

# Module 4 Lecture Notes Part III

## Overview

In this section of the module, we will be examining situational influences within consumer behavior. Depending on the circumstances around a purchase or consuming behavior, a consumer may receive a different amount of value. Situational influences, or effects unrelated to enduring customer, brand, or product qualities, refer to these contextual effects. Things connected to time, place, or antecedent conditions may be included in contextual effects. They may also have an impact on how consumers digest information and shop, including how purchases are made and what is consumed. Situational factors alter the desire to consume things, which alters the worth of those things. In several product categories, situational factors might also trump consumer brand preferences. In other words, situational influences are all those elements unique to a time and place that have an impact on present behavior but do not result from knowledge of the stable characteristics of the consumer and the stimuli.

## Types of Situations

*There are five traits that situations often possess. Physical surrounds for a product include its geographic and institutional setting, furnishings, sound, smells, lighting, weather, and any displays of goods or other materials that surround it. Retailers are especially worried about how the physical environment may affect their business. The term "store atmosphere" or "environment" refers to the whole of all the physical components of a retail setting. Managers modify the physical retail environment using atmospherics to elicit emotional responses from customers. When defining an atmosphere in a service industry setting, such as a hospital, bank, or restaurant, the term "servicescape" is used.*

*The term "social surrounds" refers to those people there who may have an influence on a given consumer's behavior. The other people that are there, their positions, and how they interact with one another all have the potential to have significant social situational effects.*

Temporal perspectives are concerned with how time affects consumer behavior. Examples include how the time of day, how long it has been since the last purchase, how long it has been since meals or payday, and how much time is available due to commitments. Because they have capitalized on the temporal perspective aspect, convenience stores have developed and become successful. A customer under time constraints might not be able to digest information necessary for making the optimal decision. Through seasonality, the time of year can influence consumer behavior. There are cyclical patterns of consumption, as is the case with many goods, such as champagne, which are mostly sold around the holidays. Consumption can also vary depending on the time of day. For example, most customers do not prefer fish sticks for breakfast. But fish sticks are delicious for lunch or dinner! The circadian rhythm theory explains how the body responds to changes in the time of day.

An individual's antecedent states are qualities that are temporary. All people experience moods, which are brief periods of melancholy, great excitement, etc. Temporary circumstances include things like being exhausted, unwell, having a lot of money (or none), and so forth. Antecedent circumstances are situational traits that a consumer takes to a certain location for processing information, making a purchase, or engaging in consumption. Economic resources, orientation, mood, and other emotional experiences like fear are examples of antecedent conditions. By framing the events that occur, they can influence the worth of a circumstance.

The objective or motivation for engaging in the consumption activity is reflected in the task definition. Different buyer and user roles that the person may have in mind may be reflected in the assignment. For instance, a person purchasing a gift is in a different circumstance than a person purchasing their own use.

The ambience of a store has the potential to add value by either making shopping easier or by making the experience more enjoyable. Each retail or service location has a unique environment that defines it. It is possible to create an environment that makes buying much easier. Convenience stores have changed the layout of their sales floors and removed a sizable portion of their product selections. As a result, the consumer can finish the process of purchasing a required product faster. Another reason for being in a certain environment is that it is simply more emotionally satisfying. The atmosphere is composed of people, who also produce social aspects. The outcome includes social comparison. The people you shop with affect your purchase decisions.

In summary, although situational factors can have an indirect effect on behavior, they can also interact with a person's traits and the product to do so. In certain instances, the circumstance will have no impact at all because the person's traits or decisions are so strong that they take precedence over everything else. However, the circumstance always has the potential to be significant and consequently worries marketing managers.

Dr. Wolter's video below helps reinforce these key concepts of situational influences.

