

Developing Stronger Brands: How Brand Awareness Drives Purchase Intention Through Image and Trust?

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the interconnectedness of brand awareness (BA), brand image (BI), brand trust (BT), and purchase intention (PI) in a sample of consumer of comparably locally produced in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In a sample of 900 consumers who purchased Saudi-made products, the authors applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) methodology to assess the proposed conceptual model. The analysis revealed that BA positively enhanced BI significantly, and BI subsequently paved a significant path to BT and PI. BA and PI were followed partially by BI and BT respectively, and a serial mediation was found. It requests branding policies which aren't naive BA, but rather influence BI and maintain BT. It is retrospect to the local initiatives that signifies the significance of the drivers of BA and how they translate into a more salient BI and PI, and favor for local product. It provided the findings that are critical to marketers, managers, and policymakers in planning to allocate the local brands as trustworthy and competitive slogans in the local marketplace.

KEYWORDS

Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Local Products, Purchase Intention, Brand Trust, KSA

INTRODUCTION

As companies become more aware of the value of a strong brand, developing powerful brands has become a key marketing priority (Koay et al., 2023). There are distinct benefits to having a solid brand, such as a competitive advantage and repeat purchasing (Aggarwal, 2004; Sari et al., 2024).

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One fascinating area in marketing is the study of antecedents that influence customers' intentions to purchase a specific brand (Tam et al., 2022). It is valuable for monitoring purchase intentions (PI) since they are determinants of final purchasing choices (Zeithaml et al., 2000). However, PI has recently been found to be a major and reliable driver of genuine purchasing decisions. PI is developed as a result of a strong relationship between the customer and the organization (Song et al., 2024). In a world where consumers are constantly exposed to numerous brands, building strong brands in saturated markets has become a major challenge for businesses. Organizations are increasingly aware of the value and power of a quality brand (Koay et al., 2023). A strong brand offers clear benefits, including competitive advantage, brand loyalty, and repeat purchases (Aggarwal, 2004). Therefore, studying the antecedents of consumers' PIs has become a topic of interest in marketing.

Among the available strategic levels, brand awareness (BA) has a significant impact on how consumers perceive, evaluate, and ultimately choose a product. It represents the initial phase of the consumer choice process. However, although it is a key factor in attracting consumers' attention, its influence on purchasing behavior cannot be reduced to a simple linear correlation. This connection is part of an intricate network of relationships, including psychological processes such as brand trust (BT) and brand image (BI). These processes operate as mediators, influencing PI both directly and indirectly. PI is a key indicator of real purchase behaviour (Aaker, 1991). Moreover, numerous empirical findings support the significance of comprehending how BA affects PI.

Over the past few decades, brand creation and development have been a popular topic among professionals and academics alike. Companies are adopting innovative initiatives, shifting their focus from boosting awareness to developing ongoing relationships with their customers (Gesundo et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023; Tan, 2024; Song et al., 2024). The significance of a powerful brand has been widely studied in the marketing literature (Klink & Athaide, 2010; Sari et al., 2024). Hence, in the contemporary corporate setting, it becomes essential to consider what could impact customer PI.

This study can add several contributions to branding literature. First, academics believe that PI has a substantial influence on prospective purchase decisions. According to Aizen (1991), people are highly inclined to translate their strong intentions to buy a certain brand or product into a tangible purchase. Customers are far more likely to turn their expressed strong desire to buy a particular brand into a tangible purchase. Second, several studies have been done to explore the antecedents that constitute PI (Angel et al., 2023; Büyükdag, 2021), and there is a need for more studies in this area, as suggested by Bagozzi & Dholakia (2006). Diverse conceptualizations of brands and their influence on consumer behaviour have been proposed by academics (Ayoub & Awad, 2024; Kite et al., 2018; Sari et al., 2024; Tam et al., 2022). Third, the theoretical foundation for our research framework is built upon the emerging hierarchy of effects model and brand equity model with buyer behaviour theory (BBT). Whereas the hierarchy of effects model developed by Ajzen (1991), which referred to the customer journey steps from initial awareness to ensuring purchase, the BBT and brand equity model, which were set by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), identified the influencing factors in developing PI. These emerging additions significantly enrich BBT theory, especially in the relationship between brand mechanisms and consumer behaviour.

Fourth, the logical mapping of BA, BI, BT, and PI onto one another is not systematically analyzed in the prior literature. While some studies have proposed conceptual structures that incorporate certain research variables but ignore positive interactions among these variables or treat them separately (Erdem & Swait, 2001). Fifth, pathways of causality involving mediating processes, such as the influence of BA on BI impacting BT and subsequently on PI, have received little attention, even though several studies indicate that BA has a short-term influence on PI (Indriana et al., 2022). Finally, Table 1 assesses some recent articles in the brand literature to identify the probable antecedents of PI. Notably, the systematic review for these studies has not adequately investigated crucial perspectives that play a role in identifying the causes of PI, thereby suggesting a need for more studies on the antecedents of PI in one framework. Thus, this study fills this gap by constructing a case framework that fits BA, BI, and BT as a probable precursor of PI.

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