2. **Review of Literature**

An extensive survey of literature was performed in order to understand the existing body of knowledge, the gap in literature and the need of this study. This section is organized in 3 divisions: Background of information search in consumer behavior studies with respect to various approaches; Information search in consumer behavior literature; and the relationship between category attitude and information search.

2.1 **Background on Information Search**

Consumer purchase activity is a process of decision making and theoretically all decision making follows the typology of either emotional or rational approach (Campitelli, Gobet, Epstein, 1983; Epstein, Pacini, Denes-Raj, & Heier, 1996, in Zhong (2005). These are the two fundamentally different modes of information processing—analytic and rational processing versus heuristic and intuitive processing. Overall literature around information search in consumer behavior studies were also observed to be demarked into rationale and psychological approaches. The rationale approach literatures were found to be based on the economic perspectives or on the Economics literature. The research works of psychological approach were found to have studied the information search from the consumer psychology or individual drives. These researches were stemmed from classic studies of Psychology. Individual aspects dominated the psychological route (Engel et al., 1995, Solomon, 1996, 2008, Kotler, 1997; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997) whereas cost-benefit comparison was predominant in rationale approach (Downs, 1961; Stigler, 1961; Felick, Herrmann, & Warland, 1983; Bryant, 1988). As “attitude” is an individual characteristic, our approach falls under psychological approach. Following sections elaborate both the approaches.
Rational Approach

As per the rational approach information search is a step of purchase decision making, which in turn was observed as a risk-mitigation process. Consumers would evaluate options and make a final decision in order to minimize the risks (March & Simon, 1958; Cyert & March, 1963). As mentioned in literature information search was considered important since the value of information was considered as an important economic aspect in the process of consumer decision making. Various works were made on the importance of information search and it was noted that the value of information one owns have been rated higher than the information not owned (Raban, 2001). Consumers set expectations that information helps in better decision making and thus set higher value to information search. Acquired information impact the final choice made by the consumers (Simonson, Huber, & Payne 1988). The value of information was observed to be proportionate to expected utility of the choice set. The higher would be the utility, the higher would be the value (Hauser & Wernerfelt 1990). Linking it to the classic concept of bounded rationality (March & Simon 1958), that one takes decision within the available ‘set’ of information, and hence the value of information becomes high.

Similarly Risks-Reward Model in information seeking highlights that search efforts are made to gain, and to reduce risk. Another set of researchers have focused on the cost-benefit aspect as part of rationale approach. Based on a cost-benefit-analysis, consumers arrive at the final decision. Individuals analyze the outcome vs the input they may need to invest on and accordingly they go for information search (Beach & Mitchell, 1978; Bettman, Johnson & Payne, 1991; Hyldegard, 2006). These sets of researchers highlighted that consumers adopt a rational approach and hence go for information search so as to make an efficient choice (Payne, 1982; Avery, 1996). Literatures around cost-benefit perspective of rationale approach highlighted information search as a process
to minimize cost and maximize benefits. Thus the summary of this section highlights, information search primarily deals with the following 3 categories of literature:

- **Value of Information** (March & Simon, 1958; Ahituv & Neumann, 1986; Simonson et al., 1988; Hauser & Wernerfelt, 1990; McCleary & Whitney, 1994; Raban, 2001)

Relating it to category, many studies in past had also shown that uncertainty associated with category (Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972; Zikmund & Scott, 1973; Deshpande & Hoyey, 1993; Bhatnagar, Misra & Rao, 2000). Bhatnagar et al., (2000) proposed that category impacts the search behavior given the typical characteristics of the categories; for example, certain product categories influence more interactive purchase, which in turn could be considered as purchase based on extensive search (Fram & Grady, 1964; Bhatnagar et al., 2000).

Studies had also indicated that costs and benefits are not independent of category. The same consumer wouldn’t have similar information search process for all classes of products (Watson, Viney & Schomaker, 2002). In their paper of price sensitivity, Nagle and Holden (1995) intuitively indicated that price is not independent of category, and hence the information search is influenced by category.
All studies pertaining to value of information, and product class knowledge clearly highlighted the fact that, category would have very high impact on information search (Brucks, 1985; Putrevu & Ratchford, 1997). Researchers have shown that value for money spent would be subjective and product class or category is a determinant for the same (Cooper, 1969) since product category is an important aspect while evaluating the information around the attributes of product to be purchased (Zeithaml, 1988).

**Psychological Approach**

Predominantly in the decades of 70s and 80s, most consumer research seemed to have dealt with the psychological approach. This approach primarily deals with the endogenous determinants of consumer information search or decision making. The classic models of motivational theory have supported the psychological approach (Howard & Sheth, 1969). Relating it to psychology, motivation is the driving force resulting in a particular action. Considering the action as buying decision or information search for decision making, there would always be some motivation. Abraham Maslow (1965) postulated that needs are hierarchically structured and that needs low in the hierarchy must be fulfilled before need higher in the hierarchy become salient in Van Raaij and Wandwossen (1978), or in other words, the driving force changes with time. Herzberg’s 2 factor theory in Van Eerde, and Thierry, (1996) suggested that motivation to search in case of a lower important product would be lower and high-important/involvement products would be higher. Mathematically, Vroom represented Motivation as a multiplicative model of “Valence, Expectancy & Instrumentality” in Van Eerde, and Thierry, (1996). Consumer behavior literature around decision making borrows a lot from this. Researchers have shown that information search is a personal characteristic and depends on individual’s motivation to search for information; therefore motivation was studied as an integral part in information search literatures related to
psychological approach (Engel et al., 1973). Bettman suggested motivation is the desire that impacts both intensity and direction of an individual behavior (Bettman, 1979). A majority of the studies by Marketing theorists pertaining to the body of knowledge in consumer decision making have highlighted the psychological aspect of information search. As a systematic process once the need is recognized, consumers seek information about alternatives and then evaluate the alternatives to arrive at the decision (Engel et al., 1995; Solomon, 1996, 2008; Kotler, 1997; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997).

Individual dimension was found to play a big role, for example, a risk-averse individual was assumed to tolerate low amount of risk compared to risk-takers. Theorists say that most people are risk averse for gains and risk seeking for losses (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Another individual dimension that was studied often was Ability to Search to make right decision or in other words the self confidence in oneself was studied to be influencing the search activity. Among other individual traits attitude was studied as an important endogenous characteristics of consumer behavior (Kotler, 1997; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). Classic theories around attitude indicated that attitude has a strong relationship with behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Past studies have found out a high correlation of attitudes and subjective norms to behavioral intention, and subsequently to behavior (Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw, 1988). If people evaluate the suggested behavior as positive (attitude), and if they think their significant others want them to perform the behavior (subjective norm), this results in a higher intention (motivation) and they are more likely to do so. Some theorists have defined attitudes as acquired associations between object and assessment (Fazio, 2007). Researchers have found out that people develop positive disposition when they are attached with a product (Kleine, Kleine & Chris, 1995). If performance of purchased product is below expectation, consumers might sense dissonance or disconfirmation as a general measure of
the difference between expectations and perceptions, which is strongly associated with consumer attitudes (Dawes & Rowley, 1999).

A structured approach in literature related to psychological perspective was observed as modeling the antecedents of information search. A huge number of studies were performed around determinants of information search (Newman, 1977; Bettman, 1979; Moore & Lehman, 1980; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Moorthy et al., 1997; Guo 2001). Mostly the psychological factors were considered as important antecedents of information search (Bennett & Mandell, 1969; Duncan & Olshavsky, 1982) as studied by Newman (1977), Bettman (1979), Moore and Lehman (1980); Beatty and Smith, (1987) and Guo (2001). The psychological determinants considered by Newman (1977) were knowledge, experience, education, income and personality variables. The determinants of external search as part of psychological aspect categorized by Bettman (1979) included conflict and conflict response strategies, and individual differences and knowledge. Moore and Lehmann (1980) classified the determinants of external search as knowledge and experience, individual differences, and conflict and conflict-resolution strategies. A detail studies were performed as seminal papers time and again in past decades by Beatty and Smith (1987) and Guo (2001).

Thus the summary of this section highlights that information search primarily deals with the following 2 categories of literature:

- Individual characteristics (e.g., Engel et al., 1995; Solomon, 1996, 2008; Kotler, 1997; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997)
- Antecedents of Information Search (Newman, 1977; Bettman, 1979; Moore & Lehman, 1980; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Moorthy et al., 1997; Guo 2001)
We noted that attitude was observed as an important individual characteristic that influence the information search since most studies of antecedents of information search highlighted attitude as an integral aspect (Beatty & Smith, 1987). Relating it with experience with product, or in other words attitude towards known or new products certainly impact information search (Srinivasan & Tikoo, 1992). We observed that external search is impacted by product class and categories (Holbrook & Howard, 1977; Enis & Roering 1980). Hence a strong derivation could be made that attitude as an individual dimension has a sheer impact on information search.

**Inference for our study**

Thus it is implicit in both the rational and psychological approaches that attitude is an important aspect in consumer behavior studies especially in information search area (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Specific to service industries, a pattern was observed in consumer behavior studies pertaining to services marketing that many researchers have studied the attitude towards a service category such as attitude towards healthcare (Corbin et al., 2001), attitude towards banking (Howcroft, et al., 2002), attitude towards online shopping (Li & Zhang, 2002), attitude towards science education (Osborne et al., 2003), attitude towards life insurance (Dahl, 2004, Yusuf et al., 2009), attitude towards Internet Service (Neger, 2009), attitude towards mobile operators (Oracle White Paper 2011<sup>50</sup>) and so on. We therefore concluded that, given the fact that attitude is an important aspect of information search studies, and attitude towards a category plays significant role in services domain, it would have considerable contribution by studying relationship of category attitude and extent of information search.

2.2 Information Search

A series of literature were developed to understand the antecedents of information search over past few decades (Newman, 1977; Bettman, 1979; Moore & Lehman, 1980; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Guo, 2001 and it was observed to have a long tradition in Marketing and consumer behavior areas (Punj & Staelin 1983; Urbany, Dickson & Wilkie, 1989; Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991 and Moorthy et al., 1997, Heaney & Goldsmith, 1999, Jepsen, 2007, Lee, Park, & Widdows, 2009). Punj & Moore, 2009). Despite of the extensive studies performed in the area of information search, it is essential to perform further studies to add to the body of knowledge of services domain (The Otago Forums) and information search is a crucial step of decision making in consumer buying decision in order to arrive at an optimal choice Bagozzi, 1992; Guo, 2001). Following sections highlight the summary of our review of literature.

Literature Summary

By the extant review of literature, we felt that the literature around information search could be categorized into 4 broad ways as represented below.

Information Search based on methodology

Various types of methodologies were observed in past studies such as survey (e.g., Punj & Staelin, 1983; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Urbany, Dickson & Kalapurakal, 1996; Putrevu & Ratchford, 1997); field experiment, (e.g., Jacoby et al., 1978; Moore & Lehmann 1980), laboratory experiment, (Brucks 1985; Lehmann & Moore 1980), interview (e.g., Newman & Staelin 1972), and protocol and analysis (e.g., Bettman & Park 1980). Direct observations were also used as a method of study (Hoyer, 1984; Dickson & Sawyer, 1990). Similarly Panel data method was used by Carlson and Gieseke (1983).
Information Search based on study level

As a process, information search was organized into 3 levels of studies (Fodness and Murray, 1999)

- Proposition of systematic relationships of factors impacting information search (e.g. Newman, 1977; Bettman, 1979; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Moore & Lehmann, 1980).

Information search in selected product categories

As grouping the class of studies made in past we noted that information search was studied in several product categories (Beatty & Smith, 1987), and a few Services (Heaney et al., 1999, Cline & Haynes, 2001, Lee et al, 2009). However the focus was around Durables (Punj & Staelin, 1983; Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991); Electronics Appliances (e.g., Brucks, 1985, Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991, Chaudhuri, 2000, Rose & Samouel, 2009, Cheema & Papatla 2010); Automobiles (Ratchford et al., 2003, Klein & Ford, 2003, Awasthy, Banerjee & Banerjee et al. 2012), and Apparels (Rao & Sieben, 1992, Grant et al., 2005, Lee et al, 2010).

Determinants of Information search

A good number of studies was performed around the determinants of information search (Newman 1977; Bettman, 1979; Moore & Lehman, 1980; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Moorthy et al., 1997; Guo 2001). Around 60 variables categorized under 7 groups were noted by Beatty & Smith (1987).
Search Activities & Consumer Characteristics Relationship

Similarly, another set of studies observed to have focused on relationship types, search activity and consumer characteristics (Fodness & Murray, 1999); relationship of antecedents with the information search (Moore & Lehman 1980; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Guo 2001).

- Bivariate (Guo, 2001), Positive, Negative, (Beatty & Smith, 1987; Guo 2001, Rose & Samouel, 2009, Mourali, Laroche & Pons 2005, U and inverted U (Guo, 2001) and ‘no relationship’ (Beatty & Smith, 1987; Guo, 2001) were studied extensively.

Information Search Construct

As a construct consumer behavior theorists have studied amount of information search to a great extent. This was studied to identify the antecedents of information search and as part of decision process (Punj & Staelin, 1983; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Srinivasan & Ratchford 1991). This also was studied as what constituted amount/extent/degree of search (Punj & Staelin, 1983; Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Srinivasan & Ratchford 1991). Broadly the information search construct attributed to

- Sources –external/internal (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987)
- Amount or Extent (Punj & Staelin, 1983; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Srinivasan & Ratchford 1991)
- Relevant/All information (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987)
- Direction, degree or patterns (Bettman, 1979; Kiel & Layton, 1981)
According to Newman (1977), the determinants were classified into 6 categories: Cost, Potential payoff (price, style, perceived difference, perceived risk, knowledge, experience, education, and income), buying strategies (brand and store preference, satisficing versus optimizing, strategy of information acquisition), situational variables (urgency, financial pressure, special buying opportunities, location of residence), personality variables, and other variables (household role, party of major influence, social class, occupation, age, stage of life cycle). The determinants of external search grouped into 5 categories by Bettman (1979): “properties of the choice situation, costs versus benefits of information, conflict and conflict response strategies, and individual differences” and knowledge. In addition to that Moore and Lehmann (1980) classified the determinants of external search as “market environment, situational variables, potential payoff, knowledge and experience, individual differences, and conflict and conflict-resolution strategies. Further detailed studies were performed by Betty and Smith (1987) and Guo (2001) covering around 60 variables categorized under 7 groups summarizing the empirical findings of antecedent variable and the relationship with search studied by several theorists in various product categories for over 3 decades (1955-1985). Based on the literature studied, below is a discussion around the 7 categories:

External Factors:

External factors studied in past literature were: Number of alternatives available studied (Cox & Rich, 1964; Duncan & Olshavsky, 1982); size of feasible set (Punj & Staelin, 1983); category structure and especially, product class, benefit segment, usage situation, and evoked set (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987); distance and distribution, and sizes of various shopping centres (Newman & Staelin 1972; Guo, 2001); product categories Guo, 2001); and perceived product differences; (Claxton, Fry, & Portis 1974; Guo, 2001). Perceived
variance in retail operations (Duncan & Olshavsky, 1982), number of brands, (Urbany et al., 1989); Differences among alternatives and specifically, perceived price dispersion (Claxton et al., 1974);

**Factors based on Circumstances:**

Circumstances based factors included time pressure (Moore & Lehmann, 1980; Kiel & Layton 1981; Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991; Urgency (Punj & Staelin, 1983; Saigal, Mann, & Rashmi, 2010); need based (Newman and Staelin 1972; Claxton et al., 1974). Need for closure (NFC) (Vermeir & Geuens, 2004); financial pressure or tight budget, (Newman & Staelin, 1972; Moore & Lehmann, 1980); Claxton et al., 1974; brand uncertainty (Moorthy et al., 1997). Number of crucial attributes, and specifically, Attribute importance (Holbrook & Maier, 1978; Lehmann & Moore, 1980).

**Factors based on Benefits-expectation:**

This set of variables as suggested by Beaty & Smith (1987) captured Price, (Newman & Staelin, 1972; Kiel & Layton, 1981). Cost-benefit dimension based on price to be paid and perceived benefits were also noted by many researchers (Kiel & Layton 1981; Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; perceived benefit (Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991); net benefit (Guo, 2001).

Perceived risk has been studied extensively (Cox & Rich, 1964; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Schiffman, 1972; Engel et al., 1973; Settle & Alreck, 1989). Similarly another construct is uncertainty – (Cunningham, 1967; Bettman, 1979). Examples included performance risk in Cunningham (1967); socioeconomic risk in Perry and Hamm (1969); Status of decision-making activity, specifically Product class importance and Length of commitment necessary (Jacoby et al., 1978).
Knowledge & Experience:

Under this categories the factors studied were Product knowledge (Jacoby et al., 1978; Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Chao & Gupta, 1995; Putrevu & Ratchford, 1997); Prior product knowledge (Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991); Knowledge impacts less-than-optimal searching (Alba & Hutchinson, 2000); objective knowledge, subjective knowledge, perceived knowledge (Guo, 2001); Experience (Bennett & Mandell, 1969; Guo, 2001); Past experience (Kiel & Layton, 1981); Past experience and knowledge (Punj & Staelin, 1983); Product-related experience and purchase-experience (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987); familiarity and expertise (cf. Jacoby et al., 1986); Positive experience (Bennett & Mandell, 1969; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978).

Psychological Factors or Individual factors

Psychological or individual factors (Duncan & Olshavsky, 1982; Bennett & Mandell, 1969). Some of the important individual dimensions could be summarized as: Ability, Ability to judge, (Duncan & Olshavsky, 1982); Training, especially, Approach to problem solving, Dependence on others, (Newman & Staelin, 1972); Tolerance for ambiguity, cognitive personality traits (Schaninger & Sciglimpaglia, 1981); Positive attitude toward search, (Kiel & Layton, 1981; Punj & Staelin, 1983); Perceived search benefits, (Duncan & Olshavsky, 1982); Involvement; Demographics such as Education, (Claxton et al., 1974; Newman & Staelin, 1972; Schaninger & Sciglimpaglia, 1981; Personality as self-confidence, (Kiel & Layton, 1981).

Conflict & Conflict Response Strategies

Consumers seek information to reduce the risk of experiencing conflict in the purchase situation. Additionally, conflict occurs when consumer gets loaded with information.
Decision conflict impact extent of search and consumers go for external search during such scenario. Extents of search, Number of attributes, Satisfaction with choice are indirect measures of conflict.

**Perceived Search Costs**

Cost was studied in various ways (Punj & Staelin, 1983), such as time (Engel et al., 1978; Punj & Staelin, 1983), effort, money (Lee, 2005), degree of frustration (Downs, 1961; Punj & Staelin, 1983). There are direct and indirect costs; actual monetary expenses (Downs, 1961, Ratchford, 1980); Indirect costs include -time cost (Stigler, 1961; Engel et al., 1978; Beatty & Smith, 1987; Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991; Moorthy et al., 1997); Psychological costs (Downs, 1961; Shugan, 1980; Punj & Staelin, 1983) and effort: effort of processing information (Beach & Mitchell, 1978; Bettman, 1979; Jacoby, 1984; Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Gursoy & Umbreit, 2004). Punj and Staelin (1983) defined the Search Cost as sum total of direct & indirect costs while conducting the external search.

**Implications for Our Research**

The prior studies around information search have established various methodologies (survey, experiment etc.); several constructs (external, endogenous factors etc.); various approaches (model development, propositions etc.); and various perspectives (psychological, economics).

We attempted to adopt *Construct and Comprehensive Model Development approach*, to study the relationship of *psychological* determinants of the extent of information search through a *survey* approach. Borrowing from the previous literature, our study conceptualized six constructs as antecedents of extent of information search covering the categories identified by Newman (1977), Bettman (1979), Lehman and Moore (1980), Beaty and Smith (1987) and Guo (2001). We noted that broadly, most factors could be grouped into 2 sets of factors such as individual and
circumstance based. We concluded that while studying the attitude towards a category, the important individual factors that would interplay with search would be motivation, ability and knowledge would capture the majority of individual dimensions and perceived search cost and perceived risk would capture most of the circumstances based factors.

2.3 Category Attitude & Information Search: Summary of Literature Survey

We strongly sensed as cited by Kollat, Blackwell, Engel (1972) and what Nicosia also mentioned in Kollat et al., (1972) as many classic models have utilized many constructs in reduced-form, attitude being one of them. In the same line, influence of attitude towards category has been a neglected construct in consumer behavior studies. Many researchers have studied attitude towards category but the scope was observed to be limited to just that rather than relating it to further areas. To a large extent attitude towards category has been studied, by focusing on the antecedents, rather than what the category attitude impacts (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1981).

We examined the literature to understand how the attitude has been studied in marketing literature and the impact of the category attitude on information search. Through a series of studies, we tried to figure out the underlying relationship between category attitude and information search either explicitly or the derived relationship.

Literature Summary

We examined the literature to understand attitude in general and category attitude in particular in Marketing and consumer behavior literatures, and the relationship between category attitudes with information search.

Most of marketing literature pertaining to attitude observed to have drawn heavily from psychology. The literature could be broadly classified into:

- Attitude as part of literature (Marketing and consumer behavior literature);
Attitude Formation; and

Attitude Measurement.

**Attitude as an endogenous characteristic**

Attitude was viewed as one of the complex psychological entities (Thurstone, 1931) and consumer behavior literature had studied attitude as an individual characteristic that impacts buying decision (Howard & Sheth, 1969). Enormous studies were performed around attitude towards advertising (e.g., Shimp 1981, Moore & Hutchinson, 1983; Lutz, MacKenzie, Belch, 1983; Batra & Ray, 1986; Muehling, 1987; Gresham & Shimp, 1985; Cox & Locander, 1987; Edell & Burke, 1984,1986). In the last decade huge studies have been performed on attitude towards web advertising; on-line shopping; (Korgoankar, 2002; Li & Zhang, 2002, Neger, 2009). Broadly, in past decade a new trend had been observed, such as attitude towards healthcare (Corbin et al., 2001), attitude towards banking (Howcroft, et al., 2002), attitude towards online shopping (Li & Zhang, 2002), attitude towards science education (Osborne et al., 2003), attitude towards life insurance (Dahl, 2004, Yusuf et al., 2009), attitude towards Internet Service (Neger, 2009), attitude towards mobile operators (Oracle White Paper 2011), attitude towards airlines (Harcar & Yucelt, 2012) and so on. Essentially, attitude towards a service category has been extensively in research recently.

**Attitude formation**

Attitude formation in consumer behavior could be grouped into 3 areas:

a. Learning theory: A set of researchers studied attitude to be formed through learning (Staats, 1967) by classical, operant and observational conditioning.
b. Functionalist theory: These theories suggested that attitude directs 4 types of functions such as instrumental, knowledge, value expression and Ego-defense.

c. Forming Components: major components of attitude were largely found to be cognitive, affective, and behavioral in psychology and consumer behavior theory (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fischbein, 1975). Cognitive component helps formation of attitude through human belief, ideas thoughts about something. Affective component directs attitude through feeling and emotion towards the thing. Behavioral component is the expression of attitude to behave in a certain way.

- Attitude through association:
  Some theorists have defined attitudes as acquired associations between object and assessment (Fazio, 1990). People develop positive disposition when they are attached with a product (Kleine et al., 1995). If performance is below expectation, the customer might sense dissonance (Buttle, 1998) which may lead to disconfirmation, viewed as a general measure of the difference between expectations and perceptions, strongly associated with consumer attitudes (Dawes & Rowley, 1999).

- Attitude through feelings:
  The attitude formed due to feelings associated with category/brand/product develops the affective component (Loken & John, 1993).

- Attitude & Behavior:
  It was noted by the classics of attitude studies that attitude has strong relationship with behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein 1977). Based on the subjective norm or perceived behavior expected out of an individual, one behaves in a particular way. A high correlation of attitudes and subjective norms to behavioral intention, and subsequently to behavior,
has been confirmed in many studies (Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw, 1988). Information search is a behavior and theory suggests it has strong association with attitude.

**Attitude Measurement**

Measuring attitude has been observed as an issue (Ostrom, 1989). The attitude measurement was primarily studied by Thurstone (1931) and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). In past 2 decades, attitude measurement is addressed by Loken et al. (2002), Ajzen (2002), Olson and Fazio (2004), Heijden and Sorensen (2002).

The literature studied in measurement issue could be grouped into following:

- Dimension (uni-dimensional vs. multi-dimensional)
- Response Selection/ Measurement item (belief, thought, affective feeling etc. (Thurstone, 1931; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)
- Measurement type (central tendency vs. single item) (e.g., Thurstone, 1931 and Rosenberg 1956)
- Evaluative Continuum (pro-con scale, nominal, ordinal vs. comparative, interval, zero point etc.) studied by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Petty and Cacioppo (1986).

**Category Attitude Construct**

Attitude study in marketing literature seemed to have borrowed heavily from social and psychological studies. As summarized by Ostrom, (1989), attitude theory and measurement was extensively studied in Psychology.

From the extant of literature studied, below is the summary of definitions of attitude as per classic literatures:

- Allport’s definition in Schwarz and Bohner (2001):
"A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related”.

- Krech and Crutchfield’s definition in Schwarz and Bohner (2001)
  “An attitude can be defined as an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world”.

- **Fuson (1942) and Campbell (1950) as described in Schwarz and Bohner (2001)**
  “probability of a specific behavior in a particular situation.”

- Daryl Bem (1970): ‘likes and dislikes’;

- Eagly and Chaiken (1993) described as “Evaluation with respect to some degree of favor/disfavor”

- **Schwarz, Strack and Mai (1991) described in terms of forming a judgment in Schwarz and Bohner (2001)**

- Greenwald and Banaji (1995): ‘past experience’

- Olson and Fazio, 2004: “Association with object”

- Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980 : “attitude is the belief about object (brand)”

Researchers primarily studied this construct through a series of related variables that subsumes the validity of this variable. Attitude was studied to be strongly associated with consumer behavior and information processing. Literature suggested that attitude towards business would be related with information search (Anderson, Engledow & Becker 1979). The researchers supported this hypothesis based on the argument brought forward by Cox and Rich (1964) that when the perceived social risk towards the image is low the credibility associated with marketer dominated
sources is high. From the measurement aspects, the important variables representing Category Attitude Measurement were familiarity and experience with the category (e.g., Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Bless & Schwarz, 2010).

**Implications for our Research**

For our study we did not find a strong case established for the relationship between category attitude and information search from the extant review of literature. There were fairly good numbers of studies performed around attitude towards shopping, business, brand, attitudes towards advertising; attitude and information processing etc. (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Anderson, Engledow & Becker, 1979; Mackenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986, 1989; Shimp 1981, Shimp and Yokum, 1982; Moore & Hutchinson, 1983; Moore & Hutchinson, 1983; Edell & Burke, 1984; 1986; Gresham and Shimp, 1985; Batra and Ray, 1986; Muehling, 1987; Cox & Locander, 1987; Betty & Smith, 1987; Moorthy et al., 1997; Mantel & Kardes, 1999). Similarly another stream on attitude research strongly suggests attitude predicts behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Fazio, 1989).

From those studies, an implicit relationship could be identified between attitude towards category and information search, but has not been settled as a relationship. Many researchers had studied to understand the attitude and perception of consumers towards service sectors only recently such as healthcare (Corbin et al., 2001), attitude towards banking (Howcroft, et al., 2002), attitude towards online shopping (Li and Zhang, 2002), attitude towards science education (Osborne et al., 2003), attitude towards life insurance (Dahl, M. 2004, Yusuf et al., 2009), attitude towards Internet Service (Neger, 2009), attitude towards mobile operators (Oracle White Paper 2011), attitude towards airlines (Harcar & Yucelt, 2012) and so on.
Since we were to contribute in the service domain, and we had observed that the studies were limited to study the attitude towards a category and not to the next level of theory building consumer behavior area such as in information search area. We therefore concluded that, it would have considerable contribution by studying relationship of category attitude and extent of information search.