

Module - 6

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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LESSON – 14

MOTIVATIONAL THEORIES, APPLICATION AND THEIR IMPLICATION FOR MARKETERS

Instructional Objectives:

After completion of this lesson, the student shall know about:

6.1.3 Motivational Theories and their Implication for Marketers

6.1.4 Motivational Research and its Applicability: Implication for Marketers

6.1.3 MOTIVATIONAL THEORIES AND THEIR IMPLICATION FOR MARKETERS:

6.1.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory:

The Hierarchy of Needs Theory, proposed by Abraham Maslow, a clinical psychologist in 1943, is regarded as one of the most important contributions to the field of motivational research. Maslow proposed that human needs could be classified into five basic levels, viz., basic /primary needs, safety/security needs, social/affiliation needs, ego/esteem needs and self actualization needs. Each of the needs could be ranked in order of importance from the lowest to the highest through a pyramidal structure starting from basic /primary needs to the safety/security needs to the social/affiliation needs to the ego/esteem needs, to finally the self actualization needs. The first two needs, viz. basic /primary needs and safety/security needs were biogenic in nature and were regarded as lower-order needs; while the rest of the three, viz., social/affiliation needs, ego/esteem needs and self actualization needs were psychogenic in nature and were regarded as higher-order needs. According to the theory, these needs are hierarchical and an individual will go level by level, starting first with the fulfillment of the lower-order needs and gradually move towards the fulfillment of the higher-order needs. A person cannot move to the second level unless the first level is satisfied. Once a level is satisfied, it ceases to be a motivator and the moves to the next.

The theory was indeed a pioneering piece of work and has been versatile enough to be applied across social science disciplines. Consumer behaviorists have found the versatility of the theory highly useful while testing consumer motivation. The five needs and the terminology has been universally used and tested across disciplines. The need classification is generic enough to include needs that individuals possess. However, critics argue that the pyramidal structure fails the test of real life situations and practical testing. Even consumer behavior researchers have pointed out its limitation especially in terms of consumers moving hierarchically across needs from lower levels to higher levels. Consumers experience multiplicity of needs and wants and often satisfy them simultaneously rather than looking at their relativity. Consumers also often sacrifice one need for another.

Implication for Marketers:

a) The five-need classification clearly spells out the various reasons for which people get motivated towards product/service offerings:

- food, water, houses: basic /primary/ physiological needs
- life insurance policies, savings and current accounts in banks: safety/security needs
- membership to clubs, buying houses in residential societies: social/affiliation needs
- cars, pent houses, jewellery, membership to premium clubs and societies: ego/esteem needs
- admission to professional courses: self actualization needs.

The theory could help marketers understand consumer behavior and needs.

b) Based on the needs and the corresponding motives for purchase and consumption of product/service offerings, the marketer can identify vital clues for segmentation and positioning. Keeping in mind the particular need-motive pattern, the marketer can identify the segment that would be most lucrative for his product/service offerings. This could help him devise his marketing mix (4 Ps) to suit the needs of that segment, and then position accordingly.

Example 1: Maggi 2 Minute Noodles: Need: Hunger

Motive: Quick Snack, Easy to Cook

Major Segment: Children and Teenagers.

The mix: Small packs, attractive colour and packaging, fun and social appeal in advertisements.

Example 2: Close up Gel Toothpaste

Motive: Prevents bad breath.

Major Segment: Teenagers and Youth.

The mix: 3 varieties, red (regular), blue (crystal) and green (natural and menthol), attractive colour, packaging in various sizes, social appeal in advertisements.

Example 3: Maruti Versa

Motive: Travelling distances together

Major Segment: Large families, Upper middle class segment.

The mix: Large spacious vehicle, with double ACs, five doors, 5 lakhs.

c) The marketer could also benefit from the versatility of the theory where varied appeals for a product/service offering can be developed through the five levels of needs. Marketing promotion can be designed to appeal to one or more of the needs.

Example: The lady of the house turns professional. She picks up a part-time job, and works during such timings when her children are away to school. Out of her first salary, she buys a Samsung Microwave, 32 litres capacity for Rs. 16000 (See Table 1).

Table 1: Example: A Microwave Owen: Need versus Appeal

Needs	Appeal
- basic /primary/ physiological needs	The appeal would show: - microwave oven can help cook food quickly and easily.
- safety/security needs:	- how safe the product is for use of self, children. - how safe it is for the food that is cooked and consumed and for the environment (non-radiation)
- social/affiliation needs	- how the lady of the house can sit with the family/friends/guest while the food is being cooked. She does not have to keep standing in the kitchen while the food is cooked. She can auto-time it.
- ego/esteem needs	- she can afford it. - she is a proud owner.
-self actualization	- she bought it out of her first salary.

d) The flexibility of the theory makes it adaptable across study of various market research problems.

6.1.3.2 Mc Clelland's Trio of Needs Theory:

Another psychologist, Mc Clelland proposed a theory of Motivation that has come to be known as the Three Need Theory or the Trio of Needs Theory or the Learned Needs Theory. According to him, an individual's needs are acquired over time and are learned and accordingly shaped by ones' life experiences. These needs can be classified into three categories, and thus constitute the Trio, viz., Needs for power (nPow), affiliation (nAff) and achievement (NAch).

a) Needs for power (nPow): this refers to a desire within a person to control others (like people, situations, objects etc).

b) Need for affiliation (nAff): this refers to a desire for friendship, belongingness and social acceptance.

c) Need for achievement (nAch): this refers to a desire and pride for accomplishment and success.

This need theory shows similarity and also overlaps with Maslow's Need Theory. For example, Mc Clelland's need for power, closely relates with safety and esteem need; the need for affiliation relates to social needs and the need for achievement relates to the esteem and self actualization needs. Nevertheless, the theory holds a place for itself and has implications for social researchers and practitioners.

Implication for Marketers:

a) The trio of needs theory could explain why people get motivated towards purchase and consumption patterns of certain product/service offerings:

i) Needs for power (nPow):

Examples:

- People get attracted towards fast cars, motorcycles with greater horsepower. Such automobiles depict masculinity.
- They also desire for positions in the government and its machinery etc so as to be able to make policy decisions and control others.

ii) Need for affiliation (nAff):

Examples:

- People like to buy products and services that relate to their culture, social class and lifestyle. They prefer a social approval from people from their social class. Food items, clothing and apparel and even hobbies and interest relate to one's social class.
- People desire partying and celebrating together, and on such occasions, snacks and beverages are common products.
- People like holidaying together as family or friends etc. Holiday packages are prepared by the tours and travel companies.

Examples:

- People desire to qualify important competitive exams leading to admission in premier institutes so as to obtain education in professional courses eg. medicine, law, business administration etc. This provides them with a sense of accomplishment. Thus, they join and takes services from coaching institutes (See Table 2).

- b) Drawing upon such needs and their relevance, the marketer can take a lead towards developing effective segmentation and positioning strategies.

Table 2: Examples: Trio of Needs versus Examples for Segmentation and Positioning

Needs	Examples: Segmentation & Positioning Strategies
- Need for power	<p>- Need to exert control over other persons, objects, situations.</p> <p><u>Example 1:</u> Control over headache, pain and agony</p> <p>- Segment: The youth, middle aged and old</p> <p>- Product: Saridon</p> <p>- Positioning Appeal: Agony</p> <p><u>Example 2:</u> Control over speed, power and travel</p> <p>- Segment: The youth</p> <p>- Product: Hero Honda Bikes 100 cc and 150 cc</p> <p>- Positioning Appeal: Fill it, Shut it, Forget it</p>
- Need for affiliation	<p>- Need for social belongingness and acceptance</p> <p><u>Example 1:</u> People sitting together and enjoying coffee</p> <p>- Segment: The youth</p> <p>- Product: Nescafe Coffee</p> <p>- Positioning Appeal: Togetherness, Social appeal</p> <p><u>Example 2:</u> Being together whole day long at work, inspite of body odour and perspiration</p> <p>- Segment: The youth</p> <p>- Product: Rexona Deospray</p>
- Need for achievement	<p>- Positioning Appeal: 24 hour intensive Anti-perspirant</p> <p>- Need for accomplishment and excellence</p> <p><u>Example 1:</u> Coaching Institutes</p> <p>- Segment: The teenagers</p> <p>- Product: Bansal classes and test series</p> <p>- Positioning Appeal: Interviews/Statements with toppers and high success rate</p> <p><u>Example 2:</u> Suiting and shirting</p> <p>- Segment: The youth, middle aged</p> <p>- Product: Grasim</p> <p>- Positioning Appeal: Successful executives: conduct of business and meeting</p>

6.1.3.3 Sheth's Consumer Motives:

Professor Jagdish N. Sheth, proposed a classification of needs more pertinent to marketing management. While he primarily researched in the area of travel industry, the findings are equally applicable across most products and services. Sheth classified motives into five dimensions, viz., functional motives, aesthetic/emotional motives, social motives, situational motives and curiosity motives. According to him, each of these is oriented to the achievement of specific goals.

- a) Functional motives: this refers to the utility of a product/service, the utility and the function that is performed.
- b) Aesthetic/emotional motives: this refers to the attractiveness in terms of appearance and looks of the product/service.
- c) Social motives: this is the esteem value attached to the product/service.
- d) Situational motives: this refers to the unanticipated and unexpected benefits attached to a product/service, like discounts and allowances.
- e) Curiosity motives: this is the interest aroused by a product/service.

(See Table 3).

Implication for Marketers:

The marketer could benefit from the versatility of the theory where these varied motives, each oriented to the achievement specific goals can be better explained.

Example: A person, in sub-urban Mumbai, turns successful as a businessman. He now desires to migrate to the posh Juhu area of Mumbai and purchases a bungalow in the posh locality, next to seaside.

6.1.4 MOTIVATIONAL RESEARCH AND ITS APPLICABILITY:

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS:

Human motives are hypothetical in nature; they are varied across people and also across situations; they are abstract and sometimes cannot be exactly identified by people themselves. They could also remain outside the preview of exact identification and measurement by researchers; thus, the measurement of consumption motives and the processes that underlie consumption processes and patterns of behavior have been a subject of question and debate.

Table 3: Example: Motives and Versatility

Motives	Example: Versatility
	Purchase of the flat
a) Functional motive	- play to stay.
b) Aesthetic/emotional motive	- good looking bungalow - appealing interiors and exteriors - beautiful location, nest to the seaside, beach and palm trees
c) Social motive	- reflects upper class status, lifestyle and values
d) Situational motive	- it was bought unexpectedly; the person who owned it earlier was desperate to sell as he needed money (otherwise property in Juhu was unavailable) - bought it at a good bargain
e) Curiosity motive	- always wanted to experience a seaside living with palm trees all around, and rich people all around - it is a new experience

Consumer behaviorist and researchers use multiple tools and techniques for measurement of consumer motives. These include consumer surveys and projective tests to study underlying motives, and observations of consumers at store to study direct behavior. These tools are useful if used in conjunction with each other; they complement each other and help facilitate drawing up of valid and reliable findings.

Motivational research attempts to identify underlying motives, desires and feelings concerning consumption of product/service offerings and corresponding consumption patterns. Its understanding has relevance and applicability for marketing managers who could benefit from such research for reasons that are many. A few of them are listed as follows:

1. Motivational research helps discover and identify the forces/needs/desires, urges/drives and resultant behavior in the marketplace. In other words, it helps explain the actual reasons underlying consumer behavior.

A product and service offering helps meet a multitude of needs; as has been explained in the examples above, the purchase of a microwave helps meet various needs; the purchase of a bungalow in Juhu meets several motives; a product/service offering could meet one or few or all of these needs. Thus, a product/service offering meets many needs and motives across people and situations. Each one of us attaches a level of priority to these needs/motives.

Nevertheless an in depth study across a sample drawn from the segment to whom the product/service offering is made, can help make generalization and thereby, help understand consumer decision making, resultant behavior and consumption patterns. He could take decisions related to segmentation and positioning. The product/service offering could be fin tuned with the most important need/motive of the majority of the segment and positioned accordingly in the minds of the consumer. For example, for a person who has suddenly become rich and wants to possess a house in Juhu, the esteem and achievement need (Maslow) and the aesthetic, social and curiosity motives (Sheth) hold priority.

2. The marketer could use findings from motivational research to influence consumer decision making to his favor.

With a particular product/service offering meeting many needs and motives, the consumer is pulled and influenced towards varied brand offerings, each of which is positioned on different needs/motives. For example, a couple wants to buy a refrigerator. The joint decision making gets complicated when the husband looks at the cooling function and the compressor (functional motive), while the wife gives priority to the good looks and color (aesthetic motive). Such a conflict could also occur at an intra individual level in case of a single person making a decision, in the form of approach-approach, approach-avoidance and avoidance-avoidance conflict.

Thus the consumer faces a dilemma due to the strength and weakness of different motives and the corresponding brands. The marketer could use such a conflict situation to his favor, when he is able to understand the underlying motive, and push his brand offering if he is aware of the underlying motive. He can relate his brand offering to the benefits that the consumer segment seeks. For the above example, if he feels that the decision would end up as a male dominated decision, he would stress on functional benefits and utility of his brand, and help resolve a conflict situation.

3. Knowledge of consumer motivation can help a marketer trigger off motives to his advantage. Once a need/motive is activated, it leads to an urge/desire to act. So marketers can trigger off needs/motives by presenting desirable/required stimuli, so that they can experience desirable consumption behavior.

a) The marketer can help the consumer identify such needs and wants that exist in the sub-conscious, i.e. he could trigger subconscious motivation. Once he does that and brings them to the surface level, he can translate the need into a want, and take advantage of the product/service offering and his brand. For example, need to smell good and deodorants.

b) He could also induce the process through need-benefit segmentation and offer products and services that meet the needs of the target segment. He could segment the market on motivational needs.

c) The marketer can also try to lead the consumer from an actual state to a desired state by luring him towards improvised versions of existing products. The marketer could

highlight product/service features in the improvised versions and attract the consumers to buy their brands. For example, mobile phones.

4. Drawing on from knowledge of consumer motivation, the marketers could also gain insights into consumers' reactions any or all of the 4Ps, as also towards changes that are brought upon in the mix. This could also include reactions towards other changes in the marketing mix. He could use motivational needs to design product/service offerings, determine his pricing strategy based on rational/emotional motives that the majority of the segment has, develop promotional messages to appeal to customers etc.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING:

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FAQS (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS):

Ques 1 Assess in the context of consumer behavior, Maslow's Heirarchy of Needs Theory.

Ans 1 The Heirarchy of Needs Theory, proposed by Abraham Maslow, a clinical psychologist in 1943, is regarded as one of the most important contributions to the field of motivational research. Maslow proposed that human needs could be classified into five basic levels, viz., basic /primary needs, safety/security needs, social/affiliation needs, ego/esteem needs and self-actualization needs. According to the theory, these needs are hierarchical and an individual will go level by level, starting first with the fulfillment of the lower-order needs (basic/primary needs, safety/security needs) and gradually move towards the fulfillment of the higher-order needs (social/affiliation needs, ego/esteem needs and self-actualization needs). A person cannot move to the second level unless the first level is satisfied. Once a level is satisfied, it ceases to be a motivator and the moves to the next.

The theory was indeed a pioneering piece of work and has been versatile enough to be applied across social science disciplines. Consumer behaviorist have found the versatility of the theory highly useful while testing consumer motivation. The five needs and the terminology has been universally used and tested across disciplines. The need classification is generic enough to include needs that individuals possess. However, critics argue that the pyramidal structure fails the test of real life situations and practical testing. Even consumer behavior researchers have pointed out its limitation especially in terms of consumers moving hierarchically across needs from lower levels to higher levels. Consumers experience multiplicity of needs and wants and often satisfy them simultaneously rather than looking at their relativity. Consumers also often sacrifice one need for another.

Ques 2 Explain with an example Prof. Jagdish Sheth's Consumer Motives.

Ans 2 Professor Jagdish Sheth, proposed a classification of needs more pertinent to marketing management. While he primarily researched in the area of treval industry, the findings are equally applicable across most products and services. Sheth classified motives into five dimensions, viz., functional motives, aesthetic/emotional motives, social motives, situational motives and curiosity motives. According to him, each of these is oriented to the achievement of specific goals.

- a) Functional motives: this refers to the utility of a product/service, the utility and the function that is performed.
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Example: A person, in sub-urban Mumbai, turns successful as a s businessman. He now desires to migrate to the posh Juhu area of Mumbai and purchases a bungalow in the posh locality, next to seaside.

Table: Example: Motives and Versatility
Motives **Example: Versatility**

Purchase of the flat

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| a) Functional motive | - play to stay. |
| b) Aesthetic/emotional motive | - good looking bungalow
- appealing interiors and exteriors
- beautiful location, nest to the seaside, beach and palm trees |
| c) Social motive | - reflects upper class status, lifestyle and values |
| d) Situational motive | - it was bought unexpectedly; the person who owned it earlier was desperate to sell as he needed money (otherwise property in Juhu was unavailable)
- bought it at a good bargain |
| e) Curiosity motive | - always wanted to experience a seaside living with palm trees all around, and rich people all around
- it is a new experience |

Ques 3 Critically assess the nature and importance of motivational research?

Ans 3 Human motives are hypothetical in nature; they are varied across people and also across situations; they are abstract and sometimes cannot be exactly identified by people themselves. They could also remain outside the preview of exact identification and measurement by researchers; thus, the measurement of consumption motives and the processes that underlie consumption processes and patterns of behavior have been a subject of question and debate.

Consumer behaviorist and researchers use multiple tools and techniques for measurement of consumer motives. These include consumer surveys and projective tests to study underlying motives, and observations of consumers at store to study direct behavior. These tools are useful if used in conjunction with each other; they complement each other and help facilitate drawing up of valid and reliable findings.

Motivational research attempts to identify underlying motives, desires and feelings concerning consumption of product/service offerings and corresponding

consumption patterns. Its understanding has relevance and applicability for marketing managers who could benefit from such research for reasons that are many.

SELF EVALUATION TESTS/QUIZZES:

Section A True/false:

1. Maslow proposed that human needs could be classified into four basic levels.
2. A product and service offering helps meet a multitude of needs.

Section B Fill up the blanks:

1. Sheth classified motives into five dimensions, viz., functional motives, aesthetic/emotional motives, _____ motives, _____ motives and curiosity motives.
2. _____ proposed the Trio of Needs Theory.

Section C Multiple choice questions:

1. People get attracted towards fast cars, robust engines and speed. This exhibits the need for _____.

- a) Achievement
- b) Power
- c) Affiliation
- d) Esteem

2. Which of the following is a false statement?

- a) Human motives are hypothetical in nature.
- b) Motives are varied across people and also across situations
- c) Motives can be exactly identified by people themselves
- d) All of the above

Section D Short answers:

1. Give an example to highlight the versatility of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory.
2. What is the implication of McClelland's Theory for Marketers?
3. Give three reasons as to why motivational research is important and applicable to the study of consumer behavior?

KEY

Section A True/false:

1. False
2. True

Section B Fill up the blanks:

1. Social, Situational
2. Mc Clelland

Section C Multiple choice questions:

1. b
2. c

Section D Short Answers:

1. Example: The lady of the house turns professional. She picks up a part-time job, and works during such timings when her children are away to school. Out of her first salary, she buys a Samsung Microwave, 32 litres capacity for Rs. 16000.

Table : Example: A Microwave Oven: Need versus Appeal

Needs	Appeal
- basic /primary needs	The appeal would show: - microwave oven can help cook food quickly and easily.
- safety/security needs	- how safe the product is for use of self, children. - how safe it is for the food that is cooked and consumed and for the environment (non-radiation).
- social/affiliation needs	- how the lady of the house can sit with the family/friends/guest while the food is being cooked. She does not have to keep standing in the kitchen while the food is cooked. She can auto-time it.
- ego/esteem needs	- she can afford it. - she is a proud owner.
-self actualization	- she bought it out of her first salary.

2. According to Mc Clelland Theory, needs can be classified into three categories, and thus constitute the Trio, viz., Needs for power (nPow), affiliation (nAff) and achievement (NAch). The theory has implications for marketers. The trio of needs theory could explain why people get motivated towards purchase and consumption patterns of certain product/service offerings; Needs for power (nPow): fast cars, motorcycles; Need for affiliation (nAff): membership to clubs; Need for achievement (nAch): admission to professional courses. Drawing upon such needs and their relevance, the marketer can take a lead towards developing effective segmentation and positioning strategies.

3. Motivational research is important and applicable to the study of consumer behavior because of the following reasons:

- i) Motivational research helps discover and identify the forces/needs/desires, urges/drives and resultant behavior in the marketplace. In other words, it helps explain the actual reasons underlying consumer behavior.
 - ii) The marketer could use findings from motivational research to influence consumer decision making to his favor.
 - iii) Knowledge of consumer motivation can help a marketer trigger off motives to his advantage. Once a need/motive is activated, it leads to an urge/desire to act. So marketers can trigger off needs/motives by presenting desirable/required stimuli, so that they can experience desirable consumption behavior.
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