

Understanding the Psychology of Consumer Preferences towards Purchase of Store Brands

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KEYWORDS <i>Store Image, Merchandise Quality, Store layout, Brand perception, Customer previous experience, Value consciousness of customer, Consumer preference, Purchase of store brands..</i>	ABSTRACT The retail industry is intensely competitive, with consumer preferences significantly influencing store success. The study investigates the influence of various factors such as store image, merchandise, layout, brand perception, customer experience, and value consciousness on consumer preference and subsequent purchase of apparel retail stores' brands, concentrating in Hyderabad, Telangana. The findings indicated that store image, merchandise quality, brand perception, and value consciousness substantially influence consumer preferences, while store layout and prior experience appear to have a negligible impact on consumer preference. Moreover, customer preferences significantly influence the purchase of store brands. Retailers should prioritize quality, branding, and value-oriented methods to improve consumer loyalty. Limitations including geographical emphasis, cross-sectional data, and unexplored variables were recognized, allowing for future study to investigate broader markets, digital retail characteristics, and sustainability factors. This study offers practical insights for companies aiming to align their products with consumer expectations in a fluctuating retail environment.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry is poised for a notably stormy and unpredictable 2025, notwithstanding the inherent unpredictability even under optimal conditions. A long-anticipated cyclical downturn has occurred. Consumers, impacted by the recent surge in inflation, are becoming more price sensitive. The unexpected proliferation of duplicates, the hastening of climate change, and the ongoing reconfiguration of global trade are also noteworthy developments. Regional disparities, shown in 2024, will become increasingly pronounced in the forthcoming year. The adverse environment anticipated by numerous individuals in the fashion sector a year ago has already come to fruition. Opportunities for expansion persist; nevertheless, economic uncertainties, geographic differences, and evolving consumer behavior and tastes necessitate managing a complex array of compounding hurdles at every juncture. Thus, 2025 is expected to be a pivotal moment for numerous brands (McKinsey & Company, 2025). Transitioning from a regional clothing brand to a national brand in the apparel sector represents a pivotal advancement for a company's growth and success. Regional brands are recognizing the need of expanding nationally through meticulous planning, comprehensive market insight, and a dedication to providing high-quality products and experiences. By implementing effective strategies and prioritizing customer needs, regional clothing brands can successfully achieve a national presence in the apparel sector (Mehta, 2023). Research indicates that various aspects influence the choosing of clothes stores, including goods assortment and quality, price range, customer service, convenience, store environment and image, and the availability of reputable brands (Chen-Yu et al., 2010). Brand assortment is a characteristic that affects customer perceptions, influences retailer selection, and fosters loyalty (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Consequently, branding



has emerged as a predominant competitive strategy for numerous companies in the fashion business (Power and Hauge, 2008). This resulted in the establishment of a novel marketing channel known as the multi-brand fashion retail store, which offers multiple brands within a single location.

Certain multi-brand fashion retailers offer their own brand in conjunction with various other brands, while others opt to only sell external labels. Examples of multi-brand fashion retailers include Selfridges, Harvey Nichols, and Harrods in the UK; Macy's in the USA; and Beymen, YKM, Boyner, and Jeans Lab in Turkey. A brand-specific retail store or brand concept store exclusively offers a single brand, such as GAP or Zara (Ju-Ping & Fei, 2010). Department stores function as multi-brand retailers, characterized by their large retail establishments that provide a diverse range of merchandise. Their provision encompasses a large-scale multi-brand experience. The distinction from a multi-brand store lies in the organization of merchandise into distinct departments, including ladieswear, menswear, and home fashion. Additionally, they typically offer a diverse range of products, encompassing clothing, shoes, furniture, accessories, and toys. Furthermore, it is not essential for them to operate as a multi-brand retailer. Some individuals may choose to exclusively sell their own brand. A multi-brand store offers various brands of a single type of merchandise, such as jeans or trainers. (Kurtuluş & Özdamar, 2015)

The price premium is defined as the highest amount people are willing to pay for a national brand compared to a store brand, represented as the proportional price difference between the two. The perceived quality differential constitutes approximately 12 percent of the range in price premiums among customers and product categories, serving as the primary variable affecting price premiums (Sethuraman & Cole, 1999). The perceived quality of store brands compared to national brands, the constancy of store-brand offers over time, and consumer attitudes toward risk, quality, and price contribute to the varying success of store brands, at least in part, in the United States and Europe (Erdem et al., 2004). Consumers may discern little difference between store brand and national brand products, private brands still only have a tiny market share. An environmental psychology model that proposes a stimulus-response process analyses the impact of store atmosphere on consumer assessments of private label grocery items (Richardson et al., 1996). The relationship between store loyalty and store brand purchase is indicative of a nonmonotonic relationship (inverted U) it is positive until a specific quantity of store brand consumption is reached, at which point it becomes negative (González & Martos, 2012). Store brands are crucial in the present economic climate for assortment and distributor-price-based differentiation tactics. According to earlier studies, consumers are more likely to be loyal to a store if they are satisfied with the prices, but the perceived image of the assortment has a greater impact on building trust. While it has a limited impact on chain loyalty and a negligible effect on trust, customer faithfulness to store brands is largely based on price satisfaction rather than perceived selection image (Benito et al., 2014).

1.1 Research Gap

For instance, Pranta et al. (2024) reinforces the consumer demand on sustainable products of their lifestyle, for instance, recycled clothings. However, there is little research that explores how the sustainability perception is related to other classical driver such as store format, product categorization and price sensitivity in a bid to influence consumer preferences. In particular, EEG and VR (Kalantari et al., 2023) can be useful for exploring consumer behavior in the experimental manner. However, such approaches are not widely used to effectively examine the impact of store layout and atmosphere on the consumer preference in store physical environments.

Most of the prior work (e.g., Kiboro et al., 2020; Malik, 2015) mainly focuses on consumer preferences in developed and certain developing nations, including Kenya and Oman. Still, the attention is paid less to developing countries like India apart from expansive discussions regarding new one-stop superstores and private labels in rapidly urbanizing and growing cities such as Bengaluru. New literature predominantly addresses single elements like store image (Olariu 2016), merchandise quality (Pranta et al., 2024), or store design (Tlapana, 2009).

1.2 Objective of the Study: The research aimed to evaluate the impact of various factors such as store image, merchandise quality, store layout, brand perception, customer previous experience and value consciousness of customer on consumer preference and its subsequent influence on purchase of store brands of various apparel retail stores

1.3 Review of literature and hypotheses framing

- A positive store image improves customers' purchasing experiences and preferences. A few examples of these dimensions are pricing level, merchandise quality, and customer service (Koseoglu & Tuncer, 2023). Retailers compete against each other by ensuring they are both physically and emotionally accessible to their customers. Kiboro et al., (2020) investigated the mediating role of store image in the connection between psychographic and psychological factors and consumer purchase intention in anchor supermarkets in Kenya. The research demonstrated that store image serves as a partial mediator in the connection between psychographic and psychological factors and consumer purchase intention.

H1: Store Image significantly influences the consumer preference

- Pranta et al, (2024) investigated the influence of recycled cotton-polyester mixed garments on customer behavior and purchase patterns, focusing specifically on sustainable apparel merchandising. The research sought to uncover the



principal elements influencing customer preferences and purchasing behavior for garments made from recycled cotton and polyester blends. Nurjamad et al., (2024) desired to ascertain the impact of product quality on purchasing decisions about K-Pop albums and products. The objective is to ascertain the partial impact of product quality on purchasing decisions regarding K-Pop albums and items. Isbahi, (2023) in his study rigorously analysed the diverse factors known in consumer behaviour literature that impact purchasing behaviour. The analysis focused on consumer interest, pricing, and product quality. Caniago et al., (2022) in their research demonstrates that Product Quality substantially affects Consumer Buying Interest, accounting for 72.6% of the variance. This indicates that superior goods quality can elevate consumer preferences and augment the probability of purchase among consumers in Jakarta's UMKM sector.

H2: Merchandise quality has significant influence on consumer preference

- Mantratzis et al., (2023) examined the influence of supermarket chain layouts on consumer behaviour, emphasising ambient factors. Findings indicate that attributes of the shop environment affect emotional responses, thereby influencing impulsive purchasing behaviour. Kalantari et al., (2023) in their research assessed the influence of retail shop layouts on consumer reactions by integrating subjective input, behavioural data, and electroencephalogram (EEG) data within a virtual environment. Awais, (2023) in his research indicates that enhancing store aesthetics and product presentation can serve as an innovative and effective marketing technique for organizations aiming to attract and retain customers.

H3: Store Layout has significant influence on consumer preference

- Islamiyah et al., (2019) in their research revealed that brand image, cultural influences, personal factors, and promotional strategies play a substantial role in shaping consumer preferences for Gulaku brand sugar in Yogyakarta. In contrast, price and product packaging appear to have a negligible impact on these preferences among consumers. Ahmed et al., (2017) in their study aims to explore how brand preference and advertising impact consumer purchasing behavior among the general population in Gujranwala city. The findings revealed that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between advertisement and brand preferences and consumer buying behaviors.

H4: Brand Preference has significant influence on consumer preference

- Smart fitting rooms represent a cutting-edge technology in fashion retail, utilizing Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, including computer vision, sensors, augmented reality (AR), and more tools to deliver an immersive and personalized buying experience. This study examines the potential of smart fitting rooms to improve customer experience in fashion commerce (Kronheim et al., 2024). Nacass, (2018) in his research examines the impact of in-store customer experience, used to and customer emotional state in a retail market. Prior customer experience profoundly affects consumer purchasing preferences for FMCG products, since brand familiarity and quality are favoured in decision-making.

H5: Customer Previous Experience has a significant influence on consumer preference

- Fashion consciousness serves as a partial mediator between instrumental and terminal values and behavioural intentions. Instrumental values provide a more significant influence on fashion consciousness and behavioural intentions than terminal values (Kautish and Sharma, 2018). Individuals exhibiting a high degree of value for money are highly attuned to sale prices and prioritize reduced prices for obtaining optimal value for their expenditure. These consumers are predisposed to engage in comparative shopping (Saleh et al.2017).

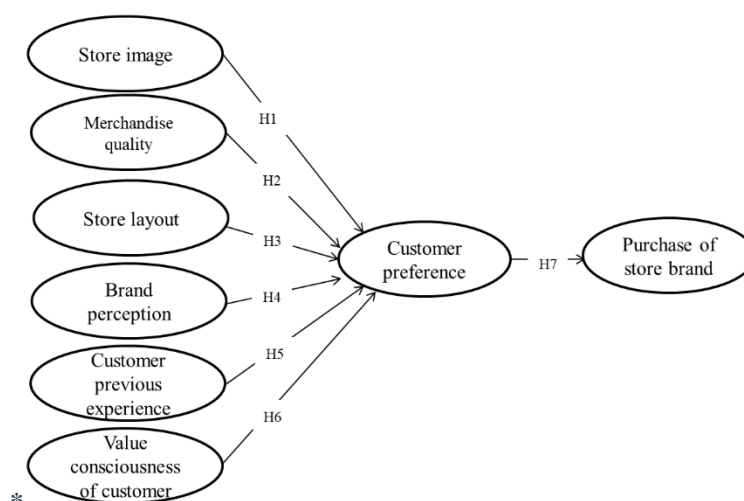
H6: Customer value consciousness has a significant influence on consumer preference

- Marketing tactics, price, sales, and psychographic characteristics all play a role in shaping consumers' brand preferences. The research shows that these factors influence customers' preferences, which in turn makes in-house brands more popular than well-known name brands in grocery stores (Ahmed et al.,2022). Consumer preference for store brands, especially private label apparel, is shaped by elements including attitude, fashion awareness, store reputation, pricing, quality, and brand loyalty. Consumers value products that adequately fulfil their requirements, irrespective of brand affiliation (Kumar, 2019). Indian customers evaluate aspects when purchasing private label brand products and how these identified factors influence their purchasing decisions about private label brands (Singh et al.,2018).

H7: Consumer Preference has significant impact on the purchase of store brands.



Figure -1 Conceptual Model



Research Methods

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive and causal research design to examine the relationship among independent factors, such as store image, merchandise, store layout, brand impression, prior customer experience, and customers' value consciousness. The dependent variables in this study encompassed customer preference and purchasing behavior related to store brands. Quantitative data was employed to provide a thorough grasp of the elements affecting customer preference and purchasing behavior.

Population and Sampling

Population: The target population comprises apparel retail consumers who regularly purchase store brands in hypermarkets, malls, and other retail brand outlets in Hyderabad.

Instruments

The questions quantifying Store Image, Merchandise Quality, Store Layout is constructed based on questionnaires of prior research (Kumar & Metta, 2024) The questions quantifying Customer Previous Experience, Customer Value Consciousness & Customer preference is designed based on the questionnaires of previous studies (Kara et al.,2009). The questions quantifying Brand Perception and Purchase of store brand are self-designed.

Sampling Technique: The respondents were chosen using convenience sampling procedure with high shopping frequency to ensure it reflects varied demographic groupings.

Sample Size: A sample of 384 respondents was selected to guarantee the statistical validity and reliability of the results based on the article “determining sample size for research activity.” (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Data Analysis Techniques

Mean and standard deviation is used for demographic variables. Using composite reliability and average variance extraction for internal consistency and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for construct validity. Utilising statistical tools such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to evaluate the proposed relationships.

Results and Discussion

Demographics Analysis

Gender and Purchase of Store Brand		
Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	11.09	3.39
Female	11.26	2.92

The acquisition of shop brands scored a mean of 11.09 by male respondents while having a standard deviation of 3.39 and



female respondents a mean value of 11.26 and demonstrated a 2.92 standard deviation. Both genders exhibit similar shopping patterns according to their purchase behavior concerning shop brands as indicated by the marginal variance in mean scores. The standard deviation among female responses shows less variability compared to male purchasing behavior that demonstrates slight variations.

Age and Purchase of Store Brand		
Age	Mean	Std. Deviation
UPTO 20	11.30	3.06
21-30	10.82	3.27
31-39	12.00	3.42
40-49	11.72	2.53
40-49	10.00	3.46
ABOVE 60	12.00	0

Buyers between 31 and 39 years old and those above 60 years old exhibit greater preference for store products while people aged 21 to 30 demonstrate a slightly less buying preference for store brands. Above 60 respondents present the most uniform shopping patterns yet the other age groups demonstrate varying conduct.

Occupation and Purchase of Store Brand		
Occupation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Student	10.89	3.32
Private Employee	11.85	2.76
Govt Employee	9.00	5.19
Unemployed	10.80	2.17
Businessmen	13.00	1.00

The strongest preference for store brands among respondents belongs to businessmen who demonstrate consistent preferences. Private sector employees demonstrate substantial interest in store brands, while students and unemployed people demonstrate moderate interest. Occupational differences show that work environment influences buying preferences for store brands possibly because of employment-related earnings and shopping habits and brand attitudes.

Income Level and Purchase of Store Brand		
Income Level	Mean	Std. Deviation
UPTO 25,000	10.94	3.05
25,000-50,000	9.76	3.95
50,000-75,000	12.50	2.55



75,000-1,00,000	11.20	3.05
above 1,00,000	13.00	2.00

Store brands are more popular among consumers who earn above ₹50,000 and the strongest preference emerges in the segment exceeding ₹1,00,000. The ₹25,000-50,000 income group demonstrates the lowest preference for store brands alongside substantial disagreement among respondents. The reported preferences indicate that wealthy customers evaluate store brand value positively while potentially discount-oriented or brand-loyal shoppers maintain lower incomes.

Education Level and Purchase of Store Brand		
Education Level	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intermediate	10.60	1.82
Bachelor's degree	11.45	2.26
Master's degree	11.19	3.33
Doctoral degree	11.09	3.05

Education level presents a moderate yet dependable relationship with preference for store brands. The preference for store brands by Bachelor's degree holders reaches its peak, while consumers at intermediate educational levels demonstrate the lowest mean, indicating a weaker preference. Higher education groups at the master's and doctoral level exhibit varying purchasing behaviors which increases the standard deviation of their purchasing patterns.

LOCATION	Mean	Std. Deviation
Urban	11.18	3.160
Semiurban	11.72	2.80
Suburban	13.00	1.41
Rural	10.73	3.45
Total	11.17	3.17

Consumers from suburban areas show the highest preference for store brands with more consistent choices, while rural consumers have the lowest preference with greater variability in responses. Urban and semiurban consumers fall in between, with semiurban consumers showing a slightly stronger inclination than urban consumers. These differences suggest that geographical location influences purchasing behavior, possibly due to factors such as access to store brands, income levels, and brand awareness.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis in SPSS is a method that enables researchers to assess the consistency and dependability of their data collection instruments, including surveys and tests.



Variables	Numbers of Items	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extraction
Store Image	5	0.914	0.682
Merchandise Quality	4	0.905	0.704
Store Layout	4	0.903	0.699
Consumer Previous Experience	3	0.888	0.724
Brand Perception	4	0.891	0.731
Value Consciousness of Consumer	4	0.893	0.676
Consumers Preference	3	0.895	0.739
Purchase of Store Brands	3	0.879	0.709

(Table -1 Reliability Analysis of Variables)

Average Variance Extraction

Store Image (0.682) Merchandise Quality (0.704), and Store Layout (0.699) these values show that the latent variable captures more than half of the variance in the indicators. While the results sampled show very high levels of construct validity the three indices Consumer Previous Experience (0.725), Brand Perception (0.731) and Consumers Preference (0.739) are all evidence by high variance explained. The criteria proposed for assessing the measurement validity are also met by Value Consciousness of Consumer (0.676) and Purchase of Store Brands (0.709). These values exceed the widely recognised threshold of $AVE \geq 0.50$, which implies construct validity is good (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Composite Reliability

Store Image has a reliability coefficient of 0.914, merchandise quality 0.905, and store layout 0.903 All the above findings indicate that the items used to measure these constructs are highly reliable. Consumer previous experience has an internal reliability coefficient of 0.888, Brand Perception has 0.891, and Value Consciousness of Consumer has 0.893 showing a relatively high reliability. The reliability of the measured variables is also relatively high: consumer preference (0.895) and purchase of store brands (0.879). The values surpass the commonly accepted threshold of $CR \geq 0.70$, indicating that construct validity is robust (Bacon et al., 1995)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a statistical method employed to validate the factor structure of a collection of observed data. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) enables the researcher to evaluate the hypothesis that a relationship exists between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs. The researcher uses theoretical knowledge, empirical research, or a combination of both, formulates the relationship pattern a priori, and subsequently tests the hypothesis statistically (Suhr,2006).

Fit Indices	Recommended	Observed	Result
CMIN/df (minimum discrepancy as indexed chi-square)	>5 Terrible, >3 Acceptable, >1 Excellent	1.886	Excellent fit
GFI	>0.80	0.856	Acceptable fit
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	<0.90 Terrible, <0.95 Acceptable, >0.95 Excellent	0.965	Excellent fit



TLI (Tucker–Lewis index)	> 0.9	0.924	Excellent fit
PNFI (Parsimony-Adjusted Measures)	> 0.5	0.750	Excellent fit
RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation)	>0.08 Terrible, >0.06 Acceptable, >0.05 Excellent		Excellent fit

(Table –2 Fit Indices of Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

CMIN/df (1.886) specifies an excellent fit, implying that the model's chi-square value in relation to the degrees of freedom is minimal, hence reducing differences between the data and the model. The GFI (0.856) which is higher than the set acceptable level of more than 0.80 (Etezad and Farhoomand, 1996) is within an acceptable range, signifying that the model adequately accounts for the variance/covariance in the data. The CFI (0.965) and TLI (0.924) indicate excellent indices, demonstrating that the suggested model significantly outperforms the null (independent) model in terms of fit. PNFI (0.750) exhibits exceptional parsimony, harmonizing model complexity with fit quality. RMSEA (0.04) signifies an excellent fit, with model error much beneath the permissible limit.

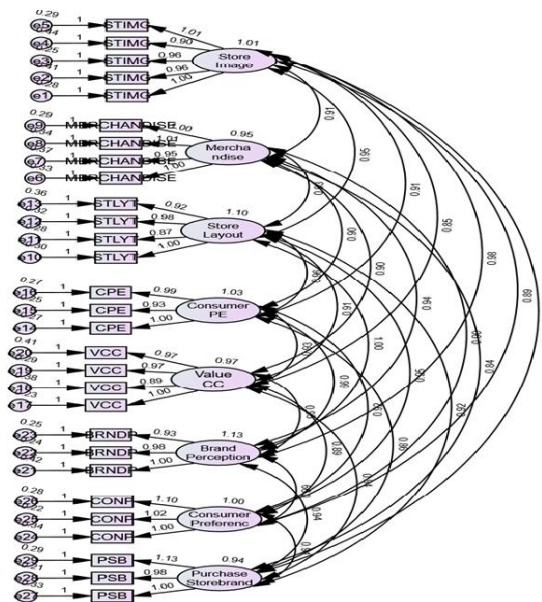


Figure -2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Structure Equation Model

Structural equation modeling is a type of methodology that attempts to describe hypotheses about the means, variances, and covariances of observable data in terms of a smaller number of 'structural' parameters determined by an underlying conceptual or theoretical model. Historically, structural equation modelling evolved from a fusion of two distinct statistical traditions. The first tradition is factor analysis, which originated in the sciences of psychology and psychometrics. The second tradition is simultaneous equation modeling, which originated in econometrics but has a history in genetics and was introduced to sociology as route analysis (Kaplan, 2001).

Fit Indices	Recommended	Observed	Result
CMIN/df (minimum discrepancy as indexed chi-square)	>5 Terrible, >3 Acceptable, >1 Excellent	1.709	Excellent fit
GFI	>0.80	0.879	Acceptable
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	<0.90 Terrible, <0.95 Acceptable, >0.95 Excellent	0.979	Excellent fit



	Acceptable, >0.95 Excellent		
TLI (Tucker–Lewis’s index)	> 0.9	0.982	Excellent fit
PNFI (Parsimony-Adjusted Measures)	> 0.5	0.604	Good fit
RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation)	>0.08 Terrible, >0.06 Acceptable, >0.05 Excellent	.043	Excellent fit

(Table –3 Fit Indices of Structure Equation Modelling)

CMIN/do (1.709) shows an excellent fit, with a low ratio indicating the model aligns well with the observed data. GFI (0.879) falls within an acceptable range, suggesting that the model adequately explains the variance and covariance in the data, though there is room for slight improvement. CFI (0.979) and TLI (0.982) indicate excellent model performance, signifying that the model's fit is significantly better than the null model. PNFI (0.604) demonstrates an excellent level of parsimony, suggesting an efficient balance between model complexity and its explanatory power. RMSEA (0.043) reflects a very low error in model approximation, further validating its alignment with the data.

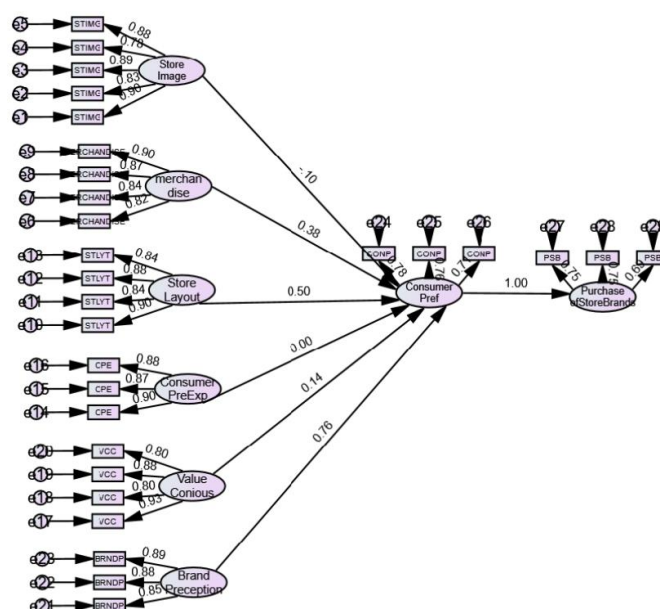


Figure -3 Structure Equation Modelling

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	P-Value	Result
H1: Store Image & Consumer Preference	0.017	Significant
H2: Merchandise Quality & Consumer Preference	0.00	Significant
H3: Store Layout & Consumer Preference	0.00	Not Significant
H4: Consumer Previous Experience & Consumer Preference	.925	Not Significant



H5: Brand Perception & Consumers Preference	0.00	Significant
H6: Value Consciousness of Consumer & Consumers Preference	0.00	Significant
H7: Consumers Preference & Purchase of Store Brands	0.00	Significant

(Table -4 Hypothesis Testing)

Interpretation

H1: Store image has a considerable impact on consumer preference, demonstrating that customers value the entire appearance of a retail store.

H2: Merchandise quality has a substantial and considerable influence on consumer preferences, underlining the necessity of high-quality products.

H3: Store layout has no significant effect on consumer preference, implying that layout may not be an important element in decision-making for this group.

H4: Previous customer experience has no substantial effect on consumer preferences, showing that prior encounters may not strongly influence future desires.

H5: Brand perception has a major impact on consumer preference, demonstrating that consumers are heavily influenced by brands' image and reputation.

H6: Value consciousness is a crucial driver of consumer preference, emphasizing the necessity of cost-benefit analysis for buyers.

H7: Consumer preferences have a substantial and significant impact on the purchase of store brands, demonstrating that preferences and brand purchases are positively related.

2. DISCUSSION

H1: Store Image and Consumer Preference

Malik, (2015) in research identified store image attributes which consumer prefer while shopping. Gundala, (2010) determined the qualities of store images that are distinctive to different sectors and assess the extent to which each attribute influences consumer purchase decisions. In our research it is revealed that substantial impact of store image on consumer preference suggests that consumers are attracted to stores that convey a favorable and appealing appearance. This includes elements such as appearance, reputation, and the store's entire ambiance. Retailers must prioritize the establishment of a robust store image via effective branding, pristine and well-maintained settings, and marketing strategies that align with target customers. Enhancing the store's appeal can substantially bolster consumer loyalty.

H2: Merchandise Quality and Consumer Preference

Caniago et al., (2022) demonstrated that product quality substantially affects Consumer Buying Interest. In our research it is revealed a strong correlation between product quality and consumer choice indicates that people favour high-quality items in their purchase decisions. Retailers must guarantee uniform product quality by procuring from dependable suppliers and enforcing rigorous quality control protocols. Emphasizing quality standards in marketing materials can enhance consumer confidence and preference.

H3: Store Layout and Consumer Preference

Tlapana, (2009) determined the influence of store layout on consumer purchasing behaviours. The study's findings revealed that store layout may not have been a major factor for the consumers in this study since there was no statistically significant correlation between the two. This can be because shoppers are already comfortable with the brand or because other considerations, including price or selection, take precedence. Even if store layout is not a major factor, merchants still need to make sure it serves customers' needs and doesn't get in the way. Priorities should be shifted to prioritize other qualities, such as ease of use and accessibility.

H4: Brand Perception and Consumer Preference

Isik and Yasar, (2015) in their research to explore the influence of brand name on consumer preferences. This study revealed the fact that consumers' preferences are so affected by how they perceive a brand's reputation, appearance, and



trustworthiness is rather evident. Investing in consistent messaging, CSR activities and consumer engagement techniques can help retailers develop great brand equity. Additional ways to improve the brand's image include showcasing accolades, certifications, or endorsements.

H5: Consumer Previous Experience and Consumer Preference

Nzuve, (2018) demonstrated considerable correlation between consumers' previous experience and consumer preference. But negligible impact of prior experience on consumer preference indicates that past contacts with the store do not substantially determine future preferences, either owing to changing consumer requirements or market dynamics. Retailers must consistently innovate and adjust to evolving consumer demands instead of depending exclusively on past goodwill. Implementing incentives, loyalty programs, and outstanding service can generate renewed attraction.

H6: Value Consciousness of Consumer and Consumer Preference

Individuals exhibiting a high degree of this feature are highly attuned to sale prices and reduced prices overall and crucially; prioritize obtaining optimal value for their expenditure. These consumers are predisposed to engage in comparative shopping (Saleh et al., 2017). In this research it is found that customers pay close attention to the value they get for their money because of the strong correlation between value consciousness and consumer preference. When setting prices and communicating with customers, stores should highlight the value they provide. Customers that are looking to save money might be catered to by offering discounts, package deals, or loyalty points. Another way to strengthen customer trust is to be upfront about the product's benefits and price.

H7: Consumer Preference and Purchase of Store Brands

Erdem et al., (2004) empirically studies consumer choice behavior with respect to store brands. In this study we found that when customers' tastes coincide with what the store has to offer, they are more inclined to buy store brands, as shown by the strong correlation between the two. Store brands should be priced, varied, and of high quality to meet client expectations. Promoting store brands through advertising efforts that emphasize their advantages, such as low prices, limited availability, or quality that is on par with national brands, can boost sales.

3. CONCLUSION

The study sheds light on the main elements that impact retail customers' preferences. Consumer preferences were found to be significantly impacted by store image, merchandise quality, brand perception, and value consciousness, but store layout and past experience did not demonstrate any such impact. There was a robust correlation between customer preferences and in-store brand purchases, further highlighting the need of coordinating in-store offers with customer expectations. These results highlight the importance of retailers putting an emphasis on branding, quality, and value-driven tactics to boost brand equity and consumer loyalty.

Limitation and Scope for Future Research

The research was performed in Hyderabad, Telangana, restricting the applicability of the results to other areas or nations with distinct customer behaviors and retail dynamics. As e-commerce continues to expand, future research may explore the impact of digital factors such as website usability, online reviews, and mobile applications on consumer preferences. Investigating the significance of eco-friendly activities, including green products and ethical sourcing, can yield insights into the increasing demand for sustainable commerce. Future research may integrate behavioral theories with sophisticated analytics, including machine learning, to more precisely forecast customer preferences and purchasing behaviors.

Conflict of Interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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