

# MARKETER'S CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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## ABSTRACT

This paper looks at how consumers behave in marketing and its environments. Having the consumer's cultural background as the major pivotal to most of the complex marketing and sales decisions the marketers undertake before acquiring a product. The social and environmental forces also play important roles to stimulate consumer decision process. The consumer is clearly defined by drawing boundary lines between the consumer and the customer; and deciding where they are related and separated. Different types of behavioral concepts are also brought to the frontline of consumer decision making summing up to the building of behavioral models.

**Keywords-** Behavioral Variables, Consumer, Culture, Customer, Purchasing behavior, Social Impact.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Who is the Consumer? To aid the basic understand of the concept of consumer behavior it will help to begin by differentiating what a Consumer is, and what a customer means in our everyday use of these words in business and casual conversations. A clear understanding of these two closely related business transaction conceptual words will disabuse our confusing knowledge of what they mean both ordinarily and conceptually.

According to (Rose, 2016) "In common English language usage, and for marketing purposes, the terms consumer and customer are virtually interchangeable, and are both frequently used to describe the purchaser of goods/ services from a given company".

Considering this example, if a nursing mother bought a baby cereal to feed her infant baby she would be regarded as a customer. The infant baby who actually fed from this product is seen as the consumer. In the same manner, if a father bought textile items to clothe his child or ward, the child or ward that benefitted directly from the uses of material is the consumer and the father is regarded as a customer to the textile retailer (Rose, 2016).

Explaining further, Rose (2016) in his words, has these to say: "a person who consumes or uses something", "a customer is a person who has purchased something or engaged in a form of exchange transaction ". He further posited that, though an individual may still be simultaneously referred to as consumer and customer, for a consumer may not compulsorily be a customer. As an example, an individual who moves into an ice-cream seller's shop, and had it refreshed his wellbeing has played both the roles of a customer and a consumer at the same time.

It is clear from here that to avoid any confusion in the use and meaning of the two conceptual words in this paper "consumer" and "customer" are used interchangeably with no rigid differences. For instance, a motorist driving his vehicle into a gasoline service station to have his vehicle's petrol tank filled-up will be

referred to as both a customer and consumer to the service station since he is the one deriving the benefit, from the use or “burning” of the gasoline. But this may be different from a paid driver sent out to buy a gasoline for his boss’ household to generate electricity through the use of a generating plant. Here the paid driver is merely a customer to the gasoline business owner while the boss is the consumer (author’s opinion, undated).

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The research attempts explain the following below:

- i. Who is a consumer?
- ii. Marketer’s Conceptual Approach towards understanding consumer behavior.

## **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of the study is:

- i. Consumer behavior is very vital and important because consumer behavior is the study of how people make decisions about what they buy, want, need, or act in regards to a product, service, or company so this makes it very vital and important and the reason for the research study.
- ii. Understanding consumer behavior is a vital aspect of marketing.
- iii. Consumer behavior also helps in identifying opportunities that are not currently met.
- iv. Finally, it is important to understand consumer behavior in order to know and find out how potential customers will respond to a new product or service.

## **1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study focuses on the Marketer’s Conceptual Approach towards Understanding Consumer Behavior. The researcher tried to find out the various consumer behaviors on Marketer’s Conceptual Approach. In the course of carrying out this study, the researcher faced problems such as time constraint, financial constraint and effect of covid 19. Just like the pandemic curtailed most academic, industry, and government basic science and clinical research it also affected this research.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1.1 Understanding Consumer Behavior**

Philip Kotler (2003) describes consumer behavior as an important concept that propels the engine moving forward the power of business and its marketing framework. Understanding of your business customer is a primary step towards your marketing prospect and success. An unsatisfied customer will not remain loyal to a business and this will constantly lead to business losses due to poor patronage of a company’s product. And of course without a customer there would be no need for any marketing practice in an organization even if it is a monopoly; because there is a limit by which customers could endure a monopolistic business. Kotler (2003) then opined that “the field of consumer behavior studies how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy, use and dispose goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires.”

LarPerner (on-line assessed, 10/02/2016) of Marshall Business School, University of Southern California once argue that, “the study of consumers helps firms and organizations to improve their marketing strategies by understanding such issues of how consumers think, feel, reason and select between different alternatives like – brands, products, and retailers”.

In the thick of a debate on companies’ “competitive struggle in the present day marketplace”, John Chambers (undated), Chief Executive Officer of Cisco Systems observes that if businesses are willing to

imbibe the experience provided by “marketing orientation” and move away from the traditional “sales and product orientation” as much as possible, the better. Chambers then suggests as follows: “make your customer the centre of your culture”. From his suggestion, it is noted that business organizations should go about putting customers at the centre of their business plans and give them exactly what they “asked for” above what competition is able to afford. In his own contribution to this marketing philosophy, Kotler (2003) opined that “the most important thing is to forecast where customers are moving and to be in front of them”. That this is the most potent way competition could be out-witted.

Williams (1985) also added that marketers can only survive this present market place turf competition if they are ready to imbibe and pursue market research techniques because it is the only way by which consumer’s intention can be revealed to expose how they behave and react to market offerings. It is the marketer’s understands of how the consumer will react or behave in a given marketing context or to a given marketing cue that is the real puzzle, along with reading and explaining the mind of customer in predicting his actions forms the core of business research (Kotler, 2003; Williams, 1985; Stanton, 1981).

It is believed that it is difficult to predict consumer behavior in a marketing setting, because human physiology cannot be totally and perfectly estimated (Williams, 1985). “Customers may say one thing but act in a different way, they may not be in touch with their deeper motivation, they may respond to influences that change their minds at the ‘last minute’” (Kotler, 2003). According to Kotler, 2003 and Williams, 1985, it is cumbersome to accurately investigate consumer behavior since the study takes on the combined knowledge of consumer’s situational and personal differences (Kotler, 2003; Williams, 1985).

## **2.2 CONSUMER’S PERSONAL AND SITUATIONAL VARIABLES**

According to Williams (1985) personal differences emerge from consumer’s beliefs, attitude, motives, and the experience they passed through earlier; while their situational differences could be found around their encounter with publicity, advertising, personal selling and other numerous promotional exposures in the form of, suppliers’ competition, distribution methods, and open discussion between consumers. It is the active mix of these variables that produces responses in a dynamic and complex manner. This finally results in a customer buying or rejecting a product, brand or service (Williams, 1985).

Contributing to Williams’ situational variables, Kotler (2003) and Stanton (1981) opined that Consumers actions are mostly directed as a result of “cultural, personal, psychological and social” influences; cultural influence is however observed to be more dominant in eliciting consumer behavioral impact than the rest of the variables.

## **2.3 PURCHASING BEHAVIOR**

No matter how simple a buying situation may be, the theory of purchasing process suggests that irrespective of the type of buying, whether simple or complex, the theory of “why” states that people buy in order to solve a problem. Stanton’s (1981) from his narration of a household buyer on why people buy, Stanton recalls how on a Friday afternoon a family buyer made the purchase of a loaf of wheat bread worth a pound from a grocery sales outlet, “wonders bread”. One will look at this buying as simple, especially from the point of view of a non-marketing professional since it could be seen as a daily buying process. The buyer may not even notice that he is undergoing any process because the purchasing may even be involuntary. Stanton however, posited that this is more than the ordinary buyer’s view in purchasing practice. To understand this purchasing process and behavior a marketer will like these “why” questions to be answered:

- “Why did the buyer buy Wonder Bread and not a different brand?”
- “Why did the buyer buy a whole wheat bread and not a rye or white bread?”
- “Why did the buyer shop at that very shop and not a different shop?”

- “Why did the buyer buy on a Friday but not, Saturday, Sunday or another different day?”

In the same manner, assuming a situation of a perfect market behavior, a marketer will want to know why a motorist prefers to re-fuel his vehicle in a Texaco filling station and not Mobil? Why is refueling being filling-up the tank fully and not just topping-up half-full? Why is he filling-up on Saturday but not Monday? What this narration stands for by answering the “Why” question and the next that will follow is to elicit purchasing behavior and thereby giving rise to marketing actions. It is the clarification of the answers to the various ‘why’ questions that leads marketing professionals to the investigation of different buyer behaviors via “Black box” approach. (Kotler, 2003; Williams, 1985; and Stanton, 1981).

## 2.4 BEHAVIORAL VARIABLES INFLUENCING BUYER/CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

According to Kotler (2003) the application of behavioral variables in a modeling approach will generate an easy and quick approach to assimilating the concept of black box in predicting the mind of a consumer or buyer. Modeling subjects the interactions of both internal (psychological) and external (situational) variables in a hypothetical construct to stimulate responses – buying or rejecting a market offering. This is simply experimented via a “black box” modeling approach where the stimulus variables interact to elicit behavior (Williams, 1985). Accordingly, the various marketing cues (psychological) interact with external variables that a customer or buyer is exposed to within the buyer’s awareness to produce marketing response translating into whether the individual buyer buys or withdraws buying. The marketing variables include, the product, and all its appeals such as price, promotion and distribution and place while the environmental cues will also include cultural, social, personal and psychological factors.

## 2.5 THE BLACK BOX PROCEDURE

Kotler then explain why the buyer decides to buy or rejects the offering. It is therefore necessary for the marketer to search through the buyer’s consciousness after being exposed to all the variables and how his decision was made as to buying or rejecting.

Table 1: Model of Buyer Behavior

Marketing Stimuli	Other Stimuli		Buyer’s Characteristic	Buyer’s Decision Process	Buyer’s Decision
Product Price Place Promotion	Economic Technology Political Cultural		Cultural Social Personal Psychological	Problem recognition. Information search alternatives purchase decision	Product choice Brand choice Dealer’s choice Purchase time Purchase amount

**Source:** Philip Kotler, Marketing Management, eleventh edition, 2003 as adapted.

To the marketer, It would be a worthwhile venture if a marketer understands his market place in order to determine what factors actually motivate his customer to purchase certain products or brands at the expense of other products or brands. The proper conduct of a product attributes will pave way for a marketer to evaluate consumer preferences for a product and strengthen the need for such preferred attributes to meet

consumers preferences. Marketer's ability to realize these preferred attributes is the main issue for an organization to plan and adopt the best marketing strategy to cope with the customer's needs. According to Kotler, Wal-Mart had an initial problem of entering the Latin America market because of its poor understanding of the market which robbed her of potential sales.

It erroneously imported all the store attributes of her US markets into the Latin America without recourse to the peculiarities of the Latin Americans marketing environmental variables in terms of its store designs as the two national markets are fundamentally different (Kotler, 2003). It stands that the Latin Americans marketing habits does not include shopping in stores with large parking slots, tinny aisles containing too many wares on the shelves. Thus, with the products dressed in banners of rioting colors of blue white and red including other characteristics of American settings that are wholly strange to the Latin American shopping environment (Kotler 2003).

### **2.5.1 Market Peculiarities**

Due to the peculiarity of Latin American's shopping habits, they prefer to go shopping with their full family members, which preclude not necessarily using family vehicles but rather going in public commuters. This has made the wide provision of car parks for their shoppers almost meaningless to them. But instead, the Latinos will expect a shopping facility that will embrace roomy aisle whereby their large family members could move in freely through when they are viewing merchandise. Moreover, Wal-Mart's combination of the blue, white and red colors in their style of shelve display only reminded them of the America's oppression under their past colonialism experience. This mistake of market entry plan robbed Wal-Mart the initial large sum of opportunity in the Latin America Market (Kotler 2003).

## **2.6 THE NEED FOR CULTURAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

The influence of culture and social forces are predominant phenomena generally exerted on human in the course of their social interactions within their communities. Many individual actions are taken in response to germane experience within our various environmental settings. For this reason, a marketer will need to examine the behavioral pattern of the society in order to determine how goods and services would be fashioned to meet up with the need and demand of each individual market segments where they operate. Accordingly, Stanton (1985) and Williams (1981) posited that it is most of the time cumbersome to know what is exactly in the thoughts and motives of customers and so the reason why they buy or reject a product elude marketer's comprehension. This same reasoning explains why buyers may not be able to fathom why they buy or not buy some specific products.

Though it is the aim of the marketer to reach a wider number of prospects for her product, this aim begins from the knowledge they gather from the combination of individual prospects about their product that is large enough to embark of a profitable marketing plan and execution (Williams, 1981).

In the words of Stanton (1985), he asserts that, "the countless variations occurring because each consumer is a separate individual with a unique personality, our task of understanding consumer behavior may seem an impossible dream and this will add to the complexity".

It is therefore good for all marketing companies to analyze why customers prefer or reject their products for another company's products (Kotler 2003). And according to Stanton (1983) the reason why consumers purchase certain specific marketing item, is the result of influence exhibited with their subconscious mind, how they feel the product and in the context of what is acceptable in the society where they live. It is incumbent on marketers to find out how the knowledge of culture, society needs affect the behavior of our buyers. Kotler (2003) therefore strongly opined in the following expression, "Culture, sub-culture, and social class are particularly important in buying behavior studies."

### **2.6.1 Culture and Consumer Behavior**

Williams (1985) describes what culture represents in an environment. He posits that culture showcases the way individuals, group of individuals, organizations, communities, nations and even the globe perform certain activities and values symbolically represents their respective behaviors. The tools, artifacts, food, clothing, etc are the products of the respective cultures as identified above. It is therefore not by accident to have identified certain agricultural tools for cultivations from specific areas of the world, so also we have different specific clothes, works of arts and others, countless to mention here one after the others.

In summary, Williams (1985) perfectly defined culture in his own words as follows: “Culture may be defined as the complex of symbols and artifacts created by man and handed down from generation to generation as determinant and regulator of human behavior in a given society. The symbol may be intangible (attitude, beliefs, values, languages, religions) or tangible (tools, housing, products, and works of arts). Culture is totally learned and ‘handed down’ way of life.

“Thus, everybody gets hungry, but what people eat and how they act to satisfy the hunger drive will vary among cultures.” (Williams, 1985)

It is obvious that the way people act, do things, or make their preferences in terms goods and services are largely dependent upon their cultural and social background. Social behaviors are also largely influenced by socio-cultural and sociological institutions which begin from the family settings, schools, peer groups, religious groups, media and government legislations. The job of the marketer is therefore to turn to these institutions to determine the needs and preference of people (consumers) as they individually or in combination influence the demand for the needs and services of their members (Williams, 1985).

According to Kluckhohn (undated) at each level of human development, people way of life are guided by their culture and the deepness and level of their cultural assimilation. These we follow through our life journey. Our life-styles are interrupted by each of the stages we pass through and are bound to follow certain ways of live founded by other people from time to time whether consciously or unconsciously.

Cultural observations are the fundamental determinant of our attitudes and behaviors in the society. Each culture evolves different set of sub cultures known as sub-cultures and members imbibe these set of sub cultural group in the process of socialization. These subcultures identify people as to what segment of a broader culture they belong. Thus Nigeria as a nation with a national culture melt down into different subcultures determined by the way of life the different components of the nation, primarily the regional components of the nation - Such as the northern culture, southern culture, western culture and eastern culture. Each of these sub-cultural settings evolves out of the bigger national culture following different pattern of behaviors which determines the food they eat, the clothe they wear, the music they listen to, marriage system they enter into and so on and so forth (Kotler, 2003). A clearly stand-alone culture or sub-culture forms the basis of market segmentations for marketers to determine the suitability of products they introduce into each set of subculture and the national culture alongside their marketing plans and strategies (Kotler, 2003)

### **2.6.2 Social Impact on Consumer Behavior**

Social influences on our behavior are also largely affected by the social group we belong at different times and stages of our lives. These according to Williams (1985) Consumers imbibe the behavior by copying what they find as a standard norm within the social strata they belong. Marketers therefore strive to identify which behavior is dominant enough amongst the identified social strata that could warrant investing their resources in terms establishing their marketing programs such as providing them with their goods and services (Williams 1985).

Membership of social class is determined by the closeness of behavioral patterns existing amongst the class. This is shown by what they believe in, the general attitudinal observations and the set of social values they are entrenched. Marketers tapped on these identified traits exhibited by the class members to prepare their market offerings and strategies to push them across to consumers (Kotler, 2003).

### **2.6.3 Individual Purchasing Behavior**

Though the purchasing process for both industrial and individual buyers looks similar, individual purchasing process is quite simpler. Both mental and physical processes are employed in each of the processes. Hill (1996) identified certain fundamental procedure observed to be problem solving in the bid to purchase a product. This problem solving process include – recognition of needs, searching for information, evaluation of information, decision taking and decision after purchasing.

### **2.6.4 Need Arouser Stage**

The decision to purchase is not taking in vacuum but rather begins when a prospective consumer feels the need to acquire a product. It could be the need to fulfill a biological demand like food to control a hunger condition or a need to aspire for a higher position and this is identified as a psychological need (Kotler, 2003 and Hill, 1996). Kotler refers to this as “problem solving” while Hill refers to it as a “felt need”. It is important to however know that none of these needs could be satisfied without first noticing the feeling for such need by the consumer. Once the need is felt, then the process of solving the problem begins and one will be eager to get the “problem solved” by getting the “felt need” satisfied.

According to Kotler (2003) it is the responsibility of the marketer to find out what are the arousers for the consumer to get motivated to purchase, and in order to sharpen his techniques and strategies for the consumer to prefer his own product or brand.

### **2.6.5 Information Search Stage**

Having completed the process of felt need, “information search” comes to play (Kotler, 2003 and Hill, 1996). This triggers the concerned consumer to start looking for information about what product will be best for acquisition in order to solve the problem. Depending upon the nature of the problem, at times it may ask for urgent solution or attention (Hill, 1996).

As an example, a hungry man may call at the next take-away food outlet in order to take an urgent step to feed while a car driver running short of gasoline will pull his car behind a pump at the next station to fill his tank to avoid getting stranded.

However, if the problem is not all that simple, such as contemplation for a change of car because the old one is not providing adequate service any longer. Then more information search will continue to help for the type of new car to buy (Kotler, 2003). At this point, Kotler proposes additional type of problem solving scenario which extends the purchasing decision making. He distinguishes between two extension set of arouser here: “Heightened attention” and “active information search”.

For heightened attention, Kotler attributed this to solving an immediate purchasing need (which is simple problem solving) such as food to satisfy a hunger condition, while the active information search (complex search) arouser goes with the need for a new car. The need for a new car will involve an extensive problem solving such as brand, cost, engine capacity, color choice, etc.

### **2.6.6 Evaluation Stage**

The third level of the purchasing problem solving is identified as “evaluation” (Kotler, 2003 and Hill, 1996). This is the processing stage of all the information gathered for the choice of product of brand to purchase

from among the numerous set of brands on which information has been already gathered. The processing of information at this stage, according to Kotler (2003) depends on individual consumer's preferred attributes in a product during the level of information gathering. Different attributes are attached to different products to arrive at a choice as follows in these examples:

“Cameras – speed, sharpness, size of camera, purchase and price;

Hotels – location, atmosphere, cleanliness, environment and price.”

Kotler concluded that it is the strength given to each of the product attribute that will determine the consumer choice of product or brand to purchase.

### **2.6.7 The Subjective Attributes**

In addition to Kotler's attribute propositions, Hill (1996) further suggested at the level of product evaluation, the inclusion of alternating the attributes with replacement of subjective considerations such as “beliefs”, “attitudes”, and “intentions”.

It is imperative to mention here that Hill's “alternative attributes” elaborations are not so needed again to avoid monotony, since all of them have earlier been discussed in this paper under “cultural and environmental” conditions that influence consumer behavior.

### **2.7 FURTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS ON CONSUMER'S “BLACK BOX” APPROACH**

As there are many unclear phenomenon exerting on the consumer's mind during the ‘black box’ processes, It is suggested that the frontier of consumer research be extended to cover the mediation of the intervening variables/ Marketing stimuli (Kotler, 2003) outside the ‘black box approach’ and the affective domain of the physiology of the consumer's brain, before buying or rejection decision takes place. This will throw more lights on marketer's decision making process for a better and fruitful marketing exercise.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic. In this research paper, this methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a research study.

This research work is specifically designed to study Marketer's Conceptual Approach towards Understanding Consumer Behavior. The research design is meant to guide the researcher in the use of the best method of collecting data in the course of the study. The research design used in this study is the simple survey approach. The researcher is interested in only observing Marketer's Conceptual Approach towards Understanding Consumer Behavior.

## **IV. DATA ANALYSIS**

There has always been the need for a fairly accurate data to be collected for any reliable information to be produced from it. This has prompted the researcher to adopt the best and most appropriate techniques and method of data collection needed.

The researcher employed both primary and secondary sources of data collection in writing this research work. In the primary data the researcher used the face-to-face interview method; Face-to-face interview is a data collection method when the interviewer directly communicates with the respondent in accordance with the prepared questionnaire. In addition, the researcher used standardized interview protocol and a standardized set of responses for recording participants' responses all in a bid to achieve the objective of the research work.



In the secondary sources of data collection the researcher obtained data from text books and previous write-ups on the study, as well as journals and also on the internet.

The researcher used the pilot study which is also called a feasibility study or experimental trial that often consists of a smaller-sized study which assist in planning and modification of a research study. Thus, since reliability is an essential pre-condition for validity the researcher employed a pilot study which mainly requires a range of few respondents that could be less than 10 - 30, though there may be a substantial increase in the sample size for a pilot study (Malhotra, 2008).

Table 1: Summary of Research Hypotheses

Variables	Coefficien t	Hypotheses	Z-value	p- value	Decision on H0
MGP=EMP	-0.373	I	-6.880	0.000	Rejected
MTV=EMP	0.226	II	4.360	0.000	Rejected
INS=EMP	0.161	III	3.172	0.002	Rejected

**Source:** Researcher Computation October 2021

### Hypothesis One

**HO<sup>1</sup>:** Marketer's Conceptual Approach is unimportant towards Understanding Consumer Behavior.

Consumer behavior as one of the explanatory variable showed a negative correlation coefficient (-0.373), with a p-value of 0.000 significant at 1% significance level which simply means that Marketer's Conceptual Approach is important towards Understanding Consumer Behavior.

### Hypothesis Two

**HO<sup>2</sup>:** Consumer behavior is not important on how people make decisions about what they buy, want, need, or act in regards to a product, service, or company.

Consumer behavior as one of the explanatory variable showed a negative correlation coefficient (0.226), with a p-value of 0.000 significant at 1% significance level. This implies that Consumer behavior is vital and important on how people make decisions about what they buy, want, need, or act in regards to a product, service, or company.

### Hypothesis Three

**HO<sup>3</sup>:** It is not important to understand consumer behavior in order to know and find out how potential customers will respond to a new product or service.

Consumer behavior as one of the explanatory variable showed a negative correlation coefficient (0.161), with a p-value of 0.002 significant at 1% significance level which implies that it is important to understand consumer behavior in order to know and find out how potential customers will respond to a new product or service.

## V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1 Conclusion

We have dealt extensively with this paper titled, "Marketer's Conceptual Approach towards Understanding Consumer Behavior", beginning with the explanation of who a consumer is, and what binds a consumer and customer concepts together; and at the same time what separates them. The knowledge of what makes up

purchasing behavior has been understood. Knowing why consumers buy or not buy a product or brand; why they choose to buy from a particular store but not in other stores. At what time the respective consumer prefers to buy (Stanton, 1981).

Culture has been singled out as a major behavioral concept that consumers, purchasing intentions deal upon and marketers are to be necessarily well grounded in the knowledge of cultural influence in consumer buying decision making (Williams, 1985). Social and environmental influences are also not left out in marketer's bid to better understand his customer while planning for the product alongside the marketing plans and strategies to reach the customer/ consumer (Williams, 1985).

In our attempts to still better understand the mind and motives of our consumer preferences, we delve into applying the psychology approach in understanding human mental processes in general and in specific term, the "mind and psyche" of the consumer via the psychologist "black box" approach (Kotler, 2003).

However, this topic cannot be completely concluded without the knowledge of what happens to the consumer after the purchase and consumption of the product or brand. This is what the marketer will refer to as the "purchase and post-purchase" decisions. At the purchase decision level, Hill (1996) refers to it as "outcome". While Kotler (2003), simply concluded as "purchase decision". At this level some consumers will feel to buy and some oblige to reject the product and look further for alternatives. At this point, some buyers who favored purchasing the product may feel absolutely alright with their choice while some may feel dissatisfied for their purchase and still some may be less concerned. But for whatever maybe the feelings, the purchaser will still be aware of the amount of satisfaction he derives from his decision (Hill, 1996).

When this purchase concerns a complex decision making as it happens during a high involving and very costly purchases, ending up (post-purchase decision) in dissatisfaction, and especially when the product is expected to stay very long with the consumer this leads to a condition of disharmony in the mind of the consumer. This Festinger (1962) refers to as "Cognitive Dissonance".

Leon Festinger in 1962 defines the term as follows: "In psychology, cognitive dissonance is the mental stress or discomfort experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values at the same time, performs an action that is contradictory to one or more beliefs, ideas or values, or is confronted by new information that conflicts with existing beliefs, ideas, or values"

Lastly, Kotler agrees that after the purchase, there is tendency for the consumer to be either in a satisfactory or dissatisfactory situation. This situation could be "very high, high, low or very low" which will need marketer's attention. Kotler (2003) proffers some measures of adjustable propositions to the affected consumers who are not comfortable at the end of their purchases with options of:

A dissatisfied consumer having the option of abandoning or returning the product, changing the product for an acceptable one; seek for enough information before purchasing especially for a high value and expensive product; by complaining to the company; involving a lawyer for legal action; by complaining to specific arm of government department or agency; by boycotting the company's patronage known as "exit action"; persuading the public not to patronize the company's product offerings otherwise known as "voice option". Taking these actions shows that the company is not doing any good job by failing to satisfy her consumers. To round-up the discussion, Kotler also proposes the following remedy at the disposal of the firm as to install confidence in consumers as follows:

The firm could enter into post transactional information to consumers; order replacement and cancellation of product orders and possible part payment returns; Companies could also choose to send letters of congratulations to buyers for choosing their product - this is frequently done by high involving engineering product companies. It is also possible to show adverts of buyers who are satisfied with their purchases and

are jubilating. Satisfied customers could also write their testimonies in favor of their suppliers to convince prospective buyers (Kotler, 2003).

If all these approaches and strategies are meticulously applied, harmony could be restored amongst the affected parties.

## 5.2 Recommendation

This research is recommended for further study. This is because it deals with consumer behavior, which is not static but dynamic and capable of being influenced to change with passage of time.

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