

Chapter 12

Mood of the Consumer: Collective Choice, Culture, and Social Class

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ABSTRACT

Consumer mood is not simply a state of mind or general affective enterprise of individuals going to make any choice. It also acts as a moderator in making the person belong to the social world in some way. The act of choosing is an intentional behavior and dependent upon the mood, culture, and social class. The object of choice fit into the accumulated framework of meaning-making systems where the mood has an important role to play in a social world. It was observed by Savani et al (2010) that people in US context have a more independent and disjointed model of choice as compared with the Indian counterparts. The argument is about the intentionality to choose as not an individual stance but collectively derived behavior in a collectivist culture like India where groups matter.

INTRODUCTION

Is mood a communally emergent phenomenon which directs towards the inner self? In common sensical ways, moods are “those subtle emotional influences which colour perception, shape behaviour and yield sustained moment of happiness, sadness, nostalgia and regret” (Schnog, 2009; p. 191). Schnog (2009) further elaborated that

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moods are emotional states which are liable, sometimes volatile, and seemingly inexplicable in origin, while a psychological common sense about emotional life teaches us that moods always have been an inextricable part of the human emotional experience. (p. 191).

Some of the scholars explored the social reality of the inner self and identity and negated the connection of mood to it and some other just defined it as a state of mind (see Heidegger, 1927; Ratcliff, 2013). The circumstances under which mood changes its intention from one object reality to other is the mind's social propensity rather than mind's individuality. The psychic economy (see Butler, 1997) of mood to direct or sway away from the object of intention due to its inconvenience to direct its attention to a particular is an act of desirability, which has a temporal stance. The way mood gets a shift and is framed in a social situation due to the realization of its social embeddedness is a matter of debate. For example, in the Indian scenario, the consumers' make choice to get a product does not imply to have the product immediately due to the socioeconomic constraints, thus, impelling the mood to get shifted towards another object in the real world. The mood of consumer fits into the mood of collective also, as different culture gives different pictures of mood. The mood of the consumer may also be taken as a social construct where its meaning is socioculturally framed through the discourses and dialectics of their group members. The mind of the consumer is the subjugated entity where the persuasiveness for the product through the advertisers affects the mood of the consumer which is often considered as independent and rational. Actually, the direction of the mood depends upon many other linked primary and secondary emotions such as sadness, happiness, anger, humiliations, jealousy, pride or schadenfreude, thus shaping the phenomenology of mood as a general state of mind. Heidegger (1927) opined that this general nature of mood clarifies the route of finding oneself. However, there are alterities where individuals or consumers come across shaping their perception of seeing the world and the product.

Research Objective

To attain a critical understanding about how mood of the consumer is not a simple, nascent and individualistic affective enterprise but has a connection with collective and social world.

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