

Consumer Involvement For Durable And Non Durable Products: Key Indicators And Their Impact

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INTRODUCTION

The consumption rate of Indian customers has gone quite up since liberalization. International brands are coming with many product categories and options to choose. Customers have started giving more importance to choose from the various available products. The increase in number of malls with various retail outlets, additional benefits, offers, attractive packaging and brand endorsement by celebrities have also led to high involvement of consumers in the purchase process. Now-a-days, marketers appreciate the importance of understanding their customers and thus, if they come to know the level of involvement with various product options, risk associated with the product and their psychology, then they can plan their marketing strategies, target consumer and allocate their resources accordingly.

“The degrees to which customers are involved in different aspect of the act of purchasing such as product, advertisements and the act of purchasing has grown to be regarded as one of the central determinants of consumer behavior. The main reason for this lies in the potential of involvement to account for the differences in the degree of both mental and the physical efforts a customer is willing to devote to consumption related activities (Laaksonen 1994)”.

Involvement refers to how much time, thought, energy and other resources consumers devote for purchasing a product. It is one of the fundamental concept used to explain the consumer buying process. The level of involvement is affected by the amount of efforts consumers give to learn about the products and to make purchase decisions. **It is a state of motivation, excitement or interest and is driven by current external variables (situation, product, risk, experience, hedonic value, communication etc.) and past internal variables (enduring, ego and central values).** Consumer Involvement is a source of explanation for the differences in the degree of both mental and physical efforts of a consumer and his decision making (Beharrell and Denison, 1995; Laaksonen, 1993). Involvement can also be conceptualized as a consumer's motivation to search for information (Brennan and Mavondo, 2000).

It is assumed that consumers put more efforts, perceive various risks and give more time for information searching to purchase a product which costs high and have the property of being more durable.

OBJECTIVES

- ✿ To find the major predictors which have an effect on consumer involvement.
- ✿ To analyze the impact of various predictors of consumer involvement on purchase decision of durable and non-durable product categories.
- ✿ To suggest the consumer involvement model for both durable and non durable product categories.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

✿ **Shridhar (2007)** revealed that for a durable product, such as television, level of influence due to financial risk is high followed by time risk, performance risk, uncertainty in purchase and physical risk while for non durable product such as toilet soap, influence of uncertainty is more than financial risk and psychological risk.

✿ **Cardoso (2007)** revealed that consumer's interest to purchase a product varies from product to product and consumer to consumer. Children are highly involved with clothing in the five dimensions -interest, pleasure, symbolism, perceived importance and subjective probability. They consider the functional aspects of clothing important and they think that the pretentious values are unimportant.

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✿ **Rajagopalan, Heitmeyer (2005)** revealed that consumers who are highly acculturated to American culture are more involved in the selection and purchase of Indian ethnic clothing and less involved in the selection and purchase of western dresses. Moderately acculturated to western culture are less involved in Indian ethnic apparel but become increasingly involved as they become more acculturated to the US culture.

✿ **O'Cass (2004)** argued that materialism affects fashion clothing involvement significantly. Materialists are utility, appearance, financial worth and ability to convey status, success and prestige. Stronger the materialistic tendencies of individuals, the higher their involvement in fashion clothing. Materialistic values are a significant contributor to an individual's involvement in fashion clothing and purchase decision involvement.

✿ **Park and Kim (2003)** revealed that consumer purchasing behavior from an online store is influenced by information quality, site commitment, relational benefits, and site awareness. The online shopping environment enables customers to reduce their decision making effort by providing vast selection once customer insures that the company is able to fulfill their requirements. Then they are likely to purchase products through online facility.

✿ **Ahmed, Johnson, Yang, Kheng, Fatt, Teng and Boon (2002)** revealed that brand, price and country of origin (quality, taste and image of the country) are the aspects of product evaluation. Brand and price are more important than country of origin in evaluating low-involved products for Singaporean consumer.

✿ **Kim, Damhorst and Lee (2002)** revealed that dimension of product involvement shaped consumer attitude. Dimension of involvement like fashion, individuality and comfort influenced consumer beliefs about product attributes in the advertisement.

✿ **Shwu- Ing Wu (2002)** revealed that level of consumer involvement influenced the advertising effectiveness. Degree of consumer involvement could effectively segment the market. Consumer involvement and advertising content importance (type of media, the degree of repetition, the length of the message, the tone of the message, and the quantity of information) are positively related. Similarly, Degree of consumer involvement and the advertising effect hierarchy (awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase) are positively related. A high degree of consumer involvement directed a high advertising effect. Thus, the degree of consumer involvement is an important indication for an advertising strategy.

✿ **Kim, Damhorst and Lee (2002)** disclosed that Women are more involved in fashion attributes while purchasing apparel but men are more concerned about level of comfort for the same product.

✿ **Aurifeille, Quester, Lockshin and Spawton (2001)** revealed that Nationality plays an important role in consumption of the product and consumers can be categorized on the basis of nationality and segment them using product involvement, brand decision involvement and purchase involvement as segmenting variable.

✿ **Baltas (1997)** revealed that familiarity and propinquity between consumer and brand personality have positive impact on the buying behavior. As familiarity increases, probability of purchasing from store brand will also increase.

✿ **Beharrell and Denison (1995)** revealed that consumers are highly involved in routine shopping and grocery shopping activity becomes highly involving in the event of a stock-out, customers may search the whole store or even undertake a second shopping trip to obtain it.

DECISION MAKING

✿ **Atkin, Nowak and Garcia (2007)** revealed that women pay more attention and get more involved than men to purchase wine in US. In US, if information is not available, then to get aware, women show a significantly stronger preference for acquiring on the spot information, including asking questions and reading the menu in restaurants as well as asking store personnel, reading labels, and reading shelf tags in stores. While men have significantly stronger tendency to read books about wine. As far as the region of origin, US consumers strongly prefer home country of origin.

✿ **Charters and Pettigrew (2006)** argued that high, medium and low involved consumers evaluate the quality of wine in different ways. Involvement levels have different impact on drinker's concept of wine quality. High involved drinkers use standard criterion to evaluate the quality, even few of high involved drinkers think that quality should be absolute-a fixed unchanged standard while low involved drinkers do not use such criterion for evaluation. They consider price, smoothness, flavor and drinkability as important aspects to quality evaluation.

✿ **Silayoi and Speece (2004)** revealed that packaging plays an important role in purchase decisions. Colors, size,

shape, graphics and available information influence the buyer's decision. Housewives and working women identified packaging as the main factor in their assessment and decision on household purchase. Consumers rely on the information available on the package and judge the quality of the product. If the package communicates high quality, consumers assume that the product is of high quality.

✿ **O'Cass (2003)** revealed that consumer involvement and product knowledge are related. Confidence represents a consumer's belief that their knowledge or ability is sufficient or correct regarding fashion clothing and this belief in ability is significantly influenced by consumers' degree of involvement in fashion clothing. Fashion clothing knowledge also positively effected consumer confidence in making decisions.

✿ **Wang, Siu and Hui (2002)** revealed that quality consciousness, brand consciousness, fashion consciousness, recreational and hedonistic orientation, price consciousness, impulsive and careless tendencies, confused by over choice and brand loyalty are important decision making styles in the Chinese market. Brand consciousness is becoming increasingly important in Chinese consumer's mentality. They show their involvement in purchase of international branded garments as domestic brands are still less stylish and have lower brand recognition as compared to imported brands. Consumers preferring to buy imported brands tend to be brand loyal and have a more hedonistic attitude. They are more quality, brand and fashion conscious.

✿ **Baltas (1997)** revealed that national brands provide special offer for the promotions of their product while typically, store brands are at permanent lower prices and do not promote as often as national brands do. Customers who usually search for such offers do not prefer stores brands, but consumer inclination to choose the cheapest alternative is positively affected on picking the store brand. Price is an important predictor of purchasing a product from a store.

DEMOGRAPHICS

✿ A study by **Sidin, Rahman, Rashid, Othman and Bakar (2008)** revealed that social structural variables such as social status, age, birth order and city of dwelling influenced children consumption behavior. Young consumer's decision-making patterns are to be based on certain parent/child characteristics such as age, social class, and sex, although the degree of associations varies by product type also. The available information sources like newspaper, magazine, internet, electronic media at higher socio- economic class homes plays an important role in consumption behavior and purchasing.

✿ **Drichoutis, Lazaridis and Nayga (2006)** revealed that as age increases, people get more involved about their health and are likely to consume foods consistent with the recommended dietary guidelines. As age increases, people become more involved in food and consider price, brand, and ease of preparation as important. Working consumers are more likely to have high involvement because they feel bigger deterioration in their health status and, therefore, try to compensate by involving in their diet. Family size is again a very important aspect- larger households are less likely to find brands important. The main meal planners are more involved with food.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in several stages. In the first stage, related literature review was done to understand the problem, concept and past studies. Various articles, books and journals were referred. In order to check level of consumer involvement, two product categories- Laptop for durable product category and Garments for non-durable product category were selected. In the second stage, research design was made and a self design opinionnaire was framed to find out the various dimensions influencing consumer involvement. Opinionnaire was focused on the various risks consumer perceived while purchasing a product, their interest in the product, hedonic value, packaging, shopping from malls, durability, their level of seeking information from various sources, reasons to purchase a product, choice of products, consumer decision-making process etc. A pilot study was conducted, 30 respondents were interviewed in order to check the validity of the questionnaire and product selection. In order to find the level of consumer involvement, Zaichkowsky's (1985) unidimensional conception of involvement was adapted. Zaichkowsky presented a 20 items bipolar likert scale called Personal- Involvement-Inventory (PII). After pilot study, data was collected from 120 respondents from Indore city from January 2009 to May 2009. In the third stage, data was classified and tabulated in order to get information in a fruitful manner.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

Cronbach alpha values for all 24 items on five point likert scale measuring independent variables stood at 0.7265 and .7054 for Garments and Laptop respectively. The Scale is simple and acceptable across the products. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to find how these variables have an influence on consumer involvement for both product categories. Multiple regression analysis where consumer involvement is a dependent variable and independent variables financial risk, performance risk, physical risk, social risk, time risk, uncertainty of selection, psychological risk, previous experiences, product attribute, situation, brand personality, hedonic value, motivation, level of learning, utility of the product , price, durability, gift(for whom a product is purchased), life style, store, frequency of use, additional benefits, packaging and endorsement were taken as predictors of consumer involvement.

RESULTS

❖ REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR GARMENTS

Table 1 :ANOVA: Showing the Linearity of Regression Model of Garments

ANOVA					
Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.764	4.764	20.974	0.00
	Residual	5.678	0.227		
	Total	10.442			
2	Regression	6.951	3.475	23.894	0.00
	Residual	3.491	0.145		
	Total	10.442			
3	Regression	7.51	2.503	19.638	0.00
	Residual	2.932	0.127		
	Total	10.442			
4	Regression	8.073	2.018	18.747	0.00
	Residual	2.369	0.108		
	Total	10.442			

Stepwise Regression Analysis reveals four models. ANOVA confirms the linearity at 5% significant level. F value for all four models in Table 1 is significant as significant value is less then 5% or .05. Hence, hypothesis of non linearity is rejected and regression analysis can be performed.

Table 2 :Model Summary: Showing Proportion of Variation in Consumer Involvement in Garments Explained by Independent Variables (R²)

Model Summary						
Dependent Variable	Model	Predictors	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
Consumer Involvement	1	PRESHOP	0.675	0.456	0.434	0.47657
	2	PRESHOP,HEDONIC	0.816	0.666	0.638	0.38138
	3	PRESHOP,HEDONIC, OFFER	0.848	0.719	0.683	0.35703
	4	PRESHOP,HEDONIC, OFFER, UNCERTNT	0.879	0.773	0.732	0.32812

In Table (2), R square shows the proportion of variance in consumer involvement that can be predicted by Previous Shopping Experience, Hedonic Value, Special Offer or Additional Benefits and Uncertainty. These predictors jointly explain 77.3 % variation in consumer involvement.

The values of beta explain the order of the contribution in consumer involvement by the predictors. The β 's coefficients in table (3) indicate that Previous Shopping Experience is highly influencing in consumer involvement and followed

Table 3 :Coefficients: Showing The Coefficients, S.E., And T Values Obtained From Regression Model Of Garments

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandarised Coefficients β	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.062	0.45		4.586	0.000
	PRESHOP	0.469	0.102	0.675	4.58	0.000
2	(Constant)	0.522	0.536		0.974	0.340
	PRESHOP	0.372	0.086	0.536	4.34	0.000
	HEDONIC	0.433	0.112	0.479	3.878	0.001
3	(Constant)	0.435	0.503		0.863	0.397
	PRESHOP	0.302	0.087	0.435	3.472	0.002
	HEDONIC	0.396	0.106	0.437	3.732	0.001
	OFFER	0.137	0.065	0.26	2.094	0.047
4	(Constant)	0.843	0.496		1.7	0.103
	PRESHOP	0.274	0.081	0.395	3.394	0.003
	HEDONIC	0.39	0.098	0.43	3.994	0.001
	OFFER	0.16	0.061	0.304	2.624	0.015
	UNCERTNT	-0.09981	0.044	-0.237	-2.287	0.032

Figure 1

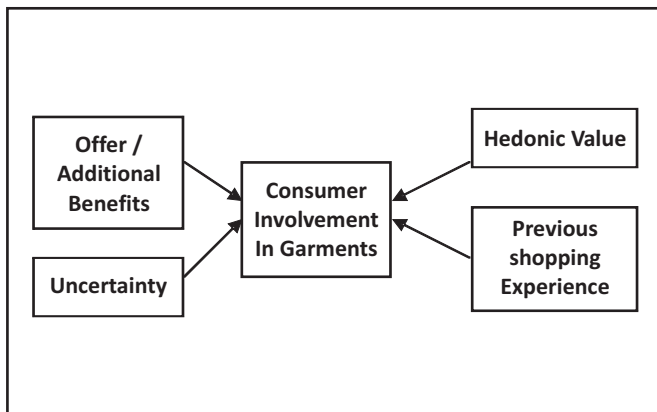


Figure 3 : Showing Regression Line Of Consumer Involvement And Uncertainty (Garments)

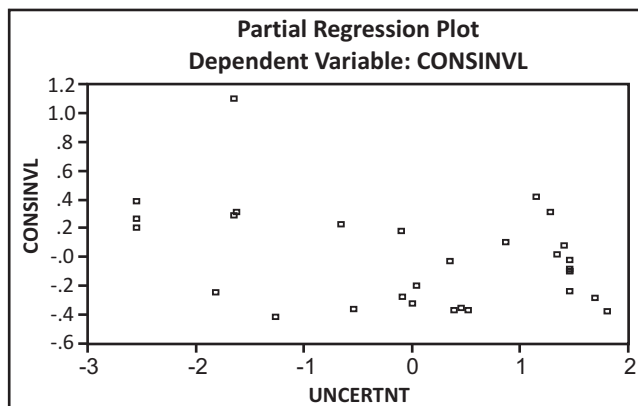


Figure 2: Showing Plot Of Predicted Values And Residuals Obtained From Regression Analysis (Garments)

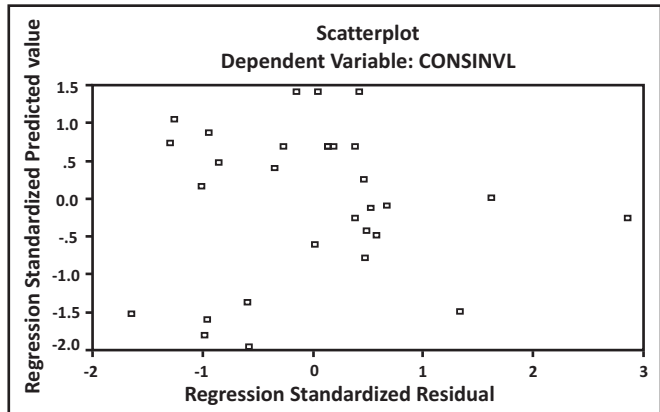


Figure 4 : Showing Regression Line Of Consumer Involvement And Previous Shopping Experience (Garments).

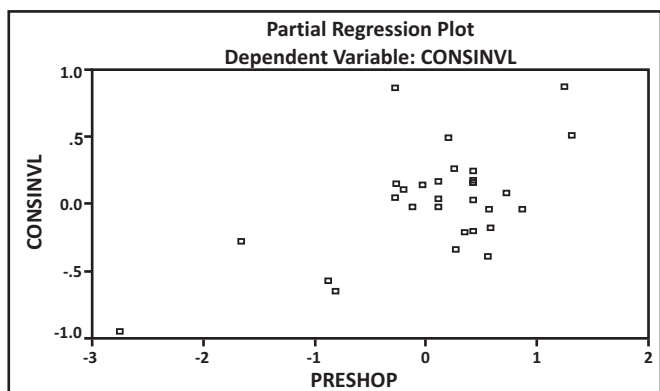


Figure 5 : Showing Regression Line Of Consumer Involvement And Hedonic Value (Garments).

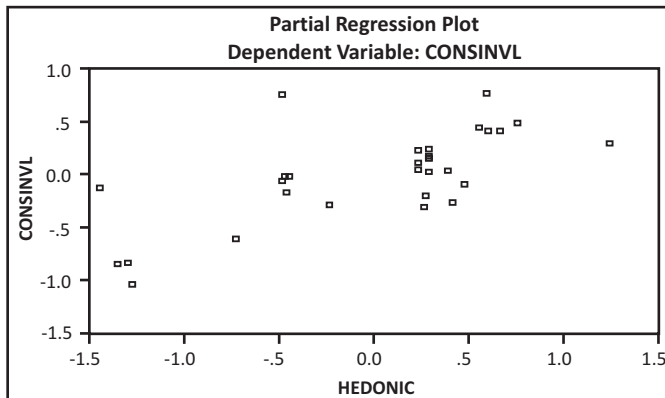
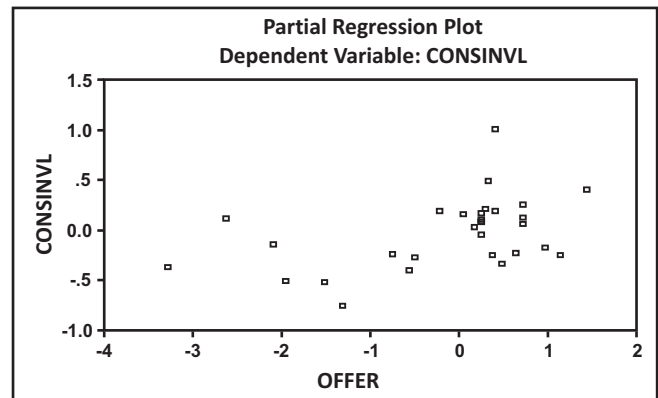


Figure 6 : Showing Regression Line Of Consumer Involvement And Offers (Garments)



by Hedonic Value, Special Offer and Uncertainty (model 4). The t values for all the β 's are statistically significant. This model suggests the following Regression line:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$$

Consumer Involvement = 0.843 + 0.39 (Hedonic Value) + 0.274 (Previous shopping Experience) + 0.16 (Offer) - 0.099 (Uncertainty)

✿REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR LAPTOPS

Table 4 :ANOVA: Showing The Linearity In Regression Model Of Laptops

ANOVA					
Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.56	4.56	18.96	0.00
	Residual	6.01	0.24		
	Total	10.57			
2	Regression	5.71	2.85	14.07	0.00
	Residual	4.86	0.20		
	Total	10.57			
3	Regression	7.01	2.34	15.10	0.00
	Residual	3.56	0.15		
	Total	10.57			
4	Regression	8.04	2.01	17.52	0.00
	Residual	2.53	0.11		
	Total	10.57			

For Durable product (Laptop), Stepwise Regression Analysis reveals four models. ANOVA confirms the linearity at 5% significant level. F value for all four models in table 4 is significant as significant value is less then .05. Hence, hypothesis of non linearity is rejected and regression analysis can be performed.

In Table 5, R square shows the proportion of variance in consumer involvement that can be predicted by Brand Personality, Durability, Frequency of Use and Hedonic Value. These predictors jointly explain 76.1 % variation in consumer involvement.

The values of beta explain the order of the contribution in consumer involvement in Laptop by the predictors. The β 's coefficient in table (6) indicate that Brand Personality is the highly influencing in consumer level of involvement and followed by Hedonic Value, Frequency of Use and Durability (Model 4). The t values for all the β 's are statistically significant.

Table 5 :Model Summary: Showing Proportion of Variation In Consumer Involvement in Laptops Explained by Independent Variables (R²)

Model Summary						
Dependent Variable	Model	Predictors:	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Consumer Involvement	1	BRNDPERS	0.656	0.431	0.408	0.490
	2	BRNDPERS, DURABILITY	0.734	0.539	0.501	0.450
	3	BRNDPERS, DURABILITY, FREQOFUSE	0.814	0.663	0.619	0.393
	4	BRNDPERS, DURABILITY, FREQOFUSE, HEDONIC	0.872	0.761	0.717	0.338

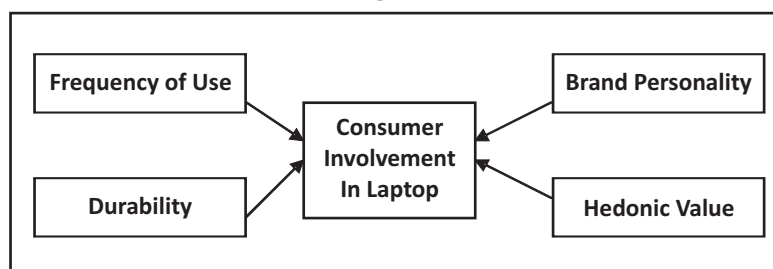
Table 6 : Coefficients: Showing the Coefficients, S.E., and T Values Obtained From Regression Model of Laptops

Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.10	0.42		5.00	0.00
	BRNDPERS	0.44	0.10	0.66	4.35	0.00
2	(Constant)	1.28	0.52		2.47	0.02
	BRNDPERS	0.47	0.09	0.71	5.05	0.00
	DURABLT	0.16	0.07	0.33	2.38	0.03
3	(Constant)	0.87	0.47		1.84	0.08
	BRNDPERS	0.39	0.09	0.59	4.55	0.00
	DURABLT	0.17	0.06	0.36	2.92	0.01
	FREQOFUS	0.19	0.07	0.37	2.90	0.01
4	(Constant)	-0.18	0.54		-0.33	0.74
	BRNDPERS	0.37	0.07	0.56	5.01	0.00
	DURABLT	0.17	0.05	0.34	3.23	0.00
	FREQOFUS	0.23	0.06	0.45	3.94	0.00
	HEDONIC	0.25	0.08	0.32	3.00	0.01

This model suggests the following Regression line:

Consumer Involvement = - 0.18 + 0.37 (Brand Personality) + 0.25 (Hedonic Value) + 0.23 (Frequency of Use) + 0.17 (Durability)

Figure 7



CONCLUSION

Multiple Regression Method suggested four models for both the product categories. The best model in case of Garments suggests that customers feel happy and pleased while purchasing garments and their level of involvement is influenced by hedonic value. For this product category, they evaluate their previous experience with the product and

Figure 8: Showing Plot Of Predicted Values And Residuals Obtained From Regression Analysis (Laptop)

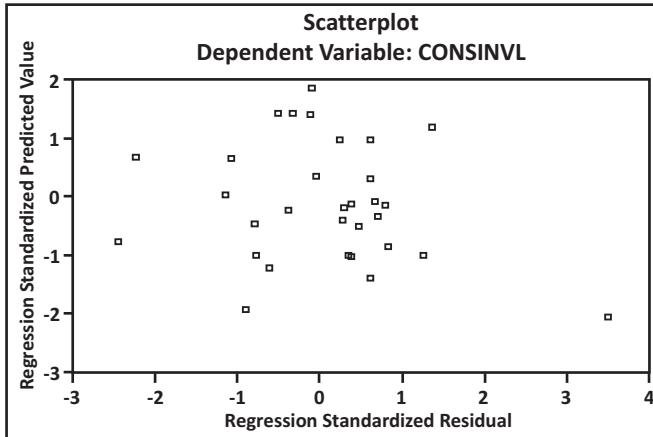


Figure 9 : Showing Regression Line Of Consumer Involvement And Brand Personality(Laptop)

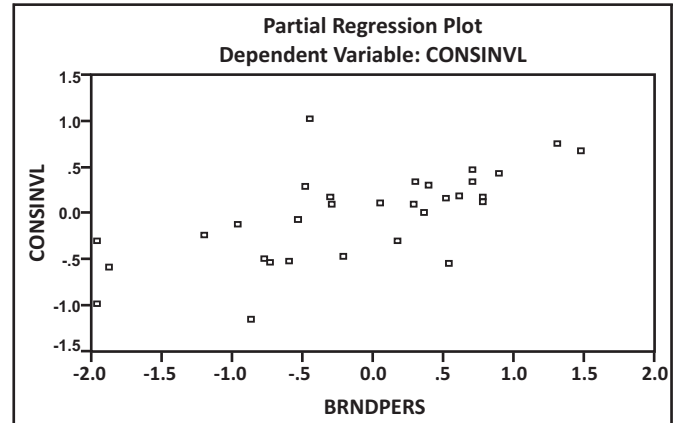


Figure 10 : Showing Regression Line Of Consumer Involvement And Hedonic Value (Laptop)

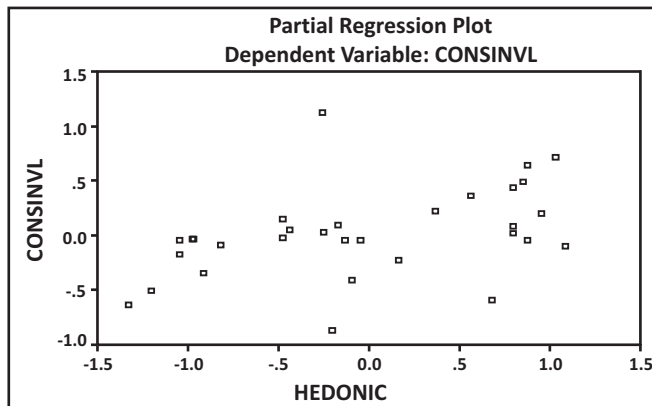


Figure 11 : Showing Regression Line Of Consumer Involvement And Durability (Laptop)

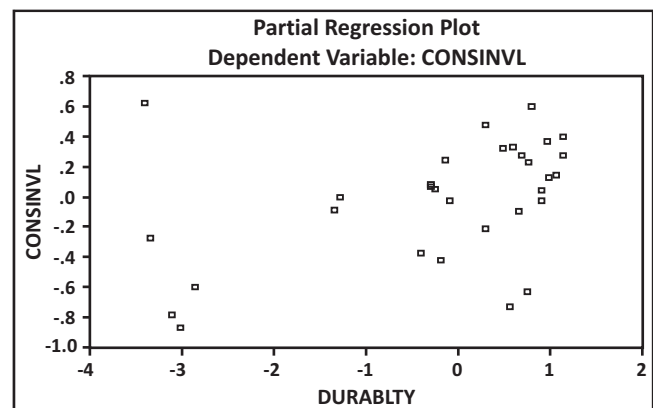
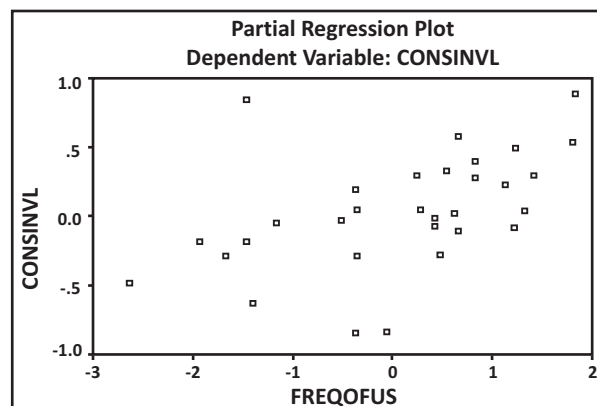


Figure 12 : Showing Regression Line Of Consumer Involvement And Frequency Of Use (Laptop)



do not purchase if they are not satisfied with the product. Customers also take advantage of special offer and benefits given by store/brand in garments. They get confused while purchasing this product because of plenty of brands available and due to fashion/brand consciousness. In case of Laptops, customers give more preference to brand and find that it shows their status, they believe that use of Laptop gives them an opportunity to reveal their personality and

the type of life they strive for. While purchasing this product, they are also concerned about durability and frequency of its use, those who frequently use laptops, get more involved with them. Hedonic value does affect level of consumer involvement. Surprisingly, none of the risk could give their impact on consumer involvement in both the proposed models. Marketers need to mark these dimensions to understand their target consumer and their behavior. Marketers should keep giving special offers in brands and try to maintain the quality of the product continuously. Even for Laptops, durability should be the main concern of the marketers.

ELLIPSIS

CONSINVL = Consumer Involvement
DURABLTY= Durability
HEDONIC = Hedonic Value

BRNDPERS = Brand Personality
REQOFUS = Frequency of use
UNCERTNT = Uncertainty

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