**COURSE OUTLINE**

1. Concept of consumer behaviour
2. The role of the consumer in marketing
3. Group and cultural influence; concept of consumer behaviour
4. Social stratification, reference group, sub-cultural influence of the individual in consume behaviour
5. Information processing; predisposition
6. Attitude, attitude change and persuasive communication in consumer behaviour
7. Nature of communication- decision process
8. Consumerism
9. Consumer protection and rights
10. Consumer groups/association in Nigeria

**CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

Americans and diet foods: up to 80% of Americans go for diet foods, drinks (energy) and weight watchers; yet more than one-third of Americans are obese. Those who should be weight and obesity conscious are the children. Marketers are quick to capitalize on this and other consumer behaviours in the market place to manufacture and sell goods of these types. Purchasers and marketers have adjusted their product make, offerings and strategies to accommodate consumers’ demand to feel good about their selves. Marketing concept should be that organisations should satisfy so marketers must understand consumer needs and stay close to them.

**What is Consumer Behaviour?**

It focuses on how the consumption related activities of the individual is shown in his buying behaviour. It investigates the reasons behind and the forces influencing the selection, purchase, use and disposal of products, goods and services in order to satisfy personal needs. Consumer Behaviour is therefore the study of how consumers select, purchase, use and dispose of goods and services to satisfy personal needs or household needs. The AMA (American Marketers’ Association) defines consumer behaviour as the dynamic interpretation of the effect and cognition, behaviour and the environment by which human beings conduct the exchange aspect of their purchase. In other words, consumer behaviour entails the thoughts and feelings people experience, and the actions they perform in their consumption process in buying.

The field of Consumer Behaviour is a fairly young discipline; a list of textbooks were written only recently in the 1960s. The pioneers in the discipline of consumer behaviour were James F. Engel, David T. Kollat, Roger D. Blackwell, John A. Howard and Harold H. Kassarjian, who are regarded as fathers of consumer behaviour.

Some influences that shape consumer choices and tendencies are internal processes such as our own thinking, feeling and desiring. Other influences come from environmental factors, such as social forces (intrapersonal, group or interpersonal), and economical situations (and promotional). Intrapersonal influences of consumption are – perception, hearing, attitude, motivation and personality. Interpersonal influences are – groups, culture, sub-culture, social (purchases), etc.

The ultimate goal of knowing consumer behaviour is to help marketers better understand the processes and activities of consumer behaviour, and thus help them to anticipate how their marketing services and tactics will influence consumers and affect the types of goods and services consumers will buy. Marketers would better enable human behaviour so as to blend their product services with themselves.

**NB**

* Buyer/Customer is the one who buys personal products for personal consumption. It entails business to business buying also.

**GROUP INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BEHVIOUR**

A group can be defined as a combination of two or more individuals coming together to share a set of norms, values, beliefs and are related to certain roles, relationships and experience independent behaviours.

A group, notably, cannot be said to be of some students who always hang out together, neither can it be of fans watching football matches always, nor a number of motor-park touts. A group, therefore, is a social system with its own rules and regulations, its own hierarchy of interlocking roles. Members of the same group do have:

1. A structure,
2. Display of regular contacts,
3. Cooperative interaction with one another,
4. A common goal, common norms, a sense of pride and belonging they share.

Above are the characteristics of a group.

There are many groups that people can belong to that can influence their buying behaviours. They include:

* The family,
* Peer or friendship groups,
* Religious groups,
* Work groups, etc.

There are many purposes of joining groups, some of which are:

1. To have a sense of belonging
2. To be respected by others
3. To obtain a social status
4. For motivations to push to rewards
5. For a show of ostentatious or conspicuous lifestyle.

**Importance of Groups**

Groups are important to their members for:

* **Socialization**

This is the process by which an individual develops through interaction with others in the group where the individual can experience specific patterns of socially relevant behaviours. Consumers continually learn to adjust to the new roles of their group and abandon the archaic (old) ones. Socializing with one’s group allows one to adopt group standards; group ways and norms which may be imposed on the one through the following processes of modelling, reinforcement and social interactions.

* + - Modelling:

Modelling is by imitation, and imitation is a learning process. Every group member makes attempts to imitate others in the group in all their activities or their prescribed behaviour, e.g.: opinion leaders’ acceptance of a new fashion makes the clothing accepted by all as fashion. He therefore serves as a role model and source of reliable information for subsequent purchases.

* + - Reinforcement:

Group members use the mechanism of sanctions on members. Rewards are given to reinforce good behaviours or initiatives, while punishment is given for wrong acts or omissions contrary to group rules and regulations. Group members tend to repeat rewarded actions and avoid behaviours that they have been punished for.

* + - Social Interactions:

This defines what group members expect from each other within the roles they occupy in the group. In some cult groups in the US and Europe, it is expected that to belong, one should hand over all material means of independence, such as money and personal belongings, to the group; only the leader is allowed to hold money and property.

Socialization, in all, serves as an instrument of influencing consumers in their buying behaviours. Consumer socialization is the process by which we acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to our effective functioning as consumers in the marketplace. Individuals learn to think and behave according to the models of their groups in society. The group to which one belongs, influences and models one’s consumption patterns, behaviours, product type acquired, purchasing and consumption characteristics.

**Types of Groups**

1. Primary and Secondary Groups
2. Formal and Informal Groups

* **Primary Groups**

They are small but intimate groups that meet always and have face-to-face communications, e.g.: the family.

* **Secondary Groups**

These are groups in which regular face-to-face contact and intimacy is lacking but may occur via the media, e.g.: religious groups, alumni groups, labour unions, etc.

The difference between these groups is that a family group influences the moulding of members’ lifelong behaviour patterns while professional or religious organisations may evolve only with payment of dues, or attending feasts or annual meetings.

* **Formal Groups**

They are highly organized, legalised and regulated groups with an explicit structure and goals, procedures and tasks.

* **Informal Groups**

Groups in which structure, goals and procedures are less explicit and less recognized.

**Groups That Can Influence Behaviours**

* **Reference Groups**

Our ideas, desires to join, fit in or identify with desired individuals or groups are the motive for our many purchases and activities. We often do go to great lengths to please and satisfy the members of the groups to which we belong.

A reference group is a group or individuals in a group considered to have relevance upon an individual’s aspiration or behaviour. Reference groups influence consumer behaviour by information, utility and value expressed of a product. A referent must be a figure that has impact on many people; a person or group, whose influence affects the consumption life of the environment, e.g.: celebrities, soccer stars, party members, etc.

* **Social Status**

Status represents the relative position occupied in a specific social stratum (plural- strata) in the society. Status comes up in many ways. It can be achieved through education or it can be ascribed, that is, given to as a result of social class, wealth, age, gender or ethnicity. All these can influence one’s consumption or buying behaviours. Higher status implies greater power and influence in a group. Social status influences consumer behaviour because consumers always purchase products, services and brands that suggest or show their elevated status in their respective groups.

**SOCIETAL (CULTURE AND SUB-CULTURE) DETERMINANT/INFLUENCE OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

Marketing strategies that prove successful in one country often cannot be extended to another especially in Europe, Asia or Africa; where there exist language and cultural variations. Chinese marketers even at their international expansions research show that youthful Chinese prefer Western products; like cars, Coca Cola, Nike, etc., over their own products.

There are groups in a culture known as *subcultures*, that is, smaller groups within a society that have their own distinct characteristics and models of behaviour defined by ethnicity, race, religion, age, gender, social class or profession. The subcultures have their own models of behaviours. Understanding differences among subcultures can help marketers develop more effective marketing strategies. The society has a lot of subcultures, in various continents and even down to countries. You find them in ethnicity, age, religion, rural vs. urban dwellers, in their dressings, lifestyle and so on. Understanding the behavioural of these subcultures enhance marketing strategy decisions.

**Social Group (Stratification)**

Every consumer belongs to a social group. Our early group starts from what we learnt from our family as members of the family. As we grow older, we join other friendly groups as school groups, neighbourhood groups; adult groups as work groups, clubs and so on.

Group membership influences individual buying behaviours. Groups establish norms of behaviours. Norms are the values, attitudes and behaviours that a group deems appropriate for its members; and members are expected to comply with these norms. Individuals who want to appertain to the group must adopt its norms and standards of behaviour (punks). They can also influence one’s purchasing behaviours and some other activities.

ASCH Phenomenon reveals that individuals would conform to the majority rule, even if that majority rule went against their belief.

**Reference Groups**

These are groups whose value structure and standards influence other people’s behaviour. Consumers usually try to make their buying behaviour look like their perception of what their group likes. Reference groups have strong influence on what their members would like to purchase so as to belong; the reason being to purchase a product that can identify you to the group. Also, the purchased product must be conspicuous; it must stand out as something unusual, a brand or product not everyone has except the reference group. Individuals in a reference group like to maintain a status – Ferrari owner club, a political party, a club, an aspirational group with which one wants to associate oneself.

Children as reference groups have a buying behaviour of buying what they see on television, opinions of friends, mates and what fashion they wear; to buy. Celebrities also influence youths’ buying behaviour, just to be like them – a “start”. Young Japanese aspire to get/possess American Cultural Values. Nigerian youths aspire to American/European music, education, etc.

**Social Class**

There is a ranking in every society of the class structure. We have the Upper structure and the Lower structure in the subcultures. In America, we have the Upper Class, Lower Upper, the Upper Middle and the Lower Middle Class. In Nigeria, we have recently – the upper class, the middle class and the worker/lower class. Class ranking is determined by occupation, income, education, family background and residence location. Mechanics can earn more than University professors but the buying behaviour is not the same. People in a social class exhibit buying behaviour common to their class, rather than their own selves.

**Opinion Leaders**

These are those trendsetters who purchase new products before others in a group and tend to influence others to purchase. Opinion leaders can persuade others in the group to purchase a product. They are those that seek out information about a product and confer it to others. They command respect in the group or the community. They are found within all segments of society. Information from media houses flows to the opinion leaders who disseminate them interestingly to others, maybe mouth-to-mouth. Celebrities/fashionistas are examples of opinion leaders.

**The Family**

Most of us belong to two families in our lifetime; the one we are born into and the one we later form ourselves. The family group is the most important determinant of consumer behaviour because of the close continuing interactions among family members. Families usually have their norms of expected behaviour, different role patterns and status relationships for its members.

Family structures have changed over the years as many women now work like men outside the homes, increasing incomes, family purchasing behaviours and the decision making powers of buying and purchasing.

Purchasing decisions in today’s families can be:

1. Automatic, i.e., when husband and wife usually make certain purchase decisions, e.g.: for personal care items, each buys for oneself.
2. Husband dominant role occurs when the husband makes the purchase decision, e.g.: buying life/insurance policy.
3. Wife dominant role has the wife making the most dominant decision, e.g.: the children’s clothing; food items at home, etc.
4. Syncretic role refers to joint decisions, e.g.: purchase of a house.

**Children’s & Teenagers’ Purchase**

Children and teens through watching television or surfing the internet learn about the latest gadgets, fashions and trends thus becoming experts on what to buy. They influence what their parents would buy- cereals, chocolates. Children even as they grow continue to play roles in the family buying and consumer behaviour.

**The Media (Adverts)**

What we see on the television, media advertisements, tends to influence our buying behaviours. Shots of our stars, celebrities, etc., make us admire them and sometimes dress or behave like them, and fashion our buying to what they use. Television with its advertising, colours and extravagance appeals to individual senses and convinces us to change our consumption behaviours.

**ATTITUDE CHANGE DUE TO PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION**

The Intellectual Man has become an explaining creature. He has become a father to children, a wife to a husband, a lecturer to listeners, a doctor to patients, an expert to a layman, and so on, to his own soul. The way which advertising and persuasive communications use words and motions in numerous ways dually affects attitudes and behaviours. It often has to do with culture. Each culture is reflected in its language and communicates what is of value to the people. Culture includes personality, how people express themselves, and show emotions, the way they think, how they move, how problems are solved. There are many aspects of culture which influence consumer behaviour. Information about different cultures helps to facilitate communication among the parties involved in the communication industry, and helps develop cultural awareness and sensitivity in producing effective cross culture advertising, that will suit different cultures, and convince them to change in their buying behaviours and in making marketing decisions.

**Value and Lifestyle**

The strategy of focusing on the product plus its value in advertising is still highly rated by some communication people as a means of attitude change to behaviours. Products and brands with a unique selling proposition, consumer benefits and lifestyle are still admitted by advertisers. This adds value to imagery and is a motivating factor to change.

Advertising presents the products as used in the context of a particular lifestyle which allows for one’s projection and identification, and thus builds one’s personality. This links the brand to product related values. For example, Mercedes Benz fits in with self-respect, social recognition and comfortable life; Volvo fits in with family security, comfortable life and self-respect; BMW fits in with self-respect, pleasures and a world of beauty. Advertisers use this to change consumers’ attitude and behaviours by connecting lifestyle to values – every lifestyle is connected and characterised by a number of values which are shared to a greater or lesser extent by the members of a group.

**MODELS THEORY FOR CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

1. **Howard-Sheth Theory**

Howard-Sheth theory was a model developed in 1969 as the first attempt in marketing of a comprehensive modelling of consumer behaviour. The specific objective of the model is to explain the brand choice behaviour of the buyer. It is assumed that the buyer’s behaviour is rational, i.e., really reasonable according to the information he has received about the object. Howard and Sheth set out to build a positive theory which states and describes what is, rather than that which stipulates what ought to or should be. That is how the buyer makes this brand choice, or chooses his brand and not how he should choose it.

The brand choice must be seen and be observable. This can be observed on four assumptions:

* The buyer behaviour (output) is assumed to be caused by the (input) stimulus received. So, the model is essentially an attempt to explain what goes on between the input and the output in the buyer’s mind. Put in the simplest form, the model consists of the elements of the inputs – the *hypothesis* or hypothetical construct (assumptions), the *exogenous variables* and the *response variables*.
* Exogenous variables are the importance (ego sum) of purchase, time pressure (urgent need), financial status, personality traits, social (groups that influence) and organisational setting, culture and social class – describes ones position/behaviour in societal strata (opinion leaders). Culture is one which influences motives, decision mediators and inhibitors.
* Outputs consist of attention, comprehension, attitudes, etc., towards a brand, intention to buy and purchase behaviour. It is important to note that advertising effectiveness is often measured in terms of their response variables.
* Inputs consist of stimuli or information emanating from the environment. They consist of available and various items of information about the available brands or products in the market. They include quality, price distinctiveness, availability of brand and sales services provided. These stimuli can be conveyed by and communicated through the media, TVs, newspaper advertisements, interpersonal relations, or word of mouth.

1. **Engel, Kollat and Blackwell Model**

Also, this model of consumer behaviour was developed in 1968. It was revised in 1982 by Engel and Blackwell after the other author died.

These authors had two decision making model approaches. One is for high involvement decision process while the other is for low involvement decision process.

A high involvement decision process entails extended problem solving, and a choice of high importance or relevance to the consumer or decision maker. This model depicts the buyer as either being involuntarily exposed to information or actively searching for information which may come out from the marketer outside the company’s control. The consumer may or may not be exposed to incoming information and therefore may or may not gain attention, may or may not recognise the product and may or may not be understood. In this case, if the information is compatible with the existing one in his mind and belief as stored in his memory a long time ago, it is acceptable, retained in the memory and thus reinforces the changes, existing beliefs or buying behaviour. If it is incompatible information processing that stops, the stored impulse in the long term memory can affect the buyer by creating a problem of recognition but makes the buyer conscious of the differences between this actual and desired state of affairs. This influences the individuals’ motives and decisions, and changes his buying behaviour. So, problem recognition leads to internal research for information which will be used in the market for decisions and buying behaviours.

**Marketing Application of Models**

The importance of the application of these models in marketing activities or decision making cannot be over-emphasized.

The roles of the models help marketers in:

1. Analysing every aspect of consumer decision making
2. It helps them I recognising the stage target consumers have reached in the decision making process, by understanding that decision making even continues after sales and states and carriage repeat, purchase and brand loyalty is necessary.
3. Models also help marketers in identifying and classifying the multiple psychological and external variables that influence the purchase of their product by target consumers.
4. To the consumers, it helps them in decision making because not all of them receive the same degree of information search. To attain certain levels of extensive problem solving decisions, the consumer needs a great deal of information in order to establish a set of positive criteria to know or understand a specific brand. So, a large amount of information concerning each brand is necessary to differentiate it before decision is considered.
5. Consumers having established basic criteria for knowing a product category and brand among various sets must then establish preferences concerning a group of brands by getting additional information to distinguish among the various bands.
6. The models also help the consumers in their routinized response behaviour; at this level, the consumers have had some experience with the product, its category and, as well, established a set of criteria with which they can know the brand. In some cases, they may search for small amount of information to buttress what they already know before responding to buying decisions.

**Marketing Implications of Models**

The importance of the application of models in marketing cannot be left unnoticed, especially in decision-making. The use of the EKB model helps marketers in:-

1. Analysing every aspect of the consumer’s decision making.
2. It helps in recognising the stage consumers have reached in the decision making process by understanding that decision making also continues even after sales; and so to take steps that may encourage customers (after sales service) to come back and repeat buying , so as to create band loyalty.
3. It also helps in identifying and classifying the multiple psychology and external variables that can influence the purchase of their product by target consumers.

**CONSUMER RELATED MODELS OF MAN**

The objective of the topic is to understand how these models relate to man. Man in this consumer attribute is being related as:

1. The Economic Man
2. The Passive Man
3. The Cognitive Man
4. The Emotional Man

**The Economic Man**

He is the one that makes rational decisions to buy or not to buy according to the decisions he makes. But consumer researches have condemned this model for the following reasons:

1. That to behave rationally in the economic sense, a consumer would have to be aware of all available product alternatives.
2. Then he would be capable of ranking each of the alternatives in terms of the benefits and the disadvantages it will give.
3. That in his decision, he would have to be able to identify the correct and best alternative.

To do this, the economic man-consumer must have and rely mostly on accurate information, and an adequate degree of intense motivation to allow him make perfect choice of alternative decision.

Some say the Economic model could be unrealistic for the following reasons:

1. That man is limited by his existing skills, habits and reflex desires.
2. That man is also limited by the extent of his knowledge about the object.

**The Passive Man**

The passive man is depicted as a consumer basically submissive to the self-servicing interest and caprices of interest and marketing, promotional efforts. In this aspect, consumers are sometimes perceived as impulsive and irrational purchasers due to adverts of marketers they are prone to and ready to yield to. In this case, the consumer to the market is being looked at as an object to be manipulated, not “centred”.

This is why salesmen and marketers use the “AIDA” process of (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) to capture the consumer’s interest and persuade him to purchase.

First of all, in the AIDA selling process, the salesman must secure and grab the man’s attention; secondly, this attention must be developed, sustained and turned into interest. Thirdly, this interest must lead to desire, and lastly, all doubts must be removed from man’s mind so as to lead him to the action = buying.

The problem with this model is that it fails to see that today’s marketing centres on man; that marketing should be consumer oriented to succeed, and that it is man that gathers the whole information before he decides to purchase the product that would give him the greatest satisfaction.

**The Cognitive Man**

The model exemplifies the cognitive man as the problem solver. The cognitive man is seen as being receptive to or actively seeking out products and services to fulfil their needs and enjoy their life. It focuses on how the consumer seeks information about selected brands and products in their various retail outlets. In this context, the cognitive manbecomes a computer or an information processing system. This information search and process leads to analysis and formation of preferences that ultimately lead to buying intentions.

**The Emotional Man**

When a consumer makes emotional purchase decisions as the term indicates, the emphasis is placed on current mood and feelings. The Emotional man also makes rational decisions; buying products that afford emotional satisfaction is a perfect rational consumer decision.

Emotional buyers, for example, buy designer label clothing not because they look better in them but because the status or branded label makes them feel better or superior. Choosing a dress makes them feel better than the alternative is a perfectly rational decision.

Advertisers are therefore recognising the use and renewed importance of emotional or feelings-oriented advertising, as in, the adverts for HIV, cigarettes, drugs and speed driving that kills.

In all, to summarise: the consumer-related models of man comprise- the Economic Man, the Cognitive Man, the Passive Man, and the Emotional Man.

The Economic Man makes rational decisions while the Passive Man is submissive to marketer’s manipulations and is viewed as an irrational purchaser. The Cognitive Man is viewed as receptive and actively looking for products that will satisfy his/her needs and wants. The emotional Man makes his purchase due to his mood and feelings at that particular time.

**INFORMATION AND PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATIONS TO ATTITUDE CHANGE**

**Promotions**

Marketers develop promotions to communicate information about their products and to persuade consumers to buy them. The four major types of promotions are:

1. Advertising
2. Sales Promotion
3. Personal Selling
4. Public Relations (Publicity)

Promotions constitute one of the marketing strategies that are experienced by consumers as social aspects of the marketing environment that may influence consumers’ affective and cognitive responses and behaviours. As marketers, the importance of promotions in persuading people to buy cannot be overemphasized. Most products, to be successful, need promotions and persuasive communication to create and maintain a differential advantage over other products (rivals and competitors in the market place). The marketers must be concerned on information and communication sources that would be related to the consumers and influence their decision to buy. Some entries say advertisements and promos do not add value to the product but only end in increasing the cost to the consumer.

Other supporters say promotions inform, educate, the consumer about the products’ attributes, benefits the consequent prices and the places where the product will be available. Some say some promotional activities save consumers money directly, e.g., through discounts, bonus, etc. Persuasive promotions and information affect consumer behaviour when used by the promotional strategies of advertisements, sales promotions, personal selling and publicity.

* **Advertising**

This is any paid but personal presentation of information about a product, brand, company or store or idea with an identified sponsor. Advertising is intended to influence consumers; affect their cognition, thinking, evaluation, feelings, knowledge, belief and attitude concerning a product or brand of product. Advertising continues to create images in the consumer’s mind and keeps persuading them to buy, hence, influencing their buying behaviour. Also, the use of televisions, radio, print, billboards, internet, signs, bulletins and other media sources conveys the message of advertising. Sometimes, consumers are daily bombarded by different advertisements, some of which are incomprehensible with low level attention. So, it is left for marketers to develop messages and select the media that would circulate better and capture the interest and attention of their consumers. Nike used advertisements, billboards, etc., in showing strong men, images, etc., for its advertising, For example, Bolt, Carl Lewis, Messi, Ronaldo, etc., wearing Nike shoes, T-shirts and boots. Nike sales increased due to this strong sportsmen strategy of using Nike boots and wears.

* **Sales Promotion**

Sales Promotion is direct inducements to a consumer to make a purchase. Some sales promotions include: discount sales – that is, temporary deduction; seasonal sales; multiple sales – take 3, pay for 2; trade shows, point of sales display, free samples, premiums and gifts. Sales promotion has the intention of selling the product immediately; “move it today, not tomorrow”. So, more sales promotions are done with the intent of changing the consumers’ immediate buying behaviour.

* **Personal Selling**

This involves direct personal interaction between the potential buyer and a sales person. This can be a powerful promotional means in two ways;

1. Personal communication with the sales person with product at hand, would involve both buyer and seller to talk more about the product, and this may change the decision- buying process. So, consumers may be more motivated or may attend to the information of the sales person and buy the product.
2. During the interactive communication process, the sales person may adapt their sales presentation strategy to fit the informational needs and wants of the potential buyer and convinces him to buy it, e.g., life insurance, automobile sales, household equipment, houses, etc.

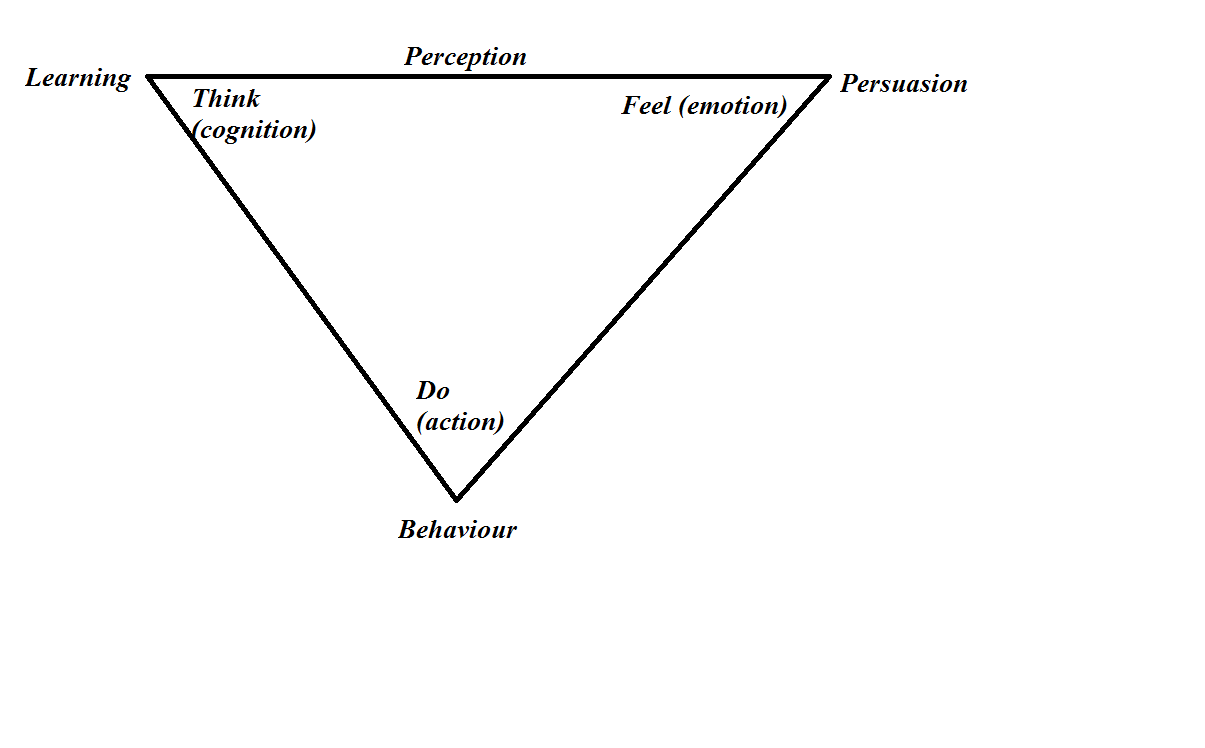
Personal selling can be done also through telephone calls – telemarketing; which follows a prepared script, and calls made to prospective customers like GLO, MTN, Airtel, etc. Avon, Mary Kay cosmetics are all built on personal selling with rewards given to the best sellers.

* **Public Relations (PR) or Publicity (Image Promotion)**

Publicity is any unpaid form of communication about a company’s products, brand or image. The description of new products or the launch of a new product, brand comparison in trade conferences, in trade journals, newspapers or discussions on the television plus radio talk shows provide information about a product to the consumers. Publicity can be negative or positive. Positive publicity is when a good idea or product is produced; negative publicity is when a product causes disaster, e.g., Nike bonanza//gift for social responsibility, Mike Adenuga’s global boosting of the Super eagles’ morale for the AfricaCup (Positive). Negative when Tylenol, a pharmaceutical company produced a drug that poisoned people.

Publicity can be negative or positive, as stated above. Publicity communication is regarded credible because it is not intended to persuade people to buy but to add knowledge and information.

So, sales promotion can enhance brand relationship and has a powerful effect on immediate buying and consumer behaviour. Advertisers must try to get consumers to perceive, or at least notice their advertisements. The advertisers would hope that consumers will either learn something or be persuaded by something in the advert to buy from the company being publicised. Finally, advertisers must try to get consumers to behave in a certain way; that is, to buy the product in the advert. All these help to draw attention create recognition of and understanding of the products so as to sell it.

These processes help the consumers in the decision-making process. They are therefore able to differentiate, categorize and choose product alternatives through the information they have gotten about the product through persuasive communications of advertising, personal selling, public relations and sales promotions. The notion of the benefits, use and satisfaction that the product will give derives from such medium. Other avenues of information may include old personnel experience, reference group experience or bidding, research of professional journals, leaflets and bills from business enterprises about their goods and locations, etc.

***NB***

**Alternative Evaluation**

After assuming information about a product, next, you process it and then choose from the alternative (which to buy)

To make these decisions, there are 4 steps to follow:

1. Get a systemized information
2. Establish criteria for decision-making
3. Determine which to choose
4. Compare both alternatives, and then take the decision to buy – that you think will best satisfy your wants

The last thing you do is – make a purchase decision. A purchase decision means selecting one product between two alternatives, or amongst many. This involves decision to buy or not to buy.

In another spectrum, the 5 stages model of buying decision process includes:

1. Recognize the problem – what to buy, how to get there, from what store, etc.
2. Go out to search for in9formation (about the use, benefits, etc.)
3. Evaluate the alternative ( compare it with other brands of the sae products)
4. Make further decision (to buy or not to buy)

Post purchase decision (after use, do you tell a friend, do you come back to buy? Are you better off?)

**CONSUMERISM**

Consumerism is defined as the policies and activities designed to protect consumers’ rights as they get involved in any exchange relations with organizations, manufacturers, and sellers of goods and services.

It can also be formally described as a set of activities of government, business, independent organizations, groups and concerned consumers that are designed to protect the rights of consumers.

According to Charles Percy, consumerism is a broad public reaction against bureaucratic neglect and corporate disregard of the public concern in business transactions.

President John F. Kennedy of the United States of America passed a bill to be approved in the 1960s by the congress when he saw how consumers were cheated in their buying relationship and exchange with sellers and manufacturers. He described the treatment being meted by manufacturers in their exchange activities with the consumers and set up laws for the interest and protection of consumers. He advocated for four (4) basic rights of the consumers;

1. The right to safety of what they buy to use or eat.
2. The right to be informed about the product or service they buy.
3. The right to choose what one likes from alternatives.
4. The right to be heard or seek redress in court.

Added to this list in modern times is:

1. The right to consumers’ education – access to knowledge about the product, use, or service.
2. Environment Pollution; and responsibilities to the poor and minorities was added as Consumer Right.

This initiative developed into a social movement to ensure that consumers are protected and their voices heard and responded to. This movement became known as *Consumerism*.

**Development of Consumerism**

Consumerism history can be traced back to the Bible in the book of Proverbs that shows many references to cheating; deceptive and irresponsible business practices of old. People like Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other reformers cried against this in their teachings. This represented some sort of early consumerist activities. They made specific attack on deceptive selling practices and preached the concept of “just price”. As income increased, a decrease in the real purchasing power came from the rising prices. Consumerism arises because of the failures of business or other organisations in the exchange relationship to meet and respond to legitimate consumer demands. Consumerism really started in the 1960s. It was an influential book in advertising written by Vance Packard (1957), ‘*The Hidden Persuaders*’, which argued that the consumer is being manipulated unconsciously by advertising and its message.

But the new consumer movement of today is known to be attributed to john F. Kennedy’s message to the American Congress on March 15, 1962, in which he asked Congress to approve the Consumer Bill of Rights, having observed how consumers were being cheated and used badly in their exchange relationship. He pointed out that government is the ultimate protector and guarantor of consumers’ right, and built a foundation on this thesis. He was supported by Ralph Nader, John Gilbraith and Rachel Carson (on Pollution) as the pioneers of consumers movement; Consumerism.

**Consumerism and Management**

Consumerism as a movement has come to stay. Much attention is given to it today as corporate social responsibility of management and corporate firms. So it has to be managed the same way as any other environmental challenge. Management can follow the *Hensel Management System* that provided responsible and workable guidelines to follow. These are:

1. Understanding the consumers’ world.
2. Redressing grievances and responding to injuries from consumers.
3. Improving customer contact, relationship and service.
4. Creating credibility for consumers.
5. Providing consumer information.
6. Organising for responsive actions and feedbacks.

In Nigeria, this movement has taken off with the passage of the Consumers’ Protection Bill by the Senate in 2014. Many associations have been formed to this effect. Some organizations that have somehow provided consumer protection are: the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON), providing for safe and quality products to consumers; the NAFDAC, ensuring safe drug and food for consumers; the Consumers’ Right Protection Association. All these groups help to protect the consumers from unscrupulous acts of manufacturers and sellers.

**Factors that Hinder Consumer Movement in Nigeria**

1. Ignorance of consumers to their rights. (low level of awareness)
2. Lack of unionism and trust amongst leadership.
3. Lack of faith in government policies.
4. Lack of trust in the judicial system.
5. Time lag on the resolution of cases for redress.

**Why Consumers Must Form Association of Consumers**

1. Because of the unscrupulous act of manufacturers.
2. The consumers market has become so wise and sophisticated that they can no more be cheated.
3. Consumers are more educated and populated.
4. Consumers can now stand up for their rights because of their growing population.
5. The Passage of the Consumers’ Rights Bill and Policy has given the consumer more strength to depend on their buying rights.
6. Legal luminaries and Human Rights Lawyers are now ready to offer their services to protect the consumers.
7. The rising expectations of the Public to higher standard goods; as standard of living increases, the urge for quality increases.