

Identifying the Factors Affecting Purchase of Private Label Brands

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ABSTRACT

Along with the growth in the organised retail sector, private label brands have become a growing phenomenon. Every retailer focuses on the development of private labels due to high margins, thus providing consumers an alternative to national brands. Initially, the focus was only on the food and grocery segments. However, now it has extended to other product categories. The objective is to identify the factors that influence the purchase of private labels in retail stores, through systematic literature review. After a rigorous review, 67 papers were selected, which were published between the years 1972 and 2020. These research papers are from various databases, such as Emerald Insight, Elsevier, and JSTOR. The findings of the study reveal that maximum studies were done on food and grocery and apparel categories. Mall intercept survey was conducted to obtain information from respondents. Other findings revealed that factors such as store image, product familiarity, perceived quality, perceived risk, price consciousness, consumer attitude, value consciousness, and extrinsic cues influenced the perception of consumers towards purchase intention of private label brands.

Keywords: Retail Industry, Private Labels, Consumers

INTRODUCTION

Retail Industry

India is one of the rapidly increasing prosperous economies, allowing foreign investors to invest in India (Chawla et al., 2019). The retail sector has a strong relationship with the economic growth of the country. In the world, the retail sector of India is the 5th largest industry in retail space (www.ibef.org). The retail industry has immense potential for growth and opportunities that exist in many sectors (Talreja & Jain, 2013). India is renowned as the land of shopkeepers (Chawla et al., 2019). Some of the factors that have driven the growth of India's organised retail sector includes healthy economic growth, changing demographic profile, increase in disposable income, urbanisation, and changing consumer tastes and choices (www.ibef.org).



Source: www.ibef.org

Fig. 1: Growth Driver of Retail Sector

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Indian retail scenario comprises organised and unorganised retailing (Kumar & Khan, 2020). The organised retail sector includes enterprises engaged in the production or sale of goods and services operating as private limited corporations, administered by the Companies Act. The following features may be seen in organised retailing: (1) ownership of the retail setups are held by the company; (2) some of the employees are on the organisation's payroll, while others are on contract; and (3) under Minimum Wages Act, employees are regulated. These businesses have a government-issued trade license and are required to pay taxes to the government. Hence they qualify as organised merchants (Panigrahi & Thakkar, 2016).

The unorganised retail sector consists of low-cost retailing or traditional formats that are unauthorised. Kirana shops, convenience stores, general stores, corner stores, and pavement vendors are just a few examples.

In the last few years, there has been a significant shift in the Indian retail sector, with the unorganised sector beginning to narrow down (Panigrahi & Thakkar, 2016) and a huge transformation in the organised retail sector. The organised retail sector is gaining popularity as consumers' tastes and preferences have changed (Nair, 2011). Large-scale modern retail formats have emerged in the organised sector, such as supermarkets, hypermarkets, department stores, chain stores, specialty stores, and discount stores (Mathur & Gangwani, 2016). Until the development of the organised retail sector, manufacturers were the sole producer of brands nationally and internationally (Tjakraatmadja, 2019). With the growth of the organised sector, the private labels of retailers started evolving. The private labels are the brands of a particular retailer, which are available with that retailer only.

Private label brands are sold as consumer products by retailers or through stores owned by retailers under their own brand name or trademark (Spratt & Shimp, 2004). According to Kumar and Steenkamp (2007), private label brands or store brands are produced and owned by retailers,

and are sold only in the retailer's outlets. Different terms are used for private labels, such as own brands, retailer brands, distributor brands, and so on. Labega et al. (2007) stated that private labels help retailers build loyalty, by differentiating them from other substitutes. Private label brands are under the control of retailers, which offer customers a cheaper option than national brands. It is also labeled as inexpensive, as it helps consumers fulfil their requirements at a lower price. This is the reason for retail organisation, where many retailers offer various types of private labels in different categories such as apparels, food and grocery, electronics, consumer durables, personal care, and so on (Panigrahi & Thakkar, 2016).

Due to the existence of different types of products in different categories in retail stores, consumers are attracted to retail outlets, and ultimately buy private labels due to attractive price and quality. In the early stage of private label development, these were available only in commodity and non-branded product categories, such as spices, grams, flour, and other eatables. With time and consumer acceptance, they have grown and are available in other categories, like high technology electronic gadgets like juicers, mobiles, and water purifiers (Gupta, 2015). Globally, the market share of private labels is increasing continuously (Pangriya & Kumar, 2016).

For enhancing market share, major retailers are entering the market with their private labels (Singh et al., 2018). Some retailers like Shoppers Stop, Big Bazaar, Reliance, Pantaloons, Trends, Nilgiris, and Croma are selling private labels in various product categories in India (Pangriya, 2018). Shoppers Stop developed the concept of private label brands in early 1990s by launching the 'STOP' brand, which is its own brand. Similarly, Westside retailers launched the Westside brand (Hemantha, 2017); Tasty Treat was launched by Big Bazaar; and Network and Net Play by Reliance Trends (Singh et al., 2018). Positive development of private labels started in India since 2000 (Chattopadhyay, 2018). Table 1 presents the major retailers and their private label brands in India.

Table 1: Retailers and their Private Label Brands in India

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Retailer</i>	<i>Private Brand</i>	<i>Product Category</i>
1	Pantaloons	Dreamz, Azile, Annabella, Honey, Rang Manch, Akkriti, San Frisco, RIG	Apparels: Sleepwear, Casual, Sportswear, Formal, Ethnic
2	Vishal Mega Mart	First Crop Full Bloom Imli Tree Outshine Home Ninja Tondon Home Finery & Home Select Fashion:Brink, Driftwood, Vivela, Mawie, Blacktie	Biscuit, Instant Noodles, Fry Snacks, Cereal, Pulses, Flour Green Tea, Honey, Coffee, Tea, Jam, Juice, Ketchup, Wafers Pickle, Soup Shampoo Detergent, Toilet Cleaner, Surface Cleaner Electric Kettle, Heat Convector, Gas Stove, Mixer Juicer Dinner Set, Container Set Apparel
3	Easy Day	Golden Harvest Caremate Tasty Treat Panchamrit Easy Life Voom	Spices Handwash, Toilet Rolls and Tissue, Facial Tissue Namkeen, Biscuit, Ketchup, Cookies Tea Door Mat, Shopping Bag Detergent
4	Big Bazaar	John Miller, DJ & C, Knighthood Tasty Treat, Fresh & Pure Sensei & Koryo Clean Mate	Apparels Food and staples Electronics Homecare
5	Shoppers Stop	Stop, Kashish, Life, Haute Curry, Elliza Donatein	Apparels
6	First Cry	Baby Hug Cute Walk	Apparels Footwear
7	Spencer	Smart Choice & Tasty Wonders Clean Home Maroon Fashion: Island Monks, Asankhy, Scorez Mark Nicolas	Food Item: Pulses, Rice, Cereal, Beverage, Dry Fruits, Honey Home Cleaning Products Home Essential: Premium Home Care, Kitchen Products Apparels Formal Men's Footwear
8	More	Feasters, Kitchen's Promise, Selecta 110% Fashion: Bluearth Bjoyzz Yo Berwins Incheels	Food and Staples Cleaning Products Men's Apparel For Women Kids Section Men's Footwear Women's Footwear
9	Westside	E.T.A, Wardrobe, Nuon, Ascot, Gia	Apparels
10	Reliance	Reliance Fresh, Good Life, Masti Oye, Reliance Select Expelz, Enzo Fashion: Rio, Fig, Fusion, Avaasa, Hushh, Frendz, Network, Netplay, The DNMX, Performax	Food and Staples Cleaning Products Apparel

Source: Author's own research.

India did not see the private label brands as an important entity during the 1990s, as the Indian organised retail industry was still in the nascent stage at that time (Hemantha & Arun, 2017). With the growth in organised retail chains, private label brands have become a growing phenomenon (Gangwani et al., 2020). The main aim of the study is to identify the factors that buyers consider when purchasing private labels in retail stores, through systematic literature review.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research papers that were reviewed were identified using various databases, including Emerald Insight, JSTOR, Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, and journals like

Journal of Retailing, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Service, and so on.

The search items to find the articles were: consumer's perception towards private label bands, purchase intention for private label brands, factors affecting consumer's perception towards private labels, success of private label brands, private label brand, and national brand.

The research papers that were reviewed were published between the years 1972 to 2020. A total of 67 papers were selected based on the study's relevancy. There were 20 papers published between 1972 and 2005 and 47 papers published between 2006 and 2020.

Fig. 2 and 3 depict the publication of numerous papers from years 1972-2005 and 2006-2020, respectively.

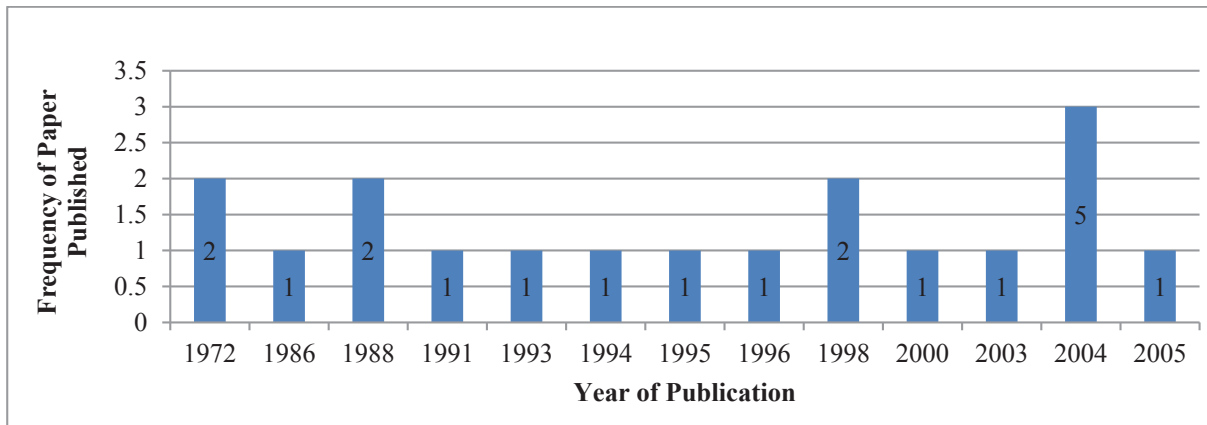


Fig. 2: Graphical Representation of Published Works from 1972-2005

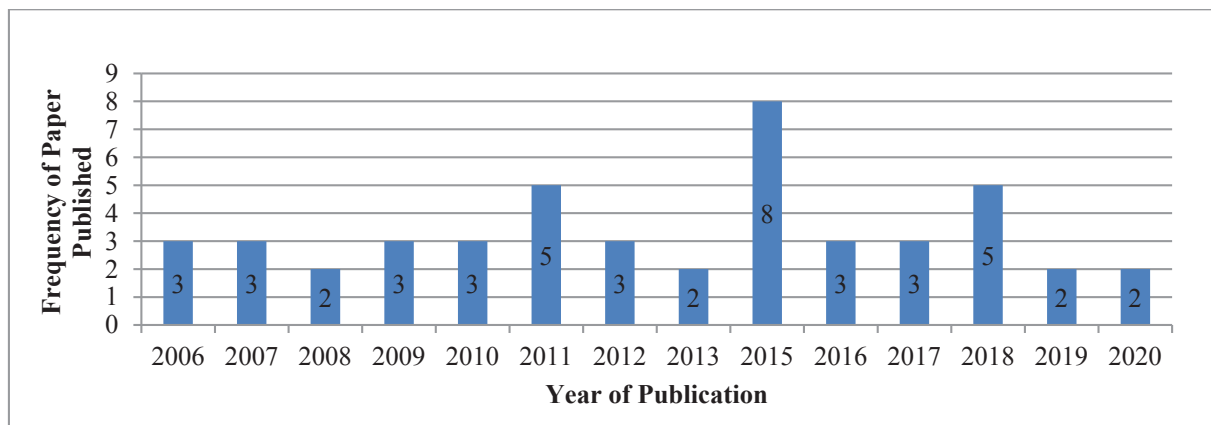


Fig. 3: Graphical Representation of Published Works from 2006-2020

FINDINGS

The findings obtained by analysing the literature are presented under 2 parts. The first part describes the elements of research methodology, including respondent type, product categories, data collection method, and statistical techniques that were used by previous authors. Second part gives details about the factors that influence the perception of consumers towards purchase of private labels in a retail store.

ELEMENTS OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Respondents' Type

Respondents include the consumers who visit the stores to purchase products and apparels. They belong to various age groups, and different genders and geographical locations. The age of the respondents is at least 18, because by this age they definitely start shopping for themselves (Sharma et al., 2011). The surveys comprised male and female respondents from metro and non-metro cities across India (Panigrahi & Thakkar, 2016). A majority of the study focused on those respondents who visited shopping malls.

Product Category

In India, with the growth of the organised retail sector, retailers are focusing on their own brands. They offer private label products in various product categories, including apparel, food and grocery, electronics, consumer durables, personal care, and so on (Panigrahi & Thakkar, 2016). Previous studies conducted by different researchers have mainly focused on categories like apparels (Kumar & Kothari, 2015), household cleaning (Beura & Moharana, 2016), and food and grocery (De & Singh, 2017).

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In most studies, for collection of data, the mall intercept method had been used. Besides this, retail stores or department stores were selected to collect the data. Maximum studies used primary data that were collected

through distributing a structured questionnaire (Beura & Moharana, 2016; Gala & Patil, 2013). However, few studies used both primary and secondary data, i.e., websites, journals and magazines, and government publications (Khandelwal, 2015).

Statistical Techniques

Previous literature had used a number of techniques to measure the relation between variables that affect the purchase of private labels. Statistical tools include exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), analysis of variance (ANOVA), correlation, regression, descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation, and so on.

Factors Influencing the Consumers' Purchase Intention of Private Labels in Retail Stores

This section includes the different variables that play a crucial role in shaping the purchase intentions of consumers in buying private labels. Table 2 highlights the operational definitions of various variables.

Table 2: Operational Definition of Variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Operational Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Purchase Intention	It is the possibility that consumers plan or are ready to buy certain products and services in the near future.	Wu et al., 2011
Store Image	It is the impression of retailers in the consumer's mind. This perception is determined on the basis of functional and psychological characteristics linked to the retailers.	Burt & Mavrommatis, 2006
Product Familiarity	It refers to the knowledge of the consumer, which they use to assess the quality of products.	Trusov et al., 2009
Perceived Quality	Perceived product quality refers to a consumer evaluation of overall excellence or superiority of a product.	Zeithaml, 1988
Perceived Risk	Perceived risk refers to the uncertainty of the product linked with the purchase of a private label, experienced by all the consumers.	Dowling, 1986
Price Consciousness	A price-conscious consumer is defined as a low-price consumer, who especially focuses on the pursuit of low price products (Lichtenstein et al., 1993).	Lichtenstein et al., 1993

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Operational Definition</i>	<i>Source</i>
Consumer Attitude	Consumer attitude reflects a person's favourable or unfavourable opinion towards a commodity.	Binninger, 2008
Value Consciousness	Value consciousness refers to the extent to which quality is obtained in relation to price.	Zeithaml, 1988
In-Store Extrinsic Cues	Extrinsic cues are related to product-related features, like price, promotion, and packaging, which act as signposts influencing consumers' perception.	Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003

Purchase Intention

The decision of a consumer to purchase a product depends on the interest of the consumer. Buying interest is a way that influences consumers to purchase a product (Shao et al., 2004). Rahaman et al. (2012) proposed dimensions of buying interest, such as:

- Consumer's willingness to consider buying
- Decision to buy a product in future
- Buy back decision

According to Wu et al. (2011), purchase intention refers to the possibility that a consumer is willing to buy a particular product. In previous studies, the purchase intention has been considered a predictor of actual buying (Jin & Suh, 2005).

Store Image

Burt and Mavrommatis (2006) state that store image is defined as the overall perception of the store in the minds of consumers. The consumer perception related to store is a combination of some attributes, including physical (layout, convenience, selection); and social and psychological factors (quality, atmosphere, experiential feelings, and emotions). As a result of these factors, consumers are able to form an attitude regarding retail stores. According to Richardson et al. (1996), store image is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes various aspects of the store that consumer uses for evaluating the image of a store. The main aspects of store image are product quality, atmosphere of the store, product layout, store service, product assortment and convenience, and so on (Diallo, 2012).

A number of studies have been conducted to determine the influence of store image on private label purchase. Various studies show that store image has a direct and positive impact on purchase intention of private labels (Wu et al., 2011). Bao et al. (2011) observed that consumers with a favourable store image are likely to experience higher quality private labels. Semeijn et al. (2004) concluded that when a retailer store image is positive, it helps in reducing the risk of private label, and increases the perception towards private labels.

Product Familiarity

Familiarity is an important factor that helps consumers buy private labels. Familiarity refers to the knowledge about products that consumers experience. It reflects the knowledge of consumers about the product and how much information is available to them. Consumers accumulate direct and indirect experiences related to products, through advertisement exposure, word of mouth, regular marketing communication, and interaction with the salespersons (Trusov et al., 2009). Rao and Monroe (1988) stated that when consumers have more information about the product category, they will be able to identify the quality of the products.

Dick et al. (1995) said that there is a connection between private label brands and willingness to purchase, because greater familiarity helps in increasing consumer experiences and in understanding that these are better quality products. Many studies have shown that there is a positive relation between familiarity and perceived quality, but it negatively impacts perceived risk (Richardson et al., 1996; Beneke et al., 2015).

Perceived Quality

Mandez et al. (2008) explained product perceived quality as the combination of all characteristics and attributes of a product that are responsible for meeting the needs of the user. According to cue utilising theory, products have an array of cues that act as an indicator of quality (Olsan, 1972). These are categorised into 2 parts: (i) extrinsic cues, which include price, packaging, labeling, store image, and so on (Richardson et al., 1994); (ii) intrinsic cues, which include ingredients, taste, smell, and texture (Dodds et al., 1991). If consumers are satisfied with the

quality of the private label product, then they become loyal to that product (Juan & Govindan, 2017).

Richardson et al. (1994) proved that perceived quality affects consumer's purchase intention towards private labels. Kounk (2018) also proved that consumers' purchase intentions towards private label brands are positively influenced by perceived quality. Fong et al. (2015) explained that consumers evaluate the quality of private labels based on the retailer's image. Many studies have stated that there is a negative effect of low quality products on private label purchases (Erdem et al., 2004; Gala & Patil, 2013).

Perceived Risk

According to Dowling (1986), risk refers to the uncertainty of the product linked with the purchase of private labels experienced by the consumers. It is associated with the negative utility received by the consumers while buying a particular brand. Any action taken by consumers will produce results, which they cannot predict with certainty. This can sometimes be unpleasant (Liljander et al., 2009). Previous studies found that perceived risk is a "multidimensional phenomena" (Mieres et al., 2006; Liljander et al., 2009), which includes physical, functional, financial, social, and psychological risks.

Kakkoa et al. (2015) stated that there is a direct impact of lower perceived risk on private label purchase intention of consumers, i.e., the lower the perceived risk, the greater the choice of private label purchase. However, many studies confirm that higher the risk associated with the private label, lower the chance of consumers to buy private labels (Richardson et al., 1996).

Price Consciousness

Emphasis is placed by consumers on paying a lower price while making a purchase decision. This is known as price consciousness. Price conscious consumers are not willing to pay a high price for the products (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). Batra and Sinha (2000) stated that price conscious consumers are price sensitive, price oriented, deal prone, and value oriented. For buying low-price products, price conscious consumers are willing to spend their resources,

like time and efforts, at more stores (Jin & Sternquist, 2004). Burger and Schott (1972) stated that lower prices are an important feature for private labels and help to predict private label purchase.

Batra and Sinha (2000) concluded that price consciousness has a favourable impact on purchase intention of private labels. However, sometimes consumers' purchase intention is reduced due to high purchase products; they feel that they are losing their money if they are buying high cost products (Dodds et al., 1991; Lichtenstein et al., 1993).

Consumer Attitude

The attitude of consumers plays an important role in influencing the purchase intention of consumers towards private label products (Chaniotakis et al., 2010). Binninger (2008) stated that for assessing the behaviour of consumers, attitude is the most important determinant. It is used for predicting acceptance of products in the market. Attitude reflects favourable or unfavourable reactions of consumers towards private labels (Burton et al., 1998). Goldsmith et al. (2010) observed that consumers' attitude helps them in the decision making process of purchasing private label products. Chaniotakis et al. (2010) explained that consumer purchase decision is affected by their "Way of Thinking". Therefore, attitude acts as a vital link between the idea of the customer and the purchase of products.

Value Consciousness

Some consumers do not want to evaluate products based on lower prices or high quality. Instead they use value as a criteria for evaluation (Thanasuata, 2015). Value is defined as the ratio of quality and price. It is concerned with the sacrifice made by consumers to receive the benefits of a product (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). They are considered as value conscious consumers, because they focus on the quality that is received against the price paid (Zeithaml, 1988). Previous studies have shown that value consciousness influences the purchase intention of consumers towards private labels (Richardson et al., 1996; Burton et al., 1998).

Role of In-Store Extrinsic Cues

Extrinsic cues within the store, such as in-store promotions, product packaging, and shelf space allocation, act as signposts that affect the perception of consumers towards products (Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 2003). Promotion acts as a marketing and communication tool that adds value to a product. Advertising, direct marketing, publicity, and sales promotion channels are used for promotion of products (Rowley, 1998). Packaging is important from

consumers' perspective, because it attracts their attention. It plays the role of "Silent Salesman", because it benefits the consumers by providing information about quality and product (Ampuero & Villa, 2006). According to Amrouche and Zaccour (2006), one of the most essential assets for a retailer is shelf space. It is a limited resource; therefore, optimal allocation of space can play an important role. These extrinsic cues are considered eye-catching attributes and have been found to have a significant effect on the purchase of private labels (Richardson et al., 1994).

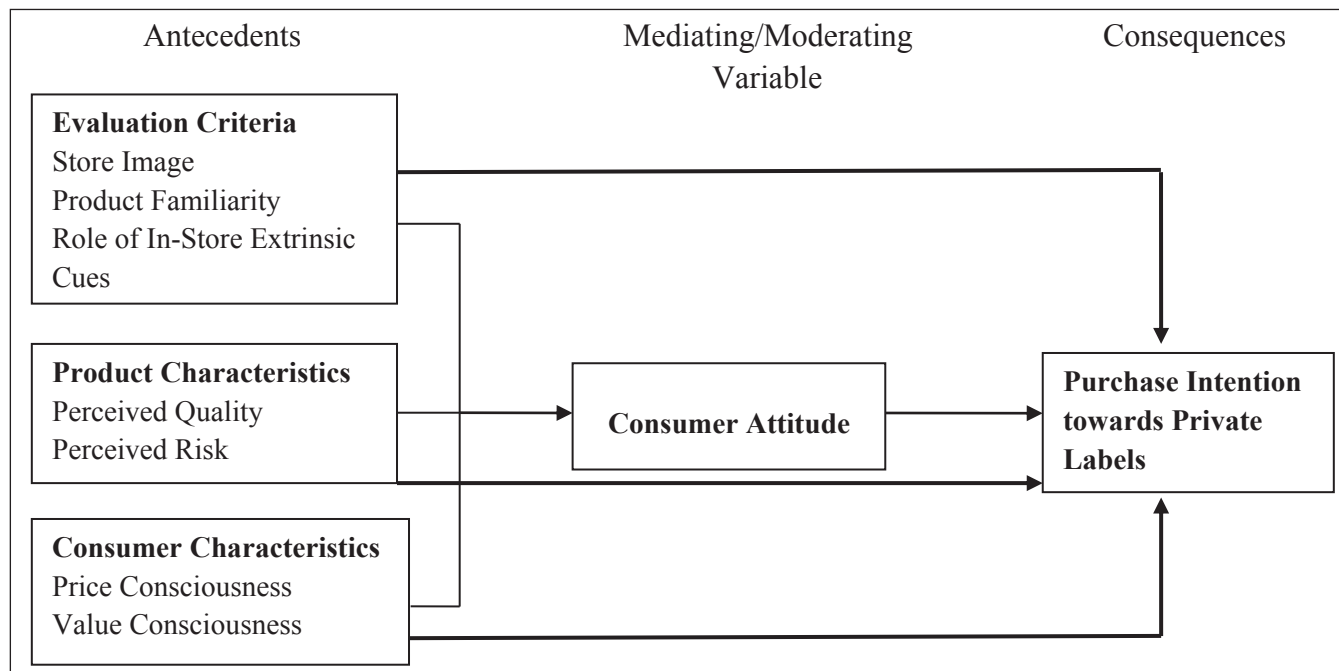


Fig. 4: Conceptual Model

CONCLUSION

With the passage of time, growth in the organised retail sector in India is increasing. Every retailer wants to differentiate themselves from others. This is why retailers are focusing on the development of private label brands, in comparison with a national brand. Brands that were developed by the retailer under their own brand name or a new brand name, and sold exclusively in their retail outlets only, are known as private label brands. This helps the retailers gain a higher margin by creating an alternative to the national brand, and provides good quality products at reasonable prices to the consumers.

Findings show that there are many factors that help the consumers in evaluating the private label products related to a particular store. Many factors, such as evaluation criteria (familiarity, store image, packaging of the product, store atmosphere); product characteristics (perceived quality, perceived risk, perceived value for money); and consumer consciousness (price consciousness, discount consciousness), influence the perception of consumers towards private label purchase. While making a purchase decision, consumers consider these factors. In addition, consumers want to know whether a particular product satisfies their needs. Thus, it is necessary that retailers focus on these factors. Retailers continuously try to improve consumer's knowledge regarding private labels

to increase consumer purchase (Yang & Wang, 2010). Quality is an important factor considered by consumers when purchasing a product. Therefore, retailers have to improve product quality through reducing quality variation between private labels and national brands (Glyn & Chen, 2009). Retailers can provide money-back guarantee schemes, free samples, knowledge about products, and other promotional activities to consumers that reduce the risk perception (Mieres et al., 2006). This will help the retail outlets enhance their sale.

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