The role of brand trust as a mediator in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention

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Abstract--- The present purpose of this study was to empirical research on the role of brand trust as a mediator in the connection between brand satisfaction and purchase intention. We tested research data from 255 customers at laptop shops in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. PLS - Partial Least Squares was implemented to evaluate the measurement model and the structural model. The result of the investigation explained that brand satisfaction had a positive impact on brand trust and purchase intention. The findings also revealed that brand trust had a positive influence on purchase intention. Furthermore, the results also disclosed that brand trust had a mediator variable in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention.

Keywords--- brand satisfaction, brand trust, purchase intention, PLS

1. INTRODUCTION

Brands operate various essential roles. At their most fundamental level, brands act as markers for the offerings of a company. From the customer perspective, brands can simplify choosing, promise a specific quality level, decrease risk, and create trust [1]. Besides that, the central purpose of several businesses has built a powerful brand in the market competition because it enables the creation of a broad range of benefits to companies including decreased risk, higher profits, association with other parties as well as the chance for brand expansion [2, 3]. Furthermore, increasing in rivals among businesses and slow to increase new purchasers, businesses have scrutinized for new ways to boost their business abilities. One of the popular approaches has focused on improving the purchases of present clients through client-brand relationships. With this approach, businesses should study consumer performance as this has been important in persuading consumers to purchase business brands, which points to purchase intention [4]. Some researches revealed that brand satisfaction and brand trust as critical determinators in consumer-brand relationships [5–8]. Prior empirical investigations stated that brand satisfaction had a vital precursor of brand trust [6, 9]. Besides, previous research also confirmed that brand satisfaction had an antecedent of purchase intention [10, 11]. Likewise, recent studies also affirmed brand trust had a predictor of purchase intention [3, 12]. However, to date, little attention has concentrated on the role of brand trust as a mediator in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention. Therefore, the present purpose of this study is to empirical research on the role of brand trust as a mediator in the connection between brand satisfaction and purchase intention.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

2.1. Purchase intention

Purchase intention was a purchaser's actual intention toward a product [13]. Purchase intention was defined as a compound of buyers' care and the likelihood of purchasing a product. Some prior researches said that purchase intention referred strongly to attitude and preference toward a brand or a product [14, 15]. Purchase intention has also

described the likelihood that customers would intend or be ready to buy a specific product/service in the future [16]. Other scholars said that purchase intention reveals customers' predictable action in short-term future purchasing decisions (e.g., what product or brand the customer will purchase on the next shopping) [17]. Besides, buying intention was considered as the tendency of a customer to buy a product. The higher a consumer wanted to buy a product, the greater the purchase intention [18, 19].

Furthermore, Kotler (2003) stated that purchase intention could also be affected by an individual's perceptions and unforeseeable circumstances. An individual's perceptions related to private preference; and unforeseeable circumstances indicated to the situations that change the purchase intention [20].

2.2. Brand satisfaction

In the literature, brand satisfaction has been one of the branding concepts that has been broadly investigated [4, 9, 21]. Brand satisfaction was described as a consequence of the consumers' assessment in which consumers look satisfied with their chosen brand, and the brand matched their expectations. Brand satisfaction could be divided into two, i.e., transaction-private satisfaction and accumulative satisfaction [6, 22]. Some prior scholars disclosed that brand satisfaction was defined as the cumulative satisfaction since the overall purchaser's evaluation based on the consumer's total purchasing and experience with a brand of product/service [23, 24]. The link between brand satisfaction and brand trust has examined in some empirical researches [6, 25]. Some prior investigations confirmed that brand satisfaction was an antecedent of brand trust and enhancing brand satisfaction pointing to an improvement in brand trust [21, 26]. Prior empirical studies admitted that brand satisfaction had a significant positive effect on brand trust [6, 9].

Moreover, the consumer's satisfaction with the brand was an essential determinant in building valuable contacts with them. Satisfied buyers will repurchase the brand, express positively to others about the brand, give less regard to rival brands and advertisements, and purchase other brands from the rivals [11]. Besides, other scholars stated that brand satisfaction was a good predictor of purchase intention [6, 7, 10]. Some previous studies verified brand satisfaction had a positive influence on purchase intention [6, 10, 11].

Therefore, we proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: Brand satisfaction has a significant positive effect on brand trust.

H2: Brand satisfaction has a significant positive impact on purchase intention.

2.2. Brand trust

There have been various notions of brand trust in the existing branding literature [27]. Trust was defined as consumers' confidence in the quality and trustworthiness of the product/service provided by the business [24]. Brand trust as a state of thinking safe while interacting with the brand relies on the thought that the brand will continue reliable and responsible for pleasing the consumer [28]. Other scholars stated that brand trust as purchasers' readiness to depend on the brand [29]. The concept of trust was only suitable in circumstances of uncertainty (e.g., when higher versus minor differences among brands happen). Precisely, trust decreased the risk in situations the purchaser perceived especially unsafe as they understood they could rely on the trusted brand [29, 30]. Brand trust also was described as a purchaser's willingness to depend on the brand in the aspect of uncertainty since expecting that the brand will produce positive results [31].

Some scholars disclosed that brand trust was an antecedent of purchase intention [12, 32]. Previous empirical researches confirmed that brand trust had a positive impact on purchase intention [12, 32].

Thus, we proposed the next hypothesis:

H3: Brand trust has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

2.3. The role of brand trust as a mediator variable between brand satisfaction and purchase intention

In the relationship between brand satisfaction and trust and retailer purchase intentions, Zboja and Voorhees (2006) revealed that brand satisfaction and trust affected retailer repurchase intentions, that effect was mediated through retailer satisfaction and trust [6]. Other scholars also disclosed that satisfaction had a significant impact on trust, and trust had a meaningful influence on behavior intention [33]. As mentioned above, some prior empirical studies showed that brand satisfaction had a positive effect on brand trust [4, 34]. Likewise, some previous empirical researches confirmed that brand trust had a positive impact on purchase intention [12, 35]. Based on the above literature, we anticipate that brand trust looks likely to mediate in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention.

Consequently, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H4: Brand trust mediates in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention.

The ground on the objective of the present research, literature review, and hypotheses development, the proposed study model was built, which is displayed in Figure 1.
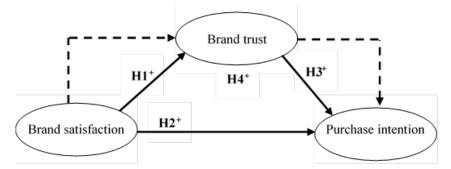

Figure 1. The proposed study model

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Measures

The measurement items of the constructs from previous investigations were examined and adjusted to fit the research condition. A five-point Likert scale, scoring from "1 = fully disagree" to "5 = fully agree" was implemented.

In this present research, we modified four items of brand satisfaction from Chinomona et al. (2013) [9] and Oliver (1980) [36]. We adjusted four variables of the brand trust from So et al. (2013) [29] and Cuong (2020) [37]; four items of purchase intention from Mathur (1999) [38].

3.2. Sample and data collection

The survey data was an investigation of purchasers who purchased at laptop shops in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. This study sample was carried the ground on convenience sampling with different groups of purchasers about gender and age in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. We provided the sum of 350 questionnaires, and there were 95 responses released as there was no adequate information or responded to similar questions. Consequently, there were 255 responses accepted for the last examination. The sample was 113 male purchasers (44.3%) and 142 female purchasers (55.7%). Purchasers whose ages from 18 to 25 made up 49%; from 26 to 35, made up 34.1%; from 36 to 45, made up 16.9%.

3.3. Analytical method

We utilized the partial least squared structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software to test the proposed research model. Testing the proposed research model and hypotheses were taken through two steps: (1) Assessment of the measurement model and (2) Assessment of the structural model (PLS-SEM) [39, 40].

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

(1) Assessment of the measurement model: construct reliability and validity

Table 1 exhibited the measurement scale of the construct's examination results.

We performed Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) for evaluating the reliability of the study. Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs should be higher than 0.70, and the CR values were larger than 0.70, meaning sufficient internal consistency of the constructs [39]. Table 1 described that Cronbach's alpha values of the independent variables were above 0.70. Thus, these constructs gained internal consistency reliability.

We employed the factor loading of all items values and the average variance extracted (AVE) to assess convergent validity. The factor loading and AVE should be higher than 0.50 [39, 41]. In this current research, the factor loading of all items and the AVE values were above 0.50. Therefore, the convergent validity of the constructs was suitable.

Table 1: Measurement items of the construct's analysis results

Construct	Indicators	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Brand satisfaction (BS)	BS1	0.839	0.814	0.878	0.643
	BS2	0.855			
	BS3	0.756			
	BS4	0.753			
Brand trust (BT)	BT1	0.802	0.832	0.888	0.665
	BT2	0.823			
	BT3	0.820			
	BT4	0.816			
Purchase intention (PI)	PI1	0.856	0.879	0.917	0.734
	PI2	0.856			
	PI3	0.840			
	PI4	0.874			

Source: Data processing result

Moreover, we evaluated discriminant validity through the Fornell-Lacker criterion [42]. It related the square root of the AVE values with the latent variable. Accurately, the square root of the AVE should be higher than its highest correlation with any other construct [39]. Table 2 showed that the square root of AVE of reflective construct brand satisfaction, brand trust, and purchase intention was higher than the corresponding latent variables correlation. Therefore, the discriminant validity of these constructs was satisfactory.

Table 2: Discriminant validity result

Construct	Brand satisfaction (BS)	Brand trust (BT)	Purchase intention (PI)
Brand satisfaction (BS)	**0.802**		
Brand trust (BT)	0.483	**0.815**	
Purchase intention (PI)	0.562	0.625	**0.857**

Source: Data processing result

(2) Assessment of the structural model and hypotheses testing

(2.1) Evaluation of the model fit

Figure 2 and Table 3 presented the structural model results.

The outcomes in Figure 2 and Table 3 demonstrated that the Chi-square = 202.847 was significant at 0.05 level (p=0.00). SRMR (standardized root mean square residual) was a measure of the approximate model fit of the proposed research model. By convention, a model had a good model fit when SRMR was less than 0.08 [43]. The summary outcomes in Table 3 revealed that the model had SRMR indices = 0.064 < 0.08. Therefore, the proposed research model was harmonized well for study data. Moreover, testing of a multicollinearity issue unveiled that all VIF values were below the threshold of 5. Consequently, there were no multicollinearity problems in the structural model [39].
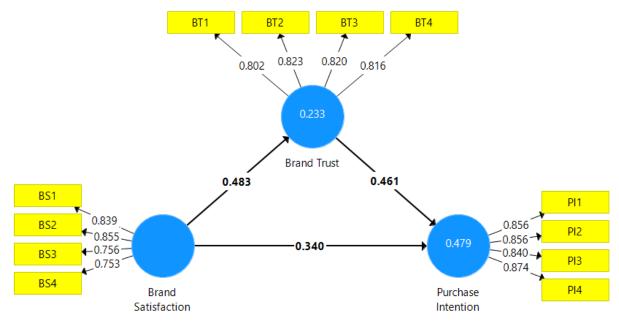

Figure 2: The structural model (PLS-SEM)

Source: Data processing result

Table 3: Model fit results

	Saturated model
SRMR	0.064
d_ULS	0.319
d_G1	0.152
d_G2	0.131
Chi-square	202.847
NFI	0.869

Source: Data processing result

(2.2) Hypotheses testing

Table 4 and table 5 illustrated the hypotheses testing findings. Bootstrapping results (with 5000 resamplings) for the link between the constructs in the proposed research model asserted that the t-value of the H1, H2, H3, H4 was higher than 1.96, and these hypotheses were significant at a 5% level. Consequently, these hypotheses were supported.

Table 4: Direct effect results

Path coefficients	Hypotheses	Path coefficients	t-value	p-value	Results
Brand satisfaction → Brand trust	H1	0.483	7.569	0.000	Supported
Brand satisfaction → Purchase intention	H2	0.340	5.679	0.000	Supported
Brand trust → Purchase intention	H3	0.461	3.313	7.067	Supported

Source: Data processing result

Table 5: Indirect effect results

Path coefficients	Hypothesis	Path coefficients	t-value	p-value	Results
Brand satisfaction → Brand trust → Purchase intention	H4	0.223	5.285	0.000	Supported

Source: Data processing result

(2.3) R^2 (explained variance), f^2 (effect size) and Q^2 (predictive relevance)

To the structural model, the primary assessment metrics were R^2 (explained variance), f^2 (effect size), and Q^2 (predictive relevance) [39]. The R^2 was the overall effect size measure for the structural model [43]. The R^2 value of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 could be presented as weak, moderate, and substantial [44]. The (f^2) effect size enabled evaluating the independent variable contribution to the dependent variable. The f^2 value 0.02 was small, 0.15 was medium, and 0.35 was high [45]. The Q^2 value estimated the structural model's predictive relevance for each endogenous construct. The Q^2 value should be over zero [39].

In this current investigation, the R^2 value for the overall model here was 0.479 (see Figure 2 and Table 6) less than 0.67, watched as a moderate impact; we mentioned that brand trust had an average effect (0.461), followed by brand satisfaction (0.340). Besides, brand satisfaction explained 23.3% of the variance on brand trust; we also disclosed that brand satisfaction had a moderate influence (0.483).

Table 6: R^2 (explained variance), f^2 (effect size) and Q^2 (predictive relevance)

Relationship	f^2	Construct	R^2	Q^2
Brand satisfaction → Brand trust	0.304	Brand trust	0.233	0.140
Brand satisfaction → Purchase intention	0.170			
Brand trust → Purchase intention	0.313	Purchase intention	0.479	0.325

Source: Data processing result

Table 6 revealed the f^2 effect sizes. The relatively high f^2 effect size appeared for the relationship of brand trust → purchase intention (0.313), and brand satisfaction → brand trust (0.304). The medium f^2 effect size occurred for the tie of brand satisfaction → purchase intention (0.170).

Table 6 also showed that the Q^2 values of two endogenous variables were over zero. Accurately, brand trust had Q^2 values (0.140), and purchase intention had Q^2 values (0.325). These outcomes verified the model's predictive relevance for the endogenous latent variables.

4.2. Discussion

This present study's contribution was to measured and tested the role of brand trust as a mediator in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention in different circumstances compared with earlier researches. Most of the previous analyses center on these impacts for the various industries, and this current study demonstrated these effects in the Vietnam laptop market.

The current analysis results stated that the four hypotheses in the research model were supported.

The study outcomes displayed that brand satisfaction had a positive influence on brand trust. Brand satisfaction was a precursor of brand trust. The influence of brand satisfaction on brand trust was medium ($\beta = 0.483$). The f^2 impact size of the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand trust was relatively large (0.304). The prior empirical studies confirmed the results of this research [6, 9]. The research findings also revealed that brand satisfaction had a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Brand satisfaction was an antecedent of purchase intention, and the impact of brand satisfaction on purchase intention was moderate ($\beta = 0.340$). The f^2 effect size of the connection between brand satisfaction and purchase intention was reasonable (0.170). The prior empirical studies supported the results of this research [6, 10, 11].

Moreover, the findings also showed that brand trust had a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Brand trust was a predictor of purchase intention, its' impact on purchase intention was average, and the f^2 effect size of the link of the brand trust and purchase intention was reasonably large (0.313). The previous empirical studies reinforced the results of this study [12, 32].

Finally, the mediation finding revealed that brand trust mediated the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention. The results confirmed that mediation existed in the proposed research model. The finding indicated that brand satisfaction varied brand trust, and later, in turn, brand trust influenced purchase intention.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1. Managerial implications

In line with the earlier researches, this present study disclosed that the role of brand trust as a mediator in the link between brand satisfaction and purchase intention. Therefore, practitioners should concentrate on strategies that enhance the buyer's perception of brand satisfaction, brand trust to boost purchase intention.

The research outcomes described that brand satisfaction was a predictor of brand trust and purchase intention. The research will help laptop shop practitioners to recognize the significance of brand satisfaction on brand trust and purchase intention. Therefore, managers should build strategies to increase customers' brand satisfaction. If clients satisfied with the product brand, clients have tended positively for brand trust and purchase intention.

Besides, the results also showed that brand trust was an antecedent of purchase intention. These results also confirmed the crucial role of brand trust in purchase intention. Therefore, practitioners should make what commits to customers, and this will enhance customer' purchase intention.

This research stated that brand trust played an essential role as a mediating variable in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention. Therefore, practitioners should enhance buyers' perception level of brand trust through improving brand satisfaction, in turn, which leads to increase purchase intention.

5.2. Limitations

In spite of the fact that this present research has notable contributions to literature and practice, this study has some limitations. First, this current research may not be generalizable to all other industries, so the future should focus on other sectors such as clothes, dairy, etc. Second, this study only on the role of brand trust as a mediator in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention; therefore, future studies should focus on other influential factors such as brand image, brand awareness, perceived value, etc.

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