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**WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF CONSUMERS BEHAVIORAL  
CHANGE? SOME INSIGHTS IN SPIRAL MODEL**

Fazal Ur Rehman (a)\*, Rosman Bin Md Yusoff (b), Farwida Javed (c), Shafie Bin Mohamed Zabri (d), Fadillah Binti Ismail (e), Mohammad Saeed Shahbaz (f), Altaf Hussain (g)

\*Corresponding author

- (a) FFTP, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Parit Raja, Johor, Malaysia gp160133@siswa.uthm.edu.my
- (b) PPUK, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Parit Raja, Johor, Malaysia rosmanny@uthm.edu.my
- (c) COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Attock Campus, Pakistan
- (d) FFTP, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Parit Raja, Johor, Malaysia
- (e) FFTP, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Parit Raja, Johor, Malaysia
- (f) FFTP, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Parit Raja, Johor, Malaysia
- (g) FFTP, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Parit Raja, Johor, Malaysia

***Abstract***

The pace of change in consumer behavior is the eyes catching topic in today's business environment and a debatable theme among academic researchers. This study intends to understand the process of change in consumer behavior based on the conception of spiral model of behavioral change. This study is based on the secondary sources of data and searched important, relevant databases to get the frontier of knowledge and clarify the process of consumers' behavioral change in a structured way. The study has noted that spiral model (some time called stages of change model) has been widely used by clinicians, researchers and marketing practitioners to build desired behavioral change in a society. This study addresses an overview to spiral model and thoroughly sheds light on its dimensions; pre-contemplation, contemplation, decision or preparation, action, maintenance and termination stage of change and presents a comprehensive outline to increase understanding in the process of behavioral change based on spiral model.

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**Keywords:** Change Process, Consumer Behavior, Spiral Model.



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## **1. Introduction**

This study sheds light on the conception of change in consumer behavior and provides an overview to understand the process. Notably, this study explains the spiral model of behavioral change along with its dimensions and aims to increase understanding in the philosophy of change in consumer behavior and clarify the change process. Change in consumer behavior may be the process of transformation and modification from current purchasing and consumption habits to adopt favorable healthy buying and consumption behavior due to motivational, volitional, actionable and health issues in human society. The change in behavior may be required due to unhealthy buying behavior, reduce the risks of disease, and get improvement in the life quality of a society (Manzano, Rivas & Bonilla, 2012), the issue to get change in consumer's behavior has been investigated through several approaches, mainly due to health issues in a society. The first part of this study presents the introduction followed by the problem statement, research questions and the purpose of the study. The second part of this study presents an overview to the process of change along with spiral model of behavioral change. The third part presents methodology and findings of the study. The conception of change in consumer behavior gets increase in literature as academic researchers are widely using this idea in the theoretical frameworks to understand the change process and identify the factors which influence the behavior of consumers. Such studies can help in understanding consumers' behavior, integrate the summary of constructs, developing hypothesis and pathways that influencing change in consumers' behavior (Michie, Johnston, Francis, Hardeman & Eccles, 2008; Rutter & Quine, 2002). However, advertisers and marketers may use different techniques to create change in consumers buying behavior. It has assumed that the informative, features added and attractive marketing and advertising campaign of a brand can catch the attention of consumers and warm up their emotions for convincing to buy (Markman, 2014). Once the customers are convinced by a business toward the superiority of product than they may purchase the product, and after satisfactory experience they will repeat the purchase and adopt change in their buying behavior.

## **2. Problem Statement**

This study has the problem to understand the techniques and process of creating change in the behavior of consumers.

## **3. Research Question**

What is the process of consumer's behavioral change?

How does the Spiral model work?

#### 4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to understand the change process of consumer behavior and adding possible knowledge in the relevant area.

#### 5. Literature Review

##### 5.1. Process of Behavioral change

The process of change in the attitude, intension and behavior of consumers get start in stages of chronological aspects as spiral model has described it (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Rodgers, Courneya, & Bayduza, 2001), and may help in understanding the behavioral barriers and a great mean for program designers who engage in the transition from one stage to other. Several processes have mentioned in previous literature and have gain empirical support for cognitive and behavioral activities to get progress in modifying behavior (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Rodgers, Courneya, & Bayduza, 2001; Velicer et al., 1998). Some processes consist of experimental stages while some processes highlight behavioral aspects.

**Table 01.** The Stages of Change Where Processes are More Emphasized

	Stages of Change				
	Pre-contemplation	Contemplation	Decision	Action	Maintenance
<b>Processes of Change</b>	Consciousness raising				
	Dramatic relief				
	Environmental reevaluation				
	Self-reevaluation				
	Self-liberation				
	Counter conditioning				
	Helping				
	relationships	Reinforcement			
	management	Stimulus			
	control				

Source: Prochaska, Redding and Evers (1997)

In the consciousness raising stage consumers need to get increase in knowledge, awareness about negative consequences, and the reasons of problem in existing behavior (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). The awareness of problematic behavior can be increased by getting feedback, reading articles in relevant field, education, confrontation, interpretation and advertising campaign of companies, and concerned authorities (Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). While in the stage of dramatic relief, consumers are conscious to get

some experience of the relevant problem, expression of feeling, and emotions toward problematic behavior (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992). For example, the death of someone can influence the perception of consumers toward problematic behavior (Patten et al., 2000). In environmental re-evaluation stage, consumers assess the influence of problematic behavior of their social life and surrounding environment (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998), while in self-re-evaluation stage consumers assess themselves with problematic and non-problematic behavior (Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). In this stage consumers assess the way of their own feelings about problematic behavior and move from contemplation to preparation stage (Patten et al., 2000).

In self-liberation stage, consumers assess their beliefs in regard of problematic and modified behavior, their commitment toward beliefs (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998), and using different strategies in self-liberation stage like; public testimonies, New Year resolutions, commitment enhancing techniques and availability of choices which increase their commitment towards ceasing problematic behavior (Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). While in social liberation stage, consumers are seeking opportunities of non-problematic behavior in their surrounding environment (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). In counter condition stage, consumers try to learn about healthy behavior, relaxation, assertion and all other positive self-statements (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). In helping relationship stage, consumers are open to interact with other and can trust those who support them in changing their problematic buying behavior like social support, self-help group and counsellor calls (Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). However, the contingency management is helpful in providing guidance to avoid problematic behavior (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998), where punishment and reward system to promote healthy buying behavior are the key concept of contingency management (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). In stimulus control stage, consumers need to left or remove the stimuli of problematic behavior and in struggle to adopt the habits of healthy behavior (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). It has assumed that adopting own healthy environment and favorable behavior in buying, self-help community or groups are helpful to structure appropriate change and reduce the chances of relapse (Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998).

**Table 02.** Processes of Change

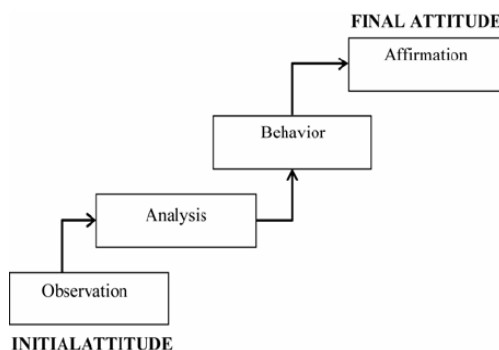
Process of Change	Description
Consciousness Raising	Increasing information about the problem
Self-Re-evaluation	Assessing how one thinks about oneself with respect to the problem behavior
Self-Liberation	Choosing or committing to act
Counter-Conditioning	Substituting alternatives
Stimulus Control	Avoiding the behavior
Reinforcement Management	Rewarding oneself
Helping Relationships	Being open about problems with people who care
Dramatic Relief	Expressing feelings about one's problems
Environmental Re-evaluation	How one's problem affects others
Social Liberation	Increasing alternatives for problem behaviors

Source: Prochaska, DiClemente and Norcross (1992).

In order to get change in the buying behavior of consumers is often the goal of an organization and the government of a country. Most often organizations give incentives, providing useful information and execute attractive advertisement to create desired change in a society. For example, Clean Up the World, is the United Nation Environment Program that executing a global campaign to inspire communities to bring desired change in the world. Practitioners and advertisers are using different techniques to get desired change in the consumers' behavior due health issues or other profit generating purposes. Such as, Ioanas and Stoica (2014) have noted that 62% consumers in USA read advertisement in social networking sites, 98% finds it reliable, while 80% of these consumers noted change in their buying intention. Similarly, Hayta (2013) also noted the influence of social advertisement in changing the buying behavior of Turkish consumers. The study has mentioned the influence of social advertising on buying behavior in terms of consumption, searching for additional information's and as a communication tool to share satisfaction. Likewise, Kumari (2012) has noted a dramatic change in Indian consumers buying behavior due to increase in advertisement through social media. However, previous literature has mentioned various techniques and theories to create desired change in buying behavior of consumers. Like, social cognitive theory, theory of planned behavior and spiral model are the well-known theories of behavioral change.

Social cognitive theory has the philosophy that people are not changed due to inner forces but because of environmental and personal factors. Environmental factors include the situation in which behavior is performed and personal factors consist of traits, instincts, drives and other inspiring factors (Bandura, 1986; Perry et al., 1990). Theory of planned behavior has the point of views that behavior is based on one's intention to perform certain behavior. Intention is the combination of attitude and social subjective norms, while behavior is the perception of abilities and level of confidence to perform certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Armitage & Conner, 2001; Grizzell, 2007). The behavioral change has been investigated both on individual level and group level (Manzano, Rivas & Bonilla, 2012), where health belief model (HBM) and the consumers theory of information processing are widely used on individual

level while the Glanz and Rimer (1996) work is important to achieve the goals at group or community level. Antonio Leal Jimenez (2000) has proposed a model of behavior change process in the field of marketing and psychology on their own experience with four phases; observation, analysis, behavior, and affirmation. In observation stage, individual may unaware of the problem and believe that they may not directly involved in the problematic behavior or their beliefs may be different than the proposed behavioral change (Manzano, Rivas & Bonilla, 2012), while in analysis phase, the individual may conscious to change the problematic behavior and analyze the pros and cons of changing process.



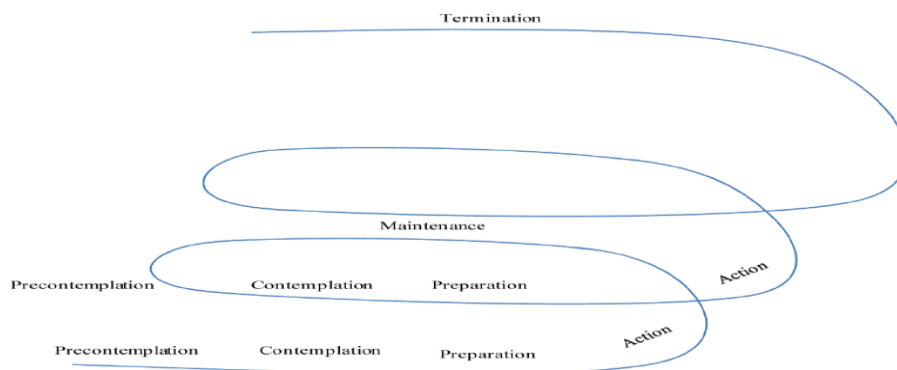
**Figure 01.** Leal model of behavioral change process (Manzano, Rivas, and Bonilla, 2012).

In behavior phase, individuals have already understanding about the pros and cons of change and may able to decide for adopting a new favorable behavior (Manzano, Rivas & Bonilla, 2012), while in affirmative stage, a reminder strategy is required to control the newly socially desirable behavior. However, Spiral model is often used in social advertising for creating change in buying behavior of a society (Manzano et al., 2012). It was developed by James, Rochaske and Diclemente in the year 1983 with different phases that are Pre-contemplation, Contemplation, Decision or Preparation, Action, Maintenance and termination. Various researchers have used this model to assess the behavioral change of consumers and has widely used by clinicians for promoting cessation of unhealthy behaviors, for example smoking cessation (Norcross, Krebs & Prochaska, 2011).

### 5.1. Spiral Model of Behavioral Change

The change in behavior of consumers can produce through a five stage model that is known as Spiral model of stages that are; pre-contemplation, contemplation, decision, action, maintenance and termination (Manzano, Rivas & Bonilla, 2012), is often applied in social marketing and is the transtheoretical model of behavioral change. Spiral model is often known as five stages of change model was developed by Prochaska and DiClemente in 1983 along with pre-contemplation, contemplation, decision, action, maintenance and termination stage (Manzano, Rivas and Bonilla, 2012). The spiral model of behavioral change has focus on the decision making abilities of consumers instead of social and

biological influences (Velicer et al., 1998). This model has been developed in a systematic integration of more than 300 relevant theories of psychotherapy as well as behavioral change (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). These stages are explained in detail as below;



**Figure 02.** Spiral model of the phases of change (Manzano, Rivas, and Bonilla, 2012).

### 5.2.1. Pre-contemplation

In the first stage of spiral model, individuals have no intention to get any change in their behavior in the foreseeable future (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 2013), do not take any action in this regard in the foreseeable future and often think to be measured in coming six month (Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). In this stage consumers may totally unaware about the consequences of behavior (Prochaska et al., 1992), and may resist getting modification or any transformation in their behavior (Prochaska et al., 1992). In this phase, consumers are unconscious about their problem and have no intention to change their behavior in immediate future (Manzano, Rivas, and Bonilla, 2012), but their friends and family members are conscious about their problem and pressurized to bring change in their behavior. Generally, most of the people have no idea about the existence of problem in this stage and the impacts of the problem are not so cognizant. People may ignore problem and do not want any change in their buying behavior. Marketers and advertisers need effective strategies to successfully influence the behavior of consumers. Reluctance, rebellion, resignation and rationalization are the main reason of pre-contemplation (Gold, 2017). The study has clarified that in reluctance state consumers have lack of knowledge and no inertia to consider any change in their behavior. In rebellion state, consumers have investment in his / her attitude and decide on their own thinking. In resignation state, consumers are hopeless to bring change and seem snowed under by the problem. While, in rationalization state consumers have lot of ideas and answers for the problem and consider it for other rather than self.

### **5.2.2 Contemplation**

In this stage, consumers realize about the existence of problem and willing to change their behavior (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 2013), they seriously thinking to overcome the problem and near to make a commitment of getting change (Manzano, Rivas, and Bonilla, 2012). In this stage consumers are in unsure position and interested to get know the problem roots, its causes, treatment and in very confused situation to make a change decision. In contemplation stage consumers evaluate the pros and cons of the problem and assess possible ways to overcome it (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 1992), and may take some time (Manzano, Rivas, and Bonilla, 2012). In this stage, consumers may intend to bring change in their behavior with in coming six month (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). Consumer evaluates the pros and cons of change in this stage and is a period of time consuming. This stage is also known as chronic contemplation of behavioral change (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). In this stage consumers are aware of the problem but often participants in risky behavior (Patten et al., 2000), and seriously consider the problem (Prochaska et al., 1992). Consumer evaluates positive effects of the decision, put away efforts and energy, minimizing cost to overcome the problem and adopt change in behavior. For example, they often say “I have a problem and I really think I should work on it and I have been thinking that I might want to change something about myself”. Searching for problem solution is the main theme of contemplation stage but not committed to take any action.

### **5.2.3 Decision / Preparation**

In the decision stage, consumers get ready to take immediate and serious action in near future and make plan for implementing it. In this stage consumers combine their intentions with the behavioral modification and criteria (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 1992), and often known as decision making stage (Manzano, Rivas, and Bonilla, 2012). This is a period of information gathering, determination, making plan, introspection of decision, re-affirmation of need, desire to change, transition, and may be a small step towards cessation. In this stage, consumers show willing to get change in their behavior within next month (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998), and may take unsuccessful action to change their behavior but still may be a part of high risk behavior (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). Consumers may nervous about their abilities in this stage and may not know how to proceed and may choose among alternative solutions to reduce the problem in significant manner (Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). According to Kritsonis (2005), in decision stage, consumers are ready to get change in their existing behavior and make plan to implement it in next two weeks. For getting success in the change process, individual need counseling of experts, trying to get social support in the society, assistance of friends and family in solving the problem of change.



**Table 03.** Prochaska and DiClemente’s Stages of Change Model

Stage of Change	Description	Characteristics	Techniques
Pre-contemplation	The individual has no intention to take action within the next 6 months and is generally unaware or under-aware of the problem.	Not currently considering change: "Ignorance is bliss"	Validate lack of readiness Clarify: decision is theirs Encourage re-evaluation of current behavior Encourage self-exploration, not action Explain and personalize the risk
Contemplation	The individual intends to take action within the next 6 months. He or she is aware that a problem exists but has not yet made a commitment to take action	Ambivalent about change: "Sitting on the fence" Not considering change within the next month	Validate lack of readiness Clarify: decision is theirs Encourage evaluation of pros and cons of behavior change Identify and promote new, positive outcome expectations
Preparation / Decision	The individual intends to take action within the next 30 days and has taken some behavioral steps in this direction	Some experience with change and are trying to change: "Testing the waters" Planning to act within 1 month	Identify and assist in problem solving re: obstacles Help patient identify social support Verify that patient has underlying skills for behavior change Encourage small initial steps
Action	The individual changes his or her overt behavior for less than 6 months	Practicing new behavior for 3-6 months	Focus on restructuring cues and social support Bolster self-efficacy for dealing with obstacles Combat feelings of loss and reiterate long-term benefits
Maintenance	The individual changes his or her overt behavior for more than 6 months and works to prevent relapse and consolidate the gains attained	Continued commitment to sustaining new behavior Post-6 months to 5 years	Plan for follow-up support Reinforce internal rewards Discuss coping with relapse
Relapse / Termination	The individual has no temptation to relapse and has 100% confidence in maintaining the change	Resumption of old behaviors: "Fall from grace"	Evaluate trigger for relapse Reassess motivation and Barriers Plan stronger coping strategies

#### **5.2.4 Action**

In action stage consumers have made sufficient efforts to modify their buying behavior and lifestyle. In this stage, consumers take action to modify their behavior, experience or environment to solve the problem (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998), and may receive much external recognition and the change in behavior may be too visible to them (Manzano, Rivas, and Bonilla, 2012). In this stage, the willpower of consumers may high and has the ability to change their behavior by using different strategies and techniques. Action stage required time and efforts to implement the change process and get recognition from others (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992). Action stage requires higher dedication and visible to other (Prochaska et al., 1994). This stage can be implemented by observation of others or proper guidance of professionals. Professional guidance and criteria is needed to implement the change process rather than adopting actual change by self to overcome the problem (Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). The approved and acceptable criterion of scientists and professionals may helpful in reducing the risk of diseases and changing the habits. Consumers are considered successful if they stay on modified behavior for six month (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 2013).

#### **5.2.5 Maintenance**

In this stage, consumers have made change in their behavior or lifestyle and trying to sustain the modified behavior. Here, consumers are less tempted towards decline and have the confidence to sustain behavioral change and lifestyle (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). In this stage, consumers work to sustain the modified behavior, prevent relapse and try to secure the modified behavior during action stage (Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 2013; Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998). This is a continuation stage and consumers may try to prevent relapse and consolidate the gains made in the action stage (Manzano, Rivas, and Bonilla, 2012). It has assumed that the abilities of consumers to keep away from problematic behavior and motivate towards desired and modified behavior for a period of six or more months, and is the criteria to classify consumers in this stage (Prochaska et al., 1992). Maintenance stage is a continuation of change rather than absence from it (Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998).

#### **5.2.6 Termination**

In this stage, consumers had already changed their behavior and no other activities may needed to keep maintain their behavior. Here consumers possess new and modified behavior on permanent basis and do not possess or perceive any interest in their previous problematic behavior. In this stage, consumers have no temptation to decline or relapse and having higher level confidence to keep maintain their modified or changed behavior. However, this stage is added by other researchers to Prochaska and DiClemente model to implement the change process. This new stage is now considered as a part of behavioral change

model and may helpful in understanding the behavioral change and the previous problematic behavior is no longer perceived as desirable. Relapse has very rare opportunities in this stage.

## **6. Research Methods**

This is an unsystematic literature review. Several databases were searched with different keywords such as behavioral change, process of behavioral change, process of change, spiral model of behavioral change, and stages of change model but much scattered information's were found. Some articles have been taken on the basis of high level citation in the relevant literature such as Prochaska, Norcross & Diclemente, 2013; Patten et al., 2000; Prochaska et al., 1992; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; Velicer et al., 1998 and few thesis that are related to the relevant knowledge area. All the retrieved material has been study thoroughly to present the true reflection of understanding. This study utilized the following databases to get gathered the relevant material: Google Scholar, ProQuest digital dissertation, ProQuest Multiple Databases, ABI Inform, Emerald, OCENET, Questia, Green FILE, EBSCO Host Database etc.

## **7. Findings**

Change in consumer behavior is the process of transformation and modification from current purchasing and consumption habits to adopt favorable healthy buying and consumption behavior due to motivational, volitional, actionable and health issues in human society. In the initial stage consumers need to get increase in knowledge, awareness about negative consequences, and the reasons of problem in existing behavior. After awareness, consumers become conscious to get some experience of the relevant problem, expression of feeling, emotions toward problematic behavior and start searching for possible solutions. Consumers assess their beliefs in regard of problematic versus modified behavior and using different techniques, approaches to find out the best possible choice. After sufficient efforts in searching best available choice, consumers get ready to take serious and immediate action to implement change in their behavior. With changed behavior, consumers are trying to sustain the modified behavior and the previous problematic behavior is no longer perceived as desirable. This study has also led to the conclusion that Spiral model is one of the best and systematic processes of consumer's behavioral change.

## **8. Conclusion**

Change in consumer behavior is the widely used term in current literature to develop theoretical framework for understanding the process of consumer behavioral change and identify the factors which positively influence the behavior of consumers. The change in behavior is often required due to health issues in a society or marketers try to generate revenue. Such studies may helpful in understanding the process of consumer behavior, integrate the summary of constructs, and the path ways that influence change in behavior. Advertisers may use different tactics to build desired change in the behavior of a society (particularly the buying behavior) to fulfill their goals and objectives. The process of consumers

behavioral change often start in chronological aspects in the form of spiral model which helps in understanding the behavioral barriers and engage designers in the transition from one stage to other. Spiral model is often known as stages of change model and consists of pre-contemplation, contemplation, decision, action, maintenance and termination stages of change.

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