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# The Marketing Model Applying the Concepts of Educational Psychology in the Private Educational Service Sector

Seong-Gon KIM<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** A marketing strategy for private institutions requires marketers to leverage consumer behaviors and educational psychologies when advertising and promoting product portfolios. Indeed, understanding consumers can make marketers more effective, and the purpose of this research is to tackle private institutions' education marketing by combining marketing theories and learning theories. **Research design, data and methodology:** The content analysis used in this study will be suitable because there exists numerous prior studies regarding marketing strategy and educational theories. Therefore, the current author could obtain and collect adequate textual facts from much of the literature review. **Results:** Marketing strategies that are mixed with educational theories increase consumer enrolment due to perceived usefulness, and this implies that an adequate marketing model could help improve sustainability and income as a result of enrollment in private educational institutions. The research also identified that marketing is connected to psychology and that marketers can exploit educational and psychological theories to increase successful enrolment in private educational institutions. **Conclusions:** Most importantly, the target market for private educational institutions is diverse, and institutions can use direct marketing to appeal to specific audiences. Also, the research implies that diversification strategies can increase enrolment if marketers exploit behavioral learning theories in the marketing process.

**Keywords :** Marketing Strategy, Customer Satisfaction, Educational Psychology, Private Educational Institution.

**JEL Classification Codes :** M31, I21, L19.

## 1. Introduction

There is increased competition in all industries that compels organizations to respond by including different marketing strategies. A marketing strategy does not merely react to marketing as a functional management issue but as a critical aspect of the overall business strategy (Morgan, Whitler, Feng & Chari, 2019). The need to create these strategies has been particularly vital due to the increasing need to respond to the numerous alternatives available in

the market and ultimate consumer power. A marketing strategy purposes to create a comprehension of consumer needs and influencing these wants by timely providing for these wants in a way that profitable generate value for consumers. Marketing is an essential function of the business and should not just be departmental. Instead, Hult and Ketchen (2017) indicated that marketing should permeate an entire organization. With an adequate marketing strategy, the firm can thus launch marketing activities that fit the networks within and outside the firm to create value for the customers and o fulfill primary and secondary stakeholders. The need to find appropriate marketing strategies for private educational institutions, is a vital part of the educational services sector, primarily due to various dynamics such as competition and availability of multiple alternatives parents and students consider.

Education has become an essential vehicle for success,

<sup>1</sup> First and Corresponding Author. The president of Gongbu E&C Co., Ltd, South Korea. Email: rlatjdrhs04@naver.com

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and where students attain this success is of great significance. The need for different educational instruction to meet the demands of an evolving global workforce is evident in private educational organizations. Private educations are funded and maintained by private entities s opposed to the government and, as a result, charge tuition and follow distinctive viewpoints even though they face various regulations and accountability as public or charter schools. However, in recent decades, the government has given more considerable attention to public education by including recent developments in investments such as technology and human resources. Also, there has been increased mobilization for charter schools to promote innovation in public education, which minimizes the need to pay for augmented fees when charter schools are free. These new developments reduce various advantages for private schools, making conceptualizing contemporary market strategies vital for continued growth and survival.

A marketing strategy for private schools requires marketers to leverage consumer behaviors and psychologies when advertising and promoting product portfolios. Indeed, understanding consumers is an art that can make more effective marketers. Marketing can be associated with flipping the brain switch by developing techniques that can be operative for the entire marketing strategy. This research will tackle private schools' education marketing by combining marketing theories and learning theories. Through this methodology, this article will ground solutions for marketing based on marketing and educational psychology. Therefore, the answers to finding a suitable marketing strategy for private schools will consider four key issues mentioned by Kotler in a talk by the London Forum on marketing strategy. The four crucial components include (a) market research (segmentation, targeting and positioning), (b) synthesis phase (marketing mix), (c) realization phase (production and sale) and (d) control and correction phase (evaluating sales results and making corrective plans). These solutions will highlight and relate to the theories that will be discussed in the literature review.

## 2. Literature Review

There Throughout the human life course, individuals acquire and modify knowledge, belief systems, attitudes, and behaviors. For example, how children learn how to tie their shoes or how to recognize that the word "daddy" has a y or even more complex problems such as long division involves educational processes. In marketing, learning theories can be used to manipulate behaviors and psychology of the human mind. Also, marketers can further guide specific market strategies based on consumer theories with educational psychology theories to augment the

success of branding, promotion, and other marketing activities. Daniel (2018) noted in his objectivist epistemology study using a selected Nigerian bottling company, that specific marketing strategies are vital for organizational performance. The study found that activities that are undertaken from a marketing strategy impact a firm's sales, customer, and financial performance, and that the role of the specific mediated marketing tactic is critical for influencing organizational performance. Equally, Alhadid and Qaddomi studied the purpose of marketing strategies among small and medium-sized companies in Jordan with competitive advantage a mediating variable (2016). The authors used a regression analysis found that as a result of specific well-driven marketing strategies leads to maximized organizational performance over time. Understanding the frame of thinking for how consumers take private school instruction would be useful to create marketing (see table 1 for a table describing theories that guide the review).

It is imperative to assess the forces behind the need for the educational sector marketing. These forces demonstrate the counter-power among parents and students on the choice of schools. The educational sector is a neutral mechanism, and market pressures (demand and supply) lead to a crisis for efficient, productive, and responsive educational environments. Free-market educational services can provide a high-quality education leading to more positive outcomes. The market theory, in general, encompasses four premises that connect personal choices and competition. The USA's educational services sector includes the supplier (educational institutions providing instruction) and the demand (parents and students). Within these two groups, the education sector is guided by choice, diversity, competition, and responsiveness. These premises indicate that parents have the autonomy to choose institutions. Secondly, there are diverse and unique educational offerings in the market. Educational institutions use various techniques to entice parents. Most importantly, parents and students can respond to schools that offer their needs and preferences (Oplatka, 2004). While these attributes of the educational sector (voucher plans, open enrolment, and charter schools) within a free market system have not been without criticism as Taylor noted (2001), the theory precisely describes that educational services are competitive and thus the emergency for adequate marketing strategies.

### 2.1. Educational Psychological Theories

While the discipline of educational psychology encompasses diverse theories, there are five theoretical paradigms identified. This review will use behaviorism, cognitivist, and social contextual learning theories.

Learning theories are instrumental in marketing as they help create suitable strategies to approach target consumers. For example, Behaviorism theories posit that individuals' observable changes are attributed to responding to environmental stimuli. For instance, Ivan Pavlov developed classical conditioning, a behavioral approach, to assess conditional incentives and response. Pavlov experimented with his dog and found that the dog associated a bell ring with food. Thus, Pavlov suggested that as a result of classical conditioning, a person learns a new behavior over time. In marketing, a T.V advert on a private institution could depict high walls and security cameras that parents can associate with security over time. Research demonstrates that using this theory helps to elicit responses from consumers by associating various aspects with a brand. Specifically, Stuart, Shimp & Engle (1987) found that ads that informational use conditioning such as using a pleasant voice and various cues that affect consumer attitudes. The theory of classical conditioning differs from operant conditioning, as the theory posits that people learn from their consequences. Thus they are less likely to follow through with an action resulting in adverse outcomes.

On the other hand, social and contextual theories emphasize the environment and social contexts as a vital means for an individual's learning. As such, learning within these theories is culture-specific and a product of activity and context. One prominent approach is the social learning theory, which, as Etienne Wenger proposed that individuals learn in diverse ways, but socially people acquire new behaviors by observing and imitation. Lam, Kraus, and Ahearne (2010) described reinforcement learning people learn from consequence while in the latter, people follow others to avoid similar errors. Equally, the social exchange theory, for instance, proposes that interactions are created from the need to maximize benefits and reduce costs. A seminal work by Bagozzi (1975) posited that the social exchange theory integrates reciprocity, where deference or obligations are exchanged for value received. As such, social exchange theory is divergent from social learning theory in that the latter is not dependent on self-interest rewards or reciprocity of action. Bagozzi (1975) noted that vicarious learning is a more effective and better learning process than reinforcement, especially by following model behavior.

## 2.2. Consumer Behavior Theories

Based on the pressures of the free market, marketing theories should then inform how private schools create marketing strategies. Marketing theories, particularly in the realm of consumer behavior, demonstrate how people acquire products and services. These choices in the educational sector are connected to competitive offerings,

diversity of consumer preferences, and proliferation of brands. However, it is critical to note that consumer behavior is a subtle concept, and reasons for making decisions can be augmented by numerous actions connected to an individual's psyche. As such understanding, consumer marketing theories is critical because marketers can then introduce adequate campaigns that impact consumer behavior.

The theory of reasoned action coined in the 1960s by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen posits that human beings are rational actors, and thus they would buy goods and services that are in their best interests (Madden, Ellen & Ajzen, 1992). The theory focuses on the significance of pre-existing attitudes in decision-making processes. In this view, people will only engage in buying a commodity when a specific outcome is expected. The theory implies that marketers should associate the product with positive results and that brands should limit the long lags between initial intention and action completion that provide opportunities for recourse. Through customer survey research, Buttle and Bok (1996) found that attitude towards the act had a more significant impact on international travelers' service quality than subjective norms (Perceived social pressure). The study implied that the hotel industry had to focus on attitudinal factors than such as communicating the ethical aspects of hotels that would result in augmented service quality.

Another marketing theory is the motivation theory, which is attributed to theorists such as Abraham Maslow. Motivation theories imply that marketers should instill messages that make commodities or services as urgent or how consumers perceive them as higher in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Svatosová, 2013). For instance, Maslow's theory in education would incorporate safety or security messages in schools that would make the institutions more favorable to parents. Thus, despite the high prices, the security would seem like a small price to pay. Therefore, the security example is a motivating factor for purchase as it compels an actor towards a behavior. Pitta, Subrahmanyam, and Gomez-Arias (2008) studied what motivations the poorest people in the world (those in the bottom of the pyramid (BoP)) to assess what they acquired and consumed and to understand methods firms can use to augment buyer intention. The research found that:

Despite income and resource constraints, BoP consumers are sophisticated and creative. They are motivated not just by survival and physiological needs but seek to fulfill higher-order needs either to build social capital, cultural reasons, or compensatory mechanisms. They also find that when firms offer products that also meet these higher-order needs, primarily through linkages to education and job offerings (Pitta, Subrahmanyam, and Gomez-Arias, 2008, Pg. 402).

**Table 1:** Illustration of theories that guided this research

Type of theory	Theory and Definition
Educational Theory	<p>*Behavioral: Classic Conditioning (Ivan Pavlov developed classical conditioning a behavioral theory to assess conditional stimuli and response. From learning a person learns a new behavior over time).</p> <p>* Behavioral: Operant Conditioning (The theory posits that people learn from their consequences and thus they are less likely to follow through with an action resulting in negative outcomes.)</p> <p>* Social Contextual: Social learning theory (Etienne Wenger proposed that individuals learn in diverse ways but socially people acquire new behaviors by observing and imitation).</p> <p>* Social exchange theory (Equally, the social exchange theory for instance proposes that interactions are created from the need to maximize benefits and reduce costs.</p>
Marketing Consumer related Theories	<p>* Theory of rational action (The theory implies that marketers should associate the product with positive outcomes. The theory focuses on the significance of pre-existing attitudes in the decision-making processes).</p> <p>* EKB model (The Engel Kollet, Blackwell (EKB) Model expands the theory of reasoned action to explain how consumers make the decision-making process of goods and services.</p> <p>* Motivation Theory (Motivation theories imply that marketers should instill messages that make commodities or services as urgent or in a way that consumers would perceive them as higher in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.</p>

Equally, the Engel Kollet, Blackwell (EKB) Model expands the theory of reasoned action to explain how consumers make the decision-making process of goods and services. The EKB model indicates that consumers take five steps to make a purchasing decision. The first step, which is the input, involves the absorption of marketing activities as seen online or on print media. After collecting and understanding this process, the consumer then moves into information processing where comparing diverse alternatives exist. The third step is decision making on a product based on perceived rationality, but in the third step, there are numerous influences. Before buying and evaluating purchase processes, marketers must use the first three steps to augment product purchase success. A study by Teo and Yeong (2003) found that people use consumer

decisions in the EKB model, for example, due to the benefits of the overall benefits attributed to evaluation. In particular, this is factual for the willingness to buy online products.

### 3. Findings

Research designs are a comprehensive approach that a researcher uses to combine various components of a research logically and researchers should address the research question properly, being appropriated and aligning with the method. A content analysis used for this study is suitable because there exists tremendous prior studies regarding marketing strategy and educational theories. Therefore, the current author could obtain and collect adequate textual facts which come from much of literature. That posits that this kind of research will be more appropriate those who have limited time and sources, guaranteeing that validity is established (Neuendorf, 2002).

Marketing strategies are vital in education like any other industry and sector. The significance of successful marketing campaigns is critical in a highly competitive educational services sector where numerous alternatives exist. Existing literature illustrates that the introduction of compulsory education has led to more competitive environments for schools, and with an existing market comes monetization (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2012). For example, public schools use government resources to implement pedagogy and other curriculum objectives. On the other hand, charter schools have more open and community engagement management than public schools while still getting public resources to implement goals. Equally, private schools rely heavily on tuition fees and other individual-based incentives for funding. Regardless, private schools benefit from private management and holding specific ideologies that guide the mission, which is usually limited for public schools. Therefore, institutions of learning implement cost leadership and differentiation goals within the market theory's constraints, where competing firms exist in an open market (Oplatka, 2004). As such, marketing for private schools becomes more critical as private institutions of learning have to compete against free based government-managed schools and charter schools that provide free education and other innovative techniques. Private schools, especially survival necessity, require schools to increase market share with the number of pupils or resources that would create a competitive edge over other institutions.

Foskett's (2002) research described educational marketing as un-synthesized and un-theorized, and instead, the study emphasizes choice processes and factors leading to school choice. For that reason, Oplatka and Hemsley-

Brown (2012) suggested that this lack of existing research on marketing elements mitigates the holistic conceptualization of the current variations in organizations' needs. Schools can benefit from adequate marketing strategies that define the target market or other marketing activities such as promotion. Uchendu, Nwafor, and Nwaneri, M. (2015) investigated marketing strategies in a quantitative study for private schools and found that marketing strategies increased student enrolment due to perceived usefulness. The research implied that adequate marketing strategy could help improve sustainability and income as a result of enrollment. This section provides various proposals that private schools can use to become more competitive in the educational services sector. The research places a key focus on how psychological learning theories can be used to augment success and marketing theories (see table 2 for a table representing a marketing strategy for educational services sector-solutions).

### **3.1. Solutions to Capture Market Segment and Target using Direct Marketing Communication**

Private schools have autonomy over ideologies they practice and allow various institutions to use that as essential resource marketing. Many private schools choose to practice Catholicism or Islam or other philosophical or religious beliefs. As such, private schools can use this autonomy as an advantage to appeal to parents with similarly aligned ideologies. Aligning and capturing a target market based on specific ideologies allows the marketing teams to rely on social and contextual theories of learning. People are social beings and are significantly impacted by cultural and social contexts.

One of the solutions to capture ideology targets and segments, for example, could be the use of direct marketing. For example, a private pre-school institution can target parents with children between two and five years practicing specific philosophy within a ten to the fifteen-mile radius. In this case, then marketers will apply social learning theories where people learn by observing and imitation. In time people are more likely to also joining such an institution when they learn other parents have children with similar philosophies so that learning, in this case, the vicarious apply for parents as they learn by observing and hearing. Also, institutions may use direct mail as a means to communicate with parents earning high incomes.

The school is reaching specific targets and segments aligned to similar philosophies, for example, use theories as a stimulus, which then compels parents to enroll their children because of the rewards they could reap through say essential relationships with people with similar tastes. Cao, Jiang, Oh, Li, Liao, and Chen (2013) noted that Maslow's hierarchy of needs does exemplify that people are

motivated to certain behaviors due to various needs. By using philosophy as a critical motivating factor, parents can gain friendships from similar social connections. For schools that target high income earning parents, direct mailing would be appealing to parents to interact with other parents who can provide, for instance, augmented economic opportunities. The social exchange theory posits that people will want to communicate in relationships that offer the most benefits and avoid interactions with most risks. Thus, marketers should use direct mailing to attract specific segments and target markets by understanding a unique aspect such as philosophy on incomes.

### **3.2. Solutions using Diversification Strategies to Increase Enrolment**

Private Schools differ in how the approaches they use to attract new students and parents. Marketers ought to use behavioral diversification to create an urgent need for enrolment in schools. Besides the class size dynamics and other resourced based means to capture enrolment, students and teachers want to feel they are getting something that different schools do not offer. Diversification approaches create a school image and are related to the "functional variations that influence daily learning processes" (Zancajo, 2018). As such, various structured, diversified approaches to marketing should be identified as key to successful enrollment.

Behaviorism theories of learning assert in changing behaviors as part of the learning process. For example, parents are more likely to enroll their children in schools that offer personalized and quality education, especially if a parent's education is substandard. A need to mitigate the outcomes is a crucial motivating factor. Among behaviorism theories, classical conditioning postulates that over time a person is likely to adapt to new behaviors due to conditional stimuli. Learning in a substandard school in comparison to a private school offering quality education stimulates a success response among parents and thus motivates them to enroll their children. Also, operant conditioning theory can explain why parents would choose quality education diversification strategies and personalized education over say crowded public schools. Operant conditioning proposes that people learn from their consequences and are likely to change their behavior to mitigate adverse outcomes.

Marketers can influence success in diversification strategy by using the theory of reasoned action that hypothesizes that people are rational actors and thus make decisions that are in their best interests. With this in mind, marketers can communicate the diversified factors added to the institution, such as innovation or augmented quality, to appeal to different markets. Within this framing, parents

and students find an appeal to more positive branding with diversity factors included as parents are rational actors and have thus learned that they should decide to enroll children since they will be successful adults. Providing, for example, aviation packages within a short time augment the urgency for enrolment, making parents perceive the additional courses as necessary for success to a greater extent they received.

### 3.3. Solutions for the Marketing Mix

#### 3.3.1. Leadership and Better Institutional Management,

Communicating the institution's value is crucial and can be a source of competitive advantage for an organization. Compared to public and charter schools, private schools have management autonomy. Thus, the firm's efforts should be made to enhance a rewarding experience for students, parents, and teachers. Therefore, the leadership role is critical because management and coordinating with parents are crucial for finding value (Prasertcharoensuk & Tang, 2017). Strategic leadership provides collaborative and inspirational benefits. Including parents in essential decision-making processes inspire a sense of high esteem among parents and self-actualization goals among students. Thus, marketers need to appeal to motivation theory by asserting on a leadership that is centered towards growth and engagement. The social exchange theory of learning supports leadership significance in an organization because individuals will find engaging leaders as beneficial towards meeting various goals. Thus, marketing ought to focus on the advantages of dedicated leadership, which benefits new enrolments.

#### 3.3.2. Appealing to the necessity for products offered

Private schools use product orientation approaches to marketing extensively. These product-oriented methods include "resources based factors such as school facilities, educators, a nurturing and caring environment, small class size and discipline" (Sebolao & Mburu, 2017, Pg.658). These factors assert that schools use the product aspect of the marketing mix to capture value. Therefore, the product cannot be a source of competitiveness unless marketers can identify methods to assert urgency in the products offered. For example, marketers need to appeal to the psychological usefulness by stating expected outcomes, such as high scores or discipline. The theory of reasoned action in marketing applies then since parents expect their children to perform. Thus marketing should assert the attitudinal factors that the schools provide, leading to successful outcomes. Listing the advantages of a school is no longer a valid approach to marketing, but appealing to the rationality about enrolling should be calculated. Indeed, operant conditioning

as a learning theory makes people avoid negative consequences, and only calling to the psychology of positive outcomes is more likely to enhance successful enrolment.

#### 3.3.3. L Social media integration

Social media has become an imperative aspect of marketing, and digital strategies have thus been created to the respondent to the immediate challenges of the modern business environment. Social media strategies must become an essential part of marketing since they are more affordable while still providing maximum reach (Effing & Spil, 2016).

**Table 2:** Marketing strategy for educational services sector-solutions

Solutions	Theory
1: Using direct marketing communication	*Consumer theory: Motivation Theory- Maslow's hierarchy of needs. People are motivated to certain behaviors due to various needs. *Educational theory: The social exchange theory- People will want to interact in relationships that provide the most benefits and avoid interactions with most risks.
2: Using diversification strategies to increase enrolment	*Consumer theory: Theory of rational action- parents are rational actors and have thus learned that they should make a decision to enroll children since they will be successful adults *Educational theory: Operant conditioning theory- People learn from their consequences and are likely to make decisions to mitigate negative outcomes.
3: Leadership and better institutional management	*Consumer theory: motivation theory by asserting on a leadership that is centered towards growth and engagement. *Educational theory: The social exchange theory of learning- Supports leadership significance in an organization because individuals will engage in relationships that are beneficial towards meeting various goals.
4: Appealing to necessity for products offered	*Consumer theory: The theory of reasoned action- schools should focus on attitudinal factors that improve products and services offered. *Educational theory: The operant conditioning as a learning theory makes people avoid negative consequences such as enrolling in poorly developed schools.
5: Social media integration	* Consumer theory: The (EKB) Model-enrolment benefits should strive to make the decision process fast and to increase enrolment. *Educational theory: The social exchange theory- private schools can maximize and exploit social media platforms to engage parents and children on the advantages of enrolment

Most people today use social media to interact with people and brands. The social exchange theory posits that interaction is a behavior learned from exchange. Therefore, private schools can maximize and exploit social media platforms to engage parents and children on the advantages of enrolment. From this process, parents get the reward from asking about various products and services offered and so the likelihood to engage with the potential customer is increased. As such, marketers must use this advantage from the initial input process parents find the adverts for enrollment online. The (EKB) Model, in this case, should be used in a way that shows new needs for goods and services. For instance, enrolment benefits should include additional discounts for a limited time so that parents feel rewarded from that experience, ultimately enhancing enrollment success. Research has suggested that social media enables increases loyalty among consumers through the digital branding process.

## 4. Conclusion and Implication

### 4.1. Conclusion

The educational services sector exists in a competitive environment and more so for private schools that charge for tuition than public and charter institutions of learning. The competitiveness has increased after most governments made instruction compulsory for all children. For profit-oriented private firms, the competition is more augmented since governments have invested in means to make public education more innovative and productive. Thus, there is an emergency for marketing strategies that can help privately owned and managed institutions. Mainly due to the concern for public education by policymakers, the role of marketing amplifies.

The research identified that marketing is connected to psychology and that marketers can exploit educational, psychological theories to increase successful enrolment in private schools. Learning theories are essential because they focus on behavior, cognition, and existing social-contextual approaches, among others. However, this research centered on behavioral (classic conditioning and operant conditioning) and social-contextual theories (social learning theory and social exchange theory). The study is also informed on marketing consumer behavior approaches that would intensify successful enrollment among new students. By combining educational methods with marketing theories, the research formulated two broad-based solutions within the STP and marketing mix to create a marketing strategy that is most effective for the educational sector. The focus is mainly on private schools that have to compete with private schools, public-funded schools, and charter schools. The

originality value of this research is that it focuses on educational, psychological theories to inform on marketing strategies in the education services sector and also implements these theories with existing marketing consumer behavior theories.

### 4.2. Implication

This review implies that leadership is an essential and vital element in the educational services sector. Leaders who collaborate and guide students are more likely to appeal to every parent and student's motivation needs. The social exchange theory as an essential base for reasoning infers that school leaders should adopt appropriate skills and capabilities to make the communication more engaging to necessitate referrals and loyalty from the customers. Another implication is that schools can no longer use the resourced based view as a measure of competitive advantage as all schools have similar resources, albeit in different steps. Instead, marketers can appeal to the attitudinal factors that may augment return awards, as proposed in the theory of rational action. The implication for practice is thus the need for marketers to appeal to potential customers' psychologies instead of just listing the benefits or resources a school has, which is done by communicating benefits.

By delivering benefits, customers analyze the positive outcomes, as seen in operant conditioning. As well, Social media marketing, as part of marketing, ought to play an essential role in consumer engagement in the educational services sector. The research implies for practice that marketers ought to augment communication in the first three sections of the decision-making process to enhance success. Before the consumer decides to acquire a commodity or service, marketers should create an urgent need for products offered. Most importantly, the target market for schools is diverse, and schools can use direct marketing to appeal to specific audiences. Also, the research implies that diversification strategies can increase enrolment if marketers exploit behavioral learning theories in the marketing process.

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