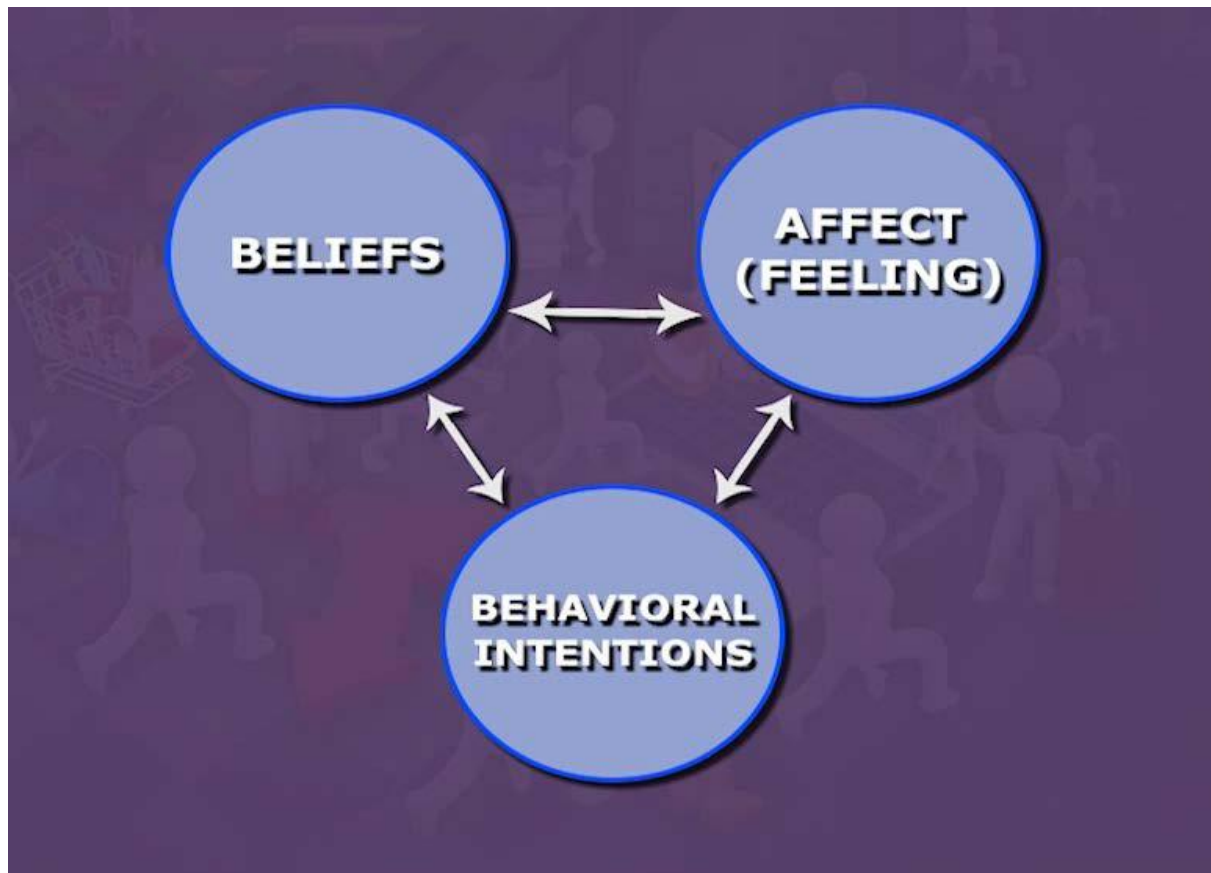


Consumer Attitude (Part-1)

Academic Script

Introduction:

Consumer attitudes are a composite of a consumer's (1) beliefs, (2) feelings and (3) behavioral intentions towards some object--within the context of marketing, usually a brand or retail store. These components are viewed together since they are highly interdependent and together represent forces that influence how the consumer will react to the object.



Beliefs. The first component is beliefs. A consumer may hold both positive beliefs toward an object (e.g., coffee tastes good) as well as negative beliefs (e.g., coffee is easily spilled and stains papers). In addition, some beliefs may be neutral (coffee is black), and some may be different in valence depending on the person or the situation (e.g., coffee is hot and stimulates--good on a cold morning, but not good on a hot summer evening when one wants to sleep). Note also that the beliefs that consumers hold need not be accurate (e.g., that pork contains little fat), and some beliefs may, upon closer examination, be contradictory (e.g., that a historical figure was a good person but also owned slaves).

Affect. Consumers also hold certain feelings toward brands or other objects. Sometimes these feelings are based on the beliefs (e.g., a person feels nauseated when thinking about a hamburger).

because of the tremendous amount of fat it contains), but there may also be feelings which are relatively independent of beliefs. For example, an extreme environmentalist may believe that cutting down trees is morally wrong, but may have positive affect toward Christmas trees because he or she unconsciously associates these trees with the experience that he or she had at Christmas as a child.

Behavioural Intention. The behavioural intention is what the consumer plans to do with respect to the object (e.g., buy or not buy the brand). As with affect, this is sometimes a logical consequence of beliefs (or affect), but may sometimes reflect other circumstances--e.g., although a consumer does not really like a restaurant, he or she will go there because it is a hangout for his or her friends.

Nature: Consumer attitude can be better explained by understanding the nature and characteristics of attitude. Attitudes are composed of three components, viz, a knowledge or cognitive component, a feeling and affect component and a behavioral and conative component. In terms of consumer learning, the attitude would express a consumer's feeling of like or dislike about a product or service offering and the marketing mix. The knowledge component is reflected in the learned knowledge that a consumer obtains from his interaction with others as well as his own experiences. The feeling component is reflected in his evaluation, and the resultant feeling of favorableness and un-favorableness. The behavioral component is reflected in the predisposition to act (purchase) based on the evaluation. Based on this explanation, the nature of attitudes can be elaborated as follows:

1.) Attitudes are directed towards an object (product/service offering, price, store, dealer, promotion, advertisement etc.) about which a consumer has feelings and beliefs.

2.) Attitudes have a direction; they could be positive or negative. A consumer could possess feelings of like/dislike, favorableness and un-favorableness towards a

product or service as well as the mix. They vary in degrees and intensity, and can fall anywhere along a continuum from very favorable to very unfavorable.

3.) Attitudes are consistent in nature, particularly with respect to the third component, i.e. behavior. Consumers are consistent with respect to their behavior. However, they are not entirely permanent and may change if the cognitive or the component is changed. This implies that if the consumer witnesses new experience or is exposed to new information about product/service offering and the mix (cognition), and) feelings are changed from dislike to like (affect), attitudes towards the offering and the mix can undergo change. In other words, while attitudes are stable and do not change frequently, they can be changed if something is done to change them.

4.) Attitudes are a learned predisposition. Attitudes are learned; they are formed as a result of i) self experiences with the product/service offering and the mix; ii) interaction with other people, be it family, friends, peers and colleagues; iii) information obtained from the marketer through promotion particularly advertisements as well as dealers and salespeople. Attitude formation as a process is impacted by needs and motivation, perception as well as learning.

5.) Attitudes cannot be observed directly. While attitudes are comprised of three components, behavior is just one of them. It is only this component that can be seen; the cognitive and affect components cannot be seen. Thus it is said that attitudes cannot be seen; they can only be inferred from the manner in which an individual behaves. Thus, we can infer that a person who buys Colgate Total toothpaste and disregards Pepsodent has a positive attitude towards Colgate.

6.) While attitudes can be inferred from our behavior, it is not synonymous to behavior. It has two other components, and reflects a learned predisposition to act favorable or unfavorably towards a product and service offering and the mix.

7.) Attitudes are situation specific; they occur within a situation. Sometimes depending upon the situation, a consumer may exhibit a behavior that may be inconsistent with his/her attitude. He may prefer to buy Pepsodent over Colgate because the former is on a sales promotion and gets him a free toothbrush.

Structural Models Of Attitude:

Several studies have been conducted to study and research upon the dynamics underlying attitudes, their formation and change as well as their relationship with acts of behavior. The focus of the study has basically been intended to understand the formation of attitudes, so as to be able to predict acts of behavior, and influence them. Researchers have proposed a number of models that identify the underlying dimensions of an attitude and explain or predict behavior. Among the various models, the more researched upon and commonly used ones are

- i) the tri-component attitude model,
- ii) the multi-attribute attitude model,
- iii) the trying-to-consume model, and
- iv) the attitude-toward-the-ad model.

I) The tri-component attitude model: As the name suggest, the tri-component attitude model states that attitudes are composed of three components, viz., a knowledge (cognitive) component, feeling and emotional (affect) component and the action (co-native) component.

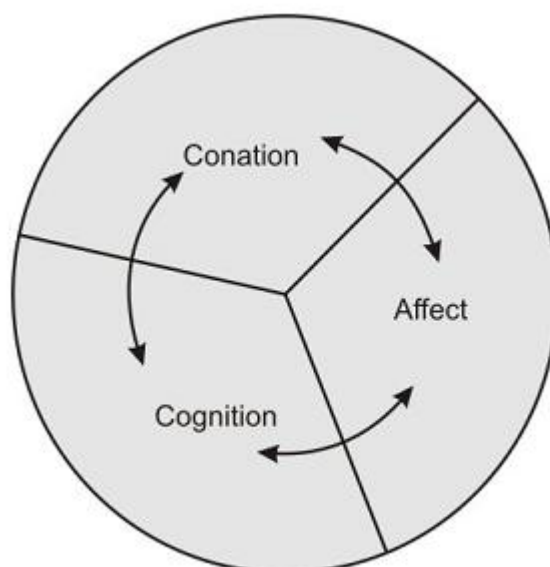
-the knowledge or the cognitive component comprises the cognitive processes that lead to the formation of attitudes. In terms of marketing, the knowledge or cognitive component of the tri-component model consists of consumers' knowledge about the products/service offering and the marketing mix. Consumer attitudes are formed on the basis of experiences as well as information received from personal (Word Of Mouth (WOM), family, friends, peers etc.) as well as impersonal (marketer's sources) sources of information that are retained in one's memory. These get shaped by beliefs and opinions, where the consumer begins to perceive that the attitude object (person, situation or thing) possesses certain attributes and acts of behavior would lead to outcomes. The beliefs and opinions get repeatedly reinforced, and finally give rise to attitudes. This knowledge component leads to the emotional component.

- the feeling or the affect component comprises the emotional component of attitudes. In fact, this

is understood to be the attitude itself, as it depicts emotional states that are positive, neutral or negative. In marketing terms, it refers to a consumer's feelings about a product/service offering and the marketing mix. These emotions could relate to an attribute or the overall object. It is evaluative in nature and would vary on a continuum as like or dislike, favorableness or unfavorableness. It manifests itself through feelings and resultant expressions like happiness, sadness, anger, surprise etc., and is indicative of consumer reaction towards the offering and the mix, which subsequently affects the purchase decision making as well as the purchase process. Such reactions and resultant states also get stored in our memory. Their retrieval, recall and recollection also impacts future decision making.

- the behavioral or the co-native component of attitudes depicts the outcome of an attitude. As attitudes are formed out of psychographic components, they cannot be seen. The first two components, knowledge and feeling are not expressive or illustrative of attitudes. It is only this third component through which attitudes can be inferred. The co-native component, is indicative of the an individual's tendency to behave [act or not to act (to buy or not to buy)] in a particular manner with respect to the attitude object (product/service offering, brand etc.).

As per the model, the knowledge and the feeling component cannot be seen, they can only be inferred; it is only the behavioral component which can be observed.



II) The multi-attribute attitude models: The multi-attribute attitude models state that a consumer's attitude towards an attitude object (product/service offering, brand, elements of the marketing mix) is a function of a consumer's perception and belief of the key attributes as well as his assessment of the key attributes. The multi-attribute models have been variedly studied and numerous variations have been proposed by various researchers. Of these, the most famous of the models are those that have been proposed by Fishbein. Martin Fishbein and his associates have proposed a series of models like a) the attitude-toward-object model, b) the attitude toward-behavior model, and c) the theory-of-reasoned-action model. Each of these is explained below:

a) The Attitude-towards-Object Model: The attitude-toward-object model states that a consumer's attitudes towards a product/service offering or a brand, is a function of the presence or absence of certain attributes, and the corresponding evaluation. Attitude is function of evaluation of product - specific beliefs and evaluations. In other words, while evaluating an offering, the consumer's attitude would be based on the presence of attributes, and the aggregation of a consumer's belief about each of these, and

- the overall evaluation of the relevance of each of these attributes in providing the necessary gains and benefits.

For example, let us take the example of Complan as a health drink. A lady wants her children to grow faster, taller and healthier. She would have a positive attitude towards Complan, if it contains vitamins and minerals, and she gives value (importance) to such vitamins and minerals.

The model is depicted in the form of the following equation:

$$\text{Attitude}_o = \sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i$$

where,

Attitude_o = the overall affect for or against the object

b_i = the strength of the belief that the object contains the ith attribute (e.g., the likelihood that Complan is a nutritious health drink with vitamins and minerals)

e_i = the evaluative criteria associated with the i^{th} attribute (e.g., how "good" or "bad" is a nutritious health drink with vitamins and minerals)

\sum is indicative of the n salient attributes over which the b_i , and e_i , combinations are summated.

Thus, consumers would tend to have favourable attitudes toward such offerings and/or brands that they have sufficient amount of attributes that are deemed important and evaluated as positive. On the other hand, they would have unfavourable attitudes towards offerings and/or brands which do not have the desired attributes or have many negative attributes.

b)The Attitude-towards-Behaviour Model: The attitude-toward-behaviour model focuses on the

individual's acts of behaviour towards the attitude object rather than mere affect or feeling towards the object. The premise is that a consumer may have positive feelings towards an attitude object, but he may have a negative attitude regarding his intention for buying such a product/service offering. Thus, a positive attitude towards the offering may not necessarily end up as an act of

purchase. For example, let us take the example of a Philips Home Theatre. A consumer is aware that a Philips Home Theatre would have a bigger screen, and better audio visual effects. He would also be aware of the high price, and may decide against the act of purchase.

Either he would not have the money or he may not think it wise to spend so much of money for a TV. Thus, while he has positive feelings and a favorable attitude towards the product offering, he does not have a positive feeling to indulge in the act of purchase.

The model is depicted in the form of the following equation:

$$\text{Attitude}_o = \sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i$$

where,

Attitude_o = the overall measure of affect for or against carrying out an act of behavior

b_i = the strength of the belief that an ith action will lead to an outcome (e.g., the purchase of a Home Theatre would lead to better audio visual impact);

e_i = an evaluation of the ith outcome (e.g., the "favorableness" of a bigger screen, better audio visual effects, unfavorableness of the cost)

Σ is indicative that there are n salient outcomes over which the b and e combinations are summated.

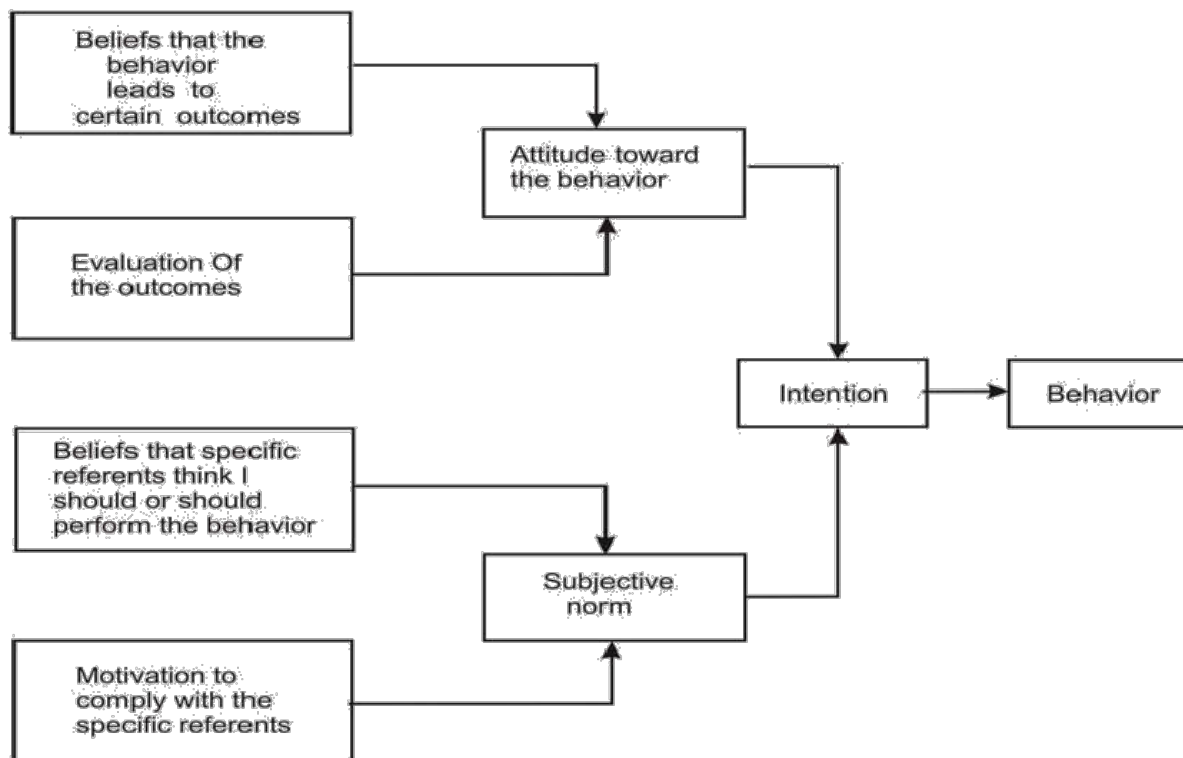
Consumers could tend to have favorable attitudes towards the product/service offering, but a negative attitude towards the act of purchase (behavior).

c) The Theory-of-Reasoned-Action Model: The theory of reasoned action model attempts to study the impact of

i) instances of behavior, and

ii) subjective norms, on the tri-components that make up attitudes.

The model incorporates these two factors that act as moderators and finally have an effect on human attitudes. The figure depicts what is referred to as “reasoned action”.



The model can be explained working backwards from behavior (i.e. act of purchase of a product/service offering). The behavior of a consumer is based on his intention to act, i.e. overall favorability toward the purchase. There are certain factors that lead to an intention to act. These are the consumer's attitude toward behavior and the subjective norm.

The consumers' attitude towards behavior includes the beliefs and attitudes about specific acts of behavior. Factors underlying attitude are

- i) beliefs that the behavior leads to certain outcomes; and
- ii) evaluation of the outcome.

The subjective norm on the other hand, refers to the norms that exist in the specific social context. Factors underlying the subjective norm are

- i) the beliefs that specific referents think as to whether the act of behavior should be performed or not; and
- ii) motivation to comply with the specific referents. For example, Arjun, a young graduate wants to go to US to do his MBA. For this he needs to give his GMAT.

1. Behavior: Study hard for GMAT.

2. Intention: Arjun decides that he would study hard for GMAT examination. -
Intention is impacted by:

a) Consumers attitude towards behavior: Arjun has a positive attitude towards studying hard.

b) Subjective norms: Arjun's parents approve of his decision to go abroad for further studies.

3. Consumers attitude towards behavior is impacted by:

a) Beliefs that the behavior leads to certain outcomes: Arjun believes that if he studies hard, he will be able to get a good score at GMAT.

b) Evaluation of the outcome: A good GMAT score would get him an admission to a good business school.

4. Subjective norms are impacted by:

i) Beliefs that specific referents think as to whether the act of behavior should be performed or not: Arjun's parents also think that he should study hard.

ii) Motivation to comply with the specific referents: Arjun wants to fulfil his parents wishes. The behavior of a consumer is based on his intention to act, which is moderated by the attitude towards behavior and the subjective norms. These are further impacted by underlying factors. Thus, the theory of reasoned action is illustrative of attitude components that are interrelated to each other. Intention precedes actual behavior; beliefs and attitudes as well as subjective norms precede intention; The theory emphasizes that attitudes are linked to behavior indirectly, via intention.

III) The Theory of Trying to Consume: The theory of trying to consume focuses on a purchase situation where the action or act of behavior (in terms of actual purchase), is not certain and may even be uncertain sometime in future. As per this theory, the action or act of behavior is directed towards a goal (something that the consumer is planning to and/or attempting do in future). In such processes of trying

the resultant outcome (in terms of purchase, possession and use) cannot be predicted for certainty.

The theory reflects the consumer's attempts at consumption, which get impeded by personal and environmental impediments, thus preventing the action (act of purchase) from occurring. Personal impediments would occur when the person faces an approach avoidance conflict, i.e. he desires a goal that also has a negative element associated along with it; for example, a lady likes to eat chocolate cake, but that also has a lot of calories that would lead to weight gain. Environmental impediments are said to occur when forces in the environment prevent an action from occurring; for example, a person desires to eat at a particular restaurant, but as he goes there, he finds no place to sit and eat; it is too crowded. The theory of trying to consume replaces behavior (as proposed by Fishbein in the theory of reasoned action model) by trying to behave. Trying to behave or accomplish a goal is preceded by intention to try, which is determined by attitude toward trying and social norms toward trying. The attitude toward trying is influenced by the individual consumer's

(1) attitude toward success and expectations of success,

(2)attitude toward failure and expectations of failure, and

(3)attitude toward process.

The attitude towards the process refers to an individual's assessment of how the act of trying to do something makes him feel, irrespective of the result or the outcome. Moving backwards, act of trying to behave is impacted by

a)intention to try, b) frequency of past trying, and c) recency of past trying. Intention to try is impacted by a) attitude towards trying, b) frequency of past trying, and c) social norm towards trying. Attitude towards trying is impacted by a) attitude towards success, failure and process, and b) expectation towards success and failure. Each of the attitudes (i.e., attitude towards success, failure and process), are determined by the summation of the “product” of the consequence likelihood and the consequence evaluations .For example, taking Arjun's example forward:

1.Act of trying: Arjun is trying hard to get a good GMAT score. - Trying is impacted by: a) Intention to try: Arjun has a positive intention towards trying for the GMAT exam b) Frequency of past trying: He has already been able to clear competitive exams in the past. c) Recency of past trying: Arjun appeared for a competitive exam one year ago.

2.Intention to try is impacted by: a) Attitude towards trying: Arjun says that he will apply for the GMAT b) Frequency of past trying: He has already been able to clear competitive exams in the past.

c)Social norm towards trying: Arjun's parents encourage him to write the GMAT. 3.

Attitude towards trying is impacted by: a) Attitude towards success: Arjun wants to get a good GMAT score so that he can get into a good business school. b)

Expectation towards success: Arjun believes that he would be able to get a good

GMAT score. c) Attitude towards failure: Arjun does not want to fail the GMAT exam.

d) Expectation towards failure: Arjun believes that he would not fail the GMAT exam.

e) Attitude towards process: Arjun is ready to study hard for the GMAT.

Each of the three attitudes, towards success, failure and process are determined by the summation of the “product” of the:

a)Consequence likelihood: the chance that Arjun is able to get admission in a good business school in the US; represented by 'b'

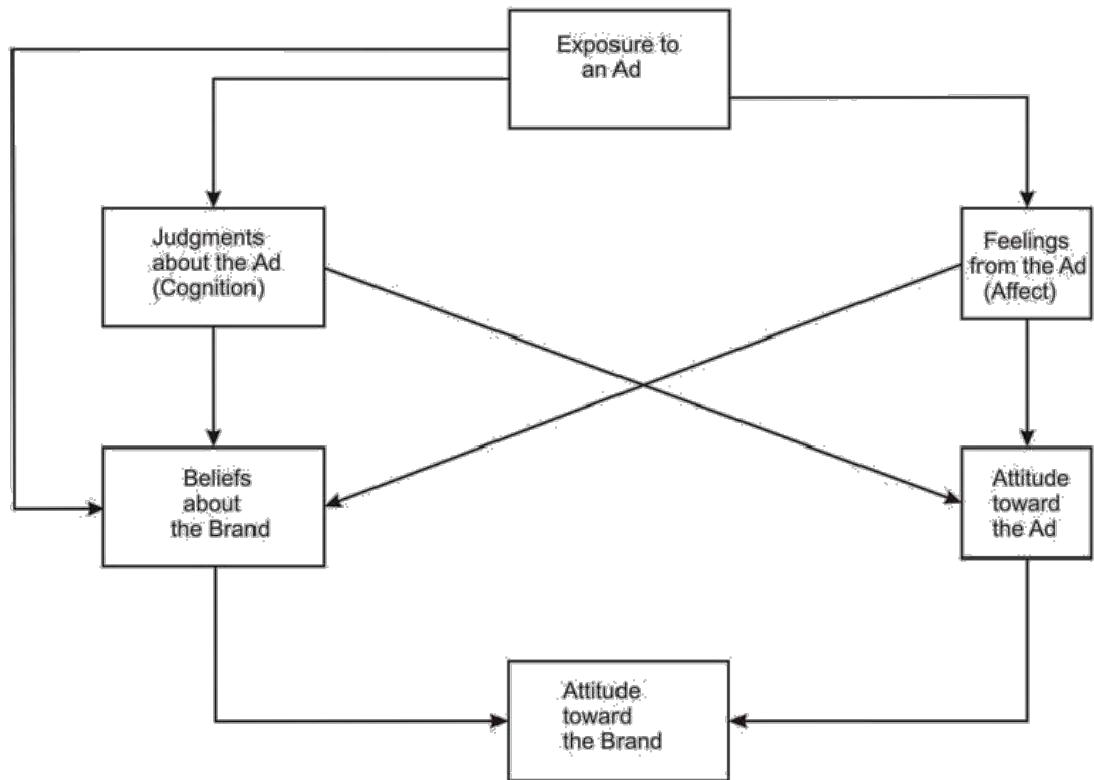
b)Consequence evaluations: how happy and proud Arjun will be when he gets an admission in a good business school in the US; represented by 'e'

b_i = Consequence likelihood contingent on success
 e_i = Consequence evaluations contingent on success
 b_j = Consequence likelihood contingent on failure
 e_j = Consequence evaluations contingent on failure
 b_k = Consequence likelihood contingent on process

IV) The Attitude-towards-the-Ad Model: This model lays emphasis on the impact of an advertisement, either in print or in audio-visual on the formation of consumer attitudes towards product and service offerings and or brands. Once exposed to an advertisement, a consumer forms the cognition (knowledge) and the affect (feeling) components of the attitude; it leads to judgments about the Ad (cognition) and feelings from the Ad (affect). The cognitive component leads to belief about the brand as well as attitude towards the ad. The affect component also leads to belief about the brand as well as attitude towards the ad. Thus, both the cognition and the affect component affect the consumer's attitude toward the ad and beliefs about the brand. A mere exposure to the ad can also lead to belief about the brand. Finally, the belief about the brand as well as attitude towards the ad leads to the development of an attitude towards the brand.

The theory behind the model states that consumers form judgments and feelings as a result of exposure to an advertisement. Not only does a consumer form attitudes towards the advertisement, he or she also forms an opinion towards the brand.

Research has shown that the model holds good more for new product and service offerings than or existing ones. The ad helps create an attitude towards the brand and helps elicit a trial. Thus marketers need to be careful while formulating ads especially for innovative products and services and for new brands. Research has also shown that irrespective of levels of consumer involvement, whether high or low, both the central (the message content) and the peripheral (the context), influence the formation of beliefs and attitudes about the brand, leading finally to the attitude towards the brand. These findings have implications for marketers.



Attitude-towards-the-Ad Model

Summary:

So friends, in today's session we have studied about

Firstly, Consumer Attitude- Consumer attitudes are a composite of a consumer's (1) beliefs, (2) feelings and (3) behavioral intentions towards some object--within the context of marketing, usually a brand or retail store.

Secondly, the various models which include

- i) the tri-component attitude model,
- ii) the multi-attribute attitude model,
- iii) the trying-to-consume model, and
- iv) the attitude-toward-the-ad model.