



## E-MARKETING AND CONSUMER ATTITUDE

G. Shunmugapriya

M.Phil., Research Scholar Sakthi College of Arts and Science for Women  
Oddanchatram

## KEYWORDS :

**INTRODUCTION**

E-Marketing is a form of electronic commerce which allows consumers to directly buy goods or services from a seller over the Internet using a web browser. Alternative names are: e-web-store, e-shop, e-store, Internet shop, web-shop, web-store, online store, online storefront and virtual store. Mobile commerce (or m-commerce) describes purchasing from an online retailer's mobile optimized online site or app. An online shop evokes the physical analogy of buying products or services at a bricks-and-mortar retailer or shopping center; the process is called business-to-consumer (B2C) online shopping. In the case where a business buys from another business, the process is called business-to-business (B2B) online shopping.

**1.2 INTERNET USERS IN THE WORLD**

Around 40% of the world population has an internet connection today. In 1995, it was less than 1%. The number of internet users has increased tenfold from 1999 to 2013. The first billion was reached in 2005. The second billion in 2010. It is noticed that the number of internet users are increased year by year.

Indians often turn to mobile internet, as the large majority of the digital population in India were mobile internet users in 2016. About 323 million people in India accessed the internet through their mobile phones in 2016, which corresponds to about 24.3 percent of the country's population. Both figures are forecast to increase in the coming years, with projections to amount to 524.5 million and around 37.4 percent respectively in 2021. Mobile internet usage in India varies according to people's living areas. As of 2016, India had an estimate of 262 million mobile internet users living in urban communities, and 109 million living in rural areas.

One aspect whereby India shares the characteristics of other global internet users is its passion for social media. In 2021, it is estimated that there will be around 358.2 million social network users in India, a significant increase from 2016, when this figure stood at about 216.5 million. This means that the share of the Indian population that access social networks is expected to jump from around 16.3 percent in 2016 to just over 25 percent. Facebook is the most popular social networking site in the country. There were about 195 million Facebook users in India as 2016, placing India as the country with the largest Facebook user base in the world. Other popular networks include WhatsApp, Google+, and Skype.

With an estimate of 43.8 percent digital buyer penetration in 2016, online shopping is also a popular online activity of Indian internet users. Retail e-commerce sales in India amounted to about 16 billion U.S. Dollars that year and are projected to surpass 45 billion U.S. dollars in 2021. Mobile shopping has gained space in the country as well. About 49 percent of Indian consumers stated using their mobiles for purchasing goods or services. This share is above global average – which stood at 38 percent as of 2016 – and the second highest figure in the world, only behind China.

India has a more number of Internet user base. Out of which Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu tops the chart with 27.71 million, with 26.87 million respectively. These were followed by Delhi which had 18.48 million users, while Mumbai and Kolkata circles had 15.28

million and 8.65 million Internet users. Tamil Nadu has the most noteworthy number of broadband web supporters in the nation. As on March 31.3.2016, of the aggregate 149.75 million broadband clients in the nation, 14.89 million were in Tamil Nadu, figures discharged by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) appear.

**1.3 CONSUMER ATTITUDE:**

Consumer focus and satisfaction is a driving force for organizations gearing up for surviving or thriving in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Those that are truly doing they have turned into consistently high performers. The companies emphasize service quality in their strategy, giving customers, what they want, when they want it and how they want it.

A philosophy of every business unit, which has triple implementation namely,

- i) The victory of any business unit rests on customer who is willing to accept and pay for the product/services
- ii) The firms must be aware of what the market wants well in advance and
- iii) Consumer wants must be monitored continually for assured success.

Understanding the consumer is the crucial task of every marketing manager. Consumers are the focus of marketing efforts. All elements of the marketing mix are tightly integrated with one another. They are seen through the eyes of the consumers and are coordinated so as to produce the best benefits and optimum satisfaction for the customers.

As on today companies are facing through tough competitions. The customers have a choice of brands to select from. In order to survive the competition, the companies have to do a better job of meeting and satisfying customer needs than their competitors.

Attitudes are consistent in nature, particularly with respect to the third component, i.e. behavior. Consumers are consistent with respect to their behavior. However, they are not entirely permanent and may change if the cognitive or the component is changed. This implies that if the consumer witnesses new experience or is exposed to new information about product/service offering and the mix (cognition), and feelings are changed from dislike to like (affect), attitudes towards the offering and the mix can undergo change. In other words, while attitudes are stable and do not change frequently, they can be changed if something is done to change them.

Attitudes are a learned predisposition. Attitudes are learned; they are formed as a result of i) self experiences with the product/service offering and the mix; ii) interaction with other people, be it family, friends, peers and colleagues; iii) information obtained from the marketer through promotion particularly advertisements as well as dealers and salespeople. Attitude formation as a process is impacted by needs and motivation, perception as well as learning.

Attitudes cannot be observed directly. While attitudes are comprised of three components, behavior is just one of them. It is only this component that can be seen; the cognitive and affect

components cannot be seen. Thus it is said that attitudes cannot be seen; they can only be inferred from the manner in which an individual behaves. Thus, we can infer that a person who buys Colgate Total toothpaste and disregards Pepsodent has a positive attitude towards Colgate.

While attitudes can be inferred from our behavior, it is not synonymous to behavior. It has two other components, and reflects a learned predisposition to act favorable or unfavorably towards a product and service offering and the mix.

Attitudes are situation specific; they occur within a situation. Sometimes depending upon the situation, a consumer may exhibit a behavior that may be inconsistent with his/her attitude. He may prefer to buy Pepsodent over Colgate because the former is on a sales promotion and gets him a free toothbrush.

### **FUNCTIONS OF ATTITUDES**

Apart from helping a consumer make evaluations about a product/service offering ending up in purchase decisions (to buy/not to buy), attitudes play other functions as well. They perform four basic functions, viz., utilitarian function, ego defensive function, value expressive function, and knowledge function. The four functions are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are related to each other and consumer attitudes are illustrative of a combination of functions (See Table 1).

**Utilitarian function:** Consumers form positive attitudes towards product/service offerings because they provide a utility, in other words, they provide a rewarding experience through the benefits that they provide. Consumers learn to relate a reward with the use of the offering. On the other hand if they do not offer a rewarding experience, consumers form a negative attitude towards such an offering.

**Ego defensive function:** Consumers form attitudes as they help defend their ego, self-image and self-concept. If a consumer is high on ethnocentrism, and patronizes Indian products, he would have a positive attitude towards Indian brands. He would speak for and promote such brands even if he knows that a foreign made product provides better value. Attitudes are formed to protect the ego.

**Value expressive function:** Positive attitudes are formed when a product or service expresses a person's values and lifestyle, personality and self image, and self concept. This is because attitudes provide people with a basis for expressing their values. In cases where there is a mismatch between the product image and a consumer's self-image, a negative attitude is developed. Attitudes are a reflection of value.

**Knowledge function:** Attitudes are formed when consumers want to reaffirm their knowledge base, to finally help them simplify purchase decision making. If a consumer thinks positive about a brand, it helps reaffirm his opinion, and makes decision making simpler and faster. Attitudes help in decision making.