as a general model of how learning occurs. According to the Pavlovian theory, conditioned learning results when a stimulus that is paired with another stimulus that elicits a known response serves to produce the same response when used alone. In experimental terms, if an unconditioned stimulus (US) results in an unconditioned response (UR), then the conditioned stimulus (CS), after repeated pairing with the unconditioned stimulus, will result in the same response, which is now called the conditioned response (CR).

Pavlov demonstrated what he meant by conditioned learning in his studies with dogs. The dogs were hungry and highly motivated to eat. In his experiments, Pavlov sounded a bell and then immediately applied a meat paste to the dogs’ tongues, which caused them to salivate.
Learning (i.e., conditioning) occurred when, after a sufficient number of repetitions of the bell sound, followed almost immediately by the food, the bell sound alone caused the dogs to salivate. The dogs associated the bell sound (CS) to the meat paste (US) and after a number of pairings, gave the same response (salivation) to the bell alone as they did to the meat paste. The unconditioned response (UR) to the meat paste became the conditioned response (CR) to the bell. 27

Classical conditioning is useful in explaining how consumers learn very simple kinds of behaviour.

In a consumer behaviour context, an unconditional stimulus might consist of a well-known brand label or store; conditioned stimulus would consist of products or services bearing the well-known brand label or advertised by the store; and conditioned response would include purchases or store patronage. 28

Advertisements carrying sales promotion messages of the kind “buy one product and take another for free” use the pavlovian theory to sell unknown products by associating them with known products. Thus the unknown product
gets the advantage of the goodwill of the known product and gets established in the market with ease.

Advertisements promoting the sale of magazines through a yearly subscription that offers the free gift of a branded product once again have a base in the Pavlovian Model of Consumer Behaviour.

Applications of Repetition: One advertising researcher argued that more than three exposures to a marketing communication are wasted. The first exposure creates awareness of the product, the second demonstrates its relevance to the consumer, and the third serves as a reminder to the product's benefits. However even this bare bones approach implies that repetition is needed to ensure that the consumer is actually exposed to (and processes) the message at least three times. However this exposure is by no means guaranteed, as people tend to tune out or distort many marketing communications. Marketers attempting to condition an association must ensure that the consumers they have targeted will be exposed to the stimulus a sufficient number of times in order to make it stick.
On the other hand, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Consumers can become so used to hearing or seeing a marketing stimulus that they no longer pay attention to it. This problem known as “advertisement wear out”, can be alleviated by varying the way in which the basic message is presented. For example, the advertisement of lux soap in which the consumer could get a gold coin. This message was delivered by different film actresses. The same sales promotion message of linking the product with an offer of gold was used to promote Taj Mahal Tea too.

The principles of classical conditioning provide the theoretical underpinning for many marketing applications. Repetition, stimulus generalization and stimulus discrimination are useful concepts in explaining consumer behaviour in the market place. However they do not explain all the activities classified as consumer learning. Traditional classical conditioning assumes that consumers are passive beings that react with predictable response to stimuli after a number of trials. Neo-Pavlovian theory views individuals as information seekers using logical and perceptual relationships among events, along with their own pre conceptions to form a
sophisticated representation of their world. Although some of our purchase behaviour - for example the purchase of branded convenience goods - may have been shaped to some extent by repeated advertising messages, other purchase behaviour results from evaluation of product alternatives. Our assessment of products are often based on the rewards we experience as a result of making specific purchases—in other words from Instrumental Conditioning.

(ii) **Instrumental Conditioning:**

The name most closely associated with instrumental (operant) conditioning is that of the American Psychologist B. F. Skinner. According to Skinner, most individual learning occurs in a controlled environment in which individuals are "rewarded" for choosing an appropriate behaviour. In consumer behaviour terms, instrumental conditioning suggests that consumers learn by means of a trial and error process in which some purchase behaviours result in more favourable outcomes (i.e., rewards) than other purchase behaviour. A favourable experience is instrumental in teaching the
individual to repeat a specific behaviour. Instrumental Conditioning is helpful in explaining complex goal directed activities.

In a marketing context, the consumer who tries several brands and styles of jeans before finding a style that fits her/him has engaged in instrumental learning. Presumably the brand that fits well is the one that he/she will continue to buy.

Instrumental learning theorists believe that learning occurs through a trial and error process, with habits formed as a result of rewards received for certain responses or behaviours. This model of learning applies to many situations in which consumers learn about products, services and retail stores. For example consumers learn which store carry the type of clothing they prefer at prices they can afford to pay by shopping in a number of stores. Once they find a store that carries clothing that meets their requirements, they are likely to patronize that store to the exclusion of others. Every time they purchase something from that store that they really like, their store loyalty is rewarded (reinforced), and their patronage of that store is likely to be repeated.
Frequency Marketing Programmes: A popular technique known as “Frequency Marketing” reinforces regular purchases by giving them prizes with values that increase along with the amount purchased. This instrumental learning strategy was pioneered by the airline industry, which introduced “frequent flyer” programmes in the early 80’s (in America) to reward loyal customers. This practice has spread to other businesses as well, ranging from video parlours to fast food joints. In India the frequent flyer programme has been successfully incorporated by Jet Airways. The frequency-marketing programme is also used by all chain departmental stores like West Side, Shoppers Stop, Crossroads etc.

Consumer’s attitudes towards sales promotion messages are formulated based on their past experiences with similar sales promotion messages. If in the past their experience was positive they tend to believe in future sales promotion messages too. However if their past experience is negative their future attitude and perception towards advertisements carrying sales promotion messages tends to be negative. This statement finds its base in the Instrumental Conditioning Theory.
Reinforcement of Consumption: Marketers have many ways to reinforce consumers, ranging from a simple thank you after a purchase to substantial rebates, follow up calls, free gifts and birthday cards. For example a life insurance company received a much higher rate of policy renewal among a group of new customers who received thank you letter after each payment, compared to a control group that did not receive any reinforcement.

Critics of the Instrumental Theory point out that a considerable amount of learning takes place in the absence of direct reinforcement, either positive or negative. Individuals learn a great deal through a process psychologists call modeling or observational learning (also called vicarious learning). They observe the behaviour of others, remember it, and imitate it. Instrumental theorists argue that children learn in this way because they can envision a reward and therefore imitate the behaviour that leads to it, but critics maintain that instrumentalist confuse learning and performance (behaviour). Both children and adults learn a great deal that they do not act upon. More over some people learn only for the pleasure of learning and not for rewards. This
criticism leads us to another theory, this one based on the mental activity of consumers called Cognitive Learning Theory.

(iii) Cognitive Learning Theory:

In contrast to behavioral theories of learning, cognitive learning theory approaches stress the importance of internal mental processes. This perspective views people as problem solvers who actively use information from the world around them to master their environment.

A lot of controversy surrounds the issue of whether or when people are aware of their learning processes. Whereas behavioral learning theorists emphasize the routine, automatic nature of conditioning, proponents of cognitive learning argue that even these simple effects are based on cognitive factors: Expectations are created that a stimulus will be followed by a response. (The formation of expectations requires mental activity.) According to this school of thought, conditioning occurs because subjects develop conscious hypothesis and act on them.
On the one hand, there is some evidence for the existence of no conscious procedural knowledge. People apparently do process at least some information in an automatic passive way, which is a condition that has been termed as mindlessness. When we meet someone new or encounter a new product or a new sales promotion message, for example, we have a tendency to respond to the stimulus in terms of existing categories we have learned, rather than taking the trouble to formulate new ones. Our reactions in these cases are formulated by a trigger feature, some stimulus that cues us towards a particular pattern. For example men in one study rated a particular car in an advertisement as superior on a variety of characteristics if a seductive woman (the trigger feature) was present, despite the fact that the men did not believe the woman’s presence actually had an influence on their evaluations.

Nonetheless, many modern theorists are beginning to regard some instances of automatic conditioning as cognitive processes, especially where expectations are formed about linkages between stimuli and responses. For example an adolescent girl may observe that women on television and in real life seem to be rewarded with complements and attention when they smell nice and wear alluring clothing.
She figures out that the probability of these rewards occurring is greater when she wears perfume, and so she deliberately wears a popular scent to obtain the reward of social acceptance.\textsuperscript{35}

(iv) Observational Learning:

Observational learning occurs when people watch the actions of others and note the reinforcements they receive for their behaviors —learning occurs as a result of vicarious rather than direct experience. This type of learning is a direct process; people store these observations in memory as they accumulate knowledge, perhaps using this information at a later point to guide their own behavior. This process of imitating the behavior of others is called modeling. For example a woman shopping for a new kind of perfume may remember the reactions her friend received on wearing a certain brand several months earlier, and she will base her behavior on her friend’s actions.\textsuperscript{36} Similarly a woman may remember the prize won by an acquaintance in a sales promotion contest and may buy the product and enter the contest.
Consumers' ability to learn vicariously by observing how the behaviour of others is reinforced makes the lives of marketers much easier. Because people do not have to be directly reinforced for their actions, marketers do not actually have to reward or punish them for purchase behaviour (think how expensive or ethically questionable that might be!) Instead, they can show what happens to desirable models that use or do not use their products, knowing that consumers will be motivated to imitate these actions at a later time. Thus during the world cup many an advertisement campaigns focused on sales promotion contests in which the prize was a return ticket for the world cup matches. The advertisements showed happy winners flying for the world cup. This strategy was capitalized upon by many a marketers.

Thus the above are the most widely accepted theories of Consumer Behaviour. The researcher has found that most of the advertisements carrying sales promotion messages can be linked to one or the other theory of consumer behaviour.
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