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COURSE TITLE: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

ASSIGNMENT QUESTION:

What are the roles of consumer behavior in marketing?

ANSWER:

To examine the role of consumer behavior in marketing, one has to first pf all understand who a consumer is. Most times people interchange the term "consumer" and "customer" but the term consumer has a more distinct definition when compared to the term customer. A customer is simply a buyer, while a consumer is the individual who buys and uses the product or service. A consumer is a customer, but a customer is not always a consumer in a business transaction. The consumer can also be called the end user.

Marketing strategies impact the daily lives of the consumer because it influences the way the consumers think and perceive, their beliefs, thoughts, attitudes and buying decisions.The consumer behavior plays an essential role in the field of choosing, buying, using the product and disposing the product after its use.

There are so many definitions of consumer behavior but the most popular and widely accepted definition is given in a book established by sage publication "Consumer behavior is the activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services ( Blackwell et al.., 2001)". The consumer behavior goes beyond the consumer's attitude while buying a product or service, it is more about the steps the consumer and his or her mind will undergo before purchasing any product, the psychological factors which include the attitude, thinking process which is basically influenced by his or her background, the environment surounding the consumer plays a vital role in the selection of the product or service.

There are basically five steps of consumer behavior that are taken by the consumer that are vital to the marketers:

1. Need or Problem recognition: If there is a need for products and services then only the company will manufacture the product and then to satisfy those needs of the consumer the company will study consumer behavior. There are two important things essential to this step. They are internal stimuli and external stimuli. Internal stimuli is basically the hunger and thirst for the product or physiological factors. External stimuli is opposite of internal where such as advertisements influence individuals to try a product or service.

2. Information Search: when the need has been identitified and the consumer will seek information to satisfy the needs. To do this the consumer will reveal the information from two options: Internal information and External information. In internal information the consumer will search his or her memory that is already present about a product. External information gained from the product or advertisement orby product given to the consumer by family or friends.

3. Alternative evaluation: once the information and need is identified, it is the time for the consumer to evaluate the alternatives that are available in the market. This is a vital step for the marketers because at this stage the consumer will differentiate the product with other products to see which product will satisfy the need of the consumer.

4. Purchase Decision: after all the solution and the product evaluation is done it is time for the consumer to select the product that are satisfying the need of the consumer. The buying decision process will also depend on the factors like the where the consumer is going to buy the product.

5. Post-Purchase Behavior: After the purchase of the product, the consumer will see if the original needs are satisfied by the product and whether he or she made the right choice in buying the product.

In conclusion, when these steps are followed the marketers can easily identify the consumer behavior and work towards satisfying the needs of other consumer and the brand will try to capture the more the mark share by satisfying the needs.