



The Developing Factors of Purchase Intentions: The Emerging Trend of Private to Mega Store Environment in Pakistan

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This research study is highlighting the shifting trend of purchasing from private retail shops to mega/big box stores. Currently, many developing economies like Pakistan are witnessing a growing trend of the shift in shopping options, and moving on mega/big box stores is one of them. This research identifies some underlying factors of big box stores which affect purchase intentions. In this study store environment is considered as an independent variable whereas purchase intention is taken as the dependent variable. Customer satisfaction and behavioral loyalty are considered mediators and the effect of price (factor) has been checked as a moderator. The philosophy of positivism is followed for this research. The research design is explanatory in nature. Data is collected through structured questionnaires from the customers of FMCG and daily routine products. The sample size is 174 and both (male and female customers were considered). Non- Probability convenience sampling technique is used. For data analysis, SMART PLS 3 software and structural equation modeling are used. The results of this research suggested that the store environment has a significant impact on purchase intention. Similarly, the store environment significantly develops purchase intention with the mediation of customer satisfaction as well. Store environment has a positive impact on behavioral loyalty, whereas behavioral loyalty does not significantly impact purchase intentions. Prices have a significant impact as moderators on store environment and customer satisfaction.





Introduction

The retail industry has observed a dynamic change in recent years, whereas, they are gaining more popularity among the masses due to their convenience (Adibfar et al., 2011). The concept of mega stores is common in developed countries such as UK and USA. However, they are gaining popularity in developing countries such as Pakistan. At the same time, megastores have changed the shopping trend of customers globally (Gazzola et al., 2022). Therefore, customers are shifting their shopping preferences to these megastores. The reason for the customer shift is the wide offerings by these megastores to the customers. According to Biere et al. (2021), megastores have taken the place of local vendors so that customers can be provided with more products under one roof.

Olonade et al. (2021) discussed that customers these days are looking for convenience while shopping along with the quality and variety of products in one place. Similarly, these mega stores are not only providing the shopping experience to the customers, but they are also serving as outing spots for the customers. As discussed by Qureshi and Vakkassi (2019) that people in Pakistan visit mega stores not just to shop but to spend a good time while experiencing the shopping process and ambiance of the store. According to Marcucci et al. (2021), the global purchasing behavior of customers is changing and customers are preferring one window solutions for their purchasing. Moreover, megastores are also providing customized services to the customer and it is also one of the reasons that are attracting customers towards mega stores. However, to meet the demand of customers, several other patterns of stores were initiated in Pakistan such as general stores that have availability of various products and utility stores that are operated by the government of Pakistan which has subsidized products.

According to Olonade et al. (2021), megastores not just deal with households but also provide business-to-business services. For instance, local retailers can make bulk purchases from megastores. Therefore, the trend of mega stores is widely accepted in developed countries, whereas, it is also appreciated in the Pakistani(developing)market. On the other hand, the trend shift to megastores is beneficial for households, small businesses, and other small institutions. Moreover, according to Statista, in 2019 the global retail industry generated a revenue of around \$25 trillion and it is expected to increase to \$27 trillion by 2022 (Statista, 2022). Therefore, the retail industry is on the boom. However, the reason behind the success of megastores lies in the satisfaction of the customers. Alzoubi and Inairat (2020) discussed that customer satisfaction is achieved when value, quality, and service are delivered to the customers under one roof. Due to this, mega stores are keeping the customers at the center of their business and focusing on creating value for the customers. According to Nastasoiu and Vandenbosch (2019), meeting expectations and creating value for customers is not as easy as it looks. According to Thorisdottir and Johannsdottir (2019), customers should remain at the center of the business as they are the force that drives the business. At the same time, due to the potential operations of B to B and B- to C businesses in the Pakistani market, international retail chains are finding feasibility in starting their operations/ businesses in Pakistan. However, in Pakistan, mega stores like Imtiaz supermarket, and Metro are the biggest competitors as they



are serving the needs of the population with pricing strategies and differences in services offerings. This research study is based on addressing the contemporary trend of changing private retail to mega-stores; which is observed not only in urban areas in Pakistan but this trend in changing the traditional dynamics of the Pakistani market in rural areas as well. Previous research has been restricted to covering these phenomena and their effect on consumer behavior in developed economies whereas the impact of this shifting trend in developing countries

Previous Studies on the converging trend of opening mega stores have been widely discussed, whereas the existence of this phenomenon in developing countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka represents customer awareness about the facilities of developed shopping places, which is not specifically addressed in developing economies cases. Through this research study, an attempt to identify the impact of the store environment and subsequent factors on purchase intentions is made. Against the backdrop of existing shifting trends; this research catered the questions like how to store environment would impact consumers' purchase intentions. Keeping in view, the current scenario this research is initiated to answer the question about, what are those illustrative and non-illustrative factors which shift customers from private retail purchases to megastore shopping.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of mega-store trends on customer satisfaction in Pakistan. Whereas this study aims to examine the impact of mega-stores on customer satisfaction. On the other hand, the study will examine governing roles of purchase intention and behavioral loyalty in the relationship between mega stores and customer satisfaction. Moreover, the objective of this study is to examine if there are any roles of prices and store environment which are strengthening the impact of mega-stores on purchase intention and behavioral loyalty.

Literature Review

Impact of store environment on customer satisfaction

In the study of Barari, Ross, and Surachartkumtonkun (2020) customer satisfaction is defined as the positive or negative experiences of the customer when they used a product or service. Vargas (2021) discussed that customer satisfaction varies as per their demographics while witnessing the store environment. In similar findings by Suchanek and Kralova (2019) customer satisfaction relies on the services provided by retail stores, the more the expectations are met, the more satisfaction. According to Panday et al. (2021), stores are focused on creating an environment that attracts and environment impacts the emotions and urges of the customer leading to satisfaction. Ingaldi and Ulewicz (2019) discussed that customers prefer those stores that have an attractive environment to meet their satisfaction. It is argued by Tarihan et al. (2020) that the store environment has an indirect influence on the satisfaction of customers. Moreover, the identity of the stores is communicated to the customers through the environment they develop for the customers, in return for achieving their satisfaction (Pandiangan et al., 2021). Therefore, the store environment is the first thing that is used by the stores to attract



customers to encourage them to make purchases while enhancing their satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis in this regard is:

H1: Store environment has a positive impact on customer satisfaction

Impact of store environment on behavioral loyalty

Previously, the behavioral loyalty of the customers is defined as the repeated purchases of either a product, service, or brand. Thus, there are factors that impact the behavioral loyalty of customers such as the store environment. Terblanche (2018), the layout and environment of the store influence the behavior of the customers. Bindu et al., (2021) store environment impacts the cognitive thinking of the customers, and through interpretation and information processing behavior of the customer in a store is developed. Similarly, Pinto, Hawaldar and Pinto (2020) found that the store environment significantly drives impulsive buying in customers, as a result, the loyalty of a customer to the store is achieved. Cheah et al. (2020) explained the store environment significantly impacts the behavior of the customer. Moreover, Roggeveen, Grewal and Schweiger (2020) discussed that when customers experience a good environment in a store, they prefer that store of the available different options.

Pinto and Hawaldar (2022) argued that the store environment negatively impacts the customers if the customers are feeling stressed and have long waiting times in queues for making payments. Simanjuntak et al. (2020) supported the findings and mentioned that when customers feel stressed in the store they neglect to make purchases from the same store for future buying. Diebner et al. (2020) that customers remain loyal to those stores that are addressing the needs of the customers by adding value to their experience. Thus, the hypothesis that is developed for this study is.

H2: Store environment significantly impacts behavioral loyalty

Impact of store environment on purchase intention

The environment in retail stores can have a big impact on customers' purchase intentions (Gorji & Siami, 2020). A cluttered store with no clear direction can make customers feel overwhelmed. A store that is too bright can be off-putting for customers who are shopping for clothes. A store that is too dark might make it difficult for customers to see the items they're looking for. Alexander and Cano (2020), conventional retail stores are not optimized for customer experience as customers are not satisfied with the current retail environment. The study by An and Han (2020) discussed that it is important for the stores to know if the store environment is working. Moreover, Pinto et al. (2020). The study by Aw (2019) discussed that consumers nowadays seek additional benefits in terms of selecting the store for making purchases. As discussed by Abou Ali and Farid (2020) the cleanliness of the store impacts positively and negatively on purchase intentions. Supported by Gajanayake et al. (2021) to improve the store environment cleanliness is essential as it impacts the purchase intention of the customers and sustains their loyalty of the customers. Hashmi et al. (2020) discussed that a pleasant scent in the store environment also attracts customers leading to purchases. Roggeveen et al. (2020) support that scent impacts the emotions and moods of the customers



and encourages the customer to spend more time in the store, the more time customers are spending in the store, the more the chances of purchases increase.

H3: Store environment has a significant impact on purchase intention

Impact of customer satisfaction on purchase intention

In literature customer satisfaction is discussed as the feeling of a customer after consuming a product or a service. As a result customer satisfaction is assumed as a significant construct in studies (de Souza et al., 2020). According to Dsh et al. (2021), customer satisfaction is considered a significant influencer in developing purchase intention. Conversely et al. (2018) argued that customer satisfaction is often derived from service quality whereas purchase intention is not necessarily derived from satisfaction. Shokouhyar, Shokoohyar and Safari (2020) discussed that customer satisfaction is measured on the basis of the quality of service received the professionalism of employees and the experience of the customer with the employee of the store. Moreover, when a customer receives a promotional message from a retail outlet it is likely that a customer will make the intention to purchase a product or service (Wibowo et al., 2020). Conversely et al. (2020) stated that when the price of the offered product or service is higher than the perceived value it is likely to dissatisfy customers leading to a decline in purchase intention. Similarly, Al-Obaidi et al. (2020) discussed that a satisfied customer serves as an ambassador of the store by making recommendations to other people to make purchases from the store that is satisfying them. Tran and Le (2020) stated that the environment of the store influences customer satisfaction leading to purchase intention.

H4: Customer satisfaction has a significant impact on purchase intention

Impact of behavioral loyalty on purchase intention

Behavioral loyalty is defined as a behavior demonstrated by the customer for using or buying a specific product or service. Conversely, behavioral loyalty is referred to as a demonstration of loyalty by customers when they are trapped with high-quality services or experiences. Aburayya et al. (2020) that customers often develop behavioral loyalty when they do not have alternative options. According to Hollebeek et al. (2019) when the needs of customers are catered by a specific product or service it is likely that the customer will never switch to other options. According to Levy and Hino (2016), repeated purchase intentions are observed from loyal customers who not just make purchases from a specific brand but also recommend purchasing from the same brand. Similarly, Saini & Singh (2020) developed a model for loyalty in which loyalty was categorized into two dimensions such as behavior and attitude.

H5: Behavioural loyalty is significantly related to purchase intention

The mediating effect of customer satisfaction between store environment and purchase intention

According to Hult et al. (2019), customer satisfaction within a store environment is an opinion on how well the needs of customers are catered to efficiently. Supported by Zhu et al. (2020) customer develops satisfaction with the environment given at the store which leads to

purchase intentions from the store. Similarly, the service and product quality offered to customers also impacts satisfaction in the store leading to purchase intentions (Tran & Le, 2020). Abbas et al. (2020) found that store environment, diversity in product offerings and quality of services significantly impacts customer satisfaction leading to purchase intentions.

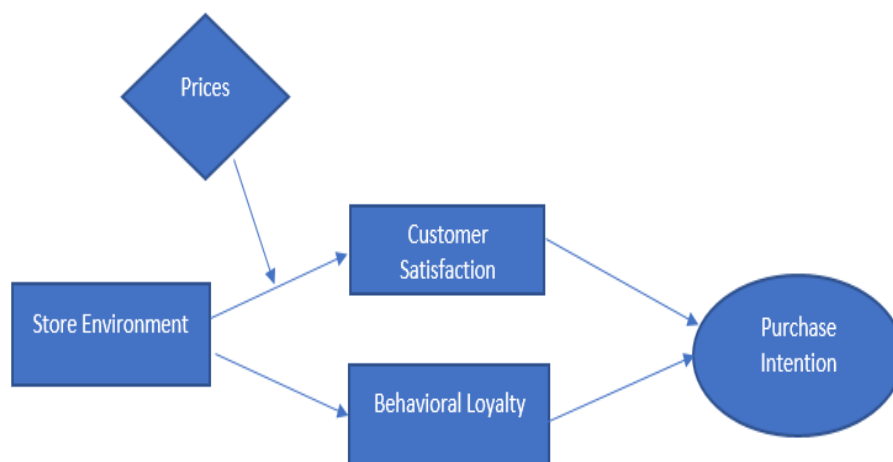
H6: Customer satisfaction mediates the impact of store environment and purchase intention

The mediating effect of behavioral loyalty between store environment and purchase intention

According to Danishet al. (2020), anything that can change the behavior of the customer can increase their loyalty and purchase intentions of the customers. Similarly, Zhu et al. (2020) also stated that the environment of a store significantly impacts the purchase intentions and loyalty of customers. Ahmad and Zhang (2020) discussed that when the store environment makes it easier for the customer to locate their wanted products it is likely to impact the purchase intentions and loyalty of the customer. Therefore, with satisfaction, loyalty is achieved whereas the environment of the store also impacts the purchase intentions of customers (Hameed et al., 2021).

H7: Behavioural loyalty mediates between the store environment and purchase intention

Figure No 1: Conceptual Framework



Methodology

The research philosophy of this paper follows the philosophy of positivism. Positivist research supports the quantitative and explanatory research design. The research design of this study falls under explanatory /quantitative design. The target population of this study is customers of FMCH/routine products. A convenient sampling technique is used to know the validity of the phenomena as there is an unavailability of a sampling frame. A deductive approach is used under which data is analyzed through theory identification to hypotheses



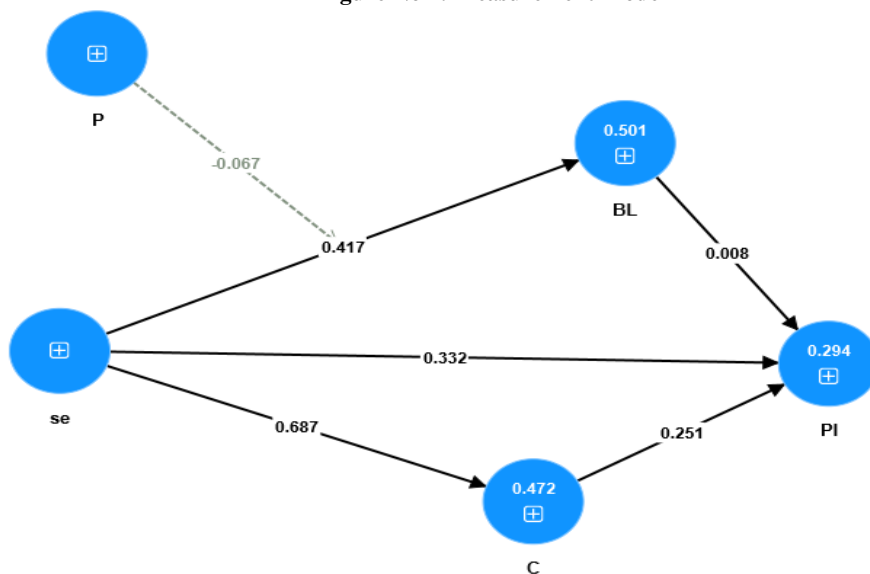
development and then results have been drawn. Data was gathered through a structured instrument which was based on five points Likert scale. Constructs were predeveloped and have been adapted to fulfill the objectives of this study.

Table No1: Detail of Questionnaire

Construct	Author	No.of items
Store Environment	Netemeyer; Bearden & sharma	10
Prices	Lai & Sarathy, 2017	5
Customer satisfaction	Kwok & Tai, 2005	7
Behavioral Loyalty	Basu & Dick, 1994	6
Purchase Intention	Hsu & Lin, 2015	6

Data Analysis

Figure No2 : Measurement Model



The results suggested the R^2 values of customer satisfaction, behavioral loyalty and purchase intentions are 0.517, 0.426 and 0.294 suggesting lesser to medium predictive efficiency. Whereas the SMR value is 0.049 which is $< .10$ and the NFI value which shows the adequacy of the model.

Table 2 represents the respondent's profile, in which age, income, marital status, and employment status have been investigated. According to the statistics, 10% of the respondents belong to the age group of 15-24, 56% belong to 25-34, 22% belong to the 35-44, and 5% belong to greater than 55 age. Similarly, 18% 65K to 86 K, 10% belong to 86K – 105K, 5% belong to 106K-120K, and 67% belong to greater than 120K. As per the statistics, 63% are married and 37% are unmarried. Same as with the employment status according to which 76% were employed and 24% belong to the unemployed category.



Figure No 3 : Structural Model

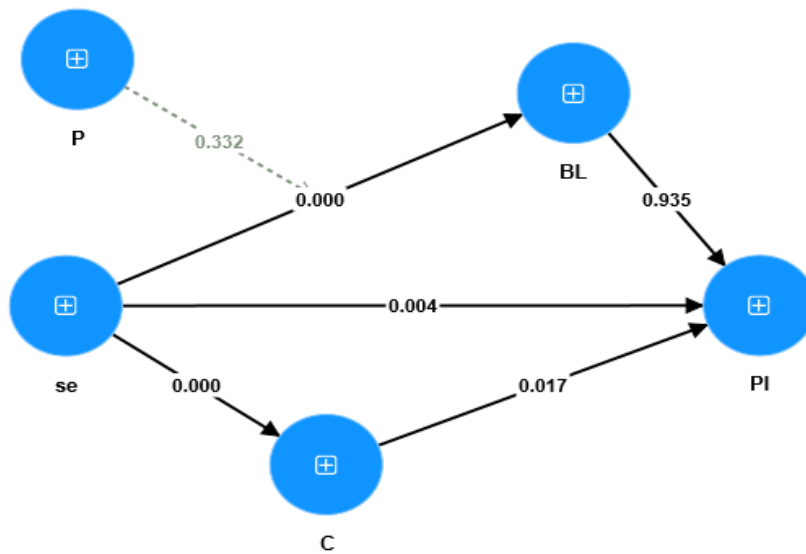


Table No 2: Demographic Profile

N=174		Percentages
Age	15-24	10%
	25-34	56%
	35-44	22%
	>55	5%
Income	65K-85K	18%
	86K-105K	10%
	106K-120K	5%
	>120	67%
Marital Status	Married	63%
	Un Married	37%
Employment Status	Employed	76%
	Unemployed	24%

Table No 3: Factor analysis, indicators reliability, Factor Loadings

Behavioral Loyalty	Customer satisfaction	Prices	Purchase intention	Store Environment	Prices x Store Environment
0.614					
0.729					
0.809					
	0.815				
	0.851				
	0.786				
		0.595			
		0.847			



0.829	
	0.696
	0.659
	0.619
	0.883
	0.755
	0.62
	1

Table 3 depicts the values obtained from outer loadings and presents the factor loading for each indicator. The outer loading values below 0.50 shows less contribution towards these factors. This procedure is a unidimensionality process. After finding the indicators which are relevant the model assessment should be applied to get better reliability and validity (Afthanorhan, 2013). The above values depict that all variables have explained the theoretical concept of the latent variable.

Table No 4: Convergent Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	The average variance extracted (AVE)
Behavioral Loyalty	0.554	0.575	0.763	0.521
Customer satisfaction	0.752	0.753	0.858	0.669
Prices	0.663	0.724	0.806	0.587
Purchase intention	0.112	0.237	0.279	0.396
Store Environment	0.562	0.648	0.771	0.541

Table No 4 represents the convergent validity. The model’s internal consistency is assessed by the values of composite reliability. The benchmark criteria for homogeneity for composite reliability is >0.7. the convergent validity is explained by assessing the values of the average variance extracted. The minimum recommended value is 0.5 (Baggozi & Yi, 1994).

Table No 5: Discriminant Validity

	Behavioral Loyalty	Customer satisfaction	Prices	Purchase intention	Store Environment
Behavioral Loyalty	0.722				
Customer satisfaction	0.698	0.818			
Prices	0.614	0.566	0.766		
Purchase intention	0.4	0.484	0.435	0.63	
Store Environment	0.653	0.687	0.627	0.51	0.735

Table no 5 represents the values for discriminant validity. Discriminant validity explains whether each construct is significantly different from others. According to (Fornell &



Larcker, 1981) criteria, the square root of the avE should be higher than the correlation between the construct.

Results of Hypotheses

Table No 6: Results of Hypotheses

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Results
Behavioral Loyalty -> Purchase intention	0.01	0.012	0.098	0.099	0.921	Rejected
Customer satisfaction -> Purchase intention	0.249	0.25	0.105	2.368	0.018	Accepted
Prices -> Customer satisfaction	0.306	0.305	0.08	3.826	0.000	Accepted
Store Environment -> Behavioral Loyalty	0.653	0.661	0.045	14.659	0.000	Accepted
Store Environment -> Customer satisfaction	0.545	0.551	0.074	7.335	0.000	Accepted
Store Environment -> Purchase intention	0.332	0.335	0.118	2.814	0.005	Accepted
Prices x Store Environment -> Customer satisfaction	0.105	0.099	0.053	1.971	0.049	Accepted

Table 6 represents the results of hypotheses according to which the direct impact of behavior has an insignificant impact on purchase intention as (B=0.01, Tvalue=0.099, P value=0.921) shows the insignificant impact. The direct impact of customer satisfaction and purchase intention turned significant as (B=0.249, T valu=2.368, P value=0.018). the direct impact of prices on customer satisfaction turned significant as (B=0.306, T value=3.825, P value=0.000). the direct impact of store environment on behavioral loyalty also has a significant impact as (B=0.6353, T value = 14.659, P value=0.000). the direct impact of store environment and purchase intention has a significant impact as (B=0.545, T value=2.814, P value =0.005). The indirect impact of prices on the relationship between store environment and customer satisfaction also turned significant showing the positive impact of prices reflects that prices significantly moderate the relationship (B=0.105, T value= 1.971, P value=0.049).

Conclusion and Discussion

This research study has been conducted with the intent of understanding the shifting trend of opening big box super stores in developing countries. Consumers’ adaptability to shifting to purchases from super stores rather than the previously held trend of domestic and nearby, privately owned grocery stores. The results of this research on this specific relationship do not support the impact of behavioral loyalty on purchase intentions. The results are contradictory to the previously held research by Ali (2019) in which the relationship is significant.



Chi (2018) conducted research on the purchase intentions of online apparel, in their research, the relationship between customer satisfaction and purchase intention are significantly related to each other. The previous study results are harmonious with the results of this research. Wantara and Tambrin (2019) conducted research in the area of Bang Kalan and measure the relationship between prices and customer satisfaction. The result of their study endorsed the significant relationship between prices and customer satisfaction. Terblanche and Boshoff (2006) have conducted research on the satisfactory shopping experience and behavioral loyalty of customers and found a significant result between them. Rashid and Rokade (2019) have conducted a similar kind of study in which they highlighted the trending phenomena of converting individual stores into mega supermarkets. They have addressed the significant relationship between store environment, service quality of the store, and customer satisfaction. The result was supported by many scholars (Hanaysha, 2018) confirmed that the store environment plays an important role in affecting consumer purchase behavior. El-Adly (2019); Hult et al. (2019) have conducted a similar study in which they found a positive impact of store environment on customer satisfaction where prices are considered as moderator. However high prices are a sensitive issue due to which some customers reduce their visits to their chosen supermarket.

Limitations

This research has some regional limitations as it has been conducted in Karachi (the Megacity of Pakistan). Another limitation of this research is it is conducted in the urban area of Pakistan and other developing countries. Sample size and availability of respondents were other issues that hinder broader implications.

Recommendations

Similar researches have to be undertaken in rural areas and with different types of retail opportunities. The Six Sigma approach can be used in the retail market to upgrade their performance. Comparative research on Asian and American trends in shopping behavior would be beneficial and give more in-depth insight.

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