Chapter Summary

**LO1 Define attitudes and describe attitude components.**

Consumer attitudes are relatively enduring evaluations of objects, products, services, issues, or people. Attitudes have three components. The first component is a cognitive component. This component consists of the beliefs that consumers have about products and their features. The next component is the affective component. This component consists of the feelings that consumers have about the product and its features. The last component is a behavioral component, which describes how consumers act toward the object in question.

**LO2 Describe the functions of attitudes.**

Several functions of attitudes have been presented including the utilitarian, ego-defensive, value-expressive, and knowledge functions. The utilitarian function refers to the use of attitudes to gain something that is valued. The ego-defensive function refers to the use of attitudes to prevent oneself from harm. The value-expressive function refers to the use of attitudes to express a consumer's core beliefs and ideologies. The knowledge function refers to the use of attitudes to simplify consumer decision making.

**LO3 Understand how the hierarchy of effects concept applies to attitude theory.**

The hierarchy of effects approach explains the process through which beliefs, affect, and behavior occurs. These hierarchies depend upon the consumer’s buying situation. In a high-involvement context, consumer beliefs are formed, followed by affect, and finally by behavior. Low-involvement, experiential, and behavioral influence hierarchies are also quite frequent in consumer behavior.

**LO4 Comprehend the major consumer attitude models.**

Two major approaches to measuring consumer attitudes were presented in this chapter: the attitude-toward-the-object (ATO) and behavioral intentions models. The ATO model includes three key elements: salient beliefs, strength of beliefs, and evaluation of attributes. The behavioral intentions model includes two key elements: attitude toward a behavior and subjective norms. These models are commonly used by consumer researchers.

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attitudinal change model that shows attitudes are changed based on differing levels of consumer involvement through either central or peripheral processing

theory of attitudes that suggests that attitudes perform four basic functions

hierarchy of effects attitude approach that suggests that affect, behavior, and cognition form in a sequential order

function of attitudes function of attitudes whereby attitudes allow consumers to simplify decision-making processes

matchup hypothesis hypothesis that states that a source feature is most effective when it is matched with relevant products

message effects how the appeal of a message and its construction affects persuasiveness

nonproduct-related information presented in a message

path to persuasion found in ELM where the consumer has low involvement, motivation, and/or ability to process a message

attempt to change attitudes

effect that occurs when the information placed early in a message has the most impact

social judgment theory theory that proposes that consumers compare incoming information to their existing attitudes about a particular object or issue and that attitude change depends upon how consistent the information is with the initial attitude

characteristics of a source that impact the persuasiveness of a message

arguments that support a message

attitudinal measurement approach that expands upon the behavioral intentions model by including a perceived control component

function of attitudes in which consumers use attitudes as ways to maximize rewards and minimize punishment

function of attitudes whereby attitudes allow consumers to express their core values, self-concept, and beliefs to others

researchers who focus on understanding the elements that comprise consumer attitudes. The approaches are also useful for marketing managers who develop marketing campaigns.

There were a number of major approaches to changing attitudes presented in this chapter. The first approach focuses on the ATO model. According to this approach, attitudes can be changed by changing the strength of beliefs about attributes, by adding new beliefs to the attitude equation, by changing the evaluation of attributes, or by altering the schema-based affect for the brand/object. The second approach was the behavioral influence approach, which focuses on changing behaviors directly. The third approach was the schema-based affect approach. This approach focuses on changing affect found in product schemas. The fourth approach was the balance theory approach. This approach suggests that consumers seek consistency in systems that are comprised of three elements: the observer, another person, and an object. Attitudes toward an object are affected by the perceived relations found with the system. The fifth approach was the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). The ELM suggests that persuasion occurs as the result of processing within one of two routes: a central route and a peripheral route. In high-involvement situations, the central route is activated, and in low-involvement situations, the peripheral route is activated. Attitude change is usually longer lasting when persuasion occurs in the central route. The sixth and final approach to attitude change was the social judgment theory approach. This theory suggests that an incoming message is compared to an initial attitudinal position and an assimilation or contrast effect occurs depending on the perceived closeness of the incoming message to the original attitude.

Both source and message effects play important roles in persuasion. Message effects include issues related to the overall content and construction of the message. Sex appeals, humor appeals, and fear appeals are all used frequently by marketers. Source effects, or effects that are attributed to the spokesperson or company, are also important. Source effects include source credibility, source likeability, source attractiveness, and source meaningfulness.