

UNDERSTANDING SUPERMARKET CHOICE BEHAVIOR IN BANGLADESH: THE ROLES OF REGULATORY FOCUS, STORE ATTRIBUTES, EPISTEMIC VALUE, AND ECO-CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

This research examines regulatory attention, explicit and implicit preferences, shop features, epistemic value, and environmental awareness in Bangladeshi supermarket consumers' decision behaviour. The study uses Regulatory Focus Theory (RFT) to create and evaluate a comprehensive model that incorporates theoretical and current features to better understand supermarket customer decision-making. A organized questionnaire was given to 150 store customers, following a quantitative method and convenience technique. SEM analysis was done using SMART PLS 3 and IBM AMOS. The results show that regulatory emphasis, explicit preference, implicit preference, store features, epistemic value, and sustainability favourably affect customer decision behaviour. The research details how regulatory emphasis, store features, epistemic value, and environmental awareness influence consumer decisions, providing supermarkets with practical insights to improve customer adoption methods. This study may help marketers, politicians, and service providers understand and use customer behaviour to boost supermarket involvement. The research applies a verified, comprehensive model to the Bangladeshi retail industry, making a unique contribution despite time and expertise restrictions. Empirical facts and a theoretical framework for consumer behaviour analysis study and strategy expand the literature.

Keywords: Supermarket, Regulatory focus, Explicit Preference, Implicit Preference, Store Attributes, Epistemic value, Sustainability.

1. Introduction

The global economy is increasingly dependent on supermarkets. According to Jung, Sharma & Mattila (2023), supermarkets make up 25–35% of Bangladesh's GDP. By 2023, Bangladesh had 130 supermarkets, a significant rise. A study of 200 Bangladeshi customers indicated that option intention boosts supermarket expansion. Consumers choose products to achieve their goals or prevent discomfort (Boesen-Mariani, Gomez & Gavard-Perret, 2010). Therefore, understanding how situational circumstances affect grocery shoppers' choices is crucial.

To compete, supermarkets differentiate their offerings (Levy, Weitz, & Grewal, 2019). They concentrate on client needs and desires, give higher value, and lower goods costs. They provide a better purchasing experience. Customer satisfaction increased supermarket repurchases (Terblanche, 2018). So, supermarkets confront more obstacles than consumer switching propensity (Choi and Park, 2006), guaranteeing customer safety and acceptable service, matching customer expectations (Wong and Sohal, 2003), and customers' fast-changing habits. Consumers nowadays are more conscious of their purchase choices and more affected by product offers (Bask et al., 2013). Thus, understanding how choosing behaviour affects grocery shoppers' purchases is crucial.

Previous research examined supermarket consumer happiness (Slack, Singh & Sharma, 2020; Adrienne & Susanne, 2019; Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2018; Terblanche 2018). Other research examined supermarket consumer loyalty (Alam & Noor, 2020; Alagarsamy, Mehrolia & Singh, 2021; Slack & Singh, 2020). Other investigations examined supermarket product purchase intention determinants (Watanabe, Torres & Alfinito, 2019; Graciola et al., 2018). Another study found that supermarket word-of-mouth affects buyer behaviour. Recently, Sharma et al. (2020) found that supermarket self-technology was impacted by shop loyalty.

Two recent studies examined supermarket product use. First, Zhijing (2021) studied consumer behavior-affecting factors using AHP. Second, Jayawardhena, Morrell & Stride (2016) used Normative Decision Theory or Image theory to study retail product use. Supermarket consumers' decisions were seldom studied. All of these studies did not explain how store characteristics, epistemic value, and sustainability impact supermarket product customer choice using Regulatory Focus Theory. This study evaluated how shop characteristics, epistemic value, and sustainability effect decision-making using regulatory focus theory. Store features affect supermarket product choice by increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Nikhashemi et al., 2016). This research examines supermarket product selection factors.

Epistemic value helps businesses acquire information, which impacts supermarket consumers' product selections (Kaur, et al., 2018). Sustainable business practices also influence supermarket shoppers' purchases (Michelini, Principato & Iasevoli 2018). Hence, the researcher intends to fill up the above-mentioned research gaps. Especially, the study pursues to validate the following research objectives:

RO1: To investigate how customer decision behaviour in supermarkets is influenced by shop features, sustainability, and epistemic value.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Supermarket

Previous research examined supermarkets from various angles. Slack et al. (2020) used the idea of consumption value to examine how functional, emotional, and social value affect consumer satisfaction among 480 supermarket customers. Other research by Sharma et al. (2020) examined how checkout quality, satisfaction, loyalty, store quality, and satisfaction affect store loyalty among 474 supermarket consumers using construal level theory (CLT). Slack et al. (2020) used the SERVQUAL model and performance-based model from 480 supermarket consumers to determine how service quality, customer expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction affect customer loyalty. From 443 supermarket shoppers, Watanabe et al. (2019) examined how contentment, store image, and individualism-collectivism affect purchase intention. Alam and Noor (2020) used the S-O-R (stimulus-organism-responses) model to examine how physical elements, dependability, problem-solving, policy, human connection, service quality, and company image affect customer loyalty among 325 Bangladeshi grocery consumers. Jayawardhena, Morrell, and Stride (2016) examine how gender age, value image, strategic image, trajectory image, and purchase affect word of mouth behaviour among 688 UK consumers using normative decision theory or image theory. Store label brand equity among supermarket customers is also affected by perceived quality, better packaging, perceived value, enticing pricing, marketing, and store brand image, according to Odongo & Motari (2020). Based on the technology acceptance model (TAM) from 264 online customers, Moriuchi & Takahashi (2018) found that perceived ease of use, perceived utility, e-trust, confidence, and attitude affect customer satisfaction and intention to re-review.

Another study by de Waal, van Nierop, and Sloot (2017) used data from 400 supermarket franchisers and the HPO (High-performance orientation) framework to test the effects of openness and action orientation, management quality, employee quality, long-term orientation,

and continuous improvement and renewal on supermarket performance. Based on the S-O-R framework from 316 online consumers, Alagarsamy, Mehroliya, and Singh (2021) showed that attitudinal attachment, brand trust, a feeling of community, convenience, structural, financial, and social ties all affect behavioural and attitudinal loyalty. Reena das, et al. (2018) examined how constant, turnover, barcode possession, improved packaging, ZABS accreditation, and distance to the nearest supermarket affect the supermarket supply chain, using data from 171 Southern African supermarket customers. Gabreil & Bonuke (2017) used Innovation Diffusion Theory to examine how store perceived quality and brand awareness affect store brand choice among 384 Kenyan grocery shoppers.

Table 1 List of Relevant Literature

| S L | Authors & Year | Context | Model adopted | Sample Size and Method | Country | Independent variables | Dependent variables |
|------------|---------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1 | (Slack et al., 2020) | satisfaction of supermarket customers | Theory of consumption value | 480 supermarket, Questionnaire survey | Fiji | Functional value, emotional value, social value | Customer satisfaction |
| 2 | (Sharma et al., 2020) | Self-service technology in supermarkets | Construal Level Theory (CLT) | 474 Supermarkets | Australia/United Kingdom | Checkout quality, Checkout satisfaction, Checkout loyalty, Store quality, Store satisfaction | Store loyalty |
| 3 | (Zhijing, 2021) | Farmers' consumption behavior toward rural supermarket | AHP (Analytic hierarchy process) evaluation model | 40 respondents, | China | price, grocery hours, speedy checkout, attributes | consumption behavior |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|---------|--|---|
| 4 | (Slack et al., 2020) | Supermarket service quality & customer satisfaction | SERVQUAL Model & Performance-based model | 480 supermarkets | Fiji | Service quality, customer expectations, customer perceptions, and Customer satisfaction(Mediator) | Customer Loyalty |
| 5 | (Adrienne & Susanne, 2019) | Consumer trust with supermarkets | | 10 Alnatura Customers | Germany | Certificates awards, Claims label brand, ability & integrity of the retailers, Sustainable practices of retailers, Product attributes, Reputation & image of the retailer, sustainable practice of producer, Peer information, Consumer trust, Consumer perceived sustainability | Consumer satisfaction |
| 6 | (Watanabe et al., 2019) | Purchase intention at supermarkets | | 443 supermarket consumers | Brazil | Satisfaction, Store image, Individualism-collectivism | Purchase intention |
| 7 | (Graciola et al., 2018) | Store price image & repurchase intention | | 207 University students | Brazil | Quality, Perceived value, Price level perception, Price fairness, positive emotion, Negative | Store price image, Repurchase intention |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|--|-------------|---|--|
| | | | | | | emotion, symbolic dimension | |
| 8 | (Mirza Mohammad & Nor Azila Mohd, 2017) | Superstore retailing in Bangladesh | Stimulus- Organism- Response (S-O-R) framework | 110 respondent s, questionna ire | Bangladesh | Service quality, Physical Aspect, Reliability, Problem Solving, Policy, Personal Interaction, Customer Value, Utilitarian Value, Hedonic Value, Relational Value Social Value, Trust | Corporate image, Customer loyalty |
| 9 | (Alam and Noor, 2020) | S-O-R paradigm in superstore s of Bangladesh | The S-O-R Model | 50 respondent s with systematic sampling, 325 questionna ire survey | Bangladesh | Physical Aspect, Reliability, Problem Solving, Policy, Personal Interaction, Service Quality | Corporate image, Customer loyalty |
| 10 | (Alagarsam y, Mehroli and Singh, 2021) | Brand relationshi p quality | S-O-R framework | 316 respondent s, structured questionna ire | India | Convenience bond, Structural bond, financial bond, Empathy bond, Social bond, Attitudinal attachment, Brand trust, Sense of community | Behaviora l and attitudinal loyalty |
| 11 | (de Waal, van Nierop and Sloot, 2017) | Supermar ket performan ce | HPO Framewor k | 400 supermark et franchisers | Netherlands | Continuous improvement and renewal Reliability, Continuous improvement and | Supermar ket performan ce |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|--------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| | | | | | | renewal, Management quality, Employee quality, Long- term orientation | |
| 12 | (Reena das, et al., 2018) | Implicatio ns for suppliers of supermark ets | | 171 respondent s, in-depth interviews | Southern Africa | Constant, Turnover, Possession of a barcode, improved packaging, Accredited to ZABS(Zambia Development Agency), Distance to the nearest supermarket | supermark et value chains |
| 13 | (Larson, 2019) | Supermar ket self- checkout usage | | 605 respondent s, | United States | female dummy variable, Green attitudes, Privacy concerns | coefficien t |
| 14 | (Jayawardhe na, Morrell, and Stride, 2016) | consumpti on behaviors in supermark et shoppers | Normative Decision Theory or Image theory | 688 UK shoppers, questionna ire survey | United Kingdom | Gender& Age, Value Image, Strategic Image, Trajectory Image, Purchase | Word of mouth behavior |
| 15 | (Kitapci, et al., 2013) | service quality dimension s to customer loyalty | | 505 respondent s, questionna ire survey | Turkey | Tangibility, responsibility, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, satisfaction, and loyalty | Word of mouth |

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

3.1 Theoretical Background

The researcher is interested in supermarket shoppers' decisions based on regulatory focus, store characteristics, epistemic value, and environmental awareness. In a store, researchers tried models and concepts. According to consumer value theory, Slack et al. (2020) say perceived value affects grocery customer pleasure. Sharma et al.'s Construal Level Theory (CLT) (2020) claims that checkout quality, satisfaction, loyalty, store quality, and satisfaction impact store loyalty. The AHP evaluation model by Zhijing (2021) covers cost, grocery hours, checkout speed, characteristics, and consumption. Service quality, customer expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction boost supermarket customer loyalty, according to Slack et al. (2020). In 2020, Alam and Noor introduce the Bangladeshi superstore S-O-R concept. Alagarsamy, Mehroliya, and Singh (2021) assessed supermarket brand connections using S-O-R. Jayawardhena, Morrell, and Stride (2016) used normative decision theory or image theory to study supermarket shoppers' consumption habits by gender, age, value image strategy, image trajectory, image purchase, and word of mouth. Other research used perceived ease of use, usefulness, e-trust, confidence, attitude, customer pleasure, and intention to e-review in online supermarkets to determine TAM (Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2018). Gabreil & Bonuke (2017) used Innovation Diffusion Theory to study shop quality and brand preference.

3.2 Theoretical Gap

The existing research did emphasize determining the influence of regulatory focus, explicit preference, and implicit preference on supermarket consumers' choice behavior based on regulatory focus theory (RFT) from the perspective of Bangladesh. More importantly, RFT (Higgins, 1997) illustrates the influence of regulatory focus, explicit preference, and implicit preference on choice behavior to consumer particular products. Accordingly, the existing studies have also considered RFT in different contexts, for instance, e-learning (Tan, Liew & Gan, 2020), online food delivery applications (Cai & Leung, 2020), and retail shopping behavior (Das, 2015), and online privacy protection behavior (Mosteller & Poddar, 2017). The previous studies also suggested the necessity of implementing RFT in other fields (Chang et al., 2019; Chang and Cheng, 2021; The Khoa, Wang & Guchait, 2020). Despite this, the applications of RFT is yet to be verified in supermarket incorporating price, store attributes, and sustainability from the perspective of an emerging country like Bangladesh. Hence, the present study developed a unique theoretical model based on RFT integrating three

contemporary dimensions (i.e., price, store attribute, and sustainability). Accordingly, the proposed six distinguished hypotheses & the model's structural links among the constructs are presented in Figure 1.

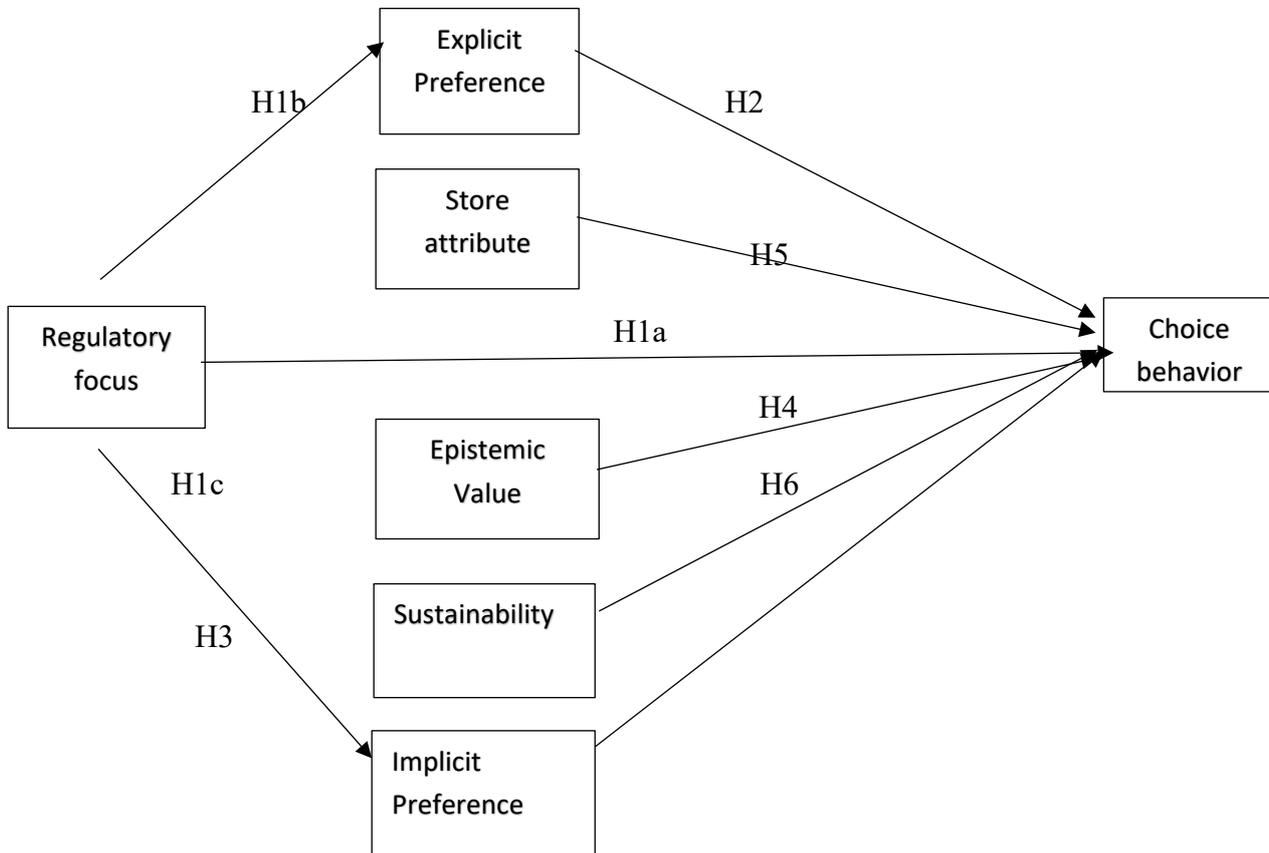


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.3 Hypothesis Development

3.3.1 Regulatory Focus, Explicit preference, Implicit Preference, Choice Behavior

Customers attain objectives via self-regulation and enjoyment, but regulatory attention helps prevent suffering. RF emphasises desirable end-states and tactic incentive to get them (Tan, Liew & Gan, 2020). "Regulatory focus theory describes how people self-regulate to meet their standards and goals" (Higgins, 1997, P1282). Supermarket displays match items to help shoppers reach their aims. End caps encourage buyers to spend more, reducing their agony. It also provides happy-making buy-one-get-one-free deals. RF favourably affects supermarket shoppers' choices. Research shows that RF improves EP (explicit preference) in online food delivery apps (Cai & Leung, 2020) and e-learning platforms (Tan, Liew & Gan, 2020). Das, 2015; Cai & Leung, 2020; Tan, Liew & Gan, 2020) examined how RF affects IP (implicit

preference) in retail buying behaviour, online meal delivery apps, and e-learning platforms. Additionally, CAI and Leung (2020) explored how RF improves choosing behaviour in online meal delivery apps. We have the following hypotheses:

H1a: *Regulatory focus has a positive influence on explicit preference.*

H1b: *Regulatory focus has a positive influence on implicit preference.*

H1c: *Regulatory focus has a positive influence on choice behavior.*

3.3.2 Explicit Preference

Self-reported assessments may measure reasonable explicit preferences. EP measures conscious levels directly (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). According to Friese, Wänke & Plessner (2006), “Explicit preference refers to the attitude and beliefs by which individual achieve their desired end-state, preferences values, needs, ideas and rewards” (P728) Supermarkets use behavior-based methods to make consumers aware judgements and provide subsidised prices to improve direct customer measurements. EP influences supermarket product selection in this study. EP positively affects CB (choice behaviour) in online food delivery apps (Cai & Leung, 2020) and e-learning platforms (Tan, Liew & Gan, 2020). We have the following hypotheses:

H2: *Explicit preference has a positive influence on choice behavior.*

3.3.3 Implicit preference:

Implicit preference is an automatic and unconscious attitude that involves direct measurement (Hofmann et al., 2005). “Implicit preferences are described as evaluative responses regarding an attitude object” (Greenwald et al., 2002, P728). Supermarkets’ clean and subtle environments influence customers’ unconscious attitudes. For that reason, IP influence consumer to choose supermarket products. Previous studies have found the positive influence of IP on CB (choice behavior) in the context of online food delivery applications (Cai & Leung, 2020) and e-learning platforms (Tan, Liew & Gan, 2020), etc. Hence, we have developed the following hypotheses:

H3: *Implicit preference has a positive influence on choice behavior.*

3.3.4 Epistemic value

Epistemic value is the worth of cognitive accomplishments such as correct and justified belief, knowledge, and understanding. EV means generating value by gaining information from the

organization (Kaur, et al., 2018). Epistemic value is described as “the perceived utility acquired from an alternative capacity to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge” (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991). The information-seeking behavior helps customers to generate information and gather knowledge that influences consumer choice behavior. Existing literature has illustrated the positive influence of EV on CB in the context of online social media brand communities (Kaur, et al., 2018) and customers’ purchase motivation (Yeo, Mohamed & Muda, 2016) etc. Hence, we have developed the following hypotheses:

H4: *Epistemic value has a positive influence on choice behavior.*

3.3.5 Store attribute

Store characteristics are the fundamental elements that make up a store's picture dimension. SA can help customer attitudes towards using marketing strategy (Finn, 2004). “Store attribute refers to the attribute of improving customer satisfaction and customer loyalty” (Nikhashemi et al., 2016). supermarket customers' choice behavior is influenced by some attributes such as product quality & availability, store cleanliness & personnel, atmosphere, the convenience of store location, and the friendliness of the staff. Previous studies have found the positive influence of SA on CB in the context of retail stores (Nikhashemi et al., 2016) and purchase intentions in online stores (Badrinarayanan, Becerra & Madhavaram, 2014) etc. Hence, we have developed the following hypotheses:

H5: *Store attribute has a positive influence on choice behavior.*

3.3.6 Sustainability

Sustainability consists of satisfying current needs in ways that do not decrease the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own needs. It describes the ability to maintain or support a process continuously use in a business (Michelini, Principato & Iasevoli 2018). “Sustainability refers to the strategic, transparent integration and achievement of an organization’s social, environmental, and economic goals in the systemic coordination of key inter-organizational business processes for improving the long-term economic performance of the individual company and its supply chains” (Bask et al., 2013, pp-381). Supermarket food waste, sustainable seafood, and energy efficiency influence customer choice behavior. Previous studies have found the positive influence of sustainability on CB in the context of supply chain management (Bask et al., 2013) food sharing models (Michelini, Principato & Iasevoli, 2018) etc. Hence, we have developed the following hypotheses:

H6: *Sustainability has a positive influence on choice behavior.*

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Over 20 billion people live in Khulna and Gopalganj, Bangladesh, where the survey was conducted. Supermarket shoppers in Bangladesh, where retailers contribute 1.49% of GDP and create jobs, provided the data (Alam, 2021). "Agora" was the country's first supermarket, opened in 2001. Bangladesh has various supermarkets like Meena Bazar, Swapno, and Almas. Research was systematic, using representative sampling and quantitative analysis. Due to unknown population data, nonprobability sampling and snowball sampling were used to select respondents. A questionnaire covered demographic and measurement items, based on prior research. A pilot test with 15 respondents confirmed understanding of the items.

4.2 Measurement Items

To gather information, the author will administer a survey using a questionnaire that is embellished with five Likert scales, where five indicates strong agreement and one indicates severe disagreement. The item regulatory focus was adopted from Tan, Liew & Gan (2020) explicit preference was adopted from Hofmann et al. (2005) implicit preference was adopted from Hofmann et al. (2005) the epistemic value was adopted from Kaur, et al. (2018) sustainability was adopted from Micheline and Iasevoli (2018) and store attributes were adopted from Nikhashemi et al. (2016) and Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram (2014). Appendix B contains a list of every item utilised in this investigation.

4.3 Data Collection

Bangladesh collects data in July 2024. Dillman (2000) suggested sending a cover letter and questionnaire to responses. The survey was sent via email with a cover letter and each respondent's email address to guarantee delivery with the mail. After one day, the author emailed responders to return the questionnaire. One day later, the last email was sent to those who did not respond. A week later, the author added the last appeal to the analytical remarks of the remaining dissatisfied responders. Online and paper-based surveys showed no significant differences (Hollander and Rosen, 2000 & Da Dillman, 2000). Online and paper-based response rates were similar (Hollander and Rosen, 2000; Da Dillman, 2000 & Al Amin et al., 2021). The respondents' group completed 150 of 200 questionnaires. The target group completed 150 of 200 questionnaires. The response rate was 75%. They included 84 males

(56%) and 66 women (44%). Most responses (42%) were 18–30. Most responders (56%) are married, and 46% are post-graduation. Table 4 shows respondent demographics.

4.4 Data Analysis

Data are analyzed by using Structure Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM may quantify a succession of dependent variables, causal models, or equations at the same time (Chin, 1998; Wang et al., 2019 & Al Amin et al., 2021).

Table 2: Demographic profile of the respondents.

| Variables | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 84 | 56% |
| Female | 66 | 44% |
| Age | | |
| 18–30 years | 63 | 42% |
| 31–40 years | 59 | 39% |
| 41–50 years | 28 | 18.7% |
| Educational Level | | |
| Secondary School | 4 | 2.7% |
| Higher Secondary | 36 | 24% |
| Graduation | 40 | 26% |
| Post-Graduation | 70 | 47% |
| Marital Status | | |
| Married | 84 | 56% |
| Unmarried | 66 | 44% |
| Number of Family Members | | |
| Two members | 13 | 8.7% |
| Three members | 33 | 22% |
| Four members | 38 | 25% |
| Above four members | 66 | 44% |

The data was analyzed using PLS-SEM, which may quantify a succession of dependent variables, causal models, or equations at the same time (Chin, 1998; Wang et al., 2019 & Al Amin et al., 2021). PLS-SEM can also predict the magnitude of endogenous variable changes produced by a set of external stimuli (Arefin et al., 2015). According to Hair et al. (2019) and Sarstedt et al. (2017) SmartPLS 3.0 software was used to analyze CFA and structural linkages

among the variables in the recommended model to measure confirmatory factor analysis and structural ties among the study variables.

5: Data Analysis and Result

5.1 Measurement Model

The measuring model's discriminant validity, convergent validity, and reliability were evaluated. To evaluate construct dependability, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and rho A were used. Convergent validity was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE) and standardized factor loadings. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the HTMT ratio, which incorporates Hair et al. (2017).

5.1.1 Construct Reliability

Hair et al. (2017) recommended that composite reliability (CR) would not be less than 0.70 (CR > 0.7), indicating that the questionnaire measures the same construct. According to Hair et al. (2017), the model's internal consistency should have a minimum necessary value of 0.70 for both Cronbach's alpha and rho A, ranging from 0 to 1. The greater consistency is explained by the closer value near 1. Moreover, Hair et al. (2019) suggested that Cronbach's alpha and rho_A (@: >0.7; rho_A: >0.7) cutoff values should be higher than 0.70, which represents the proposed research model's internal consistency. All requirements (Cronbach's alpha, rho A, and CR) are met for all constructs in our research model (table 4)

Table 3: Construct Reliability

| Constructs | Items | Factor Loading | Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7 | rho_A | CR>0.7 | AVE> 0.5 |
|------------------|-------|----------------|------------------------|-------|--------|----------|
| Regulatory focus | REQ1 | 1.000 | 0.509 | 0.575 | 0.754 | 0.513 |
| Store attribute | SAQ2 | 0.817 | 0.506 | 0.542 | 0.751 | 0.507 |
| | SAQ3 | 0.842 | | | | |
| Epistemic value | EVQ1 | 0.818 | 0.621 | 0.742 | 0.790 | 0.568 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | EVQ 3 | 0.922 | | | | |
| Sustainability | SQ1 | 0.717 | 0.721 | 0.777 | 0.837 | 0.631 |
| | SQ2 | 0.791 | | | | |
| | SQ3 | 0.862 | | | | |
| Implicit preference | IPQ2 | 0.906 | 0.396 | 0.713 | 0.724 | 0.547 |
| | IPQ3 | 0.924 | | | | |
| Explicit preference | EPQ 1 | 0.782 | 0.821 | 0.821 | 0.894 | 0.739 |
| | EPQ 2 | 0.896 | | | | |
| | EPQ 3 | 0.895 | | | | |
| Choice behavior | CBQ 1 | 0.784 | 0.451 | 0.524 | 0.475 | 0.475 |
| | CBQ 2 | 0.842 | | | | |

5.1.2 Convergent Validity

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must be more than or equal to 0.5 ($AVE > 0.5$). It signifies that the construct may be found in more than half of the objects found in the research model proposed by (Hair et al., 2017). The AVE and factor loading between the constructs that satisfy the dependability threshold value of the model are shown in Table 3. Table 3 displays the factor loading between the constructs and the AVE that satisfies the dependability cutoff value of the model.

5.1.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity according to the HTMT Ratio and the Fornell-Lacker criterion (FLC). The author analyses the Fornell and Lacker criteria in Table 3 to assess the measurement model's discriminant validity, and in Table 4, the author also examines the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). Furthermore, the correlation and squared root of AVE are similar

to the diagonal value described by FLC. According to Hair et al. (2017) diagonal value is greater than off-diagonal values and another study by Henseler et al., (2015) suggested that the heterotrait- monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) must be less than 0.85 ($HTMT < 0.84$). As shown in **Table-5**.

Table 4: *Fornell and Lacker Criteria*

| | Choice Behavior | Epistemic Value | Explicit Preference | Implicit preference | Regulatory Focus | Store Attribute | Sustainability |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Choice Behavior | 0.813 | | | | | | |
| Epistemic Value | 0.822 | 0.872 | | | | | |
| Explicit Preference | 0.519 | 0.472 | 0.859 | | | | |
| Implicit preference | 0.536 | 0.317 | 0.699 | 0.915 | | | |
| Regulatory Focus | 0.728 | 0.556 | 0.444 | 0.513 | 1.000 | | |
| Store Attribute | 0.819 | 0.844 | 0.539 | 0.351 | 0.536 | 0.829 | |
| Sustainability | 0.714 | 0.782 | 0.426 | 0.233 | 0.470 | 0.761 | 0.792 |

Table 5: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

| | Choice Behavior | Epistemic Value | Explicit Preference | Implicit preference | Regulatory Focus | Store Attribute | Sustainability |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Choice Behavior | | | | | | | |
| Epistemic Value | 1.339 | | | | | | |
| Explicit Preference | 0.825 | 0.636 | | | | | |
| Implicit preference | 0.884 | 0.443 | 0.851 | | | | |
| Regulatory Focus | 1.058 | 0.657 | 0.479 | 0.570 | | | |
| Store Attribute | 1.557 | 1.349 | 0.794 | 0.529 | 0.727 | | |
| Sustainability | 1.099 | 1.014 | 0.562 | 0.314 | 0.533 | 1.150 | |

5.2.1 Coefficient of Determinations

Coefficient of Determinations (R²) Table 4 displays the squared multiple correlations (R²). Regulatory focus generates a 62% difference in choice behavior, according to the coefficient of determinations (R²). In addition, explicit preference affects choice behavior (CB) by 37%. Moreover, implicit preference influence CB by 52%. Further, choice behavior is changed by 48% due to the changes in epistemic value. Also, store attributes affect choice behavior by 21%. Finally, choice behavior is changed by 18% due to the change in sustainability.

Table 6: Coefficient of Determinations

| R ² | |
|----------------|------|
| Effect of RF | .624 |
| Effect of EP | .375 |
| Effect of IP | .524 |
| Effect of EV | .488 |
| Effect of SA | .213 |
| Effect of SU | .185 |

5.2.2 Hypotheses Testing

The six proposed hypotheses were tested using regular bootstrapping with 5000 resamples, and SMART PLS3 software was used (Henseler, et al., 2015) to evaluate the suggested research model utilizing the path coefficient and t-statistics. Choice behavior (CB) are positively influenced by regulatory focus (RF) ($\beta = 0.420$, t-statistics = 3.901, $p < 0.000$), as shown in Table 4. As a result, H1c was not rejected. The relation between RF and EP was significant ($\beta = 0.504$, t-statistics = 6.245, $p < 0.000$). As a result, H1a is not rejected. The author found that RF was significantly influenced IP ($\beta = 0.515$, t-statistics = 5.094, $p < 0.000$), which means that H1b was not rejected. In H2 the author discovered that EP had a favorable impact on CB ($\beta = -0.106$, t-statistics = 3.078, $p < 0.002$). Finally, the structural model has been shown in Figure 2.

Table 7: Path Coefficient and Hypotheses Test Results

| Hypothesis | Relationship | Path Coefficient | Standard Deviation | t-Statistic | VIF | p-Value | Remarks |
|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------|---------|-----------|
| H1a | RF → EP | 0.504 | 0.081 | 6.245 | 1.000 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H1b | RF → IP | 0.515 | 0.101 | 5.094 | 1.000 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H1c | RF → CB | 0.420 | 0.108 | 3.901 | 2.324 | 0.000 | Supported |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|---------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| H2 | EP → CB | -0.106 | 0.107 | 3.078 | 4.613 | 0.002 | Supported |
| H3 | IP → CB | 0.148 | 0.061 | 3.102 | 3.544 | 0.002 | Supported |
| H4 | EV → CB | 0.190 | 0.047 | 1.828 | 2.709 | 0.068 | Not Supported |
| H5 | SA → CB | 0.328 | 0.066 | 2.252 | 2.373 | 0.025 | Supported |
| H6 | SU → CB | 0.087 | 0.089 | 1.183 | 2.371 | 0.237 | Not Supported |

The results shown in table 8 also verified that IP positively influenced on CB ($\beta = 0.148$, t-statistics = 3.102, $p < 0.002$). Thus, the H3 was supported. In contrast, the relationship between EV and CB was not significant ($\beta = 0.190$, t-statistics = 2.709, $p < 0.068$). Hence, H4 was not supported. Moreover, H5 represented that SA was associated with CB. As per the author's prediction, the study showed that SA significantly influenced CB ($\beta = 0.328$, t-statistics = 2.252, $p < 0.025$), which means that H5 was supported. Finally, Table 4 showed that SU had positively influence on CB ($\beta = 0.087$, t-statistics = 1.183, $p < 0.037$) in the context of supermarket. Therefore, H6 was supported.

Before testing the structural model, the author checked for lateral collinearity using the variance inflation factor (VIF). According to Hair et al. (2019), VIF values larger than 5 indicate a lateral multicollinearity issue among the constructs, and the optimal VIF value is less than 3.00 or close to 3.00. In many builds, the author validated that there was no lateral VIF issue. The study's structural model is shown in Figure 2.

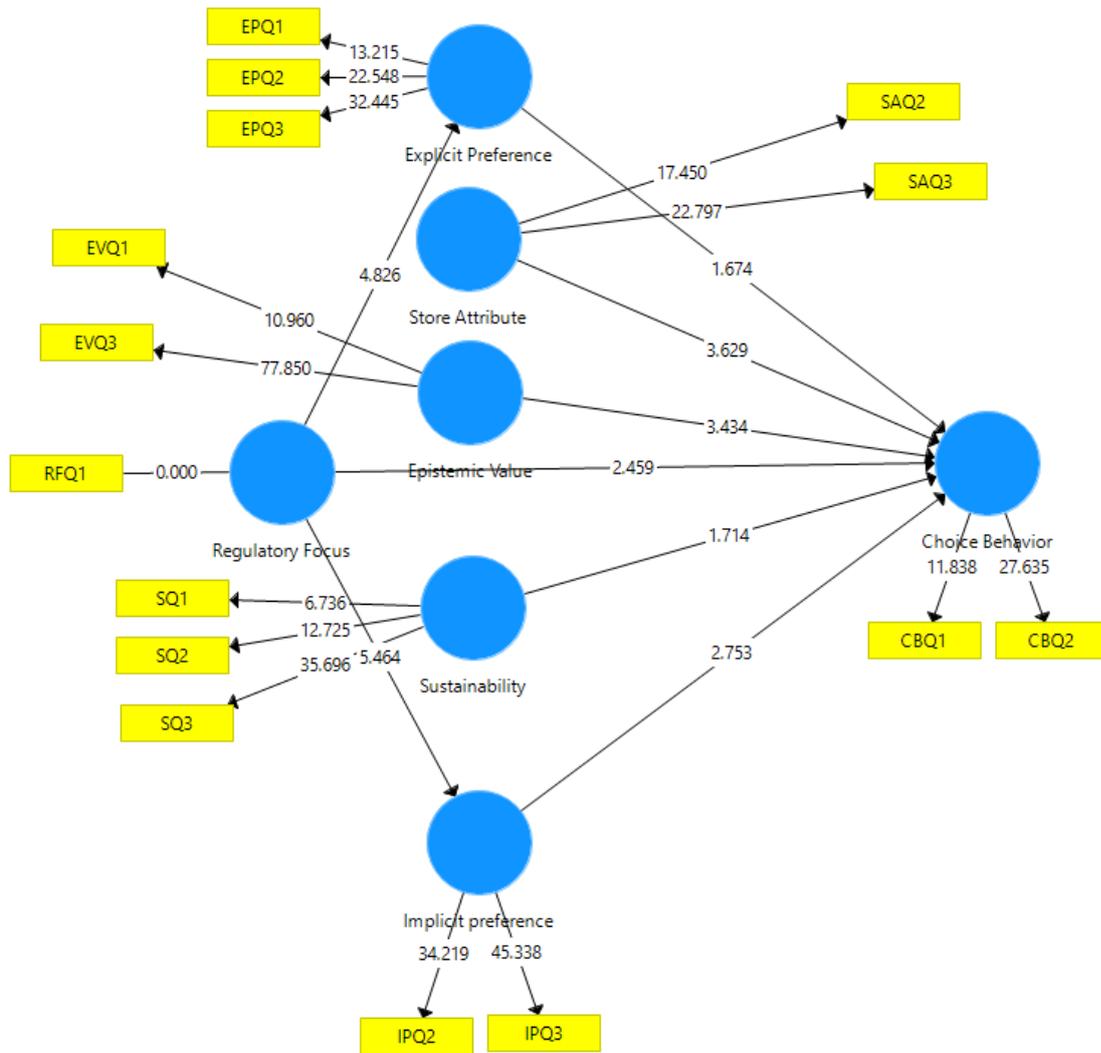


Figure 2: *The Structural Model of the Study*

6: Discussion

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study used regulatory focus theory (RFT) and a few novel variables to study supermarket consumers' choosing behaviour. In particular, the research makes three contributions. The research developed and validated the regulatory focus hypothesis for Bangladeshi supermarkets. The results showed that regulatory attention affects explicit preference, implicit preference, and decision behaviour in H1a, H1b, H1c, H2, and H3, supporting Cai and Leung (2020) in online food delivery applications. Das (2015) supported these in retail buying behaviour, and Tan, Liew, and Gan (2020) in e-learning. Customers take steps to avoid pain and seek pleasure, therefore past study validated these characteristics. Second, the research was the first empirical study to explain regulatory emphasis by combining shop features,

sustainability, and epistemic value on Bangladeshi supermarket choosing behaviour. Nikhashemi et al. (2016) found that storage properties affect choosing behaviour in H4. Nikhashemi et al. (2016) validated this theory since supermarket décor, cleanliness, and parking amenities attract consumers to buy. Kaur, et al. (2018) also shown that epistemic value affects choosing behaviour in H5. Customers are most excited, satisfied, and optimistic after buying a goods. Bask et al. (2013) confirmed that H6 sustainability affects choosing behaviour. Supermarket viability depends on customer pleasure. Third, the regulatory emphasis hypothesis was first used in supermarket literature from a developing nation (namely Bangladesh). This background was neglected in most writings. Therefore, regulatory focus theory, shop qualities, epistemic value, and sustainability impact supermarket customers' buying decisions.

6.2 Practical Implications

The author gave specialists useful advice in this research. This research examines how various factors may influence consumer decision and create a positive atmosphere. Modern supermarkets care more about consumer decision behaviour for buy intents than customer pain and pleasure. Regulatory attention, explicit preference (EP), and implicit preference (IP) boost choice behaviour. Because RF prevents consumers' discomfort EP, EP boosts customer confidence, helping them reach their goals. However, IP has frequently improved corporate performance. Because it favourably affects consumers' decision behaviour and supermarket buy intention. The author demonstrated that regulatory focus theory improves supermarket consumer choice. Customers should be guaranteed that supermarket décor and cleanliness impact their product purchases. Decoration and cleanliness are important in supermarkets. This market may draw focused consumers to their target fast and allow self-checkout to circumvent lengthy checkout lineups. All of this makes supermarkets viable.

7. Limitations and conclusions

In this study, the author had been faced some limitations: The author spent more time gathering data from several sources. Furthermore, there isn't much room to gather data on this subject. In this research, another problem is the time limitation. Research data is not readily available in this context. There may be little validity of data and explain both quantitative and qualitative data by using statistical data.

Above the discussion, supermarket performance plays an essential role in choice behavior. The purpose of this research was to determine how store attributes, sustainability, and epistemic

value affect consumer behaviour and to investigate regulatory focus by combining the effects of these factors on consumer behaviour in the environment of supermarkets. The author focused more on consumer choice behavior for making purchase intentions than the supermarket is concerned about avoiding customer pain and how to achieve pleasure. Also, the author discussed customers should be assured that supermarket decoration, and a clean and fresh environment influence customers to choose products from the supermarket. This research explains that implicit preference has often made progress toward being successful in business.

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Appendix-A: Measurement Items

| Measurement Variables | Measurement Items |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Regulatory focus Higgins, (1997) | I strategically avoid mismatches to desired end-states. Ensure correct rejections. Insure against errors of commission. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Explicit preference Higgins, (1997) | I work hard for achieving pleasure. I can take the approach to achieve the desired end–state. Insure against errors of omission. |
| Implicit preference Das, (2015) | I feel I have often made progress toward being successful in my life. I often try to reach that in life in which I believe. I am so careful about avoiding anticipating pain. |
| Epistemic value | I experience the highest excitement when using these market products. I experience the highest satisfaction when using it. I experience the highest hopefulness when using it. |
| Store attribute Nikhashemi et al., (2016) | This market environment is clean and fresh. Car parking facilities are important for this market. Cleanness and freshness. |
| Sustainability Bask et al., (2013) | In the modern age, the supermarket is sustainable. Customer satisfaction is important for making sustainability of the supermarket. I find it important that renewable resources are favored in the design of supermarkets. |
| Choice behavior Khan and Mohsin, (2017) | I make a special effort to buy household products from supermarkets. When I have a choice between the supermarket and the local market, I choose the supermarket. I have switched products for hygienic reasons. |

Appendix-B: Hypotheses Table

| Hypothesis | Citation | Context | Independent variables | Dependent Variables |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Regulatory focus > Explicit Preference | Cai and Leung, 2020 | Online food delivery application | Self-efficacy, Regulatory focus prevention vs. | Purchase intention |

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| | | | promotion, Perceived benefit, Perceived risk, Risk propensity | |
| Regulatory focus > Implicit Preference | Das, 2015 | Retail shopping behavior | Promotion focus, Prevention focus, Impulsiveness | Store loyalty |
| Regulatory Focus > choice behavior | Som and Lee, 2012 | Choice assortment | Perceived confidence, Consumer preference, promotion focus, prevention focus | Choice behavior |
| Explicit Preference > choice behavior | Tan, Liew, and Gan, (2020) | E-learning | Promotion-focus, Prevention-focus, Learner's motivation, Learner's extraneous load | Learner's regulatory focus orientation and agent's message frame |
| Implicit Preference > choice behavior | Som and Lee, 2012 | Choice assortment | Perceived confidence, Consumer preference, promotion focus, prevention focus | Choice behavior |
| Epistemic value > Choice behavior | Kaur, et al., 2018 | Social media | Functional value, social value, conditional value, emotional value | User intention to continue using online social media brand community |
| Store attribute > choice behavior | Nikhashemi et al., 2016 | Retail store | Perceived value, brand loyalty | |
| Sustainability > Choice behavior | Bask et al., (2013) | Supply chain management | Sustainable strategy and policy, Sustainable product design, Sustainable sourcing, | Choice Behavior |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | Product recovery, and end-of-life management | |
|--|--|--|--|--|

Appendix-C: Selected Theory Table

| Theory Name | Context | Citation |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Regulatory Theory | Beyond Pleasure and Pain | Higgins, (1997) |
| | E-learning | Tan, Liew, and Gan, (2020) |
| | Social modeling of food intake | Friese, Wänke and Plessner, (2006) |
| | Social Media | Mosteller and Poddar, (2017) |
| | Reliance on implicit preferences in consumption contexts | Florack, Friese and Scarabis, (2010) |
| | Implicit – explicit consistency | (Hofmann et al., 2005) |

Appendix-D: List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| AHP | Analytic Hierarchy Process |
| AVE | Average Variance Extracted |
| CB | Choice Behavior |
| CLT | Construal Level Theory |
| CR | Composite Reliability |
| CB-SEM | Covariance-Based SEM |
| EX | Explicit Preference |
| EP | Epistemic Value |
| HPO | High- Performance Orientation |
| HTMT | Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio |
| PCA | Principal Component Analysis |

| | |
|---------|--------------------------------|
| PLS-SEM | Partial Least Square |
| RF | Regulatory Focus |
| RFT | Regulatory Focus Theory |
| SA | Store Attribute |
| SU | Sustainability |
| SEM | Structure Equation Model |
| S-O-R | Stimulus – Organism- responses |
| TAM | Technology Acceptance Model |

Appendix-E: Questionnaire

Bangladeshi Supermarket Customers' Choice Behavior: The Influence of Regulatory Focus, Store Attributes, Epistemic Value, and Environmental Consciousness

Dear Sir/Madam,

Greetings of the day!! Hope you and your family are safe and blessed. Kindly be informed that we are conducting an academic survey. The probable title of the academic study is "*Bangladeshi Supermarket Customers' Choice Behavior: The Influence of Regulatory Focus, Store Attributes, Epistemic Value, and Environmental Consciousness*". This research form has been created for research purposes. All of the gathered information should be used only for research, and the privacy of the collected data is secured.

This questionnaire consists of two sections. Please read the instructions carefully before you start each section. It is important to note that individual responses to this survey will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your co-operation in completing this survey. Please be assured that we respect your privacy and the given answer will only use for this research purpose.

With Regards

Sagor Ejarder

Sections A: Demographics

Please mark the following statements with a tick mark (✓).

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Gender | <input type="radio"/> Male | | <input type="radio"/> Female | |
| Please mention your Age | <input type="radio"/> 18-30 years | <input type="radio"/> 31-40 years | <input type="radio"/> 41-50 years | <input type="radio"/> Above 50 years |
| Educational Level | <input type="radio"/> Secondary School | <input type="radio"/> Higher Secondary | <input type="radio"/> Graduation | <input type="radio"/> Post-Graduation |
| Marital Status | <input type="radio"/> Married | | <input type="radio"/> Unmarried | |
| Number of Family Members | <input type="radio"/> Single | <input type="radio"/> Two members | <input type="radio"/> Three members | <input type="radio"/> More than Four members |

Sections B:

(Please rate the following statements and mark them with a tick mark (✓). Here, 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regulatory Focus | | | | | | |
| RFQ1 | I strategically avoid mismatches to desired end-states. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| RFQ2 | Supermarkets ensure correct rejections. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| RFQ3 | Supermarket insures against errors of commission. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Explicit Preference | | | | | | |
| EPQ1 | I can take the approach to achieve the desired end-state. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| EPQ2 | I am insure against errors of omission. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| EPQ3 | I work hard for achieving pleasure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Implicit Preference | | | | | | |
| IPQ1 | I feel I have often made progress toward being successful in my life. | | | | | |
| IPQ2 | I often try to reach that in life in which I believe. | | | | | |
| IPQ3 | I am so careful about avoiding anticipating pain. | | | | | |
| Store attributes (SA): | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SAQ1 | Supermarket owners care about the store decoration. | | | | | |
| SAQ2 | This market environment is clean and fresh. | | | | | |
| SAQ3 | Car parking facilities are important for this market. | | | | | |
| Epistemic Value (EV): | | | | | | |
| EVQ1 | I experience the highest excitement when using these market products. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| EVQ2 | I experience the highest satisfaction when using it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| EVQ3 | I experience the highest hopefulness when using it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sustainability | | | | | | |
| SQ1 | In the modern age, the supermarket is sustainable. | | | | | |
| SQ2 | Customer satisfaction is important for making sustainability of the supermarket. | | | | | |
| SQ3 | I find it important that renewable resources are favored in the design of supermarkets. | | | | | |
| Choice Behavior | | | | | | |
| CBQ1 | I make a special effort to buy household products from supermarkets. | | | | | |
| CBQ2 | When I have a choice between the supermarket and the local market, I choose the supermarket | | | | | |
| CBQ3 | I have switched products for hygienic reasons | | | | | |

“Thank You for your valuable time and feedback”