



Determinants of Purchase Intention in Saudi Arabia: A Moderating Role of Gender

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Authors' contributions

This paper was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author AMA designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author SAA managed the analyses of the study and the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Saudis live segregated life between male and female in all forms which might affect their decision making and purchase intention. Understanding the difference between male and female regarding their purchase intention and behavior is growing. Accordingly, this paper outlines three main factors that may affect male and female purchase intention (perceived value - packaging- trust). The main focus was on perceived value, packaging, and trust which are important elements in the current study relationships. Data was collected using an online self-administered survey from consumers in the food industry sector. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. Results of this study indicate that perceived value and trust are positively associated with purchase intention, but not product packaging. More than that, the results indicates no significant effect of gender, which means male and female in Saudi perceived food products the same which does not affect their purchase intention. These findings have important implications for managers in the areas of the food industry and branding. Managers should focus on customers' perceived value and gain their trust to enhance purchase intention.

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the severe competition and the power shift to the consumers the increased level of knowledge has forced companies to be more focus and professional. Thus, the role of manufacturers, suppliers, and marketers become very critical to convincing consumers with certain products for both genders. Therefore, it is very important for organizations to investigate the major factors that enhance the purchase intention as one of the important factors which play a major role in consumers' behavior either positive or negative.

Currently, packaging, perceived value, and trust are factors which consumers looking for and essential for competitive advantage to manufacturers. In fact, these variables play different roles in the competition environment, for example, packaging was defined as the medium to handle, distribute, move, protect...etc. [1,2]. Basically, this study will shed light on gender differences in their behavior regarding purchase decision for selected constructs that recently become competing in the market namely; product packaging perceives value and trust.

1.1 Problem Statement

In Saudi, male and female consumers live segregated lives. Our understanding of their purchasing intentions is a weak and we cannot fully predict their intentions. In this study, we examined the impact of product packaging, perceived value and brand trust on purchase intention. These three factors influence the consumers' willingness to purchase the product. We examined how these three factors are stronger for female consumers compare to male.

1.2 Significance of the Research

As the rapid growth in competition more emphasize is on the consumers' behavior and the variables that affect the human intention to behave. The competition in the food industry in Saudi Arabia markets is increasing in the last years. Also, the increased level of health awareness with the importance of fundamental requirement for food [3]. This study will fill the gap in the literature regarding the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) line of knowledge. Second, this study will contribute to the practitioners' implications in their selection.

Finally, an empirical evidence of the chosen relationship will enhance the academic literature.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Background

In order to understand how customers, behave two essential theories were presented as a basis to explain the human internal reasons. The first theory is the theory of planned behavior [4] where customer's intention is the central factor in this theory to motivate consumers to perform a certain behavior. Thus, customers need to build intention towards the product and that intention would be build based on their evaluation of that product.

Tversky and Kahneman [5] developed prospect theory which explains customer decision making. The theory is an extension of utility and satisfaction theory that explains customer willingness to purchase [6]. In addition, prospect theory explains customer's evaluation of a product by looking at what he gets and what he loses - perceived values. When any customer wants to buy a product, he/she evaluates what he is getting by looking at familiar product, reference point. If a customer gains from certain product decision more than he loses, he will have more intention to buy the product. Customers' evaluation of a product includes product packaging, brand trust, and brand perceived value.

In addition to the above theories, Dodds and Monroe [7] proposed a model for consumers' evaluation of perceived value, perceived quality and price. They proposed that customers will buy products with high perceived value which means that perceived value is a key factor for customer purchase decision. In addition, Chong et al. [8]; Thaler [9] found that trust and perceived value is an important antecedent of purchase intention and decision making.

2.2 Perceived Value

Saudi's consume all types of products; they are the largest consumers market in the MENA area [10]. Many companies tailor their product to meet local consumers standards and taste. For example, Mcdonald's introduced McArabia, a pita bread sandwich, to meet Saudi's and Emirates taste. Other companies change colors, names

and packaging to appeal to Saudi's consumer and to increase their perceived value.

The definition of the concept Perceived value is differ based on the culture, and to ensure the sufficient understanding of this abstract concept Zeithaml [11 p. 14] define perceived value from marketing perspective as "The customer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given". Therefore, the personal comparison is critical to the classification of the benefits and value [12]. Different definitions were recommended in the previous studies such as Kim et al. definition [13] "It is the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given".

Perceived value is an important element in the relationship of price, quality. It has a high influence on the consumers' purchasing decision process [7]. Additionally, Petrick [14] has pointed to the dimensions of what the consumers expect to receive from the purchasing processes: quality, the emotional response, the reputation obtained from the services, the monetary price, and the behavioral price. It is also an important indicator to the repurchase intention.

Most of the previous research has been focused on quality and price as the major components of value. In addition, consumers compare what they get -product attributes- with what they give -money, time, and effort- which means they are value driven. In fact, perceived value means more than that, recently it is used as a competitive advantage for strategic thinking [14]. Studies found that consumers who have different perceived value will have different purchase behavior. Value creation is an essential concept for practitioners and scholars. It considers as a key to long-term success and delivering customer value might be the only thing that matter in the new world [15]. In fact, perceived value can create a good brand image when consumers receive trustworthy perceived value in the product/service consumption [16].

H1: Perceived value positively influence purchase intention.

2.3 Product Packaging

Packaging is essential and important as a marketing tool used for different purposes such as; communicating, brand differentiation and

identity and product evaluation [17,18]. Packaging may be defined as "all products made of any material of nature to be used for the containment, protection, handling, delivery and preservation of goods from the producer to the user or consumer", [19]. Therefore, the quality of the product is a major component first to the consumers, because they used their perception to the product quality as a criterion for judgment [20].

However, the attitudes towards the product packaging design have an effective role in the consumers' perception of the product value [21]. The product packaging has shifted from its traditional role such as protect, distribute to become a more functional tool for communication with consumers [1,2]. Therefore, packaging plays an important role in marketing and marketing strategy due to its major contribution to introducing the product to the market.

On the other hand, packaging is an indicator of the quality of the product which affects the consumer's purchase decisions [21]. Packaging has been viewed as a measurable and economic factor that has its impact on the consumer behavior [22]. Also, there is a relationship between product packaging and organization positioning strategy and the value of the product in the consumers' mind [23].

H2: Product packaging positively influence Intention to Purchase.

2.4 Brand Trust

Trust is the inside judgment and belief which strengthen or weaken the relationship between customers/employees and organizations [24]. More than that, good trust on persons, products, and services will lead to increase perceived value which maximizes loyalty [21,25]. Patrick [26] pointed that most of the social relationships depend heavily on the level of trust, some will fail because of less trust. Additionally, trust is one of the factors that determine the length of the future relations with consumers [14].

Regarding the relationship with intention to purchase previous studies found brand trust is a good indicator for the online decisions significant the sites with a higher level of trust will encourage the purchase processes [26]. Thus, trust has a major role to enhance the intention to shopping behavior [27]. According to the theory of Planned Behavior, when consumers feel trust

they will be more willing to shop [28]. Therefore, the mental perception of consumers to trust as a positive factor will directly link it with high intention to purchase [29].

Brand trust is essential to increase the value of the brand which, expanded through the full knowledge of the consumers' expectations and go beyond it. Brand trust is important because of its role to enhance on purchase intention. Also, brand trust is essential to gain positive impact of brand features [30]. A strong brand is characterized high perceived quality, loyalty, and availability to consumers [31]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is:

H3: Brand trust positively influences purchase intention.

2.5 Gender

To understand the purchase decision in the Saudi's market, it is essential to incorporate both male and female into the picture. Most studies had focused on male's opinion because it was hard to reach female's opinion [32]. In fact, there is a huge segregation between men and women in all form of life (e.g., education, sport, and healthcare). The unemployment between Saudi's Women is 70% however they influence household purchase decision [33,34]. Also, women have more bachelor degrees than ever and the country economic changes in the past few years brought more women into the workforce [35]. There is no much research about the difference between men and women regarding purchase intention in Saudi. In this research, the researchers are examining the gender differences between men and women regarding their purchase intention.

Demographic variables (e.g., age, gender and socioeconomic status) are a key determinant of consumers' characteristics. To some degree, consumers' characteristics may influence consumer behavior [36]. For example, women pay attention to details and look at product attributes extensively. On the other hand, men tend to use simple decision process and use less information. Furthermore, [36] argue that women focus on quality while the male focus on overall evaluation. Therefore, the hypothesis for this construct will be the following:

H4a: The positive relationship between perceived value and purchase intention

would be stronger for female consumer compared to male.

H4b: The positive relationship between product packaging and purchase intention would be stronger for the female consumer than male.

H4c: The positive relationship between brand trust and purchase intention would be stronger for the female consumer than male.

2.6 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a vital concept in marketing that different from actual purchase [37]. Purchase intention refers to the consumer's pending transaction whereas the actual purchase refers to the consumer actual act of buying. Additionally, purchase intention is the tendency to buy a certain product [38]. However, purchase intention is an important indicator of actual purchase. The purchase intention would ultimately lead to purchase behavior. Purchase intention is to consider as a key indicator of purchase behavior [39]. Therefore, purchase intention would derive from consumers' evaluation (compare what they get with what they give) of the product.

3. RESEARCH MODEL

This study is based on the following proposed model.

3.1 Research Hypotheses

H1: Perceived value positively influence purchase intention.

H2: Product packaging positively influence Intention to Purchase

H3: Brand trust positively influences purchase intention.

H4a: The positive relationship between perceived value and purchase intention would be stronger for female consumer compared to male.

H4b: The positive relationship between product packaging and purchase intention would be stronger for the female consumer than male.

H4c: The positive relationship between brand trust and purchase intention would be stronger for the female consumer than male.

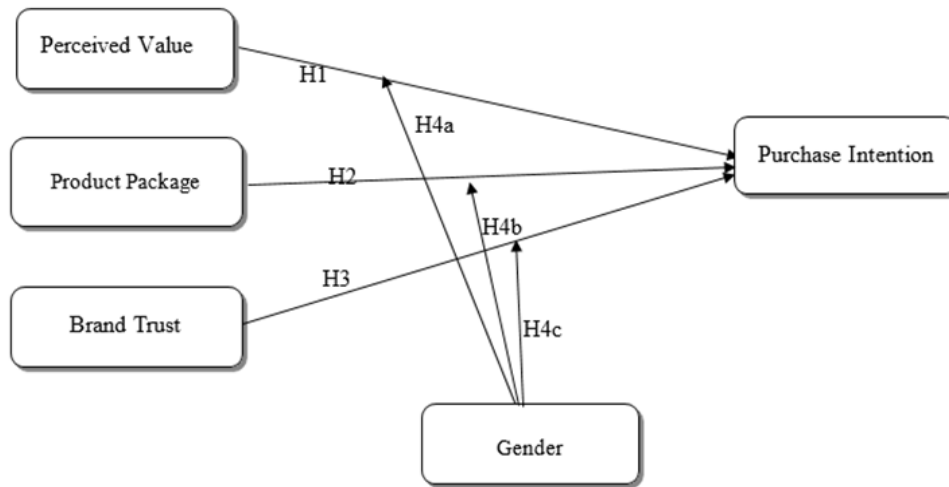


Fig. 1. Research model

3.2 Research Methodology

3.2.1 Data collection method and sampling framework

The data were collected from different categories, it includes both genders, all ages, all education levels, and all nationalities. The number of a female was 491, and the male 554. Social media and other online methods were used to collect the needed data. In order to recruit respondents, firstly, there was a screening question to choose the right respondents; such as whether they spend any money on the category of the food product. Any respondents who meet the criteria was availed with the main survey. In approximately three to five weeks, a total of 1045 completed and usable responses from the sampling frame were received. A comparison of the mean of responses for early respondents and late respondents did not vary, thus providing evidence that non-response bias is not an issue. In order to control for common method bias, the researchers used Harman one factor test and found that no single constructs account for more than 50% of the variance [40]. Thus indicating that common method bias is not an issue.

3.2.2 Instrument design

The measurement of this study contains four scales which, were adopted from the literature. Perceived value was measured by ten items adopted from [41]. To measure product design a scale with seven [42]. Purchase Intention was

measured by four items which are adopted from [38,43]. Four items to measure trust were adopted from [44]. The initial scales were in the English language, the scales then translated to the Arabic language. Back translation was conducted by professors who is expert in marketing filed to maintain the consistency of the initial meaning and to ensure that the constructs and items represent the original scales. Demographic questions were added at the separate section at the end of the questionnaire.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Reliability and Validity of Measures

For the study constructs scales were adopted the items from extant literature directly. The face validity was conducted through professors in the filed with the process of the translation and back translation as mentioned in the before. Both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted to develop the measurement model. EFA extracted only 4 factors for this model. After deleting two cross loading items the factor analysis was confirmed by using structural equation modeling [44]. On average, the factor loadings are greater than 0.670 for each construct.

The acceptable fit, indicated by the global fit indices, between the data and factor structure. All composite reliability values are greater than $< 0.75 >$, thus ensuring the reliability of the measures [45]. All AVEs are greater than

<0.509>, thus confirming the convergent validity. Following the guidelines of Fornell and Larcker (1981), the results pointed that all of the square roots of AVEs are greater than the inter-construct correlations. Moreover, AVEs are greater than the average shared variance (ASV) [46], thus further confirming discriminant validity. Please see <Table 1 > for details of the measurement model.

4.2 Structural Equation Model

The relationships among the latent constructs were tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimate.

The path estimates, t-values and the fit indices are presented in the < Table 2 >. There is an acceptable fit with the data as indicated by the global fit indices – chi-square/df=263/109, p-value=0.000; RMSEA=0.037; NFI=0.969, CFI=0.982, RMR (SRMR) =0.037 (0.000), GFI=0.971, [43,47,46]. Path analysis shows that customers' perceived value have a positive impact on purchase intention, thus supporting H1. Moreover, the impact of product packaging is not significant, data were not supported to H2b. As expected, product trust has significant impacts on usage purchase intention, thus supporting H3.

Table 1. Model validity measures

	CR	AVE	Package	Trust	Perceived value	Purchase intention
Package	0.834	0.509	0.714			
Trust	0.899	0.691	0.080	0.831		
Perceived value	0.837	0.519	0.100	0.401	0.720	
Purchase intention	0.822	0.608	0.081	0.484	0.488	0.780

Table 2. (CFA) factor loading

Items	Component			
	1	2	3	4
V9 I am happy I buy that brand.	0.785			
V8 I feel good about my decision to buy that brand.	0.771			
V3 This brand is considered a very good buy.	0.753			
V10 I am sure it was the right thing to do to buy that brand	0.682			
V4 This brand appeared to be a bargain.	0.681			
V1 This brand is very good value for money I paid.	0.670			
T2 I trust this brand.		0.888		
T3 I feel secure when I buy this brand because I know that it will never let me down		0.832		
T1 This is an honest brand.		0.825		
T4 This brand offers me a product with a constant quality level		0.809		
D4 The more interesting the design/shape of the package is, the more likely I am to purchase it			0.868	
D3 A package design/shape that is decorative appeals to me.			0.809	
D1 I buy a brand because the design of the package is attractive.			0.803	
D2 I buy a brand because the design of the package is familiar to me.			0.735	
D5 The package design/shape is an indicator of the value of the product brand.			0.676	
PUI3 I plan on buying this brand				0.824
PUI4 I am interested in buying this brand				0.758
PUI2 I would consider buying this brand				0.700
Extraction (%)	30.085	16.524	10.910	7.378
Reliability	0.843	0.898	0.841	0.750

Table 3. Structural model

		Path		Un Std. Estimate	Std. Estimate	C.R.	P
H1	Value	→	Purchase intention	0.449	0.053	8.492	***
H2	Package	→	Purchase intention	0.011	0.016	0.659	0.510
H3	Trust	→	Purchase intention	0.283	0.031	9.247	***

Table 4. Moderation effect

				Male		Female		z-score
				Estimate	P	Estimate	P	
H4a	Package	→	Purchase intention	0.002	0.958	-0.038	0.211	-0.896
H4b	Value	→	Purchase intention	0.373	0.000	0.311	0.000	-0.990
H4c	Trust	→	Purchase intention	0.364	0.000	0.283	0.000	-1.395

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

4.3 Moderation Analysis

In order to test the hypotheses (H4 a-c) that gender moderate the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, AMOS multi-group differences were used to examine the significance of the effects. Two groups added were added, one for male and the other for female and then conducted multi-group differences in AMOS. The results found that the fit indices of the model are above the threshold recommended – p-value=0.000; RMSEA=0.032; NFI=0.949, and CFI=0.973. Also, the model comparison between the unconstrained model and the structural weights p-value is 0.000 [43,47,46]. That means male and female respondents answered the questionnaire differently. In order to test the last hypothesis H4 (a-c), each path was examined separately. The first path H4a in the model which specifies the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention with gender as a moderator. The results indicate no significant effect of gender in this relationship with p-value 0.238 that means male and female in Saudi perceived food products the same which does not affect their purchase intention. The next path is H4b indicates also no significant effect on the relationship in this path which means that gender does not moderate the relationship between product trust and purchase intention in Saudi. Finally, the last hypothesis is H4c shows the same result no significant effect for gender as a moderate the relationship between product package and purchase intention. Please look at Table 4 above for more details.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that consumers perceive value and brand trust influence their purchase intention. The structural model shows that perceived value influence consumers' purchase intention the most among the other factors. These results consist of previous studies that argue that "the only thing that matters in the new world of quality is delivering customer value" [48, p 7].

The major goal of this study is to enhance our understanding Saudi consumers' behavior. Thus, an empirical investigation was conducted in Saudi context in the food industry. The results indicate that perceived value and trust have a positive effect on users' purchase intentions. On the other hand, product packing has no influence on purchase intention. Also, the moderation effect of gender in the model is not significant. Possible explanation for the non-significant effect of product packaging may lie in that customers are familiar with the product that we examined our model.

This study provides insights for marketers to effectively attract customers. It also adds to the current literature on customer behavior by highlighting the impact of perceived value and brand trust on purchase intention. Our results corroborate the findings in previous research on brand trust [28] and customer behavior [49]. Customers' perceived value and brand trust are powerful tools to lead purchase intention and then to actual behavior. Next, the theoretical and managerial implications pertaining to the results of the study are discussed.

6. LIMITATION AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study faced few limitations that should be taken into account. First, the sample of this study was collected online and that might be biased to the customers who use the internet and not consider the customers who do not use the internet frequently. In future studies, it is recommended to collect data offline and compare the results. Second, survey methods were used which increase the probability of generalizing the results but do not conclude causality. Therefore, in future studies, it is advisable to test the relationship between variables using longitudinal study or experiment. Lastly, the caution of the interpretation of some associations among variables needs to be taken into consideration in the future studies.

Because Saudis are the highest segment penetration on social media in the world [50]. Organizations need to understand their behavior in using social media and how that affect their purchase intention and behavior. Accordingly, future research could investigate the differences between gender-based E-WOM influences on the food industry in order to conduct comparisons. It is recommended to change the study instrument to focus groups or experiments.

7. IMPLICATION

The results of this research would help managers and scholars to understand the consumers' intentions. The proposed model could help marketing managers to understand the influence of gender, brand trust, product design and perceived value. Our study helps managers who work in the GCC region because there is not much research that has been done in the area. Managers should build brand trust and create a platform for higher perceived value. As the results show that when consumers perceive value from the product they will be more likely to purchase the product. Managers should focus on building brand trust and create value for consumers. Creating value for consumers considers being a key success factor to many managers [15]. Also, this study also can be valuable for new companies who want to enter the GCC market or in Saudi Arabia.

This study extends our knowledge and understanding of perceived value [49], brand trust [26], product packing [17] and gender differences [36], especially in the GCC area. Also, this study confirms previous studies that

consumers in the GCC area are like other consumers in the world that there is no significant difference in male and female purchase intention as we hypothesis. Saudi Arabian consumers are affected by globalization and they have similar characteristics with other consumers around the world [51,52].

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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