

The Impact of Product Design on Purchase Intention of Semi-Durable Products

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ABSTRACT

In a world of cutthroat competition, consumers have a multiple options in selecting a particular product. Product Design acts as a commanding feature in the product mix. Although product design has been recognized as influencing attribute of a product, little is known as the cognition and affective states of consumers from product design. The study investigates cognition and affective states in semi-durable products based on Mehrabian and Russell's Framework. Cognition and Affective states are internal states developed within an individual in response to a stimulus which lead to a particular response. The states are paramount in developing an intent to purchase within a consumer. Consumers assess and create an opinion about a product based on its product design. Nevertheless, how these judgements of consumers affect purchase decisions is hardly explored. The objective of the present study is to identify how product design leads to cognition and affective states with in a consumer and its influence on purchase intention particularly in semi-durable products. The findings shows the product design of semi- durables has a very strong influence on the cognition and affective states of the consumer. The study implies that consumers judge the product and attach emotions to the product on the basis of product design. The results of this study will be fruitful to the corporate world that focus on product attributes to increase revenue and gain advantage over competition.

Keywords: *Product Design, Cognition. Affect, Purchase Intention.*

Introduction

Innumerable products are available in the market that is used for various purposes like for work, completing a given task, movement, entertainment and so on. While choosing a product, we find ourselves in a difficult position as there are several alternatives available to us. The choice depends on numerous factors and among them characteristics of the product play an immense role. Product is an important element of the marketing mix and product design have been used by the marketer to gain a competitive advantage in the market place (Berkowitz 1987). Product design play a vital role in appealing the potential consumer. Products through their design can communicate value to the consumers as well as stand out

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from its competitors (Berkowitz, 1987; Dumaine, 1991; Lloyd-Jones, 1991; Midgley, 1977)

Product design acts as a tool for communicating about the product to its users as well as persuades consumers to make a choice. It has induced the consumers to judge quality of the product on the basis of the product design (Bloch, 1995). Aesthetic properties of the product also induce consumers to judge the quality and nature of their usage. Studies on consumption and usage experience have addressed that consumer's focus on emotional design characteristics such as attractiveness and creativity (Norman, 2013).

Several factors have been recognised in the purchasing process of consumer, to purchase a product or opt for a specific brand (Shafiq et al., 2011). In addition to the product design, brand familiarity and product attitude also has an effect on purchase intention. Product design has been studied on various context but there is a need to concentrate on impact of cognitive and affect.

Product design includes product attributes along with product form and aesthetic features of the product which complement to the overall impression of the product. Studies also pinpoint the need to explore product design more on the basis of their durability (Kim & Lennon, 2010). Product design has been an unquestioned determinant particularly in semi-durable products. Semi –durable products are those products that are neither perishable nor lasting in nature, example: clothing, footwear, ornaments, etc. Hence, this study will be on the product design of semi-durable products.

Review of Literature

A product is a combination of physical, aesthetic and symbolic characteristics and attributes that are to satisfy the consumers' needs (Crilly et al., 2004). A product is bought by a consumer not only due its functionality but due to other attributes like convenience, safety, individuality, stylishness, etc.

According to Levitt (1983) an overall product concept constitutes the following features: generic product, expected product, extended product and potential product. Another categorisation of products is by the types of benefits they provide. Function benefits involve physical benefits, psychological benefits which include satisfaction of the needs that come from the personality of the user and social benefits which include satisfy needs of relationships with other people (Lai, 1995). These aspects are influenced by product design.

Studies of empirical aesthetics provide possible dimensions for describing the relation of visual design qualities such as prototypicality and unity (Veryzer & Hutchinson, 1998). Margolin and Buchanan (1996) defines unity as the level of congruity among the elements of form with purpose of the given object and prototypicality refers to how the given object is representative of its category satisfying its purpose or something which acts as model in a category which it belongs.

There are differences between affective and cognitive judgements: cognitive judgements evaluate what is in the stimulus (how the product design is), whereas affective judgements involve the self in that stimulus (I like the design or the colour or the shape) (Zajonc & Markus, 1982). It is not easy to determine the primacy of affect or cognition in a decision-making process; hence these hinder our ability to assess its influence on other constructs, such as brand beliefs and product attitudes, etc.

Berger and Mitchell (1989) assumes that change in attitude leads to change in behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) describe attitude as evaluative beliefs. The information that is readily accessible at

the time of purchase about a brand or a product may increase brand familiarity and product attitude (Berger & Mitchell, 1989). Compte and Postlewaite (2004) suggests the use of feelings as an independent construct and also states the influence of confidence on emotions.

The neuropsychological research findings support the partial independence of affect and cognition which means that affective responses can occur with little or no cognitive processing (LeDoux et al., 1990). Similarly, Zajonc (1980) states that “affect and cognition are separate and partially independent systems and that although they function conjointly, affect could be generated without a prior cognitive process.”

In light of the existing literature, it is essential to reassess the relationships between variables with a focus on cognition and affect on purchase intention from product design of semi-durable products

Statement of the Problem and Research Gap

Psychological and behavioural responses of consumers have given due consideration (Lee et al., 2011; Suwelack et al., 2011) but the impact of cognitive and affect to purchase intention based on the product design of semi-durable products is unrecognised in the literature.

Cognitive responses refer to response based on consumers’ beliefs, thoughts and judgements on the basis of the product design (Bitner, 1992; Solomon, 1983; Bloch, 1995). Affective responses refer to the emotions and drives associated with an attitude object (Keer et al., 2013; Millar & Tesser, 1986). Affective and cognitive responses based on product design of semi-durable products may influence consumer’s purchase intention which establishes the need for the current study. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- a) How the product design leads to consumer cognitive and affective responses?
- b) How cognitive and affective responses affect the purchase intention?

Objectives

The study deals with the following objectives:-

- To know whether product design leads to consumer cognition and consumer affective responses
- To understand how cognitive and affective responses affect the purchase intention.
- To identify whether brand familiarity and product attitude has an impact on purchase intention along with product design

Scope of the Study

Products such as Foot wares, Ornaments, Clothes, Home furnishing is taken into consideration for this study to bring attention to the product design of semi- durable products. Continuous growth of competing products in several industries brings out the role and impact of product design as necessity for successful company performance (Lee et al., 2011). Along with cognition and affect, the effect of other factors such as brand familiarity and product attitude affect the purchase intention but the relationship is to be tested and established. Hence this study focuses on brand familiarity and product attitude along with product design as well.

Model Development

The model adopts its variables from existing literature tests its applicability on semi-durable products. The framework Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework (1974) has been widely tested and proved in literature and the two main variables cognition and affect have been included in the model based on this framework. A clear view about the model development is given below:

Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework (1974)

This study is based on the Mehrabian and Russell’s Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework (1974). The framework states that when an individual meets a stimulus (S) the individual develops internal states (O) which initiate to a particular response (R). The stimuli develop individuals’ cognitive and emotional states, which in turn determine behavioural responses (Lee et al., 2011). This theoretical lens is used to confirm whether a well-established framework will support in the case of product design of semi-durables.

Product Design of Semi-durables

Product, one of the 4 P’s of marketing mix and product design being an important ingredient of the success of the product. Scholar have discussed this term as a combination of factors that contribute to a visual effect (Hollins & Pugh, 1990; Lewalski, 1988). These characteristics can be to deliver a value to the consumers regarding their functionality or to enhance their user experience or may be related to their aesthetic features. Product design in Semi-durables will act as a stimuli in this study. Existing literature states that product design must be explored on the basis of their durability (Kim & Lennon, 2010). It was found semi-durable goods need to be focused. (Kim & Lennon, 2010)

Cognition and Affect

The internal states are the cognitive and affective states of the consumer. Cognitive response refers to response based on consumers’ beliefs, thoughts and judgements on the basis of the product design, the cognitive state relates to how consumers evaluate a product based on the product design and form a product attitude based on the design (Bloch, 1995). Affective responses refers to the emotions and drives associated with an attitude object (Keer et al., 2013; Millar & Tesser, 1986). Affective responses discusses the emotional reactions and the drives that develop within a consumer (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) based on the product design. Holbrook and Zirlin (1985) suggest that “experience of aesthetic value can be realized during the functional usage of a product” which might be true in case of semi-durable products.

Product Attitude

Product attitude refers to the consumer’s attitude about a product. Attitude is defined as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 6). According to the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), a person’s overall attitude towards an object determines an individual’s intention to perform a behaviour with respect to that object. Therefore attitude of a consumer in a product tends to lead to purchase intention.

Brand Familiarity

Brand familiarity refers to how much a consumer is familiar about a brand. Brand familiarity reflects the degree of experience a consumer has with a brand. It can be directly or indirectly (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Kent & Allen, 1994). Consumer might be familiar with the brands and at times might be unfamiliar with the brands (Stewart, 1992). A brand may be familiar with the direct use of a product or through peer groups, ads or marketing communications for the brand, the way a brand is positioned, packaged and so on. This brand familiarity may affect the purchase intention of the consumer.

Purchase Intention

“Purchase intention is the preference of consumer to buy the product or service.” (Younus et al., 2015). It means the intent of a consumer to purchase the product after evaluation. Many factors lead to purchase intention which is cognition, Brand familiarity, product design, product attitude, etc. Jayachandran, Hewett and Kaufman (2004) explains the fundamental role of product knowledge of the consumer. Another research of Fung, Chong and Wang (2004) revealed that consumer’s attach sentiments towards design and packaging affect purchase intention. Product attitude stands as a factor of purchase intention which implies the relationship with product and consumers (Payne & Holt, 2001)

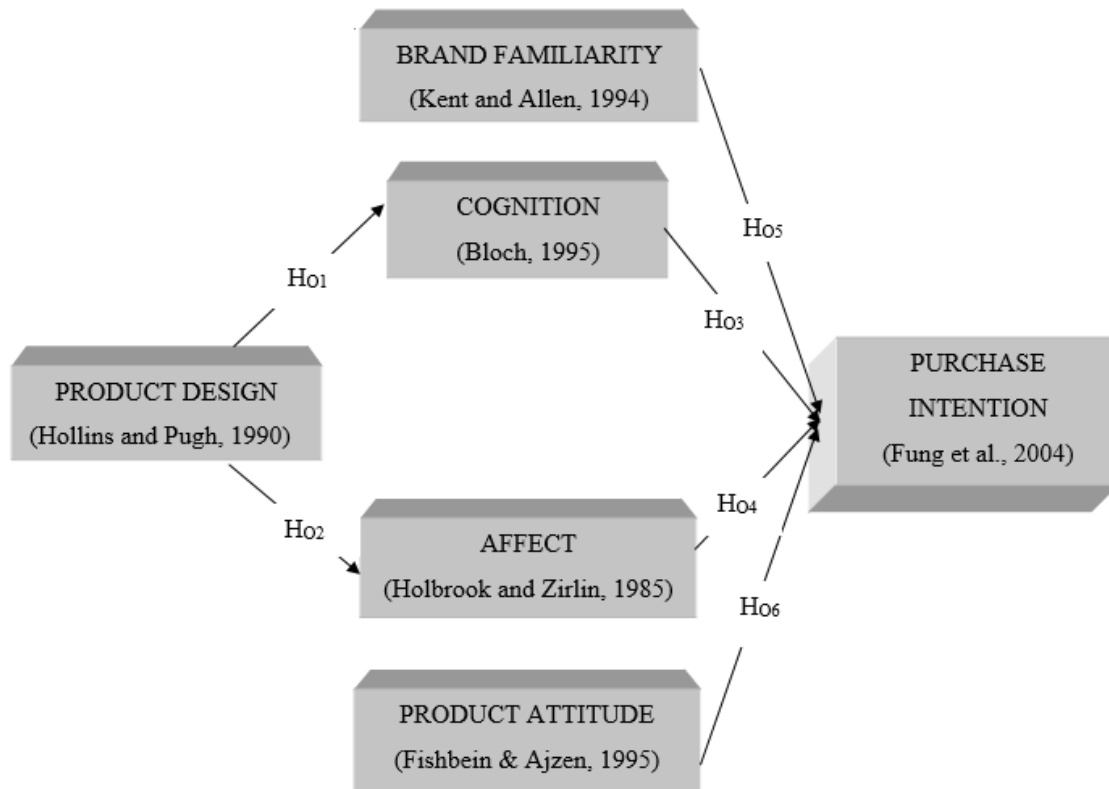
Cognitive and affective states of the consumer lead to a particular response. In this study we will look into the intention of the consumer to purchase a product based on the internal states developed by the product design. We believe product attitude perceived by the consumer as well as brand familiarity also affect purchase intention along with consumer cognition and consumer affect. The impact of brand familiarity and product attitude on purchase intention is also looked upon.

Consequently, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

- H01: Product design has no significant effect on Cognition.
- H02: Product design has no significant effect on Affect.
- H03: Cognition has no significant effect on Purchase intention.
- H04: Affect has no significant effect on Purchase intention.
- H05: Brand familiarity has no significant effect on Purchase intention.
- H06: Product attitude has no significant effect on Purchase intention

Based on the above review the following Model was developed for Validation

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model



Methodology

In the present study, data were collected by survey method with the help of structured questionnaire. Both primary and secondary data sources were used for the study. Primary data is collected from 360 respondents (consumers) by using random sampling. Responses were measured by a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The collected data was analysed using various mathematical and statistical tools. The results are discussed below.

Data Analysis and Result

Demographic Profile:

The demographic characteristics are presented in table 1. Out of the total collected responses, only 360 responses were completed and usable for data analysis. A brief profile of the respondents is stated below:

Table 1: The general profile of the total 360 respondents.

Demographic Factors	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	169	46.9
	Female	191	53.1
Age Group	Below 25	167	46.3
	25-35	63	17.5
	35-45	54	15.0
	45-55	45	12.5
	Above 55	31	8.7
Purchase of Semi-durable products			
Purchase of Footwear	Monthly	9	2.5
	Quarterly	211	58.6
	Half Yearly	97	27.0
	Yearly	43	11.9
Purchase of Ornaments	Monthly	12	3.3
	Quarterly	32	8.9
	Half Yearly	59	16.4
	Yearly	257	71.4
Purchase of Clothes	Monthly	153	42.5
	Quarterly	137	38.0
	Half Yearly	59	16.4
	Yearly	11	3.1

Source: Primary Data

Descriptive Statistics

The constructs and measures used in the study indicated mean to be above 4 and the standard deviation score for all of them were close to 1. It showed that majority of the respondents agree with the statements. The constructs used were product design, brand familiarity, product attitude, cognition, affect and purchase intention.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on 28 measures (items) to validate constructs with a sample of 160 respondents initially. In order to check the suitability of the data for Factor Analysis, Correlation Matrices were computed and it was found that there is enough correlation between variables. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.916 which is acceptable to continue with factor analysis and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant ($p < 0.001$) which means that the distributions are approximately multivariate, normal and acceptable for factor analysis as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

No. of items	28
Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.916
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	2759.139
Degrees of Freedom	378
P Value	<0.001**

Source: Authors' calculation

**Denote Significant at 1%

After standards indicate that the data is suitable for Factor Analysis, Principal Component Analysis was employed for extracting the factors. The extracted factors are then rotated using the widely used 'Varimax Rotation method' and the Rotated Component Matrix. It gives an idea of how the factors initially extracted differ from each other and provide a clear picture of which item load on which factor.

Model Evaluation and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):

The measurement model is assessed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) that tests the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the constructs under study. The convergent validity of the constructs is established through Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. A second sample of 360 respondents were collected The CR of all the 6 variables is greater than 0.7 and AVE values are also above the suggested threshold of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

For establishing adequate discriminant validity, the square root of AVE values (diagonal elements) must be less than the inter-construct correlation (off-diagonal elements) for all constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). It was found that seven factors had Eigen values which is greater than .5 and therefore they were all extracted. The factor loadings are shown in Table 3 and discriminant validity results are shown in Table 4.

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Constructs	Measures	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	C.R.	AVE
Product Design	PD1	.671	.788	.80	.523
	PD2	.787			
	PD3	.679			
	PD4	.769			
	PD5	.673			
Brand Familiarity	BF1	.539	.791	.75	.541
	BF2	.808			
	BF3	.841			
	BF4	.630			
Product Attitude	PA1	.645	.700	.77	.513
	PA2	.824			
	PA3	.782			
	PA4	.772			
Affect	A1	.639	.822	.78	.515
	A2	.804			
	A3	.799			
	A4	.831			
Cognition	C1	.647	.836	.72	.533
	C2	.641			
	C3	.737			
	C4	.771			
	C5	.787			
	C6	.657			
Purchase Intention	PI 1	.791	.831	.81	.518
	PI 2	.834			
	PI 3	.758			
	PI 4	.775			
	PI 5	.616			

Table 4: Discriminant Validity Results

Constructs	Product Design	Brand Familiarity	Product Attitude	Affect	Cognition	Purchase Intention
Product Design	.52					
Brand Familiarity	.047	.54				
Product Attitude	.287	.052	.51			
Affect	.425	.098	.309	.51		
Cognition	.225	.013	.178	.425	.53	
Purchase Intention	.235	.052	.298	.287	.178	.51

The goodness for the measurement model is estimated by using the maximum likelihood estimation method. Bentler and Bonett (1980) recommended specific criteria for assessing the model fit: $X^2/df < 3$, $GFI > 0.8$, $NFI > 0.90$, $CFI > 0.90$ (Bentler, 1992), p close near to and $RMSEA < 0.5$. The model fit indices for the measurement model are within the suggested values (Table 5) indicating appropriate fit of the measurement model.

Model Validation and Hypotheses Testing

The General Fit indices of the structural model which is validated is given in table 5. The goodness-of-fit indices of the structural model indicate that the model has a good fit with the following indices values: $X^2/df = 2.585$, $GFI = 0.921$, $NFI = 0.892$, $AGFI = 0.896$, $CFI = 0.939$ and $RMSEA = 0.073$

Table 5: Model Estimates and Fit Indices of the Model

Fit Indices	Model Value	Threshold Value
X^2/df	2.585 ($X^2=865.937$, $df=335$)	5.0 (Wheaton et al., 1977) to as low as 2.0 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).
GFI	.921	>0.9 Bentler and Bonett(1980)
AGFI	.896	>0.80 Hair, Babin and Anderson (2010)
NFI	.892	>0.90 Bentler and Bonett(1980)
CFI	.939	>0.95 Bentler and Bonett(1980)
RMSEA	.073	<0.80 MacCallum et al (1996)

The proposed hypothesis are tested using structural equation modelling (SEM) and the results are presented in Table 6. The results indicate a significantly positive relationship between Product Design and Cognition (H_{01}) ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.23$, $p < .001$); Product design on Affect (H_{02}) is found significant ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.24$, $p < .001$). Cognition on purchase intention (H_{03}) is significant ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.122$, $p < .001$) and product attitude on purchase intention (H_{06}) is found to be significant ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.127$, $p < .001$). All the null hypothesis are rejected means that they have significant influence between the variables.

Table 6: Regression Weights of Variables in the Model

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Hypothesis	Standardised beta co-efficient	P value	Results
Product Design	Cognition	H_{01}	.232**	<.001	Significant
Product Design	Affect	H_{02}	.243**	<.001	Significant
Cognition	Purchase Intention	H_{03}	.122**	<.001	Significant
Affect	Purchase Intention	H_{04}	.112**	<.001	Significant
Brand Familiarity	Purchase Intention	H_{05}	.091**	<.001	Significant
Product Attitude	Purchase Intention	H_{06}	.127**	<.001	Significant

** Significant at 1% Level

Source: Authors' calculation

The validated model is given below:

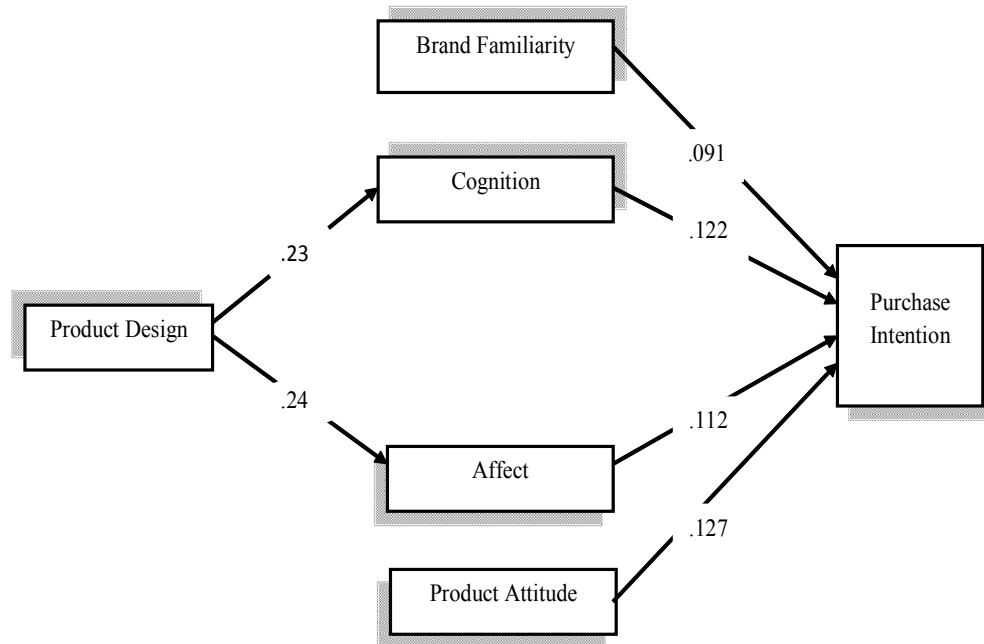


Figure 2: Empirically Validated Model

Findings and Discussions

The results of analysis present a positive and significant relationship between the variables. Product design has a very strong influence on the cognition and affective states of the consumer. This urges a need for business organization to focus attention on product design of a product especially in the case of semi-durables. It can be said that consumers judge the product and attach emotions to the product on the basis of product design.

Among the various dimensions, Product attitude has the strongest impact on purchase intentions. This reveals that product related beliefs and knowledge are the main factor that affects consumers purchase decision. Thus, it is necessary that positive attitude should be encouraged about a product.

Factors of cognition and affect have effect on purchase intention. Consumers perceive an opinion which eventually affect the intention of the individual to purchase a product. The attitude or the motions both positive and negative also affect the intention to purchase of a consumer. Brand familiarity also has a positive influence comparatively less than the other factors. Most of the people think that it is important to know about the brand.

These findings assist the marketers in devising pertinent strategic plans for future applications. The product design acts a key ingredient in marketing a product which paves way for evolving internal urges which ultimately lead to purchase intention. So, the enterprises should definitely take into account

product attitude and heed to consumers' attitude of a product in order to improve its sales and gain a competitive edge.

Theoretical Contributions of the Study

In spite of the limitations in the present study, it makes significant contribution to the existing literature by examining the influence of cognition and affect on purchase intention from product design. The study makes an effort to understand the product design of semi-durable products and proves to benefit the corporate world there is a need to concentrate on product design in semi-durables especially while introducing a new brand or a product in the market to gain attention of consumers. Product design in semi-durables make this novel in nature. This study helps the marketers to understand internal states developed in a consumer through product design and its effect on purchase intention. This would help them to create more sales revenue and also to gain a preferential status in the market by using product design as a competitive weapon.

Conclusion and Scope for Future Research

Product design is an influential element of the product mix. Consumer's judge and associate to a product through their product design. The product design attributes to certain psychological and behavioural responses. The objective was to study the influence of cognition and affect on purchase intention arising from product design of semi-durable products. It was found that product design had greatly impacted in creative cognitive and affective states within a consumer. Consumers develop an attitude based on product design which influence purchase intention. The study focuses on understanding consumers' cognition and affect and its influence on purchase intention

The present study contributes to the literature by considering product design of semi-durables. The results show that product design of semi-durables has a very strong influence on the cognition and affective states of the consumer. Product design paves way for evolving internal urges which can ultimately lead to purchase intention. This study helps the marketers to understand internal states developed in a consumer through product design and implies its need while developing strategies for marketing a product.

This study possesses some limitations too. It reflects the internal states from product design only (stimulus) hence other characteristics of a product that contribute to cognition affect are not examined. Another limitation of this study is that it inspects internal states that is cognition and affect as a whole. Consequently, there arises a need for focusing on the different types of cognition and affective states such as emotions, arousal and pleasure separately. This study particularly focuses on semi-durable products and findings may not be applicable to other types of products.

The research model was developed from S-O-R Framework. This research model can be extended by adopting dimensions from other models. Future research could investigate cognition and affective states in detail. Product attitude was found to have an influence on purchase intention. Empirical work that includes behavioural outcome measures (e.g., choice, purchase) can be focused which may be useful to help insights for managers to know the actual behaviour of consumers and to increase sales of a product. Product design is contributing immensely to the success of the product hence multi-dimensional research on the basis of durability of the products would be an interesting topic for young researchers to set their foot onto.

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Appendix: Measurement Scales

Measures	Item Acronym	Mean	SD
Product Design			
I like the new products options offered by manufactures	PD1	4.59	.658
I wait until a new innovation has proven itself before purchasing	PD2	4.34	.847
I prefer to buy new products of brands familiar to me	PD3	4.40	.771
I like to tell others about new products	PD4	4.39	.832
Economic conditions make me more likely to try new products	PD5	4.26	.973
Brand Familiarity			
I purchase the products of only familiar brands	BF1	4.28	.855
I believe it is important to know the brand	BF2	4.44	.806
I have found that knowing about brand make difference in purchase	BF3	4.44	.800
I have used various branded product	BF4	4.46	.783
Product Attitude			
I intended to purchase products even if they are more expensive	PA1	4.01	1.157
I think quality is an important criteria when buying products	PA2	4.65	.626
I spend sufficient time to get a quality product	PA3	4.52	.735

Contd...

I think gender is a factor that has effect on the purchase decision	PA4	4.29	.893
Affect			
I often feel anxious about making purchase	A1	4.32	.879
When I think about making purchase I become excited	A2	4.30	.845
I sometimes feel that something from my inner mind pushed me to make a purchase	A3	4.24	.950
I will continue to buy the products of my favourite brand	A4	4.43	.844
Cognition			
I think knowledge can motivate my purchasing process	C1	4.53	.624
I think effect of peer group induce me to buy	C2	4.34	.903
Advices & information provided by my family may lead to buying decision	C3	4.33	.902
I think advertisement can change my perception about the product	C4	4.14	1.055
I think knowing about sales promotions schemes make difference in purchase	C5	4.33	.908
I believe cash discount is the good option as a sales promotion scheme	C6	4.45	.889
Purchase intention			
I will buy a product based on the advertisement	PI1	4.00	1.093
I will purchase a product based on its attractiveness	PI2	4.24	.970
I always prefer high quality products	PI3	4.53	.760
I definitely intend to buy branded products	PI4	4.31	.912
I prefer to purchase branded products next time	PI5	4.38	.882

Source: Primary Data

Rotated Component Matrix

Item Acronym	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
PD1	.622					
PD2	.501					
PD3	.552					
PD4	.613					
PD5	.697					
BF1		.748				
BF2		.720				
BF3		.617				
BF4		.597				
PA1			.522			
PA2			.688			
PA3			.704			
PA4			.509			
A1				.702		
A2				.766		
A3				.689		
A4				.648		
C1					.502	
C2					.583	
C3					.621	
C4					.635	
C5					.616	
C6					.732	
PI 1						.699
PI 2						.696
PI 3						.666
PI 4						.621
PI 5						.714

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax

Source: SPSS calculation