Instructional Objectives:

After completion of this lesson, the student shall know about:

6.5.5 Measurement of Attitudes
6.5.6 Attitude Formation and Attitude Change

6.5.5 MEASUREMENT OF ATTITUDES:

Attitudes cannot be seen; they can only be inferred from the manner in which an individual behaves. Nevertheless it is crucial that attitudes are measured. This is because an individual with a positive attitude towards a product/service offering is more likely to make a purchase. Attitudes can be measured by observation, qualitative studies and quantitative techniques (or rating scales).

a) Observation: As has been mentioned above, attitudes can be inferred from the manner in which an individual behaves. By making observations of behavior, a marketer can infer a consumer’s attitudes. For example, if a person patronizes Colgate toothpaste and buys it, it can be inferred that he likes that brand.

Observation as a process of measuring attitudes, has both pros and cons. Advantages are that on the basis of past experiences, market researchers can make quick inferences. Disadvantages are that the process is expensive in terms of time and money; further findings may not always be reliable and valid. Thus, the method is used to complement other tools and techniques in research, and is generally not used as the sole method of research.
b) Qualitative studies: Attitudes can also be measured through qualitative tools and techniques that help identify consumer opinions and beliefs as well as their feelings, by getting them involved in open discussions. Such techniques could take the forms of focus groups, depth interviews, and psychological tests.

- **Focus groups:** In focus group interviews, a group of consumers between 6-12 in number are called together, and discussion is initiated about a product or service offering. The discussion could range across a wide spectrum related to the offering, the brand, the dealer or any of the 4Ps. The people are made to openly discuss their ideas, opinions and feelings, and the discussion is controlled by a moderator. As they begin to discuss an issue, they move towards related issues about the product and service offering, and this provides valuable insights to a researcher. However, the problem with focus group interviews is that the sample may not always be truly representative of the segment to which the product is targeted. So as a tool, focus group interviews are not used in isolation, but are used with other tools and techniques, so as to lead to be truly representative and provide valid findings.

- **Depth interviews:** A depth interview is similar to a personal interview, where a consumer is interviewed about the product/service offering, the brand, and any or all of the 4Ps. The consumer is asked questions for a considerable period of time, and his opinions and beliefs are recorded, so are his feelings and bodily gestures. The researcher asks a question and the interviewee is encouraged to talk in length about his reactions and feelings about the product and service offering and the 4Ps. The encouragement to talk in length provides valuable insights and reveals things that the interviewer may not have thought off or imagined. Questions like “What”, “Why”, “How”, and “If” are used to enable a detailed insightful discussion. The problem with depth interviews is that it is time consuming and expensive. It also requires trained psychologists as interviewers. And like, focus group interviews, it may not always be representative of the market segment.
- **Psychological tests:** A host of psychological tests are available that are used to infer and measure consumer attitudes. Projective techniques are used commonly; for example the consumer may be asked to interpret a picture (Thematic Apperception Test), or fill in a dialogue in a cartoon, or write ten-twelve words describing a figure or an image. They can also be asked to complete an incomplete paragraph (as story writing), or write the first word that comes to mind when a product/service or brand is mentioned or shown. Open ended questions like sentence completion help reveal consumer insights and underlying feelings and opinions about product offerings, brands and the 4Ps. The problem with psychological tests is that interpretation may turn out to be subjective and it requires trained psychologists as interpreters.

c) **Quantitative techniques, Rating scales or Attitude scales:** Commonly used methods for measuring attitudes is via attitude scales. Consumer survey questionnaires based on rating scales are used to measure attitudes quantitatively. The most commonly used attitude scale is the Likert scale, which measures consumer reactions on a five point or on a seven point scale based on degrees of agreement and disagreement, or liking and disliking. Another scale that is commonly used is the one that uses a bipolar scale comprising opposite adjectives at each extreme; this is known as a Semantic differential scale. While collecting responses may be time consuming, rating scales provide a means for quantitative analysis, and thereby lead to reliable and valid findings. However, care should be taken to chose a sample representative of the sample.

### 6.5.6 ATTITUDE FORMATION AND CHANGE:

Attitude formation is of prime importance to a marketer. This is because he needs to develop positive attitudes for his product and service offering, as also his brand. Attitudes comprises three components, knowledge, feeling and behavior; while we can just observe behavior, the knowledge and feeling component remain hidden. Thus, we can infer that an attitude, (whether positive or negative) is formed based on the observation of one’s behavior. That is why learning is defined as a change in behavior that occurs as a result of experience. Once attitudes are formed (as a result of learning), it is very difficult to
change them. This section deals with the formation and change of attitudes.

a) Attitude Formation:

Attitudes are formed as a result of the learning process. The formation of attitudes can be explained through behavioral theories (classical conditioning, operant conditioning), cognitive learning and social learning.

i) Classical Conditioning: The principles of stimulus generalization, stimulus discrimination and repetition help formation of attitudes.

People prefer buying products that are associated with familiar brand names. Line extensions and brand extensions lead to favorable attitude formation. The favorable attitude is the result of repeated satisfaction with successful brands owned by a company; consumers associate the image and favorable attitude associated with the parent brand to the newly introduced brands from the same source. Also, by using successful celebrities as brand endorsers, companies try to form a positive association between the celebrity, and the "neutral" new product.

Consumers also have a positive attitude towards successful brands. The successful brand name is the unconditioned stimulus that, through repetition and positive reinforcement, results in an favorable attitude (the unconditioned response).

ii) Instrumental Conditioning: Generally, while making purchases, a consumer passes through cognition, attitude and behavior, in that order. However, in certain kinds of purchases, like low-involvement purchases, impulse goods, trials or situational factors, the sequence lies as cognition, behavior and attitude. Thus, attitudes develop following the act of purchase and consumption of the product.

In such cases, consumers tend to form attitudes based on the reinforcement that they receive. If the acts of purchase and consumption are followed by a rewarding experience in terms of consumer satisfaction, they develop a positive attitude towards the product or service offering and/or the brand. Else they are indifferent or may even develop a negative attitude towards the brand.
iii) Cognitive Learning Theory: Attitudes are also formed on the basis of information that a person collects about a product or service offering and/or a brand, from his environment. Such information could be specific to the product or service, or may be incidental, that gets stored in his memory. The consumer forms positive or negative attitudes based on information gathering, storage and retention, and on the basis of knowledge and beliefs. Marketers should be careful in providing knowledge about their product and service offerings, either in print, audio-visual media or even through their salespersons and dealers. However, they should focus on a few relevant features rather than providing excessive information; too much of cluttering leads to perceptual blocking.

Impact of sources in attitude formation:

While attitudes are formed as a result of learning, they are influenced by various sources. Such sources include self-experiences, as well as direct and indirect influences; direct influences are influences from family and friends, salespersons (direct marketers) as well as dealers; indirect influences include influences via mass media, either print or audio-visual.

Self experiences have a major role to play in the formation of attitudes. Consumers form favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards product and service offerings based on self experiences. They try out product and service offerings and also evaluate them. Thus, marketers attempt at eliciting trial by offering sales discounts or even free samples.

Direct influences through interactions with members of family as also with friends and relatives, and primary reference groups impact the formation of attitudes. Salespersons as well as dealers also have a role to play in the formation of attitudes. These marketing representatives provide information to the consumers and attempt to favorably influence the potential customer’s towards their product and service offerings and/or brands.

Indirect influences via mass media, either print or audio-visual provide information to the consumers and this helps in formation of attitudes. Consumers are kept informed by the marketer on various product and service offerings, features,
attributes, prices as well as their availability. Marketers publish brochures and pamphlets. They distribute pieces of information via mass media, through newspapers, magazines and trade journals, as well as through advertisements on TV. Such information about the product and service offering and the 4Ps influences consumers’ attitudes, whether favorable or unfavorable. Companies also have their websites where consumers often blog about their experiences. They publish consumer experiences and expert opinions, which affect attitude formation.

It would be noteworthy to mention here that both the split brain theory, route to persuasion and elaboration likelihood model could have implications; In cases of high involvement, the consumer would look for factual appeals, while in case of low involvement, he would be receptive to social and/or emotional appeals.

b) Attitude Change:

Once formed, attitudes are enduring and consistent. However, this does not imply that they cannot be changed. Attitudes can be changed in the same manner as they are formed, i.e. through learning. They can be changed by bringing about a change or alteration in any one or all of the components that make up the attitude, i.e. knowledge, feeling and behavior. Bringing about, changes in any or all of the tricomponents, requires immense effort on the part of the marketer, who need to provide information via media as well as use reference group appeals and opinion leaders so as to influence modification of attitudes.

- **Attitude change via cognition:** Attitudes can be changed by providing information about the brand, and changing consumer beliefs about the attributes about a brand. It can also be brought about by changing the importance that consumers’ attach to the attributes of a product.

- **Attitude change via affect:** Attitudes can also be changed by generating positive feelings and emotions towards a brand. Ambience of the store, reward schemes, well designed ads with celebrities etc., also create positive mood states that impact attitudes.
- **Attitude change via behavior:** Consumer attitude can also be changed by eliciting trail on the part of the consumer and encouraging him to use the product.

However, as newer information about product attributes, benefits, features etc is provided so as to bring about change in consumer beliefs and attitudes, consumers tend to experience some level of attitudinal inconsistency. Such feelings of inconsistency lead to uneasiness and tension in the minds of consumers and as a natural consequence, they attempt to seek consistency in thoughts, feelings, and actions. In fact, they desire a match between the tricomponents, and more so, want their attitudes to be in consistency with their knowledge.

Researchers have proposed two theories that address the issue of consistency among behavioral processes, viz., the cognitive dissonance theory and the attribution theory. As per the cognitive dissonance theory, a consumer would face a feeling of discomfort and dissonance, when the tricomponents, fail to match with one another, and the person’s knowledge, feelings and behavior conflict with one another. In such a situation, the person would face cognitive dissonance and in order to reduce this dissonance, he would attempt to change the inconsistent cognitive elements. According to the attribution theory, it is a tendency on the part of human beings to attribute the reasons of their behavior on to their self (internal attribution) or to others (external attribution). Consumers also make attributions that match their existing beliefs, evaluations, and actions. They could also attribute the reasons for their belief on to others. Both the theories, i.e. the cognitive dissonance theory and the attribution theory result in subsequent attitude changes.

Attitudes can be changed/ modified through various means. The marketer could take measures that can influence consumer attitudes, by bringing about a change in the consumers' opinions, beliefs or evaluation of the product. Some of the strategies that a marketer could take to bring about a change in attitudes or to influence attitudes (with relevant examples) are described below:
1. **Bringing about a change in the product itself, and/or the package:**

The marketer could bring about a change in the product itself, thereby adding on to benefits that are provided by the product or service offering. The marketer could also add on to newer attributes and features. In this way, he could either claim to provide whatever he was providing earlier in a better manner, or provide something that the competitor does not provide.

By doing so the marketer adds on to the value proposition. As the perceived value of the product/brand, increases, the consumer’s attitude becomes favorable.

For example: A lady has a neutral attitude, and is indifferent towards the various brands of shampoos that are available. She believes that brands like Pantene, Sunsilk, Fiama di Wills, Dove and Garnier are all the same. Now for example, Fiama di Wills comes up with a promotional scheme whereby, a conditioner is given free with the shampoo or it introduces a scheme whereby you buy one, and get one free. In such a case, the lady may develop a positive attitude towards buying Fiama di Wills, as she would feel that she is getting more value for money. Similarly, if Dove claims to prevent hair fall, and boost hair growth, the lady may develop a favorable attitude towards Dove.

While changing the product itself, may be an expensive strategy, involving changes in technology and manufacturing process, as well as changes in the marketing strategy, alternatively the marketer could change only the packaging. Packaging could also provide benefits like ease of use, ease of carrying and handling as well as storage.

For example: Dhara refined vegetable oil began to be preferred by single individual households over other brands; this is because it was launched in small packs as 200 ml Tetra Briks.

2. **Identifying evaluative criteria for the consumer:** Consumers summarize their opinions, beliefs and overall attitudes based on the various product attributes and benefits. They may often ignore an attribute because they are unaware of an attribute or a benefit or a criterion. The marketer could help the consumer identify evaluative criteria. The marketer would focus on such criteria where he feels he is on a strong position. He could either have a monopoly (as a USP) or a competitive edge.
For example: Godrej promotes its brand Expert Powder Hair dye, by mentioning five attributes. The most important of which is “no ammonia”. When they emphasize this, they do provide evaluative criteria for the consumer to compare against other dyes and colors that do have ammonia and other chemicals. The consumer begins to feel that Godrej is a better brand as it does not contain the harmful ammonia.

3. Modifying or changing the criteria for evaluation: The marketer could also identify criteria that modify or change the existing criteria for evaluation. This means that he focuses his efforts on to educating the consumers to use such attributes for evaluation, which he had not used earlier.

   As mentioned above, consumers’ summarize their opinions and overall attitudes based on the various product attributes and benefits. They give varying degrees of importance to the various attributes and criteria, and by modifying or changing the criteria for evaluation, the overall attitude towards the product and service offering would change.

   The marketer generally finds himself in a position to do this when he has modified his product and added product attributes and features. He promotes such attributes on which he has the “uniqueness”, or those on which he performs best. He would avoid talking about such attributes which he does not possess or on which he does not perform well.

For example: A dishwash bar is supposed to sparkle clean the utensils and leave behind a good smell. These had been the evaluative criteria, for choosing a brand against another. However, Jyoti laboratories Ltd. emphasized on the bacteria that remains on the utensils even after they have been washed and left sparkling clean. They promoted their brand Exo Detergent Bar and Liquid as the only anti bacterial dish wash liquid with Cyclozan as the active ingredient. In this manner they modified and changed the criteria for evaluation.
4. **Associating the product/brand with an existing favorable attitude:**

The brand could also be related to socio-economic, cultural and environmental cause. An association between the product/brand and the favorable cause would result in favorable attitudes towards the brand. With cause-related marketing, marketer’s try to develop favorable attitudes toward their brands by associating them to existing favorable attitudes toward a cause. In this way, not only do they contribute to the social cause but also influence consumer attitudes’ towards their products, and or brands. Thus, the marketer tries to alter consumer attitudes toward products and service offerings, and/or brands by associating them with socio-economic, cultural political and environmental causes as also social groups and events.

For example: Procter & Gamble, in association with CRY and Sony has launched the Project “Shiksha”, to help educate the underprivileged children. As and when a consumer buys a P&G product, he/she supports one day’s education of one child. A favorable attitude towards the cause, leads to a favorable attitude towards the brand, P&G. In this manner, P&G tries to create a favorable attitude towards its products and elicits action on the part of consumers to buy their brands.

5. **Changing the basic motivational function:** As has been discussed above, brands perform four basic functions, viz., the utilitarian function, the ego-defensive function, the value-expressive function, and the knowledge function. Consumers form attitudes regarding a product /brand based on any one or few of such functions. A marketer could change consumer attitudes by laying emphasis on a function that has not been associated earlier with the product and/or brand. In other words, it implies that the marketer makes new needs prominent, and shows to the consumers that it can serve a function that has not been considered earlier.

For example: Phenyle, the traditional brand from Bengal Chemicals, has been perceived as a cleaning agent that has been used to clean floors. Reckitt Benckiser (India) Ltd. Introduced their brand Lysol, which was positioned not only as a cleaner that keeps homes clean but also as a disinfectant that left behind a good smell, and protected the family from illness caused by germs. So by making a new need prominent and changing
the basic motivational function of floor cleaners, Reckitt Benckiser was able to create a favorable attitude towards their brand.

6. **Changing consumer opinion and beliefs about competitor brands:**
The marketer could also build favorable attitude towards his brand by negating the value of competitive brands. He could change the prevailing consumer opinions and beliefs about the competitive brands.

*For example:* GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare India Ltd. claims that their energy drink, Horlicks promotes growth and provides energy faster and better than Complan. Heinz India Pvt. Ltd claims the same for their brand, Complan. Thus, both try changing consumer opinions about their brands by comparing them with competitor brands.

**REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING:**

Ques 1  How can you measure attitudes? Explain.

Ans 1  Attitudes cannot be seen; they can only be inferred from the manner in which an individual behaves. Nevertheless it is crucial that attitudes are measured. This is because an individual with a positive attitude towards a product/service offering is more likely to make a purchase. Attitudes can be measured by observation, qualitative studies and quantitative techniques (or rating scales).

a) Observation: As has been mentioned above, attitudes can be inferred from the manner in which an individual behaves. By making observations of behavior, a marketer can infer a consumer’s attitudes. For example, if a person patronizes Colgate toothpaste and buys it, it can be inferred that he likes that brand.

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interviews is that the sample may not always be truly representative of the segment to which the product is targeted. So as a tool, focus group interviews are not used in isolation, but are used with other tools and techniques, so as to lead to be truly representative and provide valid findings.

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**Ques 2** Discuss the theories underlying attitudinal formation?

**Ans 2** Attitude Formation:

Attitudes are formed as a result of the learning process. The formation of attitudes can be explained through behavioral theories (classical conditioning, operant conditioning), cognitive learning and social learning.

i) **Classical Conditioning:** The principles of stimulus generalization, stimulus discrimination and repetition help formation of attitudes.

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Consumers also have a positive attitude towards successful brands. The successful brand name is the unconditioned stimulus that, through repetition and positive reinforcement, results in an favorable attitude (the unconditioned response).
ii) **Instrumental Conditioning:** Generally, while making purchases, a consumer passes through cognition, attitude and behavior, in that order. However, in certain kinds of purchases, like low-involvement purchases, impulse goods, trials or situational factors, the sequence lies as cognition, behavior and attitude. Thus, attitudes develop following the act of purchase and consumption of the product.

In such cases, consumers tend to form attitudes based on the reinforcement that they receive. If the acts of purchase and consumption are followed by a rewarding experience in terms of consumer satisfaction, they develop a positive attitude towards the product or service offering and/or the brand. Else they are indifferent or may even develop a negative attitude towards the brand.

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**Ques 3**  
**How can you bring about attitudinal change in consumers?**

**Ans 3**  
**Attitude Change:**

Once formed, attitudes are enduring and consistent. However, this does not imply that they cannot be changed. Attitudes can be changed in the same manner as they are formed, i.e. through learning. They can be changed by bringing about a change or alteration in any one or all of the components that make up the attitude, i.e. knowledge, feeling and behavior. Bringing about, changes in any or all of the tricomponents, requires immense effort on the part of the marketer, who need to provide information via media as
well as use reference group appeals and opinion leaders so as to influence modification of attitudes.

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   By doing so the marketer adds on to the value proposition. As the perceived value of the product/brand, increases, the consumer’s attitude becomes favorable.

2. **Identifying evaluative criteria for the consumer:** Consumers summarize their opinions, beliefs and overall attitudes based on the various product attributes and benefits. They may often ignore an attribute because they are unaware of an attribute or a benefit or a criterion. The marketer could help the consumer identify evaluative criteria. The marketer would focus on such criteria where he feels he is on a strong position. He could either have a monopoly (as a USP) or a competitive edge.

3. **Modifying or changing the criteria for evaluation:** The marketer could also identify criteria that modify or change the existing criteria for evaluation. This means that he focuses his efforts on to educating the consumers to use such attributes for evaluation, which he had not used earlier.

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change.

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6. **Changing consumer opinion and beliefs about competitor brands:**

   The marketer could also build favorable attitude towards his brand by negating the value of competitive brands. He could change the prevailing consumer opinions and beliefs about the competitive brands.
SELF EVALUATION TESTS/QUIZZES:

Section A   True/false:
1. We can infer that an attitude, (whether positive or negative) is formed based on the observation of one’s behavior.
2. Attitudes can be developed following the act of purchase and consumption of the product.

Section B   Fill up the blanks:
1. In ______________ interviews, a group of consumers between 6-12 in number are called together, and discussion is initiated about a product or service offering.
   Focus group
2. The most commonly used attitude scale is the ______________ scale, which measures consumer reactions on a five point or on a seven point scale.
3. A bipolar scale comprising opposite adjectives at each extreme, is known as the ______________ differential scale.

Section C   Multiple choice questions:
1. Attitudes are formed as a result of ______________
   a) learning
   b) motivation
   c) personality
   d) all of the above.

2. Researchers have proposed two theories that address the issue of consistency among behavioral processes, viz., the cognitive dissonance theory and the a) route to persuasion
   b) attribution theory
   c) split brain theory
   d) ELM Model.
Section D  Short answers:

1. Mention techniques by which attitudes can be measured?
2. Attitudes comprise three components. Name them.
3. How can you bring about attitude change via affect?

KEY

Section A  True/false:
1. True  2. True

Section B  Fill up the blanks:
1. Focus  2. Likert  3. Semantic

Section C  Multiple choice questions:
1. a  2. b

Section D  Short Answers:
1. Observation, qualitative studies and quantitative techniques (or rating scales).
2. Knowledge, feeling and behavior.
3. Attitudes can be changed by generating positive feelings and emotions towards a brand. Ambience of the store, reward schemes, well designed ads with celebrities etc., also create positive mood states that impact attitudes.