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# Perceived Consensus and Behavioral Mimicry in Marketing



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# Introduction



In the modern day business activities are intensifying and sophisticating day by day. This is as a result of the increasing globalization of the world economy, which creates high demand for goods and services to meet needs of people and organizations. With the ever increasing needs of individuals and organizations, marketing activities emerge as very essential and inevitable to couple business activities. Basically, marketing is concerned with the process of communicating the values attached to the goods and services offered by an organization to the target market (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005). Marketing aims at availing and selling goods and services to the customers in the target market with the intention of satisfying their needs appropriately. For a marketer to successfully achieve his or her targets, various marketing techniques may be used. The most appropriate marketing technique is determined after selecting the target markets through market segmentation and analysis. This is coupled with an explicit understanding of consumers' behaviors and advertising the value of a product or service to the customers. In addition to these techniques, there are various other marketing methods that a marketer can use to meet needs of society successfully. These methods include perceived consensus and behavioral mimicry.

# Perceived Consensus



Perceived consensus is an essential technique for marketers promoting their goods and services to a target market. It is concerned with the visual display of perceptions of potential customers. In using this technique, a marketer of a product or a service will display the position of a product, product brand, product line, or even the company itself relative to the prevailing competition in the market. The marketers must thus display their products in a way that is consistent with the perceptions of customers on what is culturally consensually. This is because perceptions of people are too often shaped by their cultures (Spekman, Salmond, & Lambe, 1997). This leads to the development of personal values and beliefs. As such, the customers' perceived consensus will influence the goods and services that will be demanded to meet their requirements. This prompts the marketers to ensure that visual display of their products does not conflict with what the customers take as a perceived consensus.

# Behavioral Mimicry



In society, people live amongst other people and interact in various ways. In their daily activities, they are sturdily prone to notice that other people are different from themselves. This makes people draw on these differences, which act as a source of tension. In the field of marketing, this is referred to as the aspect of behavioral mimicry and facilitates interpersonal bonding and social interaction among different people

living together as a society. The result is that people are able to develop a sense of similarity by imitating behavior of others (Herrmann, Rossberg, Huber, Landwehr, & Henkel, 2011). With this important interpersonal function, the aspect of behavioral mimicry acts as an important tool for marketers. In this sense, people's tendencies to imitate others will allow to sell more various products and services because people will imitate a certain person who has used the product or service before (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005). For instance, a marketer in marketing his products or services can use a famous and influential personality, such as a musician, athlete, or comedian in an ad. When people see this ad, in which a famous personality is featured, they are likely to imitate this celebrity. This will make a product or service from the ad have an increased demand as the supposed customers will buy them intending to imitate the behavior of that celebrity. People are also prone to imitate behavior of other people who live amongst them. This means that a marketer can introduce a new product to only specific influential people within a specific target market. When the new product is seen by other people, they will be motivated to search for such a product. Eventually, the marketer will have achieved success in marketing the intended product or service.

## **Implications of Perceived Consensus and Behavioral Mimicry in Marketing**



Both perceived consensus and behavioral mimicry are believed to have significant implications on the marketing activities. They are known to

benefit and cost the marketers in various ways.

## Perceived Consensus



In the modern day, the marketers have continued to use the availability of internet services to avail information to the customers. This helps to shape their perceived consensus and ensure that the company is in line with what is locally acceptable. Perceived consensus is based on certain social norms, upon which some assumptions are made by individuals. People may perceive behaviors and attitudes of others to be either similar or different from theirs. The prevalent assumption is that a memorable salient behavior is a representative of behaviors perceived to be correct by the majority of people in the community. When well utilized, the perceived consensus concept can help a marketer to promote the likeliness of a product or a service in the market (Spekman, Salmond, & Lambe, 1997).

In the marketing activities, the seller's reputation is believed to be influential on the customer's trust in the goods and services offered for sale. The marketers' visual display of their products to the market acts as a basis, onto which the potential customers build their trust in the company and its products and services. The more the marketers effort to visually display their product's brands, product lines, and the company itself is consistent with the perceived values and beliefs of customers, the more the level of trust the customers will develop. Higher trust is likely to lead to higher sales of the company's goods and services.

However, inconsistency from what is perceived culturally consensual will ruin the customers' trust in the company's products and services. This means reduced sales because customers will prefer goods and services from other customers. For example, a marketer is marketing alcoholic beverages. It is common knowledge that drinking in the community is highly discouraged. In this context, the people in the target market will be unwilling to buy the alcoholic beverages from the fact that they believe it is wrong.

Through various marketing research studies, behavioral mimicry has proven to be a very important tool that enables a marketer to promote various marketing activities. Behavioral mimicry serves an important and critical function in both social and individual interactions. For marketers, the consequences that emerge from behavioral mimicry are far beyond what one may expect. Marketing research studies have established that behavioral mimicry is essential in daily marketing activities as well as in people's daily lives. For instance, it acts as a means, through which people are bonded. Also, it makes people feel closer to each other and enables people to help others more. In a marketing perspective, the effect is that there are likely to be increased demands for goods and services through the influence of behavioral mimicry. For instance, people tend to imitate those they live amongst or leaders who lead them. Suppose a marketer uses some of the influential people in the society. The likely effects are that people will imitate the influential and featured people. If the marketer is advertising some apparel, then the people might imitate such a person and search for such products (Herrmann et al., 2011).

The aspect of behavioral mimicry helps to bring attitudes of other people to be in line with those of others. Eventually, the marketer will be able to accomplish the marketing activities successfully and the outcomes will be significant and evident.

## **Ethical Considerations in Implementation of Perceived Consensus and Behavioral Mimicry**



In the field of marketing realities and ethical concerns it has increasingly become an important thing to consider daily activities. In this context, the implementation of concepts of behavioral mimicry and perceived consensus as marketing methods is associated with various ethical considerations. In the modern business world, marketers and other business people promoting their products and services are expected to maintain high level of responsibility, fairness, and honesty in all their advertisements (AMA Publishing, 2014). Different marketers may have different subjective opinions as to what is right and what is wrong. While ethics in marketing practice is not a stringent list of rules regarding what needs to be done, there are various guidelines that may assist marketers to evaluate new marketing strategies that promote ethics in their activities. Every marketer has an opportunity to participate in ethical marketing practices starting from a small retail store to a large multinational corporation. These businesses can choose to engage in fair, open, and honest advertisements (AMA Publishing, 2014). When done in a thoughtful way, marketing practices can turn out to be

economical and effective. There is an array of marketing advertisements and promotional activities that may be considered unethical when implementing the concepts of perceived consensus and behavioral mimicry.

## Children in Advertising



Children in advertising is an ethical concern in line with behavioral mimicry. Children are fond of asking for things that they see being used by other people. For example, children may ask for toys because they have seen other children behaving in a certain way when playing with their toys. This is an important ethical concern because children are huge consumers of advertisements yet they lack objective evaluation skills. Marketers should avoid this by acting ethically to avoid exploitation of this innocence in children (Marketing-Schools.org, 2012). Doing this would mean ethical marketing practices.

## False Brand Comparisons



When a company is making a display of its products with the aim of lying in line with the perceived consensus of the target market, false brand comparison is likely to emerge as an important ethical concern. Marketers participating in unethical marketing practices are likely to present false and misleading informational facts regarding a particular product or service. They may also present misleading information on



the products and services of competitors as well as the competitors themselves. To promote ethics in the marketing practices, all marketers should free themselves from false brand comparisons and misinterpretation of facts and information.

## Stereotyping Women



So often women are common figures featured in advertisements. However, this contravenes ethical standards in a big way. This is because they are commonly considered as domestic workers and sex objects. When behavioral mimicry and perceived consensus as methods of marketing embrace stereotyping of women, the likely effects are the contribution to a sexist culture. This is a form of gender-based discrimination.

## Exaggeration



In their marketing practices, some marketers act unethically by presenting false claims regarding the popularity and quality of a purported product or service. For instance, a marketer may declare that a product or service has a worldwide representation. When this is stated, the target market may have high expectation from a particular product or service, which cannot be delivered by the marketer (Marketing-Schools.org, 2012). This leads to a lower utility of goods and services.

# Surrogate Advertising



Surrogate advertisements may emerge as important unethical practices when marketers go against some prescribed laws prohibiting advertisement of products, such as drugs, for example, tobacco, cocaine, and alcohol among others. When the marketers engage in advertisements of such products, it may be unethical because they tend to remind consumers that these products exist without necessarily referring to them directly (Marketing-Schools.org, 2012). In addition, surrogate advertisements may be unethical because apart from advertising harmful products, they may act as an influential way to encourage minors to use such drugs. Marketers should avoid engaging themselves in such advertisements as far as possible.

## Conclusion



This research paper has explored perceived consensus and behavioral mimicry as some of the important marketing methods. Perceived consensus is concerned with what people believe to be culturally acceptable and in line with the beliefs and values of people. Behavioral mimicry is about how people imitate the behaviors of others. When well used, both perceived consensus and behavioral mimicry may allow a marketer to realize increased sales and meet the needs of people and organizations better. In the modern day and age, when ethical concerns need to be keenly observed, marketers are subject to unethical marketing practices, which they ought to avoid. Among these unethical

marketing practices are engagement of children in advertising, stereotyping of women, surrogate advertisements, and exaggerations among others. These activities should be avoided to promote ethical marketing activities.