

## The Importance of Store Image in Retail Food Markets: An Analysis within the Framework of the S-O-R Paradigm

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<b>Perakende Gıda Pazarlarında Mağaza İmajının Önemi: S-O-R Paradigması Çerçevesinde Bir Analiz</b>	<b>The Importance of Store Image in Retail Food Markets: An Analysis within the Framework of the S-O-R Paradigm</b>
<b>Öz</b> Rekabetin son derece yoğun olduğu perakende sektöründe mağazaların rakiplerinden farklılaşması ve avantaj elde etmesi oldukça zorlayıcı bir hal almıştır. Bu bağlamda tüketicilerin satın alma niyetini belirlemeye yönelik birçok çalışma yapılmış olmasına rağmen mağaza imaj boyutlarının belirlenerek uyarıcı-organizma-tepki (S-O-R) modeli çerçevesinde ele alınan çalışma sayısı oldukça sınırlıdır. Bu çalışmada mağaza imajının marka bilinirliği, müşteri memnuniyeti, algılanan değer ve satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkileri S-O-R modeli kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda, perakende pazarlarının mağaza imajını nasıl güçlendirebileceğine ve dolayısıyla mağaza performansını nasıl iyileştirebileceğine dair kanıtlar sunulmaktadır.	<b>Abstract</b> In the retail industry, where competition is extremely intense, it has become quite challenging for the stores to differentiate themselves from their competitors and gain an advantage. In this context, although many studies have been conducted to determine the purchase intention of consumers, the number of studies that have been handled within the framework of the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model by determining the store image dimensions is quite limited. In this study, the effects of store image on brand awareness, customer satisfaction, perceived value and purchase intention were investigated using the S-O-R model. As a result of this study, evidence is presented on how retail markets can strengthen store image and therefore improve store performance.
<b>Anahtar Kelimeler:</b> Mağaza İmajı, Algılanan Değer, Memnuniyet, Satın Alma Niyeti, Uyarıcı-Organizma-Tepki (S-O-R)	<b>Keywords:</b> Store Image, Perceived Value, Satisfaction, Purchase Intention, Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R)
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<b>Çıkar Beyanı</b>	Yazarlar açısından ya da üçüncü taraflar açısından çalışmadan kaynaklı çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

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## 1. Introduction

The retail sector in the world continues to grow with the effect of many factors. According to Statista data, sales of 27 trillion dollars were realised in the retail sector in 2021 and it is estimated that this figure will reach 30 trillion dollars by 2024 (Sabanoglu, 2021). This growth attracts the interest of many businesses in the sector and can increase competition in the sector. Therefore, it becomes very important for businesses to be able to influence the behaviour of consumers in an increasingly competitive environment. Consumers today seek an experience in retail stores that is more than product variety and quality. This situation, which is a very critical issue for retail management, includes factors such as determining the factors affecting satisfaction, identifying and targeting customer segments, and long-term customer retention (Theodoridis and Chatzipanagiotou, 2009: 709). The concept of retail store image first attracted attention when Pierre Martineau (1958) defined the personality of the retail store (Porter and Claycomb, 1997: 374). Retailers can have the advantage of differentiation in the market thanks to the store image related to the offered product or service, which increases the purchase intention of the customers. Retailers must be vigilant in responding to customer needs and strategically communicating their market image (Graciola et al., 2020: 1). Similarly, some scholars (Yeniçeri, 2005; Erciş et al., 2016; Ülker and Tosun (2021) stated that store image is a strategic marketing tool that can provide retailers with a competitive advantage. Therefore, realising how to store image is perceived by consumers and understanding the impact of store image dimensions can be a critical factor for retailers.

Many studies have been conducted on determining the purchasing behaviour of consumers. Different studies have been conducted to reveal the purchase intentions of store image (Schlosser, 1998; Diallo, 2012; Graciola et al., 2020). When we examined the literature, it was observed that the existing studies (Theodoridis and Chatzipanagiotou, 2009; Aghekyan-Simonian et al., 2012; Graciola et al., 2020) mostly focus on different designs in store image dimensions. On the other hand, there are many studies examining the relationship between store image and structures such as customer satisfaction, perceived value, and brand awareness (Chang and Tseng, 2013; Sharifi, 2014). However, the relationship of store image with these dependent variables has been tested through the main structure. However, explorations on whether store image dimensions have an effect on these dependent variables have been ignored. Testing these relationships directly will be clearly understood whether the store image dimensions have a direct effect on the dependent variables. In summary, the relationship of store image dimensions with these variables has been examined indirectly. However, no study has tested the relationship between dimensions such as customer service, price level and customer satisfaction, perceived value and brand awareness variables. In this study, it is thought to reveal the relationship between these variables. Therefore, a clear understanding of these relationships will provide important implications for business managers in practice. The stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model has an important function in revealing these relationships. In the context of consumer behaviour, the S-O-R model provides a theoretical infrastructure to reveal the relationship between many structures (Xu et al., 2020). In this study, the relationship between store image dimensions (price level, customer service, merchandise and architecture project), brand awareness, customer satisfaction, perceived value and purchase intention in retail grocery stores is examined within the framework of S-O-R model.

It is thought that this study will make some contributions to the existing literature. Firstly, this study will explore the direct relationship between store image dimensions and perceived value, brand awareness and customer satisfaction in retail grocery stores. This discovery may provide an extension of the relationship of store image discovered through the main construct in the existing literature. Secondly, the S-O-R model is used as the theoretical infrastructure to investigate the effect of store image on other variables. This will provide an infrastructure for explaining the relationships between similar constructs in future research. Finally, it provides evidence on how retail markets should improve store image, achieve higher brand awareness and greater customer satisfaction, increase perceived value with find, and therefore improve store performance.

The structure of this study is as follows. In the second section, the theoretical background of the study and the relationship between the used theory and the variables in the research model is explained. In addition, hypotheses regarding the relationship between variables are also explained in this section. In the third section, the methodology is included. In the fourth section, the findings are explained; in the fifth section, the results of the study are discussed and suggestions for future studies are made.

## **2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development**

### **2.1. Stimulus-Organism-Response (Stimulus-Organism-Response: S-O-R) Paradigm**

Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) S-O-R model describes how humans respond to environmental stimuli in three stages: stimulus, organism, and response. Following changes in the inner personality, such as exposure to environment-stimulating sensory systems (stimulus) and emotions or thoughts (organism), affect approach-avoidance behaviors (response) that respond to the environment, according to the S-O-R model (Lee et al., 2021: 535). This model aims to integrate individuals' perceptions and feelings about external stimuli and their individual responses to explain positive or negative behaviors that are subsequently created (Chen and Yao, 2018: 2). Donovan and Rossiter (1982) applied the S-O-R model to retail contexts and discovered that shopping experiences (stimulus) in a retail store lead to changes in consumers' inner identities (organism), and that these changes (organism) mediate the causality between shopping experiences (stimulus) and store preferences (response).

Despite its origins in environmental psychology, the S-O-R model has been used in numerous studies in the marketing literature to reveal the effects of stimuli on consumer behavior in the retail industry (Chang et al., 2011; Kim and Lennon, 2013; Chen and Yao, 2018; Mkedder et al., 2021; Tuncer, 2021). There are also studies combining the store image with the S-O-R model (Oh et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2009; Decré and Pras, 2013; Saricam, 2022). Adopting the S-O-R model while examining consumer behavior helps to distinguish between environmental stimuli and internal and external behaviors of consumers (Chen and Yao, 2018: 2). This model shows that the created environment (S - Stimulus) can affect the customer's mood (O - Organism) and evoke behavioral response (R - Response) (Goi et al., 2014: 462).

Store image consists of a number of components such as merchandise, price and physical characteristics. These components that make up the image can be an environmental stimulus for consumers. For example, the excellent service provided by the store staff can increase the satisfaction and excitement of customers (Kim and Lennon, 2013). Therefore, image can affect the cognitive and emotional mood of consumers. Tian et al. (2022) used image as an environmental stimulus in their study. On the other hand, perceived value (Wu and Li, 2018),

customer satisfaction (Dagger and David, 2012) and brand awareness (Xu, Bai, and Li, 2020., 2020) can create an emotional and cognitive state in consumers with the effect of environmental stimuli. Hewei and Youngsook (2022) used purchase intention as a reaction factor. In light of this information, store image dimensions (stimulus), brand awareness, satisfaction, perceived value (organism) and purchase intention (response) were used in this study. The research model created in this context is shown in Figure 1.

## 2.2. Store Image Dimensions

Store image is defined as the set of brand associations associated with the store in the consumer's memory. It focused on factors such as the dimensions of the store image, the quality and variety of the products sold, the prices of the products, the physical facilities of the store and the services provided by the sales personnel (Erdil, 2015: 199). Through the manipulation of store attributes, retailers can develop strong and unique retail brand associations, namely store image (Noordwyk, 2008:15). Retailers can create a brand/store image among consumers based on various factors, including the range of products they offer, their pricing policies, the quality of their services, and other related aspects (Keller, 1993: 11). The image of a store serves not only as a direct indicator of store quality, but also as a risk mitigating factor (Semeijn et al., 2004: 249). The perception of consumers regarding the extensive range of products and services offered by a retailer within a single establishment holds a significant impact on the formation of the store's image (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004: 334).

Store image is seen as a multidimensional concept that includes some elements for retail stores. For example, Graciola et al. (2020) discussed the dimensions of price level, merchandise, store atmosphere, customer service and architectural structure in the context of store image. On the other hand, Ulusu (2009) divided the store image into three dimensions: physical features, after-sales service and employees. Noordwyk (2008), on the other hand, collected the dimensions of store image defined in the literature in eight dimensions store atmosphere, convenience, facilities, corporate, product, promotion, sales personnel and service. Semeijn et al. (2004: 257) argued that a better understanding of the effects of various store image factors could lead to greater strategic consistency and better resource allocation decisions.

There are studies in the literature examining the relationship between store image and purchase intention. For example, Wu et al. (2011) found that store image dimensions such as product variety, product quality, price, value for money, and store atmosphere have a direct and positive effect on purchase intention. Porral and Lang (2015), in their study of the Spanish market, revealed that variables such as price, familiarity, and store image greatly affect purchase intention. Mathur and Gangwani (2016), in their study in India, showed that store image significantly affects the purchase intention of private label apparel brands in retail stores. Graciola et al. (2020), on the other hand, investigated the relationship between store image and purchase intention on different store formats in Brazil and concluded that there is a direct significant effect on this relationship. In this study, the store image consists of 4 dimensions adapted from previous store image studies (Price level, customer service, merchandise and architecture project).

Price Level. Pricing is one of the most important issues of retail competition (Zielke, 2006: 297). Customers are more satisfied when they shop at a low-cost store because they can buy products that are proportional to their purchasing power (Jinfeng and Zhilong, 2009: 489).

The price level refers only to the amount of money customers have to pay (Zielke, 2006: 300). Graciola et al. (2018: 209) showed that low price level affects purchase intention. Erdil (2015), on the other hand, concluded that price image has a significant effect on consumers' purchase intention in his study investigating the effects of brand image, price image, and perceived risk on consumers' store image and purchase intention.

Merchandise. Customers' perception of product variety is a factor that affects their shopping preferences. Therefore, the products must be well stocked and displayed correctly (Graciola et al., 2020: 3). Product perception refers to the degree to which a product category is associated with a store in the minds of consumers. A high level of product perception corresponds to a strong perceptual link between a store and a product. Store image and product perception offer store-specific clues (Bao et al., 2011: 221). Mathur and Gangwani (2016) concluded that product quality, variety and style lead consumers to purchase private label products.

Customer service. In this study, within the scope of the customer service dimension of the store image, the appearance and physical attractiveness of the store employees and other non-verbal factors such as body language that contribute to these are also focused. Qualified features of store employees contribute to the perception of quality service offered by the store, and this affects the purchase intention (Graciola et al., 2020: 3). According to the study of Diallo (2012), it is emphasized that investment in the quality of customer service is necessary in order to make inferences about the purchasing behavior of consumers.

Architecture project. Retailers make distinctive visual identities a part of their store strategies in order to reinforce the power of their brands (Kirby and Kent, 2010). In addition, retail stores include the use of architecture in their strategies to present their brands to consumers. Designing stores from a commercial point of view is seen as a strategy for retail stores that facilitates the creation of distinctive visual identities and reinforces the brand's leadership and strengths in the market (Graciola et al., 2020: 3). Yuan et al. (2021) showed in their study that the architecture project has a very high impact on the consumer experience.

### **2.3. The Relationship Between Store Image Dimensions and Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness creates a specific brand image with strong associations. Since high brand awareness can be a sign of quality and loyalty, it leads the buyer to consider the brand at the point of purchase (Yoo et al., 2000: 197). The store image in the minds of customers is the foundation of brand equity (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004: 332). Brand awareness affects consumer decision making by influencing the formation and strength of brand associations in the brand/store image (Keller, 1993: 3). Brand awareness is the extent to which consumers recognize a specific brand, as well as a brand's ability to achieve a predetermined level of recognition and awareness (Sharifi, 2014: 45). Keller et al. (2011) regarded brand recognition and brand recall as two main constructs of brand awareness. According to Yoo et al. (2000), perceived quality, brand associations, and brand awareness can all impact brand equity by influencing brand loyalty. Graciola et al. (2020: 12), in their research on the relationship between store image and brand awareness, found a significant result with high effect. Huang and Sarigöllü (2012) found a positive relationship between price and brand awareness. From the point of view of brand awareness, an attractive in-store atmosphere and architectural structure offers great potential in terms of creating a unique store image and providing differentiation (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). According to Keller (1993), consumers' recall of

products in a store supports brand awareness. Graciola et al. (2020) found that investment in customer service has positive effects on brand awareness.

From this point of view, we propose the following hypotheses regarding store image dimensions and brand awareness:

- H1a. Price level positively influences brand awareness.
- H1b. Merchandise positively influences brand awareness.
- H1c. Customer service positively influences brand awareness.
- H1d. Architecture positively influences brand awareness.

#### **2.4. Store Image Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction Relationship**

There is no single accepted measure for customer satisfaction, which has become an important structure in marketing. In the literature, customer satisfaction tends to be a combination of reactions after purchasing and consuming a product/service within a certain timeline (Dash et al., 2021: 612). The majority of current marketing research focuses on the impact of store image on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Jinfeng and Zhilong, 2009: 486). Because the level of customer satisfaction is derived from the approval or disapproval of expectations regarding all features of the service, satisfaction may be the strongest predictor of behavioral intentions (Grace and O’Cass, 2005: 228). On the other hand, addressing the hedonic and utilitarian motives of customers increases satisfaction (Bolton et al., 2021: 5). When purchasing decisions are made with the assistance or advice of store staff, the manner in which this service is provided has an effect on customer satisfaction. However, the extent to which interaction with store employees affects customer satisfaction may vary (Grace and O’Cass, 2005: 229). Theodoridis and Chatzipanagiotou (2009) stated that pricing and products are the main determinants of customer satisfaction. Kursunluoglu (2014) showed that customer service is effective in customer satisfaction and loyalty. Jalil et al. (2016) found that the architectural structure and atmosphere of the store (facility aesthetics, ambiance, spatial layout and employee factor) have a significant impact on customer satisfaction.

From this point of view, we propose the following hypotheses regarding store image dimensions and customer satisfaction:

- H2a. Price level positively influences customer satisfaction.
- H2b. Merchandise positively influences customer satisfaction.
- H2c. Customer service positively influences customer satisfaction.
- H2d. Architecture positively influences customer satisfaction.

#### **2.5. The Relationship Between Store Image Dimensions and Perceived Value**

In research on consumer behavior, perceived value is used as an important antecedent (Jin et al., 2015: 85). Perceived value includes utilitarian value and hedonic value (Chang and Tseng, 2013: 865). By bringing together the customer and the retailer, the store's image influences perceived value in terms of both hedonic and utilitarian values. As a result, perceived value is determined by the benefits versus sacrifices that customers accept when purchasing a product or service (Graciola et al., 2020: 3). This service delivery is important in the value equation because the store's service benefits customers during the retail exchange experience (Grace and O’Cass, 2005: 230). It is assumed that stimuli in retail environments, such as music and ambient odors influence consumers' internal evaluations, such as emotional responses, which in turn elicits approach or avoidance responses. When these

stimuli are used correctly, the customer's perception of the store environment can be positively influenced, making the location more convenient for shopping (Spangenberg et al., 2006: 1282). Ligas and Chaudhuri (2012) studied a comprehensive model that explains the effect between the price level and perceived value and obtained positive results. Jalil et al. (2016) found that the architectural structure and atmosphere of the store (facility aesthetics, ambiance, spatial layout, and employee factor) had a significant impact on perceived value. Kumar (2017) argues that stores can increase perceived value by offering sufficient goods and affordable prices. Helkkula and Kelleher (2010) found significant results between customer service experience and perceived value.

Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses regarding store image dimensions and perceived value:

- H3a. Price level positively influences perceived value.
- H3b. Merchandise positively influences perceived value.
- H3c. Customer service positively influences perceived value.
- H3d. Architecture positively influences perceived value.

## **2.6. The Relationship Between Brand Awareness, Customer Satisfaction and Perceived Value and Purchasing Intention**

The likelihood and willingness of consumers to purchase a specific product or service is referred to as purchasing intention (Wu et al., 2011). Purchase intention represents the degree of probability and willingness of consumers to purchase the product or service. Brand awareness, on the other hand, shows that consumers recognize and remember the brand, which can reflect the attitude of consumers towards the brand (Tan et al., 2021: 3). Brand awareness is the measure of a brand's accessibility in the customer's memory (Shahid et al., 2017: 35) and has a significant impact on consumer decision-making. In this context, consumers typically make decisions based on brand awareness. A well-known brand is much more likely to be chosen by consumers than an unknown brand (Huang and Sarigöllü, 2012: 93). According to Huang and Sarigöllü (2012), brand awareness has a positive relationship and effect on customer reactions. While this relationship represents improved brand performance, it also influences consumer purchasing decisions and intentions. As a result, brand awareness is critical in the customer's decision-making process and serves as a guide in purchasing decisions. Shahid et al. (2017), a brand with high brand awareness will achieve more growth in the market. Therefore, it will help the company to make profits and eventually there will be an increase in market share and profitability. Therefore, for this study, it is important to know the effects of brand awareness on purchase intention. Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H4. Brand awareness positively influences purchase intentions

Customer satisfaction is widely acknowledged as a significant consumer response variable (Grace and O'Cass, 2005: 230). Consumers who are more satisfied are more likely to repurchase and recommend the product they purchased. In other words, as customer satisfaction rises, repeat purchases may become more common (Kuo et al., 2009: 890). Customer satisfaction is considered a good indicator of purchase intention, a strong predictor of customer loyalty, and a combination of transaction-specific evaluation and overall evaluation (Dash et al., 2021: 612). Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses:

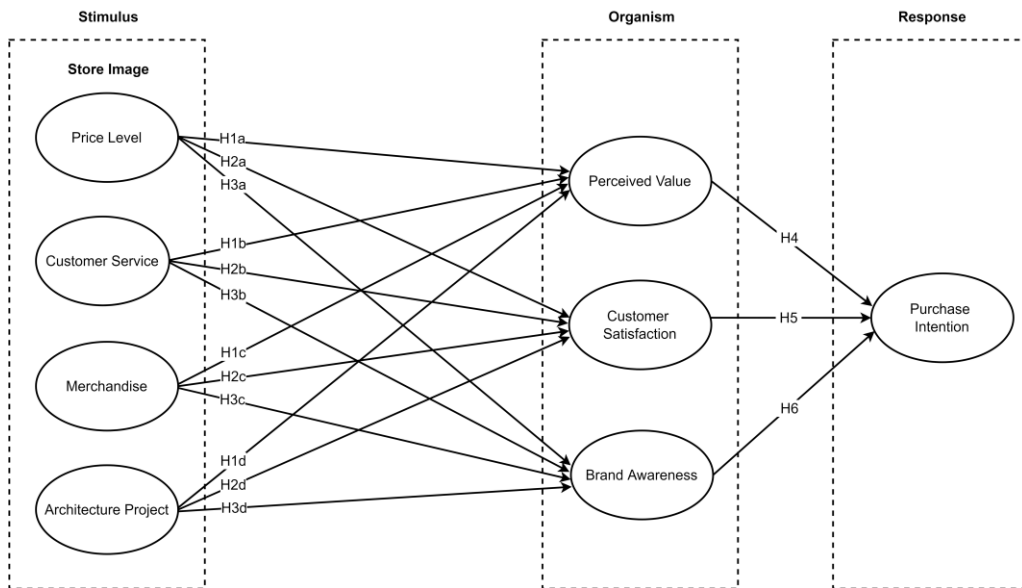
H5. Customer satisfaction positively influences purchase intentions

Zeithaml (1988: 14) defines perceived value as “the consumer's overall assessment of the usefulness of a product or service based on his perceptions of what is given and received”. Zeithaml (1988) points out that the customer sees value in different ways. Some customers describe it simply as a low price, while others simply see the benefits they get. Others consider quality as a value obtained from the product or service they pay for, or view value as the value they get in return for what they give. The research conducted by Konuk (2018) confirms that perceived value increases purchase intention. As a result, consumers tend to buy from stores that offer products at maximum value. Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses:

H6. Perceived value positively influences purchase intention.

Figure 1 depicts the research model developed within the framework of the S-O-R model.

Figure 1: Research Model



### 3. Method

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between store image, brand awareness, satisfaction, and perceived value in retail markets using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. The design of the research is relational and the quantitative research method is used. Furthermore, the data was collected using the convenience sampling method. The data collected by the online survey method are tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

#### 3.1. Sampling and Data Collection

The sample of this study consists of individuals over the age of 18. Social networking platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp were used to reach the target participants. Before collecting primary data, a face validity test was performed. First, the questionnaires were distributed to 37 participants in a pilot study. The participants were



asked if there was any uncertainty in the scale items, and they were asked to complete a questionnaire. Adjustments were made on some items in line with the suggestions of the participants. Opinions of one expert and three academicians were taken on content validity and translation processes. Furthermore, the obtained data were analyzed, and the factor loadings and other item values were controlled.

A total of 210 people participated in the online survey. 57.1% of the 210 participants were female and 42.9% were male. The sample's age distribution shows that the majority of participants are young. 51.4% of the participants are under the age of 34 and 35.7% are between the ages of 35-49. 62.4% of the respondents have a bachelor's degree or higher.

**3.2. Scale Design**

All scales used in this study were taken from the previous literature. A comprehensive literature review was carried out in order to create a questionnaire. The scales determined as a result of the literature review were adapted and included in the survey. The sources used for the survey are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Scales and Resources Utilized

Scales		Number of Items	Scale Creation Format	Resources
Store Image	Price Level (PL)	4	Adapted	Zielke and Toporowski (2012)
	Customer Service (CSE)	5	Adapted	Theodoridis and Chatzipanagiotou (2009)
	Merchandise (ME)	5	Adapted	Kumar and Kim (2014)
	Architecture Project (AP)	4	Adapted	Wang et al. (2012)
<b>Brand Awareness (BA)</b>		6	Adapted	Yoo et al. (2000)
<b>Customer Satisfaction (CSA)</b>		3	Adapted	Slack et al. (2020)
<b>Perceived Value (PV)</b>		6	Adapted	De Toni and Mazzon (2014)
<b>Purchase Intention (PI)</b>		4	Adapted	Watanabe (2014)W14)

The questionnaire form consists of six parts. The first part includes store image, the second part includes perceived value, the third part includes customer satisfaction, the fourth part includes brand awareness, and the fifth part includes purchase intention scales. In the sixth part, there are statements about the demographic characteristics of the participants (age, gender, education level and monthly income and monthly grocery shopping amount). The survey parts were formed in accordance with the 5-point Likert Scale Type, between 1 and 5 as "1 = I strongly disagree", "5 = I strongly agree". There are 37 items in total in the questionnaire, excluding demographic information. Variables and scale items are given in Appendix 1.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed with SmartPLS software using Structural equation modeling (SEM). Before the analysis of the research model, reliability and validity analyzes of the structures included in the research were carried out. In this context, reliability, convergence and divergence validity were evaluated.

Table 2: Measurement Model Results

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
Price Level (PL)	PL1	0.871	0.774	0.858	0.608
	PL2	0.549			
	PL3	0.843			
	PL4	0.814			
Merchandise (ME)	ME1	0.715	0.753	0.835	0.504
	ME2	0.774			
	ME3	0.682			
	ME4	0.742			
	ME5	0.626			
Customer Service (CSE)	CSE1	0.841	0.887	0.918	0.691
	CSE2	0.883			
	CSE3	0.870			
	CSE4	0.840			
	CSE5	0.713			
Architecture Project (AP)	AP1	0.929	0.930	0.950	0.827
	AP2	0.923			
	AP3	0.923			
	AP4	0.861			
Perceived Value (PV)	PV1	0.505	0.878	0.910	0.634
	PV2	0.847			
	PV3	0.899			
	PV4	0.829			
	PV5	0.879			
	PV6	0.751			
Customer Satisfaction (CSA)	CSA1	0.894	0.848	0.908	0.767
	CSA2	0.908			
	CSA3	0.824			
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA1	0.685	0.758	0.831	0.503
	BA2	0.788			
	BA3	0.781			
	BA4	0.829			
	BA5	0.792			
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.913	0.903	0.932	0.774
	PI2	0.900			
	PI3	0.827			
	PI4	0.877			

**4. Findings**

**4.1. Common Method Variance**

Before applying the PLS method, it is necessary to examine the data for the presence of common method bias (Tehseen et al., 2017). The most commonly used method to examine common method variance is Harman's Single Factor Test. This test is performed to determine whether a single factor explains the variance in the collected data (Chang et al., 2010). Accordingly, all items were subjected to factor analysis under a single factor. Data were analyzed with SPSS. The percentage of variance explained by a single factor was 35.8%. The results show that there is no problem with common method variance in the study.

**4.2. Reliability and Validity**

The validity and reliability of the research model were tested using the measurement model. The measurement model results are shown in Table 2. To test its reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) coefficients were examined. According to the measurement model results in Table 2, it is observed that cronbach's alpha values vary between 0.753 and 0.930 and CR values vary between 0.831 and 0.950. Therefore, it shows that both parameters exceed the threshold value of 0.7 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), which provides the reliability requirement, and the reliability of the scales is ensured.

For construct validity, convergent and discriminant validity were examined. The mean variance (AVE) and indicator loads extracted for convergent validity were examined. It is expected that the explained mean variance (AVE) value will be  $\geq 0.50$  (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and factor loads  $\geq 0.50$  (Hair et al., 2021: 96). Accordingly, as shown in Table 2, all AVE values are above the recommended 0.5 level. The loadings of all items are above the expected threshold of  $\geq 0.5$ . Accordingly, the convergent validity was confirmed. Only BA06 was excluded because it gave results below the expected value (-0.047).

For discriminant validity, Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loads and HTMT ratio were examined. According to the Fornell and Larcker criterion, which is the first method, the square roots of AVE must exceed the correlation coefficients of each latent variable (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). According to the information in Table 3, the validity was confirmed since the condition that the Fornell Larcker values were higher than the correlation values in the rows and columns of the latent variables was met.

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	PV	PL	BA	CSE	CSA	AP	PI	ME
PV	<b>0.796</b>							
PL	0.619	<b>0.780</b>						
BA	0.393	0.313	<b>0.709</b>					
CSE	0.560	0.337	0.353	<b>0.832</b>				
CSA	0.656	0.514	0.467	0.528	<b>0.876</b>			
AP	0.586	0.309	0.221	0.568	0.495	<b>0.909</b>		
PI	0.591	0.485	0.628	0.460	0.722	0.396	<b>0.880</b>	
ME	0.585	0.445	0.286	0.442	0.561	0.490	0.485	<b>0.710</b>

In the second step, cross factor loadings were examined. Chin (1998) proposed determining discriminant validity by determining whether each factor loading is greater than all of its cross-loadings. Table 4 shows that each factor loading is greater than all cross loadings.

Table 4: Cross Factor Loads

	PV	PL	BA	CSE	CSA	AP	PI	ME
PV01	<b>0.505</b>	0.258	0.262	0.241	0.338	0.371	0.360	0.215
PV02	<b>0.847</b>	0.503	0.333	0.542	0.598	0.516	0.524	0.570
PV03	<b>0.899</b>	0.571	0.329	0.527	0.561	0.536	0.506	0.496
PV04	<b>0.829</b>	0.547	0.339	0.468	0.528	0.505	0.459	0.516
PV05	<b>0.879</b>	0.558	0.354	0.451	0.563	0.485	0.525	0.510
PV06	<b>0.751</b>	0.457	0.257	0.378	0.505	0.366	0.436	0.410
PL01	0.625	<b>0.871</b>	0.222	0.344	0.485	0.382	0.409	0.420
PL02	0.337	<b>0.549</b>	0.242	0.266	0.300	0.181	0.249	0.152
PL03	0.458	<b>0.843</b>	0.275	0.258	0.423	0.176	0.435	0.382
PL04	0.465	<b>0.814</b>	0.254	0.173	0.369	0.186	0.396	0.388
BA01	0.346	0.338	<b>0.685</b>	0.288	0.372	0.261	0.376	0.320
BA02	0.309	0.282	<b>0.788</b>	0.248	0.327	0.113	0.488	0.203
BA03	0.242	0.217	<b>0.781</b>	0.289	0.312	0.106	0.478	0.141
BA04	0.336	0.241	<b>0.829</b>	0.286	0.414	0.189	0.557	0.252
BA05	0.243	0.102	<b>0.792</b>	0.243	0.349	0.152	0.515	0.169
CSE01	0.444	0.281	0.329	<b>0.841</b>	0.428	0.444	0.404	0.360
CSE02	0.403	0.238	0.312	<b>0.883</b>	0.407	0.416	0.373	0.293
CSE03	0.512	0.361	0.342	<b>0.870</b>	0.510	0.486	0.413	0.379
CSE04	0.448	0.207	0.263	<b>0.840</b>	0.384	0.486	0.293	0.400
CSE05	0.503	0.290	0.210	<b>0.713</b>	0.446	0.517	0.416	0.396
CSA01	0.638	0.521	0.447	0.511	<b>0.894</b>	0.432	0.709	0.483
CSA02	0.604	0.441	0.373	0.473	<b>0.908</b>	0.514	0.619	0.532
CSA03	0.465	0.377	0.411	0.395	<b>0.824</b>	0.342	0.560	0.458
AP01	0.565	0.311	0.222	0.535	0.502	<b>0.929</b>	0.401	0.475
AP02	0.505	0.283	0.260	0.500	0.456	<b>0.923</b>	0.398	0.467
AP03	0.532	0.244	0.158	0.526	0.391	<b>0.923</b>	0.325	0.431
AP04	0.528	0.279	0.159	0.502	0.441	<b>0.861</b>	0.308	0.405
PI01	0.445	0.408	0.637	0.390	0.600	0.296	<b>0.913</b>	0.410
PI02	0.441	0.350	0.591	0.322	0.559	0.290	<b>0.900</b>	0.394
PI03	0.702	0.546	0.482	0.526	0.743	0.453	<b>0.827</b>	0.498
PI04	0.453	0.371	0.503	0.352	0.609	0.331	<b>0.877</b>	0.387
ME01	0.412	0.328	0.196	0.239	0.418	0.286	0.418	<b>0.715</b>
ME02	0.382	0.361	0.207	0.272	0.395	0.400	0.358	<b>0.774</b>
ME03	0.366	0.370	0.279	0.310	0.357	0.285	0.321	<b>0.682</b>
ME04	0.540	0.306	0.138	0.374	0.464	0.444	0.290	<b>0.742</b>
ME05	0.347	0.211	0.215	0.373	0.340	0.304	0.348	<b>0.626</b>

### 4.3. Structural Model

After the measurement model was verified, as a second step, a path analysis test was applied to test the hypotheses. The effect levels between the variables were analyzed using the SmartPLS program. While examining the relationship between the observed variables and latent variables in the measurement model, the relationships between the latent structures that constitute the aims of the research were tested at this stage. In this study, 15 hypotheses were tested. While 13 of these hypotheses were accepted, 2 of them were rejected. The analysis of the structural model including  $R^2$ , beta ( $\beta$ ) and P values obtained as a result of the analysis is presented in Figure 2.

In the table of hypothesis results in Table 5, the results of the dimensions of the store image such as price level, customer service, merchandise and architecture project on perceived value, customer satisfaction and brand awareness are seen.

The dimensions of store image are price level (H1a,  $\beta=0.384$ ,  $P<0.00$ ), customer service (H1b,  $\beta=0.194$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), merchandise (H1c,  $\beta=0.201$ ,  $P<0.00$ ) and architecture project (H1d),  $\beta=0.194$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), there is a positive and significant relationship on the perceived value. Accordingly, H1a, H1b, H1c and H1d were accepted. On the other hand, the dimensions of the store image are price level (H2a,  $\beta=0.272$ ,  $P<0.00$ ), customer service (H2b,  $\beta=0.238$ ,  $P<0.00$ ), merchandise (H2c,  $\beta=0.263$ ,  $P<0.00$ ) and architecture project (H2d,  $\beta=0.146$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) there is a positive and significant relationship on customer satisfaction. Accordingly, H2a, H2b, H2c and H2d were accepted. Finally, while price level (H3a,  $\beta=0.185$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) and customer service (H3b,  $\beta=0.268$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) found a positive and significant relationship on brand awareness; merchandise (H3c,  $\beta=0.100$ ,  $P<1.126$ ) and architecture project (H3d,  $\beta=-0.043$ ,  $P<0.592$ ) do not have a positive and significant relationship on brand awareness. Accordingly, H3a, H3b were accepted, while H3c and H3d were rejected.

On the other hand, the effects of perceived value, customer satisfaction and brand awareness on purchase intention were also examined. As a result of the findings obtained in this context, a positive and significant relationship was found between perceived value and purchase intention (H4,  $\beta=0.151$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). A positive and significant relationship was found between customer satisfaction and purchase intention (H5,  $\beta=0.454$ ,  $P<0.00$ ). A positive and significant relationship was found between brand awareness and purchase intention (H6,  $\beta=0.361$ ,  $P<0.00$ ). Accordingly, hypotheses H4, H5 and H6 were accepted.

Figure 2: Analysis of the Structural Model

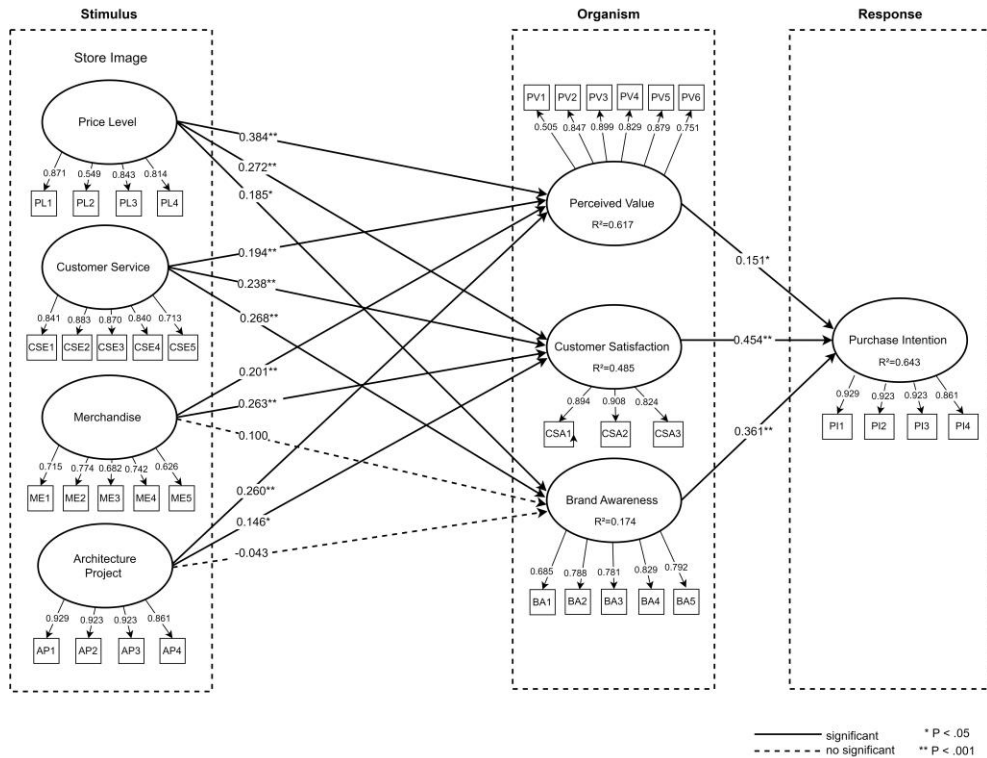


Table 5: Hypothesis Results

	Hypothesis	Path coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value	Result
PL -> PV	H1a	0.384	7.226	0.000	Supported
CSE -> PV	H1b	0.194	3.337	0.001	Supported
ME -> PV	H1c	0.201	3.960	0.000	Supported
AP -> PV	H1d	0.260	4.694	0.000	Supported
PL -> CSA	H2a	0.272	5.722	0.000	Supported
CSE -> CSA	H2b	0.238	3.649	0.000	Supported
ME -> CSA	H2c	0.263	3.516	0.000	Supported
AP -> CSA	H2d	0.146	2.100	0.036	Supported
PL -> BA	H3a	0.185	2.512	0.012	Supported
CSE -> BA	H3b	0.268	3.289	0.001	Supported
ME -> BA	H3c	0.100	1.126	0.261	Not supported
AP -> BA	H3d	-0.043	0.592	0.554	Not supported
PV -> PI	H4	0.151	2.425	0.016	Supported
CSA -> PI	H5	0.454	7.068	0.000	Supported
BA -> PI	H6	0.361	7.076	0.000	Supported

\*\*\* PL: Price Level, CSE: Customer Service, ME: Merchandise, AP: Architecture Project, PV: Perceived Value, CSA: Customer Satisfaction, BA: Brand Awareness, PI: Purchase Intention

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the S-O-R framework, the main purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between price level (S), customer service (S), merchandise (S) and architecture project (S), perceived value (O), customer satisfaction (O), brand awareness (O) and purchase intention (R). It is thought that the findings of this study contribute to the literature.

According to the research findings, price level, customer service, merchandise and architecture project have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Therefore, these findings show that maintaining an appropriate price level for the customer, providing product variety, equipping sales staff with the competencies to represent the store and investing in the attractiveness of the store architecture (stimuli such as decor, music and ambient odours) can increase customer satisfaction. Product and price level are the dimensions that have the highest impact on customer satisfaction. Similarly, it was confirmed that image dimensions have a positive and significant effect on perceived value. It can be stated that price level has the strongest effect on perceived value. This finding shows that customers are more price sensitive and have a cost-benefit based perspective. The customer service dimension has the weakest effect. Therefore, this finding shows that the level of customer service is a less utilitarian factor on the customer. While price level and customer service have a positive effect on brand awareness, architectural structure and product have no effect on brand awareness. In previous studies, contradictory results have emerged on the relationship between store image and brand awareness. Therefore, these different results may be due to the samples obtained from different types of shopping stores. For example, consumers who shop in price competition-oriented grocery stores may have an awareness of the price level of the brand. Therefore, the architectural structure of such stores may not create a brand association in the customer. The relationship between perceived value, customer satisfaction and brand awareness and purchase intention was confirmed by positive and significant effects. These findings indicate that a good image and a high awareness brand can increase customer satisfaction and improve customer purchase intentions. These results are consistent with Chi et al. (2009), Kuo et al. (2009) and Jiao et al. (2021), is consistent with the results of studies developed by.

The findings of this study offer several theoretical contributions to the existing literature. Firstly, in previous studies (Chang and Tseng, 2013; Graciola et al., 2020; Sharifi, 2014), the relationship between store image and other dependent variables has been analysed on the basis of the main construct. In this study, the relationship between store image dimensions and other dependent variables was directly explored and the impact level of each image dimension was revealed in more detail. For example, previous studies (Beneke and Zimmerman, 2014; Jinfeng and Zhilong, 2009) have revealed different results between store image and brand awareness. However, it was unclear which store image dimensions were effective in these results. This uncertainty has been clarified with the findings of this study. Therefore, the literature on store image has been expanded. Secondly, the theoretical background of the research model of this study is the S-O-R model. Therefore, since this theoretical background is used for the first time within the framework of the model formed by these variables, it has created an infrastructure for similar future studies. Thirdly, perceived value, customer satisfaction and brand awareness of the dimensions of store image within the framework of retail grocery stores have been tested for the first time in this study. Therefore, these findings provide important contributions to the literature. Finally, the results

of previous studies have become stronger by confirming the effect of perceived value, customer satisfaction and brand awareness on purchase intention.

The findings of this study provide various managerial contributions for retail stores. According to the findings of this study, price level affects customer satisfaction, perceived value and brand awareness. Therefore, the fact that the products offered to customers are cheaper and more favourable than competitor stores may affect customer satisfaction and perceived value. On the other hand, the cheap product approach may increase brand awareness by creating an image in the consumer. Moreover, product, customer service and architectural structure affect customer satisfaction and perceived value. These findings suggest that businesses with quality products, product variety and sufficient stock can increase consumer satisfaction and perceived value by creating an image. On the other hand, polite, friendly and empathetic store personnel can positively affect consumers. Therefore, it may be useful for businesses to provide customer service training to their staff. Moreover, the importance given by business managers to issues such as the atmosphere, lighting and decoration of the store may affect the satisfaction and perceived value of consumers.

#### **5.1. Limitations and Recommendations**

There are some limitations to the study that should be addressed in future research. This research is limited to data obtained through an online survey. In future studies, data can be physically collected in market environments. On the other hand, most of the factors in the research model, which includes the important factors affecting consumers, are of a quality that can attract the attention of researchers who examine their purchasing behavior. More research is needed to determine the extent to which these factors change consumers' purchasing behavior. The findings reflect the consumer preferences of retail markets. As a result, caution should be taken when generalizing these study findings to other retail categories. Finally, using environmental factors, this study can be replicated and applied to other retail sectors.



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### Appendix 1. Variables and Scale Items

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**Price Level**

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PL01 – Prices in this market are usually very low.

PL02 – Prices in this market are usually very high.

PL03 – We can buy cheap products from this market.

PL04 – Prices in this market are lower than other markets.

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**Customer service**

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CSE01 – Salespeople have a good appearance.

CSE02 – Salespeople take care of the customer.

CSE03 – Salespeople are friendly.

CSE04 – Salespeople are knowledgeable enough.

CSE05 – There are enough salespeople.

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**Merchandise**

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ME01 – Market offers reliable products.

ME02 – There is a wide range of products in the market.

ME03 – The market is full of products.

ME04 – The market has high quality products.

ME05 – Market has differentiated products

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**Architectural Project**

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AP01 - The architecture of the market has an attractive character.

AP02 – Your market is attractively decorated.

AP03 – The interior wall and floor color schemes are attractive.

AP04 – The overall design of this market is interesting.

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**Perceived Value**

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PV01 – Money is easily spent in this market.

PV02 – The saying “You get what you pay for” applies to this market.

PV03 – The benefits offered in this market are in line with the sacrifices/costs made.

PV04 – The benefit I will get from this market is very high.

PV05 – The price in this market is more than good value for money.

PV06 – I think the prices in this market represent the real value of the competitor market.

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**Customer Satisfaction**

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CSA01 – Based on my overall experience with supermarkets, I am very satisfied

CSA02 – The shopping experience offered by supermarkets exceeds my expectations

CSA03 – I am happy to shop at supermarkets.

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**Brand awareness**

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BA01 – I know what this store's brand/logo looks like.

BA02 – I can recognize this store among other competing brands.

BA03 – I am aware of this store.

BA04 – Some features of this store immediately come to mind.

BA05 – I can quickly remember the symbol or logo of this store.

BA06 – I have a hard time imagining this store in my mind.

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**Purchasing Intention**

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PI01 – I will most likely shop from this supermarket again.

PI02 – I will definitely shop at this supermarket again.

PI03 – I will recommend this supermarket to my friends and family.

PI04 – I plan to shop at this supermarket in the near future.

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