



## **FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR**

### **A CONCEPT PAPER**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The study investigates the factors influencing consumer buying behaviour, with special reference to Surf Excel and Sunlight detergent powders in the Sri Lankan market. In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, understanding consumer behaviour is crucial for organizations to develop effective marketing strategies. This research aims to identify and analyze key cultural, social, personal, and psychological elements that impact consumers' purchasing decisions regarding detergent products. A quantitative research approach was employed, and data were collected through structured questionnaires from a selected sample of detergent consumers. The findings reveal that brand image, product quality, price sensitivity, promotional activities, and social influences significantly shape consumer buying patterns. Additionally, the study compares consumer preferences between Surf Excel and Sunlight, offering valuable insights for marketers and brand managers to enhance their marketing strategies and meet consumer expectations.



**Keywords:** *Consumer Buying Behaviour, Surf Excel, Sunlight, Detergent Powder, Brand Image, Price Sensitivity, Marketing Strategies, Consumer Preferences*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer buying behavior is a crucial aspect of an organization's transactions and business activities, as it reveals buyers' preferences. Each person's choices can vary based on internal psychological factors, social influences, cultural background, economic conditions, and personal circumstances (Orji et al., 2017). Therefore, organizations must pay close attention to these preferences and adjust their product quality to align with customer expectations. This approach is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the market, where many sellers vie for attention across various products. Ultimately, organizations should prioritize their customers' opinions and preferences (Noel, 2017). Consumer behavior is a specific aspect of human behavior that is crucial for planning and developing marketing strategies. It encompasses how consumers decide whether to purchase, use, or dispose of products that fulfill their needs (Schiffman et al., 2014). The term "consumer behavior" applies to both individual and organizational consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2015). This study specifically focuses on the behavior of personal consumers, who purchase goods and services for personal use, for their households, or as gifts for others. In these situations, the products are intended for final use by individuals, known as end users or ultimate consumers (Solomon et al., 2016).

Moreover, understanding consumer buying behavior is crucial for every organization. This knowledge helps firms determine which goods and services customers prefer and what expectations they have regarding those products or services. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to identify their consumers' buying behavior related to specific products to ensure their survival in the market (Zhai & Williams, 2012). As a result, this chapter will discuss the theoretical frameworks and empirical studies relevant to the current research.

## 2. THEORIES OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

### 2.1. Cognitive Learning Theory

Much of our learning happens through our mental faculties. Some solutions come to us instantly, while others require careful gathering and analysis of information to make decisions. Therefore, learning is a function of engaging the mind, which is referred to as cognitive learning theory (Schunk, 2012).



There was no specific moment that marked the end of the associations or behavioral era and the onset of the cognitive revolution. Initially, this revolution was subtle. However, as psychologists grew increasingly dissatisfied with the limitations of behavioral theories and methods, and as linguists presented compelling arguments against radical behaviorist approaches in their studies of language development, the conditions became favorable for the rise of cognitivism. Another significant factor was the advancement of computers, which served as both a credible metaphor for human information processing and a valuable tool for modeling and examining cognitive processes (Baars, 1986; Woolfolk, 2013). One key category of cognitive theories is known as cognitive-information processing learning theories. From the cognitive information processing (CIP) perspective, human learners are seen as information processors, similar to computers. When learning occurs, information is gathered from the environment, processed and stored in memory, and then expressed as learned capabilities (Ormrod, 2016).

Supporters of the CIP model, similar to behaviorists, aim to explain how the environment influences human behavior. However, unlike behaviorists, they recognize an intervening variable between the environment and behavior, which is the learner's information processing system (Schunk, 2012)

## **2.2. Involvement Theory**

The involvement framework suggests that there are intrinsic personal factors that connect individuals to objects. Certain characteristics of the objects themselves may also drive involvement, and situational factors can trigger an involvement response as well. By manipulating any or all of these elements, an individual can become more engaged with an object. The initial component of this framework, which focuses solely on the relationship between the individual and the object, is referred to as enduring involvement in the literature (Higie & Fieck, 1989; Richens et al. 1992).

However, this early model did not differentiate between affective and cognitive involvement. Other researchers, such as Petty and Cacioppo (1986), created the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which highlighted that the influence of emotion was primarily observed in low-involvement or peripheral routes to persuasion. The simultaneous interaction of emotion and cognition in situations or objects that generate high involvement did not receive significant attention in academic literature until the 1990s (Chaudhuri, 1993).



The inseparability, or strong correlation, between cognitive and affective involvement was proposed by Buck et al. (2004). They argue that emotional reactions and rational cognition occur simultaneously and interactively as two processes of persuasion. Their conceptual model for understanding consumer behavior combines affect, reason, and involvement into a three-dimensional diagram. The foundation of their model is an effective response, which serves as the basis for the second dimension, reason. The third dimension, involvement, represents a blend of both affective and rational processing, encompassing both thinking and feeling. This dimension is calculated as a ratio of the affective and cognitive (reason) measures (Chaudhuri, 2006).

To determine the overall influence, the effect and reason scores are summed and divided by two. When applied to various product categories, this model creates a grid that categorizes products into high and low involvement based on the affect to reason ratio (Buck et al., 2004). This method explicitly recognizes emotion/affect as a distinct form of cognition, separate from analytical cognition, yet acknowledges their strong correlation (Buck et al. 2004).

Defining and measuring involvement is challenging. Involvement encompasses three components: the person, the product, and the situation (Schiffman et al., 2014). It can also include ego-involvement, and commitment is another indicator of involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Greater information-seeking behavior corresponds to higher involvement, while less information searching indicates lower involvement (Kotler & Keller, 2015). It is important to distinguish between product involvement and brand involvement. The level of involvement is reflected in the time taken to make decisions and the significance attributed to the product. Involvement should not be viewed as a binary concept of high and low but rather as a continuum (Solomon et al., 2016). Despite some semantic issues, involvement theory significantly contributes to the development of effective communication strategies (Schiffman et al., 2014).

### **2.3. Social Judgement Theory**

Social Judgment Theory (SJT), developed by Sherif and Hovland (1961) and furthered by Sherif et al. (1965), is founded on the idea that the impact of a persuasive message regarding a specific issue is influenced by how the recipient assesses the position presented in that message (O'Keefe, 1990). According to Sherif et al. (1965), an individual's attitude toward a given issue or behavior cannot be



fully represented by just one option among the alternatives available. Research within the SJT framework seeks to establish the limits of the recipient's position concerning the range of possible alternatives.

In Social Judgment Theory (SJT), positions on an issue are defined by extreme viewpoints, which can be categorized into latitudes of acceptance, non-commitment, and rejection. Each individual assesses the range of alternatives independently, and these individual judgments can be aggregated to reflect a consensus shaped by social norms within a specific group. Consequently, SJT facilitates the identification of group patterns that arise from individual perceptions. Furthermore, SJT asserts that group members are influenced by these patterns similarly to how Social Network Analysis (SNA) operates. Members of the group develop and adopt various practices, customs, traditions, and definitions that establish boundaries for acceptable and objectionable attitudes and behaviors on significant issues. These shared practices and definitions, with their evaluative components, form the norms of the group (Sherif et al., 1965).

To assess individual and group positions on a specific issue, Social Judgment Theory (SJT) recommends creating an Ordered Alternatives Questionnaire that outlines the full range of possible viewpoints. Respondents indicate which positions they consider acceptable, unacceptable, or neutral. By analyzing these individual responses, group responses can be derived that represent the audience's latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and non-commitment. According to SJT predictions related to Social Network Analysis (SNA), the most significant changes in perception and behavior are expected from messages that fall within the latitude of non-commitment. Messages within the latitude of acceptance are likely to produce an assimilation effect, where they are perceived as closer to the audience's viewpoint than they actually are. Conversely, messages that fall into the latitude of rejection are viewed as more distant from the audience's position than they truly are, resulting in a contrast effect. Consequently, both types of messages are unlikely to be embraced by the audience (Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Sherif & Sherif, 1967).

The core idea of Social Judgment Theory is that a person's engagement with an issue influences how they process information related to it. Individuals who are deeply invested in a topic and hold strong or clear opinions are likely to accept only a limited number of alternative viewpoints (Sherif & Sherif, 1967).



## 2.4 Definitions of Consumer Buying Behavior

Consumer Buying Behavior pertains to the purchasing actions of the end consumer. Various factors, specifics, and characteristics shape an individual's decision-making process, shopping habits, purchasing behaviors, preferred brands, and chosen retailers. Each of these elements contributes to the overall purchase decision. A consumer is influenced by aspects such as culture, subculture, social class, group memberships, family, personality traits, and psychological factors, as well as cultural trends and their social environment (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). By identifying and understanding the factors that affect their customers, brands can create more effective strategies, marketing messages (Unique Value Propositions), and advertising campaigns that resonate with the needs and perspectives of their target audience. This approach can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and boost sales (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Consumer buying behavior is regarded as an integral component of marketing, with Kotler and Keller (2011) defining it as the examination of how individuals, groups, and organizations purchase and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to fulfill their needs and desires.

As stated by Kotler et al. (2009), "Consumer behavior is the examination of how individuals or groups purchase, utilize, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to meet their needs or desires." Initially, consumer behavior was viewed merely as buyer behavior, focusing on the interaction between consumers and producers during the purchasing process. However, marketers now understand consumer behavior as a continuous process that extends beyond the moment a consumer exchanges money for goods or services (Solomon, 1996). Consumer behavior is defined as "the examination of the processes through which individuals or groups choose, buy, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to fulfill their needs and wants" (Solomon, 1995). Consumer behavior is quite intricate, as each individual has a unique mindset and attitude regarding the purchase, use, and disposal of products (Solomon, 2009). Due to the ongoing changes in living standards, trends, fashion, and technology, consumers' attitudes toward purchasing products fluctuate (Kumar, 2004).

According to Jeffrey (1971), one of the crucial factors in examining the impact of risk management on the consumer decision-making process is self-confidence. Consumers with low self-confidence tend to be defensive or indecisive when faced with problem-solving purchase decisions. A consumer's buying behavior is shaped by various cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors, most of which are



beyond marketers' control but must be considered to understand the complexities of consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is defined as the study of the processes by which individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to meet their needs and desires (Solomon, 1995).

In the context of marketing, the term "Consumer" encompasses not just the act of making a purchase, but also the overall patterns of buying behavior, which include activities before and after the purchase. Pre-purchase activities might involve recognizing a need or desire and searching for and assessing information about products and brands that could fulfill that need. Post-purchase activities include evaluating the product's performance and alleviating any anxiety related to purchasing high-cost or infrequently bought items. Each of these activities impacts both initial purchases and repeat purchases, and they can be influenced by marketers to varying extents (Foxall, 1987).

Engel et al. (1986) describe consumer behavior as "the actions of individuals directly involved in acquiring, using, and disposing of economic goods and services, as well as the decision-making processes that lead to these actions." Simple observation alone offers limited understanding of the complexities of consumer choice, prompting researchers to turn to the advanced concepts and methodologies of behavioral sciences to better understand, anticipate, and potentially influence consumer behavior.

## **2.5 Importance of Consumer Buying Behavior**

Understanding consumer buying behavior allows marketers to identify and predict how consumers make purchasing decisions. This study not only reveals what products consumers buy but also provides insight into the reasons behind their purchases (Kumar, 2004). According to Professor Theodore Levitt, consumer behavior is crucial for marketers in business because the primary goal is to attract and retain customers (Kumar, 2004). If a customer is satisfied with a product, they are likely to make repeat purchases. Therefore, marketers need to promote products in a way that persuades customers to buy. As a result, both acquiring new customers and keeping them loyal are essential for business success. Enhancing the knowledge of salespeople can influence consumers to purchase a product. The success of marketing products and services depends largely on how consumers respond to them. Effective



marketing by salespeople can ensure that the right product reaches the right audience. Consumer behavior focuses on understanding what consumers need and want to buy, and which goods and services can meet those needs. In essence, consumer behavior specifically addresses how consumers act and make purchasing decisions (Schifman, et al., 2012).

Understanding how consumers decide to dispose of products or services is important, as disposal involves consumers discarding items (Solomon, 2009). This aspect of consumer behavior is complex and requires greater attention from marketers. By analyzing when and how consumers dispose of products, companies can position themselves to minimize this behavior (Raghavan, 2010).

### **3. FACTORS INFLUENCING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR**

#### **3.1 Internal or Psychological Factors**

Consumer buying behavior is shaped by various internal or psychological factors, with motivation and perception being the most significant (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

##### **3.1.1 Motivation**

According to William J. Stanton, a motive is described as a drive or urge that prompts an individual to seek satisfaction. It becomes a buying motive when the person seeks fulfillment by purchasing something. A motive is an internal drive or need that prompts a person to take action to fulfill two types of desires: core wants and secondary wants (Stanton, 2009). Motivation serves as the force that initiates goal-oriented behavior, pushing an individual to act in order to satisfy their needs. As such, it is one of the key internal factors that influence consumer behavior. A need becomes a motive when it reaches a level of intensity strong enough to compel action. A motive is essentially a need that is pressing enough to drive a person to act (Kotler & Keller, 2016).



### **3.1.2. Perception**

According to Brown (2006), Humans possess more than just the traditional five senses. In addition to touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing, we have other senses, such as the sense of direction, balance, and an awareness of which way is down. Each sense continuously sends information to the brain, but if all of it were processed, it would overwhelm the system. As a result, the brain filters the surrounding environment, disregarding unnecessary details. Consequently, the information reaching the brain does not offer a complete picture of the world. When an individual forms a worldview, they compile the remaining information to understand what is occurring externally. Any missing pieces of are filled in using imagination and past experiences. Therefore, this cognitive map is not a mere 'photograph' but rather an imaginative construct.

### **3.1.3. Past Experience**

This leads us to interpret new experiences based on our existing knowledge. Psychologists refer to this phenomenon as the law of primacy (Laird, 2003). Sometimes, familiar sights, smells, or sounds from our past can trigger inappropriate responses; for instance, the aroma of baking bread may evoke memories of a village bakery from twenty years ago, even if the scent was actually produced by an aerosol spray near the supermarket bread section (Laird, 2003).

An illustration of cognitive mapping as it relates to perceptions of product quality could be described as follows: the consumer uses an input selector to identify and assign value to various cues. For assessing quality, these cues typically include price, brand name, and retailer name. There are strong positive correlations between price and quality in most consumers' perceptions, as well as between brand name and quality; while the retailer's name is less impactful, it still carries some significance (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010).



### **3.2. Social Factors**

Humans are social creatures, so our behaviors, preferences, and aversions are significantly shaped by those around us. We often look for validation from others and rarely engage in actions that are deemed socially unacceptable. The social factors that influence consumer behavior include Family, Reference Groups, and Roles and Status (Chaudhary & Bhattacharya, 2006).

#### **3.2.1. Family**

There are two types of families that impact a buyer's life: nuclear families and joint families. A nuclear family is smaller in size, allowing individuals more freedom to make decisions, while a joint family is larger, with a preference for group decision-making over individual choices. Family members can have a significant influence on buying behavior, especially in the Sri Lankan context. The tastes, preferences, lifestyles, and other factors of family members are deeply intertwined with the family's purchasing habits (Lansing & Kish, 1957). The influence of family on a member's buying behavior can manifest in two ways.

- i) The family's impact on an individual's personality, traits, attitudes, and criteria for evaluating options, and
- ii) The influence on the decision-making process related to purchasing goods and services.

#### **3.2.2. Reference Group**

A group consists of two or more individuals who share common norms and whose relationships make their behaviors interconnected (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). A reference group is a collection of people that an individual identifies with, significantly influencing their attitudes, values, and behaviors, either directly or indirectly (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Reference groups can be categorized in various ways, but this list is not intended to be exhaustive (Hogg & Vaughan, 2018).

#### **3.2.3. Roles and Status**

An individual is involved in various groups, such as family, clubs, and organizations. Their position within each group can be characterized by their role and status. A role encompasses the activities that a person is expected to undertake, and each role comes with an associated status (Schiffman & Kanuk,



2010). People select products that reflect their role and status in society. Therefore, marketers need to recognize the status symbol potential of different products and brands (Solomon, 2017).

### **3.3. Cultural Factors**

Kotler noted that human behavior is primarily shaped by a learning process, through which individuals acquire a set of values, perceptions, preferences, and behavioral patterns as a result of socialization within the family and other important institutions. This learning process helps to establish a set of values that significantly influence and drive behavior patterns.

Schiffman and Kanuk identify values such as achievement, success, efficiency, progress, material comfort, practicality, individualism, freedom, humanitarianism, youthfulness, and practicality. This extensive set of values is further shaped by subcultures, including nationalities, religions, races, and geographic regions, each exhibiting varying degrees of differences in ethnic tastes, cultural preferences, taboos, attitudes, and lifestyles. Cultural factors include:

#### **3.3.1. Culture**

Culture plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's desires and behaviors. As children grow, they learn values, perceptions, preferences, and behaviors from their families and significant institutions. This cultural background significantly impacts consumption patterns and decision-making processes (Pantano, 2011). Marketers must investigate cultural influences and tailor their marketing strategies to fit the unique characteristics of each cultural group to enhance product or service sales. However, culture is not static; it evolves over time, and these changes are gradually integrated into society.

Culture consists of a set of beliefs and values that are commonly held by the majority within a group. While cultures are typically large, they can theoretically be shared by just a few individuals (Kacen & Lee, 2002). Culture is transmitted from one member of a group to another, often passed down from one generation to the next; it is learned, making it both subjective and arbitrary. For instance, food is closely tied to culture. In Bengal, fish is considered a delicacy, with numerous varieties celebrated, whereas in Gujarat, Rajasthan, or Tamil Nadu, it is generally viewed as an undesirable food choice. These differences in culinary preferences are rooted in cultural influences rather than random individual tastes, reflecting the behaviors of people from specific cultural backgrounds.



Culture can evolve over time, but these changes are usually gradual because culture is deeply ingrained in people's behavior. From a marketing perspective, it is often more effective to operate within an existing culture rather than attempt to alter it.

### **3.3.2. Sub-culture**

Each culture is made up of smaller subcultures that offer more precise identification and socialization for their members. A subculture is defined by a set of beliefs shared by a subgroup within the larger culture, encompassing aspects such as nationalities, religions, racial groups, and geographic areas (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Numerous subcultures represent significant market segments, and marketers must create products and marketing strategies that cater to their specific needs (Solomon, 2017).

While this subgroup generally shares many beliefs with the dominant culture, they also have their own set of beliefs that may conflict with those of the larger group (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2019). For instance, Indians are typically viewed as orthodox and conservative, yet affluent young individuals often engage in nightlife, enjoying parties with alcohol and women without hesitation.

### **3.3.3. Social Class**

Consumer behavior is influenced by the social class to which individuals belong. The categorization of socioeconomic groups is referred to as Socio-Economic Classification (SEC) (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Social class represents a relatively stable and structured division within society, where members share similar values, interests, and behaviors. It is not defined by a single factor like income; instead, it is assessed through a combination of various elements, including income, occupation, education, authority, power, property ownership, lifestyles, and consumption patterns (Solomon, 2017).

Society is divided into three social classes: upper class, middle class, and lower class. Each of these classes exhibits different purchasing behaviors. Upper-class consumers seek high-end products to uphold their social status, while middle-class consumers tend to shop more thoughtfully, gathering information to compare various producers within the same category. In contrast, lower-class consumers often make impulse purchases. Consequently, marketing managers must thoroughly examine the relationship between social classes and their consumption patterns to effectively target



the appropriate audience for their products (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2019).

### **3.4. Economic Factors**

Consumer behavior is significantly shaped by economic factors. The economic elements that affect consumer behavior include:

#### **3.4.1. Personal Income**

A person's buying behavior is largely influenced by their personal income. Gross personal income is made up of disposable income and discretionary income (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Disposable personal income refers to the actual amount of money available to an individual after taxes and mandatory deductions have been subtracted from gross income. When disposable income increases, spending on various items also rises. Conversely, a decrease in disposable income results in reduced expenditure on different items (Solomon, 2017).

Discretionary personal income is the amount left after covering essential living expenses. This income can be spent on shopping goods, durable goods, and luxury items. When discretionary income rises, spending on these goods also increases, enhancing an individual's standard of living (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2019).

#### **3.4.2. Family Income**

Family income is the total income earned by all members of a household. This income impacts the family's purchasing behavior. The portion of family income that remains after covering basic needs can be used for purchasing shopping goods, durable items, and luxuries.

#### **3.4.3. Income Expectations**

Income expectations are a key factor influencing an individual's purchasing behavior. If a person anticipates an increase in their income, they are likely to spend more on shopping goods, durable items, and luxury products. Conversely, if they expect a decrease in future income, they will reduce their spending on comforts and luxuries, focusing their expenditures on essential needs.



### **3.4.4. Savings**

Savings also affect an individual's purchasing behavior. A change in the amount saved can result in a corresponding change in spending habits. If a person chooses to save more from their current income, they will likely spend less on comforts and luxuries.

### **3.4.5. Liquid Assets**

Liquid assets are those that can be quickly converted into cash without any loss in value. Examples of liquid assets include cash on hand, bank balances, and marketable securities. If an individual has a higher amount of liquid assets, they are more likely to spend on comforts and luxuries. Conversely, if they have fewer liquid assets, their ability to spend on such items is limited.

### **3.4.5. Consumer Credit**

Consumer credit refers to the credit options offered to consumers who wish to buy durable goods, comforts, and luxuries. This credit can be provided directly by sellers or indirectly through banks and other financial institutions. Methods of consumer credit include hire purchase, installment buying, and direct bank loans. The availability of consumer credit significantly impacts consumer behavior. When more consumer credit is accessible under favorable terms, spending on comforts and luxuries tends to rise, encouraging consumers to make these purchases and improve their standard of living.

## **3.5. Personal Factor**

According to Horská and Sparke (2007), Buyer behavior is also influenced by personal factors. Key personal factors that affect purchasing decisions include.

### **3.5.1. Age**

A person's age is a significant personal factor that affects buyer behavior. Individuals purchase different products at various stages of their life cycle, and their tastes, preferences, and other choices evolve as they move through these stages.

### **3.5.2. Occupation**

A person's occupation or profession impacts their buying behavior, as lifestyles and purchasing decisions vary greatly depending on the type of work they do. For example, the buying habits of a doctor are noticeably different from those of a lawyer, teacher, clerk, businessman, or landlord.



Therefore, marketing managers need to create tailored strategies to align with the purchasing motives of different occupational groups (Al-Salamin & Al-Hassan, 2016).

### **3.5.3. Lifestyle**

Lifestyle refers to a person's way of living, reflected in their activities, interests, and opinions, which represents the "whole person" and how they interact with their environment. Marketing managers must create tailored strategies to align with the diverse lifestyles of consumers (Wansink, 2000).

### **3.7. Empirical Evidence**

Different researchers have analyzed consumer buying behavior and its influencing factors through various approaches.

Vigneron and Johnson (1999) observed a growing need for appearance and materialism among people, with individuals increasingly seeking to look and feel good. This led to a global surge in the cosmetics and toiletries industry. Chambers Encyclopedia defines cosmetics as products meant to be applied to the human body for cleaning, beautifying, enhancing attractiveness, or altering appearance, including items used as components of such products. Today, a wide range of cosmetics and toiletries, from natural to advanced products, are available. Usage patterns and preferences differ across gender, age, and socioeconomic groups. However, there are relatively few studies, particularly focused on the cosmetic and toiletry industry in India.

In their study, Fry and Siller (1970) examined the purchase decision processes of working-class and middle-class housewives in a controlled environment that simulated shopping behavior. Their comparison of search behavior, brand preferences, and sensitivity to deals between the two social classes showed a significant level of similarity in their observed behaviors during the shopping simulation.

In another study, Chernev (1997) examined how common features influence brand selection and the moderating effect of attribute importance. The research suggests that when brand attributes vary in significance, having the best value on the most important attribute can lead to a greater polarization in brand choice shares. Conversely, when attributes are regarded as equally important, common features tend to have the opposite effect, resulting in a more balanced distribution of brand shares.

Consumer behavior involves analyzing how, when, what, and why individuals make purchases. It can



be defined as "the decision process and physical activities individuals engage in while evaluating, acquiring, using, or disposing of goods and services" (Loudon & Bitta, 1980). Today, this concept can also be described as "the activities people undertake when acquiring, consuming, and disposing of products and services" (Blakwell et al., 2001). A study by Voss and Parasuraman (2003) found that purchase preferences are mainly influenced by price rather than quality during the pre-purchase evaluation. When quality information is clearly provided, price does not affect perceptions of quality before or after consumption. Instead, evaluations of quality after consumption positively influence perceptions of price.

Marketers who effectively understand consumer behavior are more likely to influence purchasing decisions successfully (Shah, 2009). Three key aspects of consumer behavior must be carefully considered: psychological influences, socio-cultural influences, and situational influences. Marketers face various challenges when selling products such as cosmetics, which are applied directly to the skin and other body parts. Consumers often perceive a risk of dissatisfaction regarding the benefits of these products. Therefore, it is essential to study the consumer buying decision process in this context.

According to Kotler and Levy (1969), consumer purchase decisions involve the behaviors exhibited by decision-making units during the buying, usage, and disposal of goods and services. This process encompasses the decision-making and physical activities individuals undertake when evaluating, acquiring, using, or disposing of products and services. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) stated that consumer behavior refers to the actions consumers display when searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products, services, and ideas that they believe will meet their needs.

Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995) defined consumer purchase decisions as activities directly associated with acquiring, consuming, and disposing of products and services, along with the decision-making processes that occur before and after these actions. In the case of services that require time, such as holidays or travel, decision-making becomes a crucial aspect of consumer behavior. It is important to note that the purchase decision extends beyond just acquiring goods or services; it also includes post-purchase activities that are part of consumer behavior.

According to Tara, personal factors are individual traits that may not be applicable to others within the same group. These traits encompass a person's decision-making style, unique habits, interests, and opinions. Additionally, age, gender, background, culture, and other personal issues can influence



decisions related to these factors. For instance, older individuals tend to display different consumer behaviors compared to younger individuals, leading them to select products differently and spend money on items that may not appeal to a younger audience. This study will focus on the personal factors that influence consumer purchase decisions.

Personality can be described as "consistent responses to environmental stimuli" (Kassarjian, 1971). Essentially, it refers to a person's habitual response patterns that are repeated in similar situations. How a consumer reacts to environmental stimuli is influenced by their psychological composition. Since no two consumers are identical, they may experience similar levels of tension reduction, yet their degrees of extroversion may vary, resulting in different behaviors.

#### 4. PROPOSE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

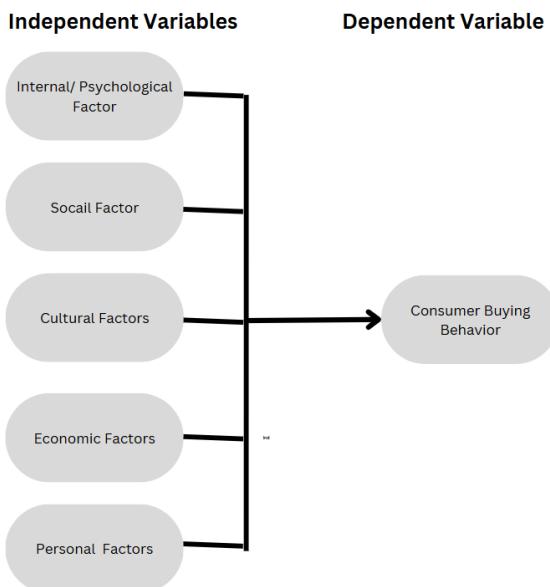


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Source: Developed by Author



## 5. CONCLUSION

This research will identify several variables that influence consumer purchasing behavior. The findings are expected to indicate that psychological and personal factors will be the primary drivers affecting consumer behavior for both Surf Excel and Sunlight detergent products. Additionally, social and economic factors will also play a role in shaping consumer decisions for these brands. However, cultural factors such as norms, values, and attitudes are not anticipated to influence purchasing decisions, as customers will not consider these aspects when selecting Unilever's detergent products.

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