

CIE Psychology A-level

Psychology and Consumer Behaviour

Notes



Part A: The Physical Environment

Retail/Leisure Environment Design

- According to Turley and Milliman (2000), retail environments can either be enticing (approach behaviours) or alienating (avoidance behaviours). The likelihood that a customer will make purchases depends on external variables, interior variables, layout and design, point of purchase, decoration and human variables.
- Music is a particularly important general interior variable, alongside more recent research focusing on the role of aroma. Lighting is also associated with the store's image i.e. the customer's perception of the store.
- Layout can be designed strategically to highlight the most important, newest or expensive products, alongside increasing the likelihood of making unplanned purchases. Product displays which are attractive also increase this likelihood, and the area denoted to each item signifies its importance.
- Through the use of a quasi-experiment, Finlay et al (2006) investigated the effects of general interior variables on casino customers, who were exposed to a casino with an emphasis on nature and relaxation (Kranes), or with a greater focus on the machines (Friedman). The researchers demonstrated that Kranes' layout evoked more feelings of relaxation and intimacy, which translated into higher sales and more games being played by the customers.
- Vrechopolous et al (2004) suggests that the design of a virtual store is just as important as a real-life store, and measured the effects of using three different layouts: free-form, grid and racetrack, using 120 participants from the UK and Greece who were given £20 to spend in the online stores. The findings demonstrated that a free-form layout was the most popular amongst customers and that it made the shopping experience more 'fun', whilst the traditional grid proved to be less effective. This suggests that organisations need to be flexible in their approach to store design in order to maximise profitability.

Evaluation

1. Since Turley and Milliman have identified many variables which may impact upon the shopping experience, this suggests that companies may make more informed choices about new store layouts and strategic designs in order to maximise profitability.
2. However, Finlay's use of a quasi-experiment may mean that he incorrectly drew causal conclusions. This is because this experimental design lacks the highly-controlled conditions associated with a laboratory experiment, so the biasing effects of extraneous and confounding variables were not controlled for.
3. The three theories above all have real-life, practical applications, through the improvement of retail and leisure designs, which will translate into increased sales and an improved company image.

Sound and Consumer Behaviour

- North et al (2003) demonstrated that classical music may produce the greatest profitability of a restaurant, as indicated by the mean amount of money each customer spent over a three-week period, as opposed to pop music and non music. This was supported by statistical analyses, showing that the classical music group also spent significantly more, on average, on starters and coffee compared to the other experimental and control groups. This may be because the classical music was in sync with the other aspects of the expensive restaurant e.g. styling and decor.
- Classical music can also increase average spending when such music is not in line or 'synergistic' with the other aspects of the dining area, as demonstrated by North and Hargreaves (1998) in a school canteen.



- Using a field experiment, Gueguen et al (2007) investigated the effects of music played in open-air retail environments, such as a stall. The researchers found that customers stayed at the stall for an average of 1.55 more minutes when music was played, compared to when there was no music, and also bought on average 8% more goods. This may be due to music distorting our perception of time.
- Woods et al (2011), using a laboratory experiment, found that sound has a significant effect on an individual's perception of the taste of food! For example, there's a negative correlation between the increasing volume of the music used in the retail setting and the decreasing rates of reporting sweetness and saltiness, showing that tastes which are usually unaffected by sound can be adversely affected when poised within certain retail environments. This was also accompanied by increased ratings of the crunchiness of food when there was louder music being played.

Evaluation

1. There are important real-life applications associated with an increased understanding of the influence of music on retail environments. This means that companies can make more informed choices about which music to include, according to the other aspects of their environment and the product they are selling.
2. The limitations of such studies must also be considered, especially the rarity of music being played in open-plan areas, and so this is a particular limitation of Gueguen et al's work.
3. There are methodological limitations associated with the use of field and quasi experiments. The lack of highly controlled conditions means that the findings are likely to be affected by the bias of uncontrolled confounding and extraneous variables, which means that causal conclusions may be incorrectly drawn.

Lighting, Colour and Smell

- According to Mehrabian and Russel (1974), aromas can intervene between cues in the environment and our consequent behaviour, thus being able to shape our behaviour in this way in a positive way, if the aromas have been selected carefully.
- According to Lazarus' (1966) cognition-emotion model, scents can impact upon the emotions which customers feel when they enter the store and their perception of this environment.
- Kutlu et al (2013) found that out of 121 participants (the overwhelming majority being female), lighting colour schemes were important to 75% of respondents, giving the majority of them a sense of stylishness and luxury. This supports the idea that both lighting and colour can be used strategically to increase sales.
- In a field experiment conducted by Chebat and Michon (2003) into the effects of odor on the emotional arousal of customers in a retail environment, the researchers found that scent has a significant influence on the customer's perception of the store, and particularly if this is an ambient scent, resulting in increased store sales and profitability.

Evaluation

1. The use of field experiments by Kutlu and Chebat and Michon increase the ecological validity of their findings because behaviour was studied in the environment within which it would usually occur, and so this minimises the risk of demand characteristics and participant reactivity biasing the findings.
2. However, the lack of control over confounding and extraneous variables means a reduction in the validity of the conclusions drawn because it is increasingly difficult to draw a reliable 'cause and effect' relationship between two variables/outcomes.
3. The studies above may have breached the BPS ethical guideline of privacy. Although most shoppers would not object to having their behaviour monitored whilst shopping, the amount of money they spend and on what they spend it is very much private and may be a cause of embarrassment or modesty for some.

Part B: The Psychological Environment

Environmental Influences on Consumers

- Mackay and Olshavsky (1975) measured the effects of cognitive maps using 78 supermarket shoppers from Indiana, who had to rate their local 8 supermarkets according to price, distance, size of the store and quality. After respondents drew a map of the location of these



- supermarkets relative to their home or workplace, the researchers found that preference had a greater effect on map-drawing compared to the actual behaviour displayed by each participant.
- Machleit et al (2000) studied the effects of crowding in retail environments and found that overcrowding leads to an increased frequency of negative emotions on the part of the consumer, lower levels of satisfaction and also lower levels of the individual's expectations of the shop. These results can be interpreted with the consideration that different people have different tolerances for crowding, and so will be affected by different stress levels. This effect is weaker in discount-stores, and stronger in luxury brands.
 - Gil et al (2009) studied shopper movement patterns in a supermarket, using a quasi-experiment where the researchers did not manipulate any of the variables. Shoppers were tagged so they could be identified on CCTV, and then were interviewed by the researchers on topics such as the amount of money they'd spent and on which items. The researchers concluded that there were 5 different types of shopping movement patterns: the raider, explorer, tourist, native and the specialist.



Evaluation

1. Mackay and Olshavsky conducted their research as part of a laboratory experiment. This has the advantage of maintaining highly-controlled conditions, which minimises the biasing effects of extraneous and confounding variables, which increases the validity of the conclusions drawn.
2. Gil et al used a quasi-experiment, which has the benefit of producing findings with high ecological validity. This is because there is no manipulation of the independent variable (and so reduces the effects of participant reactivity and researcher bias) and behaviour is recorded in the environment within which it usually occurs, thus minimising the effects of demand characteristics.
3. There are real-life applications associated with an improved understanding of cognitive maps and how these can affect the consumer's perception of the overall quality of the brand. Further research can be conducted into this area to improve understanding and design stores in accordance with customer's cognitive maps. The study of shopper movement patterns can be utilised by stores to increase 'impulse buys', whereby the customer is guided towards specific areas of the store and has an array of products to choose from when waiting at the checkout.
4. The majority of these studies have been conducted in Western cultures, such as the UK and the USA, meaning that a consideration of individualistic cultural norms towards spending must be taken, in contrast to collectivist cultural norms.

Menu Design Psychology

- Pavesic (2005) suggested that the 'key is in the details' when it comes to menu design, and using this as a tool to increase customer spending and loyalty. Examples include the layout, font size, the number of items on the menu, and the extent to which the menu matches the theme of the restaurant. This idea was further developed by Seaberg (1971), who suggested that drawing the customers' attention to certain items is essential to increasing profits e.g. those items with the largest profit margins.
- Dayan and Bar-Hillel (2011) studied the effects of changing primacy, recency and menu item positions. They found that customers are more likely to choose items at the top or bottom of the menu, compared to in the centre (56%). In a second study, out of a total of 951 orders, the most commonly ordered items were those on the 'extremes' of the menu i.e. the topmost or bottommost items.
- Wansink et al (2005) studied the link between sensory perception and the name of a menu item. The researchers found that when 'new' labels (nostalgic labels with geographical references) were placed instead of traditional ones (e.g. Succulent Italian Seafood Filet), these descriptive labels changed the customer's perception of the food as having more calories but also being more appealing. This means that the use of descriptive food labels can improve sales and a customer's perception of the restaurant and its food!

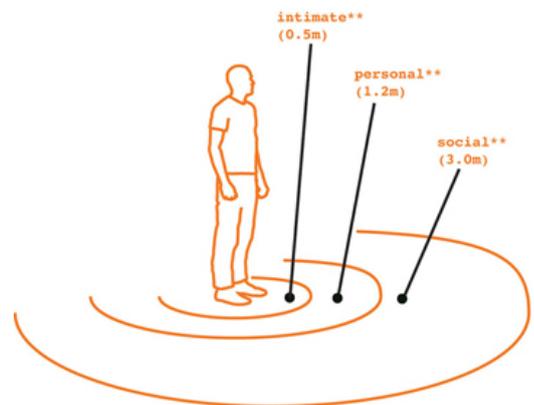


Evaluation

1. Numerous replications of the studies above have been carried out, which increases the reliability of the findings (reduces the likelihood that each study was a 'one off' and the chance that the findings may have been caused by uncontrolled extraneous and confounding variables) and the validity of the conclusions drawn.
2. Dayan and Bar-Hillel's study used deception towards their participants, who were not told the true aims of the study. This means that the participants were unable to give their informed consent, so two BPS ethical guidelines had been breached. The fact that the participants were aware that their behaviour was being monitored may mean that the findings were biased due to participant reactivity (a type of demand characteristic), where the respondents deliberately change their behaviour in order to please the researcher.
3. The collection of quantitative data is useful in that it can be objectively interpreted and can also undergo statistical testing, so the extent to which the finding is significant can be determined. However, qualitative data provides more descriptive detail and a larger insight into the customer's experience, which may be particularly important for companies who want to make particular improvements to customer experience.

Personal Space

- According to Somner (1969), there are 4 zones of personal space: intimate space, personal space, social space and public space, with invisible boundaries separating these different zones. Respect shown towards these boundaries minimises stress and so is likely to increase sales within a retail environment, as demonstrated by Felipe and Somner (1966), who showed that individuals are likely to remove themselves from a social situation if their personal space has been invaded by another.
- Personal space is linked with the concepts of overload, arousal and behavioural constraint. For example, if another person invades our personal space, then we are faced with an overload of information (i.e. the other person's facial features, expression etc), experience more arousal and also question the freedom we have over our own behaviour.
- The idea of the importance of personal space was tested by Robson et al (2011), who found that close table spacing reduced the quality of the customer's experience at the restaurant, as well as increasing feelings of stress and crowding, whilst decreasing privacy. The opposite could be said for distant table spacing i.e. 24 inches. Gender is also an important consideration, where women are more sensitive to feelings of crowding and a lack of privacy, and so are likely to spend less money and time at the restaurant.
- Milgram et al (1986) investigated the idea of defending one's place in a queue, where a confederate would calmly ask to and interject into a queue. The researchers changed the numbers of intruders and 'buffers' in the study (who came between the intruder and the naïve participant). The findings showed that naïve participants were more likely to confront the intruder if they behind them in the queue, as opposed to in front of them. This resulted in physical and verbal abuse, such as pushing the intruder out of the queue or verbally asking them to leave (21.7% of cases). These were not always hostile, but non-verbal signs included 'dirty' looks and glares. Therefore, a queue can be considered as a social system, where it is assumed that each person's position is respected.



Evaluation

1. Robson et al's study suffered from reduced ecological validity because participants were asked to give responses whilst considering an imaginary scenario, as opposed to a real-life situation. This means that the findings are only likely to be applicable within this specific research setting.
2. However, Milgram et al's study features greater ecological validity because it is a field experiment, and so records behaviour in the environment within which it would usually occur. This means that a 'cause and effect' relationship between the two outcomes can be more



validly drawn, as well as taking into account individual participant variables such as age and gender.

3. The real-life applications associated with an improved understanding of this research is the ability to purposefully design retail environments in a way which increases the customer's perception of personal space, reduces stress and so increases the time and money that they will spend at the site. This has economical implications in terms of increased profitability for the company.
4. However, most of the studies above were conducted in individualistic cultures. Collectivist norms about personal space and 'queue etiquette' may differ, and so this means that such research has poor cross-cultural validity because the findings are restricted to Western/individualistic cultures.

Part C: Consumer Decision Making

Consumer Decision-Making

- Neumann and Morgenstern (1944) suggests, through their utility theory, that consumers make rational decisions in an effort to maximise the likelihood of positive outcomes. On the other hand, Simon (1956) suggested that instead of religiously researching every product on the market, the consumer simply chooses to purchase a specific item because it is 'good enough' for their purposes and for the time they have available for such research. According to Kahneman and Tversky (1970), through their Prospect Theory, consumers make decisions on purchases based upon the two concepts of value and endowment, where individuals have different perceptions of these two concepts.
- There are a series of steps involved in consumers making purchasing decisions, and these have been utilised by businesses. There are differing views as to how these stages can be established. For example, according to Green and Wind (1973), the stages can be categorised as compensatory, non-compensatory and partially compensatory. On the other hand, Richarme (2005) suggests that there are three non-compensatory strategies (satisficing, elimination and lexicographic), whilst there are only two partially compensatory strategies (Majority of Conforming Dimensions, and Frequency of Good and Bad Features).
- According to Richarme (2005), the consumer decision-making process can also be explained according to consideration (an initial list of products is drawn up) and involvement (suggests that the amount of cognitive effort used to make a decision is directly proportional to the importance of this decision).

Evaluation

1. An improved understanding of the cognitive mechanisms underlying the decisions that consumers make can be exploited by companies to increase profitability, such as through the use of easily-accessible online stores/websites (as suggested by Jedelski et al in 2002).
2. A weakness specific to utility theory is that it does not consider individual differences because it assumes that all consumers are rational. This is not always the case, especially because different people have different perceptions of value and endowment (according to Kahneman and Tversky) and so may be seen by 'irrational' by others. The method of linking these explanations also suggests that such theories are complementary, rather than polar opposites.
3. The findings above may be culture-bound because they were mainly carried out in Western/collectivist cultures, where norms of how much money the average person spends and on what may be significantly different to the norms present in collectivist cultures e.g. China and India.

Choice Heuristics

- Heuristics act as 'mental shortcuts' which prevent us from sensory overload and from processing too much information at once. However, they can also lead to perceptual errors due to the distortion of sensory stimuli. The idea of availability heuristics (our immediate perception of a brand or product) was tested by Hoyer et al (2009), who found that negative availability heuristics (e.g. being sure that a poor-quality top will lose its shape in a few days) lead to a negative perception of the brand/product. This effect can either be enhanced or overcome using information from others, such as their personal opinions, to change our perception of base rate information (how often an event occurs). Availability heuristics work hand in hand with representative heuristics, which represent how we make mental comparisons of one product with the best alternative which comes to mind.



- Wansink et al (1998) studied the processes of anchoring and purchase quantity decisions. The researchers suggested that consumers are likely to spend more money if promotions quantify large volumes of items to purchase, as opposed to individual prices, and the consequent study demonstrated a 32% increase in sales when the former method was used, as opposed to the latter. However, the researchers acknowledged the potential role of consumer confusion as a way of explaining these findings.
- Wansink et al also investigated the effects of purchase limits, using a limit of 12 items per customer in their particular study, in 3 supermarkets in Iowa. The findings showed that consumers bought, on average, 3.7 more cans of soup when the advertised purchase limit was 12, as opposed to no limit. This suggests that such limits can change a consumer's perception of the worth and value of the product, because a higher limit implies a 'better deal'.
- Knutson et al (2007) investigated the role of pre-cognitive decisions in the consumer's decision-making process. The participants had to choose the price of an object after they had seen the object and the price separately, for 4 seconds each, using 26 healthy right-handed adults. The researchers found that the mean number of objects purchased was 23.58 and there was a negative correlation between increasing preference and decreasing reaction time. This suggests that long reaction times indicate that the consumer is undergoing a conflict of interest e.g. the item is too expensive or has no practical value.

Evaluation

1. Heuristics are particularly important in maintaining customer loyalty towards a specific brand by ensuring that the customer's favourite products are readily available and accessible.
2. Through an increased understanding of anchoring, purchase quantity decisions and pre-cognitive decisions, companies can strategically create promotions and limits for consumer purchases in order to maximise profits.
3. However, particular problems associated with field studies (such as that used by Wansink et al) is that there is no control over confounding or extraneous variables which may have caused the changes in spending as opposed to the purchase limit e.g. how tired the customers were, their mood, financial situation etc. This reduces the validity of the conclusions drawn on the basis of these studies.

Intuitive Thinking and Its Imperfections

- According to Kahneman and Tversky (1979), there are two systems of thinking - system 1 (thinking fast, and is intuitive and requires no effort) and system 2 (thinking slow, and is deliberate and requires conscious effort/insight). Heuristics are closely linked with these two systems, and particularly the role of the anchoring heuristic i.e. the influence of irrelevant information. Similarly, the representativeness heuristic are linked with thinking slow systems (1), where individuals ignore the frequency of certain events which make them more or less likely to occur within a given scenario, often resulting in denial of the incorrect answer.
- Choice blindness was investigated by Hall et al (2010). Swedish participants sampled jam or tea at a stall in a supermarket, and then unknowingly had the flavour of each item swapped, and participants then had to say which out of the two options they preferred. This resulted in one of three behaviours: concurrent detection (the individual immediately says that there's a difference), retrospective detection (the individual is aware of the change but does not voice it) or sensory-change detection (the individual reported no specific change). On average, 33.3% of the manipulated trials were detected, with the jam being 1% higher than the tea. The rate of detection was lower when the pairs were more similar. This emphasizes the high frequency and influence of choice blindness in commercial settings.
- Braun-LaTour et al (2004) conducted research into advertising and false memory. The researchers found that the majority of participants did not realise an incorrect character (Bugs Bunny) in a Disneyland advert, and simply assumed that this character must have been Mickey Mouse. Providing incorrect information about Bugs Bunny increased the likelihood of participants reporting this by 15%, showing that false adverts do affect memory. The form of false information was then tested as either words or pictures or both. The researchers found that false information given in verbal form had a smaller impact on memory than false information given in pictorial form, as shown by the findings that participants remembered more items when pictorial information was given i.e. 76% compared to 46% when only verbal cues were used.



Evaluation

1. The ideas of choice blindness and thinking systems demonstrate that human cognition can be faulty and therefore, can be exploited by adverts and companies. Choice blindness is particularly important in showing that differences in products produced by the same brand are unlikely to be noticed by the majority and even if so, these changes are unlikely to be voiced.
2. The ideas above also demonstrate the power of advertising and labelling, where simple changes in the value of a brand can give us the impression that it is luxury or budget, and so will affect the customer's perception of the brand.
3. The concept of false memories have important implications in the judicial system, such as reevaluating the utility and reliability of eyewitness testimony, as investigated by Loftus and Palmer (1974).

Part D: The Product

Packaging, Positioning and Placement

- Howard (1992) suggested that gift wrapping is a direct symbol of the item being a gift, whilst Poruvleb et al (2009) questioned this expectation. The gift can be unwrapped, wrapped in an unconventional way or wrapped conventionally. In a study investigating the effect of wrapping on the mood of the recipient, Poruvleb et al found that the majority of individuals have a preference for wrapped gifts, regardless of the environmental consequences or financial costs, and cite fear of embarrassment and 'playing it safe' as some of the key reasons for their views. The overall conclusion was that gift wrapping is important to make it obvious that the item is a gift, and to re-establish the social roles of two people as a 'giver' and a 'receiver'.
- Grossman and Wisenblit (1999) investigated the importance of the colour of a product and the role of associative learning. Classical conditioning (i.e. learning through associations) can explain why we associate certain colours with certain products e.g. white with a washing machine, green with a lawnmower etc, and this influences our perceptions and expectations associated with this product. Such associations may also be responsible for physiological reactions (e.g. yellow being associated with warmth and happiness), and this understanding can be exploited by commercial stores to create a certain atmosphere within their shops.
- The idea that people have colour preferences which are specific to certain products is supported by Holmes and Buchanan (1984). Therefore, this all suggests that associations between colours and objects, and this has different meanings/attributes for different individuals, which may play a crucial role in decision-making processes where there is little involvement on the part of the consumer.
- Atalay et al (2012) studied the relationship between attention and shelf position, by using eye tracking devices. The researchers found that brands featured in the centre of the shelves experienced a higher rate of eye fixations across a longer period of time and so a greater level of consumer attention, translating in an increased likelihood of choosing these items and so increased profitability (as these items are usually the most expensive). This was supported by the second study, which showed that the central product is still more likely to be chosen than others at the extremities of the shelves, even if this central product is not in the individual's central visual field.



Selling the Product:

- 'Solution-selling' is a method of marketing products whereby they are thought to solve a common problem, and therefore make a person's life "easier". A second method is focusing on the competitor. This is especially used in supermarkets, who compete with each other for customers through price-matching and loyalty card schemes. A third method is a product-focused technique where the merits of the product (e.g. quality and utility) are displayed alone, ignoring the needs of the customer and the workings of other competitors.



- Kardes (2007) demonstrated the idea of a 'disrupt-then-refute' (DTR) technique, where the customer is initially confused by the message but this is then rephrased to add clarity. For example, two groups of confederates approaches customers in a supermarket and advertised the candy as either "100 cents - that's 1 dollar!" (DTR group) or as "1 dollar" (control group), and found that the DTR group purchased 21% more candy than the control group. This suggests that DTR can be used to internalise the message which is advertised, and so customers consider the offer/product more due to this confusion. The researchers also found a positive correlation between NFCC (a measure of indecisiveness) and the extent to which each individual is affected by DTR.
- Cialdini (1984) suggests that there are several key methods which can be used to persuade a customer to purchase an item or service: reciprocity, commitment, consistency, liking, authority, social proof and scarcity (particularly used in Black Friday sales).

Buying the Product:

- The theory of planned behaviour suggests that there is a positive correlation between increasing intention and the increased likelihood that a customer will make a purchase. However, this may also explain why some may have a flawed perception of behavioural control because intentions are affected by subjective norms and attitudes, as explained by Azjen's theory of planned behaviour.
- According to the stimulus-response model, marketing stimuli and other stimuli contribute towards the buyer's characteristics and their decision-making processes, which results in several possible responses on the part of the buyer e.g. product choice, retail choice and purchase frequency.
- Buyer characteristics are cultural, social, personal and psychological. According to Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1968), the decision-making process of the consumer can be explained in terms of identifying a problem, searching for information about a possible solution, evaluating any alternative solutions, choosing to purchase a specific item or service, and then the consequent post-purchase behaviour.

Evaluation

1. Poruvleeb et al demonstrated that gift wrapping is vital in establishing the social roles associated with giving and receiving a present. This has practical and economical implications for retailers because by originally packaging the products as gifts, they can then be sold with the positive association of having the purpose of being a gift, and so increasing the likelihood that the customer will purchase this as a gift.
2. Focus groups are a particularly important part of generating data concerning the product and brand, and so being a useful starting point for potential future changes to the product. However, such focus groups are still affected by cultural bias/situational variables, as suggested by Atalay et al, where eye-tracking technology may me a more objective measure of the appeal of a product, compared to the subjective opinions of a focus group.
3. An improved understanding of the techniques used to sell products, especially in relation to customer needs, is crucial in improving sales and profitability, as well as informing companies of possible areas where marketing strategies could be re-evaluated.
4. Most of the studies above emphasise the importance of situational variables. For example, this is particularly evident in the DTR technique where retailers can exploit a customer's initial confusion to their advantage.
5. The use of rating scales can quickly produce large quantities of data with relatively little effort on the part of the researcher (as they do not need to be present when the customer completes their scale) but also suffers from the demand characteristics of social desirability bias and acquiescence bias.
6. The particularly useful real-life applications associated with an increased understanding of the process of a consumer choosing to buy a product, is that retailers can exploit the idea that customers often choose to make a purchase depending on their needs and intentions. Therefore, advertising and marketing could be specifically geared towards emphasising how a customer's life would be different if they choose to purchase the item or service.



Part E: Types of Advertising and Advertising Techniques:

Persuasive Techniques

- People seem to believe that they themselves are not affected by advertising, but others are, as suggested by Wilson and Brekke (1994).
- It is important to strike a balance between the use of striking visual stimuli in advertisements and the message proposed by the advert. It is of no use to the retailers if customers simply remember the advert but not the actual brand or message!
- McCarthy (1960) suggested that the key elements of effective marketing are the product (what is it?), place (where can I buy this?), price (is it worth it and do I need this?) and promotion (how did I hear about this product?). On the other hand, Lauterborn (1990) suggested that effective marketing can be explained in terms of customer want or need, cost to satisfy, convenience to buy and communication.
- Auty and Lewis (2004) studied the effectiveness of product placement in films (i.e. where the characters are seen drinking a recognisable brand of soft drink or alcohol). Limited processors (6-7 year olds), cued processors (11-12 year olds) and strategic processors (12+) all viewed the same film clip of Home Alone, before being questioned about the clip. The children were offered Pepsi and Coca-Cola to drink whilst answering the questions (i.e. an implicit preference test). The researchers found that children in the experimental group were significantly more likely to choose Pepsi as opposed to Coca-Cola compared to the control group, despite Coke dominating the UK market shares. This demonstrates the enormous influence of product placement, to the extent that it can influence people to go against the established market norms.



Communication and Advertising Models

- The source of the advert is particularly important in determining how likely we are to buy a product i.e. how credible or trustworthy is this advertisement? The credibility of an advert can be improved through the use of experts, whilst trustworthiness can be improved through the inclusion of 'normal' people giving their opinions on the product - this allows the average consumer to relate to the product and the advert, as suggested by Boyd-Jansson (2010). However, especially when using celebrities to endorse products, it is important that this celebrity does not have too many commitments because they are then viewed as less trustworthy (which is counterintuitive in these circumstances).
- Repetition and consistency of the message, whilst accompanied by distinctive images and an acknowledgement of existing views/opinions about the product, are key parts of effective marketing techniques.
- According to the AIDA model, there are 4 levels of varying significance and influence in terms of persuading the consumer to buy a product. Awareness is the broadest, followed by interest, desire and action. This model was further modified by the CAB model (cognition, affect and behaviour), whilst the TIREA scale focuses on the role of thoughts, interests, risk, engagement and action. The REAN model suggests that it is most effective to look towards the customer life cycle as an explanation for effective marketing i.e. reach, engage, activate and nurture.
- According to Lavidge and Steiner (1961), the Hierarchy of Effects Model can be used to explain marketing communication in terms of: Awareness (where have I seen this advert before?), Knowledge (what does this product promise?), Liking (how does this product compare to the competitor's alternative?), Preference (how viable are the alternatives?), Conviction (how motivated am I to purchase this product?) and Purchase (the final step). These 6 steps can then be reduced into three aspects of consumer behaviour/life cycle: cognitive, affective and conative.



Advertising Applications

- Fischer et al (1991) investigated the idea of brand recognition in children by testing their awareness of 22 brand logos, including 10 stereotypically 'children' brands e.g. Coca-Cola, Walt Disney and Nike. 229 children were individually tested by matching cards with the logos onto a board as part of a game. The researchers found that the recognition increased with age - younger children reported better recall of typically 'childlike brands (e.g. The Disney Channel - 91%), whilst 91% of 6-year olds recognised Old Joe the Camel i.e. 61% more than 3-year olds. The surprising finding that children as young as 6 were able to recognise cigarette brands emphasises the influence of TV advertising.
- Synder and DeBono (1985) suggested that an individual's self-monitoring levels will affect how product images and quality appeal to them. Using 50 male and 50 female participants, participants were exposed to all 3 advertisements (Canadian Club Whiskey, Barclay cigarettes and Irish Mocha Mint coffee) before completing a 12 question questionnaire. The researchers found that those individuals with high levels of self-monitoring found the image-orientated adverts most appealing, whilst quality-orientated adverts were favoured by those with low levels of self-monitoring. The former group were also prepared to pay significantly more for products compared to the low self-monitoring group, further supporting the conclusion that dispositional/ personality traits have a significant impact on which adverts are most appealing/effective, thus suggesting that retailers and marketing companies should keep this in mind.
- Kohli et al (2007) studied the effectiveness of slogans by considering the 'brand' being made up of the brand name, logo and slogan. Slogans are flexible in that they can be more frequently and easily changed compared to brand names. Therefore, slogans are a key part of brand recognition. They increase brand awareness and also style the brand's image. Yalch (1981) found that overly complex slogans are increasingly difficult to remember (and so counterintuitive) whilst 'jingles' are better suited towards companies with smaller budgets who rely mostly on radio advertisements. However, puns can help to increase brand awareness, as demonstrated by Lagerwerf (2002), especially if they are repetitive and fun!

Evaluation

1. There a multitude of dispositional and individual characteristics/traits which may influence participants to choose one product over another in the case of product placement techniques, and so it is important not to jump to unreliable causal conclusions.
2. However, Auty and Lewis' study in particular may have suffered from demand characteristics. Since the participants were so young (6 years old was the youngest) they may have struggled to understand the purpose of the study or even why they were watching the film, which may have translated into confusion and a failure to please the experimenter, this resulting in atypical consumer behaviour.
3. A lack of empirical evidence concerning advertising models means that these models are highly speculative and so may be considered as unreliable. Therefore, this reduces the utility of these models as advertising companies and retailers may be reluctant to base their marketing strategies and adverts on models which have little or no evidence to support their effectiveness.
4. The use of children in Fischer's study is particularly informative because it means that retailers and brands can make informed decisions about how to target children as customers, particularly as they have significant influence over their parent's purchasing decisions too. The matching game used by Fischer was clever due to preventing the problem of demand characteristics or the Please-U effect in the study because the children saw the game as fun and so displayed typical behaviour.
5. The studies above have demonstrated that an interactionist approach is best adopted when explaining the effectiveness of ad campaigns - dispositional factors are key in determining which adverts are most effective, as demonstrated by Synder and DeBono. Therefore, retailers should use this to their advantage and create different adverts (both quality and image-orientated) to appeal to the different personalities of customers.

