



THE IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVERTISING TACTICS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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The Impact of Psychological Advertising Tactics on Consumer Behavior

In today's fast-paced market, businesses use psychological advertising tactics to sway consumer behavior and drive sales. Understanding how consumers make choices is essential for companies and individuals navigating the marketplace. This paper delves into the impact of these tactics on consumer behavior. The relationship between psychological tactics and purchasing decisions can be uncovered by examining various consumer behaviors, influences, and the widespread reach of advertising.

Consumer Behavior

Both parties need to understand consumer behavior for businesses to thrive and for customers to make intelligent purchasing decisions. Consumer behavior is "the study of customers, their likes, dislikes, and trends in purchasing specific products and services" (Gupta, 2022). Understanding this behavior allows businesses to predict what, when, and why customers purchase. There are five stages of the consumer decision-making process. First, the customer recognizes the product that they need. Then, they search for what they need and find information

on it. Third, they evaluate potential alternatives to what they require. Fourth, the customer makes a purchase. Lastly, the customer evaluates their decision post-purchase (*Maryville University Online*, n.d.). For businesses to utilize consumer behavior and the consumer decision-making process in favor of their products, they need to understand the different consumer behaviors.

There are four types of consumer behavior; their character is based on what the customer purchases and their behavior both throughout and post-purchase (Gupta, 2022; *Survey Monkey*, n.d.). The first type of consumer behavior is *complex buying behavior*. This behavior is seen when a customer makes an expensive and infrequent purchase. This behavior is characterized by extensive research and high involvement in the purchasing process. It is called complex because this behavior has no predictable trend or pattern. The second type of consumer behavior is *dissonance-reducing buying behavior*. This behavior is characterized by the customer's fear of making wrong choices, resulting in them hesitating and delaying their purchases. This behavior is evident when customers struggle to differentiate between brands, causing post-purchase regret and searching for validation to relieve confusion and make sure they made the right purchase decision. The third type of behavior is *habitual buying behavior*. It is seen when customers make routine purchases driven by everyday necessities, free from brand concerns or loyalty. This behavior is characterized by customers consistently buying the same product based on utility rather than a preference for a particular brand. The last type of behavior is *variety-seeking behavior*. This behavior is the direct opposite of habitual behavior, as variety-seeking behavior is characterized by customers buying alternative products to either just try them out or because they have not yet found a suitable product in that particular category. However, this does not mean the customers think the previous product they tried was not up to standard. Sometimes, they just

want to try something new. Understanding the different types of consumer behavior allows businesses to understand their buying patterns better.

Influences of Consumer Behavior

Various things influence consumer behavior (*SurveyMonkey*, n.d.). There are chronic factors that characterize habitual buying behavior. Emotional factors also play a role in purchasing decisions, as emotional reactions are faster than rational reactions. Next are social factors, such as social status and influence from friends and family. Mental factors also influence consumer behavior, as consumer thinking plays a vital role in more expensive products. Even if mental and emotional factors are addressed, there is still the factor of finances, which may limit or allow one's purchasing power. Lastly, the most important factor is personal preference. One's consumer behavior will also change since personal preferences change over time based on the above factors.

Importance of Consumer Behavior

Understanding the importance of consumer behavior is helpful for both businesses and customers. Companies need to understand consumer behavior for their products to succeed. When businesses understand consumer behavior, they know how to position their products in the market and where to advertise and sell (Gupta, 2022; *SurveyMonkey*, n.d.).

On the other hand, customers need to understand where their buying decisions are rooted. If someone is in debt, they can determine how to make healthier buying decisions that will help their financial situation by analyzing their consumption decisions. Additionally, customers need to understand different psychological tactics used in advertising to better identify those tactics and not cave into their appeals (*SurveyMonkey*, n.d.).

Psychological Advertising Tactics

Emotional Appeal

There are many psychological advertising tactics used in the business field. However, there are prominent tactics that focus heavily on emotion. For instance, when businesses imply that their products are scarce due to popular demand, people are more likely to purchase the products since there is a feeling of power that comes with owning something that most people do not have. This demonstrates how invoking a fear of missing out on a limited product encourages the consumer to purchase the product. Additionally, stating that a product is limited invokes a sense of superiority associated with the product. Thus, this is a very successful emotion-based tactic (*Lean Labs*, n.d.).

Additionally, when companies include positive testimonials on their products, it makes customers more inclined to purchase since they do not want to miss out. Positive testimonials appeal to the consumers' emotions since they evoke a sense of trust in the product. These testimonials make the customers believe that the product is high-quality since other people say it is good, so they are more inclined to buy it to understand its appeal (*Lean Labs*, n.d.).

Advertisements also use the *framing effect* when promoting their products and services. They do this by portraying their product in a more receptive manner. For instance, when promoting toothpaste, advertisements say, "9 out of 10 dentists recommend" rather than "1 out of 10 dentists don't recommend." By doing this, the product is more appealing to the customer. The product is shown in a more positive light, which is associated with positive emotions and reviews. Therefore, the *framing effect* is another effective way businesses get in touch with their customer's emotions (*Lean Labs*, n.d.). So, while many different tactics are seen in advertising, those that focus on emotion are more prominent and effective than logic-based advertisements.

Most psychological tactics indeed lean towards appealing to emotions rather than logic. Research indicates that tactics focusing on emotional appeal tend to outperform those emphasizing rational content. For instance, based on advertising campaign performance, 31% of ads with emotional pull succeeded, compared to the 16% success rate of ads focused on rational content (*USC MAPP Online*, 2023). Given that the primary goal of advertisements is to persuade viewers to purchase products or services, appealing to emotion proves to be an effective strategy. Emotional advertisements enhance authenticity, engagement, memorability, personality, and effectiveness. By crafting advertisements that evoke emotions, marketers can establish a deeper connection with viewers, increasing their likelihood of purchasing the advertised product or service.

Impact of Tactics

Psychological advertising tactics significantly influence consumers' behavior and consumption decisions, mainly through the emotional aspects of advertisements. Even if a customer initially has no intention of purchasing a product, an advertisement that effectively utilizes emotional appeals can captivate the viewer and significantly increase the likelihood of a purchase (Fan, 2023). Given that the average American is exposed to a staggering 4,000 to 10,000 advertisements daily (*USC MAPP Online*, 2023), the cumulative impact of these ads on their opinions is considerable. For instance, if a hundred of these daily ads endorse a particular product or service, the viewer's perception of that product will become more positive over time.

Adolescents

Adolescents are particularly susceptible to the influence of advertisements for several reasons. Chief among these is their extensive screen usage. Given that adolescents spend many hours online each day, the internet serves as a prime platform for marketers to showcase their

advertisements to this demographic (*MediaSmarts*, n.d.). Moreover, since children often browse the internet without parental supervision, parents may be unaware of the extent to which their children are exposed to advertising. One prevalent way companies target adolescents is by leveraging social media influencers. Many influencers receive payment to endorse specific products to their audience, leading to increased purchases of those items. For example, numerous cosmetic influencers receive compensation for promoting specific products. When their primarily teenage audience sees these endorsements, they are more inclined to purchase the showcased products, viewing them as endorsed by a trusted figure. However, not all influencers receive compensation. Many child influencers, whose audience consists of children around the same age or younger, engage in unpaid endorsements for toy companies. These influencers create "unboxing" videos, where they open packages and react to their content. Since these videos typically feature toy unboxing, they appeal to a younger audience, prompting them to request these toys from their parents (*MediaSmarts*, n.d.). This illustrates how adolescents' extensive internet usage exposes them to advertisements, making them more susceptible to their influence. Therefore, advertisements mainly influence adolescents due to their significant screen usage, which begins at a young age.

Conclusion

In conclusion, psychological advertising tactics significantly influence consumer behavior, altering purchasing decisions and shaping opinions of products and services. Emotional appeals resonate with consumers, encouraging engagement and nurturing loyalty. However, ethical considerations emerge concerning their influence on vulnerable populations, particularly adolescents, amidst the proliferation of such advertisements and their impact. By

striking a balance between advertising techniques and ethical considerations, advertisers can forge authentic connections with customers and promote sustainable growth in the marketplace.

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