

Factors Affecting Purchasing Behavior

SUBMITTED BY: Leya Matthew

SUBJECT(S): Marketing

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

Why do we buy what we buy, and not something else? What factors influence our purchase decisions? In this lesson, students are encouraged to critically examine the myriad factors that influence their purchases. Moving from the perspective of the customer to the marketer, the students use this analysis to design a marketing plan for a product. Throughout the lesson, students engage in critical analysis, teamwork and problem solving.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Marketing, I. Foundations of Marketing
- Marketing, II. Consumers and Their Behavior

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“Purchase Power: How to Make Smart Consumer Choices”](#)
- [“Following Trends at the Intersection of Fashion and Business”](#)
- [“Economic Partnership: Coffee Beans, Moroccan Rugs and the Future of Fair Trade”](#)
- [“Big Data and Your Future as a Data Scientist”](#)

Common Core Standard(s):

1. CCR Standard for Reading: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it.

2. CCR Standards for Listening: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on each other's ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning and use of evidence and rhetoric.
3. CCR Standards for Speaking: Present information, findings and supporting evidence in such a way that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development and style are appropriate to the task, purpose and audience.

Objectives/Purposes:

In this lesson, students will identify factors affecting a purchase decision and create a marketing strategy informed by this knowledge. Students will also develop critical and analytical skills, along with teamwork and presentation skills. Since the lesson involves analysis of personal shopping decisions, students will also become conscious of individual shopping patterns and potentially become better consumers.

Knowledge@Wharton Article: “[Conspicuous Consumption and Race: Who Spends More on What](#)”

Other Resources/Materials:

Flip charts and markers

Internet access

Activity:

1. Consumption Maps (10 mins)

The teacher introduces the lesson by explaining the concept of a consumption map and describing her own consumption map (*see attachment*). For my consumption map, I drew all the items on me that were purchased and related them to the factors that affected their purchase. For example, I bought my glasses in India (I am from India) because they were “in”. Any reading glass would have done, and cheaper models were available. But, like many women (a research study says 92%!), I am unsure of my appearance and choose to go on the safer side by buying the models that are deemed fashionable by market trends.

Each purchase decision, likewise, has an interesting social, historical or cultural component. For example, my earrings are made of gold — which is a common Indian consumption pattern. Gold jewelry is considered an investment, and most women get their inheritance in the form of gold instead of land since the land has to “remain in the family.” Therefore, even the poorest of the poor wear gold jewelry handed down over generations, or they wear imitation gold. This has led to a big imitation-gold jewelry market among the poorer classes in urban cities like Mumbai.

Students are thus introduced to some of the factors affecting purchase decisions as understood by a study of consumer behavior — economic factors, cultural factors, social factors and personal factors.

The teacher now asks students to create their own consumption maps. They identify products on themselves and critically analyze the factors that affected their purchase decisions. Students are encouraged to be critical and exhaustive in their analysis.

2. Presentations (10 mins)

Students present their consumption maps.

3. Work with Knowledge@Wharton article (8 mins)

The teacher now distributes copies of the article: “*Conspicuous Consumption and Race: Who Spends More on What,*” and the class reads aloud the sections that talk about class differences and how that impacts purchase decisions. The final focus is on how marketing decisions need to be aware of these factors and how some companies factor these into strategic decisions.

4. Identify marketing opportunities from consumption maps (10 mins)

The teacher now tapes the charts to the wall and asks students to pair up and scrutinize the consumption maps for marketing opportunities. The example of gold jewelry can be reiterated — the cultural value on gold creates a big market for imitation-gold jewelry among the urban poor in India.

5. Class Discussion and Wrap-Up (5 mins)

The class reconvenes and discusses the possibilities they identified in the consumption maps. Thereafter, the teacher wraps up the lesson.

Tying It All Together: Understanding the factors that affect a purchase decision forms the basis for most marketing activity — market segmentation, designing the marketing mix, etc. In this lesson, students critically examine their personal experiences to analyze the factors that influence their purchase decisions. From this understanding of consumer behavior, the students move to the marketing aspect: How can we use our understanding of consumer behavior to design marketing strategies? This also facilitates introspection of how marketing affects their own behavior and helps students become better consumers. This eventually places the student in an interesting space — more critical as consumers and more challenged as marketers.

Practice Outside of the Classroom: Analyze what affected your decision the next time you make a purchase. What was the role of marketing in your decision-making process?

Read the Wharton Global Youth Program article [“Purchase Power: How to Ask the Right Questions and Make Smart Consumer Choices”](#)

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: The teacher needs to be aware of social, racial or other cultural tensions within the student population and ensure that value judgments about student consumption are not made. The class has to be retained as a safe space where students can examine their own behavior and feel intrinsically motivated to do so. If students become defensive of their consumption patterns, the teacher has to be able to navigate the students to an environment of trust.

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