
Original Article

Consumer preferences of store brands: Role of prior experiences and value consciousness

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ABSTRACT Store brands play an important role in retail strategy and understanding store brand purchase behavior is a critical issue for marketers and researchers alike. This paper contributes to the body of knowledge in this area by examining different factors affecting consumers' purchase behavior of store brands. In this process, we investigate the decision to purchase a store brand using a conceptual model, which incorporates a number of variables hypothesized to influence store brand purchase decisions. Using a sample of 799 shoppers, we have analyzed the relationships assumed in the conceptual model. Results confirm the hypothesized relationships between store brand purchase and value consciousness, previous experience, and consumer perceptions. Managerial and academic implications of the study are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Store brands have made significant penetration into the supermarkets in the last two decades. Accordingly, interest in understanding consumer store brand purchase behavior have increased significantly. In this study, store brand (also private labels are used interchangeably) are defined as ‘... products owned and branded by the organizations whose primary objective is distribution rather than production’.¹ According to the estimates, the share of store brands in the US continues to grow and accounts about 20 per cent of unit sales² and 15 per cent of dollar sales in supermarkets.³ Moreover, store brands have an established and recognized status in some Western European countries such as France and the UK. In the UK, for instance, the volume market share of store brand packaged goods exceeds 55 per cent of the total sales.⁴

The growth and penetration of the store brand sales in Western markets is not a new phenomenon and is expected to continue.^{4,5} Furthermore, current economic hardships felt around the globe due to economic slowdown and recession could create more favorable environment for store brands. Literature shows that store brand performance may be linked to economic conditions and generally store brand market share increases when the economies suffer from an economic downturn (p. 99).⁶ During the difficult economic periods like the consumers are experiencing currently, popularity of the store brands are assumed to increase^{7,8} due to their low prices and reduced disposable consumer income. More recently, researchers⁹ linked private brand performance to economic expansions and contractions.

Generally, it may be argued that the popularity of the store brands is an outcome of a set of interrelated factors including concentration in retailing such as well-organized large retail chains that can develop their own brands, changes in consumers’ loyalty levels towards established national brands, and relatively improved consumers’ attitudes toward store brands partially due to improved quality of store brands over the last several decades. Moreover, well-organized large retail chains have significant promotion

budgets, which can be used to communicate with their customers more effectively.¹⁰ To this end, retailers have been using effective marketing strategies, such as advertising manufacturer brands to attract customers to the store and then emphasizing store brands, which typically have lower variable cost and potentially higher margins, while consumers are in the store.¹¹

Despite the lower prices, quality improvements, retailer guarantees, and more effective communication by the retailers, the challenge facing the marketers of store brands is that consumers continue to prefer national brands over store brands, if the price is right.¹² Since store brands are almost always the cheapest brand, it could be argued that the fundamental reason for consumers to buy these products is their lower costs. However, retailers need to monitor carefully and identify the consumer preferences that are not necessarily due to the price sensitivity. Utilizing the information presented in the literature, the purpose of this study is to examine consumers’ store brand purchase behavior by using a conceptual model, which incorporates various factors such as brand, price and risk perceptions, involvement, experience and familiarity, as well as psychographic and demographic factors, that are assumed to influence the store brand purchase behavior. Understanding the role of such factors on consumers’ preferences can be a major strategic advantage to the retailers and marketers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of brand management is the creation of value in the consumers’ mind and brands add value in several ways.¹³ First, brands can help consumers interpret and process the information by simplifying the organization and recall of a large quantity of information that consumers have accumulated over time.¹⁴ Second, brands can provide confidence in purchase decision; that is, buying a well-known brand implies a lower risk. Finally, the purchase and use of a product may evoke feelings, emotions, or provide a means for a person’s self-expression and identity formation.^{13,15} Cue utilization theory^{16,17} suggests that when

making quality judgments consumers use direct (ingredients, taste, texture, and so on) and indirect (price or brand name) indicators of quality. Most of the time, consumers are not equipped with tools/knowledge to assess quality using direct cues (for example ingredient quality) but rather they use indirect measures, which are easily interpreted, evaluated and assessed, in making quality judgments.

Rao and Monroe¹⁸ provided a model relating price, perceived quality, perceived sacrifice, perceived value, and willingness to buy. In their model they confirmed that price has both objective external properties and subjective internal representations that are derived from the perception of price. Higher prices lead to a higher perceived quality and to a greater willingness to buy.¹⁹ Therefore, consumers may be suspicious of the quality of a product if its price is too low. Richardson *et al*²⁰ argued that familiarity with store brands, extrinsic cues usage in product evaluation, perceived quality variation, perceived risk, and perceived value for money, income and family size were the important factors influencing private labels purchases. In their studies, Zaichkowsky,²¹ Kapferer and Laurent,²² and Richardson²³ suggested that personal involvement with the product may be important in explaining the reasons why consumers come to accept store brands. They suggest that store brands of those products are usually considered to be low involvement products, with low monetary value, little differentiation among different alternatives, low perceived risk by the consumer, frequently purchased, and involve very little innovation.²⁴

Since the classic work of Myers,²⁵ research regarding store brand products has attracted substantial interest of academics and industry practitioners. Several studies has been undertaken to investigate the characteristics of buyers of store brand grocery products. Most of these studies conducted in the 1960s through 1980s have been focused on profiling store brand buyers in terms of socioeconomic variables,^{26–28} personality characteristics,²⁵ shopping style,²⁹ and information processing.³⁰ In general, these studies concluded that consumers are reluctant to buy store brands

because of their perceived poor quality.^{29,30} More recently, Baltas and Argouslidis³¹ found that specific consumer characteristics such as frequency of shopping, loyalty, income, and education, were associated with interpersonal differences in store brand demand.

Additional studies focused on estimating the impact of national and store brands' marketing actions on brand sales or market share,³² developing optimal marketing strategies for national and store brands,³³ understanding whether store brands attract the same value conscious consumers,³⁴ building loyalty through store brands,^{35–37} attitudes toward store brands,³⁸ and the role of store brands on retail margins.³⁹ More recent studies focused on investigating the relationship between household's private label share and its behavioral store loyalty⁴⁰ and predicting demand for store brands across categories.⁴¹

However, findings of these studies were not conclusive and at best presented a weak relationships among the variables investigated. Some of the studies showed that store brands were becoming increasingly more popular because consumers had greater trust in the quality of these products.^{14,42–44} The changing perceptions may be due to the increased importance that the retailers/distributors are placing on quality control process to maintain more consistent levels of quality as well as on improving quality.⁴⁵ Moreover, increased investment in research and development and the implementation of strict quality control practices might be a sign of retailer/distributors realizing the important role that quality plays in the success of their store brand products.^{6,11,46} Also, a survey of retailers that carry store brands recommends that retailers must develop high quality store brands and just low-priced store brands are not enough in influencing consumer decisions.⁴⁷

In sum, previous studies indicated that consumers are attracted to store brands due to their affordability – they are in general 20–40 per cent cheaper than manufactures brands,^{48,49} increased alternatives, guarantees offered by a local familiar store,^{44,50} perceived value for

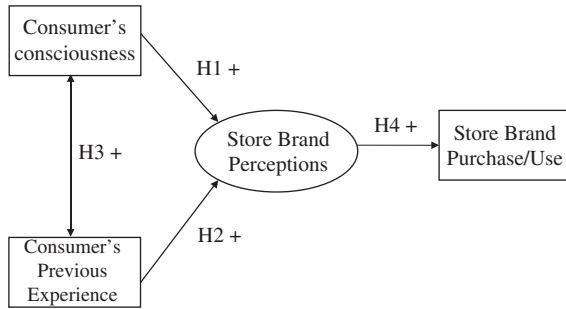


Figure 1: Conceptual model.

money,⁵¹ loyalty or high switching costs,⁵² convenience and time saving,^{10,53} hedonic benefits or consumption pleasure,^{15,34} and to fulfill a unique need (for example ethnic foods, diet foods, sugar free, and so on). We argue that consumers' value consciousness along with their positive experiences with store brands, are the major constructs that explains store brand purchase behavior. Accordingly, Figure 1 shows the conceptual model tested in this study to explain the store brand purchase behavior.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Previous studies argued that consumers' quality perceptions of the store brands may explain why they buy store brands. Richardson *et al*⁵¹ argued that the likelihood of the store brand purchases is positively related to favorable quality perceptions. Although manufacturers of store brands assert that they offer the same quality as national brands, it can be argued that consumers do not necessarily see it that way or agree with this view. Literature also confirms that the significant differences in quality perceptions of store brands relative to national brands among consumers still prevails. Consumers who are reluctant to buy store brands are significantly more inclined to believe that store brands offer lower quality, have less reliable ingredients and are of lower nutritional value.²⁴ In this study, we consider 'Store Brand Perceptions' as a higher order construct, which is influenced by a number of other constructs most of which are studied independently in the literature. One such construct is the 'Value consciousness,' which is considered an important

factor in the store brand purchase behavior. Dick *et al*²⁴ defined value consciousness as 'consumers' evaluation of product quality relative to the price required for purchase.' Since store brands are 20 to 40 per cent less expensive compare to the national brands, store brand shoppers may consider this as having much greater 'value.' A more comprehensive operationalization of the value consciousness should incorporate lower level constructs. It is known in the literature that most of the consumer learning takes place through their previous buying experiences. Consumers who are willing to purchase store brands may have greater familiarity and usage experience with store brands than those who are reluctant to buy store brands. Hence, we argue that consumers' previous experience with store brands will have a significant positive effect on their evaluations of store brands. Accordingly, we consider 'value consciousness' and 'Store Brand Perceptions' as the higher order constructs, which influence the store brand purchase. We develop the following set of hypotheses:

- Hypotheses 1:** Consumer's Consciousness will have a positive influence on the Store Brand Perceptions.
- Hypotheses 2:** Consumer's Previous Experience will have a positive effect on Store Brand Perceptions.
- Hypotheses 3:** Consumers' Consciousness will have a positive relationship with Consumer's Previous Experience.
- Hypotheses 4:** Higher Store Brand Perceptions will lead to higher Store Brand Purchase/Use.

METHODOLOGY

Survey instrument

In this study, we used a questionnaire to collect data on variables that are hypothesized to influence store brand purchase behavior. Specifically, we collected data on consumers' involvement levels, brand loyalty, price perception, quality perception, familiarity,

intolerance for ambiguity, and perceived risks to understand the perceived value of store brand. Respondents rated each item on a 5-point Likert type scale, where 1 represented 'strongly disagree' and 5 represented 'strongly agree.' A reverse scale was used to reduce response error. To measure store brand experiences, three questions (a) willingness to buy, (b) if they would recommend it to their friends, and (c) probability to consider buying store brands in the future were used. The survey instrument also included questions about respondent demographics such as age, gender, marital status, income level, education and household size and psychographics.

Data collection

Data for the study were collected as part of a larger study through self-administered questionnaires from residents in Pittsburgh and York, Pennsylvania. A total of 850 questionnaires were hand-delivered to respondents living in different neighborhoods and were personally picked up. The person responsible for grocery shopping in the household is required to respond to the survey. After a three-week period, of the 850 questionnaires distributed, 799 usable ones were retrieved.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Subjects were regular grocery shoppers and they indicated that they shop for groceries for their households at least once a month. Table 1 illustrates that a total of 442 women and 357 men completed the survey. Respondents were fairly educated; post university graduates comprised 3 per cent of the respondents, while 31.2 per cent had some college or technical school education, 48.6 per cent graduated from high school or less. About 20 per cent of the respondents were 24 years old or younger, 21 per cent between the ages of 25 and 34, 23.7 per cent between the ages of 35–44, 24.6 per cent between the age of 45–59 and the rest were older than 60 (10.5 per cent). With regard to occupation, homemakers accounted about 12.7 per cent, full time positions 43 per cent, part time workers 20.5, self employed 4.6 per cent, students 17.4 and retired 1.8. Of the respondents, 20.5 per cent had annual

Table 1: Sample respondents demographic profile

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Relative frequency (%)</i>
<i>Education (n=797)</i>	
High school or less	48.6
Technical school	6.8
Some college	24.4
College graduate	17.3
Graduate school	2.8
<i>Gender (n=799)</i>	
Male	44.7
Female	55.3
<i>Age Group (n=792)</i>	
Less than 25	19.9
25-34	21.2
35-44	23.7
45-59	24.6
60+	10.5
<i>Income (n=782)</i>	
Less than \$30K	20.5
\$30-\$45K	19.1
\$46-\$60K	20.8
\$61-\$75K	15.7
\$76-\$100K	15.1
\$100K+	8.8
<i>Occupation (n=795)</i>	
Homemaker	12.7
Student	17.4
Part-time employed	20.5
Full-time employed	43.0
Self-employed	4.6
Retired	1.8
<i>Household size (n=795)</i>	
Single person	23.0
2 people	33.7
3 people	16.4
4 people	17.1
5 and more people	9.6

household incomes less than US\$30 000, 19.1 per cent \$30 000–\$45 000, 20.8 per cent \$46 000–\$60 000, 15.7 per cent \$61 000–\$75 000, 15.1 per cent \$76 000–\$100 000 and about 8.8 per cent came from households with annual incomes over \$100 000. Twenty three per cent of respondents are single person families, 33.7 per cent are from small sized families (2 people), 16.4 per cent are from 3 people families, 17 per cent 4 people families and 9.6 per cent are from large families (5 or more people).

Table 2 illustrates the mean scores of consumer perceptions of national brands versus store brands. Some of the comparisons between the national brands and the store brands were statistically significant. Although this table indicates that

Table 2: Mean scores of perceptions about manufacturer versus store brands#

Factors	Manufacturer brands	Store brands
High quality	3.79	2.10*
Low price	2.92	3.59*
Highly trustworthy	3.79	2.96*
Attractive packaging	3.76	2.48*
Frequently advertised	3.74	2.61*
High sales promotions	3.53	2.65*
Highly nutritious	3.53	3.40
High on reliability	3.71	3.24
Better taste	3.88	3.36
Variety of choice	3.80	3.13
Healthy	3.45	3.36

*Significant at $P < 0.05$.

5-point Likert scale was use (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree).

manufacturer brands received higher ratings in general, consumers perceived national brands as higher quality, attractively packaged and had more trust in those brands, while store brands were mainly perceived as a low price alternative.

We then analyzed the observable differences between store brand buyers and non-buyers. Table 3 shows the results of our analysis. Analysis reveal that store brand buyers are older, mostly female, high percentage of them have lower incomes, frequent grocery shoppers and they have higher grocery spending per month compare to the non-buyers. Moreover, higher percentage of store brand buyers indicated that price, loyalty and availability were important for them while national brand buyers considered quality, trust in brand, prestige, and loyalty were important for them.

Measurement

Based on the literature review and conceptualized model, Table 4 shows the constructs used in the model and the items used to operationalize them. Summated scored were used to combine related variables into a single composite measure. Respondents were asked to identify their observance of each item in purchasing grocery products. Respondents rated each item on a 5-point scale, where 1 represented 'strongly disagree' and 5 represented 'strongly agree'. An opposite coding system was used for some variables. For these variables 5 symbolizes

Table 3: Characteristics of store brand buyers versus not buyers

Characteristics	Buy store brands (n=432)	Do not buy store brands (n=360)
Age *	60% higher age groups	60% lower age groups
Gender *	55% female	55% male
Family income *	59% lower income levels	60% higher income levels
Frequency of purchase *	Frequently	Less frequently
Average money spent *	Over \$100	Below \$100
	Buy store brands because of	Buy national brands because of
• Quality	35%	64%
• Low price	87%	12%
• High trust	36%	58%
• Attractive packaging	41%	48%
• Loyalty	69%	71%
• Availability	72%	45%
• Uniqueness	63%	51%
• Prestige	32%	74%
• Habits	39%	47%

*Significant Chi-square $P < 0.05$.

'strongly disagree' and 1 corresponds to 'strongly agree'. To measure respondents' store brand previous experiences, three questions were used. First question asked respondents to indicate if they would recommend store brand grocery product to their friends. A five point Likert scale ranging from 5 being 'highly likely' to 1 being 'highly unlikely' was used to measure respondents' recommendation of store brands. Second question asked them to indicate their willingness to buy store brand grocery products over national brands. A five point Likert scale ranging from 5 being 'high' to 1 being 'low' was used to measure their willingness. Finally, the third question asked them to indicate their satisfaction levels. A five point Likert scale ranging from 5 being 'very satisfied' and 1 being 'very unsatisfied' was used to measure their satisfaction levels. Table 4 summarizes the other constructs used in the study.

The model proposed in Figure 2 was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). We followed the advice of Raykov et al⁵⁴ for the analysis of more complex models. Therefore, we performed analysis at the sub-model levels – first an analysis of the 'Consumer's Consciousness'

Table 4: Items retained in the final model

Label	Question	Dimension
X1	I compare prices of at least a few brands before I choose one	Budget conscious ($\alpha=0.79$)
X2	I find myself checking the prices even for small items	
X3	It is important to me to get the best price for the products I buy	
X4	My household budget is always tight	
X5	Store brand grocery items offer great value for money	Value Conscious ($\alpha=0.75$)
X6	Store brand grocery items are considered to be a good buy	
X7	Store brand grocery items appear to be a bargain	
X8	When buying a brand of grocery product, I look for the cheapest brand available	Price Conscious ($\alpha=0.68$)
X9	Price is the most important factor when I am choosing a brand of grocery product	
X10	In grocery products, the brands I normally buy are frequently on deal	
X11	In grocery product, I usually wait for sale to buy the brand I want	Discount conscious ($\alpha=0.62$)
X12	I clip coupons for national brands from newspapers	
X13	I use store flyers to decide what to buy and where to shop	
X14	I use a coupon if I see it on a package or in the store	
X23	I am very satisfied with store brand grocery products	Consumer's previous experience ($\alpha=0.82$)
X24	I recommend store brand grocery products to my friends	
X25	I would not hesitate to buy store brand grocery products	
X15	SBGP – Price	Sensory perception ($\alpha=0.70$)
X16	SBGP – Quality	
X17	SBGP – Appearance	
X18	SBGP – Taste	
X22	SBGP – Nutrition	Content perception ($\alpha=0.72$)
X21	SBGP – Reliability	
X20	SBGP – Label information	
X19	SBGP – Healthy	
X26	I buy store brands	Store brand purchase/use
X27	My shopping cart contains store brands for several products	

sub-model, second analysis of the 'Consumer's Previous Experience', then followed by the sub-model 'Store Brand Perception', and finally, an analysis of the 'Store brand purchase/use'. Each analysis consisted of two stages^{55,56} of modeling.

First, using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), the multidimensionality and acceptability of the measurement model for each construct was

tested. Second, each sub – model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling to analyze the causal relations between the constructs. The data were explored for outliers and none were identified. A purification process reduced the number of scale items that were retained for each sub-scale.⁵⁷ Multivariate normality was assessed by comparing Mardia's Coefficient against its critical ratio.⁵⁵ All sub-scales data were found to be acceptably normal. The total number of indicators used for each of the constructs left in the model was also reduced in the purification process,⁵⁷ leaving the most salient ones to measure the constructs in the final model. As conceptualized, both the 'Consumer's Consciousness' and 'Store Brand Perceptions' found to be higher order constructs. The proposed scales achieved reasonable levels of Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients (see Table 4, which also lists the items retained).

The development of a robust conceptual model needs to be verified with three types of fit measure: absolute, incremental or comparative, and parsimonious.⁵⁸ Absolute fit statistics compare the hypothesized model with no model at all. However, they are used as the first step in developing new models. The absolute fit indexes of the combined model (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.05, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.05, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.92, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.91) indicate that our hypothesized model fits the sample data very well. Comparative or incremental indexes of fit are based on a comparison of the hypothesized model against a baseline model, also called the independence model. From the comparative fit indices (Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.88, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.92, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.92) we can see that the hypothesized model also represents a good fit to the data. Finally, parsimonious fit indices take into account the complexity (that is, number of estimated parameters) of the hypothesized model in the assessment of overall model fit. From the parsimonious fit indexes our results indicate that we can once again conclude that

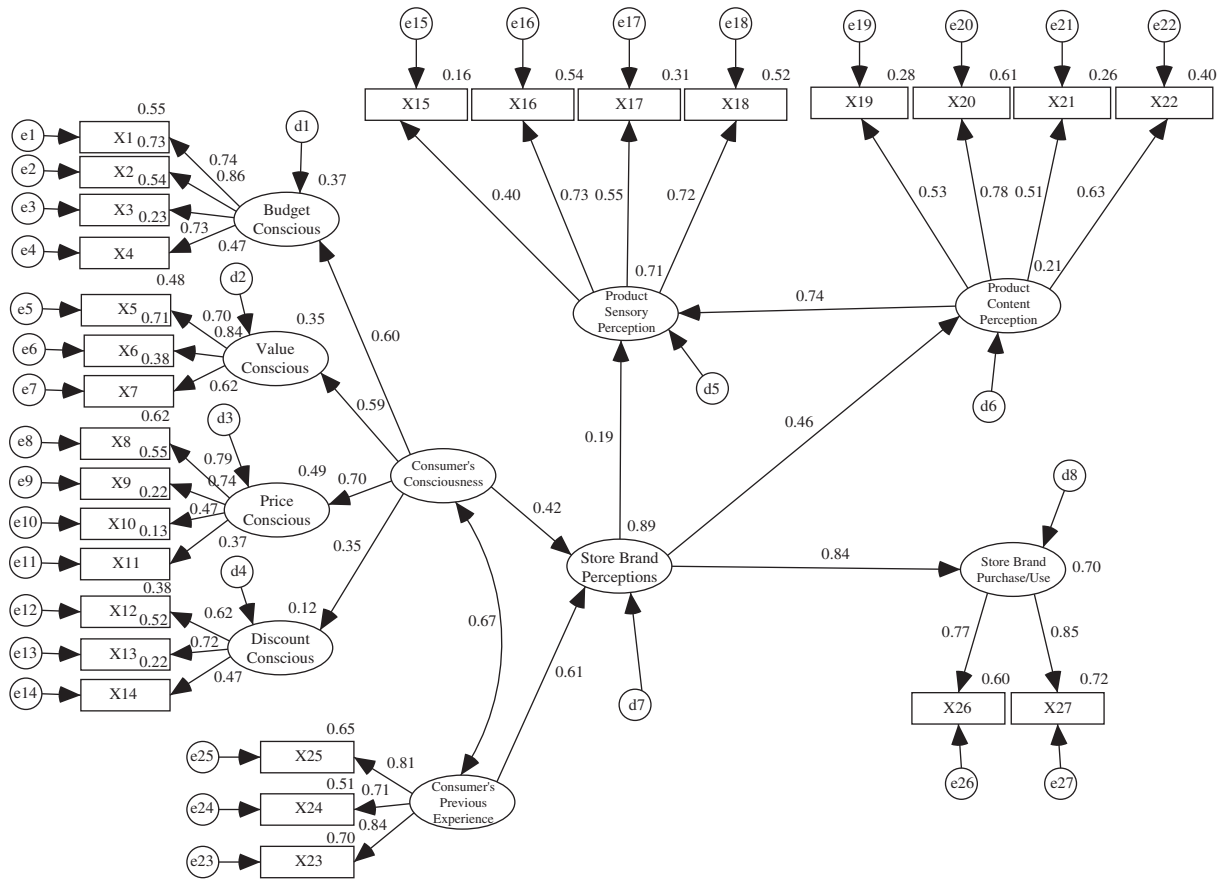


Figure 2: Store brand purchase/use.
 Note: chi-square=900.783(313 df); $P=0.000$; $GF=0.921$; $AGFI=0.905$; $CFI=0.916$ $RMSEA=0.049$.

our hypothesized model fits the sample data fairly well (Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) = 0.78, Parsimony Comparative Fit Index (PCFI) = 0.82, Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) = 0.76).

Hypothesis testing

The proposed hypotheses were tested by examining the critical ratios for each hypothesized link in Figure 2 (also see Table 5). All were above 1.96 and of the expected sign and therefore significant. Thus all hypotheses were supported. In addition a very high level of the variance in reported Store Brand Purchase/Use behavior was predicted ($R^2 = 0.70$).

The results demonstrate significant links as hypothesized between a value consciousness and experience dimensions, perception of store brand and reported behavior towards the store. For the

Table 5: Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Standardized regression weight	Critical ratio	Confirmed
Hypotheses 1 Consumer's consciousness plays a positive role on the store brand perceptions	0.42	5.0	Yes
Hypotheses 2 Experience has a positive effect on store brand perceptions.	0.61	8.5	Yes
Hypotheses 3 Consumer's consciousness is positively linked to the consumer's previous experience.	0.67	9.4	Yes
Hypotheses 4 Positive store brand perceptions will increase the store brand purchase/use.	0.84	8.9	Yes

final model, 70 per cent of the variance of 'Store Brand Purchase/Use' was explained by its antecedent 'Store Brand Perceptions'. Consumer's Consciousness and Consumer's Previous Experience explained 89 per cent of the variance in perceived 'Store Brand Perceptions'. SEM is capable of estimating not only the direct effects of one variable on another but also the indirect effects. The total standardized contribution to Store Brand Purchase/Use from Store Brand Perceptions was 0.84 compared with a total of 0.51 from Consumer's Previous Experience, and 0.35 from Consumer's Consciousness.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although store brand purchase behavior is studied frequently in the literature, empirical studies provided inconsistent evidence in explaining store brand purchase behavior. Since the classic work of Myers,²⁵ a number of studies has been undertaken to investigate the characteristics of buyers of store brand grocery products. Most of these studies focused on profiling store brand buyers in terms of socioeconomic variables, personality characteristics, shopping style, and information processing. In general, these studies concluded that consumers are reluctant to buy store brands because of their perceived poor quality. However, the findings of these studies were not conclusive and at best presented a weak relationships among the variables investigated. Some of the studies showed that store brands were becoming increasingly more popular due to the fact that the consumer had greater trust in the quality of these products.

In this study, using a conceptual model, we studied the relationship between consumer perceptions and the store brand purchase behavior. This study results indicate significant relationships between consumers' consciousness and store brand perceptions and the purchase behavior. Our results suggest that two higher-order constructs namely 'Consumers' Consciousness' and 'Store Brand Perceptions' contributes significantly to the model fit in explaining 'Store Brand Purchase' behavior. Also in this model, 'Consumer's Previous Experience' is found to be significantly related to the higher order construct called 'Store Brand

Perceptions' and ultimately it is linked to the 'Store Brand Purchase' behavior. These results show that consumer perceptions about store brand were significantly influenced by their levels of consciousness as well as their previous experiences.

These findings indicate that consumers' consciousness contribute positively to their perceptions of store brands and the greater knowledge on the store brands (mostly due to consumers' previous experiences) leads to positive perceptions, which in return contributes positively to the likelihood of store brand purchase. Important managerial implications of this study may be noted. It is known that consumer use brand name primarily as a cue to evaluate product quality. In one hand, retailers should continuously focus their efforts in attempting to establish a strong brand image for their store brand lines, while in the other hand, make investments in promotion campaigns to familiarize consumers with their brands and encourage first time purchases through novel sales promotion methods. These actions will contribute to the increased trial purchases, which will stimulate to initial purchase experience with the product. Previous research indicates that price plays an important role in consumers' quality perceptions of products. In other words, there is a long history of research that demonstrates that consumers often use price to infer product quality. Marketers should be very careful in promoting the benefits of their store brands since some consumers may view low store brand prices as a cue that store brands are of inferior quality and may turn off shoppers who might try store brands. The finding of this research suggest that consumer's consciousness contributes to the positive store brand perceptions and therefore marketing strategies should be designed to emphasize the 'value' aspects of the offering with a special emphasis on high quality and a superior value. Effective advertising and promotion should position these products as offering very high quality and value, and as being available exclusively at the sponsoring store's outlets. In summary, this paper adds to the growing literature on understanding store brand purchase behavior.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. First, although this study used a large sample size, it was conducted in a limited region in the United States. Caution should be used in generalizing the results to larger groups. Second, purchase behavior was operationalized based on purchase intentions or willingness to buy. It is possible that future studies can use a more objective measure of purchase such as actual spending or number of store brand items purchased. Finally, this study only focuses on examining the role of store brand perceptions on purchase intentions. A more comprehensive conceptualization of the behavior would create better opportunities to understand the store brand purchase behavior.

The results of this study encourage several other avenues for future research activity. Given the store brands have become a global phenomenon, it is recommended to replicate this study in the international domain to examine relationships between consumers' perceptions and purchase behaviors in markets in which store brands have greater market shares. Results of this study should be used as a catalyst for future research of interest to both marketing academics and industry researchers who are interested in store brands.

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