

ATTITUDE, MOTIVATION, AND MARKETING OR,  
WHERE DO THE ATTRIBUTES COME FROM?

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ABSTRACT

Attitude researchers tend to restrict their responsibility to studying respondents' reactions to a set of attributes, and the relationship between attitude and behavior. Both are important issues. But equally important and hitherto ignored by attitude researchers is the question: Where do the attributes come from? A model of the consumer decision process is presented which contains the key elements usually studied in attitude research namely, feelings, beliefs, and attitude as well as attributes and their source in the person and environment elements that motivate the brand choice decision. It is contrasted with the Fishbein approach to studying attitude. Implications for achieving a closer match between the marketer's tasks and behavioral science theory and research are stated.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY, AND MARKETING RESEARCH

There are at least three interested parties for the question: Where do the attributes come from? Social psychology, consumer psychology, and marketing research have something to say on the subject. None of the three has offered what I consider to be a complete answer by which I mean, here, an answer at the conceptual and empirical levels. Furthermore, the answers offered by social psychology and by marketing research are very different: in some sense, they are mirror images of each other.

Fishbein, who represents social psychology for present purposes, tells us how to obtain a set of attributes empirically. He states that attributes are generated by asking subjects to list, in a free-response format, "the characteristics, qualities, and attributes of the object, or the consequences of performing the behavior" (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, p. 218).

Consumer psychologists have pointed out that the question of the theoretical source of attributes is a topic in need of attention (e.g., Cohen 1977; Pessemier & Wilkie 1972). Cohen, for example, notes that the intellectual ancestry of the expectancy value approach to attitude points to motivation as the source of the attributes. At the same time, he also notes that it is the common practice of workers in the attitude area to "shift focus to the object of the attitude and work back to the individual, some as far as needs and motives (e.g., Katz 1960, Rosenberg 1956), others (e.g., Fishbein 1965) only as far as evaluative responses

associated with the object through prior learning" (1977 p.2). In their research, consumer psychologists obtain their attribute sets in a variety of ways. Often it is not entirely clear how the attributes were obtained. Authors may tell us that an existing attribute set was used, perhaps one taken from an earlier study, or one developed by marketing research. If Fishbein's procedure is followed, subjects are asked to state characteristics of brands, or outcomes of using a product or brand (e.g., Ryan & Bonfield 1975, p. 122).

In marketing research once again we find an empirical procedure as we did in social psychology, but one that differs in substantive ways from that described by Fishbein. Qualitative research, in particular the focus group interview, is the well-trodden ground by which marketing research generates its attribute set, in conjunction with suggestions from the marketing team. Although a fair amount has been written on focus group research, very little has been said about the model of behavior that may direct the writing of the focus group interview guide. By and large, marketing research texts are silent on the subject of generating product attributes, surprisingly so in view of the pivotal role of product attributes as the embodiment of the marketer's response to consumer wants. The practical, if brief, comment in Boyd, Westfall, & Stasch (1977, pp. 582-4) is a notable exception. How marketing research goes about generating the attribute set has not been documented to any extent and, perhaps for this reason, its theoretical significance has gone unnoticed. Wilkie & Pesseasier state: "Methods for attribute generation include expert judgment and unstructured group or depth interview" (1973, p. 428). Note, however, that the topic assigned to the expert judges and addressed through the unstructured interviews is different from Fishbein's direction to list the characteristics of the attitude object. It is to develop a list of product attributes and benefits which consumers want in the situation in which the attitude object (e.g., a brand) is used. Qualitative research starts, typically, by asking respondents to talk about the consumer activity or condition, broadly defined, for which the brand of interest is to be used e.g., "Our topic today is meal preparation" (cf. Wells 1974, p. 2-139). This is a very different procedure, empirically and conceptually, from asking subjects to list the qualities or characteristics of brands.

In sum, social psychology and marketing research give us different procedures for generating an attribute set and neither appears to have considered the conceptual framework. From consumer psychology we have some concern about conceptual underpinnings along with empirical procedures which reflect consumer psychology's dual allegiance to basic psychology and to marketing research.

Part of what I plan to do in this presentation is to de-

cribe a consumer decision model which includes the main elements we associate with attitude models of the expectancy value variety namely, affect, cognition, and attitude, and which also incorporates attributes and their origin in the person and environment elements that motivate the brand choice decision. Along the way, I shall present side-by-side the approaches to attitude of social psychology and marketing research and shall point to substantive differences between them.

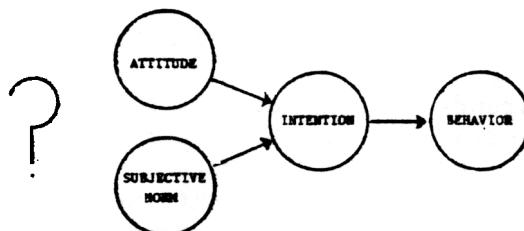
FIGURE 1: IS ATTITUDE PART OF A LARGER BEHAVIORAL MODEL?



### WHERE DO THE ATTRIBUTES COME FROM?

To address the question: Where do the attributes come from? I am going to start by asking another question: Is there a larger behavioral model in which attitude is embedded? What are the other concepts that come before and after attitude in a model of behavior? (Figure 1). One thing that may follow attitude is behavior. The attitude-behavior relationship is tomorrow's topic so I shall not talk in any detail about what follows attitude, what comes to the right of Attitude in the figure, except to remind you, in passing, of the general outlines of what is often called the Extended Fishbein Model (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975).

FIGURE 2: A REPRESENTATION OF THE EXTENDED FISHBEIN MODEL

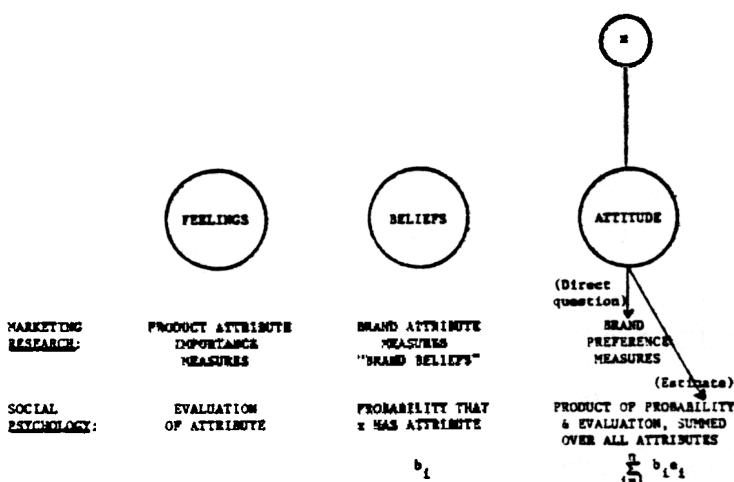


In Figure 2, Attitude and Subjective Norms combine to affect Intention and Behavior. At the very end of my talk I shall mention Behavior again, but until that point, the rest of what I have to say relates to what may precede Attitude, i.e., what is in the blank space to the left of Attitude.

The term "attitude" embodies the notion of attitude toward something,  $x$ , the attitude object. The attitude object,  $x$ , may be a physical object, a concept, a behavior. In marketing research we usually talk as though  $x$  were a brand i.e., an object, but I think it is true to say that the wording of the questions put to survey respondents makes it clear to them that the con-

text is purchase behavior in a specific product category. The attitude object,  $x$ , is represented in Figure 3, and I am asking: How are we to conceptualize what is in the space to the left?

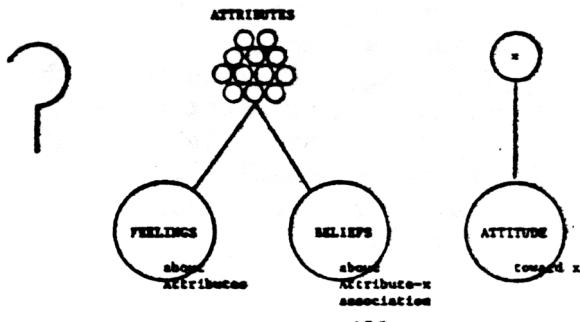
FIGURE 3: RESEARCH OPERATIONS IN MARKETING RESEARCH AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY



It is widely held that beliefs and feelings combine in some way to produce attitude, so we can begin to fill the space with the two attitude components: Beliefs and Feelings. Let's look at the points of contact between social psychology and marketing research practice in regard to these attitude components.

In marketing research practice probably the most frequently asked survey questions relate to the components of attitude. Respondents are asked to rate a set of attributes for importance when choosing a brand in the product category under study; they are also asked to rate major brands on the same set of attributes. A direct questioning approach is usually used to obtain overall attitude toward buying a brand, and there are many different specific questions which are used for this purpose. In social psychology, there are a number of versions of what is referred to in general terms as the expectancy value approach. Probably more than any other, Fishbein's has been used in consumer psychology, and I am following Fishbein here. Beliefs are obtained by having subjects indicate the likelihood that  $x$ , the attitude object, has each of a number of attributes; feelings are obtained by asking subjects to indicate the extent to which each attribute is good or bad. The person's attitude toward the attitude object,  $x$ , is then estimated by multiplying probability and evaluation for each attribute and summing over the set of attributes (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, p. 223). Note that both in marketing research and social psychology we cannot talk about researching Feelings and Beliefs without using one additional term: Attributes.

FIGURE 4: ATTRIBUTES AND ATTITUDE COMPONENTS



Our schematic now includes this additional term: Attributes (Figure 4). The expectancy value formulation for attitude is saying that if we are to estimate a person's Attitude toward  $x$ , we must know: The Beliefs the person holds about associations between  $x$  and Attributes, and the Feelings the person has about the Attributes. Attitude toward  $x$ , then, is a composite of one's feelings about the attributes one believes  $x$  to possess. Notwithstanding the superficial similarity between the approaches of social psychology and of marketing research there are crucial differences between them. Social psychology and marketing research differ in the manner in which the attribute set is generated, in regard to the status of the attitude object, and in their respective treatments of motivation (Figure 5).

#### SOME DIFFERENCES IN APPROACHES OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND MARKETING RESEARCH

	<u>SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY</u>	<u>MARKETING RESEARCH</u>
ATTRIBUTE SET:	Direct request to list qualities/characteristics of $x$ .	Indirect approach. Built up from analysis of exploratory interviews.
ATTITUDE OBJECT ( $x$ ):	Often appears as a given (e.g., The Republican Party, CIA, Going to Church).	May be created from scratch or, if it already exists, may be changed (e.g., new product, new brand, new positioning).

Reason or context for considering  $x$  is often left ambiguous i.e., for subjects to supply their own context.

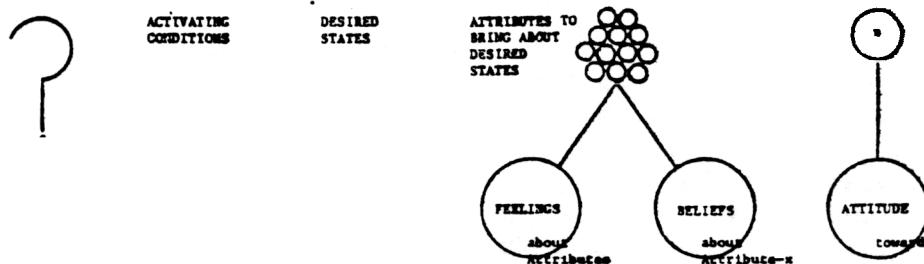
Understanding motivating influences i.e., the consumer's use-context, is of prime importance so that  $x$  may be tailored accordingly.

Specifically, with regard to the question: Where do the attributes come from? social psychology asks concerning the attributes which subjects believe  $x$ , the attitude object, to possess. Marketing research uses an indirect questioning approach to identify the attributes which respondents want in the product-use situation under study. In marketing research, then, attributes represent consumer wants. We know that the space to the left, in Figure 4, must contain a conceptualization of the source of consumer wants. It must contain some representation of the motivating influences on consumers.

One of the difficulties psychologists and others have had with conceptualizing motivation comes, I believe, from thinking of motivation as something that resides within the person. If

we probe deeply enough, perhaps in the deep recesses of personality, we shall find the answer to what motivates the person. As I think marketing researchers have learned from such research on consumer wants, elements in the person's environment as well as elements within the person may motivate behavior i.e., may activate behavior in a particular direction (Fennell 1975). Accordingly, to represent motivation I shall talk about Activating Conditions and Desired States (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6: MOTIVATIONAL ANTECEDENTS OF ATTITUDE



Consumers experience discomfort (Activating Condition) and they sense a disparity between the way things are and the way they could be (Desired State), and they may engage in behavior to bring about the desired state (Fennell 1979a; cf. Peak 1955). As marketers, we are interested in making available goods and services possessing those attributes which will help consumers to bring about their desired states. Elsewhere (Fennell 1978), I have described seven different kinds of activating conditions and the direction for behavior associated with each. Note that the term "activating condition" allows for influences on behavior whether from the person or the environment, and it refers to those influences that are operating in the situation under study.

As promised, I have been working backwards from Attitude, filling in the space to the left in the figure. I have arrived at the end of this enterprise, so far as our current purpose is concerned, and what we find at the end i.e., beyond the Activating Conditions in Figure 6, is a Person and an Environment. Where do the attributes come from? They are the marketer's answer to the desires of consumers which, in turn, arise from influences coming from within the person and from the person's environment.

What we call "the environment" as though it were a unitary entity, in fact comprises numerous systems, each one of which is a large subject in itself. Likewise, "the person" is composed of many different systems, physiological and psychological, which exist side-by-side, sometimes intersecting each other and the environmental systems. As marketers, we are not interested in describing the environment per se, or the person per se, even if it were possible to do so adequately. What we do want to

know is how all of this enormous complexity comes together to influence the consumer's perception of meal preparation, or household cleaning, or private transportation, or personal hygiene, or food storage, etc.

When person systems and environment systems intersect, or come together, as they do in different ways many times a day, they form a Situation (Figure 7). Among the many situations

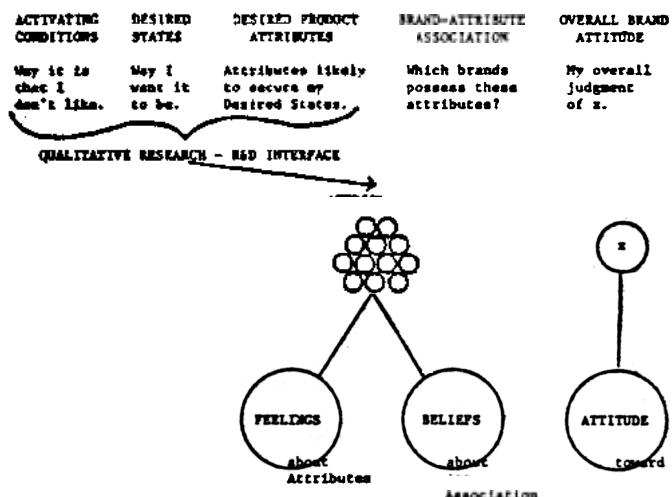
FIGURE 7: SOURCE OF ACTIVATING CONDITIONS IN PERSON AND ENVIRONMENT ELEMENTS

ENVIRONMENT	PERSON
Physical -Natural -Built Political	Cognitive Units and Processes Traits
SITUATION AS PERCEIVED	
Activating Conditions	
1 Economic	Desired States
2 Cultural	Desired Attributes
3 Societal	
4 Family	
5 Task	
6 etc.	
Economic	Values
Cultural	Self-Concept
Societal	Skills
Family	Interests
Task	Roles
etc.	Physiology

that arise for the person in this way every day, marketers want to understand those that involve or that may involve the use of goods and services. I shall return shortly to fill in the rest of this figure. First I want to examine in greater detail the motivational and attitudinal aspects of the consumer's decision process which are shown across the top of Figure 8: The Activating Conditions — "the way it is that I don't like," followed by Desired States — "the way I want it to be," and next, Desired Product Attributes — "the attributes likely to secure my Desired States." With regard to Brand-Attribute Association, the consumer wants to know which brands offer and deliver desired attributes; and finally, Overall Brand Attitude is intended to represent the consumer's overall judgment about a brand, taking pros and cons into account. Note that the market-place translation of consumer wants begins with "Attributes."

Where do the attributes come from? The meeting of consumer and producer which occurs in the translation of consumer wants into product attributes is achieved largely through the interface of qualitative consumer research and the technological knowledge of the R&D department. What is going on in those countless focus group interviews which marketing research uses to help develop

FIGURE 8: MOTIVATIONAL AND ATTITUDINAL ASPECTS OF DECISION PROCESS



an attribute set is an attempt to get respondents to describe the elements in their own personalities and environments that provide clues to what they want in the situation under study. Note that there are two conceptually distinct phases to building the attribute set. The first has to do with understanding the consumer's perspective i.e., activating conditions and desired states. The second has to do with translating the consumer's perspective into the physical and psychological properties of goods and services. Each phase has its own difficulties.

Understanding the Consumer's Perspective. I shall briefly mention two difficulties. First, it is a curious feature of human motivation that we seem to be able to articulate our goals more readily than our reasons for having those particular goals, or the conditions that influenced us toward the goals. In the normal course of events, this may not be any great harm although it may have something to do with the fact that often when we have achieved a long-sought goal our experience of the achievement is different from what we expected it would be. (Possibly, in setting our sights on that particular goal we did not choose appropriately in the light of the particular activating conditions which were operative). To someone like the marketer, who is in the business of helping us to achieve our goals, our difficulty in articulating the conditions that influence us toward a particular goal presents a serious drawback. The problem arises because what passes as a statement of goal in everyday discourse may give little clue to the nature of its activating condition. Let's look at one example in a marketing context of the motivational ambiguity of product attributes (Fennell 1978). When people tell us for what they are striving, or what they want, they have given us minimal information about their motivation.

FIGURE 9: ATTRIBUTES MAY BE MOTIVATIONALLY ANNOYANCES

BELIEFS RELATIVE TO ACTIVATING CONDITIONS		DESIRED STATES	DESIRED ATTRIBUTES
PROBLEM SOLUTION	My dog's poor health may be due to bad diet.	Dog's poor health in good conditions.	
PROBLEM PREVENTION	Dog becomes aware about "badly pain" diet.	Evidence of my self-concept as dog lover.	It "Importance rating" for "GOOD NUTRITION".
STABLE STATE MAINTENANCE	Basic nutrition is a routine matter.	Supplyline of acceptable dog food as basic.	
EXPLORATORY INTEREST	Animal nutrition is my hobby.	Have & information about nutrition.	

A respondent in a consumer survey on dog food may rate "good nutrition" high on importance, or in a focus group session on consumer orientation to pet care may say: I want good nutrition for my dog. Without further probing, the marketer has little direction for product formulation or advertising attentional strategy. The activating conditions and desired states of consumers who indicate they want good nutrition in dog food may be any of those shown in Figure 9, or indeed others.

A second difficulty in understanding the consumer's activating conditions and desired states resides in the likelihood that in order to function in their daily lives consumers may have developed various coping strategies and defense mechanisms which serve to block from their awareness many of the larger and smaller irritations of everyday living. Identifying these annoyances and devising ways to deal with them is one path to the promising new product idea. But how exactly is marketing to do this if the consumers to which it turns for guidance have blocked awareness of discomforts? Some twenty years ago the marketing world became disenchanted with the excesses of Freudian analysis applied to everyday products. The possibility of subjectivity on the part of the researcher was unsettling, to say the least, when it became evident in the differing recommendations of independent researchers studying the same topic (see, for example, Ramond 1974, p. 89). Marketing moved on to other approaches to uncovering consumer wants, first to reliance on large numbers -- of respondents and data points -- made possible by computer capacity, and more recently to ever more sophisticated statistical analyses. The basic problem posed by the notion of unconscious motivation remains unresolved, and it may arise right at the time focus group respondents are supposedly sharing with us the consumer's perspective. Dr. Nadien takes a closer look at this problem which is still very much at the frontier of known territory (Nadien 1980). At the same time, marketing has taken on the task of satisfying consumers' wants, and the possibility that people are not always able to articulate what they want comes with the territory. Marketing's practice of multi-phase interaction between consumer and producer (through the various forms of product development research) uses a fair degree of trial and error, and seems appropriate at the present stage of development in the behavioral sciences.

Translating Consumer Wants into Product Attributes. Understanding the consumer's perspective is only one of the two key facets of building the attribute set. The other is the translation of consumer wants into product attributes. I believe most marketing researchers would agree that it is not the respondent's role, in qualitative research, to state the exact product features or attributes that are desired. Indeed, one of the more common reasons why a researcher may feel dissatisfied with an exploratory interview is that it had been hard to get the respondents to do more than playback the product attribute language which is often used in advertising. The producer rather than the consumer is familiar with the technology of production, and understands what properties may and may not be built into a brand, and how. When consumers talk in product attribute language they are in the producer's area of expert knowledge. Consumers can and do express reactions to product attributes, but instead of relying on consumers to generate desired product attributes it is preferable to have them talk about what they, and not the producer, know at first hand namely, the conditions that give rise to their purchase and use of products. The researcher can facilitate translation of the consumer's perception of the product-use situation into product attributes by securing a briefing from R&D personnel in advance of conducting exploratory interviews. R&D people often have a wealth of information on human physiology as well as product formulation possibilities which focus group moderators should be acquainted with as they prepare the interview guide and moderate the discussion. With systematic preparation for the exploratory interview, the researcher is better situated than otherwise to extract the maximum amount of useful information. It is essential that this information be then shared with R&D to complete the consumer-producer interface.

FIGURE 10: CONSUMERS MAY BE UNABLE TO ARTICULATE THEIR WANTS

ACTIVATING CONDITIONS	DESIRED STATES	DESIRED PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES	BRAND-ATTRIBUTE ASSOCIATION	OVERALL BRAND ATTITUDE
Way it is that I don't like. (even though I may have expressed the fact I don't like it, and may not even dream that things could be otherwise).	Way I want it to be. (or would want it to be if I thought about it, or knew that I could change things).	Attributes likely to secure my Desired states. (but don't ask me to speak product attribute language. If you do I'll playback what the advertising says. You must understand where I'm coming from and going to and what's feasible technologically, and then create the attributes I want).		

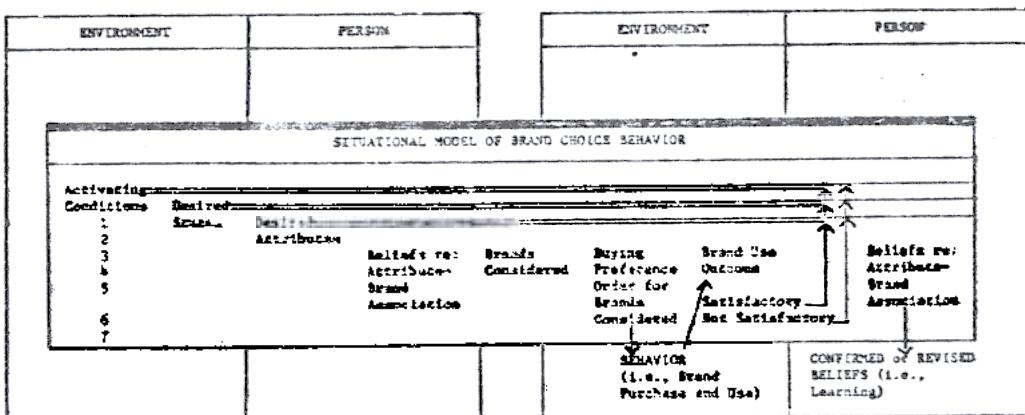
For reasons such as these it is not expected that respondents in exploratory research will be in a position to give the information marketers need in response to direct questions regarding their activating conditions, desired states or desired

product attributes. A more realistic description of the actual state of affairs is shown in Figure 10.

### SITUATIONAL MODEL OF BRAND CHOICE

I turn, now, to completing my conception of the brand choice situation as perceived by the consumer, that is, standing in the consumer's shoes (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11: THE BRAND CHOICE DECISIONS



Elements in the person and in the environment combine to create an unpleasant state of affairs (Activating Condition). Unless the person uses some form of cognitive activity to neutralize the activating condition, the alternative is to engage in overt behavior. The activating condition determines the particular kinds of outcome (Desired State) and attributes (Desired Attributes) that will be positively valued by a consumer in the product-use situation under study. Drawing on what they know about the benefits and attributes that brands offer and deliver, including the minimum information that the brand is a product category member (Beliefs), consumers select for consideration those brands that seem likely to help bring about their desired states (Brands Considered). They may need some mechanism for combining their favorable and unfavorable beliefs about each brand into a single value (cf. attitude) which can then be used to rank the brands considered in terms of buying preference (Preference Ordering). Following use of the purchased brand (Brand Use Outcome), consumers judge the extent to which the brand helped to achieve their desired states and to neutralize their activating conditions. As a result of this experience, consumers' previous beliefs about the brand may have been confirmed or may need to be revised (Learning).

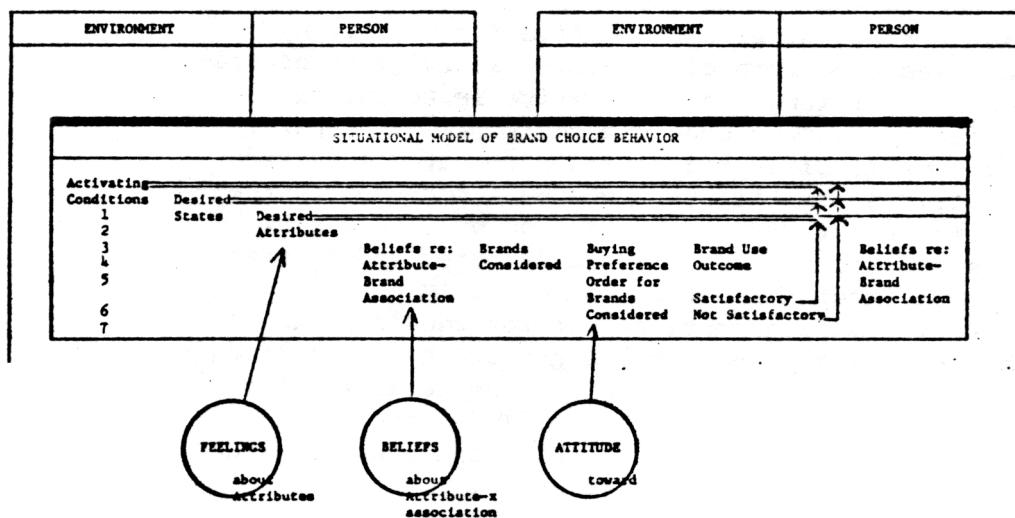
For example, parents see their teenage children rushing off in the morning without breakfast, and they are troubled because of their belief that good health requires starting the day with

a substantial meal. They may, of course, dispel their uneasiness by questioning the soundness of the solid breakfast rule, remarking perhaps to themselves that medical science, no less than other disciplines, has its fads and that the latest medical advice may be extolling the benefits of fasting till noon. If cognitive activity of this sort fails to lay their concern to rest, the activating condition remains and it specifies the desired state of getting some form of nutrition into their teenagers early in the day. How exactly this is to be done may be devised by ingenious, caring, and diplomatic parents, but there is here an opportunity for marketers to identify the parents' predicament and create appropriate product forms i.e., to translate the essential activating elements into properties of goods and services that are responsive to the consumer's condition.

### Comparison with Social Psychology's Attitude Model

Although my brand choice model contains elements that are familiar to us from attitude research, specifically Feelings and Beliefs, as well as Attitude itself in the sense of a summary or overall reaction to the attitude object (Figure 12), the attitude and brand choice models differ in substantive ways. The

FIGURE 12: ATTITUDE COMPONENTS AND THE BRAND CHOICE DECISION



attitude model we take from social psychology starts with an attitude object and enquires about the attributes people believe it possesses, then enquires about people's feelings toward the attributes. Where do these feelings come from? What is their source? The answer is that we learn to have these feelings because of other characteristics with which the attributes are associated, which in turn are related to yet others in a chain stretching back to early childhood:

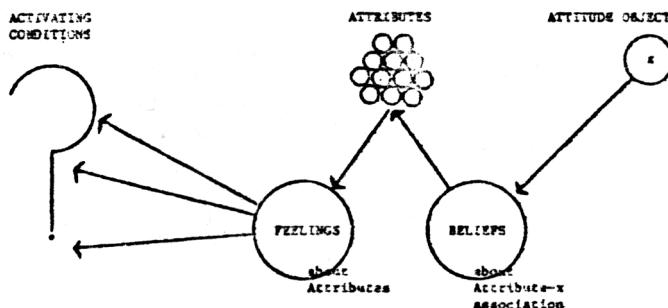
"(attribute evaluations) are themselves a function of beliefs linking the attribute to other characteristics and evaluations of those characteristics. The latter evaluations are again based on beliefs and evaluations, etc. It is possible to continue such an analysis indefinitely. Ultimately, however, one must probably fall back on hedonism, pleasure-pain principles, or other primary motives to account for the initial acquisition of affect. For example, for a newborn infant ingestion of milk satisfies hunger and may be viewed as giving pleasure or eliminating pain. Milk thus takes on some of the pleasurable (positive) qualities associated with hunger reduction. In this way, a positive attitude toward milk has been acquired. The evaluation of milk can now account in part for the development of attitudes toward other objects which come to be associated with milk (e.g., mother or breast).

Although it is possible in principle to trace through the development of a person's attitudes beginning with his early childhood, it will usually be sufficient to assess the evaluation of the attributes associated with the attitude object at a given point in time" (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, p. 217).

For present purposes such an analysis is deficient in two related respects. It assumes that attributes are always evaluated in the same way regardless of the context, and by offering an explanation in historical terms only, it fails to consider the influence of currently operating forces in the person's environment which may combine with elements within the person to determine value in specific situations.

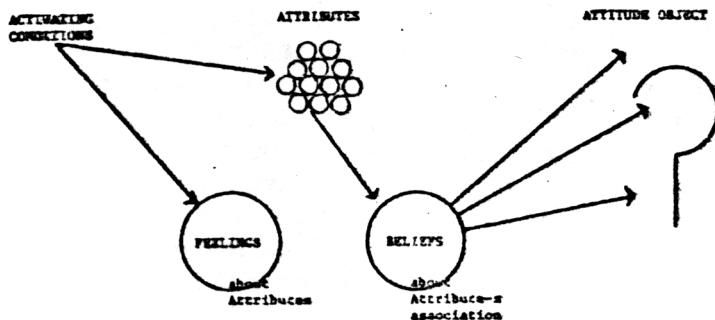
The attitude formulation from social psychology works backward from an attitude object to unspecified motivations i.e., activating conditions (Figure 13). In contrast, marketing re-

FIGURE 13: ORIENTATION OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY



search wants to understand motivation i.e., to specify the activating conditions, and work forward from there to an

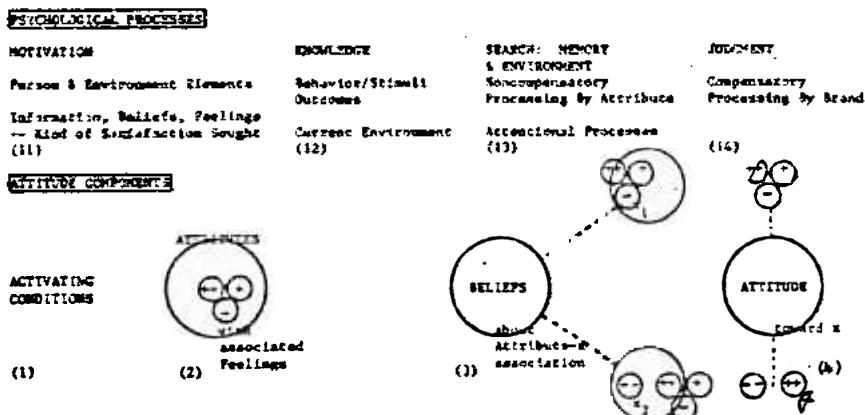
FIGURE 14: ORIENTATION OF MARKETING RESEARCH



attitude object (Figure 14). Here activating conditions endow certain attributes with value in the situations consumers find themselves in. Depending on what they know about associations between such valued attributes and ways to secure the attributes, consumers consider one or more attitude objects. Note that from the present perspective, brands i.e., attitude objects, come up for purchase consideration if they are believed to offer desired attributes. This is in sharp contrast to the sequence of events in social psychology where the attitude object is the focus of initial attention.

In a conference sponsored by the American Marketing Association the context is clearly attitude research for marketing applications. In this spirit, then, I believe it is useful to decompose the attitude formulation and to consider the function of each of its elements in the context of a brand choice model, from the perspective of marketing, on the one hand and of psychological processes on the other (Figure 15).

FIGURE 15: ATTITUDE COMPONENTS, MARKETING TASKS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES



Elements from attitude research appear across the center of

the figure: Attributes, Feelings, Beliefs and Attitude. (1) "Activating Conditions" is added at the beginning to represent the motivating influences on consumers. (2) Rather than emphasize just Feelings, it seems more appropriate to refer to the Attributes about which consumers have Feelings. (3) "Beliefs" has a dual role: It represents consumers' information about the marketplace as well as the means by which one or more brands come up for purchase consideration. (4) Brands may not mirror consumers' desired attributes exactly, or the consumer may be choosing from two or more brands; in either case the consumer needs some means of arriving at an overall judgment that takes pros and cons into account. This may be the primary function for Attitude in the marketing application: to address the question how various pieces of information about individual options are combined to yield a value which makes it possible to order the options preferentially.

Shown across the bottom are the corresponding marketing tasks: (5) Identifying consumer wants (cf. Smith's (1956) notion of heterogeneity of demand and a market inherently segmented as regards consumer wants); (6) Translating consumer wants into the attributes of goods and services, a task that involves the collaboration of the marketing research and R&D departments; (7) Letting consumers know that a good or service is available; (8) Assessing consumers' beliefs and knowledge about brand attributes; (9) Ascertaining the particular set of brands which a consumer considers buying in order to identify the effective competitive frame for different groups of consumers (cf. buying/consideration class, Smith 1967); (10) Finally, studying consumers' buying preferences -- marketers want to know where their brand places in the buying preference ordering of the brands consumers have considered.

Shown across the top of Figure 15 are the major psychological processes which we would study in order to understand the determinants of each component of the consumer's brand choice decision. (11) Activating conditions arise from elements in the person and the person's environment. They originate from an interplay among, for example, information, beliefs, and feelings, which determines the kind of satisfaction the consumer seeks. (12) What consumers do to neutralize their activating conditions depends in part on their store of knowledge and belief about the outcomes associated with various behaviors and stimuli as well as their knowledge of the possibilities offered by the current environment. (13) In generating specific action possibilities (e.g., brands to buy) consumers presumably search their memory and the current environment, and likely use noncompensatory processing by attribute in this search stage. Consumers' scanning of the environment takes place intentionally and incidentally, possibly using a mechanism that lowers the threshold for

reception of affectively relevant stimulation (cf. affective determinants of attention allocation, Fennell 1979b). Finally, in the judgment phase, the consumer may use compensatory processing by brand to convert the strengths and weaknesses of each option being considered into a single value.

## IMPLICATIONS

My analysis of consumer decision processes suggests a number of conceptual distinctions and implications for attitude research which, because of space limitations, I can touch only briefly here (Figure 16). First, there are the related issues

FIGURE 16: SUMMARY

To answer the question I began with: Where do the attributes come from?

- The variables we study in attitude research are part of a larger model of behavior.
- This larger behavioral model has motivational and information processing aspects.
- The attributes we study in marketing originate in the motivational aspects of the model. Specifically, they are the qualities of goods and services that help consumers to achieve Desired States and to neutralize Activating Conditions.

As for Attitude, Motivation, and Marketing:

- It is Motivation's job to explain the kinds of satisfaction consumers seek.
- It is Attitude's job to explain how consumers choose among options they are considering in order to realize the satisfactions they seek.
- It is Marketing's job to make options available with attributes that deliver consumer satisfaction.

Some Conceptual Distinctions:

- Motivational, Search, and Judgment aspects of the decision process.
- Judgment and Affect aspects of the attitude construct.
- Beliefs and Knowledge and the nature of accompanying Affect.

Some Implications of Marketing Research practice for Multi-Attribute Attitude Research:

Since Attributes reflect subjects' wants --

- Generate attributes from subjects' reactions to the entire product-use situation rather than to the attitude object only.
- Use subjects who engage in the relevant consumer activity in place of asking subjects to pretend they are in the market.
- Remember heterogeneity of demand and don't expect all subjects to show a common pattern of performance.
- Because attributes are motivationally ambiguous, study activating conditions as well as consumer reactions to product attributes.

of the necessity for making a distinction between belief and knowledge, and the question whether or not affect precedes behavior. Attitude is often understood to mean a behavioral tendency to approach or withdraw from an attitude object with accompanying feelings of favorableness/unfavorableness, or liking/disliking. Certainly, the quality of this feeling is likely to be different when the attitude object is known only by description (belief) and when it is known by experience (knowledge). Marketing research practice acknowledges the distinction between knowledge with and without experience when "brand beliefs" data, for example, are analyzed separately for triers and nontriers.

In my brand choice model, feeling originates in the motivational processes of the consumer and directs the consumer's search for appropriate attributes. If one brand only comes up for consideration as possessing the desired attribute, it may be bought on the basis of the consumer's belief alone. It

seems unnecessary to postulate that the consumer likes the brand in advance of trying the brand. If the brand delivers on its claim, the consumer may well like it after use. However, if we apply the Fishbein formula in the case just described, based on what the consumer believes about the brand and how the consumer evaluates what is believed, we obtain a measure of attitude, or liking for the brand, in advance of purchase. The Fishbein approach appears to force us to make an unwarranted assumption about liking (affect) in advance of experience. Even in cases where the consumer is using judgment processes e.g., assessing pros and cons of one or more brands, it seems preferable to consider two issues separately: 1) the particular combinatorial rules and trade off systems that yield an ordering of the options which are being considered; 2) the subject of affect — whether and where it occurs in the decision process, and its specific nature.

Whether affect occurs before or after behavior (e.g., brand purchase) is, of course, an issue that has arisen in the discussion relative to the hierarchy of advertising effects (e.g., Raymond 1974, pp. 14-22; Ray 1973). My analysis here suggests additional questions about the way advertising works that are, perhaps, even more interesting. Does advertising merely supply information (e.g., about brand-attribute associations) and rely on existing consumer affect to power the purchase decision, so to speak, or are there circumstances in which it supplies both information and motive power for the purchase decision? Advertising, for example, could create liking for an item in advance of purchase so that the nonpossession of the item becomes an activating condition for the consumer. Also, it could inculcate a belief which combines with existing person and environment elements to create an activating condition, at the same time creating an appropriate brand-attribute association so that the consumer selects the advertised brand as the means of neutralizing the activating condition.

Underlying what has been suggested so far is the further implication that the consumer's degree of familiarity with a particular motivating situation is an important variable with theoretical ramifications that go beyond those so far articulated in discussions of Howard's (e.g., 1977) or Robinson, Faris, & Wind's (1968) threefold classification of buying situations. The dimensions that define familiarity may vary depending on the marketing task being studied. My analysis of consumer decision processes, for example, suggests the importance of distinguishing between instances in which the consumer's information about the marketplace is based on experience and those in which it is not, a qualitative distinction with theoretical implications that are not apparent when amount rather than kind of information is stressed.

With regard to the implications for attitude research which is conducted in the consumer psychology laboratory with an eye to marketing applications, a "strong" interpretation of what I have been saying is that the kinds of questions typically addressed in multi-attribute, multi-brand research are meaningful only in the context of a decision process originating in consumer wants. Marketing researchers recognise the motivational context by means of a number of procedures which often are absent in laboratory research. First, some consumer psychologists have noted subjects' difficulty in articulating desired attributes (e.g., Maxis, Ahtola, & Klippel 1975, pp. 46-7). Generating the attribute set in a manner similar to that used in marketing research may be helpful (i.e., from a discussion in which subjects' reaction to the entire product-use situation is obtained rather than only to the attitude object or the behavioral outcomes). Second, marketing researchers screen respondents to obtain those currently engaging in the consumer activity of interest. In the absence of evidence that subjects who are asked to pretend they are in the market for a particular product behave in a manner substantially similar to subjects who truly have relevant wants, the marketing research screening practice appears preferable for use in the laboratory as well. Third, because of the origin of attributes in consumer wants, attitude researchers may consider the implications of heterogeneity in demand for their research. Fourth, because product attributes are motivationally ambiguous (i.e., the "same" product attribute may be desired by consumers with differing activating conditions), consumer psychologists may expect to reach a better understanding of consumer behavior when their analysis is differentiated at the level of activating conditions rather than at the level of product attributes only in the manner of multi-attribute, multi-brand research. The last two points suggest an initial clustering of subjects in the manner of segmentation research.

Finally, systematically relevant information is lost when, instead of ascertaining the brands they consider buying, subjects are required to react to a predetermined set of brands. The information lost is of great significance in a marketing context and, more basically, an important aspect of the decision process is removed from investigation namely, the emergence of candidate behaviors and stimuli for consideration in specific situations.

In a context where the motivational, search, and judgment aspects of the decision process are distinguished, the attitude research tradition may contribute primarily to elucidating the judgment aspect i.e., the processes by which consumers reconcile what they want and what they know in choosing among the options they are considering. Progress to this end will be facilitated by research which is integrated within the framework of the entire decision process.

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