

COMPONENTS AND MODELS OF ATTITUDES

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Attitude can be formed from a person's past and present. An attitude can be a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, events, activities, and ideas. Attitudes develop over time through a learning process and are affected and also formed by family influences, peer group influences, personality, experience and information (from environment). Environmental factors have a strong influence on attitudes formation. Attitudes are formed with respect to situations, persons or groups with which individual come in contact in course of the growth and development of his personality. These influences tend to be more powerful for strong attitudes which are accessible and based on elaborate supportive knowledge structure. Attitudes are formed as a result of direct contact with the object. Product that fails to perform as expected can easily lead to negative attitudes. Sometimes, even in absence of actual experience with an object one can form attitude. In Psychology attitude is a psychological construct, a mental and Emotional entity that inheres in, or characterizes a person. According to Murphy and Murphy, attitude is primarily a way of being set towards or against certain things.

COMPONENTS OF ATTITUDES

There are three components of attitudes:-

Cognitive Component

The cognitive component is an evaluation of the entity that constitutes an individual's opinion (belief/disbelief) about the object. Cognitive refers to the thoughts and beliefs an individual has about an attitude object. The informational component consists of beliefs, values, ideas and other information a person has about the object. It makes no difference whether or not this information is empirically correct or real. The cognition component of an attitude, reflects a person's perceptions or beliefs. Cognitive elements are evaluative beliefs and are measured by attitude scales or by asking about thoughts. A person's knowledge and beliefs about some attitude object reside within the cognitive component. The cognitive component of attitudes refers to the beliefs, thoughts, and attributes that we would associate with an object.

Affective Component

The emotional components involve the person's feeling or affect-positive, neutral or negative-about an object. This component refers to the person's feelings that result from his or her beliefs about a person, object or situation. The affective component becomes stronger as an individual has more frequent and direct experience with object, person or situation. Affective is the emotional component of an attitude. The behavioural component of an attitude is measured by observing behaviour or by asking a person about behavior or intentions. An individual uses an attitude as a schema for evaluating an object. Personal experience with the object and the repeated expression of the attitude increases its accessibility. The affective component represents a person's likes or dislikes of the attitude object. The affective component of attitudes refers to your feelings or emotions linked to an attitude object.

Behavioral Component

The behavioural component consists of the tendency of a person to behave in a particular manner towards an object. The behaviour (or conative component as it is often called) relates to the likelihood that, or tendency of how, an individual will react to the attitude object. This includes our public observable behaviour. The behavioral component of attitudes refers to the way the attitude we have influences how we act or behave.

Models of Attitudes

There are three important attitude models: the tricomponent attitude model, multi-attribute models and attitude – toward – the – ad models

Multi – Attribute Attitude Model

The multi-attribute attitude model provides a framework for understand and assessing consumers' attitudes about a product or brand or firm. Not only does it help reflect the multiple dimensions, against which consumers make inferences and judgments, but it also helps show how consumers value elements of differentiation. And, with this perspective, marketers can make changes to their communication and positioning strategies. Multi attribute attitude models used to predict consumer choice in multiple criteria decision making situations have produced mixed results. The basic multi-attribute model has three elements—attributes, beliefs, and weights. Attributes are the characteristics of the attitude object. Beliefs are a measurement of a particular attribute. Weights are the indications of importance or priority of a particular attribute. A multiattribute model can be used to measure a consumer's overall attitude.

The most influential multiattribute model—the Fishbein model—also uses three components of attitude. The first, salient beliefs, is a reference to the beliefs a person might gain during the evaluation of a product or service. Second, object-attribute linkages, is an indicator of the probability of importance for a particular attribute associated with an attitude object. Evaluation, the third component, is a measurement of importance for the attribute. The goal of the Fishbein model is to reduce overall attitudes into a score. Past and predicted consumer behavior can be used to enhance the Fishben in model (Smith, Terry, Manstead, & Louis, 2008).

The model is based on giving different attributes a numerical value as to weigh what attributes are most sought after in the object or organization. This numerical value can be examined by identifying different attributes and let individuals such as customers rank them between a scale of 1-10, where 1 is least desirable and 10 being the highest. By giving the attributes a numerical value it also enables a possibility as to compare if the consumers values and beliefs correlate with what a brand or product want to represent.

The Tricomponent Attitude Model

The tricomponent attitude model states that attitudes are composed of three components, viz., a knowledge (cognitive) component, feeling and emotional (affect) component and the action (conative) component. - the knowledge or the cognitive component comprises the cognitive processes that lead to the formation of attitudes. The tricomponent model consists of consumers' knowledge about the products/service offering and the marketing mix. Consumer attitudes are formed on the basis of experiences as well as information received from personal (family, friends, peers etc.) as well as impersonal (marketer's sources) sources of information that are retained in one's memory.

These get shaped by beliefs and opinions, where the consumer begins to perceive that the attitude object (person, situation or thing) possesses certain attributes and acts of behavior would lead to outcomes. The beliefs and opinions get repeatedly reinforced, and finally give rise to attitudes. This knowledge component leads to the emotional component. - the feeling or the affect component comprises the emotional component of attitudes. The attitude itself, as it depicts emotional states that are positive, neutral or negative.

Attitude toward the Ad Model

Attitude toward the ad is defined as "a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion." After Mitchell and Olsen (1981) and Shimp (1981) introduced the importance of the Aad construct, research on the causal relationships among Aad and other measures of advertising effectiveness become a main study stream. In the causal relationship, Aad usually acts a moderator, and it influences on brand attitude (A b) and intention to purchase the brand (purchase intention, PI). To understand the impact of advertising or some other promotional vehicle on consumer attitudes towards particular products or brands, considerable attention has been paid to developing what has been referred to as attitude towards the ad models. the model depicts, the consumer forms various feelings / affects and judgments / cognitions as the results of exposure to an advertisement. These feelings and adjustments in turn the consumer's attitude towards the ad and beliefs about the brand secured from exposure to the advertisement. Finally, the consumer's attitude towards the ad and beliefs about the brand influence his or her attitude towards the brand.

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