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Presenting Consumer Behavior Prediction Model with Emphasis on Brand Perception from Shahrvand Store Brand

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Abstract

Purpose: the present research was designed and implemented with the aim of presenting a prediction model for consumer purchase behavior with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand store.

Methodology: in order to achieve the research objectives, qualitative and exploratory grounded theory approach was used. The sample required for investigating the research questions was obtained through theoretical sampling method. The required data were collected through profound and semi-structured interviews until theoretical saturation. Overall, 10 interviews were performed with the experts of marketing and industrial management, general psychology, the representatives and staff of chain stores. For data analysis, Strauss and Corbin methodical approach was used by going through three stages of open, axial, and selective coding. Eventually the paradigmatic model of the research was presented.

Findings: at the end of the data analysis, 94 concepts were identified as 19 items and six main classes. The results indicated that perceived satisfaction with the brand, brand communication, and enjoyable motives were introduced as excellent and effective conditions on development of the axial dimension of consumer status, grantmaking based on behavior, perception, and expectations of consumers about services. They lead to repeated purchase behavior, brand dependence, and brand loyalty through perceived strategies, perceived after sale services, and perceived value creation for consumer.

Conclusion: based on the findings, stores, relation-oriented marketing, and internal branding of the store were identified as the contextual conditions, and perception of environmental factors plus consumers' perceived experience as confounding conditions.

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1. Introduction

Today predicting the consumer behavior can reflect the consumer's tendency to buying a product or receiving a special service in the future (Sarkar & Chaudhuri, 2016). In other words, developing the purchase behavior of consumers means higher purchase probability. The consumer's intention to buy from a brand forms not only from the attitude to that brand but also by considering a set of brands (Shah Hosseini et al. 2011). Every day, consumers make many purchase decisions. This consumer decision-making occurs in different stages of social and cognitive processes. Behavior prediction is one of the stages of purchase decision-making which studies the reason behind consumer behavior to buy from a special brand (Lao, 2014). Nevertheless, when purchasing products, consumers confront numerous decisions with regards to the product itself; its purchase, as well as its applications, Researchers on consumer behavior makes great attempts to better understand how such decisions are expressed. In this regard, different factors can affect the purchase behavior of the consumer and their decision-making for the purchase (Rahmatabadi & Azami, 2015).

In any society and considering its special conditions, there are different environments that form the public behavior and indeed determine their behaviors and functions. The main factors that affect the information search process and in turn decision-making for purchase have been examined extensively. Research has shown that these factors include market characteristics, product features, consumer characteristics, and situational characteristics. The purchase behavior and consumption behavior of the consumer are affected by factors including cultural factors (which includes culture, micro-culture, and social classes), social factors (which include the effect of authority groups, family, as well as social role and status), individual factors (which include age, lifecycle stage, occupation, any conditions, lifestyle, personality, and personal conceptions), psychological factors (such as motivation, perception, learning, and attitude) (Sanaei & Shafei, 2014). Progressive attention to all five senses of human beings in the marketing process suggests that companies should be aware of the internal processes of the consumer purchase behavior. The sellers are first confronted with special challenges of perceiving and predicting emotions as well as experiences of consumers. Secondly, they should take some measure to form the store environments and services such that they could nurture desirable emotions and eliminate unwanted undesired emotions (Ram & Manoj, 2014).

Meanwhile, a powerful brand creates value for both the customer and organization. On the one hand, brands provide brief and useful tools for simplification of the process of selecting and purchasing the product or service to the customer, while also facilitating and accelerating the data and information processing for them, thereby creating value for the customers (Keller & Lehmann, 2008). Thus, companies can assign a higher price for their products based on a powerful brand. They can also create a better commercial leverage, enhance their margin of sales and profit, and reduce their vulnerability against competitors. Meanwhile, a powerful brand is related to the product asset alongside the customer needs, which increases the product recall (Solomon et al., 2019). Powerful brands enhance trust in intangible products and power of customers in better visualization and perception. They reduce the safety, social, and financial risk of customers when purchasing products, which are effective factors in assessing a product before purchasing, when the images and visual words about products, advertisements, and other marketing activities of the brand are retrieved from the customer perception (Doaei, et al, 2011).

Accordingly, perception is a process in which the person creates a meaningful image of the world through selection, organization, and interpretation of information. In the processing and interpretation of these stimuli, cultural contexts should also be noted, though individual components also play a significant role in this process. Understanding these processes helps the marketer to enhance their audience attention to marketing stimuli and to improve the effectiveness of their promotional activities. Nevertheless, achieving this aim necessitates precise understanding of the brand perception process, where the way stimuli are organized also plays a significant role in the brand perception process. This is because the consumer does not interpret marketing stimuli in an individual or isolated way; rather, these stimuli are interpreted together and in association with each other. Furthermore, the consumer interprets the symbols utilized in

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the marketing activities and forms their perception based on these interpretations. Thus, brand perception factors are heavily interlinked with internal concepts and depend on the consumer perception of the brand (as well as its related utility) instead of objective indices. In this regard, the studies by Fonga, et al indicate that brand perception is an important marketing strategy for developing the consumer purchase in the retail market which can put the brand exclusively in the consumer's mind, and often lead to sales, margin, profitability, and constant interest of shareholders. Thus when consumers perceive that the brand has high quality, the interest in that brand increases, which leads to establishing a desired communication with the brand, thereby enhancing the consumer purchase prediction (Matthew et al., 2017).

Consumers make many purchase decisions every day. This decision-making of the consumer occurs through different stages of social and cognitive processes (Afrasiabi, et al, 2018). Indeed, prediction about decision-making for the purchase or the purchase intention indicates the mental preparation of the consumer to take some measure for a proposal. Regarding the way it is measured, typically the respondents are asked to specify the probability of purchasing a product within a specific period of time, where the purchase intention is defined as a predictor for the actual behavior of purchase. It should be noted that purchase intention does not mean the very act of purchasing; rather the purchase intention is noted as a prepurchase action (Nowruzi, et al, 2018). Meanwhile, the retail industry, and on top of that chain stores have experienced various challenges over recent years. The most important challenges have been development of the range of competition between chain stores and increased level of knowledge and awareness of consumers and in turn changes in the expectations and needs of consumers based on their brand perception. Thus, these stores should guide and implement some approaches for satisfaction and eventually development of loyalty through precise identification of the factors affecting the consumer behavior prediction.

Hence, considering the increasing attention to the services of chain stores and presence of numerous brands in this sector, the competition between service providers as well as similarity of the presentable services to consumers, have led to their confusion about selecting the brands and differentiating between them. In such conditions, consumer behavior prediction through developing the perceptions would heavily influence the decision-making of consumers. In such competitive conditions, the stores that differentiate themselves from the competitors and create a desirable and unique status in their consumer mind will be successful. Stores can raise the awareness of consumers through marketing activities; by creating associations, they could present a desirable image of the brand in their mind, and take important steps to enhance the perception of their brand with consumers. In addition, considering the limited resources and facilities, as well as the necessity of achieving the consumer purchase behavior prediction in chain stores, and since the importance and influence of brand perception elements have been proven by great scholars such as Chlor Walker, the influence of each of these factors in chain stores should be investigated. Then based on this investigation, considering the resources and facilities and in line with the significance of the influential factors, the necessary measures to maintain and acquire perception relationship about the brand and the consumer purchase behavior prediction can be taken. Clearly, in this association the satisfaction and desired perception of consumers about the brand have a direct relationship with return on investment, sales profits, growth of the market share, and reduction of costs.

This research attempts to resolve the shortcomings related to the current models, and then to evaluate the consumer purchase behavior with a systematic and comprehensive approach with an emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand store. In this way, identification of such a relationship will help theoreticians and managers predict the consumer purchase behavior by gaining awareness about the current status, and with an emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand store, they could predict a useful and effective planning to improve the brand perception of this store. The consumer purchase behavior prediction: consumer purchase behavior prediction is a major responsibility for most marketers (Eunju & Yeong, 2019).

In this regard, market research can help in unveiling the customer's goals in this relationship. Nevertheless, this approach which protects the actual motivations of consumer subject precise supervision can be a long-term evaluation for research project with suitable design (Chen & Tung, 2012). With

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emergence of communication technologies, marketers for predicting the consumer purchase behavior have access to more complex and sensitive tools, based on which the consumer's reaction to packaging, store experiences, websites, advertisements and other issues can be well investigated and interrelated. Eventually, its impact on the consumer behavior can be remarkable (Matthew et al, 2017; Santos & et al, 2013).

Brand perception: brand perception indicates the value the brand creates in the minds of the corporate customers. This type of value arises from factors such as brand loyalty, perceived quality, perceived price, and brand awareness (Keller, 2008). Brand perception through a complex process and comprehensive approach is essential to be guided towards desired repurchase behavior; in his approach, the consumer general assessment of the utility or desirability of a product or services is based on the perceptions they have about the receivables and payments.

In this regard, Mohammadifar Y & Poor Jamshidi (2021) evaluated the antecedents for developing smart consumption behavior. They found that the variables of product brand, trusting the product, the perceived value of the product, the match between price and quality, social context, and social responsibility have a great influence on developing the smart consumption behavior. Note that the studied variables could account for 0.30 of the variance of the smart consumption behavior. Brünner (2020) investigated the behavior prediction in a test of matches based on no equilibrium beliefs and selection. The results showed that no equilibrium beliefs were an important factor for decision-making to compete in matches and the performance in those matches. In addition, a useful model of no equilibrium beliefs should allow the players to update their beliefs throughout the course of the match.

Fonga, et al. examined the effects of brand perception and brand valuation on brand selection. The findings confirmed system-based systems and four dimensions of brand value, explaining the complexity theory while also consolidating the suitability of brand perception. Eunju & Yeong (2019) also investigated the attitude of consumers and purchase behavior for different green foods from the aspect of green value. In that research, the relationships between six constructs and 20 indices were measured through structural equations modeling. All basic dimensions had a significant effect on the consumer's attitude which also considerably affected their purchase intention.

Meena, et al. (2018) investigated the brand value and behavioral goals of the customer based on a modified model. The obtained results suggested a powerful relationship between the brand value plus all four concepts of behavioral intention and the customer satisfaction, partially supporting these relationships. In addition, the results changed the modifying effect of age and education of consumers on the customer satisfaction relationship. Matthew (2017) also examined the consumer-based brand value actions for Lux Co. brand. He found that all four elements of CBBE were positively related to the brand attitude. Brand attitude would yield the relationship between the four elements of CBBE and purchase intention, where the brand performance would reduce the relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention.

Nevertheless, the background of the research suggests that the issue of predicting the consumer purchase behavior with emphasis on brand perception has remained understudied. The models presented in this regard have mostly been superficial and been of less integrated and continuous nature. With that in mind, it can be stated that the issues of predicting the consumer purchase behavior and brand perception have remained underdeveloped, and many key issues have remained untouched for research in this area.

2. Methodology

This research is qualitative. Considering the current theoretical gap, grounded theory approach was used for predicting the consumer purchase behavior with emphases on brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores. The grounded theory approach is a kind of qualitative research which employs a series of systematic approaches in an inductive way in order to establish a theory about the phenomenon of interest. In this research, for sample selection, purposeful sampling which is one of the non-probabilistic sampling methods

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was used. Purposeful sampling that is applied in qualitative research means that the researcher chooses the subjects that could be possible for the study based on the fact that they could be effective in understanding the research problem and phenomenon orientation of the study. Accordingly, the data have been collected through unstructured interviews with experts. The statistical population of the present research consisted of management experts in Shahrvand store. All interviews were recorded, which were then utilized for coding, modification, and receiving feedback. Overall, 15 experts were interviewed. Nevertheless, the data collection continued until theoretical saturation of themes so that no new data could be achieved any longer. In addition, Table 1 summarizes the research typology.

Table1. Research typology

dimensions	Present research	Descriptions
Philosophical basis	Interpretive paradigm	It is relied upon to discover different dimensions of consumer purchase behavior prediction with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand chain store
Orientation	Fundamental - applied	Fundamental because by presenting a model with new variables it adds to the knowledge and applied because it deals with investigating the consumer purchase behavior prediction with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores based on grounded theory and presenting practical suggestions for developing these relations
Approach	Inductive	First the data are collected and then the related hypotheses are presented. This approach seeks to develop a theory.
Data collection	Qualitative	Understanding the phenomenon in its context and understanding the meaning that exists in the minds of subjects are of interest, not the data quantity
Objective	Exploratory	The aim is to design and develop a comprehensive model which shows more aspects of the consumer purchase behavior prediction with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand store
Strategy	Grounded theory	Based on the research objectives and questions
Data collection method and instruments	Interview	In order to develop a theory based on the grounded theory approach, typically structured interviews are used for data collection

3. Findings

The data collection instrument was interview with experts. The participants came from Shahrvand chain stores with positions of management and head of the marketing sector, senior marketing advisors, managers of chain stores, etc. Briefly, based on the interview protocol, interviews were performed with a sample of retailing industry managers. From among the interviews, the information required for the research was extracted. The data analysis method was based on grounded theory approach and through coding and theme discovery. In the initial phase of the research, through open interviews with the managers of this industry, the subject is first understood. Also, observing the behavior of stores managers would help in deepening this understanding. Next, based on these actions and after coding as well as theme discovery, the conceptual model of the research is drawn. In addition, after each interview, the researcher has extracted the transcripts and coded them. Three stages of coding including open, axial, and selective were performed on the data. For this purpose, first the data were read line by line whereby the open codes (the words stated by participants) were extracted. The resulting codes where then compared with previous codes, whereby the codes that were conceptually similar to each other would be placed in one class. In this way the classes would be created gradually. The classes were then compared with each other and if required merged with each other. Alternatively, one class would be broken down into two or several other classes, or the place of code would change from one class to another. All these were performed in order to eventually achieve the axial class. The basis of the association process in axkial coding is extending and expanding one of the classes, similar to what has been chosen as the central class in the present research, signifying brand-

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consumer relationships arising from causal conditions, affecting the process and strategy, leading to the final outcome. Selective coding also unveiled the interrelationships of classes with each other.

Meanwhile, after performing the scientific interviews with academic and executive experts in organization, the consumer purchase behavior prediction model was developed with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand store based on the grounded theory method.

Causal conditions: in this model, causal conditions are the events that create situations and issues associated with a phenomenon and explain how and why individuals and groups respond to special methods. The causal conditions include some items of themes that directly affect the consumer purchase behavior prediction with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores. Alternatively, these factors somehow create and develop the phenomenon. In this research, three themes of perceived satisfaction with the brand, brand communication, and enjoyable motives have been experimental factors that could create causal conditions for predicting the consumer purchase behavior with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores. The themes related to the causal conditions are shown in Table 2.

Table2. Central coding for theme extraction from the concepts

main themes	Secondary themes	Sample of the concepts extracted from the interviews	Code of the interviewee
Causal conditions	Perceived satisfaction of the brand	Existence of a relationship between its consumer and store suggestions and complaints the unit of active communication with the consumer establishing its consumer club timely announcement of the store activities to the consumer promotional discounts for customers organizing festivals	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P10 ,P14
	Brand relations	Improving communication features with its consumer CRM perceived communications maintaining long-term relations with its consumer	P1, P10, P12, P9, P11, P3
	Enjoyable motives	Value-based purchase social purchase sense of enjoyment the desire for purchasing enjoyable products	P12, P7 P5, P6
Contextual conditions	Store features	The store atmosphere and space convenience of facilities variety of products after sales services suitable of goods	P9, P11, P12, P7
	Relation-oriented marketing	Deep relationship with the consumer sustaining service provision the culture of managing customer relationship sympathy with the consumer enhancing its consumer trust to the store reducing conflicts with its consumer	P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P10
	Inner branding of the store	Respectful and friendly treatment of the store authorities timely response by the store personnel	P1, P2, P9, P11, P12, P13,P15

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		presentation of new products as well as information by the store personnel provision of help by the store personnel training personnel behavioral skills	
Confounding conditions	Consumer characteristics	Differences and changes in consumer patterns negative mental image economic conditions disapproving the product consumer pessimism about the product not consuming intentionally	P3, P4, P5, P6, P10, P15, P14, P13, P7, P8
	Perception of external factors	Economic factors (the consumer economic conditions) cultural factors (adherence to beliefs) social factors (values and norms, improper advertisements)	P1, P7, P8, P9, P10, P12
	The consumer perceived experience	Mental reactions of the consumer packaging creative thinking of the consumer rational confrontation with the brand use of weak brands in the store	P2, P3, P4, P11, P12, P14
Central themes	Consumer status	Bargaining power Consumer liquidity and concurrent with their purchase improper behaviors of consumer consumer noncommitment applying the consumer experiences	P1, P2, P3, P4 P11, P12, P14
	Brand making based on consumer behavior	Brand making in line with the target consumer use of public relations to improve the brand identity providing brand services based on social networks identity making for industrial brand	P3, P4, P5, P6, P10, P13, P14
	The consumer's perception and expectations of the store	The consumer's expectations about service provider the consumer's understanding of services recognizing the mental images of consumer about the services the consumer's deep attitude about costs the consumer's appraisal of service quality	P1, P2, P8, P1, P10, P12, P9, P11, P12
Strategies	Brand positioning	Positioning strategy with regards to the brand determining the relationship between product features and target market evaluating distinctive criteria enhancing the status in its consumer mind diversifying the sales network	P1, P2,P5, P7, P9, P10, P12, P15
	Perceived discounts	Use of the store's special sales existence of suitable occasional and seasonal discounts existence of cash discounts use of the consumer club discounts use of the presentation and test of enjoyable products offering gifts or free samples at special occasions	P4, P5, P6, P10, P15, P14, P13, P7, P8, P11,

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	After sales perceived services	Offering quality products by the store rapid money refunding for returned products easy return of damaged products free home delivery	P1, P2, P8, P11, P12
	Perceived value creation for the consumer	Attempts for creating pleasant experiences for the consumer attempts for providing services in line with the consumer expectations caring for the needs and desires of the consumer creating added value for consumer fair and suitable pricing	P4, P5, P6, P10, P15, P12, P13, P14
Implications	Purchase repeated behavior	Encouraging friends and acquaintances to purchase from the store products Selecting this store from among several stores Repurchasing from the store products Reducing the consumer's orientation towards other stores	P1, P12, P9, P11, P12, P7
	Brand dependence	Better perceptions of quality mouth-to-mouth advertisement No consumer churn easy accessibility to services increasing future predictability	P3,, P5, P6, P10, P15, P14, P7, P8, P14
	Brand loyalty	Suitable and desirable response increasing profitability reducing marketing costs lower sensitivity of the consumer to the competitors persuading to purchase the consumer sense of reliability about the product	P2, P3, P4, P5, P13, P9, P11, P12, P15

Paradigmatic model: selective coding considers the results of the previous codings and chooses the main theme. This coding relates the theme to other themes in a systematic way, and while validating it develops it further. Meanwhile, selective coding begins from integrating and presenting the consumer purchase behavior prediction model with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores identified among themes and subthemes in open and axial coding. Accordingly, for better and clearer representation, paradigmatic model has been drawn as Fig. 1.

In the paradigmatic model, the causal conditions are behind the consumer purchase behavior prediction with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores. This approach may have some advantages and disadvantages that play a significant role in transition conditions at the time of study and interview collection. Meanwhile, the major phenomenon and the strategies for responding to it are important which functions within a context and intervention conditions, while also facilitating the grounds for creating new theory. Meanwhile, the factors behind the consumer purchase behavior prediction with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores have been the main concern of this research.

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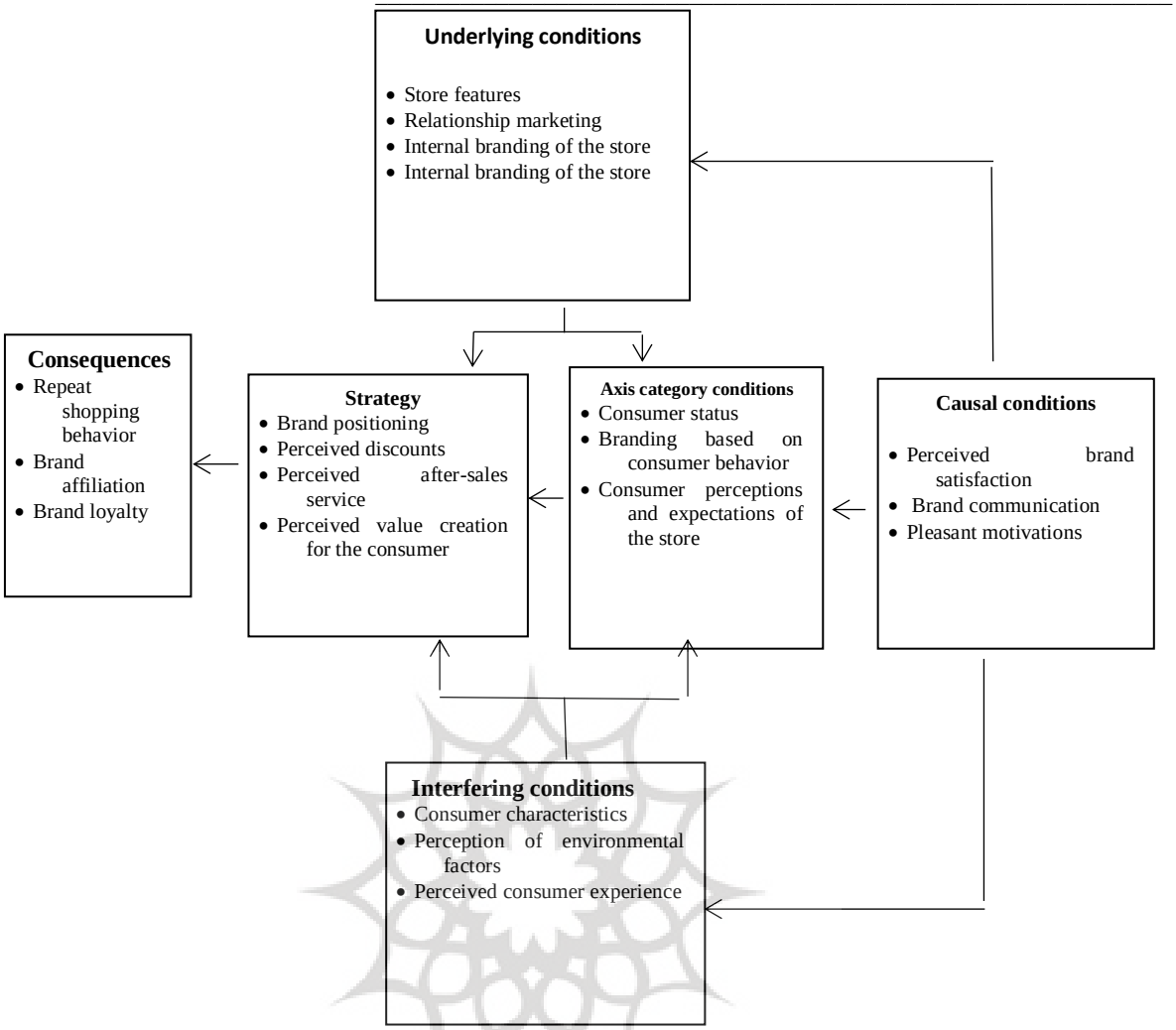

Fig.1. Paradigmatic model of the research

4. Discussion

The final obtained model shows that in the retail industry especially chain stores, holistic view and attention to different areas of branding especially consumer purchase behavior reduction and brand perception are important while considering the causal, contextual, and confounding conditions. The present research was performed to present a management model on consumer purchase behavior prediction as well as brand perception based on grounded theory approach. The results involved presentational causal, contextual, and interventional factors, plus central theme, implications and development of strategies for developing the consumer purchase behavior prediction model with emphasis on brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores, which has been presented as the final model of the research. In this model, unlike identified models, it is not limited to predicting the consumer purchase behavior; rather it also covers brand perception of Shahrvand chain stores. In addition, the research model does not cause any special constraints for covering different types of brand-consumer relationships that may be identified in further research. In this regard, by investigating the antecedents of development of smart consumption behavior, the match between price and quality, social context, and social responsibility have a great influence on developing the smart consumption behavior. The results are in line with the findings of Fong et al. That research indicated that the activities that are based on consumer prediction would lead to customers' brand loyalty over the long run. The results of Menavisho also explained a strong relationship between brand value and all four concepts of behavioral intention with customer satisfaction. Brünner (2020) stated that the credibility of the

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manufacturer's brand and the organization of interest affect the purchase behavior of consumers as well as its components including attitude, social norms, and purchase efficiency. In this regard, the following are suggested:

Managers should do their best to maintain satisfied consumers who are loyal to their services, for establishing a system that could constantly survey the consumers and be in communication with them. This is because the consumer's needs are constantly changing and in order for the store to be able to keep its activity in this highly competitive environment, they should adapt themselves to the ever-changing needs and desires of consumers. The managers of Shahrvand chain stores should also make attempt to adapt the services to the latest needs and changes. Also, through increasing customers trust to the brand, they could enhance the brand perception based on the services they provide and the conditions they create in the consumer's mind.

It is suggested that managers with suitable marketing activities and investment, determining fair prices in line with the level of quality of services, involvement of customers in social programs and activities for promoting the stores brand across different segments of the market, usage of promotional activities such as presenting monetary discounts, rewards, etc. take effective steps to enhance brand loyalty. Creating insight into consumer purchase behavior prediction regarding individual and internal characteristics would help the retail industry and especially chain stores to take measures for encouraging consumers on sharing and developing relations. It is suggested that managers and marketers by learning complete skills of novel marketing methods, such as establishing electronic mouth-to-mouth advertisements, encourage users to share the services of the store brand across social networks. This is because such a promotion would have a substantial effect on their satisfaction and hence loyalty. In addition, it is also suggested that the managers of Shahrvand chain stores focus on their brand visualization and create a strong brand by benefiting from social media, so that while developing special value of the brand in the minds of the consumer, they could also influence their relationship with the customers. Since the special value of the brand is mostly involved with the mentalities of store consumers, social networks have a strong impact on the formation of a strong brand in the minds of customers, where mouth-to-mouth advertisements are one of the best means provided by these networks.

In this regard, the managers of stores should consider social networks as novel media and an important part of their marketing mix for efficient and effective use of digital marketing and for achieving desired outcomes. This helps managers to attain greater consumer trust, thereby accelerating the course of establishing loyalty among customers. Meanwhile, one of the important tools in creating powerful associations is advertisements in which subliminal stimuli are used. These stimuli not only create positive and lasting associations, but also affect their brand trust, thereby creating emotional bonds with the consumer. They can also directly affect their emotions.

As suggestions for future researchers, they could investigate the research subject with a comparative approach in different industries such as insurance, banking, chain stores and others, and evaluate the generalizability of the research model to other contexts. This research was implemented based on systematic grounded theory method. Other researchers all suggested applying Straus (classic) or Sazagra (Charmaz) methods and then comparing their results with the present study outcomes.

Limitations: as with most studies that are based on theories arising from data, the findings of this study were obtained by relying on the views and experiences of individuals as well as the environmental conditions of the research. As such, the obtained results can be generalized to similar conditions in contexts. The agreement and consensus of experts in the course of research was another limitation.

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