

MEASURING CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT IN VADODARA :
IMPACT OF PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT ON PURCHASING
INTENTION IN VADODARA : AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Consumers today have a lot of choice in terms of shopping for products. They exhibit different behavior when purchasing a high involvement product, as compared to a low involvement product. This research paper tries to prove this difference in behavior statistically with the help of primary data collected from respondents. Also, an attempt has been made to find out the impact of product involvement on purchasing intention of the people of Vadodara city. For this purpose, two representative products were selected and respondents' perception towards them with respect to the factors that determine involvement was studied.

Keywords: high involvement, low involvement, payment mechanism, shopping situation, affective link, search & information processing, social interaction, social relevance, purchase purpose.

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INTRODUCTION

As India grows, so does the industry and its various sectors. With this growth, the disposable income of its citizens has also grown. With this growth and expansion of the business sector, and the Information Technology revolution, consumers' choices in terms of payment mechanism, shopping situation and purchasing intention have also grown. Nowadays consumer has a choice of buying a product or availing of a service either through a physical shop/mall, go online and purchase the same product or even purchase through a teleshopping program telecast on his television. With the growth of internet and television these methods of purchasing have become popular. Gone are the days where, if a person wanted to book a railway ticket for traveling to Mumbai, he would have to go to the railway reservation counter. Now, he can get a railway ticket booked online through a website for this purpose. He can even book hotels and flights on the internet. These modes of purchase have become popular thanks even to the banking revolution and advent of plastic money in the form of debit/credit cards. India has entered the era of virtual channels and TV/Online shopping. Today people have a choice of buying through the internet (e.g. ebay.co.in, reliance shopping, indiatimes shopping, rediff shopping, etc) or through their TV, sitting at home and dialing a phone number (Homeshop 18, TVC, etc.)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Product Involvement

Involvement is defined as the mental condition of an individual, which is judged by individual's cognition for things and the importance perceived. (Ming-Chuan Pan, 2007). An individual's mental state for the goal or action, reflects one's interests.

As far as involvement is concerned, there are two types of product involvements

- High involvement products
- Low involvement products

The concept of involvement has been introduced in psychology in 1947 by Sherif and Cantril and was used in the beginning to explain the receptivity of individuals on communications. The definition of involvement used in the present study is: a person's perceived relevance of the object

based on inherent needs, values and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The term “low and high involvement products” can be misleading in the sense that involvement is not a property of a product (Salmon, 1986). Involvement is recognized as the interaction between the product and the individual. Although involvement tends to be defined as the relevance of a product rather than the interest of an individual in a product, involvement can be interpreted to be more on the side of the stimulus than on the side of the viewer (Salmon, 1986). If involvement can be defined according to the stimulus, than products can be organized into different product involvement categories and ideally, markets can be segmented on the basis of product involvement (Grunig, 1989; Taylor & Joseph, 1984). One of the ways of identifying whether product involvement is high or low is to find out the perceived risk and return from the purchase. In case of high involvement products, consumer perceives high risk and also high levels of satisfactions are achieved if the purchase is as per his perceived benefits. On the other hand if a wrong purchasing decision is made, it involves huge amount of risks in terms of costs, time and satisfaction. Hence, for high involvement products, consumer spends lot of time gathering information about the product. He inquires about its price and compares it with its features in detail. He also asks for feedbacks and experiences of others who have used the same or a similar kind of product.

Howard and Sheth in 1969 stated that involvement with products has been hypothesized to lead to greater perception of attribute differences, perception of greater product importance, and greater commitment to brand choice. Robertson, Zielinski and Ward(1984) stated that high versus low involvement consumer decision process as follows:

Behavioral Dimension	High involvement view	Low involvement view
Information Seeking	Consumers actively seek product and brand information.	Consumers seek limited product and brand information.
Cognitive Response	Consumers resist discrepant information and utilize counter arguments.	Consumers may passively receive discrepant information with limited counter arguments.
Information Processing	Consumers process information in a hierarchy-of effects decision	Consumers process information in a simplified awareness to trial-

	sequence.	decision sequence.
Attitude Change	Attitude change is difficult and rare.	Attitude change is frequently but transient.
Repetition	Sheer number of messages will be less important than message content in achieving persuasion.	Sheer number of messages may result in persuasion.

Purchasing Intention

Purchasing intention is a psychological process of decision making. (Engel,1990). Consumers are motivated by the fulfillment of demands to search relevant information according to personal experience and external environment. A consumer, before purchasing a product, starts to collect information about the product. This information is evaluated and comparisons are made. Based on the comparisons, the final buying decision is arrived at. This process is called the consumer decision process. “Purchasing intention is the probability of customer’s willingness to purchase.” (Dodds.,1991). Higher the perceived value more will be the purchasing intention. Purchasing intention can be studied through the various shopping situations a consumer prefers for different products and also the payment mechanisms he likes for products with different involvement levels.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To find out and classify consumers’ involvement in purchasing intention as high or low.
- To study and test statistically, various factors that determine product involvement.
- To study purchasing intention through shopping situations and payment mechanisms for high and low involvement products in Vadodara.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- A sample size of 200 respondents was selected for the purpose of this research from Vadodara in Gujarat. For this, stratified sampling method was used in selecting the sample units.
- Primary data was collected in the form of structured questionnaire through survey and personal interviews to test the hypothesis.
- Within the sample size, the sample unit comprised professionals, businessmen, and salaried class, and also care was taken to select respondents who are utilizing the facility of internet for online purchasing and also have the facility of TV.
- Sample units comprised respondents belonging to different age groups and also different gender.
- Primary data collected was analysed using statistical softwares (SPSS) for the purpose of studying the findings.

Initially, a pilot study was conducted to shortlist the two representative products. For this purpose a small questionnaire was designed containing ten products. 30 Respondents were asked to rank each product from 1 to 5 with 1 as the highest rank, with respect to the statements provided to them. Based on the responses, laptop was selected as high involvement product (Mean=2.36) and detergent as low involvement product (Mean=4.16).

1: Table Showing Involvement Preference for Products in Vadodara

Product	Mean Rank	S.D.	Product	Mean Rank	S.D.
Laptop	2.36	0.98	Talcum Powder	2.20	0.99
LCD/LED TV	2.44	0.97	Noodles	2.34	0.98
Refrigerator	2.80	0.99	Detergent	4.16	0.97
Car	3.61	0.96	Deodorant	3.20	0.99
Air Conditioner	3.79	0.98	Tea/Coffee	3.02	0.98

A descriptive research design was followed to study consumer behavior for high and low involvement products. Data was collected in the form of structured questionnaire with 30 questions on Likert Scale from 200 respondents in Vadodara city. Sample units comprised respondents belonging to service (40%), businessmen (30%) and professionals (30%). The questions were framed to test various factors that affect product involvement. Respondents were asked to give their agreement on different statements regarding the respective product on a scale of 1 to 7. "1" was taken as "very strongly disagree", while "7" was taken as "very strongly agree". Based on the data obtained, mean values and significance was calculated to find out the reliability.

HYPOTHESIS

- 1 : Product involvement for Laptop is same as that for Detergent.
- 2 : purchasing intention is independent of shopping situation
- 3 : Purchasing intention is independent of payment mechanism.

DATA ANALYSIS

The primary data collected for the purpose of this research revealed the following attributes of the respondents in terms of their demographic features as well as their purchasing intention for the two products selected.

Samples were selected on the basis of their occupation. 43% of the samples belonged to service class, while 28% samples were businessmen and remaining 29% were professionals. Similarly, 36% samples were of the age group between 20 years and 30 years while 3.5% samples were of the age above 60 years. In terms of education, 37.5% samples were postgraduates, 28.5% samples were graduates, and 27.5% were professionals like doctors, and lawyers, etc. The samples selected belonged to different income classes. Out of the respondents surveyed, 24% were in the income class of Rs.2 Lacs to Rs.3 Lacs, 19.5% were having annual income of Rs.5 Lacs or more, 19% respondents earned between Rs.4 Lacs and Rs.5 Lacs. As far as the gender of the respondents is concerned, 78% were males and remaining 22% were females.

H₀ : Product involvement for Laptop is same as that for Detergent

The first and the most important test was to examine the level of consumer involvement in Laptop and Detergent in Vadodara. This was done by using Zaichkowsky's RPII (Revised Personal Involvement Inventory) with modifications. To make the model compatible to Vadodara, Zaichkowsky's model was modified by defining various factors affecting a consumer's involvement for Laptop and Detergent. For this purpose, five factors were identified and involvement was measured based on statements to study respondents' level of involvement for the two identified products.

Similar research was conducted in two European countries viz; Spain and England by Carmen Garcia, Julio Olea, Vincente Ponsoda, y Derek Scott in their article titled "Measuring Involvement from its Consequences" in the year 1996. In this research, Zaichkowsky's PII (Personal Involvement Inventory) was modified from a simple 9 item Likert Scale which used only two factors, into a Spanish version having five factors. The Spanish modification of Zaichkowsky's RPII (Revised Personal Involvement Inventory) was named as CIQ (Consequences of Involvement). As per the modified version, there are five factors which are-

- **Affective link (AL).** High involvement with a product implies some identification with it; some sort of affective link. The product is considered to be important in the subject's daily life and he/she shows a special interest in it (Krugman, 1965; Park and Mittal, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1987).
- **Search and information processing (SIP).** High involvement also implies an active search of additional information on the product and a deeper processing of this information. As a result, a change in the quantity and the quality of the knowledge on the product would be expected (Howard and Jagdish, 1969; Macquarrie and Munson, 1992).
- **Purchase purpose (PP).** High involvement is also related to purchase purpose, as people prefer to buy those products which they have high involvement with (Clarke and Belk, 1978; Zaichkowsky, 1985)
- **Social interaction (SI).** A high involvement also implies greater related social interaction, with the person trying to meet other people to talk about the product (Macquarrie and Munson, 1992).

- **Social Relevance (SR).** People having high involvement with a product try to extrapolate their own personal interest and view the product as also important for others.

To test consumer involvement, a series of statements were put to respondents and they were asked to convey their agreement on each statement. To check the internal consistency of the data, Cronbach Alpha was found out. In this, research, we got Cronbach Alpha of 0.940 for Laptop and 0.945 for Detergent.

2 : Table Showing Product Involvement for Laptop & Detergent in Vadodara

Factor	Product	Vadodara			
		Mean	S.D.	t- Value	Sig.
AL	Detergent	3.26	0.93	22.93	0.00
	Laptop	5.25	0.80		
SIP	Detergent	3.39	1.04	17.82	0.00
	Laptop	5.03	0.78		
SI	Detergent	2.69	1.27	19.61	0.00
	Laptop	5.02	1.09		
SR	Detergent	3.08	1.15	22.37	0.00
	Laptop	5.43	0.94		
PP	Detergent	4.11	1.69	13.47	0.00
	Laptop	5.96	0.96		

(S.D. = standard deviation, Sig. = Significance)

To ascertain the consumer involvement for Laptop and Detergent, five factors were tested. The obtained data suggested that mean values for all the factors for Laptop were greater than the mean values for all factors in case of Detergent. For all the factors, the mean value for laptop was found to be greater than detergent. The mean for laptop for all the factors individually was five on a seven point Likert scale with minimum mean value as 5.02 ($p = 0.00$) for the factor 'Social Interaction' and highest value of 5.96 ($p = 0.00$) for the factor 'Purchase Purpose'.

For detergent, the mean values were on the lower side of the scale. The least mean value was 2.69 ($p=0.00$) for the factor 'Social Interaction' and highest mean value of 4.11 ($p=0.00$) for the factor 'Purchase Purpose';

Based on the Spanish modification of Zaichkowsky's RPII, it was established that Laptop was high involvement product whereas Detergent was low involvement. This was concluded from the means for both the products.

H_0 : purchasing intention is independent of shopping situation.

3. Table Showing Mean Rank for Shopping Situations for Laptop & Detergent in Vadodara

Shopping Situation	Preference		Mean	S.D.
	N	N%		
Laptop				
Physical Store	169	84.5	1.18	0.446
Internet	24	12	2.20	0.634
TV Shopping	7	3.5	2.61	0.040
Detergent				
Physical Store	198	99	1.08	0.392
Internet	0	0	2.51	0.505
TV Shopping	2	1	2.41	0.574

(S.D. = standard deviation)

Table 3 indicated that consumers buy high involvement product, they show higher purchasing intention in physical store than in online shopping (t -value = 15.256, $p = 0.00$). It also indicated that consumers prefer physical store more than TV shopping (t -value = 25.721, $p = 0.00$). Compared to TV shopping, consumers preferred internet to buy a laptop as the mean of internet was more (t -value = 5.232, $p = 0.00$).

In case of low involvement product which was detergent, the purchasing intention was more for physical store than for internet (t -value = 14.600, $p = 0.00$). It was also observed that purchasing

intention was more for physical store than TV shopping (t-value = 10.909, $p = 0.00$). However, even though purchasing intention for TV shopping was more than internet, the values were not significant (t-value = 0.711, $p = 0.481$). This suggested that purchasing intention of consumers would be indifferent for detergent for internet and TV shopping. From the analysis, it was observed that purchasing intention of respondents was different for different shopping situations in high and low involvement products. Thus, alternate hypothesis H_1 was accepted.

H_0 : Purchasing intention is independent of payment mechanism.

4. Table Showing Mean Rank for Payment Mechanisms for Laptop & Detergent in Vadodara

Payment Mechanism	Preference		Mean	S.D.
	N	N%		
Laptop				
Cash	36	18	2.29	0.754
Credit/Debit Card	76	38	1.93	0.836
Cheque	88	44	1.77	0.776
Detergent				
Cash	176	88	1.20	0.399
Credit/Debit Card	24	12	1.80	0.399

(S.D. = standard deviation)

As shown in Table 4, consumers showed higher purchasing intention to pay by cheque than cash for laptop (t-value = 5.784, $p = 0.00$). Similarly, purchasing intention to pay by cheque was more than credit/debit card also (t-value = 2.354, $p = 0.032$). Between credit/debit card and cash, purchasing intention to pay by the former was higher (t-value = 1.734, $p = 0.027$).

For detergent, purchasing intention to pay by cash was more than credit/debit card (t-value = 7.124, $p = 0.00$). No respondent preferred to pay by cheque for detergent. From the above

analysis, it was observed that purchasing intention of respondents was different for different payment mechanisms for high and low involvement products. Hence, alternate hypothesis H_1 was accepted.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

It was found that laptop was a high involvement product and detergent was low involvement product. Further, the purchasing intention of respondents in Vadodara for laptop and detergent with respect to shopping situations and payments was found to be different. Physical store was the most preferred shopping situation for both, laptop and detergent. Respondents preferred physical store for laptop because they were able to see demo of the product (38.78%) and also that they were able to get the product across the table (33.67%). For detergent, physical store was preferred because they were habituated to buy from a physical store (50.5%), and also that they get more discounts(33.5%). On the other hand, cheque was the most preferred payment mechanism for laptop because it was convenient to pay for (38.2%) and also that laptop was a high priced product(33.71%). Cash was the most preferred one for detergent because it is a low priced product (34.86%) and also that cash is accepted everywhere (32.57). Internet was the second most preferred shopping situation for laptop since they get detailed product information (40.43%) and also that they could buy it any time of the day i.e. 24X7 (28.72%). Those who wanted to buy detergent through internet wanted it because of low cost since it would be sold directly by company to consumer (35.29%). Reason for preference of TV shopping for laptop was due to the fact that it is available 24 hours a day (30%) and also because of convenience(31.25%). TV shopping for detergent was preferred because of same reasons like laptop.

Thus, it can be concluded from the statistical results and the data analysis that consumers' purchasing intention for high involvement and low involvement products is significantly different in terms of payment mechanism and shopping situation.

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