

CHAPTER 4

CONSUMER ATTITUDE, MODELS AND MEASUREMENT

Attitudes are an expression of inner feelings that reflect whether a person is favorably or unfavorably predisposed to some object. They are an outcome of psychological process, and hence are not observable, but must be inferred from what people say are what they do.

Attitude has been one of the most important subjects of study in the field of Consumer Behavior. Attitude research forms the basis for developing new products repositioning the existing products, creating advertising campaigns, and predicting brand preferences as well as general purchase behavior. Understanding how attitudes influence a consumer's purchase behavior is a vital ingredient to the success of any marketing program. Business frequently succeeds in altering behavior by changing attitudes toward a product, service or activity.

4.1 DEFINITION OF ATTITUDE

Cognitively oriented social psychologists defined an attitude as "an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of an individual's world." In simple terms an attitude is the way we think, feel and act toward some aspect of our environment such as a retail store, television program, or product.¹

A recent definition by behavioral theorists explicitly treats attitudes as being multidimensional in nature. Here, a person's overall attitude toward an object is seen to be a function of (1) the strength of each of a number of beliefs the person holds about various aspects of the object and (2) the evaluation he gives to each belief as it relates to the object.²

In Consumer Behavior context, "an attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way with respect to a given object."³

Louis L. Thurstone defines attitude is - "the sum total of a man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice, or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats and convictions about a specific topic".⁴

Katz D. defines - "attitude is the predisposition of the individual to evaluate some symbol or aspect of his work in a favorable or unfavorable manner."⁵

Krech D. R. S. Crutchfield and E.L. Ballachey define - "an enduring system of positive or negative evaluation, emotional feelings, and pro and con action tendencies with respect to a social object".⁶

Robyn M. Dawes defines - "attitude is the response of an individual to a social object or phenomenon, and the response will have affective or evaluations connotations".⁷

Allport G.W. defines attitudes - "are individual mental processes which determine both actual and potential responses of each person in a social world." Since, attitude is always directed toward some object may be defined as "the state of mind of the individual toward a value." Thus attitude is a mental state of readiness organized by experience, exerting influence upon the consumers' response to marketing inputs. The attitudes are formed on account of an inward need, external environment and taste experience.⁸

4.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF ATTITUDE^{9, 10, 11, 12}

Attitudes have several important characteristics.

They

- have an object
- have direction, intensity and degree
- have structure
- are learned predispositions
- are influenced by a situation

➤ Attitudes Have an Object

The "object" can be an abstract concept such as "racism" or a tangible item such as a washing machine. The object can be a physical thing, such as a product or it can be an action such as choosing a retail outlet. For our purpose all the marketing related concepts such as product, product category, brand, service, possessions, product use, advertisement price, medium or retailer can be considered objects.

➤ Attitudes Have Direction, Degree and Intensity

Attitude expresses i) direction-the person is either favorable or unfavorable toward the object ii) degree-how much the person likes the object, and iii) intensity-how strongly he believes in his conviction. These three elements of a person's attitude provide a marketer with an estimate consumer readiness toward a product purchase. Through degree and intensity sound related they are not synonymous. For instance, a person might feel that Lee jeans are too expensive and the color fades quickly. Thus, his attitude is negative and the degree of negative feeling is quite extensive. But the individual might have little conviction feeling of sureness since he never wore one or bought one and thus his attitude could be easily changed in a favorable direction.

➤ Attitudes Have Structure

Attitudes do not stand in isolation. They are associated with each other to form a complex whole. This implies that they have a certain degree of consistency between them. Because attitudes cluster into a structure, they tend to show stability over time. However, despite their consistency, attitudes are not necessarily permanent, they do change.

➤ Attitudes are learned

Attitude relevant to purchase behavior are formed as a result of direct experience with the product, information acquired from others, and exposure to mass media. As a predisposition, attitudes have a motivational quality; that they might propel a

consumer toward a particular behavior. Thus, learning precedes attitude formation and change.

➤ Attitudes Occur within a Situation

Situation can influence the relationship between an attitude and behavior. A specific situation can cause consumer who usually wear bright and flashy color dresses might purchase a light and sober color dress since he needs to attend a job interview. It is important to understand how consumer attitudes vary from situation to situation.

4.3 MODELS OF ATTITUDE^{13 14}

4.3.1 Tri-Component Model^{15 16}

According to tri-component attitude model, attitudes consist of three major components, a cognitive component, an affective component, and a behavioral component. These three components are illustrated in Figure 4.1 and discussed as follows:

Initiator	Component	Component Manifestation	Attitude
Stimuli : Products situations, retail outlets, sales personnel, advertisement and other attitude objects.	Affective	Emotions or feelings about specific attributes or overall object	Overall orientation
	Cognitive	Belief about specific attributes or overall object	towards object
	Behavioral	Behavioral intentions with respect to specific attributes or overall	
Source : Del I. Hawkins, Roger J Best and Kenneth A Coney, "Consumer Behavior, "Seventh Edition, Mc Graw Hill Company, 1998			

Figure 4.1: Attitude Components and Manifestation

- Affective Component: A consumers’ emotions or feelings about a particular product or brand constitute the affective component of an attitude.¹⁷ These emotions and feelings are evaluative in nature, because of this nature, an individual rate an object either “favorable” or “unfavorable”. When a consumer ‘likes’ or ‘dislikes’ a product, it is an evaluation based on a vague, general feeling

without cognitive information or beliefs about the product. Or, it may be the result of several evaluations of the product's performance on each of several attributes.

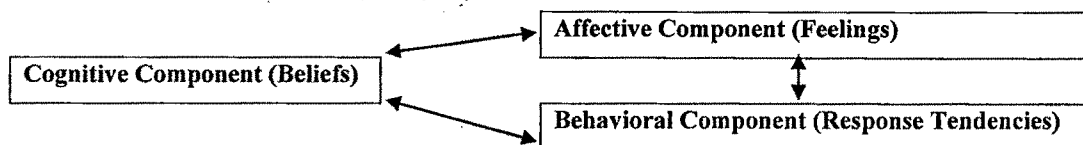
Affect laden experiences also manifest themselves as emotionally charged states (e.g., happiness, sadness, shame, disgust, anger, distress, and guilt). Such emotional states may enhance or amplify positive or negative experiences. A consumer's affective reaction to a product may change as the situation changes. Due to unique motivations and personalities, past experiences, reference groups, and physical conditions, the individuals may evaluate the same belief differently.^{18 19 20}

While feelings are often the result of evaluating specific attributes of a product, they can precede and influence cognitions. In fact, one may like a product without acquiring any cognitive beliefs about the product. Sometimes, our initial reaction to a product may be like or dislike without any cognitive basis for the feeling.²¹

- **Cognitive Component:** The cognitive component consists of a consumer's beliefs about an object. It includes the knowledge and perceptions that are acquired by a combination of direct experience with the attitude object and related information from various sources. This knowledge and resulting perceptions commonly take the form of beliefs. The total configuration of beliefs about a brand represents the cognitive component of an attitude towards as product.²²
- **Behavioral / Conations Component:** This represents one's tendency to respond in a certain manner toward an object or activity. According to some interpretations, the cognitive component may include the actual behavior itself. In pure marketing terms it relates to the consumer's intention to buy. That is, behavioral intentions. A series of decisions to purchase or other brand to friends would reflect the behavioral component of an attitude.²³

Component consistency²⁴

All the three attitude components tend to be consistent. Figure 4.2 illustrates the attitude component consistency. This means that a change in one attitude component tends to produce related changes in other components. This tendency is the basis for a substantial amount of marketing strategy.



Source : Del I. Hawkins, Roger J Best and Kenneth A Coney, "Consumer Behavior, "Seventh Edition, Mc Graw Hill Company, 1998

Figure 4.2 Attitude components Consistency

It is difficult for marketers to directly influence consumers to buy, use, or recommend their products. Hence, marketers indirectly influence consumer behavior by providing information, music, or other stimuli that influence a belief or feeling about the product.

The theory of reasoned acting holds that behavior intentions are based on combination of the attitude towards a specific behavior, the social or normative beliefs about the appropriateness of the behavior, and the motivation to comply with the normative beliefs about the appropriateness of the behavior, and the motivation to comply with the normative beliefs. It is difficult to measure all the relevant aspects of an attitude. Consumers may be unwilling or unable to articulated all their feelings and beliefs about various products or brands.

The seven factors that reduce the consistency between attitude components are as follows:

1. A favorable attitude required a need or motive before it can be translated into action.
2. Translating favorable beliefs and feelings into ownership requires ability.
3. One always measure attitudes towards product, but purchases often involve tradeoffs not only within and but also between product categories. So a customer might purchase a less expensive product in order to save resources to buy a new or another product.
4. If cognitive and affective components are weakly held, and the consumer obtains additional information while shopping, then the initial attitudes may give way o new ones.

5. One measures an individuals' attitude, but many purchase decisions involve other household members either directly or indirectly. Hence shoppers end buying a product which meet the needs of entire family.
6. Brand attitude are measured independent of purchase situation. However many items are purchased for, or in, specific situations. A very inexpensive product might be purchased if the consumer anticipates access to more sophisticated equipment in the near future.
7. It is difficult to measure all of the relevant aspects of an attitude. Consumers may be unwilling to or unable to articulate all their feelings and beliefs about various products or brands.

Thus attitude components – cognitive, affective, and behavioral tend to be consistent. But, the degree of apparent consistency between measures of cognition and affect and observations may be reduced by a variety of factors.

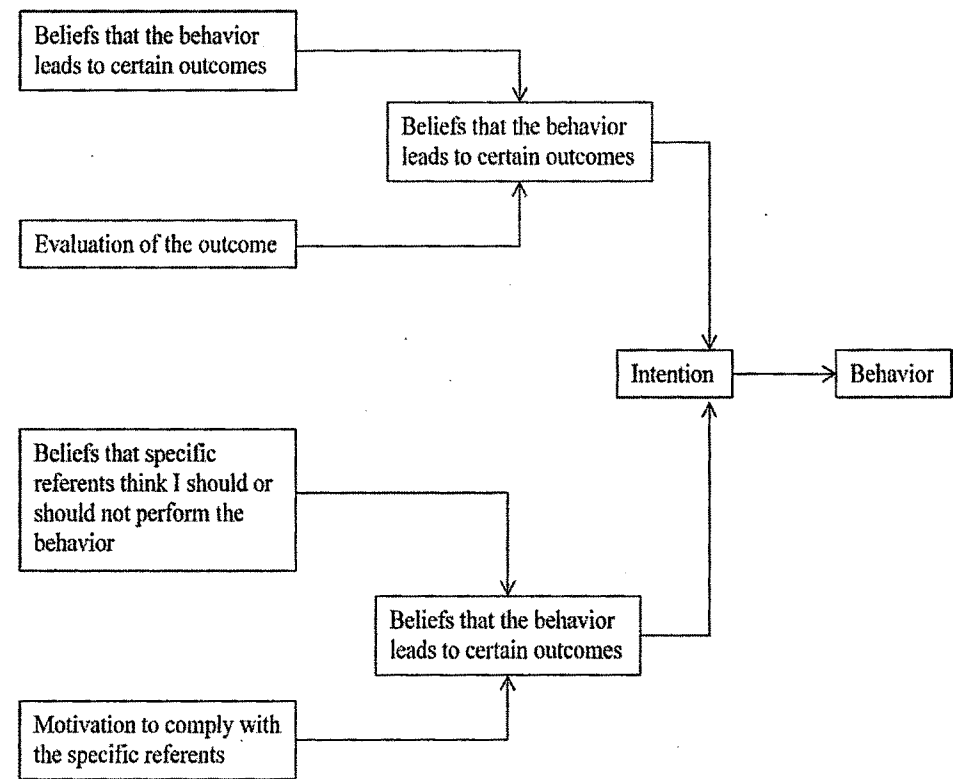
4.3.2 The Multi Attribute Attitude Model

It portray consumers attitudes with regard to an attitude objects viz. a product, service, catalog, direct-marketing or cause or a idea; as function of consumers perception and assessment of the key attributes or beliefs held with regard to the particular attitude object. Although there are many variations of this type of attitude model, the following three models are briefly stated and discussed here viz. 1) the attitude-towards-object model, 2) the attitude-towards-behavior model, 3) the theory-of-reasoned-action model.

- The attitude-towards-object model is especially suitable for measuring attitudes towards a product / service category or specific brands.²⁵.According to this model, the consumer's attitude towards a product or specific brands of a product is a function of the presence / absence and evaluation of certain product specific beliefs and or attributes. Thus consumers have favorable attitudes towards those brands that they believe have an adequate level of attributes that they evaluate as positive, and they have unfavorable attitudes towards those brands they feel do not have an adequate level of desired

attributes or have too many negative or undesired attributes. Supporting the “trade off” nature of evaluative process, a recent study of Chinese consumers responses to the content of advertisements found that consumers tended to judge product messages both subjectively and objectively.²⁶

- The attitude-towards-behavior model is designed to capture the individual’s attitude towards behaving or acting with respect to an object rather than the attitude towards the object itself.²⁷. Model corresponds closely to actual behavior compare to the attitude towards object model.²⁸
- The theory-of-reasoned-action (TRA)²⁹ model presents comprehensive integration of attitude components into structure that is designed to lead to both better explanation and better predictions of behavior. It consists of all three elements viz. cognitive, affective and conative components like tri-component model, but are arranged in different pattern.^{30 31 32}



Source: Adapted from Icek Aizen. and Martin Fishbein, *Understanding Attitude Predicating Social Behavior*, Prentice Hall, Pg. 84, 1980

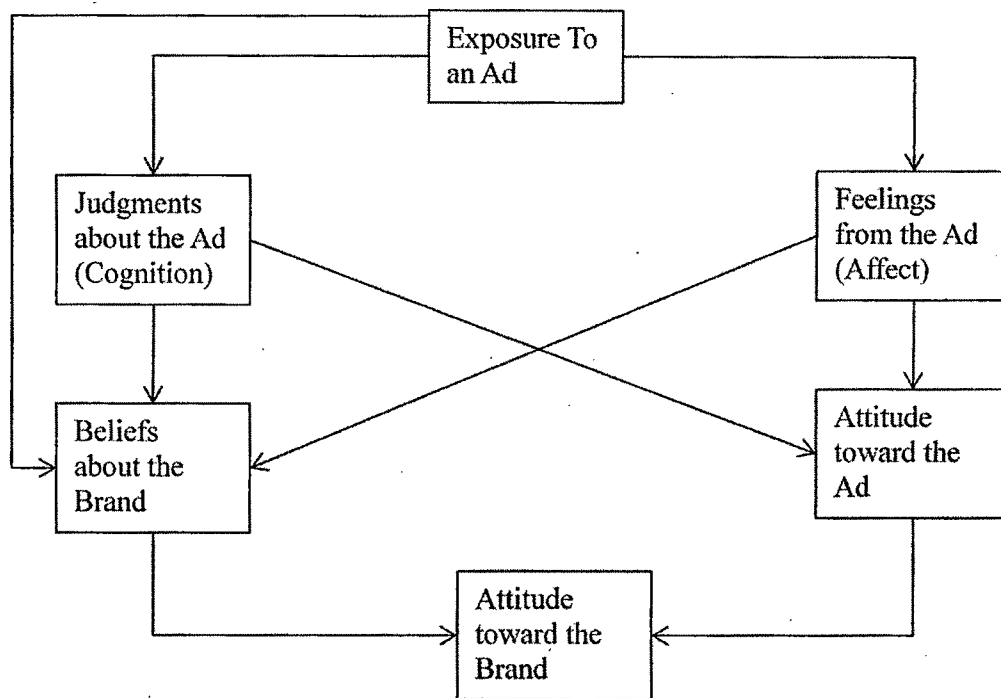
Figure 4.3: A Simplified Version of Theory of Reasoned Action by Fishbein - Aizen

4.3.3 The Trying-to-Consume Model

The theory of trying to consume is designed to account for the many cases in which the action or outcome is not certain but instead reflects the consumers' attempts to consume. In this model, there are often personal impediments that might prevent the desired action or outcome from occurring. Again, the key point is that in these cases of trying, the outcome is not and cannot be assumed to be certain. Researchers have recently extended this inquiry by examining those situations in which consumers do not try to consume – that is, fail to try to consume. In this case, consumers appear to (1) fail to see or are ignorant of their options and (2) make a conscious effort not to consume; that is, they might seek to self-sacrifice or defer gratification to some future time.^{33, 34, 35, 36}

4.3.4 The Attitude-towards-the-ad Model^{37, 38, 39}

To understand the impact of advertising or some other promotional vehicle on consumer attitudes towards particular products or brands, considerable attention has been paid to developing what has been referred to as attitude towards the ad models. Figure 4.3 presents schematic of some of the basic relationships described by an attitude towards the ad model. As the model depicts, the consumer forms various feelings / affects and judgments / cognitions as the results of exposure to an advertisement. These feelings and adjustments in turn the consumer's attitude towards the ad and beliefs about the brand secured from exposure to the advertisement. Finally, the consumer's attitude towards the ad and beliefs about the brand influence his or her attitude towards the brand.^{40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45}



Source: Julie A. Edell and Marian Champman Burke, "The Power of feelings in Understanding Advertising Effects", *Journal of Consumer Research* 14(December 1987).

Figure 4.4 A Conception of the Relationship Among Elements in an Attitude Towards-the-Ad Model.

4.4 MEASUREMENT OF ATTITUDE COMPONENTS⁴⁶

Since components of attitude are often integral part of a marketing strategy, it is important to measure each component.

- **Measuring Belief :**

Semantic differential scales can measure beliefs. They list the various attributes and characteristics of a brand that might be part of the target markets' attitude towards the brand. These characteristics can be discovered through focus group interviews projective techniques and logical analysis. Each characteristic is presented in terms of opposite extremes that it might have such as large/small, light/dark, or fast/slow. Consumer beliefs about the ideal brand are also measured using semantic differential scales.

- **Measuring Feelings:**

The Likert scale requires a list of the various attributes and characteristics of a brand that might be part of the target markets attitude towards the brand. In Likert scale, the various characteristics or that the consumer has a specific affective response to the overall brand or an aspect of it. Consumers are then asked to state a degree of agreement or consumer disagreement.

- **Measuring Response Tendencies:**

Response tendencies are most often measured by fairly direct questioning. Products for which there are strong social norms, such as consumption of alcohol or pornography, eating patterns and media usage, it works less well, but in general it works quite well for other products. People tend to understand the consumption of negative products and to overstate their consumption of positive products such as educational television. Carefully worded questions and indirect questions can be effective when dealing with negative products.

4.5 SOURCES OF ATTITUDE DEVELOPMENT^{47 48 49 50}

Attitudes develop from human needs and the value people place upon objects that satisfy those perceived needs. Sources that make, consumer, aware of their needs, how their attitudes develop their importance to them, an- develop toward objects that satisfy needs are discussed below:

- **Personal Experience**

Consumers' direct experiences with sales representatives, products representatives, products to create and shape the attitudes toward market objects. Several factors influence how they evaluate such persona experiences:

- **Needs**

Because needs differ and also vary with time, people can develop different attitudes toward the same object at different points of time in their lives.

- **Selective Perceptions**

People operate on their personal interpretation of reality. Hence the way they interpret information about products, stores and so on affects their attitudes toward them.

- Personality

Personality traits of the consumer also influence the way he or she processes this further direct experiences with objects. How social unsociable, trusting-suspicious, conservative experimenting, and so on, that people are will affect the attitudes they form.

- Group Associations

An individual's attitudes towards products, ethics, warfare and a multitude of other subjects are influenced strongly by groups that we value and with which we do or wish to associate. Several groups, including family, work and peer groups, and cultural and sub-cultural groups, are important in affecting a person's attitude development. The family is an extremely important source of influence on the formation of attitudes, for it is the family that provides us with many of our basic values and a wide range of beliefs.

- Influential Others

A consumer's attitude can be formed and changed through personal contact with influential persons such as respected friends, relatives and experts. For instance opinion leaders strongly influence the attitudes and purchase behavior of followers. Advertisers often use well known personalities or models that look similar to or acts similar to their targeted audiences. Personality also plays a critical role in attitude formation. For instance individuals with a high need for cognitive are likely to form positive attitudes in response to the ads that are rich in product related information. On the other hand, consumers who are relatively low in need for cognitive are more likely to form positive attitudes in response to ads that feature an attractive model or well known celebrity. In similar fashion,

attitudes toward new products and new consumption situations are strongly influenced by specific personality characteristics of consumers.

- Exposure to Mass Media

With easy access to newspapers and an almost infinite variety of general and special interest magazines and television channels, consumers today are constantly exposed to new ideas, products, opinions, and advertisements. These mass media communications provide an important source of information that influences the formation of consumer attitudes.

4.6 FUNCTIONS OF ATTITUDE^{51, 52, 53}

Attitudes serve four major functions for the individual. These functions are the motivational bases that shape and reinforce positive attitudes toward goal objects perceived as need-satisfying and/or negative attitudes toward other objects perceived as punishing or threatening. These situations are diagrammed in Figure 4.4. The functions themselves can help marketers to understand why people hold the attitudes they do toward psychological products.

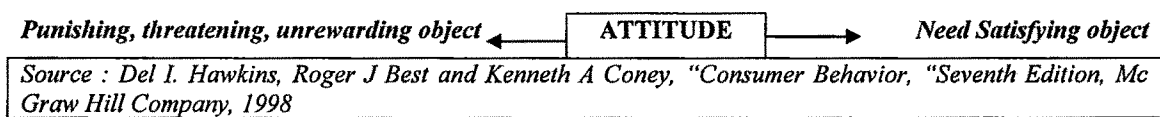


Figure 4.5: Attitude Development and Functions Based on Perceived need satisfaction or harm avoidance.

- Adjustment Function

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

- Ego Defensives Function

Attitudes are often formed and used to defend our egos and images against threats and shortcomings. Products promoted as very macho may be viewed favorably by men who are insecure in their masculinity. Actually, many outward expressions of such attitudes reflect the opposite of what the person perceives himself to be.

- Value Expressive Function

This function enables the expression of the person's centrally held values. Therefore, consumers adopt certain attitudes in an effort to translate their values into something more tangible and easily expressed. Thus, a conservative person might develop an unfavorable attitude toward fast going cars and instead be affected toward safe and slow driven cars.

Marketers should understand the values consumers wish to express as about themselves and they should design products and promotional campaigns to appeal these self-expressions.

- Knowledge Function

Humans have a need for a structured and orderly world, and therefore, they speak about consistency, stability, definition and understanding. Out of this need to know, people develop an attitude toward acquiring knowledge "The consumers' need to know", a cognitive need, is important to marketers concerned with product positioning. In fact; brand and product positioning acts by marketers are attempts to gratify the consumer's need to acquire knowledge and to develop positive attitudes toward the brand by comparative advertising.

- Utilitarian Function

This function is based on operant conditioning. We tend to form favorable attitudes toward objects and activities that are rewarding and negative attitudes towards those that are not. Marketers frequently promise rewards in advertising and conduct

extensive product testing to be sure the products are indeed rewarding. One way of changing attitude in favor of product is by showing people that it can serve a utilitarian function they may not have considered.

4.7 FISHBEIN –AIZEN MODEL & MEASURING ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRANDS⁵⁴

The various learning theories make reference to stimulus response conditioning processes. It may be argued that stimulus response bonds established in this manner correspond to what we call beliefs. Beliefs can be defined in terms of probability that a given object is related to some attribute, i.e. , to some other object, concept, or goal. If the object is now viewed as a stimulus and the related attribute as a response, a belief about an object corresponds to the probability that the stimulus elicits the response, i.e., to the strength of the stimulus response association. Tolman (1932) explicitly viewed subjective probabilities that one event is associated with (or follows from) some other event i.e. “cognitions” as “expectancies”; (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p. 28).⁵⁵

One important implication of these considerations is that, according to a behavior theory approach, belief formation should follow the laws of learning. Whenever a belief is formed, some of the implicit evaluation associated with the response becomes conditioned to the stimulus object. The implicit evaluation associated with a response constitutes an attitude which may have been formed as the result of prior conditioning. The implication of this conditioning paradigm is that attitude towards an object is related to beliefs about the object.

Fishbein (1963) has made this relationship an explicit part of his theory of attitude (multi attribute model), which can be described as -

1. An individual holds many beliefs about a given object; i.e., the object may be seen as related to various attributes, such as other objects, characteristics, goals, etc.
2. Associated with each of the attributes is an implicit evaluative response, i.e. an attitude.

3. Through conditioning, the evaluative responses are associated with the attitude object.
4. The conditioned evaluative responses summate, and thus
5. On future occasions the attitude object will elicit this summated evaluative response, i.e., the overall attitude.

According to the theory, a person's attitude towards any object is a function of his belief about the object and the implicit evaluative responses associated with those beliefs. The central equation of theory can be expressed as follows:-

$$A = \sum_{i=1}^n P \cdot D$$

Where 'A' is the attitude towards some brand; 'P' is the belief 'i' about brand, i.e. subjective probability that brand is related to attribute i; 'D' is evaluation of attribute i; and 'n' is number of beliefs.

4.8 INDIAN CONSUMER PHYSIC⁵⁶

In a study conducted by Prof. S Shajahan (Faculty IBS, Chennai), a large population of three hundred in store and six hundred household consumers were profiled. Some interesting facts that emerged were:

- Amongst the people who visited the shopping malls, almost half of them owned credit cards, besides owning gadgets like air conditioners, personal computer, etc. The age profile of the respondents was found to be between 21 – 25 Years (30%) followed by 26 -30 Years (19%) and 31 – 35 years (12%), the balance comprising assorted age groups.
- 22% of respondents were found to be self – employed / professionals followed by 21% of housewives (categorized into traditional and evolved housewives) and 19% were salaried / clerks / executives. These three formed the major share of target customers.

- It was also observed that 65% of the respondents were found to shop randomly, i.e., without any prior decision to shop. The study was conducted in Chennai which, incidentally, is the region where a majority of organized retail business surfaced.
- The authors conducted a small study in the city of Lucknow with a sample size 200 respondents with an objective to understand the mindset of customers in a Sec. B city like Lucknow towards the upcoming retail formats. It was important to understand if there were any hidden inhibitions acting as a barrier for a customer to visit such large malls.⁹ Factors were analyzed and grouped these factors into components which are highly correlated within group. The decreasing order of these factors, as per the level of relative importance as perceived by the respondents is-

Group 1	(a) Good Bargains
	(b) Reasonable Prices
Group2	(a) Wide variety of merchandise
	(b) Availability of something for everyone in the family
Group 3	(a) Convenient location
	(b) Attractive ambience
	(c) Parking and other facility
Group 4	(a) Helpful behavior of sales people
	(b) Free home delivery facility.

The results probably provide credence to the fact that the Indian consumers are invariably price conscious and all other attributes related to services dimensions are of secondary relevance.

In response to another question pertaining to preference of kirana stores over-organized retail outlets, customer gave the following reasons for their preferences –

- Lower Price 42%
- Proximity 22%
- Personal Touch 18%
- Familiarity 14%
- Free Delivery 4%

Customers were indifferent in choosing between Indian and foreign brands as long as they get value for their money from that product. Moreover almost 90% of respondents felt that organized outlets provide better facilities than any kirana stores but, as Indian consumers have strong belief that quality and price are directly proportional. This preconceived notion is playing a strong role in perceiving a premium price image of organized retail outlets and hence the hesitation of visiting such outlets. This conclusion is pursuant to the fact that the responses indicate a very strong correlation of 66.4% between facilities provided by the organized retail outlets and consumers perception about higher prices charged by these outlets.

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