

How do men and women differ in their value systems and what does it mean to marketers?

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Going on a first date, we might first be physically attracted to someone, yet, our butterfly-in-the-stomach feeling will soon disappear if we realise that, firstly, we have nothing in common and secondly, that our values do not match up. Well, the same goes for a relationship between consumers and brands and the motivations behind consumer decision making behaviour.

Men and women differ in their approach to dating as well as their decision making processes about which car to buy. Men and women both agree on a conscious level that they 'like driving'. For men, it is a love story that they share with their car and is a way of attracting attention. In contrast, for women, their cars symbolise their path to independence and self-expression. According to Mitchell and Walsh (2004), males and females want different products for different reasons and they are likely to have different ways of liking and obtaining these. A fine analysis, conducted by Target Group Index (TGi) for which Ask Afrika own the South African license and conduct the local research of men versus women's agreement with lifestyle statements reveals that their semi-conscious motivations are different and they have different main motivations behind owning a car.

Classic Economists were the first to analyse consumer behaviours as a choice. They explored conditions and mechanisms behind needs and confronted them to the constraints and or possibilities likely to impact people's actual behaviours such as price of the products and disposable income. However this was formulated in a context where goods available were mainly commodities and people were more concerned with production issues. In today's ever changing, highly digitised world, it is rapidly sensed that the mechanisms are far more complex than a simple arbitrage between perceived utility and available income. The "Why" factor that influences choices is what is missing from the equation that TGi solves.

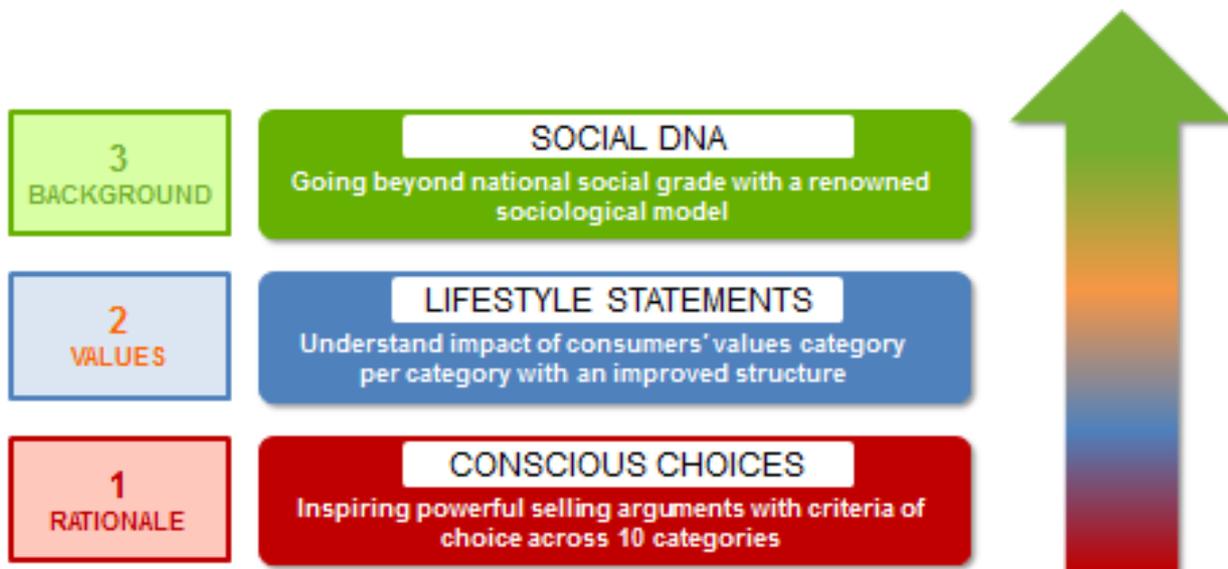
Consumer mind space – tapping the unconscious mind

Traditional path-to purchase models are missing the link between value differences in consumers as people relate to brands from a very personal and spontaneous level. Since decision-making is multi-layered, understanding the different drivers in relation to each other is essential to building an overall picture of what motivates consumers. *"It is about gaining powerful insights into the drivers of consumers' personal preferences. Reasons why we choose a brand or a product are multiple and*



they are more or less conscious". In a similar way that the reasons of why men and women are or are not attracted to each other, the roots of unconscious motivations, provide an over-arching context to what makes consumers 'tick' at the most fundamental level. Instead of asking "what are consumers buying and how are they buying? we need to ask "where do consumers come from and how does this impact the future of our products and brands." By understanding differences in values, marketers are able to understand what attracts a customer, the criteria by which consumers search for information, factors encouraging purchases and decision making.

Consumer choices are based on three levels, being the conscious choices that we make, our lifestyle attitudes and values and our life background.



More than just love at first sight

The first module explains the consumer's rational and conscious motives. These conscious decision drivers can be compared to a 'perfect man/woman' when seeking someone to date, which is most often based on physical characteristics. When considering brand and product choices, these factors which consciously influence consumption include brand image, advertising, personal experience, price, services and products offered. However this is not always who the individual ends up dating, or in this case, which brand and what product the consumer ends up purchasing. In other words, physical attractiveness of a brand or product does not necessarily result in consumers buying a brand or product. We now know consumers are not making only rational and conscious choices, but to some extent their choices are also influenced on an unconscious level.

The second module regards values and beliefs. Some are very conscious and some are semi-conscious. People will often be attracted to and want to date others who share the same lifestyle interests as they do, who go to the same type of parties, have aligned dining preferences, share the same hobbies and have similar taste in movies, music, sport, art or food. Another way of identifying the motivation of the consumer is to use lifestyles and psychographics and how they are linked with specific consumption sectors and can help reveal semiconscious motivations to understand consumption behaviour. The purpose is to qualify the semi-conscious motivations that make up the consumer involvement in the sector.

Of all factors which influence consumer decision making behaviour, one of the major factors is gender. Men and women do not only differ in their upbringing and socialisation, but also differ in social psychological aspects and values. This all impacts on decision making processes whether it be personal, professional or when and where to do shopping. Both genders differ significantly at every stage of the decision making process. In order to understand the differences in the buying decision making process, it is important to understand people's value systems.

Finally the third module goes to the deep roots of the unconscious, covering unconscious motivations, where background plays a role in preferences and tastes. There is sometimes an animal attraction between two people and they may even start dating, yet neither party quite understands what draws them to the other and the 'candidate' may or may not 'tick' any of the boxes on the perfect man/woman list and they may have very little in common, yet they are drawn to one another. In essence, who we are is a complex combination of our experiences, our genetic codes as well our psychological identification and cultural background. These factors all influence our needs, wants, motives and decisions. In this context, understanding value systems is important when looking at how people perceive and react to various situations (Bakshi, n.d.).

The role of gender in consumer behaviour

Although the majority of women remain to be main shoppers, less than half (43%) personally select the items that are bought. Husbands, partners, children and domestic helpers are increasingly becoming more influential in the shopping decisions that women make. However, men are much easier influenced with 52% of men being greatly influenced by their domestic worker in terms of the brands that they purchase compared to 48% of women. Word of mouth is an important avenue to reach men compared to women, with 49% of men stating that they ask people's advice before buying new things.

Women are bargain hunters, with 59% stating that they always look out for the lowest possible prices when going shopping. Men and women both enjoy treating themselves and convenience is key as 22% of both men and women are prepared to pay more for products that make their life easier. This holds especially true for men as they are more likely than the average South African to respond to utilitarian aspects of the shopping experience - such as the availability of parking, whether the item they came for is in stock, and the length of the checkout line. In addition, they buy on facts and data, taking a much more rational approach to the products, brands and retailers they shop at. They tend to buy on immediate needs and instant satisfaction whereas women buy on long term considerations and are emotional shoppers who thoroughly research and plan their shopping. However, this does not mean that men do not plan their shopping, the channels they use are just different with 33% of men using the internet to compare products and plan their shopping.

Compared to the total population, women are significantly more likely to be spiritual, philanthropic and patriotic in their values. Women are about doing it right, they are more traditional in their thinking and expect organisations to behave ethically. They shop local, with 54% stating that they support companies that display the Proudly South African Branding. Men on the other hand are more brand conscious with 54% of them stating that they prefer well-known brands. Their brand preference also relates to their concern with image and appearance, and they are avid consumers. Along with being image-conscious, they tend to be thrill-seekers and self-expressive

Stereotypically women have always been associated as home-makers, and findings show that 46% of women agree that their home is a place where she can express herself. However, this does not mean women are meek and fragile. In contrast, they are strong and self-assured individuals with 36.3% of women agreeing that they are confident about who they are. A campaign such as *Lil-Let's*

We are women shows a brand that portrays its passion for being woman and celebrates femininity – speaking to women about loving themselves and being comfortable with who they are.

Men are experiencers (11.7%) and have a strong desire for adventure and novelty. A brand such as Axe plays it cool with this market, for example the newly launched Apollo campaign who with their competition to win a ticket to travel to space – how does this not appeal to the motivation of adventure, novelty and experience? Men are also greater adopters of online shopping than women which may be attributed to the convenience factor as well as that 41% of them find shopping boring. 32% of men agree that online shopping is more pleasant than conventional shopping. Males have always been a neglected market but online shopping retailers such as Mantality.co.za and Style36.co.za has realised the online potential of the male market by providing them with niche male online experiences.

In the competitive arena of growing market share, marketers are finding themselves in a battle zone fighting for consumers' attention and getting consumers to purchase specific products from specific brands and having them do so repeatedly. Every day vast quantities of behavioural data are generated, but passive information is of little use without actionable insights. People might be of similar demographic background but this does not necessarily mean that this is congruent in the way they think, what they believe in, what they value and how they behave.

Marketers need to build content and narrative in line with consumers' values, which play a meaningful role in their lives. Done well, this will build a brand experience. Brands must align themselves with consumer sentiment. Understanding cultural, social and psychological traits of consumers are key to enable marketers to build lifelong relationships with consumers. These aspects are fundamental determinants or wants, behaviour, our references, buyer's decisions, motivation, values, beliefs and attitudes.

References:

Bakshi, S. n.d. Impact of gender on consumer purchase behaviour. *National Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Commerce and Management* 1(9): 1-8.

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*Data was based on individuals aged 18-59 with a sample base size of 13 727.

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