

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT IN GUJARAT, INDIA

UM ESTUDO COMPARATIVO DE ENVOLVIMENTO DE PRODUTO EM GUJARAT, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The concept of product involvement is a relatively new concept. However, in recent times, lot of research has been carried out in this area. Marketers are trying to study buyer behavior based on their involvement with a product or service. In this research also, two contrasting product were selected representing two extreme levels of product involvement. A residential house which is a high involvement product and a toothpaste which is a low involvement product. Product involvement was found out for these products based on the factors determining involvement as propounded by Carmen Garcia et al. Further, correlation analysis was conducted to test the relationship between the factors determining product involvement separately for both the products and it was found that for residential house, there is a positive and significant correlation between all the factors. However, the same was not found for toothpaste. It was found that in case of toothpaste, the correlation between all the factors was low and insignificant. Thus, this differing mindset of buyers was observed which would be helpful for marketers while designing their marketing strategy for their products and services.

KEYWORDS: Product Involvement, Affective Link, Search and Information Processing, Social Relevance, Social Interaction, Purchase Purpose.

RESUMO

O conceito de envolvimento de produto é um conceito relativamente novo. No entanto, nos últimos tempos, muita investigação tem sido efetuada nesta área. Os profissionais de Marketing estão tentando estudar o comportamento do comprador com base no seu envolvimento de um produto ou serviço. Nesta pesquisa, também, dois produtos de contraste foram selecionados representando dois níveis extremos de envolvimento com o produto. Uma casa residencial, que é um produto de alta envolvimento e um creme dental que é um produto de baixo envolvimento. Envolvimento de um produto foi encontrado para fora para estes produtos com base nos fatores que determinam a participação, como proposto por Carmen Garcia et al. Além disso, a análise de correlação foi conduzido para testar a relação entre os fatores que determinam o envolvimento do produto separadamente, tanto para os produtos e verificou-se que para casa residencial, há uma correlação positiva significativa entre e todos os fatores. No entanto, o mesmo não foi encontrado para pasta de dente. Verificou-se que no caso da pasta de dente, a correlação entre todos os fatores foi baixa e insignificante. Assim, essa mentalidade diferente de compradores foi observado que seria útil para os profissionais de marketing ao projetar sua estratégia de marketing para seus produtos e serviços.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: envolvimento de produto, vínculo afetivo, pesquisa e processamento de informação, relevância social, interação social, finalidade de compra.

INTRODUCTION

In this era of immense competition, marketers are trying hard to study consumer's behavior in terms of what products they buy, when they buy, where they buy, why they buy, what influences their buying behavior, etc. One important psychological factor that emerged recently is product involvement. It has been studied that product involvement of consumers is not the same for all the products (Sandhe Ashutosh, 2014)¹.

Involvement is the perceived relevance of the object on the basis of needs, values and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985). It is to be understood that involvement is of the consumer and not the product even though, it may be called product involvement. It is recognized as interaction between product and the individual. Therefore, in this research, involvement is termed as product involvement. Recently lot of research has been done in this field. This research focuses on the study of product involvement for two products presumed to be having different level of involvement. Further, a comparison has been done for the two products in three major cities of Gujarat which are Vadodara, Ahmedabad and Surat.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of involvement is a relatively new concept. It was first defined by Sherif and Cantril in the year 1947. More recently, the study got momentum through studies by Zaichkowsky and Kapferer. James Muncy and Shelby Hunt (1984)² identified and discussed five distinct concepts which were all labeled as "involvement". The concepts of ego involvement, commitment, communication involvement, purchase importance, and response involvement were discussed as they relate to this evolving body of knowledge.

In another research John Antil (1984)³ found that though there is a general agreement that involvement varies by individuals and circumstances and that it is somehow related to

¹ Sandhe Ashutosh, (2014), Consumers' Approach Towards High Involvement Products and Low Involvement Products: A Study of Buying Behaviour in Vadodara, Pacific Business Review International, Vol.5, Issue 5, pp.75-85

² Muncy, James A. and Shelby D. Hunt, (1984), "Consumer Involvement: Definitional Issues and Research Directions". Advances in Consumer Research, Thomas C. Kinnear (ed.), Provo UT: Association for Consumer Research, pp. 196-197.

³ Antil, John H., (1984), "Conceptualisation and Operationalisation of Involvement", Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. II, Thomas C. Kinnear (ed.), Provo UT: Association for Consumer Research, pp. 203-209.

"importance" or "interest", there is by no means any agreement exactly what involvement is, its bounds, and in general a thorough conceptualization of the concept.

Judith Lynne Zaichkowsky (1985)⁴ came out with a method of measuring involvement. She devised a 21 item bipolar adjective scale called the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII). Through this scale, she tried to capture the concept of involvement for products.

Banwari Mittal (1989)⁵, in his research titled "A Theoretical Analysis of Two Recent Measures of Involvement" used a unidimensional conception of involvement to develop a general model of involvement. The two scales were reconciled with this model, and subscales were identified in each which would measure involvement as a unified construct.

Judith Lynne Zaichkowsky (1994)⁶ in her research titled "The Personal Involvement Inventory: Reduction, Revision, and Application to Advertising" modified the personal involvement inventory (PII) and reduced the scale to ten items. The new scale was called revised personal involvement inventory (RPPII).

Carmen Garcia et al (1996)⁷ modified the model of Zaichkowsky and developed a 21-item Likert-type 'Consequences of Involvement' questionnaire (CIQ) to measure the level of involvement with products. Unlike other scales, the CIQ measured involvement from its consequences, rather than requesting the subject to directly rate his or her state of involvement.

Jacob Hornik, Tali Te'eni-Harari (2010)⁸ examined which variables influence product involvement among young people. Five variables namely; age, subjective product knowledge, influence of parents, influence of peers, and product category were explored.

Ashutosh Sandhe (2014)⁹ studied the behavior of people for buying high involvement and low involvement products. The research found that the mental process of

⁴ Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1985). Measuring the involvement construct. *Journal of Consumer Research*, **12** (December), 341-352.

⁵ Banwari Mittal (1989), "A Theoretical Analysis Of Two Recent Measures Of Involvement", in *Advances in Consumer Research* Volume 16, eds. Thomas K. Srull, Provo, UT : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 697-702.

⁶ Zaichkowsky, Z.L., (1994), *The Personal Involvement Inventory: Reduction, Revision, and Application to Advertising*, *Journal of Advertising*, Volume XXIII, Number 4, pp-59-69

⁷ Carmen García, Julio Olea, Vicente Ponsoda y Derek Scott (1996), *Measuring Involvement From Its Consequences*, *Psicothema*, 1996. Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 337-349

⁸ Hornik. J, Tali. T, (2010), *Factors Influencing Product Involvement among Young Consumers*, in *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 26(7), pp. 499-506.

consumers for both involvement categories is different. It was also found that the shopping mode for both types of product was similar, even though the reasons for selecting the said shopping mode were totally different. In terms of payment mode, a significant difference was found for both the products.

OBJECTIVES

After studying adequate literature in the area of product involvement, following objectives were laid out for this research-

- To study the buying behavior of consumers with respect to product involvement towards different categories of products in Gujarat.
- To analyse the factors that affect product involvement of respondents in Gujarat.
- To study the relationship between factors affecting product involvement for residential house and toothpaste in Gujarat.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this research was to study product involvement for two different product categories in Gujarat. For this purpose, Ahmedabad, Surat and Vadodara were selected to collect information from. These cities were selected on the basis of the size of their urban population. A sample size of 200 from each city totaling 600 was determined. For this purpose 843 responses were obtained out of which 600 valid responses were selected for further analysis. For the purpose of collecting data, stratified random sampling method was used. Accordingly, respondents from various occupations like service, business and profession were considered strata. Approximately, an equal number of respondents from each strata was selected. For collecting information, a structured questionnaire with a five point scale was used. In order to determine which products to select for further research, a pilot study was conducted and 30 respondents from each city were interviewed about their involvement for different product categories. Based on the interviews, two products viz; residential house and toothpaste were selected and product involvement for these two products was studied and analysed. In order to test the reliability of the data collected, Cronbach Alpha was found out.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Sr.	City	Cronbach Alpha
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⁹ Sandhe Ashutosh, (2014), Consumers' Approach Towards High Involvement Products and Low Involvement Products: A Study of Buying Behaviour in Vadodara, Pacific Business Review International, Vol.5, Issue 5, pp.75-85

1.	Ahmedabad	0.89
2.	Surat	0.84
3.	Vadodara	0.87
4.	Overall	0.81

From the above table it is clear that alpha value for all the cities was significantly high and hence it was concluded that the data obtained was highly reliable and further analysis could be carried out.

In order to study product involvement, the method adopted by Carmen Garcia et al was adopted. In 1996 the researchers developed a 21-item Likert type 'Consequences of Involvement' (CIQ) questionnaire. The CIQ measures involvement from its consequences rather than requesting the subject to directly rate involvement on the basis of some scale. Accordingly, five factors were identified as-

- **Affective link (AL)**

When product involvement is high, the product is considered to be important in the daily life of a person and there is special interest in that product. (Krugman, 1965; Park and Mittal, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1987).

- **Search and information processing (SIP).**

When product involvement is high, consumers tend to carry out active and detailed search of information about the product or service before deciding on the purchasing of that product. (Howard and Jagdish, 1969; Macquarrie and Munson, 1992).

- **Social interaction (SI).**

A person tends to talk more about the product with other people when his or her involvement in it is high. They are likely to talk to other people about that product. The same normally does not happen when product involvement is low. (Macquarrie and Munson, 1992).

- **Social Relevance (SR).**

When product involvement is high, it has been found that consumers view the same product as important for others also. They apply their own result to other people.

- **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, 1986).

HYPOTHESES

H1: There is no significant difference in the product involvement for residential house and toothpaste in Gujarat.

H2: There is no significant impact of factors affecting product involvement for residential house and toothpaste in Gujarat.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was collected from 600 valid responses across three major cities of Gujarat. The demographic characteristics of respondents were considered as independent variables in this research. Out of the total respondents, 35.43% respondents were in service, 31.29% were business and remaining 33.28% were professionals like Chartered Accountants, Doctors, Lawyers, Architects, etc. Based on the data collected, further analysis was carried out and hypotheses were tested.

H1: There is no significant difference in the product involvement for residential house and toothpaste in Gujarat.

Table 2: Table Showing Consumer Involvement for Residential House and Toothpaste in Gujarat

Factor	Product	Mean			Overall Mean	S.D.	F-value	Sig.
		Vadodara	Ahmedabad	Surat				
AL	TP	3.26	2.14	2.38	2.59	0.94	107.15	0.021
	RH	5.25	6.03	5.78	5.69	0.71	80.74	0.013
SIP	TP	3.39	2.10	2.45	2.65	1.03	116.97	0.002
	RH	5.03	6.03	5.73	5.6	0.76	128.00	0.006
SI	TP	2.69	1.94	2.31	2.31	1.07	27.05	0.015
	RH	5.02	6.01	5.83	5.62	0.92	83.93	0.000
SR	TP	3.08	2.31	2.48	2.62	1.07	31.30	0.011
	RH	5.43	6.03	5.64	5.7	0.81	31.12	0.030
PP	TP	4.11	2.10	2.71	2.97	1.78	87.06	0.019
	RH	5.96	6.14	5.97	6.02	0.91	43.32	0.040
Overall	TP	3.31	2.12	2.47	2.63	1.18	73.90	0.001
	RH	5.34	6.05	5.79	5.73	0.82	73.42	0.004

(TP – Toothpaste, RH- Residential House, Significance at 5%, S.D.- Standard Deviation)

The above Table No.2, it is very clear that mean values for residential house was found to be on the higher side in all the three cities while that for toothpaste, it was found to be on the lower side. The highest value for residential house was found as 6.14 for the factor ‘Purchase Purpose’ in Ahmedabad while the lowest value for the same was found as 5.02 in Vadodara for the factor ‘Social Interaction’. It can be seen from the analysis that the mean range for residential house in Gujarat was between 5.02 and 6.14 on a seven point scale, which suggests that product involvement is high.

In comparison to residential house, the highest mean value for toothpaste was found as 4.11 in Vadodara for the factor ‘Purchase Purpose’ and the lowest value for the same was

found as 1.94 in Ahmedabad for the factor ‘Social Interaction’. Thus, the mean range for toothpaste was found to be far low as compared to residential house in Gujarat. The data was found to be highly significant as can be seen from the F-value and significance. Thus, from the data analysis and results, it can be said that product involvement for residential house is high and that for toothpaste is low in Gujarat. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

H2: There is no significant impact of factors affecting product involvement for residential house and toothpaste in Gujarat.

Through the earlier hypothesis it was established that product involvement for residential house was higher than toothpaste in Gujarat. In order to further analyse the results, correlation analysis was carried out to study the impact of the factors affecting product involvement on the two selected products.

Table 3: Table Showing Correlation between Factors Affecting Product Involvement for Residential House in Gujarat

		AL	SIP	SI	SR	PP
AL	Pearson Correlation	1	.846**	.791**	.699**	.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	600	600	600	600	600
SIP	Pearson Correlation	.846**	1	.791**	.633**	.245**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	600	600	600	600	600
SI	Pearson Correlation	.791**	.791**	1	.588**	.244**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	600	600	600	600	600
SR	Pearson Correlation	.699**	.633**	.588**	1	.302**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	600	600	600	600	600
PP	Pearson Correlation	.331**	.245**	.244**	.302**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	600	600	600	600	600

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No.3 shows that the correlation between all the factors affecting product involvement for residential house was moderate to high level and also significant. The highest value of correlation was found between the factor ‘Affective Link’ and ‘Search and Information Processing’ (r=0.846, p=0.00). This implies that for a high involvement product, consumers feel that a product is important in the daily life, they are more likely to purchase

that product after a thorough search about the product. In this research also, when respondents were asked about purchasing residential house, they opined that they carry out a detailed information search about it like details of the construction company, the locality, the prices in that area, the neighbours, etc. before deciding about purchasing it. Similarly, they also agreed that a residential house one of the most important things in their life.

The lowest correlation was found between ‘Purchase Purpose’ and ‘Social Interaction’ for residential house ($r=0.244$, $p=0.00$).

Likewise, correlation between the same factors was carried out for toothpaste in Gujarat and following was observed.

Table 4: Table Showing Correlation between Factors Affecting Product Involvement for Residential House in Gujarat

		AL	SIP	SI	SR	PP
AL	Pearson Correlation	1	0.007	0.134	0.298	0.143
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.128	.480	.334	.172
	N	600	600	600	600	600
SIP	Pearson Correlation	0.007	1	0.016	0.068	0.06
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.128		.291	.097	.198
	N	600	600	600	600	600
SI	Pearson Correlation	0.134	0.016	1	0.148	0.19
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.480	.291		.638	.236
	N	600	600	600	600	600
SR	Pearson Correlation	0.298	0.068	0.148	1	0.11
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.334	.097	.638		.681
	N	600	600	600	600	600
PP	Pearson Correlation	0.143	0.06	0.19	0.11	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.172	.198	.236	.681	
	N	600	600	600	600	600
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

In contrast to what was observed for residential house, the correlation coefficients for toothpaste are insignificant and low for all the factors. The highest value was found to be 0.298 ($p=0.334$) between the factor ‘Social Relevance’ (SR) and ‘Affective Link’ (AL). However, the value was not significant. Similarly the lowest value for correlation was found between ‘Search and Information Processing’ (SIP) and ‘Affective Link’ (AL) which was 0.007 ($p=0.128$). This suggests that there is little or no impact on these factors on the product involvement for toothpaste in Gujarat. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant impact

of factors affecting product involvement for residential house and toothpaste is partially accepted in the sense that there is no impact in case of toothpaste which is a low involvement product. However, the hypothesis cannot be accepted for residential house which is a high involvement product.

FINDINGS

The major findings of the research are as follows-

- Product involvement for residential house is high and that for toothpaste is low in Gujarat, India.
- There is significant correlation between all the factors that affect product involvement for residential house in Gujarat.
- However, there is insignificant correlation between the same factors for toothpaste. Thus, contrasting consumer behavior was observed for toothpaste in comparison to residential house. Hence, it can be said that consumer behavior for high involvement products is different than low involvement products in Gujarat.
- For high involvement product, the payment mechanism was found to be different as compared to low involvement product. Respondents preferred to pay for residential house by cheque, while for toothpaste, cash and credit card was found to be the preferred payment mode.

CONCLUSION

From the data collected and analysis carried out, it can be concluded that consumer behavior for high involvement product is significantly different from a low involvement product in Gujarat. Also, there is strong correlation between the factors affecting product involvement in case of high involvement product.

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