Chapter 1
An Introduction to Consumer Psychology

ABSTRACT

Consumer psychology has been vital to the business world from its initial stages until the sales and sometimes even after the sales (providing updates, spares, and services). Marketing has focused strategies that provide consumer satisfaction. It has never been static but always has renewed itself according to the changing and developing world. This chapter provides an introduction to consumer psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior is very like marketing; it is a dynamic, complicated, and fully unresolved process. Professionals have indicated the importance of consumers' inner world rather than their behaviors all time. Levy (1959) in his symbols for sale study pointed out consumers' mind and inner world play a critical role to understand consumer behavior. Belk (1988, 1989, 2014) indicated the meaning of the object, and these possessions' impact on consumer self-concept (Belk, 1988). Zaltman (2003) proposed that it is essential to reach consumers' mind to understand them and precisely emphasized that understanding consumer behavior is possible by just understanding their mind.

Pham (2013) pointed out that consumer psychology could not provide expected efficacy for both academics and marketers due to some problems, and he called this problem as "the seven sins of consumer psychology." These are:

Figure 1. History of marketing definition
Adapted from AMA, 2008

Marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers.

1935

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

2004

1985

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.

2007

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.

- The scope of consumer behavior research is evaluated in narrow scope,
- Engage the narrow set of theoretical lenses,
- Devotion to a narrow epistemology of consumer behavior,
- Overemphasize physical processes rather psychological content,
- Overgeneralize empirical results, both as authors and as reviewers,
- Try to find convenience ways preparing a research; and
- Setting and discussing research based on narrow theoretical lenses (411-423).

Although the author classified obstacles to gain a deep understanding and to reach the consumer behavior, all items point out the narrow view of consumer behavior neglecting consumers' inner world.

This book aims to emphasize consumers' inner world and its importance. Chapters were constructed on human psychology and consumer behavior aspects jointly. Consumer psychology is explained by using research on the consumer behavior and the basic human psychology. In this chapter first, the psychology is explained and then consumer and consumption concepts are expressed.

WHAT IS CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY?

Psychology, in short, is the science of human nature. It concerns all about the human mind, i.e., how human feel, think, act, etc., and defined as "the study

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