

# Impact of Marketing Mix Elements on Satisfaction: Mediating Effect of Brand Awareness

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## Abstract

Satisfaction of the consumer has been an extremely important focus area for researchers, academicians and business professionals. This study examines the impact of marketing mix elements on brand awareness and satisfaction. It also studies the effect of brand awareness on satisfaction. It further explores the mediating effect of brand awareness on the marketing mix elements and satisfaction. The state of Punjab (India) comprises the universe of study. Convenience sampling has been used to collect data from 350 consumers of durables market. Regression analysis has shown a positive relationship between marketing mix elements and brand awareness. It has been found that marketing mix elements predict satisfaction. Brand awareness has also been seen to be significantly related to satisfaction. A mediating test has shown that brand awareness partially mediates the effects of marketing mix elements on satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Brand, brand awareness, consumer satisfaction, mediation, product, price, promotion, place

## 1. INTRODUCTION

India's consumer durable market is riding the crest of country's economic boom. Driven by young population with access to disposable incomes and easy finance options, the durable market is throwing up staggering figures. An increase in competition and improvement in technology have led to a situation where most of the consumer durable goods have been commoditized. This has created a situation where identifying a unique differentiator for the goods has become imperative, and so is the need to promote it actively.

Most of the consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the presence of a number of brands in the consumers durables category. Therefore, organizations promote aggressively to make consumers buy their brands amongst the plethora of me-too brands. In today's fast-paced and increasingly competitive market, organizations strive to sharpen their marketing tactics and strategies in order to satisfy their consumers. In a global marketplace where businesses compete aggressively, customer satisfaction has been identified as a key differentiator and is increasingly becoming a key element of every marketing strategy.

Customer satisfaction is one of the most important parameters that is essential for long-term business success and affects all organizations, large or small, profit or non-profit, global or local. Many companies are interested in studying, evaluating and implementing marketing strategies that aim at increasing customer satisfaction and maximizing retention in view of the beneficial effects on the financial performance of the firm. According to Dimitriadis (2006), satisfied consumers are less price sensitive, less influenced by competitors' attacks and remain loyal to the firm longer as compared to dissatisfied customers.

Consumer's decision to purchase a particular brand is the result of multiple factors. The market is now more customer-centric than ever before. Macdonald and Sharp (2000) have reiterated that brand awareness is an important factor that influences the purchase decision of consumers. Consumers' purchase decision can also be influenced if a product has higher brand awareness (Dodds et al., 1991; Grewal et al., 1998). Products with higher brand awareness generally have higher market share and better quality perception. Product features can also help consumers to have a subjective judgment on overall product quality that make a product hold a salient differentiation and become a selective brand in consumers' minds (Aaker, 1991).

The objectives of the present study are to explore: (1) the influence of marketing mix on brand awareness, (2) the effect of brand awareness on satisfaction, (3) the impact of marketing mix elements on satisfaction, (4) whether brand awareness mediates the relationship between marketing mix and brand awareness.

Though a number of studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between brand awareness and specific elements of marketing mix, hardly any studies have been found in the literature which have comprehensively studied the relationship between all elements of marketing mix, brand awareness and satisfaction. Such studies are fewer still in the context of consumer durables or Indian markets. This research makes an exploratory attempt to bridge the gap in literature examining the relationships between marketing mix, brand awareness and satisfaction in the consumer durables market in Punjab (India). Since this study deals with consumer durables, marketing mix has been represented by 4Ps out of the total 7Ps.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Marketing Mix

The concept of marketing mix was proposed by McCarthy (1964). It has been widely adopted through time by academicians and practitioners, having become a key element of marketing theory and practice. 4Ps of marketing

mix, namely, product, price, promotion and place represent the dimensions which managers may leverage to satisfy market needs.

Borden (1964) has postulated that 4Ps comprise of twelve managerial policies which refer to the sub-mixes within each P (Figure I). In his formulation of twelve elements, he has pointed out that it is necessary to create a list of the important elements or ingredients that make up marketing programs. He also emphasized on the list of forces that bear the marketing operation of a firm and to which the marketing manager must adjust, in his search for a mix or a program that can be successful.

Kalyanam & McIntyre (2002) have defined marketing mix as a collection of thousands of micro-elements clustered together in order to simplify managerial activity. According to Dominci and Scienze (2009), validity or exclusion of the traditional mix in digital context is a matter of possibility and convenience of extending the number of elements.

**Figure I McCarthy's 4Ps and the 12 policies of Borden**

<p><b>Product</b>                  Product Planning                  Branding                  Packaging                  Servicing</p>	<p><b>Place</b>                  Channels of Distribution                  Display                  Physical Handling                  Fact Finding and Analysis</p>
<p><b>Price</b>                  Pricing</p>	<p><b>Promotion</b>                  Personal Selling                  Advertising                  Promotions</p>

### 2.2 Brand Awareness

Creating awareness about a brand is as important as building a brand. Without brand awareness the consumers cannot or will not buy the brand, because they are simply not aware of the brand's existence (Peter and Olson, 1996). According to Rossiter & Percy (1987), brand awareness is an exercise of identification of the brand name under different conditions. It is the probability of a brand name coming to the mind of the consumer and the facility with which this happens (Garcia Rodriguez, 1998).

Gomez & Rodriguez del Bosque (1996) have explained the concept of brand awareness for the application of two important measurements in order to understand it. The first measurement is the recall that brand name is knowledge of products from the category amongst a set of suggested brands. The second measurement is the reminder that fits with spontaneous recall and refers to the brand being present in memory of customer and it is remembered by latter without the need of any external stimulus.

According to Keller (2008), anything which causes exposure of a brand to consumers contributes to the establishment of brand awareness. Hoeffler & Keller (2002) have proposed that brand awareness can also be distinguished from depth and width. Depth refers to making consumers recall or identify brand easily and width refers to the quickness with which a brand name comes to the mind of the consumer while purchasing a product. If a product owns brand depth and brand width at the same time, consumers will think of a specific brand when they want to buy a product, therefore, implying that the product has high brand awareness.

### 2.3 Satisfaction

Satisfaction has been conceptualized in a number of ways in the literature of marketing. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) have conceptualized satisfaction in terms of whether the product/service meets consumer needs and expectations. Cronin and Taylor (1992) have viewed that satisfaction is a transaction - specific measure. Transaction-specific satisfaction is an immediate post-purchase evaluative judgement and, as such, is an affective reaction to the most recent experience with a firm (Oliver, 1993). The transaction-specific approach suggests that satisfaction occurs at the post-consumption stage following a single encounter with the service provider, for example satisfaction with a specific employer (Jones & Suh, 2000).

Anderson et al. (1994) have suggested that satisfaction is an overall evaluation which is based on the total purchase consumption and experience. Overall satisfaction is an evaluative judgement of the last purchase occasion and based on all encounters with the service provider (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994). Thus, overall satisfaction is an aggregation of all transaction-specific encounters (Veloutsou, Gilbert, Moutinho & Goode, 2005). Transaction-specific satisfaction is likely to vary from experience to experience while overall satisfaction is a moving average that is relatively stable and most similar to an overall attitude towards purchasing a brand (Auh, Salisbury, & Johnson, 2003).

### 2.4 Marketing Mix and Brand Awareness

The relationship of each element of marketing mix, namely, product, price, promotion and place with brand

awareness has been explored in the following four paragraphs.

A product is branded when target buyers learn about the product and, as a result, store in their memory structures of the product which further generates awareness (Keller, 1993). Thus, the product is of more value when it is branded than when it is unbranded because consumers value those brands positively that enjoy a good reputation among the groups to which they belong or aspire to belong (Long and Shiffman, 2000). According to Davis, Golicic & Marquardt (2008), brand name is one of the important elements in brand awareness as the name acts as a file cabinet in the mind of the consumer which can be filed with linked names, facts and feelings. As a consequence, brand awareness will affect purchase decision through brand association, and when a product owns a positive brand image, it will help in marketing activities (Keller, 1993).

Only a few researchers have explored the relationship between brand awareness and price promotions and their findings are not very similar. Inconsistency in findings may be due to the use of different measures of brand awareness and research contexts of various studies. Keller (2008) has asserted that price promotion, in particular, affects the brand switchers and encourages product trials. Such product experiences enhance brand awareness. Yoo et al. (2000) have found a negative relationship between price promotion and brand awareness for durable goods. It has been concluded that consumers are equally aware of both high-priced and low-priced products. They use high-price as a quality signal to achieve decision efficiency even though low-price products give them more value. Srinivasan et al. (2008) have identified a positive relationship between brand awareness and price promotion as well as between advertising and distribution for convenience goods.

According to Rossiter and Percy (1987), advertisements create and increase brand awareness by exposing brands to customers. Krishnan and Chakravarti (1993) have proposed that the brand's likelihood of being included in consumers' consideration set increases with advertising, thereby enhancing market performance of the brand. Brand awareness is also positively related to advertising expenditure invested in the brand (Yoo et al. 2000). Peter and Olson (1996) have also concluded that though advertising has the most favourable impact on brand awareness, different levels of brand awareness are required by the consumer while making a purchase decision. Other aspects of promotion, namely, publicity, personal selling, and sales promotion might also have an effect on it.

A brand known by the consumers creates a feeling of pleasure and familiarity in them that increases the probability of purchasing it from among alternatives (Aaker, 1996). Some researchers have indicated that the consumers will be more satisfied by being able to find their brands in a high number of establishments (Ferris, Oliver, & Kluiver, 1989; Smith, 1992). Pappu & Quester (2006), in their study on satisfaction and brand equity, have found a positive and significant relationship between retailer awareness and consumer satisfaction for department stores and specialty stores. Srinivasan et al (2008) have confirmed a positive association between brand awareness and distribution intensity. Yoo et al. (2000) have indicated that repeat brand exposure in stores improves consumers' ability to recognize and recall the brand because degree of intensity with which a product is distributed plays an important role in affecting the decision of consumers.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

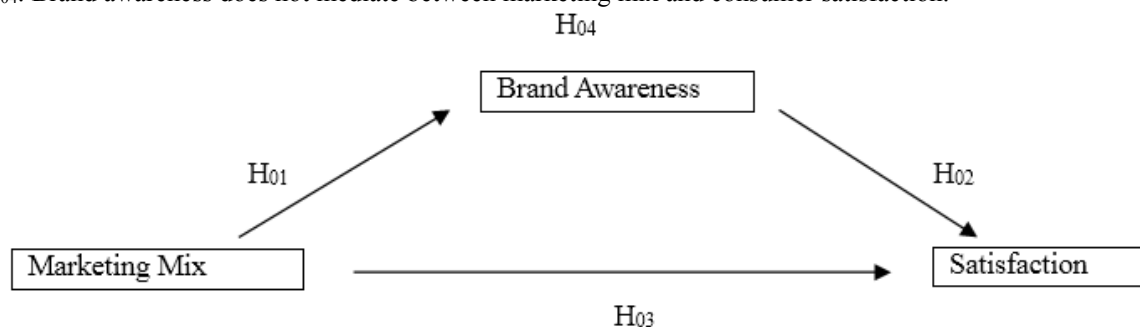
The research structure has been shown in Figure 3.1. Marketing mix is the independent variable, satisfaction is the dependent variable, and brand awareness is the mediating variable. The current study measures brand awareness by asking whether customers know the brand and tests the following hypothesis.

H<sub>01</sub>: Marketing mix does not have affect on brand awareness.

H<sub>02</sub>: Brand awareness does not have affect on satisfaction.

H<sub>03</sub>: Marketing mix does not have affect on satisfaction.

H<sub>04</sub>: Brand awareness does not mediate between marketing mix and consumer satisfaction.



**Figure 3. 1 Structure of Hypotheses**

The measurement constructs include marketing mix elements, brand awareness and satisfaction based on a 5-point Likert scale (5: strongly agree, 4: agree, 3: neutral, 2: disagree and 1: strongly disagree). Convenience sampling has been used to collect data from users of consumer durables belonging to the state of

Punjab, India through a pre-tested, structured and non-disguised questionnaire. The data has been collected between July and October 2014. Out of 415 questionnaires, 350 fully filled questionnaires have been considered, the response rate being 84.33%.

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 Reliability and Validity

The study is valid if its measures actually measure what they claim to and if there are no logical errors in drawing conclusions from the data (Garson, 2002). Validity of the constructs has been tested by the factor loading method. Table 4.1 shows the values of factor loadings of the constructs. The study also uses Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal reliability of the constructs used in the questionnaire. As shown in Table 4.1, the value of cronbach's alpha for marketing mix, brand awareness and satisfaction are 0.908, 0.920 and 0.727 respectively. According to Guilford (1965), when Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7, it shows the questionnaire has a relative high internal reliability. Since the values of Cronbach's alphas for all constructs have been found to be higher than 0.7, it indicates that the questionnaire is reliable.

##### 4.2 Regression Analysis

The study uses linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between marketing mix, brand awareness, and satisfaction. It has been found that marketing mix elements are predictor of satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.118$ ), ( $F(1,350) = 257.865, p < .001$ ), and also of brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.431$ ), ( $F(1,350) = 608.495, p < .001$ ). As shown in Table 4.2, brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.240$ ), ( $F(1,350) = 372.074, p < .001$ ), has also been found to be a predictor of satisfaction. This implies that the null hypotheses  $H_{01}$ ,  $H_{02}$  and  $H_{03}$  are all rejected.

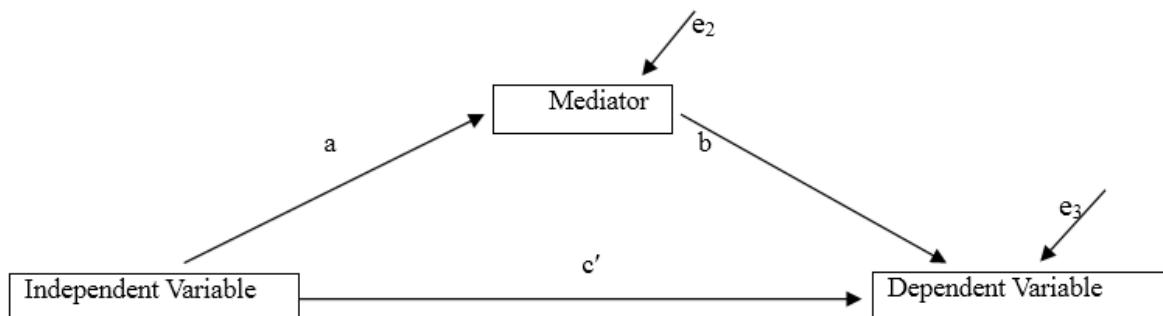
##### 4.3 Mediation Analysis

According to (MacKinnon 2007), there are three major approaches to statistical mediation analysis: (a) causal steps, (b) difference in coefficients, and (c) product of coefficients. All of these methods use information from the following three regression equations:

$$1) S = \beta_0 + cM + e_1; \quad 2) B = \beta_0 + aM + e_2 \quad 3) S = \beta_0 + c'M + bB + e_3$$

S is the dependent variable, M is the independent variable, B is the mediator, c is the coefficient relating the independent variable and the dependent variable, c' is the coefficient relating the independent variable to the dependent variable adjusted for the mediator, b is the coefficient relating the mediator to the dependent variable adjusted for the independent variable, a is the coefficient relating the independent variable to the mediator, and e1, e2, and e3 are residuals. Equations 2 and 3 are depicted in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Mediation Model



According to Baron & Kenny (1986), four steps are involved in the Baron and Kenny approach to establishing mediation. First, a significant relation of the independent variable to the dependent variable is required in Equation 1. Second, a significant relation of the independent variable to the hypothesized mediating variable is required in Equation 2. Third, the mediating variable must be significantly related to the dependent variable when both the independent variable and mediating variable are predictors of the dependent variable in Equation 3. Fourth, the coefficient relating the independent variable to the dependent variable must be larger (in absolute value) than the coefficient relating the independent variable to the dependent variable in the regression model with both the independent variable and the mediating variable predicting the dependent variable. This approach of causal steps to assessing mediation has been the most widely used method to assess mediation. Mediation analysis has been conducted using AMOS 20.0.

To test hypothesis  $H_{04}$ , regression analysis has been applied to examine whether marketing mix mediates satisfaction through brand awareness. Marketing mix has been considered as the independent variable and brand awareness has been taken as dependent variable. The results reveal that marketing mix ( $\beta = 0.431, p < .001$ ) predicts brand awareness. Marketing mix and brand awareness have been considered as the independent variables and satisfaction as the dependent variable. The results show that marketing mix ( $\beta = 0.240$ ,

$p < 0.001$ ), and brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.118$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) significantly accounts for satisfaction. It has been found that  $\beta$  value of satisfaction reduces from 0.118 to 0.039 in marketing mix. As a consequence, the impact of marketing mix on satisfaction is reduced because of addition of the mediator, namely, brand awareness. So, hypothesis H<sub>04</sub> is also rejected, and there is a partial mediating effect (see Table 4.3).

## 5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A brand becomes widely known as a result of consistent efforts by the organization owning it. The organization communicates to the market that the product has a certain set of attributes which translates into value for consumers. Consumers tend to form strong associations with a brand and are likely to purchase it quickly if and when they recognize/recall the brand. This is an advantage against competitors as consumers tend to give importance to trust rather than to price or quality. The organizations, hence, focus on making decisions that centre around marketing mix elements in order to drive awareness, create value, generate positive response and enhance satisfaction.

This study has concluded that marketing mix elements show a favourable causal relationship with brand awareness as well as consumer satisfaction. It has been found that marketing mix elements predict brand awareness and satisfaction. Brand awareness has also been found to be a predictor of satisfaction. Further, the study has also suggested that the brand awareness act as a mediator between marketing mix elements and consumer satisfaction and it partially mediates the effects of marketing mix on satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction has been found to increase with brand awareness. It implies that most of the consumers are satisfied to a greater extent when they are familiar with a brand than when they are not familiar.

Implications of this study are that consumer durable manufacturers should pay more attention to brand awareness and marketing mix elements for increasing satisfaction of consumers. It is suggested that the consumer durable organizations need to focus continuously on marketing mix through introduction of new product features, attractive price deals, innovative promotional tools and alternate distribution channels. The introduction of more appealing features, user friendly techniques and high-end quality can give consumers an opportunity to familiarize themselves with a brand. Easy payment options including payment through various modes or through periodical instalments can also help in creating satisfaction among consumers. Promotion through social networking sites like facebook and twitter, participation in exhibitions/trade fairs can be a major contributor in driving brand awareness. Proactive marketing campaigns can be carried out for addressing specific concerns of prospective consumers and enhancing their satisfaction levels. Channelizing as well as broadening the outlets for the sale of goods and generating effective after sales services can lead to a more satisfied consumer.

## 6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on only 4Ps of marketing mix because consumer durable products have been chosen as the context of study. The scope of this study is limited to Punjab region in terms of geographical boundaries and consumer durables in terms of product categories. Convenience sampling has been used to select the respondents, due to which consumers of all demographic segments may not have been equally represented. Future study may look at the effect of each P separately on mediating variable and dependent variable. More dependent variables in the context of some other industry, sector or region can also be studied. Brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand equity or some other variables could also be used as mediating variables.

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**Table 4.1 Reliability and Validity Statistics**

Dimensions	Statements	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Coefficient Alphas
Product	The product I have bought is a quality leader within its category	.563	0.774
	The reliability of the product is very high	.675	
	The product design is very attractive	.823	
	The product is quite user-friendly	.653	
	The product has very appealing features	.718	
	The company offers a variety of products	.653	
	The company offers warranty on good terms	.573	
Price	I have bought the product at a reasonable price	.578	0.633
	The overall price deal I have received is good	.656	
	The point of purchase has provided me with more than one option of payment mode	.724	
	The company offers options to buy on instalments	.698	
	The company offers credit	.577	
Promotion	The company promotes its products through print media like newspapers & magazines	.531	0.791
	The company also promotes its products through outdoor advertising	.566	
	The company communicates through TV and internet	.750	
	It also uses social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter to advertise	.651	
	The company advertises the product frequently	.764	
	The company also sells directly through its sales force	.540	
	The company often participates in exhibitions/trade fairs	.513	
	The point of purchase carries out promotional activities	.605	
	The salesperson has given me enough information about services	.486	
	The website of the company provides sufficient information	.484	
Place	The company sells its products through various channels	.572	0.758
	The point of purchase stocks other well known brands as well	.652	
	The company offers its products through factory outlets	.608	
	The point of purchase offers appealing ambience	.616	
	The product was available at the desired time	.498	
	The company is giving good after sales services	.571	
	The process for contacting for after sales is simple	.676	
	The results of after sales services are satisfactory	.674	
Satisfaction	I am satisfied with the product I have bought	.767	0.613
	I am satisfied with the price I have paid to buy the product	.833	
	I am satisfied with the way the product is being promoted	.478	
	I am satisfied with the distribution and availability of the product	.661	
Brand Awareness	I know what the brand looks like	.760	0.920
	I can recognize the brand among other competing brands	.730	
	I am aware of the brand	.767	
	I know the brand	.742	
	The brand has a strong personality	.682	
	The features and benefits of the product come to my mind quickly	.756	
	When I think of the product category, the brand that comes to my mind is the one I have bought	.774	
	I am able to recall the symbol/logo of the brand	.648	
	The company has been able to create brand awareness in minds of consumers	.708	
	The company has been able to communicate the product features	.734	
	The company has been able to differentiate the product from competing brands	.765	
	The company has been able to generate a recall of brand benefits	.713	

**Table 4.2 Regression Analysis of Marketing Mix, Brand Awareness and Consumer Satisfaction**

Variable	B	R <sup>2</sup>	t	F	Sig.
Marketing mix to brand awareness	0.431***	0.635	24.668	608.495	0.000
Marketing mix to satisfaction	0.118***	0.424	16.058	257.865	0.000
Brand awareness to satisfaction	0.240***	0.515	19.289	372.074	0.000

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

**Table 4.3 Mediation Analysis of Marketing Mix, Brand Awareness and Satisfaction**

Variables	Model 1	Model 2		Model 3
	Brand Awareness	Satisfaction	Satisfaction	Satisfaction
Marketing Mix	0.431*** (0.000)	0.118*** (0.000)		0.039*** (0.000)
Brand Awareness			0.240*** (0.000)	0.182*** (0.000)
Adj.R <sup>2</sup>	0.635	0.424	0.515	
F	608.495	257.865	372.074	

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001