

Exploring the impact of customized products and perceived product uniqueness on consumer purchase intention: A Review

Karuna^{1*}, Dr. Himanshu Kumar Pandey²

¹ Research Scholar, CCSU, Meerut, U.P. India

karunadknmu@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, M.M.(PG) College, Modi Nagar, U.P. India

Abstract: The global economy changed from mass production to a customer-centric economy that is focused on personalisation and preferences, thanks to recent digitalisation, technology enhancements and growing consumer expectations. Now businesses can compete by providing customised products to satisfy customer needs, lifestyles and self-expression. This review study aims to integrate the existing consumer behaviour, marketing and product customisation literature to investigate the relationship between customised products and perceived product uniqueness on customer purchase intention. The paper emphasises the potential for mass customisation and consumer co-creation to increase customer involvement, emotional involvement, perceived value and brand engagement. The perceived product uniqueness, the need for originality and distinctiveness of the product in the eyes of the customer, affects the intention to buy customised products. The research also includes the role of customer psychographics, product quality, advertising effectiveness, and brand image on purchase intentions. The review revealed that use of customised products enhances the satisfaction, originality and emotional involvement of the customers, which boosts purchase intention of the brand. When it comes to buying, customers prefer personalised products over regular ones, because of their preference for creativity, distinction, and self-expression. Personalization has become more popular and convenient with cutting-edge digital solutions, such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, and ecommerce customisation platforms. The study provides an explanation for the relationship between customisation and purchase intent which enables marketers and organisations to develop successful personalisation strategies in more competitive and dynamic industries.

Keywords: Product customization, Customized products, Perceived product uniqueness, Consumer purchase intention, Mass customization, Consumer behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 20 years, fast technology improvements, digitalisation, and shifting consumer expectations have all contributed to a substantial restructuring of the global marketplace. client-centric methods that prioritise personalisation and individual preferences are gradually replacing traditional mass production strategies that concentrated on providing standardised items to a wide client base. Product customisation has become a crucial competitive strategy in this changing economic climate, allowing companies to create and supply goods that closely

match the distinct requirements, preferences, and lifestyles of individual customers. Fashion, footwear, cars, electronics, cosmetics, furniture, and consumer goods are just a few of the industries that have seen an increase in customised products due to the widespread use of e-commerce platforms, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and advanced manufacturing technologies.

Consumers nowadays are no longer content with generic goods that just serve utilitarian needs. Rather, people look for goods that represent their lifestyle, beliefs, interests, and sense of self. This change has prompted companies to adopt mass customisation, which combines the flexibility of customised services with the efficiency of large-scale manufacturing, rather than mass production. Customers may choose elements like colour, size, style, material, packaging, and functionality via product customisation, resulting in goods that better meet their unique needs. In addition to improving customer happiness, these tailored experiences increase consumers' emotional connection to companies and goods, which eventually affects their choice to buy.

One of the most significant concepts in consumer behaviour research is consumer purchase intention, which is defined as the probability or propensity of customers to buy a certain product or service. Many variables, such as perceived product quality, pricing, brand image, advertising, product expertise, perceived value, trust, perceived risk, customer experience, and technological ease, have an impact on purchase intention. Because it gives customers more influence over product design and fosters a feeling of individuality and ownership, product customisation has drawn a lot of attention among these considerations. Customised goods often result in increased perceived value, boost consumer participation in the purchasing process, and strengthen brand-customer connections. The relevance of customisation in today's industry has been further reinforced by the quick growth of internet buying. Customisation is now more accessible than ever thanks to digital platforms that let customers customise and see things before making a purchase. Customisation elements have been effectively used into marketing tactics by companies like Nike, Adidas, Dell, Apple, and many online stores in order to set themselves apart from rivals and improve consumer engagement. Additionally, technological advancements like augmented reality, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and 3D printing have improved the efficiency, affordability, and scalability of customised product design, allowing businesses to offer individualised experiences to a wider range of clients.

Customers' choices for personalised goods are also greatly influenced by their psychographics, which include lifestyle, personality, attitudes, interests, and values. Customers that appreciate individuality, self-expression, and originality are often more likely to buy customised goods than those who just care about pricing or uniformity. Similar to this, customers' intents to buy customised items are greatly influenced by elements including perceived risk, product quality, packaging, advertising efficacy, and brand reputation. Therefore, companies looking to improve consumer happiness and create successful marketing strategies must comprehend the combined influence of these aspects. Relatively little empirical study has thoroughly evaluated the influence of customised goods on purchase intention, especially in the context of developing countries, despite the fact that many studies have looked at consumer purchase intention and other marketing drivers. Because of growing digital penetration, more product knowledge, and shifting lifestyles, consumer tastes are always changing, therefore it's important to look at how customisation affects consumer behaviour in the current market. An empirical study may provide important information on the link between customer purchase intention and customised goods, as well as the elements that support or undermine this relationship.

In light of this, the current research uses an empirical method to investigate how customised goods affect consumers' intentions to make purchases. In addition to providing useful implications for manufacturers, marketers, retailers, and legislators, the results are anticipated to add to the body of research already available on consumer behaviour and product customisation. Organisations can create more successful personalisation strategies, enhance customer experiences, boost brand loyalty, and gain a sustainable competitive advantage in a market that is becoming more dynamic and customer-driven by comprehending the factors that affect consumers' acceptance of customised products.

OBJECTIVES

- To probe the impact of Customized products on consumer purchase intention.
- To investigate how consumers' purchase intentions for Customized products are affected by perceived product uniqueness.

PRODUCT CUSTOMIZATION

Academics and industry professionals are coming to see marketing as a two-way street where buyers and sellers work together to improve the value of the transaction. Interactive marketing, one-to-one marketing, and individual marketing all revolve on this. This tendency will only quicken as a result of developments in Internet-based information and communication technologies and flexible manufacturing. Mass customisation is a relatively new tactic in marketing that aims to meet customers' specific demands along several dimensions by using a flexible method (Business Week 2000, p. 130). Operations management and management information systems have been heavily involved with the idea of mass customisation, particularly in relation to the data and infrastructure required for adaptable and rapid production. Academic marketers have studied mass customisation and consumer co-creation of ideal goods very little, despite its increasing popularity in marketing practice and the attention it has received from the trade press (Wind and Rangaswamy 2001).

CONSUMER PSYCHOGRAPHICS

Motivation, perception, learning, personality, and attitude are psychographic elements that impact consumers' decisions to buy or not buy a product.

i. Motivation: A consumer's motivation is what really gets them to buy. The customer is motivated to satisfy their unmet demands, whether they are natural or learned, by this driving force. A person's acquired requirements come from their interactions with society, while innate needs are the most fundamental need for survival. Worldwide, researchers use the ideas of motivation put forward by prominent psychologists like Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow, and Frederick Herzberg to examine what drives consumers.

ii. Perception: A person's perception is the result of a series of steps that begin with the selection, organization, and interpretation of sensory information in order to construct an internally consistent and externally meaningful mental image of the world around them. There is a wide range of perception because various individuals interpret the same images and events differently. From product development to advertising, marketers should bear in mind that various customers have varied impressions of the same product.

iii. Learning: When we talk about learning as a process, we're referring to the steps involved in making a purchase, using the product, and then applying what we've learned to future

purchases. The customer learns from their purchases and incorporates that knowledge into future purchases, making it a continuing process. According to theorists, learning takes place when there are incentives, signals, feedback, and reinforcement.

iv. Attitude: Learning new things all the time leads to changing one's attitude. The way people think and behave is strongly influenced by the ideas and attitudes they develop as a result of their learning experiences. A consumer's attitude about a product determines whether they will keep using it or not. Marketers throughout the world may learn about customers' attitudes with the use of models like the Tricomponent Attitude Model, the Multi-Attribute Attitude Model, and the Attitude toward the Ad model. Once a customer has developed an opinion about a product, it's hard to alter their mind, therefore marketers should make analysing customer attitudes a top priority.

CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION

Buying intent describes a customer's tendency to acquire a certain item or service. The intention to buy is a dependent variable that is affected by both internal and external variables. A customer's purchase intentions reveal their emotional investment in a product or service. Marketers rely on consumers' intentions to buy as a primary metric. "Intent marketing" refers to the practice of advertising products and services in response to consumers' stated or implied intentions to accept, buy, or utilise such products and services, regardless of whether such intentions were explicitly stated by the company or brand. Measuring purchase intention is useful for creating promotional campaigns or campaigns. The kind of material that should be shown in an advertising might be easily defined based on what the client wants. You may organise your marketing actions based on the consumer's goals, which may provide you insight into their levels of mental understanding. An integrated road plan for approaching an advertising campaign may be generated by analysing a customer base's buying intents.

According to these criteria, there are five steps that customers go through before making a purchase, and we'll go over them below:

i. Problem Recognition: When an issue or need is identified, the purchasing behaviour of consumers begins. Arousal of needs and subsequent appropriate response by the consumer are both influenced by the stimulus, which may be either internal or external.

ii. Information Search: Searching for relevant information before making a purchase is another name for this phase. At this point, customers attempt to collect knowledge on different methods to fulfil their desire, depending on how urgently they want to do so. Customers who are eager to find solutions to their problems but lack the necessary expertise often do thorough online research. In contrast, customers who aren't very motivated tend to do less thorough searches for information and instead commit the details to memory for later use. In general, the following types of consumer information sources are considered reliable:

- **Private Sources:** Family, friends, acquaintances
- **Infomercial Sources:** Advertisements, Salesforce, display boards, websites
- **General Sources:** Media platforms, existing consumers
- **Practical Sources:** Product usage, Examining the product

iii. Evaluation of Alternatives: The buyer gathers crucial information about the product options that might meet their wants in the prior stage. At this point, each potential course of action is considered. The process involves every possible alternative making its way from the total set to the choice set. The total set contains all the possibilities that a customer may find in a marketplace, while the choice set contains the options that need to be chosen. Features, usefulness, pricing, availability, service, and brand image are some of the criteria that consumers use to make their decisions. At the conclusion of this stage, a buyer forms an inclination towards a certain product, which is called purchase intention.

iv. Purchase Decision: In this step, the decision is made about turning the buy intention into an actual purchase. Factors like other people's attitudes and unforeseen circumstances determine whether or not the intention-behavior gap is fulfilled. The former denotes the general public's disapproval of consumers' decisions and the latter's acceptance of such decisions. The second category includes events outside the control of the customer that could cause a change in purchase intent right up until the checkout process. Options for brand, seller, amount, timing, and payment method must be considered in order to transform a buy intent into a real transaction.

v. Post purchase Behaviour: Purchase choices are influenced by customers' experiences with the product after they begin to use it. The happiness experienced while using the goods is the

deciding factor in these choices. If a customer is happy with a product, they are more likely to purchase it again, tell their friends about it, and provide favourable feedback to the company that sold it. Conversely, an unhappy customer will behave in the exact opposite way. As a result, it's crucial for businesses to stay in touch with customers after they make a purchase, rather than abandoning them altogether.

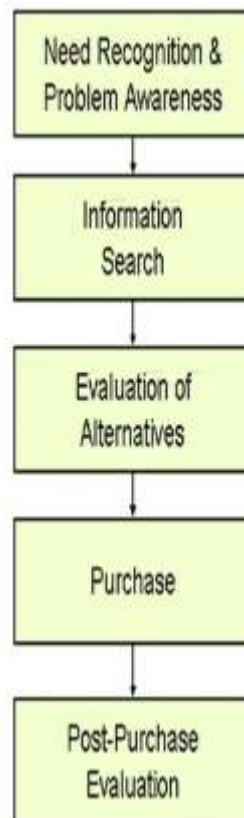


Figure 1: Consumer Buying Decision Process

PRODUCT QUALITY AND PURCHASE INTENTION

There are a lot of things that go into consumers' choice to buy, but one of the most important is the quality of the goods. Customers' impressions of a product or service's quality have a significant impact on their opinions, expectations, and, in the end, their propensity to buy it. The complex link between product quality and intent to buy has been the subject of much study, with fruitful results for theory and practice both. Buyers and suppliers' bargaining power is impacted by salespeople's performance, which is influenced by factors like personality traits, product knowledge, competitive intelligence, and the utilisation of sales force automation (Saha & Kar, 2021).

ADVERTISING AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Despite the many moving parts in today's marketing mix, one constant is the power of advertising to influence consumers' thoughts, feelings, and, eventually, their propensity to buy. Creating advertising campaigns that connect with customers and motivate them to make purchases has become an essential objective for firms competing for the attention and allegiance of their target audiences. A lot of time and energy has gone into studying advertising in an attempt to understand the complex web of interactions between different aspects, methods of execution, and the impact on intent to buy. Famous models like the Hierarchy of Effects and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) provide the theoretical groundwork for how advertisements affect consumers' intentions to buy. In reaction to advertising stimuli, consumers go through a series of cognitive, emotive, and behavioural phases, according to the Hierarchy of Effects. Ultimately, this leads to buy intentions and acts. There are two ways that advertising might affect people's attitudes and intentions, according to the ELM. One way is the central route, which includes thinking critically about the arguments presented in the message. The other way is the peripheral route, which depends on heuristic processing and peripheral stimuli.

BRAND NAME AND PURCHASE INTENTION

The ability to influence consumers' impressions, attitudes, and, eventually, buy intentions has given rise to strong brand names in today's crowded and competitive marketplace. One of the most important ways in which a well-known and respected brand stands out from the competition is via the symbolic meanings, quality promises, and emotional connotations it conveys to consumers. Across many different product categories and customer demographics, a great deal of study has focused on elucidating the complex interplay between brand name characteristics, brand equity, and the effect on purchase intention. Important studies in marketing and consumer behaviour provide the theoretical groundwork for studying how brand names impact purchase intention. Brand names, according to the Associative Network Theory (Anderson, 1983), are like nodes in a customer's memory network; they're associated with a lot of different things that could affect their attitude and ultimately their choice to buy. Similarly, according to the Brand Equity Model, brand names shape brand equity and influence customer preferences and behaviours by contributing to brand recognition, perceived quality, brand associations, and loyalty.

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW OF CUSTOMIZED PRODUCTS

Products should have better production and environmental performance all the way through their life cycle thanks to the new technical solutions advocated by Industry 4.0. The rising need for smart manufacturing technology and smart goods is also associated with this. In a sustainable market, shoppers should do their research before purchasing so-called "green" items (recycled, serviced, renewable, shared, etc.). Customers nowadays anticipate that brands will cater to their own interests, whims, and way of life. According to Lambel and Mintzberg (1996), consumers want to have a say in the design of produced goods and be satisfied with the results. Thus, a fresh, cutting-edge strategy for production and company administration is required to greatly improve adaptability, productivity, and customer service. According to the research of Koren, Y., Shpitalni, M., Gu, P., and Hu, S. J. (2015), Vesanen, J. (2007), and Zhou, F., Ji, Y., and Jiao, R. (2013), personalised goods are an example of how the paradigm of mass manufacturing has been shifted in favour of customised production. Brands like Adidas, Nike, Timberland, Converse, and Burberry all have shoes that may be customised to the customer's specifications, including the colour, insole, and laces. Companies in the automobile sector provide a plethora of fascinating examples; for instance, a Maybach car's equipment specification is quite thorough. Customer preferences, customer involvement in product design, customisation, and information flow between manufacturer and customer are common features of this approach indicated in the literature (Zhou et al., 2013). However, the notion of personalisation is not clearly defined. Customers are more likely to buy from a business that makes them feel special by tailoring their experience (Arora et al., 2008).

CONCLUSION

This review research focused on the consumer behaviour and marketing literature to examine the relationship between customisation and perceived product uniqueness on customer purchase intention. The report shows that product customisation is a major marketing strategy as customers want customization, uniqueness and self-expression. Customised items offer the option of selecting style, colour, size, material and functionality, making for a stronger emotional connection and perceived value, unlike standardised items. The literature shows that customised goods increase customer happiness, engagement in the buying process, and brand–consumer interactions, which increases consumer purchase intention. The uniqueness was very much a factor; those who consider customised products as unique and special will be

more likely to purchase. The review further reveals that motivation, personality, attitude, innovativeness and demand for uniqueness are psychographic customer characteristics that are very important for customer responses to customised products. Purchasing intention is also affected by product quality, promotional effectiveness, and brand image. Tech, particularly e-commerce platforms, AI, AR, VR, and flexible manufacturing systems have aided businesses in providing personalised products on a faster and larger scale, driving the customisation practices throughout industries. The adoption of customisation practices has been facilitated with the help of tech, especially e-commerce platforms, AI, AR, VR, and flexible manufacturing systems, which help businesses provide personalised products in a more accelerated and scaled way. The analysis concluded that customisation and the perceived uniqueness of the product promote buying intentions among customers, and enable contemporary enterprises to gain competitive advantage through the use of customisation. Consumer-centric customisation methods can contribute to increased brand loyalty, customer engagement, and market results. Future research could explore these connections in different cultural contexts, product types, and online retailing contexts to gain a deeper understanding of customer responses to personalised products.

References

1. Business Week. 2000. Customizing for the masses (March 20), 130.
2. Wind, Jerry, Arvind Rangaswamy. 2001. Customerization: The next revolution in mass customization. *J. Interactive Marketing* 15(1) 13–32
3. Saha, S., & Kar, S. (2021). Salespersons performance predictor model: An exploratory factor analysis. *JIMS8M: The Journal of Indian Management & Strategy*, 26(1), 25-33.
4. Lampel, J., & Mintzberg, H. (1996). Customizing customization. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 38(1), 21–30.
5. Koren, Y., Shpitalni, M., Gu, P., & Hu, S. J. (2015). Product design for mass-individualization. *Procedia CIRP*, 36, 64–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procir.2015.01.049>

6. Vesanen, J. (2007). What is personalization? A conceptual framework. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41(5/6), 409–418. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560710737534>
7. Zhou, F., Ji, Y., & Jiao, R. (2013). Affective and cognitive design for mass personalization: Status and prospect. *Journal of Intelligent Manufacturing*, 24(5), 1047–1069. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10845-012-0646-6>
8. Zhou, F., Ji, Y., & Jiao, R. (2013). Affective and cognitive design for mass personalization: Status and prospect. *Journal of Intelligent Manufacturing*, 24(5), 1047–1069. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10845-012-0646-6>
9. Arora, N., Dreze, X., Ghose, A., Hess, J. D., Iyengar, R., Jing, B., Joshi, Y., Kumar, V., Lurie, N. H., Neslin, S. A., et al. (2008). Putting one-to-one marketing to work: Personalization, customization, and choice. *Marketing Letters*, 19(3–4), 305–321. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-008-9056-z>
10. Kumar, A. (2007). From mass customization to mass personalization: A strategic transformation. *International Journal of Flexible Manufacturing Systems*, 19(4), 533–547. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10696-008-9048-6>
11. Tseng, M. M., Jiao, R. J., & Wang, C. (2010). Design for mass personalization. *CIRP Annals – Manufacturing Technology*, 59(1), 175–178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cirp.2010.03.097>
12. Peppers, D., & Rogers, M. (1997). *The one-to-one future*. Doubleday.
13. Riemer, K., & Totz, C. (2010). The many faces of personalization? An integrative economic overview of mass customization and personalization. In *Proceedings of the World Conference on Mass Customization, Personalization, and Co-Creation*. Hong Kong.
14. Chellappa, R. K., & Sin, R. G. (2005). Personalization versus privacy: An empirical examination of the online consumer's dilemma. *Information Technology and Management*, 6(2–3), 181–202. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10799-005-5879-y>
15. Birkel, H. S., Veile, J. W., Müller, J. M., Hartmann, E., & Voigt, K. I. (2019). Development of a risk framework for Industry 4.0 in the context of sustainability for

- established manufacturers. *Sustainability*, 11(2), 384.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su11020384>
16. Niehoff, S., & Beier, G. (2018). Industrie 4.0 and sustainable development: A short study on the perception and expectations of experts in Germany. *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development*, 12(3), 360–374.
 17. Blom, J., & Monk, A. (2003). Theory of personalisation of appearance: Why people personalise their mobile phones and PCs. *Human–Computer Interaction*, 18(3), 193–228. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327051HCI181&2_03
 18. Hu, S. J. (2013). Evolving paradigms of manufacturing: From mass production to mass customization and personalization. *Procedia CIRP*, 7, 3–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procir.2013.05.002>
 19. Senanayake, M. M., & Little, T. J. (2010). Mass customization: Points and extent of apparel customization. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 14(2), 282–299. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13612021011046115>
 20. Stock, T., & Seliger, G. (2016). Opportunities of sustainable manufacturing in Industry 4.0. *Procedia CIRP*, 40, 536–541. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procir.2016.01.129>