

Course: Psychology/ Chapters/ Attitudes

Attitudes are learned predispositions to respond in a consistent way with respect to a given object. **Attitude objects** can be can be people, products, places, ideas, issues, behavior, etc. Attitudes:

- are *learned* – through information, through direct experience or some combination of two
- are *predispositions to respond* – they aren't observable but they can be measured
- are *consistent* – positive or negative – e.g. think of something you like/don't like

Having attitudes can have a number of reasons. **Instrumental** reasons, which say that we are motivated towards rewarding objects e.g. attitudes to lotto; the **ego defens**e reasons, which states that we are motivated to sustain our self-concept e.g. our attractiveness, skills; **value expression** reasons, which indicated that we express opinions that reflect self attitude e.g. attitudes to political parties, causes or ideas; and **knowledge** reasons, which show that attitudes provide coherence and direction to our experience e.g. our attitudes to study, work, saving money,...

Components of attitude can be:

- *Cognitive* (beliefs about the object e.g. "I believe it is important to recycle")
- *Affective* (positive or negative emotional reaction to the object e.g. "therefore I like products that come in recyclable packaging")
- *Conative* (intended or actual behavior e.g. "so I will buy brand X not brand Y")

Attitudes can be also measured with different scales. The **semantic differential scale** uses bi-polar adjectives. It allows the construction of product positioning profiles. The **staple scale** uses a single criterion or key word and instructs the respondent to rate the object on a scale. It is slightly more complex than the semantic differential. And the **Likert scale** is based on a number of evaluative statements, respondent is asked to indicate level of agreement/disagreement.

Attitudes can also be changed. If buyers have a negative attitude to the product, the marketer may attempt to change this. This may require for example changing the product (e.g. improved features) or changing communication about the



product (e.g. giving the product a new image). There are two different types of change; **pre-purchase attitude change** and **post-purchase attitude change**. The **pre-purchase attitude change** considers four strategies based on Fishbein:

1. Changing the relative evaluation of attributes
2. Changing brand beliefs
3. Adding attributes to the brand
4. Changing beliefs about competitors brands

The **post-purchase attitude change** includes the **cognitive dissonance** which occurs when the individual receives new information about a belief or attitude that is in conflict with the original belief or attitude. These conflicting thoughts are prime factors that induce consumers to change attitude so that they will be consistent with actual purchase behavior.



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