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## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PURCHASE INTENTION AND PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT: THE ROLE OF BRAND ATTITUDE AS A MEDIATOR ON THIS RELATIONSHIP**

### **Abstract:**

This study tests the relationship between the product involvement (Pd. Inv) and purchase intention (PI) and the mediating role of Brand Attitude (BA) in the relationship between Product Involvement (Pd. Inv) and Purchase Intention (PI) by using a sample of 450 people. With reference to previous studies it has been observed that there is a strong relationship between Pd. Inv and Purchase Intention (PI), while a positive relationship is also found in Pd. Inv and Brand Attitude (BA). The researcher tries to find out the nature of the relationship between Brand Attitude (BA) and Purchase Intention (PI) and whether Brand Attitude (BA) mediates the relationship between Pd. Inv and Purchase Intention (PI) or not. A CFA test is performed to develop the model by using AMOS 18. The results of the study suggest that the relationship between the Pd. Inv and Purchase Intention (PI) is insignificant which is contrary to the results of the previous finding but it is found that Brand Attitude (BA) has a positive mediation effect on this relationship. It shows that when both the variables, Product Involvement and Brand Attitude (BA), are taken in consideration together Product Involvement would have a significant impact on the Purchase Intention (PI). It is also found that there is a significant relationship between Brand Attitude (BA) and Purchase Intention.

### **Keywords:**

Product Involvement, Purchase Intention, Mediation and Brand Attitude

**JEL Classification:** M30

## Introduction

Although the intentions are said to be the best indicator or predictors of actual behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), but it has been noted that these intentions are not perfectly showing the actual purchase behavior (Morwitz, 1997, 2001). A unified model has been developed to predict the purchase behavior through stated intentions (Sun and Morwitz, 2005). In studies related with purchase intention, Monroe (1990) found that in hypothetical scenarios consumers have strategic incentives to underrate their actual preferences; because respondents think that keeping price down is in their best interest. Likewise Gibson (2001) stated that respondent is revealed the purpose of study because of repeated questioning about the product desirability, which ultimately makes the respondent conscious, resulting price undervaluation systematically.

When the respondents are asked question related with purchase intention, the individuals respond strategically is dependent on many factors and one of these factors is product involvement, which influence consumers choice behaviors, response to messages, usage frequency, decision- making process extensiveness (e.g., Laurent and Kapferer, 1985; Mittal and Lee, 1989; Sherif and Cantril, 1947; Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1994).

In many researches it has been shown that consumers' beliefs about brand affect the formation of brand attitude (e.g. Mitchell and Olson 1981) and the change in brand attitude (e.g., Lutz 1975). In Some recent researches it is indicated that brand attitude can also be affected by buyers' attitude toward the advertisement.

According to Aaker (1991) positive brand attitude and brand image enhance the brand equity. Usually mistakenly it is conceptualized that brand attitude is among one of the various associations which are used to form brand image. The brand equity can be viewed as consumer biased action toward the object, while brand image would be perceptions about the objects and the brand attitude is viewed as the evaluation of object. It is hypothesized that brand attitude and brand image influence the actions towards the object. Among many other variables to determine brand equity one is purchase intentions (e.g., Machleit, Madden, and Allen 1990). So it can be inferred that brand attitude may have a significant effect on purchase intention.

According to Bettman (1979) the attitude is the affect towards the object. In a study Lutz (1991) described that attitude is mainly an affective construct which reflects predisposition for an object, leading to the actual explicit behavior.

In a research lutz(1991) explains that attitude works as a filter for an individual perception for an object. Attitude may be defined as learned predisposition to behave consistently in an unfavorable or favorable manner for a given object (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). NPD's developed brand equity model has found that the two – third of all considered brands in studies showed an increase in market share when the brand attitude tend to be more positive (Baldinger 1996).

It has also been noticed that attitude towards the brand influences the one's self reported brand value (Dyson et al. 1 996). In many studies it has been found that brand

attitude failed to consistently predict the purchase intention or behavior, both measure the brand equity (Faircloth , Capella and Alford, 2001). As brand attitude is a type of brand association, a direct effect of brand attitude on brand image is expected, which include consumer perceptions of all associations (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993).

Product involvement can be taken as the degree of importance and personal relevance. According to (Greenwald and Leavitt 1984) if the information provided in the message is relevant to the subject, it is expected that more attention is given to the content of the message in contrast to the information which is not relevant. It can be concluded that involvement is not only classified as high vs. low, but also by having different types of involvement (Mittal 1982; Park and Mittal 1985; Park and Young 1983). Utilitarian motives and value-expressive motives are the two major types of motive cause involvement. Affective involvement is reasoned by value-expressive motives while utilitarian motives cause cognitive involvement. If a subject high involvement is based on relevance of the issue or content, it can be classified as cognitive involvement. When the subject shows high involvement because of self concept, it would be termed as affective involvement (Park and Young, 1986).

According to Traylor (1981) the importance of a certain product category in peoples' life can be reflected by product involvement. When making a decision, a highly involved consumer tends to search more information for the product (e.g., detailed product attribute information) and tries to compare products to get better quality and value (Nijssen, Bucklin, and Uji 1995). In low product involvement scenario consumers may focus only on significant cues (e.g. brand name, packaging and price)

Researchers working on persuasion consistently found that information processing in highly involved consumer is entirely different with the low involved consumers. Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) suggests that when people process information, they either go through "peripheral route" or "central route" (e.g., Petty, Cacioppo, and Schnman 1983; Petty and Cacioppo 1984).

The following Hypotheses have been formed to be tested in this study:

1. Pd. Inv has a positive relationship with PI
2. BA has a positive relationship with PI
3. Pd. Inv has a positive relationship with BA
4. BA mediates the relationship between the Pd. Inv and PI

## **Method**

### *Sample and Measures*

In the study 450 respondents were asked to participate through a directly administrated questionnaire, 6% respondents were male, 34% were female, 18 were classified as outliers. Around 90 % respondents were university students.

In the research product involvement was measured on seven point 14 items McQuarrie and Munson's (1987) semantic differential scale. The respondents replied on these questions through which the product involvement variable was derived. Brand Attitude

was measured on Berger and Mitchell (1989) seven point 3 items semantic differential scale (like extremely/dislike extremely, pleasant/ unpleasant and good/bad). Purchase intention was measured by MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986) a seven point three item semantic differential scale (likely/unlikely, probable/improbable, and possible/impossible).

A CFA test was performed to obtain the pattern of observed variables for those latent constructs in the hypothesized mode and the model is finalized after excluding some variables from Product Involvement (Pd. Inv) and Purchase Intention (PI), as being shown insignificant in the model (Figure 1). In the three-factor model the cutoff values of CMNI/DF and RMESHA were satisfactory, showing a very good fit between the model and the observed data.(CMNI/DF = 2.868, RMSEA = 0.066, CFI = 0.979, TLI 0.969) .

Then the reliability and validity (convergent and discriminant) test were run. For all the three variables the results for reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were good. (Table enclosed in appendix). Method biasness is checked by using Hurman single factor technique on SPSS 17 and then Common latent factor technique; it was found that the data has no method biasness which enhanced the data reliability and authenticity. Then the structural model was made using the theoretical support as shown in figure 1.

## Result

The following results were obtained as the model was run on Amos 18.

It was tested that Pd. Inv has a positive relationship with PI (hypothesis 1), it was found that there is an insignificant relationship between the Pd. Inv and PI, having a sig value 0.073 so it can be inferred that Pd. Inv has no direct impact on PI.

The relationship between BA and PI was found significant having sig value 0.000 which shows that BA has a significant positive relationship with PI, so Hypothesis 2 would be accepted.

For the hypothesis that Pd. Inv has a positive relationship with BA, it was found that there is a significant relationship between Pd. Inv and BA, having a sig value .000. It can be inferred that when Pd. Inv is increased BA is also increased.

For the hypothesis that BA mediates the positive relationship between the Pd. Inv and PI (Hypothesis 4) it was found that the indirect path of Pd. Inv and PI was found significant, having a sig value 0.000, which shows that BA is mediating the relationship of Pd. Inv and PI. As it has been observed that Pd. Inv has no direct impact on PI, but when BA is used as mediator, the relationship becomes significant. So this relationship would be known as fully mediated relationship. All these result are shown in Table 2

PI		Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
	Pd. Inv (Estimate)	0.324	0.408	0.289
	Pd. Inv (Sig)	0.073	0.000	0.001
	BA (Estimate)	1.259	.....	1.259
	BA (Sig)	0.000	.....	0.000

Structural Modeling Estimated Direct, Indirect and Total Effects of Independent Variables on purchase Intention (Table 1)

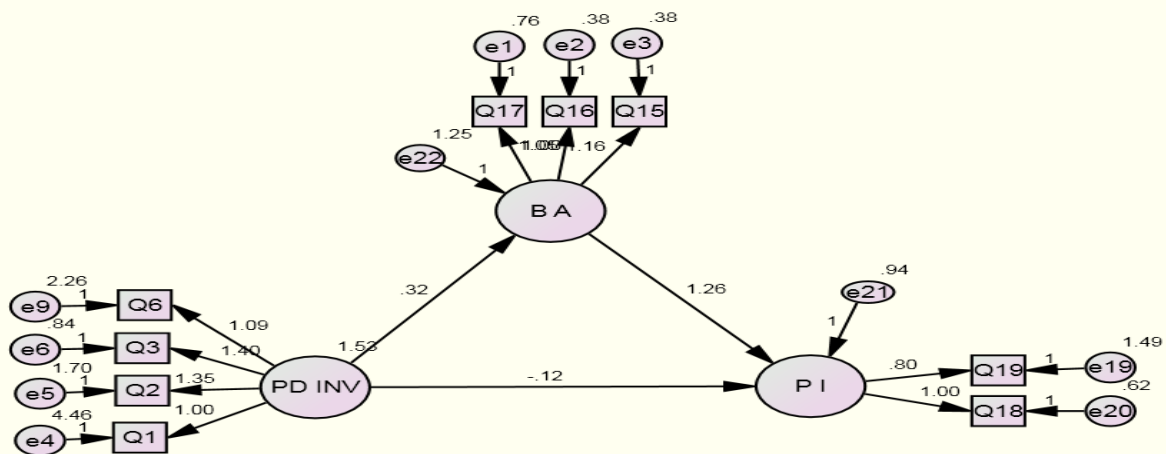


FIGURE 1: Model showing the mediating effect of BA on Pd. Inv and PI relationship (having un-standardized values)

**Conclusion**

The relationship between the Pd. Inv and PI was found insignificant, showing that whether a consumer has high concern to buy a product or not, it has no impact on Purchase Intention. When a consumer has a high product involvement, it would have a

positive impact on brand attitude showing that consumers view brand with more interest when they have high involvement in product category. It can be inferred that promotion can change the consumer brand attitude more effectively in high involvement product category in comparison of low involvement product category.

It has also been observed that brand attitude has a positive impact on purchase intention showing that if a consumer has a positive attitude towards a brand, the intention to buy that particular brand is enhanced. Marketers should try to develop positive brand attitude which ultimately increase the intention to buy the brand.

In this study the relationship between product involvement and purchase intention was found insignificant but the mediating impact of brand attitude turned the relationship significant. So it can be concluded that when both the variables are taken in consideration together, product involvement would have a positive significant impact on purchase intention. Marketers should keep this thing in mind that the consumer would have higher purchase intention when the product involvement is high with a positive brand attitude.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

In this research it was found that brand attitude has a positive impact on purchase intention. There are lots of factors which have impact on brand attitude. In this research it was not discussed that what dimensions may create a positive brand attitude. For future research, it is recommended that factors should be studied having an impact on brand attitude.

In this research the product involvement was classified as high vs. low. Product involvement may also be classified as cognitive and affective product involvement, so in future research it can be done. The data obtained for this study is from the students of university, aging between 20 yrs to 35 yrs. Although the respondents are the good representative of population, but results may be found different when the data is obtained from somewhere else.

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### Appendix

	Gender:	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Age .....			
	Profession:	Student <input type="checkbox"/>	Employee <input type="checkbox"/>	Housewife <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Please tick mark your desired response: For example, if your response is 4 than mark a tick on 4 ( )							
when you purchase or use colgate (toothpaste) you find it.							
1	Relevant						Irrelevant
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Fun						Not Fun
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Interesting						Uninteresting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Important						Unimportant
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Off no concern to me						concern to me
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Unexciting						exciting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	easy to go wrong						hard to go wrong
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	matters to me						does not matter
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	appealing						unappealing
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	no risk						risky
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	means nothing to me						means a lot to me
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Say something about me						Say nothing about me
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Easy to choose						Hard to pick
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Tells me about a person						Shows nothing
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Your overall feeling about colgate							
15	Like extremely						Dislike extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	Good						Bad
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	Pleasant						Unpleasant
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
You would purchase colgate next time you go to buy toothpaste.							
18	Likely						Unlikely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	Impossible						Possible
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	Probable						Improbable
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please tick mark your desired response: For example, if your response is 4 than mark a tick on 4 ( )							
when you purchase or use Nokia (Mobile Phones) you find it.							
1	Relevant						Irrelevant
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Fun						Not Fun
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Interesting						Uninteresting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Important						Unimportant
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Off no concern to me						concern to me
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Unexciting						exciting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	easy to go wrong						hard to go wrong
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	matters to me						does not matter
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	appealing						unappealing
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	no risk						risky
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	means nothing to me						means a lot to me
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Say something about me						Say nothing about me
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Easy to choose						Hard to pick
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Tells me about a person						Shows nothing
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Your overall feeling about Nokia							
15	Like extremely						Dislike extremely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	Good						Bad
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	Pleasant						Unpleasant
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
You would purchase Nokia next time you go to buy Cell phones.							
18	Likely						Unlikely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	Impossible						Possible
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	Probable						Improbable
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Values for Reliability, Convergent validity and Discriminative validity obtained through Excel sheet :Table 3**

	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>MSV</b>	<b>ASV</b>	<b>PD INV</b>	<b>B A</b>	<b>P I</b>
<b>PD INV</b>	0.810	0.526	0.114	0.078	0.725		
<b>B A</b>	0.906	0.763	0.686	0.400	0.337	0.874	
<b>P I</b>	0.821	0.699	0.686	0.364	0.204	0.828	0.836