

A Critical Review of Journey of Consumer Decision-Making Process Lately

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ABSTRACT

In view of a lot of buying behavior and the consumption pattern with a past experience is further facing a lot of unaddressed issues. It has inspired the current researches to study and explore intricacies, vitals and hurdles in the decision-making process till today with varieties of theories and approaches in sequence. Author has accessed online materials/ articles/ theories which had explained the possibilities that influence consumer behavior favoring or disfavoring a particular brand. The author has attempted to help and facilitate future researcher, marketers reevaluate their marketing strategies in order to capture a great pie of the market. Author has attempted to investigate and explore several directions to marketers and future researchers towards buying pattern.

Keywords: Decision-making process, Consumer behaviour, buying behaviour, Model of decision-making

I INTRODUCTION

The consumer behaviour deals with why and how a consumer decides upon their buying decisions. It instigates marketers to improve their marketing strategies and poses a challenge how to influence the consumer buying behaviour for a brand. So and why, the knowledge of buying behaviour deals the consumer cognitive make up (Ahn, Sung & Drumwright, 2016 et al, 2016 (Researchgate.net) / psychology and purchase decisions with respect to their emotions (personality, intentions, etc) feelings, arguments and selection among existing options and choices. Moreover, it deals with the consumer's environment (e.g., culture, family, media) Marketers do study and understand the influences on him/her, their motivation and decision strategies distinct between products.

This research paper focuses on a framework of the factors governing consumer buying behaviour, specifically on factors and moments that influence customers' decision-making process involving their factors and emotional intelligence. Answering two questions: 1. what that matters to them and 2. What are the emotional factors in consumer decision-making? This study also reviews trends, theories, previous studies and gaps in the field of buyer behaviour.

Moreover, this study will present the individual role of a consumer who makes a lot of purchase every day that involves his/her emotions addressing any need / problems in a purchase decision making. Additionally, marketers may seek help from this study to know their target customers and their profile and understand how customers view(involving emotions) products versus competition. This will help marketers to take an edge over competition in terms of competitive and deferential advantages enhancing company's value.

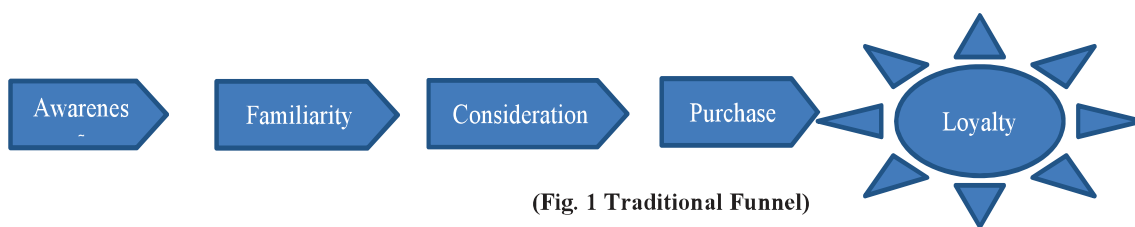
As of today, researchers are more interested into finding specific relationships and determinants of a purchase decisions with the cognitive/emotional make up to answer many more questions: it has brought a specific consumer science known as neuro-/ nano-marketing, that explains how a customer mind reacts to marketing stimuli.

Over the year the changed trends in consumer behaviour not only answers and ask the reasons for a purchase but also it stresses on the immediate, intrinsic and emotional desires of a consumer. Reasons are the customers suffer with need for hyper-efficiency and moreover, super - personalization is another emotional stature of consumers. (e-commerce is a brilliant example)

Sarmistha Nandy, 2020, in her study mentioned impulse buying as spontaneous and repeatedly uncontrolled motive to purchase products other than emotions as a unique ingredient towards the basis supply of product/service. Functional needs fulfilled by product utility and emotional needs related with the psychological aspects of product possession motivate a purchase decision. She finds emotion that passes through the melody, aroma, color, flavor, and symbols of various types.

A. A.Mehamed & Patel Chirag, 2019, in their study the emotions of a consumer that may be notice from the facial expressions of a buyer while making purchase decisions and incorporated the expressions of consumers for a decision.

The figure 1, understands and explains the touch points/ moments that matters. and states how the consumer starts making decision with a potential brand known to him/her. But this model has a limitation of never discussing any emotional input for a purchase so became obsolete as of today.



(Fig. 1 Traditional Funnel)

Court et al., 2009, refers that McKinsey study elaborates a two way communication, i.e. marketer - consumer - marketer communication in stead one-way - marketers to consumers.

It is important for them to address the consumers purchase determinants about creating connections with clients (customer network and referrals) in order to understand the shopping experience to understand customer base. It helps companies to identify additional consumer-connection moments before purchase, during purchase, and post purchase.

II REVIEW OF DIFFERENT PROPOSED MODELS AND THEORIES

The following theorists have described a consumer purchase behavior using individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and their impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society."

Table 1
Decision-making Models

Name of the Model	Short description
Simon model 1960	1. Conceptualizes the decision-making process in three stages of activities: intelligence activity, design activity, and choice activity. 2. Arguments on decision- making are a cognitive process that can be separated into simple, sequential steps.
Nicosia model 1996	1. Ccommunications process between a brand and a consumer. 2. flow of events through different stages that are identified as fields.
Engel, Kollat & Blackwell model 1968	1. Studies the components: input, information processing, decision process, and variables influencing the decision process. 2. The 5 stage decision process component: need recognition, search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and outcomes.
Theory of buyer behaviour 1969	1. The theory explains the buyer’s brand choice behaviour 2. Three levels of consumer decision-making: (a) extensive problem solving (b) limited problem solving, and (c) habitual response behaviour. 3. The set of motives; (a) several alternative courses of action, and (b) decision mediators by which the motives are matched with the alternatives, 4. Author finds a combination of decision elements affects search processes and the inclusion of information from the buyer’s commercial and social environment.
Mintzberg model 1976	A basic structure underlies these “unstructured” processes.
Keeney’s decision-making model 1982	A four-stage model: Defining the decision problem, assessing possible impacts of each alternative, determining preferences (values) of decision makers, and evaluating and comparing alternatives.
Rassuli & Harrell model 1990	1. The choice and purchase can be viewed as inputs into a process. 2. One recognizes the feedback, from choice to other consumer-behaviour variables.
Sheth, Newman & Gross model 1991	This model presents five consumption values influencing consumer choice behaviour: functional, social, conditional, emotional, and epistemic values.
Marketing Spiral 2007	1. Finds consumer behavior a spiral behavior that begins with an interaction as opposed to communication. 2. The spiral amplifies consumer increases engagement.
McKinsey’s dynamic model of the consumer decision 2009	Four primary phases: initial consideration; active evaluation, or the process of researching potential purchases; closure, when consumer buy brands; and post-purchase, when consumer experience them.

Consumer behaviour (purchase decisions) are the result of a long, detailed process that may include a broad information search, brands comparison, and evaluation. Marketers are considered successful in influencing purchase behaviour depends largely on how well they understand consumer behaviour. Belch G. & Belch M., 2009, refer that marketers are required to know the specific customer needs in order to satisfy how they turn it into purchase attributes, to understand how consumers gather information about different alternatives and to use this information to select among competing brands.

III DECISION-MAKING MODELS

Academic laureates of behavioral decision have identified many irrational customer choices and emphasize is that consumer behaviour is very valuable and important for marketers.

(a) Traditional Model of Decision-Making

The traditional (five-stage model of the consumer buying process) model of consumer decision-making, a marketer has to understand these steps: 1. bringing customers buying product/services, 2. to communicate effectively to consumers and 3. to close the sale.

Kotler & Keller (2012) also describe consumer behavior as - disposal stage, including moderating effect on decision making (involvement).



Fig. 2: Five-stage model of the consumer buying process

Moreover, Belch G. & Belch M. (2009) also further discussed relevant internal psychological processes for each stage and identified (Figure 3)

the “moments that matter” and factors that influence them.



Fig. 3: Internal Psychological Processes

- (i) **First stage of the model:** It recognizes need/problem which explores their need and the marketers want to create an imbalance between consumers' emotions (present status and their preferred status). This imbalance will create a need and make consumers have an impulsive buying of a product or service.

Factors that influence these moments are creation of desired (preferred) status; availability of information about new products or versions of the products (new status), complementary products for this product may create a need and motives to drive customers for buying. The time consumed by consumer depends on his/her past experience with buying, risk involved and interest level. With an alternative product, customer evokes a set of preferred alternatives and the consumer further shrinks his/her choice.

Third stage of evaluating alternatives: a consumer may ask question /s whether a need is there/ an alternative option is there / does he actually need it / is the original product that bad? These questions reach them with a choice and purchase decision based on price, quality, brand, product positioning, a place where to buy (location), consequences of

using the product, etc.. This context of moments that matter may be emotional connections or experiences with products and marketers are required to understand consumer' awareness of the brand during the evaluation process. On this basis the consumer makes his/her buying decision and expects a best deal

- (ii) **Post-purchase (satisfaction or dissatisfaction):** it discusses the consumer's evaluation and review of the product (right/wrong/satisfactory or attractive attributes and ease of use wise). If it matches, addresses properly their need, meets or exceeds the promises made and their expectations, they will potentially become a brand ambassador and further influence other potential customers at a positive note and may encourage for a repeat purchase/ future purchase (moment that matters).

For many of the purchase decisions people use emotions, e.g. low price, and enjoy a habitual or routine, the decision process consists of little more than recognizing the problem, engaging in a quick internal search, and making the purchase. The consumer spends little or no effort engaging in

external search or alternative evaluation (Belch G. & Belch M., 2009). So all of the stages do not apply to repeat products because every consumer already has preferences and brand loyalty, supported by Hoyer (1984), who further added that idea based decision-making of consumers do not let them engage in a big deal of decision-making process at the time of purchase for a repeat purchasend hence

they go with a quick and effortless choice tactics providing a satisfactory decision.

Marketers of new brands or those with a low market share face a different challenge hence attempt to offer more choice alternatives to consumers, hence they use different promotion programs and advertisements for a brand switching.

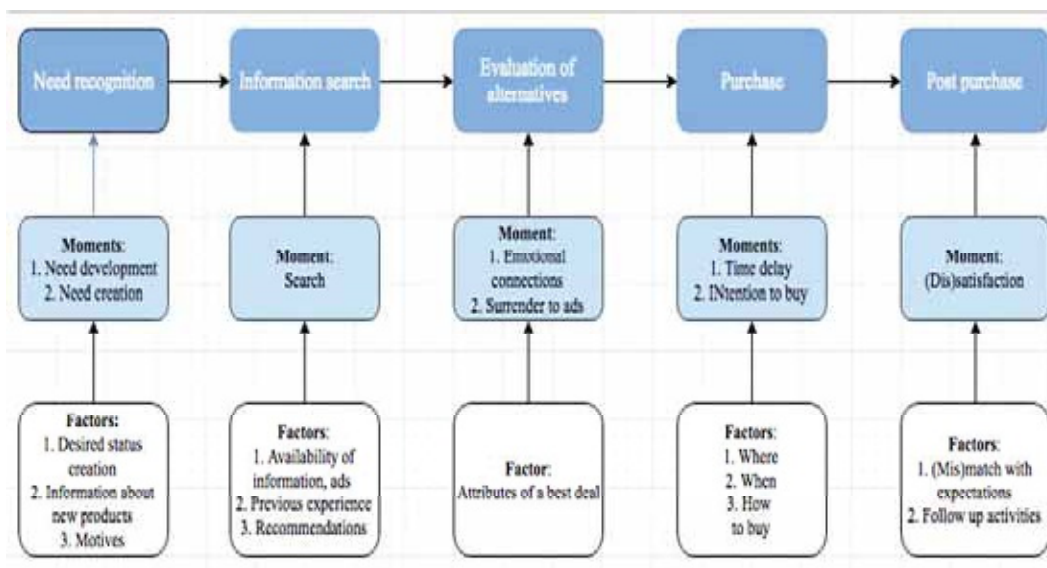


Fig. 4: Framework of factors and moments that influence decision-making (adopted as it is from internet)

McAlister (1979) challenged the existing time assumption that product choices are made separately from of each other. The scholar offered a model incorporating dependence among selections of items groups.

Solomon et al. (2006) denied the traditional model and mentioned that consumers don't go through this sequence whenever they buy something. The authors added that purchase momentum consumers possess a collection of strategies and they choose one according to the situation and the level of effort

required, supported by Dhar, Huber & Khan (2007) who mention about shopping momentum that occurs when an initial purchase provides a psychological impulse that unrelated product. enhances the purchase of a second,

(b) Variations in Consumer Decision-Making

Solomon et al. (2006) found decision making a continuum that starts as a habitual decision-making and ends with extended problem- solving (Figure 6). Many decisions are in the middle and characterized by limited problem-solving.

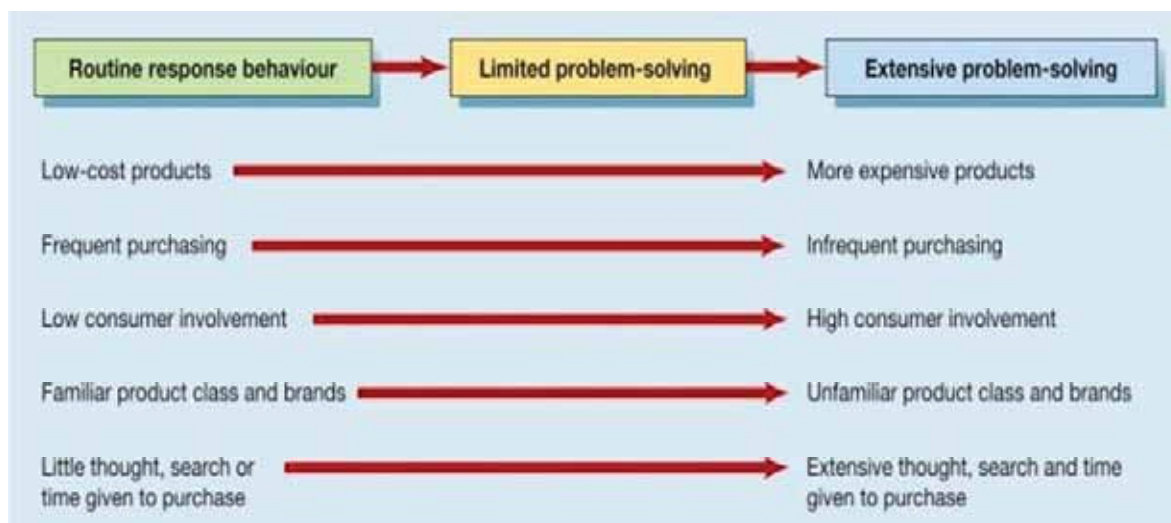


Fig. 5: A continuum of buying decision behaviour (adopted as it is from internet)

Extended problem-solving phase is as similar as tradition decision-making process whilst, limited problem-solving is simple and hence usually adopted by most of the people for decision making. Habitual decision-making involves decisions made with little or no conscious effort and automatic minimal effort.

Another theory of Marketing Spiral" (Figure 7-seeking least attention and non-linear), proposed by Armano (2007) that refers and interprets that this non linear approach of decision keeps the consumers more engaged from interaction to engagement, to participation, to conversation, to affinity, to a community.

Fig. 7: The Marketing Spiral



Fig. 6: Decision-making process

S. Vijaykathan & G.Arasuraja, 17 (7), 2020, examined and describes a profound brand awareness and emotional linkage with customers translating into pertinacious loyalty on "Emotional Branding and Buying Behavior" and identified the impact of emotional branding on the customer buying behavior. In addition, the study further suggests that marketer may include emotional appeals in their strategy because consumers with high levels of emotional intelligence may delay decision-making.

Likewise, Heilman, Bowman & Wright (2000) examined the evolution of brand preferences and marketing activities for market new consumers in the market and showed subsequent purchases in sequential purchasing stages. The theory is based on the idea that choices made by new to the market consumers are driven by two forces (1. information collection stage, 2. information collection for less known brands)

Belch G. & Belch M. (2009) discussed the difference between the degree of involvement in decision making in traditional model and examines the consumer behaviour through a cognitive approach. The decision process model comprising of five stages- calls the consumer a problem solver and information processor who is engaged in constant cognitive processes to evaluate the degree of satisfaction of their need or purchase motives. Further the study identifies other perspectives of how purchase decisions are

experience. To understand these perspectives, the author examines various approaches, e.g. behavioral and cognitive/ emotional to study their implications for advertising and promotion. The author further insisted upon culture, social class, reference groups and situational determinants to be different factors that govern an individual's purchase decision making.

Boyd et al., 2002 argued that degree of involvement in buying whether low or high depends upon the event timing of purchase (first time or repeat buying) according to traditional model of consumer buying.

Yelkur,2002, spotted in his research that global changes in the market leads to different opinions and bring convergence in the consumption pattern (e.g. in-/frequent/periodic changes in consumption pattern). It may also tend to brand switching and Brand selection/ preference sometime.This may also result effectively in other global markets and cultures in terms of consumption. But can also leave a room for unknown issues unaddressed till today.

Jilani F.A.Kader & et al, 2014, in their study reflects that consumers' decisions are driven by emotional intelligence and trust plays an important role of a predictor for perceived value and intentions to buy. In their study the authors concludes the significant emotional intelligence as the basis for online and mobile retailers in

developing appropriate strategies to attract more and more consumers.

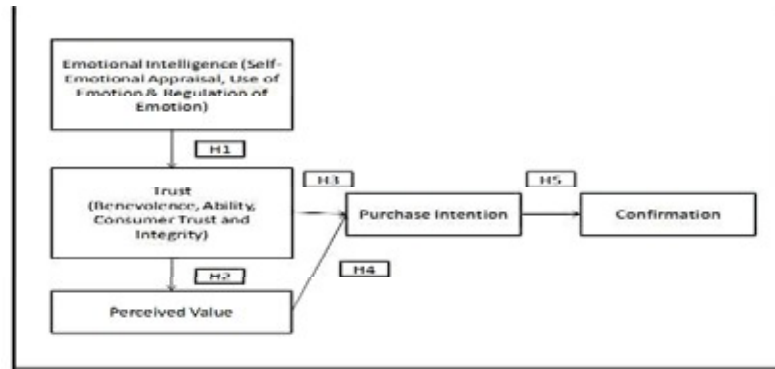
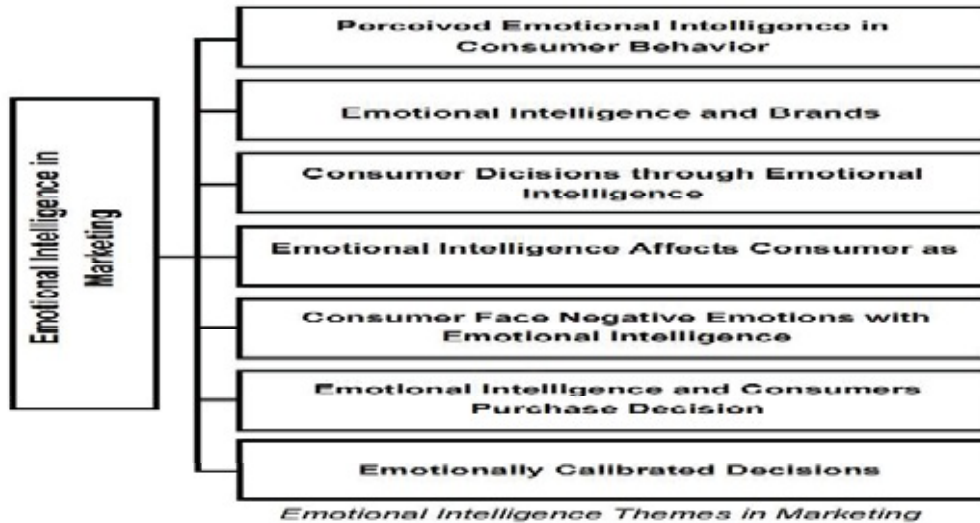


Fig. 7: The Conceptual Framework of the Study that Addressing the Relationships among the Studied Variables

Authors’ measures the consumers’ willingness to make social inference based on purchase and explored the various constituents that will

Have an impact on the consumers’ emotional intelligence (EI).

Yaseen safeena & et al, 2018, spotted the role of perceived emotional intelligence in consumer behaviour in brand positioning, as an impact of emotional intelligence on consumers’ decision-making process, out-turn of emotional intelligence on the consumer information, influence of emotional intelligence on consumer’s decision making process, consumers’ ability to face negative emotions through emotional intelligence, and emotionally regulated decisions.



IV CONCLUSION

This research paper is an outlook of different approaches and directions of consumer decision making process which involves the various elements governing the consumer perception, emotions and network. The study deals with the various stages between information search and post purchase behavior in buying process. Though there cannot be any well defined authentic answer to such questions but still it is possible to follow the proactivity and spotlight various important processes. Current trends in consumer behavior has been investigated with the intensity of future changes and challenges which are effective in

decision making. The study discovers divergations of consumer’s decision making swayed under a lot of controlling components which are emotional driven.

Traditional model served as a foundation for modern model proposed by Mc Kinsey’s (2009). Using the traditional model as a strong base for a structure of impact among "moments that matter" in decision- making and various components were developed and demonstrated, that paved the way for further way to new research on such alliances.

The researcher snuffle a gap in the methodologies in reviewed articles. Wherein it was noticed that since consumers demands more and more

and linkages.

Moreover, the emotions (stronger or less) of consumers in different countries significantly differ. Usually the sense of feelings about durables are common, but differ in discernment for non durable products, in relation to which less attention is paid to services.

Study interrogates the role of controlling the information flow about consumers' decisions, as increased control results to increased productivity.

Research on information framework (in a choice set) is also relevant in the updated marketplaces, e.g. electronic market place/ online where consumers out-run the excessive information while making decisions.

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