

Psychological influences on Consumption Decisions: An Impactful Strategy of Marketing

Dr. Debottam Chakraborty ^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The study reveals that understanding the psychology behind consumer behaviour is essential to understand whether a decision made by the consumer is actually irrational or not. By exploring the psychological, emotional and social factors the study shows how psychology influences individuals' purchasing decisions and consumption patterns. The findings reveal that consumer behaviour is influenced by psychological processes, such as the theory of planned behaviour and the elaboration likelihood model, as well as affective and social factors, including social identity theory and reference group theory. Emotional factors also play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences and purchase decisions, with positive emotions enhancing purchase intentions and post-purchase experiences. A deep understanding of the psychology behind consumer behaviour is very crucial since it enables marketers to design more effective marketing strategies, such as emotionally resonant communication, leveraging social influence, and interventions to mitigate cognitive biases. This research provides valuable theoretical insights and practical applications for marketing strategies and consumer welfare.

Keywords: *Psychology, Consumer Behaviour, Marketing Strategies*

A consumer consumes certain good or enjoys certain service only when s/he can enjoy it. In Economics, it is said that only when a good satisfies non-satiety assumption, a consumer can consume a good indefinitely as far as it is supported by the budget. This consumption gives utility which is strictly a subjective concept. Individual Psychology serves a pivotal role in this case. Psychology may vary among a set of individuals, but it is possible to form a psychological group with the people who has the same set of psychological structure.

This idea gives an immense opportunity for the marketers to target the individual groups to sale their products. So, psychological tactics are deeply ingrained in everyday marketing, subtly influencing consumer decisions without their conscious awareness. In an era where we are constantly bombarded with commercials, advertisements, and marketing strategies, modern marketers have learned that the most effective messages are the ones that bypass logic and appeal directly to instinct.

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Sundarban Hazi Desarat College, Pathankhali, Gosaba, South 24 PGS. West Bengal, India, Email: chiththi@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author

Received: January 8, 2026; Revision Received: March 10, 2026; Accepted: March 20, 2026

Psychological influences on Consumption Decisions: An Impactful Strategy of Marketing

Earlier studies in consumer psychology and marketing have explored a wide range of subjects, including how advertising shapes consumer attitudes, how pricing strategies affect purchasing decisions, and how social media influences buying behavior. Consumer psychology is central to marketing management, as it affects decision-making processes, social influence, and consumer motivation. This influence is especially visible in the food industry, where food-related choices are shaped by sensory cues, environmental conditions, and individual preferences (Kimmel, 2012).

Additionally, marketing research has examined the use of behavioral psychology principles, such as classical and operant conditioning, to better understand and influence consumer behavior (Wells, 2014). Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of consumer psychology in marketing management and point to the need for continued research to deepen insights in this field. In this backdrop, this article aims to examine how effectively psychological marketing strategies can be planned on the basis of the consumer behavior or sometimes it tries to mould consumer psychology, while also considering the ethical concerns linked to influencing people at a subconscious level. It seeks to evaluate how marketers can apply these techniques in a responsible way, ensuring a balance between persuasive efforts, individual autonomy, and maintaining consumer trust.

Psychological Factors affecting Consumer Behavior

In order to understand the how consumption decision is affected, we will consider four major psychological factors which have pivotal role in determining consumer choices:

- a) **Motivation:** Psychologists have developed theories of human motivation. Three of the best known theories are of Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow, Frederick Herzberg, which have quite different implications for consumer analysis and marketing strategies.
 - I. Freud assumes that person's motivation comes from unconscious mind. So, when person examines a specific brand, s/he will not only respond as per her/ his capabilities, but also as per some deeper motives like, say, word association, picture interpretation etc.
 - II. Maslow perceived that the consumer has some hierarchy on priorities of needs in their mind. When a person succeeds in satisfying the most important needs, then only s/he will try to satisfy the next important one. This theory helps marketers to understand how different products fit into the plans, goals and lives of the consumers.
 - III. Herzberg assumed a two factor theory that distinguishes satisfiers and dis-satisfiers. When a product comes with a particular dis-satisfying factor the satisfying factors are somehow outweighed. So, a computer of lower configuration but with a warranty is preferred than a computer of higher configuration but without warranty.
- b) **Perception:** Human perception is a process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world. People can emerge with different perception of the same thing mainly because of three perceptual process: selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention.

Psychological influences on Consumption Decisions: An Impactful Strategy of Marketing

- c) **Learning:** Learning involves changes in individual behavior arising from experience. Learning theorists believe learning is produced through the interplay of drives, stimuli, cues, responses and reinforcement.
- d) **Beliefs and attitudes:** Through learning people acquire beliefs and attitudes towards consumption. Marketer should note that brand belief has a vital role in product choice.

On the basis of the above theoretical framework we will now review how marketing strategies are designed as per the consumer psychology. Specifically some major psychological marketing tactics has been discussed with practical instances which has been used by several renowned brands all over the World.

Influence of Colour on Consumer Psychology

The progress of modern psychology has led to the focused study of color and its effects, which is now used in areas such as marketing, architecture, and many other disciplines. Human brains naturally develop preferences or aversions to certain colors, shaped by both evolutionary influences and individual experiences—whether those experiences are pleasant or unpleasant. For instance, from an evolutionary standpoint, people often connect the color red with warning or urgency because it resembles blood and fire, which instinctively heightens awareness and attention.

Among modern industries, the food sector is one of the most reliant on colour psychology. Its influence is clearly visible in the branding of McDonald's, where the bold combination of red and yellow dominates. As red is associated with stimulation, appetite, and urgency, while yellow evokes feelings of happiness and friendliness – together, these colours create an atmosphere of speed and efficiency, subtly encouraging customers to come in, eat quickly, and move on—supporting a fast and efficient dining experience.

At the same time, different audiences respond differently to colours, which is why brands carefully choose colour schemes that align with their target market and reinforce their identity. For instance, in Men's Wearhouse, a formal menswear retailer focused on weddings, business attire, and special occasions for men aged 25 to 55, uses deep blue as its dominant brand colour. This choice communicates confidence, professionalism, and refined elegance. Since blue is already a staple colour in formal menswear and suits, the brand enhances its presence by pairing it with neutral tones such as gray, white, and black, and by featuring deep blue prominently in its product imagery. Even when products are not blue, the brand often integrates blue elements—through filters, backgrounds, or accessories—to maintain a consistent and recognizable visual identity. In contrast, Kate Spade NY, which primarily targets women aged 20 to 40, makes extensive use of pink within its visual identity. In cultivating a brand image that is stylish, playful, and empowering—while still incorporating traditional markers of femininity—the company integrates motifs such as lace and a predominantly pink palette. Although these elements have sometimes been associated with limiting or negative stereotypes of femininity, the brand consciously reinterprets them in a positive light, encouraging women to embrace such aesthetics as symbols of confidence and strength. This repositioning has not only contributed to a positive social impact but has also proven to be an effective marketing strategy.

The core colour scheme employed by Kate Spade NY consists primarily of pink, complemented by accents of dark green and light purple. The pairing of pink and green is particularly effective from a design perspective, as these colours are complementary—positioned opposite each other on the colour wheel—thereby creating a visually engaging

Psychological influences on Consumption Decisions: An Impactful Strategy of Marketing

contrast. Moreover, pink, as a variation of red, has been shown to be especially appealing to many female consumers. To maintain visual consistency and reinforce brand identity, the company frequently introduces pink backgrounds or overlays into product imagery that would otherwise lack pink tones. Even subtle adjustments of this nature can increase consumer interest within the target demographic, ultimately contributing to higher levels of engagement and sales.

A notable illustration of the potential misuse of colour in marketing can be seen in the early promotional strategies of Euro Disney. The park initially incorporated the colour purple extensively across its advertising materials, souvenirs, and signage. However, it was later recognized that European cultural interpretations of purple differed significantly from those in the United States. In many parts of Catholic Europe, purple is traditionally associated with mourning, death, and religious symbolism such as the cross. As a result of these negative connotations, Disney revised its European branding approach, substantially reducing the use of purple in printed materials and within the park environment. Overall, colour psychology remains a powerful instrument for shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing behaviour. When applied effectively, it enables brands to evoke specific emotions and reinforce their identity, thereby strengthening their marketing impact. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that colour psychology represents only one component of a broader marketing strategy. To be truly effective, it must be applied thoughtfully and integrated with other key marketing principles and cultural considerations.

Psychology of Urgency, Scarcity and Anchoring Bias

Urgency and scarcity are powerful psychological strategies that marketers use to influence how customers make buying decisions. Urgency focuses on a limited time period to take advantage of an offer, while scarcity emphasizes that only a limited quantity of a product or resource is available. Both approaches create a sense of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and loss aversion, encouraging individuals to act quickly so they do not regret missing the opportunity.

Various research indicates that using scarcity-based tactics can increase conversion rates by as much as 15%, showing how effective these methods are in shaping consumer behaviour. These techniques work by appealing to people's natural tendency to value what they already have more than what they do not, and to resist losing something more strongly than gaining something new. As a result, when customers perceive urgency, they are more likely to make impulsive purchases because they worry that delaying their decision will cause them to miss out on the offer. For example, when Apple first released the iPhone X, it was limited, which made users feel compelled to act immediately. Black Friday offer is also a popular example of this kind. Anchoring bias is a mental tendency where individuals depend too strongly on the first piece of information they encounter, known as the "anchor." This initial reference point shapes later judgments and decisions, often resulting in biased outcomes. It occurs because people generally need some form of context to evaluate information, and without a reference point it becomes difficult to judge whether an estimate is accurate or not.

This bias functions through cognitive heuristics, which are mental shortcuts that make decision-making easier. Instead of carefully analyzing all available information or calculating probabilities, heuristics simplify the process into quicker, more manageable judgments. While this approach saves time and effort, it can also lead to consistent errors and distorted conclusions.

Psychological influences on Consumption Decisions: An Impactful Strategy of Marketing

A clear illustration of anchoring bias can be seen in marketing practices. Marketers often present a high initial price so that the subsequent price appears more reasonable or attractive. This first figure serves as a reference point, leading consumers to perceive the final price as a better deal or the discount as more significant than it actually is. Such framing can distort judgment and influence purchasing decisions in a way that increases sales.

One widely used example is the “Buy One, Get One Free” (BOGO) promotion, which links the value of two items together. This approach encourages customers to think of the offer as receiving one product completely free rather than paying for two at a reduced rate. Research shows that 66% of shoppers prefer BOGO deals over other types of promotions, and 93% have used such offers at least once. Seasonal periods such as Christmas, Valentine’s Day, and the back-to-school season provide ideal opportunities for this strategy, as consumers are already inclined to spend and actively seek discounts, making BOGO offers especially effective in encouraging higher purchases.

CONCLUSION

The article illustrates several central marketing strategies—namely colour psychology, urgency and scarcity appeals, and anchoring bias—have been strategically adopted by major global brands to subtly shape consumer behaviour. Each of these techniques operates through distinct psychological mechanisms. Colour significantly influences perception and emotional response, thereby affecting brand evaluation and purchase intention. Urgency and scarcity appeals generate a perception of limited availability or time sensitivity, prompting consumers to make expedited decisions to avoid potential loss. Anchoring bias functions by establishing an initial reference point that frames subsequent judgments, thereby guiding consumer expectations and choices.

Thus a strong understanding and strategic application of psychological principles allow marketers to design campaigns that are not only creative but also deeply persuasive. By leveraging insights from consumer psychology, brands can move beyond simply promoting products to forming meaningful emotional connections with their audiences. Consumer psychology enhances the effectiveness of advertising and promotional strategies by helping marketers anticipate consumer needs, predict behavioral patterns, and craft messages that feel personalized and emotionally engaging.

In today’s environment of constant information overload and endless choices, consumer psychology provides businesses with a significant competitive advantage. It enables them to cut through the noise, capture attention, and foster long-term loyalty by appealing to core human motivations that drive purchasing decisions. As consumer expectations continue to evolve, psychology will remain central to marketing strategies, guiding businesses to respond more effectively to customer needs and to build stronger, more meaningful relationships with their audiences.

REFERENCES

- Belk, R. W, Fischer, E and Kozinets R. V, (2013), “Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research”, Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Limited
- Brand, R. R, and Cronin, J. J, (1997) “Consumer-Specific Determinants of the Size of Retail Choice Sets”, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 1; Pages: 19 to 38
- Cheng, J. M. S, Jim, C. Y, and Chau, C. K, (2022) “Green Consumerism in a Consumer Society: Empirical Findings from Hong Kong”, *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, 21(1); Pages: 12 to 28

Psychological influences on Consumption Decisions: An Impactful Strategy of Marketing

- Gulati, R, and Garino, J, (2000) “Getting the Right Mix of Bricks & Clicks”, Harvard Business Review; Pages: 107 to 14
- Holzwarth, M, Janiszewski, C, and Neumann, M. M, (2006) “The Influence of Avatars on Online Consumer Shopping Behavior”, Journal of Marketing; Pages: 19 to 36
- Howard, D. J, Kirmani, A, and Rajagopal, P, (Eds.) (2013), “Social Influence and Consumer Behaviour”, New York: The Psychology Press
- Kimmel, A. J, (2012), “Psychological Foundations of Marketing”, USA: The Psychology Press
- Kotler, P, and Keller, K. L, (2018), “Marketing Management”, Pearson Prentice Hall
- Priest, J, Carter, S, and Statt, D. A, (2013), “Consumer Behaviour”, UK: Edinburgh Business School
- Prince, M, (2004), “Online Retailers Turn to New Shopping Carts to Drive Sales”, The Wall Street Journal Online, November 10
- Stern, B. B, Thompson, G. J, and Arnould, E. J, (1998), “Narrative Analysis of a Marketing Relationship”, Psychology & Marketing 3; Pages: 195 to 214
- Wells, W. D, (2014), “Psychological Processes underlying Consumer Behavior”, Journal of Consumer Research, 2(3); Pages: 1 to 18

Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Chakraborty, D. (2026). Psychological influences on Consumption Decisions: An Impactful Strategy of Marketing. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(1), 208-213. DIP:18.01.S25.20261401, DOI:10.25215/1304.S25