

Instructor's Manual

Consumer Behaviour: A European Perspective

Sixth edition

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Preface

HOW TO USE

The European edition of Solomon's Consumer Behaviour has a complete set of supplemental learning and teaching aids. The Instructor's Manual plays a central role in organising this package. This manual has been designed so instructors can plan lectures, demonstrations, discussions, visual presentations and written assignments in a coordinated and efficient manner.

All 15 chapters of the textbook have been carefully reviewed in order to develop the most logical and helpful manual for you, the instructor. Primary features of the Instructor's Manual are described below.

LECTURE SUGGESTIONS

- (a) The outline below closely follows the outline of the text.
- (b) In regular italics you will find questions that should help start a discussion.
- (c) You will find inserts that refer to interesting consumer behaviour facts that might be used to make or enhance a point.
- (d) You will find an insert [NEW!], [CHANGED] or [UPDATED] that maps new material and all changes to the 5th edition, as well as updates for you in the Instructor's Manual.
- (e) You will find Learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter of the Instructor's Resource Manual.
- (f) You will find links referring to online resources in relevant places.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Each chapter of the textbook is summarised in the Chapter summary. This section provides the instructor with a condensed version of the information included in the chapter.

This material is consistent with the Chapter summary material found at the end of each chapter in the text.

This condensation of material is especially helpful in planning chapter sequence presentation and any desired chapter combinations. In addition, this section may help the instructor plan introductory lecture remarks.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This section is the core of the Instructor's Manual. This teaching outline is a thorough outline (specifically tied to the actual phrases and definitions used in the textbook) of the material included in the text chapters. This outline includes major and minor headings from the textbook. The instructor will notice special information sections that appear periodically in the body of the outline. This material is indicated with bold type and bold asterisks (****). The purpose of the information block is to indicate to the instructor, where the key material appears in the textbook and when to use teaching aids. These information blocks may contain the following items of information: Key Terms (term is identified); Consumer Behaviour Challenge questions (discussion question is listed by number); Chapter cases (cases are listed by chapters – comments on the chapter cases may be found in a separate section of the Instructor's Manual); Chapter figures (listed by number); Chapter tables (listed by number). It is recommended that the instructor carefully reviews the Chapter Outline prior to preparing a chapter lecture. This review will help in coordinating the learning activities that are available with the textbook.

In addition, the instructor will find it useful to use the Discussion topics that periodically appear in the Chapter Outline to aid discussion of the pertinent issues. Students have found these topics to be interesting and useful to supplement the formal lecture.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LEARNING

This section has been developed to aid the instructor in understanding which of the concepts or activities contained in the text book chapters may be difficult learning assignments for the average student. By reviewing this section, the instructor may be able to direct preparation towards those topics that are perceived as being difficult. In addition, this section also provides suggestions for dealing with difficult learning concepts. Please note that this section and the Student Project section are somewhat complementary in that the learning exercises suggested in the Student Project section may be used to deal with many of the difficult subjects identified in this section.

STUDENT PROJECTS

This section suggests several projects that may be assigned to the students for a specific class or for several class periods (a term project). The projects may be assigned to individuals (individual projects) or to groups (group assignments). The instructor may require that the material be analysed in a written format or just as discussion motivators. All of the material contained in this section has been written in a student assignment format. Please consider coordinating this section with the Barriers to Effective Learning section or the Discussion topics in boxed inserts for more beneficial discussion sessions.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR CHALLENGE

Discussion questions and associated comments appear in this section. The questions appear in the text book (so assignments can be made from textbook chapters); however, the comments appear only in the Instructor's Resource Manual. Note that proper placement of the Discussion Question is down to the instructor; however, placement suggestions do appear in the Chapter Outline section.

PART A

Consumers in the marketplace

An introduction to consumer behaviour

Learning objectives – UPDATED!

When students have finished reading this chapter they will understand why:

- We use products to help us define our identities in different settings.
- Consumer behaviour is a process.
- Marketers need to understand the wants and needs of different consumer segments.
- Our motivations to consume are complex and varied.
- Our beliefs and actions as consumers strongly connect to other issues in our lives.
- Technology and culture create a new ‘always on’ consumer.
- Many different types of specialists study consumer behaviour.
- There are differing perspectives regarding how and what we should understand about consumer behaviour.

Chapter summary

Consumer behaviour is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires.

A consumer may purchase, use and/or dispose of a product, but different people may perform these functions. In addition, consumers may be thought of as role players who need different products to help them play their various parts.

Market segmentation is an important aspect of consumer behaviour. Consumers can be segmented along many dimensions, including product usage, demographics (the objective aspects of a population, such as age and gender) and psychographics (psychological and lifestyle characteristics). Emerging developments, such as the new emphasis on relationship marketing and the practice of database marketing, mean that marketers are much more attuned to the wants and needs of different consumer groups.

Marketing activities exert an enormous impact on individuals. Consumer behaviour is relevant to our understanding of both public policy issues (e.g. ethical marketing practices) and the dynamics of popular culture.

The Web is transforming the way consumers interact with companies and with each other. Online commerce allows us to locate obscure products from around the world, and consumption communities provide forums for people to share opinions and product recommendations.

Potential problems accompany these benefits, including the loss of privacy and the deterioration of traditional social interactions as people log more time online.

It is often heard that marketers create artificial needs. Although this criticism is oversimplified, it is true that marketers must accept their share of responsibility for how society develops, what is considered necessary to have and what is acceptable, nice and fun to do in society.

The field of consumer behaviour is interdisciplinary; it is composed of researchers from many different fields who share an interest in how people interact with the marketplace. These disciplines can be categorised by the degree to which their focus is micro (the individual consumer) or macro (the consumer as a member of groups or the larger society).

There are many perspectives on consumer behaviour, but research orientations can roughly be divided into two approaches. The positivist perspective, which currently dominates the field, emphasises the objectivity of science and the consumer as a rational decision-maker. The interpretivist perspective, in contrast, stresses the subjective meaning of the consumer's individual experience and the idea that any behaviour is subject to multiple interpretations rather than one single explanation.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

1. Consumer behaviour: people in the marketplace – UPDATED!

- a. The average consumer can be classified and characterised on the basis of:
 - (1) Demographics – age, sex, income or occupation.
 - (2) Psychographics – a person's lifestyle and personality.
- b. The average consumer's purchase decisions are heavily influenced by the opinions and behaviour of their family, peers and acquaintances.
 - (1) Some influencing occurs offline, with consumers picking up product information, e.g. in conversations with their friends.
 - (2) Other influencing occurs online, where consumption communities form around brands, products, practices and so on.

*******Use Key Term Consumption Communities Here*******

- c. As a member of a large society, consumers share certain cultural values or strongly held beliefs about the way the world should be structured.
 - (1) Some of the values are based on subcultures (such as ethnic groups or teens).
 - (2) Some of the values are those of reference groups.

- d. Brands have clearly defined images or 'personalities' in order to appeal to specific segments of the market.
- e. The images or 'personalities' of brands are created by product advertising, packaging, branding and other marketing strategies that focus on positioning a product in a certain way.
- f. When a product succeeds in satisfying a consumer's specific needs or desires, it may be rewarded with many years of brand loyalty.
 - (1) This bond is often difficult for competitors to break.
 - (2) However, a change in one's life situation or self-concept can weaken the bond.
- g. Consumers' evaluations of products are affected by their appearance, taste, texture or smell.

What is consumer behaviour?

- h. **Consumer behaviour** is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires.
 - 1. Consumers are actors on the marketplace stage.
 - a. The perspective of **role theory** takes the view that much of consumer behaviour resembles actions in a play.

*******Use Key Terms Consumer Behaviour and Role Theory Here*******

Discussion topic: What are some of the roles you play in life? What kind of 'costumes' do you have in your closet?

- b. People act out many roles, and sometimes, consumption decisions are affected by the play they are in at the time.
 - 2. Consumer behaviour is a process.
 - a. Most marketers recognise that consumer behaviour is an ongoing process, not merely what happens at the moment a consumer hands over money or a credit card and in turn receives some goods or services.
 - b. The exchange in which two or more organisations or people give and receive something of value is an integral part of marketing.
 - (1) The expanded view emphasises the entire consumption process.
 - (2) This view would include issues that influence the consumer before, during and after a purchase.

*******Use Figure 1.1 Here*******

*******Use Consumer Behaviour Challenge 6 Here*******

3. Consumer behaviour involves many different actors.
 - a. The consumer is generally thought of as a person who identifies a need or desire, makes a purchase and then disposes of the product during the three stages in the consumption process.
 - b. The purchaser and user of a product might not be the same person.
 - c. A separate person might be an influencer.
 - d. Consumers may be organisations or groups (in which one person may make the decision for the group).

2. Consumers' impact on marketing strategy – UPDATED!

- a. Very simply, understanding consumer behaviour is good business. A basic marketing concept states that firms exist to satisfy needs.
 - (1) Consumer response is the ultimate test of whether a marketing strategy will succeed.
 - (2) Data about consumers helps organisations to define the market and identify threats and opportunities for a brand. This knowledge also helps to ensure that the product continues to appeal to its core markets.

Discussion topic: How can marketers use social media and consumption communities to gather information about their consumers? How do you feel about information gathering like that? Is it ethical?

Market segmentation

- b. The process of market segmentation identifies groups of consumers who are similar to one another in one or more ways while at the same time they are different from members of other segments. Depending on its goals and resources, a company may choose to focus on just one segment or several, or it may ignore differences among segments by pursuing a mass market strategy.
- c. While consumers can be described in many ways, the segmentation process is valid only when the following criteria are met:
 - (1) Consumers within the segment are similar to one another in terms of product needs, and these needs are different from consumers in other segments.
 - (2) Important differences among segments can be identified.
 - (3) The segment is large enough to be profitable.
 - (4) Consumers in the segment can be reached by an appropriate marketing mix.
 - (5) The consumers in the segment will respond in the desired way to the marketing mix designed for them.
- d. Demographics are statistics that measure observable aspects of a population, such as birth rate, age distribution and income.

*****Use Table 1.1 Here*****

- (1) Important demographic segmentation variables include:
- a. Age
 - b. Gender
 - c. Family structure
 - d. Social class and income
 - e. Race and ethnicity
 - f. Geography.
- e. To sum up, a European segmentation must be able to take into consideration:
- (1) Consumption which is common across cultures (the global or regional, trends, lifestyles and cultural patterns that cross borders).
 - (2) Consumption which is specific to different cultural groups (differences in values, lifestyles, behavioural patterns, etc. among different cultures and subcultures).

Discussion topic: How would you describe yourself demographically? What bearing would this have on your purchase patterns? How could a marketer find out about you in a demographic sense?

Relationship marketing: building bonds with consumers

- f. **Relationship marketing** occurs when a company makes an effort to interact with customers on a regular basis, and gives them reasons to maintain a bond with the company over time.

*******Use Key Term Relationship Marketing Here*******

*******Use Consumer Behaviour Challenge 4 Here*******

Discussion topic: What types of organisations can make best use of relationship marketing?

- g. Database marketing involves tracking consumers' buying habits very closely and based on this information, crafting products and messages tailored precisely to people's wants and needs.
- h. The collection and analysis of extremely large datasets is called Big Data. In a single day, consumers create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data (or 2.5 exabytes).

Discussion topic: How can database marketing help an organisation improve its relationship marketing? How can companies use social media to build (lasting) relationships with their consumers?

Online resources:

Examples of social media campaigns:

<http://mashable.com/2012/02/26/clever-social-media-campaigns/>

Relationship Marketing – Anton Berg, the generous store:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cNfX3tJonw

3. Marketing's impact on consumers – UPDATED!

- a. For better or worse, we all live in a world that is significantly influenced by the actions of marketers.

The global consumer

- b. *A global consumer culture* has emerged as a result of cultural homogenisation, where people are united by their common devotion to brand-name consumer goods, film stars and rock stars.
- c. On the other hand, popular consumer culture continues to evolve as products and styles from different cultures mix and merge in new and interesting ways.

Popular culture

- d. The music, movies, sports, books, celebrities and other forms of entertainment that the mass market produces and consumes – is both a product of and an inspiration for marketers.
- e. It also affects our lives in more far-reaching ways, ranging from how we acknowledge cultural events such as marriage, death, or holidays to how we view social issues such as climate change, gambling and addictions.
- f. This cultural impact is hard to overlook, although many people do not seem to realise how much marketers influence their preferences for movie and musical heroes.

Virtual consumption and the power of crowds

- g. There's little doubt that the digital revolution is one of the most significant influences on consumer behaviour, and the impact of the Web will continue to expand as more and more people around the world log in.
- h. The digital revolution impacts how and where we consume:
 - (1) Businesses selling to consumers (B2C e-commerce): electronic marketing has increased convenience by breaking down many of the barriers caused by time and location.
 - (2) Consumer-to-consumer activities (C2C e-commerce): just as e-consumers are not limited to local retail outlets in their shopping, they are not limited to their local communities when looking for friends or fellow fans of wine, hip-hop or skateboarding.

- i. How we relate to companies, products and other consumers:
 - (1) Information doesn't just flow from big companies down to the people; today everyone can communicate with huge numbers of people online, so information flows across people as well in what can be described as a horizontal revolution.
 - (2) Social media are the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities and organisations enhanced by technological capabilities and mobility.
 - (3) Web 2.0, the internet as a social, interactive medium, is defined by user-generated content where ordinary people voice their opinions about products, brands and companies on blogs, podcasts and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and even film their own commercials that thousands view on sites such as YouTube.
 - (4) Social media platforms enable a culture of participation; a belief in democracy; the ability to freely interact with other people, companies and organisations.

Discussion topic: Which communities are you involved in and what can marketers find out from information that you provide about yourselves online?

Online resources:

Virtual crowds and social media crises:

<http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/5-steps-for-responding-to-a-social-media-crisis/622654>

Marketing ethics

- a. The relationship between marketing and consumption in a globalising and increasingly unsustainable consumer society raises some real ethical issues.
- b. Marketing ethics are essentially the rules of conduct that guide actions in the marketplace – the standards against which most people in a culture judge what is right and what is wrong, good or bad. European consumer protection laws and codes of ethics include:
 - disclosure of substantial risks associated with a product or service.
 - identification of added features that will increase the cost.
 - avoidance of false or misleading advertising.
 - rejection of high-pressure or misleading sales tactics.
 - prohibition of selling or fund-raising that is disguised as market research.

Online resources:

Marketing Ethics (Is there a limit to what we can sell?)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-a8dAHDQoo>

Marketing Ethics: 3rd world countries

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEN4hcZutO0>

Discussion topic – Ask the students: What do you think is unethical? Is there anything that is not marketable? If the students are unable to think of anything unmarketable, ask them to reflect upon the ethics of prostitution and organ trade.

Socially responsible behaviour

- c. In some instances, marketers deliberately mislead or deceive consumers, while in other instances, marketing practices may have detrimental effects on society without being explicitly illegal. Some companies also run into trouble because sizeable portions of the consuming public reject their activities.
- d. Corporate social responsibility refers to the public acceptability of marketing practice. Crucial barometers of ethical conduct are the actions a marketer takes once a company is made aware of a problem with its advertising or products. Faced with the rising phenomenon of the 'political consumer' and many pressure groups that focus on business behaviour, the industry is increasingly realising that ethical behaviour is good business in the long run.

*Source: N.C. Smith, *Morality and the Market* (London: Routledge, 1990).*

Public policy and consumerism

- e. Public concern for the welfare of consumers has been an issue since at least the beginning of the twentieth century. This is normally referred to as **consumer policy**.
- f. Consumer research and consumer welfare.
 - (1) Consumer behaviour research can play an important role in improving the lives of consumers.
 - (2) Research aids in the formulation or the evaluation of policies concerning various issues like product labelling, information provision or commercial television shows aimed at children.
 - (3) Table 1.2 depicts ten basic principles of how EU law protects its consumers.

*******Use Table 1.2 Here*******

4. Needs and wants: do marketers manipulate consumers? – UPDATED!

- a. One of the most common criticisms of marketing is that marketing (especially advertising) is responsible for convincing consumers that they cannot do without many material things that they do not really need.
 - (1) This has been argued to not apply to purely informational advertising, giving only product and store information.
 - (2) Functionality and utility are also seductive product elements.

Do marketers create artificial needs?

- b. A need may be viewed as a basic biological motive, whereas a want is the socially learned satisfier for a need (we need a drink, we want a Coke or a cup of tea).

- (1) However, beyond the level of banality, needs are always formed by the social environment.
- (2) As needs are always 'artificial', and are formed by the social environment, marketers have their share in the socialisation of consumers that leads to the construction of artificial needs.

Is advertising necessary?

- c. Given the overwhelming supply of goods, advertising is an indispensable way to communicate the existence of products and the needs and wants that these products may satisfy.
 - (1) Advertisers are important communicators; they must be followed by a sense of responsibility concerning the social and individual effects of their messages.
 - (2) Critics argue that marketers link products to desirable social attributes, fostering a materialistic society in which we are measured by what we own, disregarding functional over symbolic value.

Do marketers promise miracles?

- d. Advertising functions as mythology: it provides simple, anxiety-reducing answers to complex problems.
 - (1) Advertisers do not know enough about people to manipulate them directly.
 - (2) Advertising, in general, offers a worldview that success and status are dependent on consumer choices.

Online resources:

The Stockholm Syndrome of Advertising – Jacob Östberg:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEULSwE5GEk>

5. Consumer behaviour as a field of study

- a. It is rather recent that consumers have become the objects of formal study.

Interdisciplinary influences on the study of consumer behaviour

- b. Consumer behaviour may be studied from many points of view – such as psychology, sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology and economics.

*******Use Figure 1.2 Here*******

*******Use Consumer Behaviour Challenge 2 Here*******

The issue of strategic focus

- c. Many regard the field of consumer behaviour as an applied social science. Accordingly, the value of the knowledge generated should be evaluated in terms of its ability to improve the effectiveness of marketing practice.

*****Use Table 1.3 Here*****

The issue of two perspectives on consumer research

- d. One general way to classify consumer research is in terms of the fundamental assumptions that the researchers make about what they are studying and how to study it. This set of beliefs is known as a paradigm.

*****Use Table 1.4 Here*****

- (1) The dominant paradigm is called *positivism* (or sometimes called *modernism*). It emphasises that human reason is supreme, and that there is a single, objective truth that can be discovered by science. Positivism encourages us to stress the function of objects, to celebrate technology and to regard the world as a rational, ordered place with a clearly defined past, present and future.
- (2) The emerging paradigm of interpretivism (or postmodernism) questions the above assumptions.
 - (a) Proponents argue that there is too much emphasis on science and technology in our society, and that this ordered, rational view of consumers denies the complex social and cultural world in which we live.
 - (b) Others say positivism puts too much emphasis on material well-being, and that its logical outlook is dominated by an ideology that stresses the homogeneous views of a culture dominated by white males.
 - (c) Interpretivists, on the other hand, stress the importance of symbolic and subjective experience, and the idea that meaning is in the mind of the person.
- e. The terms positivist and interpretive are very broad, and each encompasses many diverse viewpoints. The positivist perspective includes such approaches as logical positivism, modern empiricism and objectivism. The interpretive paradigm includes subjective, naturalistic, qualitative and humanistic approaches and is sometimes referred to as post-positivism.

For a more complete discussion of these approaches, refer to L.A. Hudson and J.L. Ozanne, 'Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research', *Journal of Consumer Research* 14 (March 1988): 508–21.

Discussion topic: Do you consider yourself more a 'positivist' or an 'interpretivist'? (Don't say both – we all are!)

Suggestions for use of barriers to effective learning

Students come to your class with varied backgrounds (some come from marketing, other business disciplines, psychology, sociology or other majors), varying experiences (some have

had many marketing courses, some only a few or none) and varying intellectual skills. The purpose of this section is to remind you of some of the common difficulties students have with material contained in the chapter. Foresight of problems is often very helpful. The author hopes this material will help you stimulate and help your students.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LEARNING

1. The first barrier to effective learning in this chapter, as experienced by the student, comes from the basic definition. Definitions are often taken for granted. In the case of the definition of consumer behaviour, it will be beneficial for long-term understanding and retention to carefully cover what the definition is and what it is not. Ask students to give examples of consumer behaviour to verify that understanding is present.
2. The second major barrier comes from understanding the acting roles that may be performed by the consumer in the consumption process. Using the Discussion topics suggested in the Chapter Outline will help the students to see the variety of roles that might occur. How can marketers use the variation of roles to their advantage?
3. Many students do not understand how important demographics can be or how the information can be obtained by marketing organisations. Ask students to bring credit card applications, review the forms, and show them how the information can be useful. Ask students to indicate (after having read the chapter) what demographic traits of their own most influence their purchase decisions. How could marketers identify and categorise those traits? Describe the differences between specific and general traits.
4. The last major barrier in the chapter is the difficulty students often have in understanding the two paradigms (positivism and interpretivism). The Chapter Outline provides examples and extended material that might be used to stress these concepts. The best way is to have the students give illustrations so that reinforcement will go beyond mere definitions. Since these terms are contained at the end of the chapter (and, after all, it is the first chapter), it is sometimes difficult to cover all the material on the first or the second day of class. However, these are important concepts. Be sure to save time for them.

STUDENT PROJECTS

Suggestions for use of student projects

For each class, you might want to assign two or three students or a group of students one or more of the following Student Project assignments, and ask them to be ready to give a short oral presentation on their topic at the beginning of class. This gets students more deeply involved in the class and gives them opportunities to work on their oral skills. You might ask them to turn in a short paper (one or two pages) so that they can also practise their writing skills. Many of these projects can be done on the Internet (which also gives them practice with their research skills). If given proper credit, the students will also see that they can earn extra points to help them over the rough spots in exams. Most instructors find that by having a few students bring in fresh ideas to each class, the class becomes more enjoyable and personalised. Remember that when assignments are made with plenty of lead time, students

tend to do a better job. Since this often presents a challenge in the first several class meetings, some of the early chapter projects might be pushed back to the second week of class.

Individual projects

1. Ask a student to think of a product brand that is used frequently, and make a list of the brand's determinant attributes. Without sharing what was on the list, have the student ask a friend, of the same gender and approximate age, to make a similar list for the same product (although the brand may be different). Then have the student ask someone of the opposite sex to perform the same task. Have the student compare and contrast the identified attributes and report their findings to the class.
2. This assignment can really be fun for the class and the presenter. Have a student wear or bring to class a recent clothes purchase. Have them explain how his or her purchase decision was influenced by different economic, social, cultural and/or psychological variables.
3. Have a student observe a consumer shopping and attempt to infer the variables involved in the situation. Ask the student to report to the class, the observed behaviour and the inferences drawn.
4. Here's a chance for a student to start some networking. Have the individual interview a businessperson and ask this person to define consumer behaviour. Encourage the student to ask how the businessperson believes greater knowledge of consumer behaviour could help in job performance. See if the student can relate the responses given to the marketing concept and/or relationship marketing. If yes, how?
5. Ask a student to interview a peer about the variables thought to be important influences on consumer behaviour in the purchase of a specific product (e.g. car, stereo, house, holiday, camera, etc.). Ask them to do the same for an older person and compare and contrast the responses.
6. Demonstrate with a recent purchase that you have made whether you are following the positivism or interpretivism perspective on consumer research.

Group assignments

7. Have your group select a product of interest to your group (e.g. a car, entertainment centre, vacation spot, movie and sporting event). Have each person in the group make a list of what they consider to be the product's main attributes. Compare and contrast the attributes listed by the women and by the men to see how they may vary. Next, if there are any age or ethnic differences in the group, see if differences appear. Based on these differences, formulate strategies for appealing to the various subgroups within your group.
8. Have your group collect ads for three different brands in an identical product category (e.g. detergent, cars, toothpaste, etc.). Prepare a report on the segmentation variables used within the ads or media format in which they appear.

9. Have your group find an example of a recent product, service or program that was a failure. National marketing journals, industry and sector magazines or other marketing publications are excellent sources. Have students explain to the class how knowledge of consumer behaviour, or the lack of it, could have contributed to the success or failure of the effort.
10. Have your group go online on the Internet to three Web pages of your choice. Demonstrate how the Web pages segment markets, collect information from the consumer (after the person has come to the Web page), and might be used to build a database.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR CHALLENGE

Suggestions for use of the consumer behaviour challenge

These questions are meant to challenge a student's understanding of chapter material and to enable them to develop an ability to creatively use the chapter material to solve problems. These questions appear at the end of each chapter; however, the summarised answers do not. The questions may be used purely for discussion (if so, they might be assigned in advance of the discussion), they can be given to selected students for in-class presentation, they can be used as short essay questions on in-class quizzes or in formal examinations, or they can be used by the students to enhance the chapter summary. Answers are provided to each question, however, the answers are only intended to be suggestions (differing student answers should be judged on their own merit – there is usually more than one creative way to answer these questions).

1. **This chapter states that people play different roles and that their consumption behaviours may differ depending on the particular role they are playing. State whether you agree or disagree with this perspective, giving examples from your own life.**

Most students will be able to identify the different roles that individuals play at different times, so agreement should be almost universal. After agreeing with this notion, the student will be more likely to accept the idea that consumption behaviour is intimately tied to the role itself. The goal of this exercise is to make the student aware that consumption helps to define the roles consumers play and is a central part of those roles. For example, many family social occasions are accompanied by food and drink, and the consumption of these goods acts as a shared bond that is used to define membership in that group. Another example is the styles of clothing worn by young people, to define their group membership.

2. **Some researchers believe that the field of consumer behaviour should be a pure, rather than an applied, science. That is, research issues should be framed in terms of their scientific interest rather than their applicability to immediate marketing problems. Do you agree?**

Instead of viewing research in an either–or framework, that is that consumer behaviour research must be either pure scientific research or applied knowledge, the student should be encouraged to view it as both. Much research is done on a 'knowledge for knowledge sake' basis, but the field of consumer behaviour has the potential to make a significant contribution to how the makers of goods and services can best reach the consumer. For example, business firms are able to take the knowledge developed in a pure science

research setting and apply it to their marketing efforts by utilising the results of studies that investigate how consumers process advertising messages. Areas such as space exploration have been able to use purely scientific research and apply their findings to immediate problems. Consumer behaviour knowledge has this same quality.

- 3. In recent years, there has been a large debate about the influence that Internet shopping will have on our consumer lives. Try listing the changes that you personally have made in your buying and consumption patterns due to e-commerce. Compare these changes with changes experienced by other people from various social groups, e.g. somebody from your parents' generation, an IT freak, or somebody with a lower educational background.**

Individual responses could be compared.

- 4. Name some products or services that are widely used by your social group. State whether you agree or disagree with the notion that these products help to form bonds within the group, and supporting your argument with examples from your list of products used by the group.**

Discussion of this question is similar to that pertaining to the first question. In both cases, the focus is on whether consumption behaviour has a wider meaning – that of group bonding or identification. The actual products used are not the most important aspect of this discussion. Instead, the focus should be on consumption behaviour as more than the satisfying of primary (basic or physiological) needs. It is assumed that most students will agree that consumption has meaning beyond satisfying primary needs. However, differences will be found in (i) the situations in which consumption takes on this additional meaning, (ii) the products that do so and (iii) the form of the broadened meaning.

Encourage students to examine the products that bring forth meaning, as well as their consideration as to why this phenomenon occurs.

- 5. Although demographic information on large numbers of consumers is used in many marketing contexts, some people believe that the sale of data on customers' incomes, buying habits and so on constitutes an invasion of privacy and should be banned. Comment on this issue from both a consumer's and a marketer's point of view.**

As with many questions of this type, there are few objectively right or wrong answers. The goal is, of course, to make the student think about the issues and to be able to critically examine the arguments on both sides. Regardless of the student's specific comments on this issue, the discussion should acknowledge the legitimate interest of both parties and the possibility of a compromise suitable to both groups. This discussion could draw upon the student's personal experiences with receiving mail that obviously came as a result of information about the student being sold to a company that compiles lists. Ask the student about his or her reactions to it and encourage the student to make a special attempt to discuss the advantages and disadvantages to both the direct marketer and potential buyer.

Do the students think their university or college sells demographic information about them to database firms? If so, do they think this is legal? (See chapter information on database marketing.)

- 6. List the three stages in the consumption process. Describe the issues that you considered in each of these stages when you made a recent important purchase.**

Students can use the material presented in Figure 1.1. The three stages in the consumption process shown are (i) pre-purchase, (ii) purchase and (iii) post-purchase. The student selected should develop fairly unique sets of issues related to each of these phases based on the different products and purchases situation. Figure 1.1 provides a list of issues for each stage from both the consumer's and marketer's perspectives.

- 7. State the differences between the positivist and interpretivist approaches to consumer research. For each type of inquiry, give examples of product dimensions that would be more usefully explored using that type of research over the other.**

The differences between positivism and interpretivism, according to the text, are in their views on (i) the utility of reason towards solving problems, (ii) the proper role of technology and (iii) the form of reality. Allowing for these differences, positivism would be more useful than interpretivism in exploring utilitarian product functions, that is, what the product does and how well it does it. Alternately, interpretivism, with its inclusion of subjective aspects of products, would be more appropriate than positivism when examining the meaning of product dimensions to consumers, the role played by products in individuals' self-definition, and/or cultural and social factors that influence purchase and use. Note that the appropriate areas of research for the two views have considerable overlap.

- 8. What aspects of consumer behaviour are likely to be of interest to a financial planner? To a university administrator? To a graphic arts designer? To a social worker in a government agency? To a nursing instructor?**

The listing of the aspects of consumer behaviour corresponding to these positions should reflect the particular aspects of each position. For example, a financial planner depends on consumers' willingness to postpone consumption in order to save and invest money to have more later. A social worker must be concerned about people's attitudes towards government, social work in general, and the role of government in people's lives. What each of these positions share, and what should underlie the discussion, is their connection to the consumption process, and the fact that consumers will themselves have different needs and wants associated with their consumption. Each of the listed parties would attempt to influence consumers by using a different aspect of consumption, and these differences need to be discussed and analysed.

- 9. Select a product and brand that you use frequently and list what you consider to be the brand's determinant attributes. Without revealing your list, ask a friend who is approximately the same age but of the opposite sex to make a similar list for the same product (the brand may be different). Compare and contrast the identified attributes and report your findings.**

The purpose of this exercise is to make students realise that there may be individual (and gender-related) differences in attribute selection and attribute rating. Students may come up with different attribute lists, or at least with differences in which attributes are determinant for preference formation and choice. Within the positivist perspective, this implies that a pre-constructed list of product attributes should contain all attributes that may be relevant to any consumer, and as a consequence, that it will contain several attributes that are irrelevant to some consumers. Within the interpretivist perspective, this implies that consumers select those attributes in product perception and evaluation that help them in their individual construction of meaning in consumer goods. (Possible field project.)

- 10. Collect ads for five different brands of the same product. Report on the segmentation variables, target markets and emphasised product attributes in each ad.**

The actors and situations depicted in different ads will appeal to different segments of the market. The goal of this exercise is to make students aware of the connection between market segmentation, target market and marketing communication. Students should come up with a consistent picture of how target markets differ by segmentation variables and how and why the emphasised product attributes appeal to those different target markets.