

THE CAUSAL-CONSEQUENTIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDE FORMATION AND BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

The article defines theoretical aspects of the concept of attitude phenomenon, discusses the theoretical aspects in attitude formation, and distinguishes attitudinal factors and their relations with behaviour. In analysing the concept of attitude and analysing the factors forming attitude, using comparative analysis and the synthesis of scientific literature, a theoretical model of attitude formation is obtained, indicating the causal consequential relationship between attitude and behaviour.

KEY WORDS: *attitude, consumer attitudes, attitude formation, attitude formation components, components of attitude, attitude and behaviour, health behaviour.*

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Introduction

Consumer attitude is a constituent part of consumer psychology science, researched in the context of psychology and marketing sciences, oriented towards cognitive processes in consumer psychology and behaviour assessment in terms of attitude, habits, values, etc. The relationship between attitude, and of other individual social cognitive factors, and behaviour has been researched by various scientists in studies performed in different periods (Wicker, 1969; Bentler, Speckart, 1979; Bagozzi, 1992; Ajzen, 2001, 2005; Chaiklin, 2011; Bohner, Dickel, 2011; etc). Other researchers (Abraham, Sheeran, 1993; Schwartz, 2007; Van Kleef, van den Berg, Heederink, 2011, Van Kleef, Van Doorn, Heerdink, Koning, 2011, etc) have analysed various individual isolated emotional, cognitive, psychological aspects, and their relationship with behaviour (e.g. individual assessment, emotions, reaction, etc). So the phenomenon of attitude and behaviour is probably one of the most widely studied areas in psychological and sociological sciences, because of its distinctiveness, exclusivity, indispensability and diversification. As attitude is treated as a factor within the individual's control, the science needs research, which, by the use of aspects of attitude constitution and attitude formation, helps reveal the causal motives for an individual's behaviour. Research into and knowledge of the factors shaping consumer attitudes could provide opportunities to analyse the causal motives for behaviour in various research areas. The science also attaches significant importance to research, which reveals how,

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by way of attitude formation, we can understand, forecast, model and influence the individual's behaviour in various research areas.

Research object. Attitude formation and attitudes towards behaviour.

Purpose. The purpose of the paper is to reveal factors of attitude formation by presenting a theoretical model of attitude formation factors and its influence on behaviour, indicating the causal motives for and the relationship with such behaviour.

Research methods. The paper is based on the conceptual analysis and generalisation of scientific literature. The implementation of both methods provides the main definitions and the main features of the concept of attitude phenomenon, and provides possibilities to analyse the main aspects, principles and factors in the process of attitude formation and the formation of attitude links with behaviour. An attitude in scientific literature (Adler, Matthews, 1994; etc) is mentioned as one of the social cognitive factors affecting an individual's behaviour, and is controlled and managed by an individual. From the perspectives of the process of attitude and attitude formation, the main research focuses on the research and analysis of individual aspects of attitude formation (Ajzen, 2001; Hogg, Vaughan, 2005; Eagly, Chaiken, 1993; 2007; Petty, Briñol, DeMarree, 2007; Fazio, 2007; Schwarz, 2007; Gawronski, Bodenhausen, 2007; Pratkanis, Breckler, Greenwald, 2014; etc). However, research into the phenomenon of attitude and the attitude formation process lacks not only an integral systematised solid analysis of aspects of attitude formation, but also the analysis of their causal-consequential links to behaviour. There is a lack of scientific research revealing the causal reasons for behaviour. Qualitative research has been chosen to reveal a deeper generalised summarised view of the attitude formation process, which not only allows us to reveal the levels and factors of the attitude formation process, but also allows a deeper generalised understanding of attitude as a social cognitive factor, and to reveal the causal-consequential relationships between attitude formation, attitude formation factors and behaviour, which helps to develop a basis for further quantitative research. Health behaviour is taken as an example.

Scientific problem. How the involvement of attitude formation factors could help to analyse an individual's behaviour, indicating the causal theoretical motives for and relationship with such behaviour.

The tasks of the article. After analysing theoretical aspects of the attitude phenomenon concept and attitude formation, to identify all the different factors that form attitudes, and to present a causal-consequential theoretical model towards attitude formation behaviour, revealing the theoretical connections between attitude formation factors and behaviour, and indicating the causal theoretical relationship between attitude formation and behaviour.

1. The concept of the phenomenon of attitude

The concept of the phenomenon of attitude is extremely broad and multifaceted in the context of various disciplines. In a general sense, I would describe the phenomenon of attitude as the result of the psychological processes within an individual, including their beliefs and feelings, expressed towards a given object and able to lead to specific actions.

Studying the 19th-century phenomenon of attitude, Allport (1935) reviewed how various authors in his field interpreted the concept. Summarising their opinions and his own research insights, he concluded that attitude connoted a neuropsychic state of readiness for mental and physical activity, representing the state of mind of the individual towards a value. An attitude characteristically provokes acquisitive or aversive, favourable or unfavourable, affirmative or negative behaviour towards the object it relates to. This reaction can be expressed in an indirect or explicit, conscious or unconscious, rational or irrational, positive or negative way. Already in these definitions, there are discoverable connections between attitudes and specific action, behaviour, because attitudes are interpreted not only as the above-mentioned multifaceted reaction to a certain object, but also the tendency to act or behave towards specific objects, the 'mental' and 'motor' (readiness to act) disposition towards a real object of perceived value. In later research (Bem et al., 1972), the phenomenon of attitude was defined as the reaction to and individual evaluations of a given object. The

attitude phenomenon is also analysed in terms of evaluation by exponents of marketing and psychology, such as Lott, Lott (1985), Chaiken, Stangor (1987), Ajzen (2001), Hogg, Vaughan (2005) Pratkanis, Breckler, Greenwald (2014), and others. The above-mentioned authors define the concept of attitude using terms such as ‘cumulative evaluation’, ‘acquired over time evaluation’ and ‘favourable and unfavourable evaluation’, a psychological tendency expressing the evaluation of given objects with a certain degree of favourability or unfavourability. From a psychological point of view, attitude is treated as an invisible psychological construct that influences a person’s choices and decisions to act in a particular way. Assessing attitude as a psychological construct in this way presupposes many individual values, attitudes and feelings, so Eagly and Chaiken (1993, 2007) derive a broader interpretation of attitude from an emotional perspective, defining attitude as an ‘umbrella expression’ covering an individual’s personal psychological characteristics (feelings, emotions, values, etc). To describe the phenomenon of attitude, the authors use three main components: evaluation, the object of attitude, and the tendency to act in a specific way in relation to the object being evaluated. Together, these elements indicate a person’s propensity to evaluate a particular entity positively or negatively. Evaluation includes aspects of beliefs and thoughts about the object of the attitude, as well as intentions to act or behave in a specific way. From this perspective, the evaluations are inseparable from emotions and experience. Therefore, it is not by chance that in the studies by other authors (Edwards, 1990; Van Kleef, Van den Berg, Heerdink, 2015; etc) the concept of the attitude phenomenon is explained using affective (emotional) and cognitive (experiential, knowledge-based) components. From the affective (emotional) aspect, attitude is defined as an emotional state expressed by evaluating a given object with a certain emotional reaction (positive or negative). Emotions can be described as relatively short-term (instantaneous), differentiated and intense responses to an object of attitude, a stimulus (e.g. a person, object, situation or event) characterised by distinctive subjective experiences, physiological reactions, expressions, and tendencies towards action. Judging from the discussion of the emotional aspect, emotions are the result of an empirical process, so the phenomenon of attitude is inseparable from empirical experience. Attitude is related to personal experience, and is formed through personal experience and evolves from positive or negative experiences (cognitive aspect) associated with the specific object being assessed to which the attitude is expressed. The cognitive component includes an individual’s knowledge, beliefs and perceptions about the object of an attitude, acquired through direct experience of that object and the evaluation of new incoming and old available information, expressing an evaluation of an object with a certain emotional reaction, a certain favourability or unfavourability. Thus, an attitude is an ‘umbrella’ expression of personal attributes (an individual’s feelings, beliefs, expectations, evaluations, values, principles, etc), accumulated over a certain period of time, together with information and knowledge, and inseparable from existing information/knowledge and newly acquired information about the objects of the attitude, and is both related to empiricism (experience) and developed over time, reflecting the favourable or unfavourable reactions of the individual towards the object of evaluation.

Other scholars (Edwards, 1990; Eagly, Chaiken, 1993, 2007; Ajzen, 2001; Fazio, 2007; Schwarz, 2007; Petty, Briñol, DeMarree, 2007; Gawronski, Bodenhausen, 2007; etc), who have studied the constitution and characteristics of attitude, and attitude as an object, agree that objects to which an attitude is expressed can be ideas, phenomena, events, people, groups, products, services, and so on. It is because of the links with the object of the approach that other scholars interpret the concept of the approach with the help of various scientific models. Scientific models provide an opportunity to explain the causal assessment of certain phenomena and the response to various stimuli, and most of them focus on modelling the relationships between emotions, cognition (experience), and behavioural components. For example, in the expectancy value model (Rosenberg, 1956), the approach is defined as an overall assessment based on aspects of expectations and expected value. In the most widely studied three-component model, also known as the ABC model (Eagly, Chaiken, 1993), the phenomenon of attitude is explained through the interfaces of three components: affective (feelings, emotions), cognitive (cognition-experience, knowledge), and conative (behavioural, act). We will discuss these models in more detail in the theoretical aspects of attitude formation.

2. Theoretical principles of attitude formation

Attitudes are formed and accumulated in our memory throughout life; they are ‘silent’, in contrast to loudly expressed opinions, but are expressed and activated when decisions are needed to take specific actions: to choose certain products or services, to decide how to act in specific situations (whether to participate, buy, choose, etc).

Breckler (1984), Edwards (1990), Eagly and Chaiken (1993) and others treat attitude formation as the result of a multicomponent process consisting of certain components (cognitive, affective and behavioural). In the most widely described, three-component model of attitude formation, also called the ABC model in scientific literature, attitude formation consists of successive components that can be defined as cognitive (experience, cognition), affective (emotional, emotional) and conative (behavioural) (Figure 1).

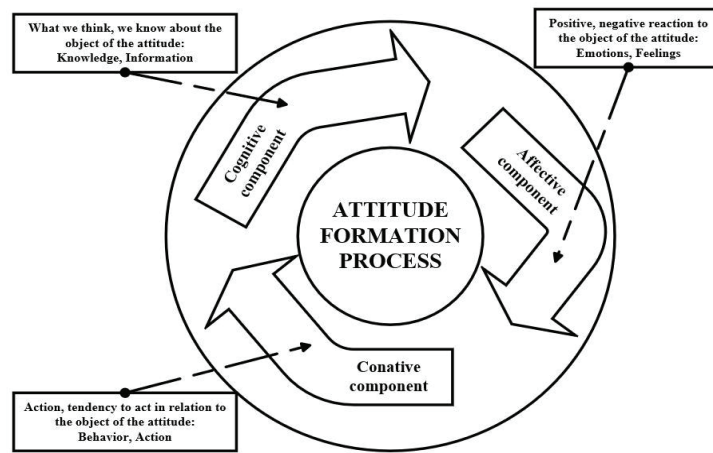


Figure 1. The three-component model of attitude formation

Source: ABC model (Eagly, Chaiken, 1993).

We will analyse in more detail how an attitude formation process acts at each of the above levels, and what factors influence it.

3. The cognitive component (level) of the attitude formation process

An analysis of the literature by researchers (Breckler, 1984; Ajzen, 1985, 2001, 2005; Fishbein, Middelstad, 1995; Sanders, 2010; Hogg, Vaughan, 2011; etc), who studied the phenomenon of attitude formation, revealed that at the cognitive component (level) of attitude formation, the process is influenced by cognitive factors: individual experience, knowledge, information, beliefs and opinions about the object of attitude. In general, it can be stated that the cognitive component is the expression of the individual’s perception, cognition and thoughts about the object of attitude, and includes the individual’s knowledge, understanding and beliefs about the object of attitude. The cognitive component of attitude formation is based on the individual evaluation of a certain object, which arises through direct experience with the assessed object, and then the reception and evaluation of the resulting information. Even the information factor is emphasised at the cognitive attitude formation level. Cognition can develop through previous exposure to communication or educational material. This information includes both information stored in an individual’s memory and newly received information in forming an attitude. The information available and assessed by the individual reflects a positive or negative previous experience with the assessed object. New information can come from

sources of communication and education. The scientific literature (Ajzen, 2005; Oskamp, Schulz, 2014; etc) finds that information is inseparable from the effects of the external environment: the external stimuli from which it is derived (e.g. advertising, the internet, friends, family, social groups). Thus, the formation of an attitude today is inseparable from information received from the mass media, from how it represents events. According to the above-mentioned authors, the external environment and its relevant stimuli have a particularly important influence on the formation of attitudes and even habits.

At the cognitive level of attitude formation, the initial individual evaluation of an object is made on the basis of available information and facts about the object being assessed, evaluating the object’s advantages and disadvantages. An example of such an actual assessment could be actual ‘measurable’ assessment criteria, such as car fuel consumption, drug strength, and so on. Through these factual evaluation criteria, objects (phenomena, products, services) are identified, separated from each other, and a certain attitude towards them is formed as objects of attitude. It should also be emphasised that negative information has a greater impact in shaping attitudes than positive data. At the cognitive level, attitudes can alter along with changing information. Based on information integration theory, the approach is formed on the basis of specific information about the available object, and consumers are the solvers of their own problems and needs. As a result, they are constantly looking for new information as their problems and needs change. How we receive and process this information forms the basis of the approach structure. When new information emerges, people evaluate it and combine it with existing information stored in the long-term memory, and an appropriate attitude is formed. For example, health authority information that a particular food may have a negative adverse effect on health may force consumers to re-evaluate their attitude, negatively assessing the harmful product, or even not consuming it at all.

In summary, the cognitive component of attitude formation (level) represents certain fact-based individual norms of perception and their limits on what is right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable (knowledge, experience). It is influenced by the individual’s internal evaluations (experience, knowledge gained over time) and information received from the outside, based on factual evaluation, and expresses certain beliefs or understandings about the object of the attitude on the part of the individual. At the cognitive level, attitude formation is inseparable from information, knowledge and information received by the individual through external stimuli. Based on the cognitive aspects of attitude formation discussed, it is possible to distinguish the factors that influence attitude formation at the cognitive level (Figure 2).

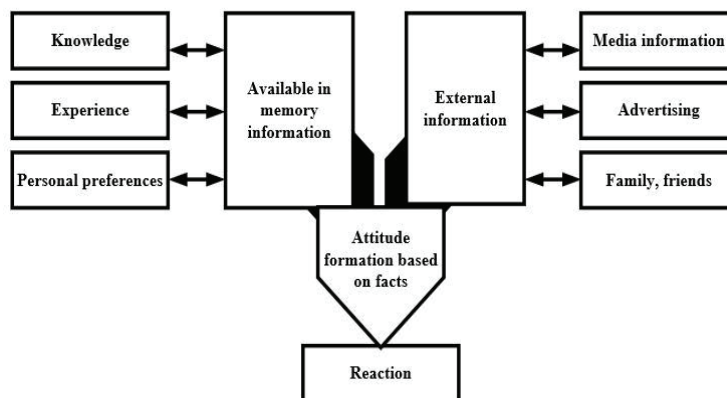


Figure 2. The cognitive component (level) of the attitude formation process and its influencing factors

Source: compiled by the authors, according to Ajzen (1985, 2001, 2005), and Fishbein, Middlestad (1995).

The result of cognitive attitude formation is the initial actual evaluation of the object, based on available and received information, leading to a specific reaction. The reaction presupposes another level of attitude formation: affective (emotional).

4. The affective component (level) of the attitude formation process

The influence of emotions on attitude formation still remains an object of research, and is highly controversial in evaluating the attitude formation process. The question arises how often emotions are used to influence others, whether they actually influence attitude formation, and how strong or long-lasting an attitude is when based on an emotional evaluation that elicits an instantaneous reaction to the object of attitude (DeSteno, Petty, Rucker, Wegener, Braverman, 2004; Van Kleef, Van Doorn, Heerdink, Koning, 2011; Van Kleef, Van den Berg, Heerdink, 2015; etc). This is particularly noticeable when assessing the fact that an approach based on emotion is often not based on facts. It can be concluded that emotionally formed attitudes are often difficult for consumers to explain consciously, as they express not only certain feelings, moral beliefs, and feelings, but also reveal a certain value system or religious aspects, and may change with the situation. For example, consumers may have a negative attitude towards cosmetics or medicines that are tested on animals because it goes against their moral beliefs.

An analysis of the research literature on the phenomenon of attitude formation (Ajzen, 2001; Crano, Prislin, 2006; Bohner, Dickel, 2011; Chaiklin, 2011; Greenwald, 2014; etc) reveals that a certain emotional reaction to the object of attitude occurs when the attitude itself cannot be based on consciousness or facts, but on emotional evaluation. The emotional component of attitude formation is also called the affective component in scientific literature, because under the right conditions, it can cause an effect of different intensity, an effect based on specific beliefs. In summary, at the affective level of attitude formation, attitude formation is based on an emotional reaction to the object of attitude, which evokes particular emotions and leads to a certain expression in action, i.e. the third level of attitude formation (Figure 3).

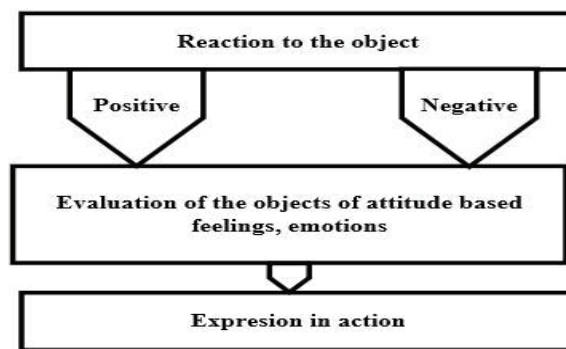


Figure 3. The affective component (level) of the attitude formation process and its influencing factors

Source: compiled by the authors, according to Ajzen (2001), Crano, Prislin (2006), and Bohner, Dickel (2011).

The result of the affective attitude formation is a reaction, influencing evaluation of the object of attitude, based on feelings, emotions, and leading to expression in action. This expression presupposes another level of attitude formation – conative (behavioural, action).

5. The conative component (level) of the attitude formation process

At the conative (behavioural) level of attitude formation, a certain expression of attitude happens in action. It is an individual tendency to react with a certain action, to take action in relation to a specific object. The action of the components of behavioural attitude formation expresses the individual's reaction, opinion (favourable/unfavourable) towards the evaluated object (Defleur, Westie, 1963; Wicker, 1969; Ajzen, Fishbein, 1977; Fazio, Zanna, 1978; Ajzen, 2005; etc). The basis of behaviour can also be based on an individual's opinion, knowledge, knowledge of the object of the attitude, or observation of the behaviour of others, how it is treated in relation to a specific object, individual or other stimulus (cognitive factor). In this case, the evaluation of the behaviour of others should influence a certain response of the individual, an action to the stimulus (Bem, 1972). In general, a behavioural component is a verbal or non-verbal expression of an individual's emotional response, even propensity, towards certain things, consisting of actions or observable reactions, arising from assessing one's own knowledge of an object of attitude or observing the behaviour of others' actions with respect to the evaluated object and leading to a certain expression by action = behaviour (Figure 4).

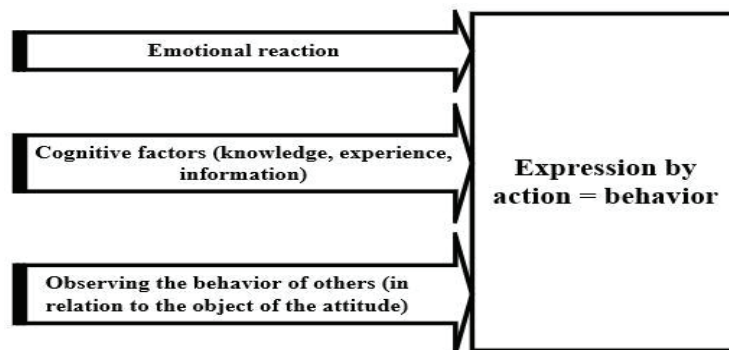


Figure 4. The conative (behavioural) component (level) of the attitude formation process, and its influencing factors

Source: compiled by the authors, according to Ajzen, Fishbein (1977), Fazio, Zanna (1978), and Ajzen (2005).

At the conative (behavioural) level, attitude formation is a verbal or non-verbal expression of an individual's emotional reaction, even inclination, knowledge about certain objects, and can influence actions and observable reactions arising from assessing one's own knowledge of the object of attitude, or observing the behaviour or actions of others in relation to the object being assessed.

The result of all the attitude formation components (levels) is an attitude formation stage. This is a specific outcome of having a positive or negative attitude towards certain objects under the influence of certain attitude-forming factors. The three levels of attitude formation (cognitive, affective and behavioural) can be defined as causal components of attitude formation. And the expression of an attitude in action or behaviour is influenced by the specific factors that shape the attitude. Assessing this relationship, it is possible to assume a causal-consequential relationship between attitude and behaviour (Figure 5).

An attitude and its formative factors could be the cause of behaviour, and behaviour is in turn the expression of attitude in action: consequence, result. In summary, it can be stated that there is a direct connection between attitude formation factors, attitude and behaviour, where an attitude is the result of the attitude formation process, influenced by certain causal attitude-forming factors (cognitive, affective and behavioural), leading to the expression of an attitude by an action. Assessing this *causal-consequential* relationship, it is possible to model the causal-consequential attitude formation towards behaviour model in various research areas (for example, health behaviour), the three levels of attitude formation (cognitive, affective and behavioural) can be defined as causal components of attitude formation and are influenced by specific factors that shape the attitude (Figure 6).

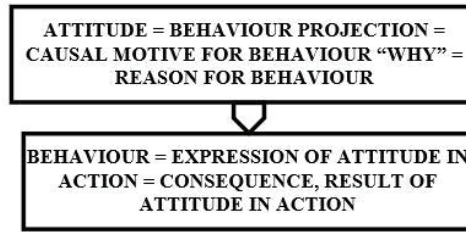


Figure 5. The causal-consequential relationship between attitude and behaviour

Source: compiled by the authors.

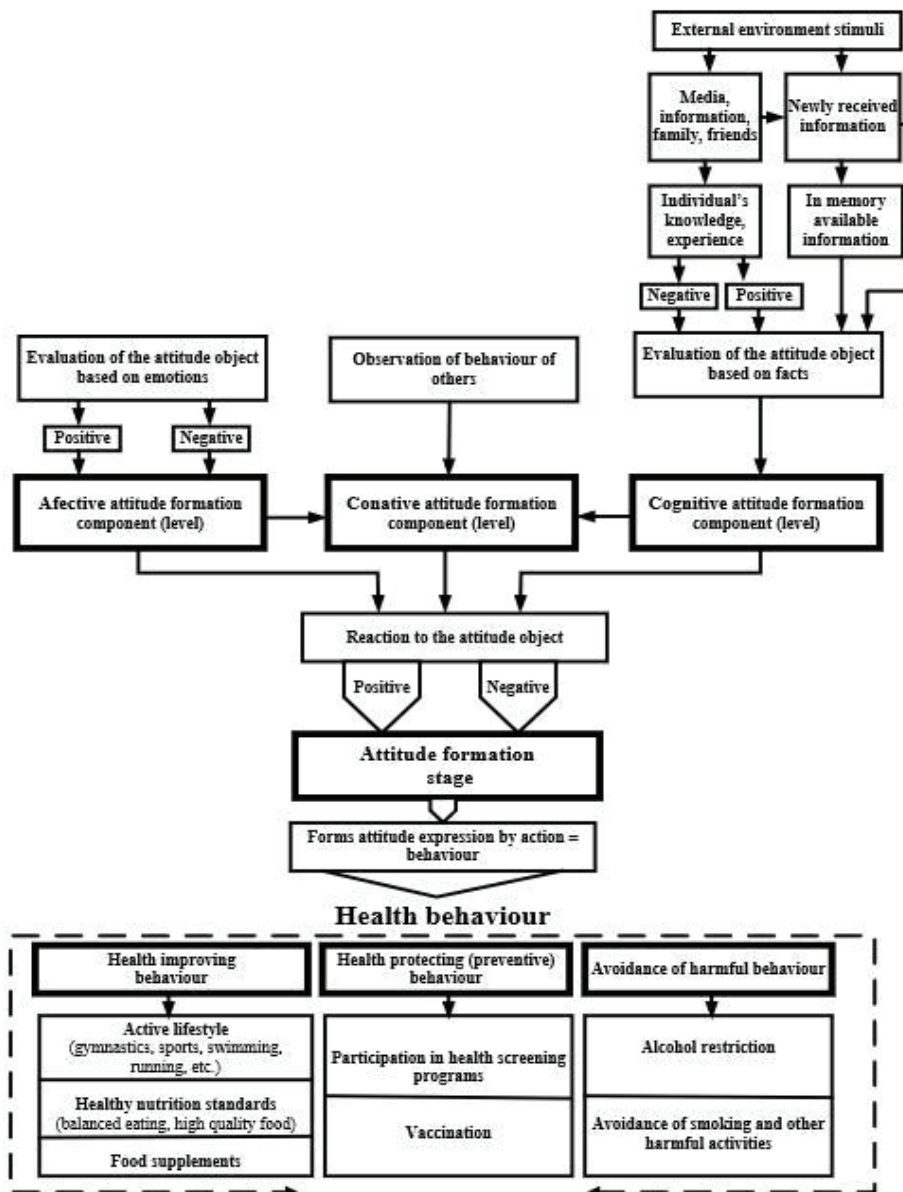


Figure 6. The causal-consequential relationship between attitude formation and behaviour; the health behaviour example

Source: compiled by the authors.

In this causal-consequential relationship between attitude formation model, where health behaviour is taken as example, the three levels of attitude formation (cognitive, affective and behavioural) can be defined as causal components of attitude formation, and are influenced by specific factors that shape the attitude. For example, cognitive attitude formation components, like media information, or influence of family members, could be defined as the causal components that shape attitude formation, and as a result lead to exact attitude expression by behaviour. This model should be verified in further research by empirical testing in various research fields. For example, in the health behaviour field, the model can be verified based on specific questions about health behaviour. For example, to the question 'Do you take food supplements?', agreement with the statement 'I take food supplements as I know that they help to prevent diseases' could be explained through the cognitive attitude formation basis, which is affected by the cognitive attitude formation factor: knowledge, awareness about food supplements. In this case, explaining it through a causal-consequential relationship between attitude and behaviour, it could be: taking food supplements = CONSEQUENCE OF BEHAVIOUR. And the cognitive attitude formation factor: knowledge, awareness of food supplements = REASON FOR BEHAVIOUR. This model reveals the possibilities for using attitudinal factors (cognitive, affective and behavioural) to understand not only the consequences of an individual's behaviour (involved – not involved, doing – not doing, performing – not performing, etc), but also to predict the causes of this behaviour (Why?) through the links between attitudinal factors (for example, in health behaviour: why participating or not participating, why doing or not doing, why performing or not performing, etc). Empirical research into and knowledge of the causal factors shaping consumer attitudes could provide opportunities to analyse the causal motives for consumer health behaviour. The science also attaches a significant importance to research, which reveals how, by way of attitude formation, one can understand, forecast, model and influence an individual's behaviour.

Conclusions

Summarising the scientific literature analysed, an attitude is acquired and accumulated in individual memory, an invisible summarised evaluation of certain objects of attitude (people, events, products, services, ideas, social phenomena), an expression of the psychological aspects of an individual's 'umbrella' through feelings, emotions, beliefs, expectations, decisions, knowledge, evaluations and values; ethical, moral, social and other principles formed on the basis of emotional, behavioural or cognitive expression, expressing a certain belief and positive or negative reaction to the evaluated object, and a positive or negative disposition to act towards the evaluated objects in certain situations. Extending this definition of attitude to cognitive and affective aspects, it can be stated that attitude is influenced by experience, accumulated over a long period of time, and expressed in a certain situation as a set of individual invisible beliefs, positive or negative feelings, a certain perception of the object of attitude (whether product, idea, phenomenon, event or problem), with an appropriate emotional response to an abstraction or a specific object or statement that can lead to a particular action.

Attitude formation can be treated as a set of internal (affective, emotional) and external (cognitive, information, environmental) factors. In this case, attitude formation takes place as a process influenced by affective and cognitive factors.

At the cognitive level, the attitude formation process is influenced by the individual's internal evaluations (experience, knowledge, information gained over time) and the external factual evaluation of the object of an attitude. The formation of an attitude at the cognitive level is the result of an individual's socialisation and reaction to external stimuli, leading or projecting into a specific expression of the individual through action: behavioural projection or behaviour (cognitively based attitudes).

The affective attitude formation level takes place under the influence of emotions, and is a certain individual emotional expression in reaction to the evaluated object, leading to a specific expression of the individual through action: behavioural projection or behaviour (affectively based attitudes).

At the behavioural level, attitude formation is a verbal or non-verbal expression of an individual's emotional reaction to the objects of attitude, and thus reactions that arise from the observation of the behaviour of others, or influence of past behaviour.

The causal-consequential relationship between attitude formation and health behaviour example model reveals that the three levels of attitude formation (cognitive, affective and behavioural) could be defined as causal components of attitude formation. And the expression of an attitude by action or with behaviour is the result of the attitude formed. From here, it is possible to assume a causal-consequential relationship between attitude in various research fields (for example, health behaviour). The causal-consequential relationship between attitude formation and health behaviour model reveals possibilities for how, through the involvement of the mentioned attitude formation factors, we can assess not only the consequences of individual's behaviour and health behaviour (participates – does not participate, does – does not do, performs – does not perform, etc), but also, through the involvement of attitude formation, foresee reasons for such behaviour (why participate or not participate, why do or not, why perform or not perform, etc). This could allow us to foresee causal motives for health behaviour, by asking specific questions, through the involvement of the causal-consequential relationship of attitude formation factors and health behaviour.

Based on this model, there is possible further research to be done on the causal-consequential relationship between attitude and behaviour in various fields (contexts), revealing what attitude-forming factors can influence different types of consumer behaviour. Research on attitude and the factors that shape them in different fields would provide opportunities to model the behaviour of consumers and their respective segments through a cause-effect prism, based on the law that there are no coincidences, and every action, behaviour or behavioural trend has a cause.

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PRIEŽASTINIS PASEKMINIS VARTOTOJO NUOSTATŲ FORMAVIMOSI IR ELGSENOS TARPUSAVIO RYŠYS

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje apibrėžiami *nuostatos* sampratos teoriniai aspektai, aptariami teoriniai nuostatų formavimosi proceso aspektai, įvairūs veiksniai, darantys įtaką nuostatų formavimuisi, jų sąsajos su individo elgsena. Analizuojant mokslinę literatūrą nustatyta, kad nuostatos yra įgyjamas ir kaupiamas atmintyje individualus,

nematomas, suvestinis tam tikrų išorės objektų (žmonių, įvykių, gaminių, paslaugų, idėjų, socialinių reiškinių ir pan.) vertinimas, „skėtinė“ individo psichologinių aspektų išraiška per suvokimus, įsitikinimus, jausmus, emocijas, lūkesčius, sprendimus, vertinimus ir vertybes, etinius, moralinius, socialinius ir kitus principus, paremtas afektyviniais, kognityviniais ir konatyviniais pagrindais, kurie apima tam tikrus nuostatus formuojančius veiksniai. Individo nuostatos yra individualus vertinimas, „kaupiamas sąmonėje“ ir įgyjamas laikui bėgant, atskleidžiantis palankų ar nepalankų individo nusiteikimą vertinimo objekto atžvilgiu, kaupiamas individo atmintyje tam tikrą laiką, kartu su informacija, įgyjamomis žiniomis, neatskiriamas nuo turimos informacijos (žinių) ir naujos gaunamos informacijos apie nuostatų objektus bei susijęs su empirika (patyrimu, patirtimi). Praplečiant šį nuostatų apibrėžimą kognityviniu, afektyviniu ir konatyviniu aspektais, galima teigti, kad nuostatos yra išorinių aplinkos stimulų (informacijos, patirties, patyrimo, socialinės aplinkos ir pan.) veikiami, ilgą laiką kaupiami, tam tikroje situacijoje aktyvuota ir išreikšta individo asmeninių nematomų įsitikinimų, suvokimų visuma, asmens teigiami ar neigiami jausmai, emocinės asociacijos vertinamo objekto atžvilgiu (apie gaminį, paslaugą, idėją, reiškinį, įvykį, problemą) su atitinkama emocine reakcija (stebint, vertinant kitų elgseną vertinamo objekto atžvilgiu), galinčia kreipti į tam tikrą išraišką – veiksmą.

Nuostatų formavimosi reiškinį bendrąja prasme būtų galima apibrėžti kaip būsenos pasikeitimą, poslinkį nuo nuostatos nebuvimo iki konkretaus rezultato – teigiamos arba neigiamos nuostatos tam tikrų objektų atžvilgiu atsiradimo, veikiant tam tikriems nuostatus formuojantiems veiksniams. Nuostatų formavimosi reiškinys yra nuolatinis nenutrūkstamas procesas, nes individai priklauso tam tikroms socialinėms grupėms, organizacijoms, kur jiems nuolat daroma vienokia ar kitokia įtaka. Nuostatos formuojasi visą laiką ir aktyvuojamos tada, kai reikia priimti sprendimus atlikti konkrečius veiksmus, pavyzdžiui, pasirinkti tam tikrus gaminius ar paslaugas, nuspręsti, kaip elgtis konkrečiose situacijose (dalyvauti ar nedalyvauti, pirkti ar nepirkti, rinktis ar nesirinkti ir pan.). Analizuojant mokslinę literatūrą nustatyta, kad nuostatų formavimasis, kaip keleto lygmenų procesas, vyksta integruojant kognityvinį, afektyvinių ir konatyvinių komponentus. Taigi tai yra daugiafunkcis procesas. Kognityviniu nuostatų formavimosi lygmeniu jų formavimasis veikia faktiniai individo vertinimai, paremti atmintyje glūdinčia informacija (patirtimi, patyrimu, laikui bėgant įgytomis žiniomis) ir iš išorės gaunama informacija, kai išreiškiamas tam tikras individo vertinamo objekto suvokimas, įsitikinimai, supratimas. Afektyviniu nuostatų formavimosi lygmeniu jų formavimasis paremtas jausmine, emocine reakcija į vertinamą objektą. Šiuo lygmeniu informacija vertinama ne faktiniu, momentiniu, o labiau emociniu aspektu. Konatyviniu lygmeniu nuostata jau yra verbalinė arba neverbalinė individo emocinės reakcijos, netgi polinkio elgtis išraiška, be to, tai gali būti veiksmai ir stebimos reakcijos, kylančios vertinant savo paties turimas žinias apie vertinamą objektą arba stebint kitų elgseną, veiksmus vertinamo objekto atžvilgiu. Nuostatų formavimosi rezultatas yra atsakomasis veiksmas, tam tikra elgsenos tendencija. Ši elgsena išreiškia vartotojo nuostatus vertinamo objekto atžvilgiu.

Analizuojant nuostatos sampratą teorinius aspektus, nuostatų formavimosi procesą, jo komponentus bei veiksniai, sudarytas teorinis nuostatų formavimosi modelis, nurodantis priešastines-pasekmines nuostatų formavimosi ir elgsenos sąsajas (sveikatos elgsena paimta kaip pavyzdys). Priežastiniame-pasekminiame nuostatų formavimosi ir sveikatos elgsenos modelyje atvaizduotus tris nuostatų formavimosi komponentus (kognityvinius, afektyvinius ir konatyvinius) būtų galima apibrėžti kaip priešastinius nuostatų formavimosi komponentus, o nuostatos išraiška veiksmu ar elgsena galėtų būti jau susiformavusios nuostatos rezultatas. Taigi galima teigti, kad vartotojo nuostatų formavimosi komponentų (kognityvinių, afektyvinių ir konatyvinių) rezultatas – suformuota vienokios ar kitokia nuostata.

Pasitelkus šį priešastinį-pasekminį nuostatų ir elgsenos sąsajų vertinimą, galima analizuoti ir vertinti vartotojo nuostatų bei elgsenos sąsajas įvairiuose tyrimų laukuose (pvz., sveikatos elgsenos), kai pasitelkus nuostatų formavimosi veiksniai galima būtų analizuoti, vertinti ne tik individo elgsenos ar sveikatos elgsenos pasekmes (dalyvauja ar nedalyvauja, daro ar nedaro, atlieka ar neatlieka ir pan.), bet ir numatyti šios elgsenos priešastinius motyvus (kodėl individas dalyvauja ar nedalyvauja, kodėl daro ar nedaro, kodėl atlieka ar neatlieka ir pan.). Pasitelkus nuostatų formavimosi komponentus būtų galima užduoti priešastinius klausimus apie konkrečios sveikatos elgsenos pasekmes. Remiantis pateiktu priešastiniu-pasekminiu nuostatų formavimosi ir sveikatos elgsenos modelio pavyzdžiu, būtų galima atlikti tolesnius tyrimus įvairiuose

tyrimų laukuose (kontekstuose), atskleidžiant, kurie nuostatas formuojantys veiksniai ir kaip gali daryti įtaką skirtingų vartotojų grupių elgsenai. Tokio pobūdžio tyrimai įvairiose srityse suteiktų galimybių modeliuoti vartotojų ir jų segmentų elgseną per priežasties-pasekmės prizmę, laikantis principo, kad atsitiktinumų nebūna, kiekvienas vartotojo veiksmas, elgsena ar jos tendencija turi priežastį.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *nuostata, vartotojo nuostatos, nuostatų formavimasis, nuostatų formavimosi komponentai, nuostatas formuojantys veiksniai, nuostatos ir elgsena, sveikatos elgsena.*

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