Chapter 4

Brand Attitude

4.1 Introduction

In consumer behavior, attitude is a learned predisposition to act in a consistent way towards an object based on feelings and opinions that result from an evaluation of knowledge about the object. Attitude formation, in turn, is the process by which individuals form feelings or opinions towards other people, products, ideas, activities, and other objects in their environment.

Definitions of Brand Attitude: One of the earliest definitions of attitude was introduced by Thurstone in 1931. He viewed attitude as a fairly simple concept—the amount of affect a person has for or against an object. A few years later, Allport proposed a much broader definition: “Attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness to respond, organized through experience, and exerting a directive and/or dynamic influence on behavior.”

Triandis and others combined three response types (thoughts, feelings, and actions) into the tripartite model of attitude. In this scheme, attitude was seen as consisting of three related components: cognition (knowledge about the object), affect (positive or negative feelings and emotions about an object), and conation (intended or actual behavior towards the object).

According to a popular definition of attitude, attitude is an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive process with respect to
some aspect of the individual’s world. The views attitudes as being made up of three components: (1) the cognitive, or knowledge component which is the learned knowledge from the individual’s own experiences with the object, as well as information gathered from others; (2) the affective, or emotional, component which is an evaluation of the object based on the individual’s knowledge of it; and (3) the conative, or behavioral-tendency, component which is a predisposition to act based on that evaluation.

Consumers form attitude about products based on the needs they have recognized through the motivation process and the knowledge they have gathered through perception and organized through learning. That is consumers use perception and learning to gather new information and integrate it with existing knowledge about a product’s attributes and benefits. This integrated knowledge serves as the basis for evaluating the alternative products from which the consumer will make a purchase decision.

Attitudes are important to marketers for one simple reason: A consumer with a positive attitude towards a product is more likely to buy the product. But because attitudes are the result of motivation, perception, and learning, they can not be observed directly.

The only way to uncover a person’s attitude is to ask him or her about them. The fact that attitudes are learned means that they can be affected by new information and experience. There are some attitudes that remain very resistant to change, however, regardless of incoming information.
Attitudes help individuals in four primary ways which reflects an individual’s motivation to: gain utilitarian benefits, express his or her values and life style, defend the ego or self concept and organize knowledge about objects in his or her environment.

Attitude has been called “the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American Social psychology”, and it is one of the most important concepts marketers use to understand consumers.

Over the years, researchers have tried a variety of approaches to studying attitudes in an attempt to provide a more complete understanding of behavior. This behavior of consumers has thought to be strategically dependent on the attitudes of the consumers. Although the dominant approach to attitudes has changed over the years, nearly all definitions of attitude have one thing in common: they all refer to a person’s overall evaluation of a concept.4

Evaluations are affective responses at relatively low levels of intensity and arousal, created by both the affective and cognitive systems. The affective system automatically produces affective responses – including emotions, feelings, moods, and evaluations – as immediate, direct responses to certain stimuli. These stimuli may or may not affect the response, depending on the environment at which the test is being performed.

The cognitive processing model of consumer decision making shows that an overall evaluation is formed when consumers combine knowledge, meaning, or beliefs about the attitude concept.5 This means that the overall evaluation is also dependent upon the accumulation of certain aspects of the attitude concept.
Objects and behaviors are the two broad types of concepts that most interest marketers. Consumers can have attitudes towards various physical and social objects including products, brands, models, stores, and people, as well as aspects of the marketing strategy.

Consumers also can have attitudes towards imaginary objects such as concepts and ideas. It does not matter if the object is real or perceived it still has relevance to consumers whether it is a brand like Coca-Cola or if it is an idea like having car alarms in all of the 2001 models.

A 1997 survey of Americans’ attitudes towards pollution and the environment found that, compared to five years ago, 76 percent were more concerned, 19 percent were less concerned, and 6 percent were unchanged.6

Once an attitude has been formed and stored in memory, consumers do not have to engage in another integration process to construct another attitude when they need to evaluate the concept again. Instead, the existing attitude can be activated from memory and used as a basis for interpreting new information. Because activated attitudes can influence consumers’ judgments, taste test usually are conducted blind (tasters are not told what brands they are tasting). This avoids activating brand attitudes that could persuade the taste judgments. Finally, the activated attitude can be integrated with other knowledge in decision making.7

4.2 Characteristics of Attitude

Attitudes have several important characteristics or properties; namely, they (1) have an object; (2) have direction, intensity, and degree; (3) have structure; and (4) are learned.
**Attitudes have an object;** By definition, attitudes must have an object. That is, they must have a focal point whether it is an abstract concept, such as “ethical behavior,” or a tangible item, such as a bottle of soft drink.

The object can be a physical thing, such as a product, or it can be an action, such as buying a motorcycle. In addition, the object can be either one item, such as a person, or a collection of items such as a social group; it also can be either specific or general.

**Attitudes have direction, intensity, and degree;** An attitude expresses how a person feels towards an object. It expresses (1) direction – the person is either favorable or unfavorable towards, or for or against the object; (2) degree – how much the person either likes or dislikes the object; and (3) intensity – the level of sureness or confidence of expression about the object, or how strongly a person feels about his or her conviction.

Although degree and intensity might seem the same and are actually related, they are not synonymous. The direction, degree, and intensity of a person’s attitude towards a product have been said to provide marketers with an estimate of his or her readiness to act towards, or purchase the product.

**Attitudes have structure;** The structure of human attitudes may be viewed as a complex set in a type of circular pattern. At the center of this structure are the individual’s important values and self-concept. Attitudes close to the hub of this system are said to have a high degree of centrality. Other attitudes located farther out in the structure possess less centrality.
Attitudes are learned; Attitudes form from personal experiences with reality, as well as from information from friends, salespeople, and news media. They are also derived from both direct and indirect experiences in life. Thus it is important to recognize that learning precedes attitude formation and change, and that principals of learning can aid marketers in developing and changing consumer attitudes.⁸

4.3 Functions of Attitudes

Attitude serve four major functions for the individual: (1) the adjustment function, (2) the ego-defensive function, (3) the value expressive function, and (4) the knowledge function.⁹ Ultimately these functions serve people’s need to protect and enhance the image they hold of themselves. In more general terms, these functions are the motivational bases which shape and reinforce positive attitudes towards goal objects perceived as need-satisfying, and/or negative attitudes towards other objects perceived as punishing or threatening. The functions themselves can help marketers to understand why people hold the attitudes they do towards psychological objects.

Adjustment function; The adjustment function directs people towards pleasurable or rewarding objects and away from unpleasant, undesirable ones. It serves the utilitarian concept of maximizing reward and minimizing punishment. Thus, the attitudes of consumers depend to a large degree on their perceptions of what is need-satisfying and what is punishing. Because consumers perceive products, services, and stores as providing need-satisfying or unsatisfying
experiences, we should expect their attitudes toward these objects to vary in relation to the experiences that have occurred.

**Ego-Defensive Function:** Attitudes formed to protect the ego or self-image from threats help fulfill the ego-defensive function. Actually, many outward expressions of such attitudes reflect the opposite of what the person perceives himself to be. Such ego-defensive attitudes help consumers to protect their self-image, and often they are unaware of them.

Value-Expressive Function; whereas ego-defensive attitudes are formed to protect a person’s self-image, value-expressive attitudes enable the expression of the person’s centrally held values. Therefore, consumers adapt certain attitudes in an effort to translate their values into something more tangible and easily expressed.

**Knowledge Function:** Humans have a need for a structured and orderly world, and therefore, they seek consistency, stability, definition, and understanding. Out of this need develops attitudes toward acquiring knowledge. In addition, the need to know tends to be specific. In addition, attitudes enable consumers to simplify the complexity of the real world.

### 4.4 Tricomponent Attitude Model

Attitude has been defined as a construct combining belief, affect, and conation intervening between stimulus and response.

The relationship between these three components has been explained by a Tricomponents Attitude Model shown in Figure 4.1.
According to this model, attitudes are consisting of three main components: Cognitive, Affective and Conative components.

**Cognitive Component:** Consumers beliefs about an object are the attributes they ascribe to it. These beliefs are based on a combination of the knowledge, experience and perceptions about the attitude object. For most attitude objects, consumers have a number of beliefs and that a specific behavior will result in specific outcomes. This cognitive component is both the starting point as well as the strongest base for information of a perception and later an attitude.

**Affective Component:** Consumer’s feeling and emotional reactions to an object represent the affective component of an attitude. This relates to consumer’s overall evaluation of the attitude object. Consumer’s feelings are often the result
of specific attributes evaluations of a product but sometimes feelings can precede and influence beliefs. In some instances people like or dislike a product without any cognitive basis for the feeling.

**Conative Component:** Conative component is the likelihood or tendency of an individual to respond in a certain manner towards an attitude object. In the context of consumer research and marketing, conative component is treated as intention to buy. This component is a result of the other two components. It arises out of the first two components but freezes itself into a strong component that actually dictates the behavior.

The Tricomponent model explains that the knowledge and perception that an individual obtain from different sources creates belief about the object and a sense of emotion or feeling is generated. This will lead to a likelihood or tendency towards the product for the individual to take a proper action that is an intention to buy.

Once the consumer buys the object, the feeling of the consumer if further reflected by his belief in his decision to go for further purchase of the same object or search for an alternative. This process is repetitive and cyclical in nature.

Based on the Tricomponent Attitude model, the researcher has developed a conceptual framework for this study (Figure 4.2).
The extended conceptual framework indicates that brand attitude is the outcome of the affective and cognitive factors which leads to attitude formation and results in intention to purchase a particular brand and the outcome is the consumer behavior towards a brand which is not the end but the beginning for the profitability of the companies; Firms with large groups of loyal customers have been shown to have large market shares, and market share, in turn, has been shown to be associated with higher rates of return on investment.

Dick and Basu (1994) suggest that brand loyalty favors positive worth of mouth and greater resistance among loyal customers to competitive strategies.
Obviously such findings encourage marketers to build and maintain brand loyalty among customers. When striving for such goals, information on factors determining the creation of brand loyalty among customers becomes an important matter.

Jacoby (1971) defines brand loyalty as repeat purchase but clearly points out that this behavior is a function of psychological processes. In other words, repeat purchase is not just an arbitrary response but the result of some proceeding factors (for example psychological, emotional or situational factors).

Understanding the role of relative attitude to brand loyalty is important for brand managers in order to enhance and maintain consumers' repeat purchasing of their brand.

The most important objective of this study is to find out the impact of brand attitude on brand loyalty and consumer purchase behavior. Demographic factors can affect formation of brand attitude, consumer behavior and brand loyalty which will be studied in this research.

In order to find out Cognitive factors for this study, the salient attributes of soft drinks were discovered in the pretest in which, respondents were asked to indicate what attributes are important while thinking on soft drink.

Following attributes are the result of the pretest and were considered as cognitive factors.

a) **Taste** of the soft drink brand,

b) **Price** of the soft drink brand,
c) **Availability** of the soft drink brand,

d) **Offers** of the soft drink brand,

e) **Healthiness** of the soft drink brand,

Affective factors which were considered for this study were taken from the list of emotional connections provided by Van Auken B. in his Branding book. These factors are:

a) **Corporate Image:** Corporate image is a consumer association to the company or corporation making the product.

b) **Brand Popularity:** No matter how technically educated the auditory is, when it comes to purchasing, the majority of buying decisions are influenced by brand popularity.

c) **Influence of Friends:** Consumers are potentially influenced by a diverse range of people that they come in contact with or observe, they are called reference groups and influence consumer’s attitudes and behavior.

Seeking and maintaining friendship is a basic drive for most people. Friends fulfill a wide range of needs: they provide companionship, security and opportunities to discuss problems that an individual may be reluctant to discuss with family members. Friendships are also a sign of maturity and independence, for they represent a breaking away from the family and the forming of social ties with the outside world. The opinion and preferences of friends are an important influence in determining the products or brands a consumer ultimately selects.
d) **Life of the Party;** Consumers feel that soft drinks are life of the parties and increase the enjoyment of every body in parties.

e) **Self Confidence;** Self-confidence is essentially a part of attitude which allows us to have a positive and realistic perception of ourselves and our abilities. It is characterised by personal attributes such as assertiveness, optimism, enthusiasm, affection, pride, independence, trust, the ability to handle criticism and emotional maturity.

f) **Interaction;** Respondents feel that their soft drink brand consistently interact with them and never disappoint them.

g) **Refreshness;** Respondents feel that their soft drink brand is the most refreshing drink.

h) **Thirst Quenching;** Respondents feel that their soft drink brand quenches their thirst completely.

i) **Good Feeling;** Respondents feel that their soft drink brand makes them feel good.

j) **Trustworthiness;** Respondents feel that their soft drink brand is trustworthy.

k) **Perceived Quality;** Perceived quality is the consumer’s judgment about a product’s overall excellence or superiority. Consumer reports found that consumers often can not differentiate among various cola beverages and that they base their references on such extrinsic cues as packaging, pricing, advertising and even peer pressure.12
REFERENCES


