METU Studies in Development, 42 (April), 2015, 1-28

Consumers' attitude to and choice of store brands in fashion apparel: Role of gender and shopping style

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Abstract

Most of the prior studies on store brands have focused on consumers' attitudes towards store brands in the grocery sector. This article studies consumers' attitudes towards store brands in apparel industry, examining whether shoppers' prefer brand-specific or multi-brand fashion retailers and the factors influencing their preferences. Data is gathered from 300 participants in an emerging market context to assess the effect of gender and shopping styles on store choice, brand selection, store brand attitude, and store loyalty. The findings and future research guidelines provided can be beneficial for both academicians and practitioners working in the fields of fashion, marketing, and retailing, inspiring further studies to be carried out in emerging markets.

Keywords: Fashion retailing, store brand, brand assortment, shopping style, gender.

1. Introduction

Highly competitive environment, economic uncertainty, rapid technological changes, changing consumer lifestyles, demographics, and shopping patterns are among the numerous challenges that fashion retailers face today. They have to develop different strategies to stand out in competition, retain their loyal customers, grow their business, and at the same time earn a fair profit. These developments have forced fashion retailers to become more dynamic and innovative (Moore, 1995). Many different retail formats are being used by companies in order to create a different retail experience. Among these are mono-brand direct-operated stores, mono-brand franchising stores, department stores, and traditional specialty stores (Moore et al., 2000; Brun and Castelli, 2008).

Following the trends in fashion retail industry and in line with consumer needs and desires, stores have developed from traditional types of fashion retailers to new types of marketing channels (Stone, 2004). Multi-brand fashion retail store, selling several brands as main products in the store, is one of these new concepts (Li and Ho, 2010). Department stores have existed in the market for years. However, multi-brand retail stores are slightly different than the traditional department store, as explained below in theoretical background.

Brand assortment is an important tool in the retailing industry to enhance image, drive store choice, and increase loyalty (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Offering manufacturer or private brands, or both is one of the decisions retailers give regarding brand assortment. Due to the growing interest in retailers' attitudes towards own-branding, store brands have become a popular topic of research. However, most of the prior research on store brands has generally focused on consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards store brands in general. The grocery sector has been the focus of much of past research on store brands (Richardson et al., 1996; Garretson et al., 2002; Sayman et al., 2002; Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003; Semejin et al., 2004; Binninger, 2008). Only a small number of more recent research have considered consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards store brands in apparel retailing (Moore, 1995; Vahie and Paswan, 2006; Liljander et al., 2009). Furthermore, there is limited research on shoppers' attitudes towards multi-brand stores and factors affecting their preferences (Rocereto, 2007).

Along with the changes in the retail environment there have been significant changes in consumers' shopping behaviours. Consumers have become less predictable and more diverse (Firat and Shultz, 1997). Firat and Schultz (1997) fragmentation argument applies not only to fragmentation of consumers but also to fragmentation of media, marketing channels, and retail formats. Existence of fragmented retail channels can modify consumers' shopping behaviour and choice of retail store. Taking into account the above mentioned gaps in literature, the purpose of this article is to understand consumers' attitudes towards store brands in apparel industry and whether they prefer brand-specific or multi-brand fashion retailers and the factors influencing their preferences. Considering the influence of gender and shopping styles on shopping behaviour (Seock and Sauls, 2008), the study examines the effect of gender and shopping styles on store and brand selection, store brand attitude, and store loyalty.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

2.1. Multi-brand retail store versus brand-specific retail store

Studies have shown that many factors affect apparel store selection, such as merchandise assortment and quality, price range, customer service, convenience, store environment and image, and availability of well-known brands (Chen-Yu et al., 2010). Brand assortment is one of the factors influencing customer perceptions, driving store choice, and loyalty (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Therefore, branding has become a dominant competitive strategy for many firms in fashion industry (Power and Hauge, 2008). This lead to the creation of a new type of marketing channel called the multi-brand fashion retail store, which sells several brands in the same store. Some multi-brand fashion retailers sell their own brand along with many other brands, whereas others prefer to sell only other brands. Examples of multi-brand fashion retailers are Selfridges, Harvey Nichols and Harrods in UK; Macys in USA; and Beymen, YKM, Boyner, and Jeans Lab in Turkey. A brand-specific retail store or a brand concept store, on the other hand, sells only a single brand, such as GAP and Zara (Li and Ho, 2010).

Most department stores are multi-brand retailers, since a department store is typically a large retail establishment that offers a wide variety of merchandise. They offer a multi-brand experience on a large scale. What makes them differ from a multi-brand store is that the merchandise they sell is organized into separate departments, such as ladieswear, menswear, home fashion and they often sell different merchandise, such as clothing, shoes, furniture, accessories, and toys. Moreover, they do not necessarily need to be a multi-brand retailer. Some may prefer to sell only their own brand. On the other hand, a multi-brand store can sell different brands of one merchandise, such as jeans or trainers.

Product assortment is one of the key factors in building customer loyalty (Sirohi et al., 1998). In this respect, multi-brand fashion retailers have certain advantages. The variety of choices they provide enables the customers to compare different brands of similar merchandise under one roof. Furthermore, the variety of brands in a store can create customer value by offering convenience and ease of shopping for today's time-constrained consumers (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004; Rocereto, 2007). Consequently, as the assortment of brands increases, consumers can perceive greater utility (Kahn and Wansink, 2004) and more flexibility in their choices (Kahn and Lehmann, 1991).

On the other hand, multi-brand fashion retailers also face challenges. Arranging the merchandise and combining several brands in the same store, whilst considering the whole style of the store design and display of products in an attractive way can be challenging (Li and Ho, 2010). It is hard for a retailer to obtain a consistent, unified and coherent overall image when it sells a variety of manufacturer brands, as each manufacturer brand has its own, different brand identity (Moore, 1995; Rocereto, 2007). Selling many brands can also be more costly for the retailer. Moreover, having too many alternatives can lead to consumer overload and uncertainty, complicate decision making, and eventually decrease their likelihood of purchase (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000; Rocereto, 2007).

Some upscale fashion retailers have started to follow this trend. Instead of creating more of their own brands they started to offer other designer brands in their stores. However, this can generate loyalty to the designer brand not to the retailer. Moreover, they may not even have brand exclusivity to items they sell, which will endanger their future sales (Berman and Evans, 2010). Therefore, other multi-brand fashion retailers prefer to develop their own store brands.

2.2. Manufacturer brands versus store brands

Retailers increasingly started to offer private label products along with manufacturer brands to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003). Manufacturer (national) brands are produced and controlled by manufacturers. They are often well-known brands which represent maximum quality to consumers and require limited retailer investment in marketing. Private brands on the other hand are owned, controlled, and sold by retail companies (Berman and Evans, 2010). They either have their own unique brand names or have the name of the retailer. A variety of interchangeable terms are used for retailer brands, including “own labels”, “own brands”, “private labels”, or “store brands” (Semeijn et al., 2004). In this article we will be using "store brands".

Until the late 1970s, store brands helped to communicate the store’s low price proposition. However, with the increase in retailer competition based on quality and service rather than only on price, store brands now communicate quality and value for money (Moore, 1995). Unlike food retailing, a higher proportion of the major fashion retailers sell their own-branded goods (Moore, 1995; Davies and Chun, 2002). In apparel industry there are retailers which only sell their own private label products, as in the case of GAP and ZARA. Where a store sells exclusively its own brand, the store brand is closely associated with the store itself. Whereas in other cases, the store brand is one of many brands available in the store, which is the case for most grocery stores and multi-brand retailers (Semeijn et al., 2004).

There has been growing interest in retailer’s attitudes towards offering store brands because of the benefits it provides for retailers (Moore, 1995). Higher profit margins (Berman and Evans, 2010); increased negotiation strength and market power (Narasimhan and Wilcox, 1998); and customer loyalty to the retailer (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003; Carpenter et al., 2005) are some of the benefits stated in previous studies. Furthermore, store brands are better controlled by retailers and not sold by competitors (Carpenter et al., 2005). They can help retailers to attract customer traffic by offering exclusive product lines and premium products (Corstjens and Lal, 2000). Moreover, they enable the retailer to differentiate its offerings from competing retailers (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003; Ailawadi and Keller, 2004).

In addition to previously stated benefits of developing store brands, Moore (1995) identified further advantages related to fashion own-branding such as; participation in design and styling of products, control of image positioning and visual merchandising, exclusivity in control of distribution, and collaboration with suppliers. Customers can also gain benefits from retailer's own-branding. If a retailer is perceived to have a distinctive image, associated with quality and status, then purchasing that retailer’s store brand can provide consumers with psychological benefits (Randall, 1990). Therefore, many retailers started to sell their own store brands rather than just being distributors of manufacturers’ brands (Semeijn et al., 2004).

On the other hand, store brands also incur additional costs, as the retailers need to invest time and money into their store brands and fund their promotion and brand building expenses (Vahie and Paswan, 2006). Besides, manufacturer brands that the retailers sell and the quality of those brands can affect the image and equity of retailer brands. They help to establish a positioning for the store. Therefore, retailers often use manufacturer brands to generate consumer interest, patronage, and loyalty (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Retailers need to take into account all these factors when deciding whether to offer store brand, manufacturer brands, or both. If they offer both, how to position and display the store brand and other brands becomes a critical issue.

2.3. Store brand attitude

As stated above, there has been growing interest in retailer’s attitudes towards store brands but it is also critical to consider consumers’ attitudes towards store brands. Factors that influence consumers’ store brand attitudes or private label proneness emphasized in prior studies include: consumer price consciousness, price–quality perceptions, shopping attitudes, impulsiveness, brand loyalty, familiarity with store brands, reliance on extrinsic cues, tolerance for ambiguity, perceptions of store brand value, and perceived differences between store brands and national brands (Richardson et al., 1996; Burton et al., 1998; Garretson et al., 2002).

In grocery sector, private brand proneness is found to be positively associated with perceived value for money offered by store brands, familiarity with store brands, age, and size of household. It is negatively related with perceived risk associated with using store brands, consumers' intolerance of ambiguity, household income (Richardson et al., 1996). Brand loyalty tendency is also found to be negatively related to attitude toward private label brands (Garretson et al., 2002). Generally a private label prone consumer is price sensitive but not image sensitive, middle-income, and educated (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). In apparel retailing, perceived value and quality of store-branded products are also believed to be the main drivers of consumers' purchase intentions of store brands (Liljander et al., 2009). Furthermore, a store's image can also affect consumers' attitudes towards store-branded products (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003; Semeijn et al., 2004).

2.4. Store image

Martineau defined store image as "the store personality or image – the way in which the store is defined in the shopper's mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes" (Martineau, 1958: 47). Retail store image is a multi-dimensional construct. Researchers have identified different attributes or characteristics that influence overall image of the store, which they called the retail mix (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998). The variety and quality of products, services, and brands sold; the physical appearance and ambience of the store; the appearance, behaviour and service quality of employees; convenience; and promotion are some of these dimensions. Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) categorized these attributes into location, merchandise, service, and store atmosphere related dimensions. Chowdhury and others (1998) identified six dimensions which include the common elements across various conceptualizations of store image. These six dimensions, which were later used by Vahie and Paswan (2006), are: employee service, product quality, product selection, atmosphere, convenience and prices/value. Apart from atmosphere, these dimensions are also used in our study.

Prior studies have argued that the image of the store is influenced by the brands it carries (Porter and Claycomb, 1997; Ailawadi and Keller, 2004; Vahie and Paswan, 2006). Similarly, store image can be considered as an important predictor of attitude towards store's brand, as it affects consumers' evaluations of store-branded products (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003; Semeijn et al., 2004). Store image also influences store loyalty (Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Osman, 1993). Therefore, retailers can use their store brands to build loyalty by creating exclusive products that are consistent with their overall store image (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003).

2.5. Store loyalty

Store loyalty can be shown by expressing a preference for a company over others, by continuing to purchase from it, by intending to increase future purchases, by engaging in positive word-of-mouth, and by intention to recommend the store to others (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Sirohi et al., 1998). Some of the antecedents of retail store loyalty investigated in prior research are: brand assortment (Simonson, 1999), service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1996), store trust and commitment (Macintosh and Lockshin, 1997), store image (Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998), and satisfaction (Macintosh and Lockshin, 1997).

Empirical evidence of the relationship between private label use and store loyalty is limited and mixed (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Some of the findings state that consumers' loyalty to and satisfaction with a retail brand are positively correlated with their loyalty to the store. Consumers who have a favourable attitude towards retail brands in general will be more loyal to the retail brands of their main store, especially if they are satisfied with them (Binninger, 2008). As addressed by Rocereto (2007), it is important to understand the linkage between consumer commitment to brands which a retail store carries and loyalty towards that retail store.

Considering that brand assortment carried by a retailer is related to its image and is one of the key drivers of store choice and an important determinant of store loyalty (Sirohi et al., 1998; Ailawadi and Keller, 2004), we propose that consumers' store choice (brand-specific store versus multi-brand store) is related to their store loyalty. Moreover, based on previous research (Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Osman, 1993), a positive relationship is expected between store image and store loyalty.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between shoppers' preference of store-type and their store loyalty.

H_2: There is a significant relationship between store image and store loyalty.

2.6. Gender

Demographic factors also influence consumers' store choice, shopping decisions and behaviours. Among consumer characteristics, gender in particular, has been identified as an important element (Seock and Sauls, 2008; Solomon, 2011). Prior research suggests that gender influences shopping motivations (Holbrook, 1986) and shopping orientation (Noble et al., 2006; Seock and Sauls, 2008).

The literature on gender differences indicates that men are often more time-conscious and achievement oriented. Consequently, they get bored and irritated when they cannot fulfil their shopping goals (Grewal et al., 2003). Female consumers on the other hand, place importance on store attributes such as visual image of the store, price, quality, and assortment of merchandise (Shim and Kotsiopulos, 1993). Similarly, Noble and colleagues (2006) also revealed that males are more prone to information attainment and convenience seeking, whereas females value uniqueness and assortment seeking. When clothing shopping behaviour is concerned women are found to be more fashion conscious than men (Goldsmith et al., 1987)

Taking into consideration the importance of gender in determining shopping behaviour, we examined the influence of gender on store choice, brand choice, attitude toward store brand, and store loyalty. Including gender in the proposed framework provides the opportunity to test the importance of gender relative to shopping styles in determining consumers shopping behaviour. Based on findings of earlier studies we propose that:

H_3: There is a significant relationship between shoppers' gender and their preference between brand-specific and multi-brand stores.

H_4: There is a significant relationship between gender and whether shoppers prefer other brands or store brands in multi-brand stores.

H_5: There is a significant difference in mean store loyalty scores of female and male shoppers.

H_6: There is a significant difference in mean store brand attitude scores of female and male shoppers.

2.7. Shopping style

Consumers may have different shopping styles and they are often segmented in terms of their shopping orientations (Moye and Kincade, 2002). Shopping orientation can be described as consumers' general attitudes toward shopping (Solomon, 2011: 381). It indicates the way shoppers perform their task of shopping (Johnson and Raveendran, 2009). Similarly, Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined consumer decision-making style as a "mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making consumer choices" (Sproles and Sproles, 1990: 137).

Previous research has identified a variety of shopping orientations (Stone, 1954; Moye and Kincade, 2002; Seock and Sauls, 2008). In our study, we used the consumer shopping/decision making styles identified by Sproles and Kendall (1986), which also formed the basis of Consumer Styles Inventory. Perfectionist or high quality conscious consumer is a characteristic measuring the degree to which a consumer searches for the best quality in products. Brand conscious or price equals quality consumer, measures consumer's orientation toward buying the more expensive, well-known national brands. Novelty and fashion conscious consumer characteristic identifies consumers who like new and innovative products and gain excitement from seeking out new things. Recreational and shopping conscious consumer measures the extent to which a consumer finds shopping a pleasant activity and shops just for the fun of it. Price conscious or value for money consumer characteristic identifies consumers with high consciousness of sale and lower prices. Impulsive or careless consumer trait describes ones who buys at the spur of the moment and is not concerned about how much he or she spends. Confused by over-choice consumer perceives too many brands and stores from which to choose and experiences information overload. Habitual or brand loyal consumer is "a consumer who repetitively chooses the same favourite brands and stores" (Sproles and Sproles, 1990: 137).

Prior research shows that shopping orientation is closely related to store evaluation criteria (Moye and Kincade, 2002; Seock and Sauls, 2008) and store choice (Gutman and Mills, 1982). Therefore, we propose that:

H_7: Consumers' shopping style predicts whether they will shop from brand-specific or multi-brand stores.

Furthermore, according to (Osman 1993), a consumer's perception of a store's image depends on his/her lifestyle and shopping orientations. Considering that store image is an important predictor of attitude towards store's brand (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003; Semeijn et al., 2004) and that store image is related to store loyalty (Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Osman, 1993), we propose that:

H_8: Consumers' shopping style predicts their attitude toward store brand.

H_9: Consumers' shopping style predicts their store loyalty.

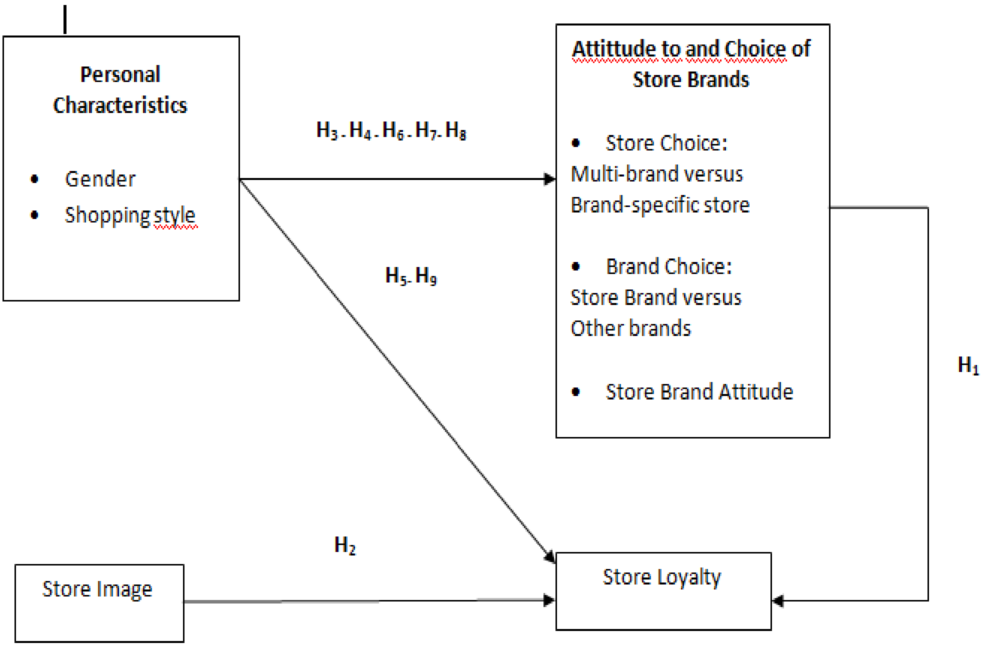
Based on the hypotheses stated above, our model (Figure 1) proposes that, shoppers' gender and shopping style influence their store choice, brand choice, attitude toward store brand, and store loyalty. The model also suggests that, store choice and store image are related to store loyalty.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling

When selecting the sample of respondents convenience and judgmental sampling was used. The researcher purposively selected the respondents so that females and males were proportionate and different age and income groups were included. Respondents who were easily accessible were selected in a non-probability manner from consumers residing in different districts of Izmir, which is the third most populous urban city in Turkey. Three hundred eighteen questionnaires were given out, of which 300 were processed. Eighteen questionnaires were considered unusable because of incomplete data.

Figure 1
Research Model



3.2. Sample Characteristics

The sample demographics indicate that 61 per cent of the respondents were female. The largest age group was 20-29, which made up 67 per cent of the participants, followed by 30-39 years (16.7 per cent) and 40-49 years (11.7 per cent). Majority of the respondents were single (77.3 per cent). Sample was predominantly comprised of middle to higher income families. Majority of the respondents had graduate and post graduate degree of education which shows that the sample was highly educated. Fifty eight percent of the participants were students. The rest represented a large variety of occupations. Distribution of demographic variables is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Sample Profile

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	183	61,0
	Male	117	39,0
	Total	300	100,0
Age	20-29	201	67,0
	30-39	50	16,7
	40-49	35	11,7
	50-59	7	2,3
	60 +	7	2,3
Marital Status	Married	68	22,7
	Single	232	77,3
Income	Less than 1000 YTL	12	4,0
	1001-3000 YTL	70	23,3
	3001-5000 YTL	85	28,3
	5001-7000 YTL	54	18,0
	7000 YTL and over	79	26,3
Education	High School	13	4,3
	University	255	85,0
	Masters or PhD	32	10,7
Occupation	Manager	34	11,3
	Self-employed	13	4,3
	clerk	10	3,3
	Worker	3	1,0
	House wife	7	2,3
	Retired	15	5,0
	Student	175	58,3
	Other	43	14,3

3.3. Data collection

Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The survey was conducted in the context of fashion apparel retail. The items were translated to Turkish and then translated back to English to assess any potential problems in translation process. A pilot test was carried out to identify any scales that were difficult to comprehend and to detect possible ambiguities. Thirty men and women of various ages participated in the pilot test. The results were not used for statistical purposes. However, based on the suggestions and comments of the participants, wording of the questionnaire and instructions were clarified, and the questionnaire was modified and refined.

The final questionnaire consisted of five parts. The first section of the questionnaire included: items on shoppers' store choice (brand-specific retail store versus multi-brand retail store), brand choice (store brand versus other brands in the store), name of most preferred clothing store, and store loyalty. A list of multi-brand retail stores (Boyner, YKM, Beymen, and Jeans Lab) and brand-specific retail stores (Zara, Mango, Gap, Koton, Ipekyol, Mavi) were given as examples, in order to assist respondents to fully understand 'multi-brand retail store' and 'brand-specific retail store' concepts. The list was compiled to ensure that well-known stores that exist in various geographic regions were used so that the respondents would be familiar with these stores. Furthermore, the instructions in the questionnaire explained and gave examples of 'private label brands' and 'national brands.' We made sure that the brands given match the related stores.

In the first section, the respondents were asked to specify the name of the brand-specific or multi-brand store that they mostly preferred to shop from. They were asked to answer the questions related to loyalty and store image taking into account this specific store. Store loyalty measures used in the study included: purchase frequency, patronage duration, repeated purchase intention, word-of-mouth intention. The items were adapted from previous studies investigating retail loyalty (Macintosh and Lockshin, 1997; Sirohi et al., 1998). Loyalty questions also ensured that the subjects have shopped in the selected store during the year to single out the regular customers of the retail store.

The second part of the questionnaire was related to store brand attitude. Six items measuring consumers' overall attitude towards store brand in multi-brand stores, were adapted from studies of Richardson et al. (1996) and Burton et al. (1998). These items were: always purchase store brands, purchase store brands in certain categories, purchase manufacturer brands only when on sale, purchase store brands when cheaper, store brand quality as good as manufacturer brands, store brands offer substantial savings.

In the third section, store image was measured with 14 indicator items, adapted from Chowdhury et al. (1998) and used by Vahie and Paswan (2006). The six dimensions of store image included were: service, convenience, quality, variety, and price / value. The respondents were asked to answer the questions on store image taking into account the 'most frequently visited multi-brand store or brand-specific store.'

Consumers' shopping style was measured in the fourth part, using Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) scale developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) and Sproles and Sproles (1990). The authors identified eight consumer shopping/decision making styles, which are: quality consciousness, brand consciousness, fashion consciousness, shopping consciousness, price consciousness, confused by over-choice, and habitual/brand loyal. The items measuring impulsiveness style were not included in the questionnaire, as it was not relevant to the context of the current study.

The responses to scale items measuring store loyalty, store brand attitude, and store image were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (5). In the last section, general demographic information was collected including gender, age, education, occupation, and income.

3.4. Reliability

Reliability analysis of store image and shopping style scales yielded favourable results. The constructs exhibited good internal consistency, as the Cronbach’s alpha values of both store image (0.759) and shopping style (0.820) scales exceed the recommended coefficient alpha value (0.70) for acceptability (Nunnally, 1978: 245).

Initial scale evaluation of store image indicated two inconsistent items (items 13 and 14) with corrected item correlation values less than 0.30. Removing item 14 did not have a significant impact on total score; however, removing item 13 improved coefficient of internal consistency from 0.759 to 0.807. Therefore, item 13 was removed from store image scale.

In shopping style scale, few items had low corrected item correlations (less than 0.30). However, removing these items only made a slight increase in total score. Moreover, as the initial Cronbach’s alpha value was higher than 0.80, it was decided not to remove any items from the shopping style scale.

4. Results

4.1. Store choice and brand choice

Descriptive statistics show that 72.7 per cent of the respondents prefer to shop in stores that sell single brand, rather than stores that sell many brands. The findings also reveal that when respondents shop in stores that sell many brands, 81.7 per cent of them prefer other brands sold in the store rather than the store brand (Table 2).

Table 2
Store Choice and Brand Choice

		Frequency	Percent
Store Choice	Brand-specific store	218	72,7
	Multi-brand store	82	27,3
	Total	300	100,0
Brand Choice in Multi-brand store	Store Brand	55	18,3
	Other Brand	245	81,7
	Total	300	100,0

4.2. Relation between store choice and store loyalty

Correlation analysis is used to test if there is a significant relationship between store choice and store loyalty. Results of Kendall’s tau b test reveal that at 0.05 significance level (sig. = 0.019), there is a weak, negative but statistically meaningful correlation between store choice and store loyalty (correlation coefficient = -.117). This signifies that there is significant relationship between shoppers' preference of store-type and their store loyalty, supporting the first hypothesis. .

4.3. Relation between store image and store loyalty

Correlation analysis is used to test if there is a significant relationship between store image and store loyalty. Findings of Pearson test show that at 0.01 significance level (sig. = 0.005), there is a weak, positive but statistically meaningful correlation between store image and store loyalty (correlation coefficient = .161). This indicates that there is a significant relationship between shoppers' evaluation of store image and their store loyalty, which is in line with earlier findings (Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998) and supports H_2.

4.4. Relation between gender and store choice

In order to assess if there is a relationship between gender and store choice (brand-specific store versus multi-brand store), Chi-square test for independence is used.

Table 3
Relation between Gender, Store Choice, Brand Choice

Gender	Store Choice				Brand Choice			
	Brand-specific store	Multi-brand store	Continuity Correction	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Store brand	Other brands	Continuity Correction	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Female	142	41	5,121	0,024	34	149	,000	1,000
Male	76	41			21	96		

As we have two variables with two categories, we used Continuity Correction value, which is the Yates' Correction for Continuity. Corrected value is 5,121 with an associated significance level of 0.024. Results of the analysis in Table 3 show that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and store choice. According to the findings the proportion of female shoppers who prefer brand-specific stores (77.6 per cent) is significantly higher than proportion of males who prefers brand-specific stores (65 per cent). Findings support H_3, indicating that there is a significant relationship between gender and store choice.

4.5. Relation between gender and brand choice

Chi-square test for independence is used to test relationship between gender and respondents' brand choice (store brand versus other brands sold in the store). Results reveal that there is not a significant relationship between gender and brand choice, as sig. (2-tailed) value is above 0.05. The findings indicate that both females and males prefer other brands rather than store brands when they shop in multi-brand stores (Table 3). As a result, H_4 is not supported. There is not a significant relationship between gender and respondents' preference of other brands or store brands in multi-brand stores.

4.6. Comparison of store loyalty and store brand attitudes of female and male shoppers

Independent sample t-test is used to examine if there is a significant difference in store loyalty mean scores of female and male shoppers. Findings reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between store loyalty of females and males, as sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.002, supporting H_5. The results show that female shoppers are more loyal than male shoppers (Table 4).

Table 4

Store Loyalty and Store Brand Attitudes of Female and Male Shoppers

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Store Loyalty	Female	183	3,9577	,57170	3,204	,002
	Male	117	3,7350	,60998		
Store Brand Attitude	Female	183	3,0446	,50514	,638	,524
	Male	117	3,0043	,55254		

On the other hand, findings of independent sample t-test reveal that there is not a statistically significant difference between store brand attitude of female and male shoppers, as sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.524 (Table 4). Results do not support H_6.

4.7. Role of shopping style in differentiating brand-specific and multi-brand store shoppers

Stepwise discriminant analysis is carried out to assess which shopping style dimensions help to differentiate brand-specific and multi-brand store shoppers. Discriminant analysis is used because store choice, which is the dependent variable, is categorical and shopping style dimensions, which are the independent variables, are interval (Malhotra, 2004). Box's M indicates that the assumption of equality of covariance matrices is not violated (sig. = 0.930).

Table 5

Role of Shopping Style in Differentiating Brand-specific and Multi-brand Store Shoppers

Predictor Variables	Wilks' Lambda	F-Statistic	Sig.	Eigenvalue	Canonical Correlation
Brand loyal	,941	18,777	,0001	,089[a]	,286
Shopping conscious	,918	13,245	,0001		

[a] First 1 canonical discriminant functions were used in the analysis.

A canonical correlation of .286 suggests that the discriminant function does not reveal a significant association between groups and predictors, accounting for 8.2 per cent ($(0,286)^2=0,082$) of the variation in store choice (brand-specific store versus multi-brand store). The Eigen value associated with this function is 0.089, which accounts for the explained variance. Wilks' lambda (0.918) indicates a highly significant function beyond 0.005 level (sig. =0.0001). Even though the model is statistically significant, the explained variance is very low, as 91.8 per cent of the total variability is not explained (Table 5). Therefore H_7 is partially supported. Consumers' shopping style partly predicts whether they will shop from brand-specific or multi-brand stores.

Analysis of the structure matrix (Table 6) reveals only two significant predictors of store choice. Brand loyalty (0.840) is the strongest predictor followed by shopping consciousness (0.521). These two variables predict allocation to brand-specific or multi-brand store group. Fashion, quality, brand, and price consciousness and confused by over-choice dimensions are not included in the discriminant function. This can be due to multicollinearity problem. It is very likely that respondents perceived these variables as highly related.

Table 6
Predictors of Store Choice

Shopping Style Dimension	Structure Matrix Correlations
Brand loyal	,840
Shopping conscious	,521
Fashion conscious[a]	,477
Quality conscious[a]	,421
Brand conscious[a]	,298
Price conscious[a]	,118
Confused by over-choice[a]	,069

[a] This variable is not used in the analysis.

The classification results (Table 7) show that 63 per cent of respondents are classified correctly into brand-specific or multi-brand store groups. Brand-specific store shoppers are classified with slightly better accuracy (64.7 per cent) than multi-brand store shoppers (58.5 per cent). The overall predictive accuracy of the discriminant function is significant at 5 per cent level (p = 0.043). Correct classification ratio using random classification is 0.5287 (53 per cent). Our classification (63 per cent) is significantly higher than this ratio.

Table 7
Classification of Brand-specific and Multi-brand Store Shoppers

Store Choice		Predicted Group Membership		Total
		Brand-specific Store	Multi-brand Store	
Original count	Brand-specific Store	141	77	218
	Multi-brand Store	34	48	82
	Brand-specific Store	64,7	35,3	100,0
	Multi-brand store	41,5	58,5	100,0

4.8. Role of shopping style in predicting store brand attitude

Regression analysis is carried out to assess how well shopping style dimensions are able to predict store brand attitude and to determine the best predictors.

Table 8
Role of Shopping Style in Predicting Store Brand Attitude - Regression Model-

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	Sig. ANOVA
1	,305[a]	,093	,090	,093	,0001[a]
2	,335[b]	,112	,106	,019	,0001[b]

[a] Predictors: (Constant), priceconsmean.
[b] Predictors: (Constant), priceconsmean, brandconsmean.

Adjusted R square value signifies that our model explains 10.6 per cent of the variance in store brand attitude. According to the ANOVA results given in Table 8, the model is statistically significant (sig. =0.0001). Quality, fashion and shopping consciousness, confused by over-choice and brand loyalty variables are not included in the model since their partial correlation coefficients are not meaningful. This can be due to multicollinearity problem. It is very likely that respondents perceived these variables as highly related. In order to check if the independent variables are highly correlated, tolerance values are examined (Table 9). As the values of the independent variables are quite respectable (not near zero), we do not appear to violate the multicollinearity assumption (Pallant, 2001).

Table 9
Multicollinearity Assessment

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance
1	Qltyconsmean	-,004[a]	-,075	,940	-,004	,971
	Brandconsmean	,139[a]	2,551	,011	,146	1,000
	Fashconsmean	,012[a]	,223	,824	,013	,992
	Shopconsmean	-,053[a]	-,954	,341	-,055	1,000
	Confmean	,095[a]	1,671	,096	,097	,935
	Brloyalmean	-,024[a]	-,424	,672	-,025	,978
2	Qltyconsmean	-,072[b]	-1,188	,236	-,069	,818
	Fashconsmean	-,063[b]	-1,028	,305	-,060	,792
	Shopconsmean	-,076[b]	-1,381	,168	-,080	,975
	Confmean	,061[b]	1,035	,301	,060	,868
	Brloyalmean	-,069[b]	-1,196	,233	-,069	,901

[a] Predictors in the Model: (Constant), priceconsmean.
[b] Predictors in the Model: (Constant), priceconsmean, brandconsmean.

Price and brand consciousness contribute to the prediction of store brand attitude, which were also stated in prior studies (Richardson et al., 1996; Garretson et al., 2002). Among these two variables, contribution of price consciousness is larger. Regression function for store brand attitude has a constant of 1.680, price consciousness coefficient of 0.304 and brand consciousness coefficient of 0.139 (Table 10). Findings partially support H_8. Consumers' shopping style partly predicts their attitude toward store brand.

Table 10

Predictors of Store Brand Attitude - Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,995		10,543	,0001
	Price conscious	,292	,305	5,527	,0001
2	(Constant)	1,680		7,481	,0001
	Price conscious	,290	,304	5,553	,0001
	Brand conscious	,113	,139	2,551	,011

4.9. Role of shopping style in predicting store loyalty

Regression analysis is carried out to assess how well shopping style dimensions are able to predict store loyalty and to determine the best predictors.

Table 11

Role of Shopping Style in Predicting Store Loyalty - Regression Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	Sig. ANOVA
1	,230[a]	,053	,050	,053	,0001[a]
2	,287[b]	,082	,076	,029	,0001[b]
3	,342[c]	,117	,108	,035	,0001[c]
4	,369[d]	,136	,125	,019	,0001[d]

[a] Predictors: (Constant), fashconsmean.
[b] Predictors: (Constant), fashconsmean, priceconsmean.
[c] Predictors: (Constant), fashconsmean, priceconsmean, brandloyalmean.
[d] Predictors: (Constant), fashconsmean, priceconsmean, brandloyalmean, confby overchoicemean.

Adjusted R square value signifies that our model explains 12.5 per cent of the variance in store loyalty. According to the ANOVA results, the model is statistically significant (sig. =0.0001) (Table 11). Quality, brand and shopping consciousness variables are not included in the model since their partial correlation coefficients are not meaningful. This can be due to multicollinearity problem. Therefore, in order to check if the independent variables are highly correlated, tolerance values are examined (Table 12). As the values of the independent variables are quite respectable (not near zero), we do not appear to violate the multicollinearity assumption (Pallant, 2001).

Table 12
Multicollinearity Assessment

Model		Beta In	T	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance
1	Qltyconsmean	,077[a]	1,264	,207	,073	,862
	Brandconsmean	-,003[a]	-,051	,960	-,003	,800
	shopconsmean	,098[a]	1,537	,125	,089	,783
	priceconsmean	-,172[a]	-3,088	,002	-,176	,992
	confmean	-,169[a]	-3,032	,003	-,173	,993
	Brloyalmean	,172[a]	2,945	,003	,168	,911
2	Qltyconsmean	,106[b]	1,760	,079	,102	,844
	Brandconsmean	-,010[b]	-,161	,872	-,009	,799
	shopconsmean	,091[b]	1,456	,146	,084	,783
	confmean	-,135[b]	-2,356	,019	-,136	,931
	Brloyalmean	,198[b]	3,427	,001	,195	,896
3	Qltyconsmean	,034[c]	,527	,599	,031	,723
	Brandconsmean	-,049[c]	-,784	,433	-,046	,774
	shopconsmean	,125[c]	2,008	,046	,116	,766
	confmean	-,144[c]	-2,557	,011	-,147	,929
4	Qltyconsmean	,039[d]	,606	,545	,035	,722
	Brandconsmean	-,007[d]	-,117	,907	-,007	,719
	shopconsmean	,112[d]	1,819	,070	,106	,761

[a] Predictors in the Model: (Constant), fashconsmean.
[b] Predictors in the Model: (Constant), fashconsmean, priceconsmean.
[c] Predictors in the Model: (Constant), fashconsmean, priceconsmean, brandloyalmean.
[d] Predictors in the Model: (Constant), fashconsmean, priceconsmean, brandloyalmean, confbyoverchoicemean.

Fashion and price consciousness, brand loyalty and confused by over-choice variables contribute to the prediction of store loyalty. Among these four variables brand loyalty has largest contribution followed by fashion consciousness. Regression function for store loyalty has a constant of 3.406, fashion consciousness coefficient of 0.196, price consciousness coefficient of -0.161, brand loyalty coefficient of 0.204, and confused by over-choice coefficient of -0.144 (Table 13). Findings support H_9. Consumers' shopping style predicts their store loyalty.

Table 13

Predictors of Store Loyalty - Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,122		16,688	,0001
	Fashion conscious	,216	,230	4,071	,0001
2	(Constant)	3,735		13,778	,0001
	Fashion conscious	,231	,245	4,395	,0001
	Price conscious	-,188	-,172	-3,088	,002
3	(Constant)	3,268		10,927	,0001
	Fashion conscious	,177	,189	3,291	,001
	Price conscious	-,214	-,196	-3,552	,0001
	Brand loyal	,198	,198	3,427	,001
4	(Constant)	3,406		11,308	,0001
	Fashion conscious	,184	,196	3,440	,001
	Price conscious	-,176	-,161	-2,859	,005
	Brand loyal	,204	,204	3,569	,0001
	Confused by over-choice	-,112	-,144	-2,557	,011

5. Discussion and implications

Even though multi-brand fashion retailers enable shoppers to compare different brands, and offer convenience, flexibility, and ease of shopping (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004; Rocereto, 2007), findings of our research show that majority of the respondents still prefer to shop in brand-specific stores, rather than multi-brand stores. Although both females and males prefer brand-specific stores, the findings signify that proportion of female shoppers who prefer brand-specific stores are higher than males. Considering that men are often more time-conscious, achievement oriented, and convenience seeking (Grewal et al., 2003; Noble et al., 2006), it is more likely for proportion of males who prefer multi-brand stores to be higher than females. Fashion apparel retailers who target females or males, need to consider this in arranging their brand assortment.

The findings also highlight that when shopping in multi-brand stores, majority of the respondents prefer other brands sold in the store rather than store brands. Moreover, the gender does not influence the brand choice, as both females and males prefer other brands rather than store brands when they shop in multi-brand stores. Furthermore, no significant difference is found between store brand attitude of female and male shoppers. This indicates that, multi-brand fashion apparel retailers may not necessarily benefit from developing their own brands, as shoppers visit their stores mainly to purchase other brands that they sell. Therefore, rather than creating store brands, multi-brand apparel retailers can be more successful by offering carefully selected designer brands in their stores.

The negative but statistically meaningful correlation between store choice and store loyalty suggests that as people shift from brand-specific to multi-brand apparel stores, they may become less loyal. Even though the relationship is weak, it may imply that customers are likely to develop loyalty to the brands that the multi-brand apparel retailer offers rather than the retailer itself. This is to be expected especially when multi-brand retailers do not have brand exclusivity to the items they sell. On the other hand, in the case of brand-specific stores, as they will not be able to purchase the brand in another retailer, shoppers are more likely to become loyal to the retail store itself. Therefore, operating a brand-specific retailer selling its own private label products can be a safer strategy to attain store loyalty in apparel retailing.

Considering that many factors affect store loyalty, brand assortment by itself does not determine shoppers' loyalty to the store. According to our results, gender of the shoppers and store image are also found to influence store loyalty. In line with earlier findings, our results reveal that store image and store loyalty are positively related. Shoppers become more loyal to the store as their evaluation of store image increases. This result signifies that apart from arranging their brand assortment retailers need to make sure that they have a distinctive image in line with the products they sell in order to build and maintain store loyalty. Findings also show that there is a significant difference between store loyalty of females and males. Female shoppers are found to be more loyal than male shoppers. Therefore, retailers also need to find ways to increase loyalty of their male customers, considering that male shoppers are likely to be less loyal.

When we examined the effect of shopping styles on store choice (brand-specific store versus multi-brand store), as opposed to what our model suggested, we have found that shopping style dimensions only account for a small proportion (8.2 per cent) of the variation in store choice. Of the seven shopping styles included in the study, only brand loyalty and shopping consciousness are likely to be predictors of store choice. Extent to which consumers repetitively choose the same favourite brands and stores, and how much they find shopping a pleasant activity, influence whether they choose brand-specific or multi-brand stores. Both brand loyalty and shopping consciousness dimensions are higher for shoppers who prefer brand-specific stores.

In predicting store brand attitude, slightly a higher proportion of the variance (11.2 per cent) is explained by shopping style dimensions. In this case, price and brand consciousness contribute to the prediction of store brand attitude, which is in line with prior studies (Richardson et al., 1996; Garretson et al., 2002). Consumers' orientation toward buying the more expensive, well-known national brands and consumers' consciousness of sale and lower prices influence their attitude toward store brand. Among these two variables price consciousness's influence is larger.

Shopping style dimensions explain 13.6 per cent of the variance in store loyalty. Fashion and price consciousness, brand loyalty, and confused by over-choice variables contribute to the prediction of store loyalty. Among the four predictor shopping styles, brand loyalty has the largest contribution followed by fashion consciousness. Shoppers who choose the same favourite brands and stores, who like new and innovative products, and who are confused by too many brands and stores are likely to have higher store loyalty in apparel retailing. Price conscious consumers are also found to be more loyal, which was not expected. One explanation behind this can be stores offering loyalty programs and benefits to their loyal customers.

Among the seven shopping styles included in the study, quality consciousness dimension was not found to be significant predictor of store choice, store brand attitude, or store loyalty. This may be due to the fact that with the increase in retailer competition, consumers now expect retailers to offer certain level of quality, irrespective of whether it is a brand-specific store or multi-brand store, or whether it offers private labels or national brands. Moreover, offering high-quality products will not be satisfactory to build store loyalty today. Retailers need to be aware that quality is one of the expected customer services. Therefore, they need to offer other augmented services in order to attract and retain a loyal customer base.

6. Conclusion and Limitations

Along with the changes in the retail environment, such as fragmentation of marketing channels and existence of multiple forms of stores, there have been significant changes in consumers' shopping behaviours. Some of the unexpected and interesting results revealed in the study and highlighted above in results and discussion sections also support Firat and Schultz (1997) fragmentation argument that consumers have become less predictable and more diverse. Consequently, it has become more difficult to define a particular shopper segment today. Therefore, understanding retail shopping behaviour is more critical than ever before.

In this regard, our study aims to understand the shopping behaviour of fashion apparel customers, examining their attitudes towards store brands, whether they prefer brand-specific or multi-brand fashion retailers and the factors influencing their preferences. We hope to make a contribution to literature by highlighting the effects of gender and shopping styles on store choice, brand selection, store brand attitude, and store loyalty. Analyzing consumers' gender and shopping styles can enable retailers to understand their target customers, determine their needs, and identify effective ways of reaching and fulfilling them. As there is limited research on consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards store brands and on shoppers' attitudes towards multi-brand stores in apparel retailing, we hope that our findings will be beneficial for both academicians and practitioners working in the fields of marketing, consumer behaviour, and retailing.

Our findings signify that consumers still prefer brand-specific retailers carrying their own private label products. According to our results, gender of the shoppers influence store loyalty. However, gender does not seem to be an important factor in influencing store choice and brand choice. On the other hand, brand loyalty and brand consciousness are found to be among the important shopping styles influencing store choice, store brand attitude and store loyalty. This supports the importance of branding for retailers in fashion industry.

Furthermore, most of the prior studies on consumer choice of retail brands have been carried out in developed countries. This study examines shoppers' attitudes towards multi-brand stores and store brands in apparel industry, in an emerging market context. It specifically explores Turkish consumers' choice of retail store. Retail environment in emerging markets have been changing with traditional retail formats increasingly being replaced by modern, organized retail chains and increasing number of shopping malls and new brands. Existence of fragmented retail channels and shifting consumer behaviour show global characteristics of the Turkish marketplace. We hope that our study will contribute to the retailing and consumer behaviour literatures and will have implications to fashion retailers in Turkey and in other emerging economies. In this respect, we believe that the findings will inspire further studies to be carried out in emerging markets, to expand and enrich the literature on retail brands.

Among the limitations of this study are using convenience sample of respondents and self-report measures of shopping attitude. Furthermore, the sample is proportionately heavier in female and 20 to 29 years old respondents. Therefore results cannot be generalized. Besides, the study examines only the effect of gender. Future studies can consider the effect of other demographic variables such as age, income, and education, apart from gender.

Another limitation of this research is the subset of store image variables selected. We have not included atmospherics, which is an important dimension of store image (Richardson et al., 1996). Instead we chose to focus on other attributes of store image, such as merchandise, and service quality. As consumers buying decisions are influenced by their experiences with the retail environment and store's atmosphere, future studies should also include atmospherics dimension of store image.

Finally, in order to gain a deeper understanding of shopping behaviour of fashion apparel customers and underlying reasons behind their store and brand preference, in-depth interviews can be carried out with shoppers. Using a qualitative approach can help us to understand further dynamics behind customers' shopping behaviours and preferences.

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Özet

Moda perakendeciliğinde mağaza markalarına karşı tüketici tutumu ve tercihi: Cinsiyet ve alışveriş tarzının rolü

Mağaza markaları ile ilgili önceki çalışmaların çoğu tüketicilerin gıda sektöründeki tutumunu inceler. Bu çalışma tüketicilerin mağaza markalarına karşı tutumunu moda perakendeciliği alanında araştırır ve müşterilerin mağaza tercihlerini ve bu tercihleri etkileyen faktörleri inceler. Cinsiyet ve alışveriş tarzının, mağaza ve marka tercihi, mağaza markası tutumu ve mağaza sadakati üzerindeki etkisini anlamak için, 300 katılımcıdan veri toplanmıştır. Bulguların ve ileride yapılacak çalışmalar için verilen önerilerin, moda, pazarlama ve perakendecilik alanlarında çalışan araştırmacılara ve uygulayıcılara yol göstermesi ve yeni ampirik araştırmalara ışık tutması beklenmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Moda perakendeciliği; mağaza markası; marka çeşitliliği; alışveriş tarzı; cinsiyet.