



Global and Southern African Perspectives

# Consumer Behaviour

2nd Edition

L Schiffman  
J Wisenblit

**Academic editor:** T Shrosbree

**Authors:** S Brewer, M Joubert, S Brijball Parumasur,  
S Pillay, S Raninger, T Shrosbree, T Tshivhase



Pearson South Africa (Pty) Ltd  
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## **Acknowledgements**

### 5.5.3 RETRIEVING AND RETAINING DATA

Information does not merely remain in long-term storage waiting to be retrieved. It is constantly organised and reorganised, as new chunks of information are received and new links among those chunks are created. For example, a memory of a product's name may be activated by relating it to the spokesperson appearing in its advertising. Product information stored in memory is brand based and consumers interpret new data chunking.

**data chunking** The process during which consumers recode what they have already encoded, which often results in recalling additional relevant information; 'chunks' are groupings of information.

A key component of retention is called **data chunking**, defined as the process during which consumers group information together into smaller more memorable chunks, or pieces of information (this concept was discussed in Chapter 4). Marketers have studied the kinds and numbers of groupings (or 'chunks') of information that consumers can handle. It is generally accepted that it is easier for consumers to remember five (plus or minus two) chunks of information. Marketers assist consumers by chunking their information into five (plus or minus two) bits.

The process during which consumers recode what they have already encoded often results in recalling additional relevant information. 'Chunks' are groupings of information that are organised consistently with the way in which information has already been organised. One study demonstrated that 'brand imprinting', messages that merely establish the brand's identity, if conducted before presentation of the brand's benefits, facilitated consumer learning and retention of information about the brand.<sup>10</sup> Studies also showed that a brand's 'sound symbolism' (a theory suggesting that the sounds of words convey meanings) and the brand's 'linguistic characteristics' (e.g., unusual spelling) affected the encoding and retention of the brand name.<sup>11</sup>

**data retrieval** The process by which people recover information from the long-term store, that is frequently triggered by external cues

**Data retrieval** is the process by which people recover information from the long-term store. The process is frequently triggered by external cues. For example, when you see a product in the store or on TV, you automatically retrieve the applicable information your brain has stored. If the brand is distinctive and heavily advertised, or if you had a memorable experience using it, the retrieval will be quicker than that for less sought-after brands. Environmental triggers are cues in the environment that remind a person of something and then she or he talks about it.

Unexpected elements improve consumers' ad retention only when those elements are relevant to the advertising message. For example, an advertisement for a brand of stain-resistant, easy-to-clean carpet shows an elegantly dressed couple in a beautiful dining room setting where one of the people inadvertently knocks the food, the flowers and the china to the floor. The elegance of the actors and the upscale setting make the accident totally unexpected, whereas the message remains highly relevant: the mess can be cleaned up easily without leaving a stain on the carpet. Because this advertisement is very dramatic, it is likely to be remembered (or retrieved) when the consumer is exposed to any of the elements of the advertisement thereafter.

However, unexpected cues are not the same as incongruent ones. Although consumers notice advertisements containing cues that are incongruent with the products advertised, they are unlikely to remember them. For instance, a print advertisement showing a nude person sitting on a piece of office furniture would very likely attract readers' attention, but would probably not increase the likelihood that the brand would be remembered or subsequently retrieved. In one experiment, where subjects were manipulated into making choices between four desserts based on memory or on the actual stimuli (the desserts themselves), researchers discovered that memory-based product choices were guided more by feelings (e.g., an urge for tasty food), whereas stimulus-based choices were guided more by deliberative considerations (e.g., the need to follow a sensible diet).<sup>12</sup> A greater number of competitive advertisements in a product category leads to lower recall of all brands' advertising claims because consumers are confused by many competing advertisements and they find it hard to retrieve information. Under such conditions, advertisements can activate the retrieval of cues for competing brands.

## 5.6 Cognitive learning

### LEARNING

#### OBJECTIVES

**5.6** *Understand cognitive learning as a form of consumer decision making.*

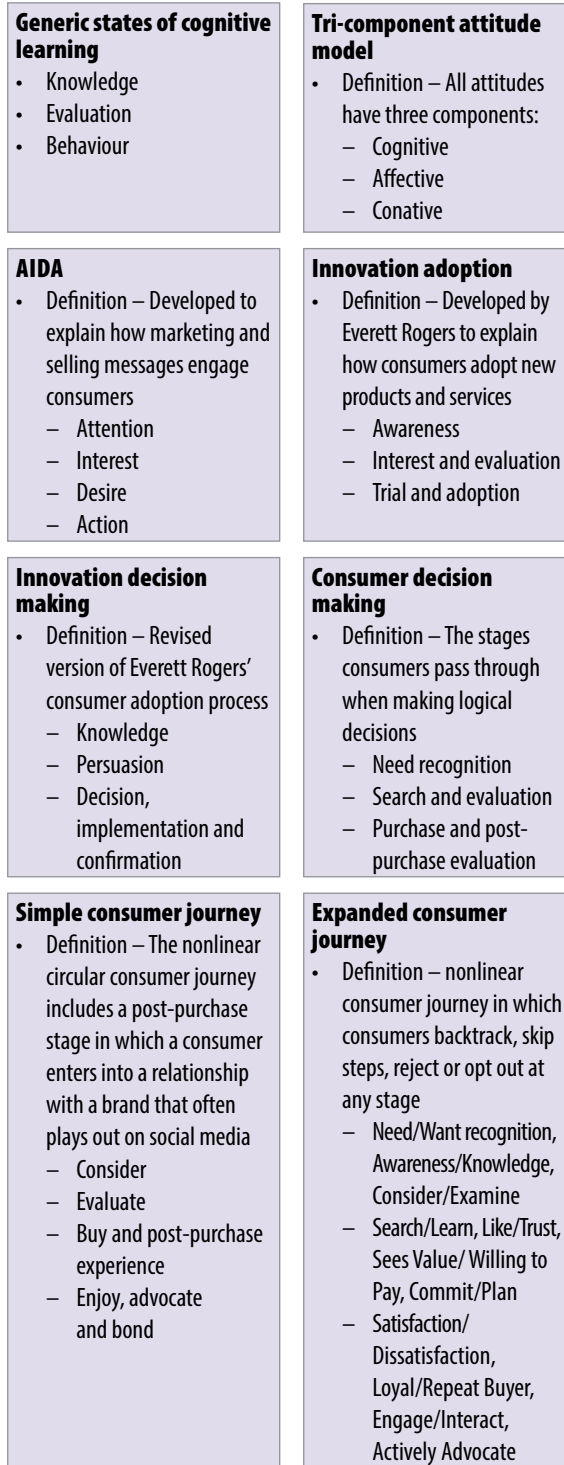
Cognitive learning is the systematic evaluation of information and alternatives needed to solve a recognised but unfilled need or unsolved problem. Unlike behavioural learning, which consists of instinctive responses to stimuli, cognitive learning involves deliberate mental processing of information. Cognitive psychologists focus on the roles of motivation and mental processes in producing a desired response, rather than the immediate response to a given stimulus. Cognitive learning occurs when a person has a goal and must search for and process data in order to make

a decision or solve a problem. For a long time, consumer researchers believed that all consumers passed through a complex series of mental and behavioural stages in arriving at a purchase decision. These stages ranged from awareness of the purchase options (exposure to information), to evaluation and preferences regarding the alternatives available, to possibly trying one or more versions of the product and then buying or not buying it (behaviour expressed as adoption or rejection). For example, a consumer looking to purchase a super-slim, point-and-shoot digital camera (the goal) must choose among many brands and models (problem solving). The consumer will first get to know the features of different models (exposure to information resulting in knowledge), then develop preferences and evaluations regarding the different alternatives and then decide which model to buy and which ones not to purchase (rejection).

**FIGURE 5.5**

Representations of cognitive learning

Source: Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019, 135



An advertisement for Colgate toothpaste is based on cognitive learning. Let's assume that Modi has had her teeth cleaned every six months, as recommended by dentists, and the tartar and plaque on her teeth has been removed regularly. But, as she grew older, her gums became sensitive and occasionally painful. During her regular cleaning, her dentist tells her that she has occasional gingivitis, which is an inflammation of the gums, and advises her to use toothpaste specifically designed to battle this condition. Previously, Modi regarded toothpaste as a 'commodity', considered all brands to be similar and bought whichever brands were on sale. But, following her dentist's advice, she now faces a new problem and an unfilled need: finding a toothpaste specifically designed to fight gingivitis. She then sees the Colgate advertisement, and, although Colgate is more expensive, she starts using it. Subsequently, her gums no longer hurt and her dentist compliments her on her excellent oral hygiene. Modi engaged in cognitive learning: she faced a problem, looked for a solution, read about the benefits of Colgate in the advertisement and started using the product consistently, which resulted in relief from pain and thus reinforced what she had learned.

Researchers have since developed several models depicting sequential information processing and cognitive learning, which are featured in Figure 5.5. Although the models use different terms to designate the sequences they depict, in essence they all follow the three-stage generic sequence listed in the top left frame. The consumer journey models are not linear and take into consideration that consumers may backtrack, skip steps, reject or opt out at any stage of the process.<sup>13</sup>



## 5.7 Consumer involvement and hemispheric lateralisation

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

**5.7** *Understand the impact of involvement and passive learning on purchase decisions.*

#### consumer involvement

The degree of personal relevance that the product or purchase holds for the consumer

Initially, marketing scholars believed that complex processing of information applied to all purchases, expensive and cheaper alike. Later on, theorists realised that many purchases, especially routine ones, do not involve extensive information processing and evaluation. Such purchases are of minimal personal relevance, as opposed to highly relevant, search-oriented purchases. This understanding led to the conceptualisation and study of consumer involvement.

### 5.7.1 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

**Consumer involvement** is the degree of personal relevance that the product or purchase holds for the consumer. High-involvement purchases are very important to the consumer (e.g., in terms of perceived risk) and thus provoke extensive problem-solving and information processing. Under this scenario, both cars and dandruff shampoo can represent high-involvement purchases: the car because of its high-perceived financial risk (to most people) and the shampoo because of high-perceived social risk (to some people). Low-involvement purchases are not very important, hold little relevance, have little perceived risk and provoke limited information processing.

#### Measurements of consumer involvement

There is great variation in the conceptualisation and measurement of consumer involvement. Throughout the marketing research literature, 'involvement' has been defined in numerous ways, including product involvement, brand involvement and advertising involvement. Because there is no universal definition of involvement, there is no single way to measure it. Some measures gauge cognitive factors, such as the importance of a purchase to a buyer and the risk perceived with the purchase; other measures focus on the behavioural aspects of involvement and appraise such factors as the search for and evaluation of product information. The most popular measurement tool is self-administered surveys that assess the consumer's cognitions or behaviours regarding a particular product or product category and measure involvement on a continuum (not as a dichotomy). For example, a scale measuring involvement with, say, e-books might require respondents to express their attitudes on five-point, bipolar semantic differential scales on ranges between paired adjectives, such as important–unimportant, relevant–irrelevant, exciting–unexciting, priceless–worthless and interesting–boring.

#### Strategic applications of consumer Involvement

Marketers aspire to create customers who are involved with the purchase and view the brand they buy as unique. Many studies have shown that high involvement with the product category, and also perception of a given brand as superior, leads to brand loyalty. Although there is no generalised profile of a highly-involved consumer, many studies have investigated the personal characteristics related to involvement level. For example, researchers found a relationship between ethnicity and involvement; appeals portraying Hispanic identities were effective in advertising low-involvement items, but not high-involvement products.<sup>14</sup>

#### Involvement and context

Research indicates that the context in which the promotional message appears has an impact on involvement. One study discovered that consumers who were highly involved in the sports programme they watched recalled advertisements significantly better than those who were less involved with the programme. Another study found that involvement with video games affected brand memory. Players who were initially unfamiliar with the game, but became highly involved with it while learning how to play, recalled many of the brands embedded in the game. When they became experienced players, they became less involved with the game and recalled fewer of the brands. Many marketers now show avatars (animated, virtual-reality and people-like figures) in websites. Avatars have been effective and studies have found that this is because they often engage consumers in learning about products and services. One study discovered that attractive avatar sales agents were effective in selling to consumers with moderate product involvement, whereas expert avatars were more effective sales agent for products with high involvement levels.

In addition to increasing product and brand involvement, marketers must expand customer involvement with their advertisements; they can use sensory appeals, unusual stimuli, celebrity endorsers and innovative techniques online to increase the persuasiveness of their promotions. Highly involved consumers engage in long-term relationships with products and brands and increasing involvement levels enhances these bonds. The best strategy for increasing the personal relevance of products to consumers is the same as the core of modern marketing: providing benefits that are important to customers, differentiating the offering from its competition, improving the product and adding relevant benefits (especially as competition intensifies).

### 5.7.2 HEMISPHERIC LATERALISATION

#### hemispheric

**lateralisation** (split-brain theory) A theory whose premise is that the human brain is divided into two distinct cerebral hemispheres that operate together, but 'specialise' in processing different types of cognition: left hemisphere is rational and responsible for reading, speaking and reasoning; right hemisphere is non-linear, emotional, metaphoric, impulsive and intuitive

**Hemispheric lateralisation** (split-brain theory) stems from medical research done in the 1960s; its premise is that the human brain is divided into two distinct cerebral hemispheres that operate together, but 'specialise' in processing different types of cognitions. The left hemisphere is the centre of human language; it is the linear side of the brain and primarily responsible for reading, speaking and reasoning. The right hemisphere is the home of spatial perception and nonverbal concepts; it is nonlinear and the source of imagination and pleasure. The left side of the brain is rational, active and realistic; the right side is emotional, metaphoric, impulsive and intuitive.

### 5.7.3 PASSIVE LEARNING

The core of cognitive learning is that consumers who are deliberate about purchases will:

1. seek and evaluate applicable information
2. form attitudes toward the purchase alternatives available
3. make purchase decisions.

#### passive learning

A form of learning in which consumers receive information from repeated exposures which is fully processed after a product is purchased

According to these models, behaviour follows the cognitive processing of information. In contrast, advocates of **passive learning** maintain that repeated exposure to TV advertisements, which is low-involvement information processing, induces purchases prior to consumers' information processing and the formation of attitudes. Herbert E. Krugman considered TV a primarily pictorial medium and TV viewing as a right-brain activity, consisting of passive and holistic processing of images viewed on the screen. Krugman also maintained that TV is a low-involvement medium.

As opposed to TV, printed, verbal and static information in newspapers is processed by the brain's left side. Therefore, print media are considered high involvement. Accordingly, the processing of printed advertising takes place in the left brain and along the cognitive learning sequences featured in Figure 5.5. In contrast, advertising that consists mostly of moving images and pictorial information is processed holistically by the right side of the viewer's brain, with minimum involvement. The right brain's passive processing of information is consistent with classical conditioning.

Through repetition, the product is paired with a visual image (e.g., a distinctive package) to produce the purchase of the advertised brand. Accordingly, during passive learning and exposure to low-involvement media, continuous repetition of advertisements is the key factor in producing purchase behaviour. This line of thinking also suggests that television advertisements are most effective when they are of short duration (15 or 20 seconds) and repeated frequently. Right-brain information processing underscores the importance of the visual components of advertising. Strong visuals in TV advertisements and in-store displays generate familiarity with the brand and induce purchase behaviour. Pictorial cues are more effective at generating recall and familiarity with the product, whereas verbal cues (which trigger left-brain processing) generate cognitive activity that encourages consumers to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the product.

## 5.8 Outcomes and measures of consumer learning

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

**5.8** *Understand how to measure the outcomes of consumer learning.*

For marketers, the goals of consumer learning are increased market share and brand-loyal consumers. These goals are interdependent: brand-loyal customers are the core of a stable and growing market share and brands with larger market shares have disproportionately large numbers of loyal buyers. Marketers' promotions are designed to teach consumers for whom the brands promoted provide the best solutions for satisfying unfilled needs. Thus, marketers must measure to what extent consumers have learned the information contained in promotional messages. The most popular measures of consumer learning are recognition and recall of messages and attitudinal and behavioural evaluations of brand loyalty.

### 5.8.1 RECOGNITION AND RECALL MEASURES

The purpose of recognition and recall tests is to determine whether consumers remember seeing an ad and the extent to which they have read it and can recall its content. Recognition tests are based on **aided recall**, whereas recall tests use **unaided recall**. In a recognition test, the consumer is shown an ad and asked whether they remember seeing it and can remember any of its salient points. In a recall test, the consumer is asked whether they have read a specific magazine or watched a specific television show, and, if so, whether they can recall any advertisements seen, the product and brand advertised and any notable points about the offerings promoted.

For example, the Starch Readership Ad Study evaluates the effectiveness of magazine advertisements according to three criteria: noticing the advertisement, associating the advertisement with the brand advertised and involvement with the advertisement (defined as having read most of the advertisement text). At the start of a Starch survey, respondents are presented with a magazine issue and asked whether they have read it. Those who respond positively are then shown each ad that had appeared in that issue, with the brand name concealed and asked questions that measure recall and recognition of the advertisement. The study output consists of tagged advertisements, with the tags showing the percentage of readers who have noticed each advertisement, were able to associate the ad with the brand advertised and read most of the advertisement's copy. Advertisers can then gauge the effectiveness of each advertisement by comparing its scores on the Starch measures to similar-sized advertisements, competitors' advertisements and their own prior advertisements. Starch also appraises consumers' intentions to buy and the likelihood of engaging in word-of-mouth discussion about the product after reading the advertisement. A study using Starch readership scores demonstrated that consumers received more information from advertisements for shopping products, for example, high-priced clothing and accessories, than from advertisements for convenience goods, for example, low-priced items purchased routinely. Surprisingly, they also received less information from advertisements for search products – that is, very expensive, durable items purchased infrequently and following an extensive information search. These findings show that marketers may not be including enough information when advertising search products.<sup>15</sup>

### 5.8.2 BRAND LOYALTY

**Brand loyalty** is a measure of how often consumers buy a given brand; whether or not they switch brands and, if they do, how often; and the extent of their commitment to buying the brand regularly. To marketers, a high degree of brand loyalty is the most desired outcome of consumer learning and an indication that they have effectively 'taught' consumers a given behaviour (i.e., buying the marketer's brands consistently). Marketers agree that brand loyalty has two components – behaviours and attitudes – and that both must be measured. Attitudinal measures gauge consumers' overall feelings about the brand, including their future purchase intentions. Behavioural measures focus on observable, factual behaviours, such as the quantity purchased, purchase frequency and repeated buying.

Behavioural learning scientists who favour the theory of instrumental conditioning believe that brand loyalty results from an initial product trial that was reinforced through satisfaction, which led to repeat and continuous patronage. In contrast, researchers of cognitive learning believe that consumers engage in extensive problem solving, information search and evaluation of alternatives that eventually lead to a strong brand preference and ongoing purchase behaviour.

**aided recall** A recognition test that measures the effectiveness of learning and communications, where consumers are shown advertisements and asked whether or not they remember seeing them and can recall any of their salient points

**unaided recall** A recall test that measures the effectiveness of learning and communications, where consumers are asked whether or not they have read a particular magazine or have watched a particular TV show, and if so, whether they can recall any of the ads featured in these media and their salient points

**brand loyalty** A measure of how often consumers buy a given brand, whether or not they switch brands, and if they do, how often, and the extent of their commitment to buying the brand regularly

Nevertheless, consumer behaviour researchers agree that if a consumer finds many brands in a particular category to be 'acceptable', they are unlikely to be brand loyal. Therefore, marketers must differentiate their products from those of the competition so that the products stand out and consumers become reluctant to view other brands as 'acceptable'. The degree of brand loyalty depends on three factors:

1. the consumer's risk aversion or variety seeking
2. the brand's reputation and availability of substitute brands
3. social group influences and peers' recommendations.

There are three types of brand loyalty:

1. Covetous brand loyalty includes no consistent purchase of a given brand, in spite of strong attachment to it.
2. Inertia brand loyalty is purchasing the brand because of habit and convenience, but without any emotional attachment to it.
3. Premium brand loyalty means high attachment to the brand and repeat purchase.<sup>16</sup>

Low involvement with a given product category results in habitual buying without emotional attachment to any brand (i.e., inertia loyalty). Consumers perceive minor or no differences among brands and buy a brand repeatedly only because of familiarity and convenience. Premium loyalty represents truly brand-loyal consumers. They are committed to the brand, unlikely to switch to other brands and likely to go out of their way to buy the same brand.

### 5.8.3 BRAND EQUITY

#### brand equity

The intrinsic value of a brand name, which stems from consumers' perception of the brand's superiority, the social esteem that using it provides, and the customers' trust and identification with the brand

High brand loyalty greatly increases a brand's monetary value. The term **brand equity** represents the intrinsic value of a brand name. This value stems from the foundations of brand loyalty: The consumer's perception of the brand's superiority, the social esteem that using it provides and the customer's trust and identification with the brand. Brands that are heavily promoted for extended periods attain ample name recognition and consumer loyalty, which results in high brand equity. Because of the escalating costs of developing new products and their high failure rates, many companies capitalise on their brands' equity in the forms of family branding and product line extensions rather than launching new brands. Brand equity facilitates the acceptance of new products, allocation of preferred space by distributors and charging premium prices. Brand equity is most important for low-involvement purchases, such as inexpensive consumer goods that are bought routinely and with little processing of cognitive information. In such circumstances, the most important strategy is continuous advertising designed to prevent extinction and forgetting.

Brand names are the most valuable assets of marketers of consumer goods and services. Among the best-known brands are Apple, Coca-Cola, Disney, Google and Sony. These names are global, 'cultural icons' and enjoy powerful advantages over the competition. According to studies, some of the highest equity brands are: Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, Visa, Amazon and McDonalds.<sup>17</sup>

## Case study 1: Kauai – We believe in a better future for good food

Kauai food stores propagate the importance of eating healthy food made from fresh natural ingredients. The first store was opened in Cape Town in 1996 and, as of 2023, Kauai has over 200 stores globally, over 150 of which are in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, including full concept stores, in motion stores (a smaller store format) and Kauai school stores. They also operate in Thailand, Scotland, Holland, Ireland. And Kauai is still expanding, aiming to open stores in other countries in the short term. Their success shows that there is a great deal of demand for healthy, natural fast food, and Kauai has made this most of consumers choosing this option. Kauai offers a variety of healthy fast food options such as wraps, smoothies, fruit juices, salads and portion size meals. Visit <http://www.kauai.co.za> to gain more information about the franchise.

Source: Kauai. Our Story. <https://kauai.co.za/our-story/> (Accessed 31 January 2023)