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[Andy Ismail](#)*, Yenny Maya Dora, [Taofik Hidajat](#)

Posted Date: 21 February 2024

doi: 10.20944/preprints202402.1188.v1

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Article

Consumer Decision Making Model Process but as Independent Factors: And Its Influence on Purchasing Behavior

Andy Ismail ^{1,*}, Yenny Maya Dora ² and Taofik Hidajat ³

¹ Management Department, Darwan Ali University, Sampit, Indonesia.

² Management Department, Widyatama University, Bandung, Indonesia, Management.

³ Department, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Bank BPD Jawa Tengah, Semarang, Indonesia.

* Correspondence: andy@unda.ac.id

Abstract: This research challenges the traditional perspective on consumer behavior, which focuses on external factors shaping the sequential stages of decision-making. Instead, it proposes a paradigm shift by treating the decision-making process itself as an independent variable, exploring its impact on various outcomes like purchasing behavior, brand loyalty, and post-purchase satisfaction. This novel approach offers deeper insights into the intricacies of consumer behavior, particularly in the digital age. By uncovering the reciprocal relationships between the decision-making process and other variables, the research provides a more nuanced understanding of how consumers navigate today's complex landscape. It further delves into how variations in the decision-making process across diverse consumer groups influence various outcomes, recognizing the unique characteristics and needs of different demographics. The research also acknowledges the interplay of psychological, social, and contextual factors that shape both the decision-making process and its downstream effects, offering a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted influences on consumer behavior. Ultimately, by studying the decision-making process as an independent variable, this research aims to equip businesses and researchers with valuable insights, enabling them to better navigate the ever-evolving world of consumer behavior.

Keywords: consumer decision making; paradigm shift; purchasing behavior; independent variable; digital age; diversity; social factors; psychological factors; contextual factors

Introduction

Traditionally, research on consumer behavior has predominantly treated the consumer decision-making process as a dependent variable, examining how external factors influence the sequential stages of need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Шкурупська, 2018; Suomala, 2020; Karimi et al., 2018). However, there is a growing interest in exploring an alternative perspective, where the sequential and interconnected nature of the decision-making process becomes the independent or predictor variable.

This paradigm shift stems from a realization that the consumer decision-making process is not only shaped by external factors but can also play a significant role in influencing other variables within a specific context. Thus, studying the consumer decision-making process as an independent variable allows researchers to investigate its impact on various outcomes or dependent variables.

The background of such research could underscore the intricate dynamics of consumer decision-making and its potential to shape subsequent behaviors or attitudes. Researchers may aim to understand how variations in the decision-making process among diverse consumer groups impact factors such as post-purchase satisfaction, brand loyalty, or future consumer behavior.

Furthermore, the background may delve into the psychological, social, and contextual factors that influence the consumer decision-making process. By comprehending how these factors contribute to the decision-making dynamics and, subsequently, affect other variables, researchers can gain valuable insights into the complexities of consumer behavior.

In the contemporary landscape, where technology and social media play pivotal roles, exploring the consumer decision-making process as an independent variable gains additional significance. The ever-evolving nature of technology and its impact on consumer behavior necessitate a thorough understanding of how the decision-making process itself can shape outcomes in the digital age.

Investigating the consumer decision-making process as an independent variable offers a novel perspective for understanding its broader implications and consequences. This research direction allows for a deeper exploration of the reciprocal relationships between the decision-making process and various outcomes, contributing to a more nuanced comprehension of consumer behavior and market dynamics.

This research, focusing on the dependent variable of purchasing behavior, advocates a paradigm shift in the study of consumer behavior. The conventional perspective treats the sequential stages of the decision-making process as dependent variables (Figure 1) influenced by external factors. However, our approach challenges this notion, considering these stages as independent variables that can actively shape and impact different outcomes within a given context. By treating the decision-making stages as independent variables, we aim to investigate their potential influence on purchasing behavior, post-purchase satisfaction, brand loyalty, and overall consumer behavior. This shift allows for a deeper exploration of the nuanced dynamics of consumer decision-making and its potential to drive diverse behaviors and attitudes. Our objective is to understand how variations in these decision-making stages among different consumer groups significantly affect key factors, providing a comprehensive insight into purchasing behavior.

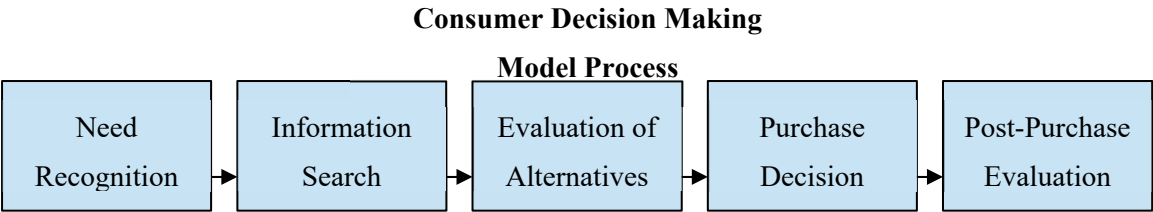


Figure 1. Consumer Decision Making Model Process.

Furthermore, the research aims to explore the psychological, social, and contextual factors contributing to decision-making dynamics and their subsequent impact on purchasing behavior. This comprehensive approach acknowledges the complexity of consumer decision-making and the multifaceted interactions between its various components. In the contemporary era marked by technology and social media influence, the study intends to uncover how the redefined, non-sequential decision-making process interacts with and shapes outcomes in the digital age. Recognizing the evolving nature of technology and its profound impact on consumer behavior, our research emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of how the decision-making process, treated as independent variables, serves as a driving force behind various outcomes in the realm of purchasing behavior.

This research proposes a departure from the conventional view, advocating for an exploration of the traditionally sequential and interrelated stages of the decision-making process as independent variables. Adopting this novel perspective aims to unravel the reciprocal relationships between these decision-making stages and various outcomes, contributing to a profound understanding of purchasing behavior and the dynamics of the contemporary market.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this research centers on a rigorous literature review to investigate the various stages of the consumer decision-making model process. By systematically exploring academic databases, journals, and pertinent publications, the study aims to synthesize existing scholarly works related to need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. This comprehensive review will not only contribute to a deep understanding of each stage but will also aid in identifying gaps in current research, informing the

development of theoretical frameworks, and guiding the subsequent phases of the investigation. The rationale for adopting a literature review methodology lies in its ability to provide a nuanced perspective on consumer decision-making dynamics, allowing the research to build upon and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the realm of consumer behavior.

Result

Need Recognition

The impact of need recognition on purchasing behavior has garnered substantial attention in diverse research studies. For instance, Moser (2015) identified willingness to pay (WTP) as a robust predictor of green purchasing behavior, highlighting the influential role of personal norms and environmental concerns in shaping consumer decision-making. This underscores the importance of recognizing individual needs in influencing environmentally conscious purchasing behaviors (Moser, 2015). Similarly, Taralik et al. (2022) emphasized the pivotal role of need recognition throughout the entire purchasing decision process, indicating its significance in shaping customer experience and subsequent behavior. Azzara et al. (2023) further contributed to this understanding by highlighting the substantial contribution of consumer needs and desires to purchasing behavior, underscoring the central role of need recognition in the overall decision-making process (Azzara et al., 2023).

Examining need recognition in the context of sustainability cues on packaging, Rees et al. (2019) found a nuanced relationship with its effect on purchasing behavior, suggesting that other moderating factors may influence this connection. Meanwhile, Li (2022) uncovered that consumers' recognition of product quality, price, and purchasing channel convenience significantly impacted purchasing behavior, revealing the multifaceted nature of need recognition in shaping consumer decisions (Li, 2022).

Furthermore, the exploration of need recognition's impact on purchasing behavior extends to the realm of social commerce. Hettiarachchi et al. (2018) emphasized the foundational role of need recognition in the consumer decision-making journey, spanning stages such as information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. Additionally, Pasharibu et al. (2020) aimed to measure consumer behavior intention in using the online store channel for daily needs products, highlighting the influence of convenience and risk transactions rooted in the recognition of needs (Wahyudin et al., 2021).

The conclusion drawn from this literature review indicates a clear significance between need recognition and consumer purchasing behavior. Several studies, such as those conducted by Moser (2015), Taralik et al. (2022), and Azzara et al. (2023), demonstrate that need recognition plays a pivotal role in shaping purchasing behavior. Factors such as willingness to pay (WTP), personal norms, and consumer needs and desires significantly influence purchasing decisions.

However, some studies, exemplified by Rees et al. (2019), suggest a weak relationship between need recognition and its impact on purchasing behavior, indicating the possibility of other moderating factors. Nevertheless, overall, the literature findings affirm that need recognition has a substantial impact on shaping consumer behavior and the decision-making process.

Considering the limitations and diversity of research findings, it can be concluded that there is a consensus in the literature regarding the significance of need recognition in the context of consumer purchasing behavior.

Information Search

The provided references collectively underscore the significant influence of information search on consumer purchasing behavior across various contexts. Flavián et al. (2016) emphasize that the combination of online searches and offline purchases enhances the consumer's overall purchase experience, highlighting the impact of information search on pre-choice variables. Yan & Cao (2022) reveal that attitude mediates the effects of information disorder on purchasing behavior, underlining the crucial role of information search in shaping consumer behavior.

Dwidienawati et al. (2020) stress the importance of information search during online product exploration, indicating its significance in influencing purchase intention. Li et al. (2021) synthesize consumer information search behavior as a crucial factor in reducing perceived risk and facilitating reasonable purchase decisions, thereby emphasizing its impact on the purchasing process.

Kim & Kim (2019) demonstrate that the hedonic/utilitarian quality of a product influences consumers' paths of information search, indicating the impact of information search on gift choice and purchase behavior. Zhang & Hou (2017) emphasize the essential role of information search in the context of perceived risk for innovative products and services, crucial for marketers dealing with increasingly ubiquitous innovative products.

Zhou & Wei (2020) highlight the influence of information search on comparative decision-making, particularly with the accessibility to diverse information. Lin & Wang (2020) identify flow experience as a significant psychological factor influencing online consumers' information searching behavior, indicating its impact on online purchase decisions.

Bil et al. (2022) show that informativeness, perceived ease of use, and admiration significantly impact purchase behavior, underscoring the influence of information search on consumer purchasing behavior. Basu (2018) distinguishes between experience and search goods, showcasing the differential impact of information search on different product types.

Ke et al. (2016) emphasize the complexity of information search behavior in influencing purchase decisions, challenging the assumption of a one-step search process. Lampert et al. (2017) utilize the Information Display Matrix (IDM) to trace information search in a buying process, highlighting its impact on consumer behavior. Voorveld et al. (2016) distinguish between purchase and information channels, collectively referred to as "channels," emphasizing the influence of information search across different purchase channels.

Akalamkam & Mitra (2017) focus on consumer pre-purchase external information search behavior, emphasizing its impact on online purchase decisions. Lastly, Schleenbecker & Hamm (2015) infer that information search behavior is a crucial phenomenon influencing consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in the context of fairtrade coffee.

In conclusion, these references collectively emphasize the multifaceted impact of information search on consumer purchasing behavior, providing insights into its significance across various product types, channels, and decision-making processes.

Evaluation of Alternatives

The referenced studies collectively offer valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer behavior, specifically focusing on the evaluation of alternatives and purchase decisions. Voramontri & Klieb (2019) emphasize the impact of social media on consumer satisfaction throughout various stages of the decision-making process, particularly highlighting its influence on information search, alternative evaluation, and post-purchase evaluation. Similarly, Bil et al. (2022) utilize structural equation modeling to reveal the significant and positive direct effects of influencer attributes, such as informativeness, perceived ease of use, and admiration, on purchase intention.

Khare (2015) contributes to the understanding of green buying behavior by exploring antecedents that shape consumers' evaluation of alternatives and subsequent purchase decisions, shedding light on sustainable consumption. Karimi et al. (2015) delve into the online purchase decision-making process, specifically addressing the formulation stage and the role of prior knowledge and decision-making style in shaping consumer shopping behavior.

The impact of event sponsorship on consumers' evaluation of alternatives and purchasing behavior is investigated in the study titled "Impact of event sponsorship in purchasing behavior of consumers" (2022), providing comparative insights within local conglomerate companies in Bangladesh. Bach et al. (2020) explore online customer behavior and perceptions of risks associated with online purchases, contributing to the understanding of factors influencing the evaluation of alternatives in the online shopping context.

Li (2022) employs the SOR (stimulus–organism–response) model to analyze the influence of external stimuli and psychological processes on consumers' evaluation of alternatives and

subsequent purchase behavior, offering a comprehensive perspective. Nam et al. (2017) investigate factors influencing consumers' purchase intention of green sportswear, contributing valuable insights to the evaluation of alternatives in the context of sustainable fashion.

Viejo-Fernández & Saha (2020) provide a comprehensive view of the decision-making process by considering five basic stages, including problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. Lastly, Mardhiana (2022) employs a quantitative approach to analyze factors influencing purchase decisions, shedding light on the evaluation of alternatives within the context of former insurance policy holders' perceptions.

In conclusion, these references collectively contribute to the understanding of the evaluation of alternatives and purchase decisions, encompassing various factors such as social media influence, influencer attributes, antecedents to green buying behavior, online purchase decision-making, event sponsorship impact, online customer behavior, external stimuli, sustainable fashion, and factors influencing insurance policy holders' decisions.

Purchase Decision

Framing the concept as "the influence of Purchase Decision on purchasing behavior" may seem redundant, as the purchase decision is inherently a component of purchasing behavior. A more precise approach would be to explore the factors influencing the purchase decision within the broader context of purchasing behavior. Understanding the purchase decision involves delving into the cognitive processes, psychological factors, and external stimuli that contribute to the selection of a specific product or service. These elements collectively shape the consumer's ultimate choice and contribute to the overall purchasing behavior. By examining the influencers and determinants of the purchase decision, researchers can gain insights into the nuanced dynamics that guide consumers through the decision-making process. This exploration allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how individual choices within the purchase decision stage contribute to the broader spectrum of purchasing behavior, unraveling the intricate interplay between consumer preferences, external influences, and the ultimate act of making a purchase.

Post-Purchase Evaluation

The relevant references provide valuable insights into the influence of post-purchase evaluation on purchasing behavior, shedding light on various aspects and contexts within this relationship. Taralik et al. (2022) emphasize the significance of post-purchase evaluation in shaping customer experience throughout the entire purchasing decision process. Liu et al. (2019) delve into the impact of post-purchase evaluation on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) giving behavior, underlining its influence on subsequent consumer actions. Jiang et al. (2021) contribute to the understanding of post-purchase behavior and evaluation, showcasing the repercussions on consumer behavior. Wang et al. (2019) explore the connection between in-store slack, post-purchase evaluation, and purchasing behavior, revealing intricate dynamics in the decision-making process. Nittala & Moturu (2021) focus on pro-environmental post-purchase behavior, illustrating its role in shaping green consumer behavior and highlighting the importance of post-purchase evaluation in sustainability choices.

Omar & Atteya (2020) bring attention to the role of reference groups in post-purchase assessment, emphasizing how external influences impact consumer behavior during this stage. The study on M-Shopping fashion apps (2019) unveils the significance of post-purchase customer experience in the post-adoption phase, demonstrating how positive evaluations contribute to subsequent consumer behavior. Akbar et al. (2020) explore the mediating role of impulse buying behavior in the relationship between emotional brand attachment, sales promotion, and post-purchase cognitive dissonance, showcasing the complex interplay between these variables. Tatavarthy & Mukherjee (2019) investigate the link between payment methods and post-purchase product evaluation, underscoring how the transaction process influences subsequent consumer behavior. Lastly, Shang & Wei (2017) employ the Expectation-Confirmation Model (ECM) to explain post-purchase satisfaction beliefs in mobile shopping, emphasizing the enduring impact of post-purchase evaluation on shaping consumer behavior. Together, these studies provide a

comprehensive understanding of how post-purchase evaluation influences various dimensions of purchasing behavior across different contexts.

In conclusion, the collection of studies on the influence of post-purchase evaluation on purchasing behavior reveals the multifaceted nature of this relationship across diverse contexts. The significance of post-purchase evaluation is underscored in shaping customer experience, influencing electronic word-of-mouth behavior, and contributing to pro-environmental and sustainable consumer choices. These studies also illuminate the role of external factors, such as reference groups, in post-purchase assessment and highlight the complex interplay between emotional brand attachment, sales promotion, and cognitive dissonance. Additionally, insights into the impact of payment methods on post-purchase product evaluation and the enduring effects of post-purchase satisfaction beliefs in mobile shopping further enrich our understanding of the enduring influence of post-purchase evaluation on subsequent consumer behavior. In essence, the findings collectively emphasize the pivotal role of post-purchase evaluation in shaping various dimensions of purchasing behavior, providing valuable implications for marketers and researchers in understanding and navigating this critical phase of the consumer decision-making process.

Table 1. Consumer Decision Making Model as Variables.

No	Variable	Can it be used as an independent variable?	Explanation
1	Need recognition	Yes	Need recognition signifies the initial stage of the consumer decision-making process, triggering the purchase journey. It can be manipulated by various factors like marketing campaigns, social media influence, or changes in personal circumstances.
2	Information search	Yes	The extent and nature of information search can be controlled by manipulating factors like website design, information availability, and ease of access.
3	Evaluation of alternatives	Yes	The options presented to consumers and the attributes highlighted can be controlled to influence how they evaluate different choices.
4	Purchase decision	No	The purchase decision itself is the outcome of the entire process and cannot be directly manipulated. You can manipulate factors influencing it, but not the decision itself.
5	Post-purchase evaluation	Yes	Factors like product quality, customer service, and post-purchase communication can be controlled to influence post-purchase evaluation.

In the Consumer Decision Making Model Process, certain stages can serve as independent variables, allowing for manipulation to observe their impact on the overall process (Table 1). Need recognition, marking the initiation of the consumer decision-making journey, can be influenced by external factors such as marketing campaigns, social media influence, or changes in personal circumstances, making it an apt independent variable. Similarly, the extent and nature of information search, the second stage, can be controlled by manipulating factors like website design, information availability, and ease of access, presenting it as another independent variable. The evaluation of alternatives, the third stage, also lends itself as an independent variable, as the options presented to consumers and the attributes highlighted can be controlled to shape their decision-making process. On the other hand, the purchase decision itself, being the culmination of the entire process, is considered the dependent outcome and cannot be directly manipulated. It is influenced by various factors that can be controlled, making them the independent variables affecting the purchase decision. Lastly, post-purchase evaluation, the fifth stage, can be treated as an independent variable, with factors like product quality, customer service, and post-purchase communication being manipulated to influence consumers’ assessments after the purchase.

In Figure 2, the model of “Consumer Decision Making Model but as Independent Factors” is presented, illustrating the role of each stage in the consumer decision-making process as independent factors. The first stage, Need Recognition, is depicted as an independent variable influenced by external factors such as marketing campaigns, social media influence, or changes in personal circumstances. The second stage, Information Search, is also portrayed as an independent variable that can be controlled through factors such as website design, information availability, and ease of access. The third stage, Evaluation of Alternatives, is also viewed as an independent variable, where the options presented to consumers and the highlighted attributes can be controlled to influence how they evaluate different choices. On the other hand, the fourth stage, Purchase Decision, is described as a dependent variable as it is the outcome of the entire process and cannot be directly manipulated. Nevertheless, factors influencing the purchase decision can be controlled, making it an independent variable that influences the purchase decision. Lastly, the fifth stage, Post-purchase Evaluation, is considered an independent variable, with factors such as product quality, customer service, and post-purchase communication being manipulable to influence consumer assessments after the purchase. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of how each stage in the consumer decision-making model can function as independent factors in influencing the overall process.

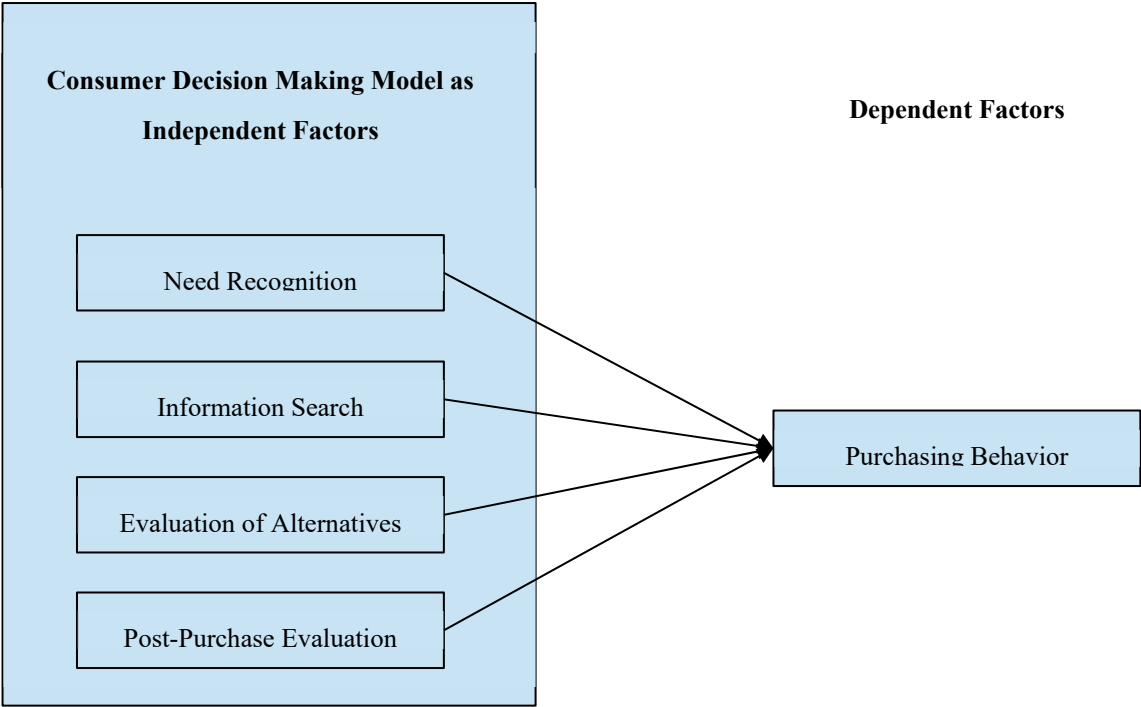


Figure 2. Model of “Consumer Decision Making Model but as Independent Factors”.**Conclusion**

The aim of this research is to systematically investigate and analyze the intricate dynamics of the Consumer Decision Making Model Process and its influence on purchasing behavior. The primary goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of each stage within the decision-making process, namely Need Recognition, Information Search, Evaluation of Alternatives, Purchase Decision, and Post-Purchase Evaluation. Through a meticulous review of relevant studies, the research aims to highlight key factors and their roles in shaping consumer choices at each stage.

In conclusion, the analysis offers a comprehensive and insightful exploration of the Consumer Decision Making Model Process and its profound impact on purchasing behavior. The clear and concise summaries of relevant studies provide a robust understanding of each aspect. The additional reflections further enhance the depth of the analysis:

1. **Need Recognition:** The analysis effectively captures the unanimous agreement in the literature on the pivotal role of need recognition in shaping purchasing behavior. It rightly acknowledges the influence of various factors such as personal norms, willingness to pay, and consumer desires, while also recognizing the potential moderating factors identified in some studies.

2. **Information Search:** The multifaceted impact of information search on consumer behavior is well-demonstrated, emphasizing its role in pre-purchase evaluation, risk reduction, and decision shaping across diverse contexts. The suggestion to explore the evolving digital landscape and the role of social media in information search adds a forward-looking dimension.

3. **Evaluation of Alternatives:** The presented references highlight the diverse factors influencing the evaluation of alternatives and purchase decisions. The acknowledgment of the roles of social media, influencer attributes, online shopping complexities, and sustainability considerations in this stage sets the stage for further exploration into consumer decision-making heuristics and potential trade-offs.

4. **Purchase Decision:** The analysis recognizes the potential redundancy in framing the purchase decision's influence on purchasing behavior but rightly emphasizes exploring its factors within a broader context. Identifying cognitive processes, psychological factors, and external stimuli shaping consumer choices offers a pathway for deeper insights, suggesting potential variations across different scenarios or product categories.

5. **Post-Purchase Evaluation:** The thorough summary of studies analyzing the post-purchase evaluation's impact underscores its lasting influence on purchasing behavior. The call to investigate how businesses can leverage positive post-purchase experiences for customer loyalty and repeat purchases suggests a valuable future research direction.

In essence, this analysis lays a strong foundation for understanding the Consumer Decision Making Model Process, encouraging further exploration into moderating factors, the evolving digital landscape, and decision-making heuristics. The insights generated can prove valuable for both businesses and researchers in navigating the complexities of consumer behavior.

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