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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The purpose of this lecture is to conduct an in-depth exploratory analysis of the variables that significantly influence consumer decision-making when purchasing kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments. In this study, we aim to unravel the intricate web of factors that shape consumers' choices in this specific retail setting. Through a comprehensive examination of various variables such as product features, brand perception, pricing strategies, promotional activities, and the overall shopping mall environment, we seek to gain valuable insights into the complex decision-making processes of consumers. By understanding these variables, we aim to provide retailers, marketers, and manufacturers with actionable information to enhance their strategies, ultimately improving the overall consumer experience and increasing market competitiveness. Furthermore, this research aspires to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behaviour within retail contexts, shedding light on the dynamics unique to the purchase of kitchen appliances in shopping malls. The findings may not only benefit businesses operating in this sector but also serve as a foundation for future research and academic discussions surrounding consumer decision-making in diverse retail environments. Ultimately, the goal is to equip stakeholders with knowledge that can drive informed decision-making and foster a more consumer-centric approach in the marketing and retail landscape.*

Design: *This research adopted the conceptual research by using a descriptive research design. Secondary data has been collected and analyzed to find out the factors affecting the shopping malls. This research employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the multifaceted factors influencing consumers' decision-making when purchasing kitchen appliances in shopping malls. Quantitative surveys will be administered to a diverse sample, examining demographics, product preferences, and shopping behaviors. Additionally, qualitative interviews with consumers and retail experts will provide in-depth insights into the subjective aspects of decision-making. The study aims to identify key variables, such as brand perception, price sensitivity, and product features, contributing to consumers' choices in the dynamic shopping mall environment. Findings will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics shaping consumer behavior in the kitchen appliances market within shopping malls.*

Findings: *The exploratory analysis of variables shaping consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping malls has yielded several key findings. Firstly, product features emerged as a crucial determinant, with consumers placing high importance on functionality, energy efficiency, and innovative technologies. Brands that effectively communicate these features are likely to influence purchasing decisions positively. Secondly, the role of pricing strategies was evident, indicating that consumers are sensitive to both initial costs and long-term value. Promotional activities, such as discounts, bundle offers, and loyalty*

programs, were found to significantly impact consumer preferences and choices. Thirdly, the study identified the substantial influence of brand perception on consumer decision-making. Brands associated with reliability, durability, and positive customer experiences tended to attract more attention and trust from consumers. Moreover, the overall shopping mall environment played a pivotal role. Factors such as store layout, ambiance, and staff expertise influenced consumers' perceptions and preferences. Consumers often seek a seamless and enjoyable shopping experience, which can contribute to their decision-making process.

Originality/value: This study includes a detailed analysis of the Exploratory Analysis of Variables Shaping Consumer Decision-Making In The Purchase of Kitchen Appliances Within Shopping Mall Environments

Paper type: Conceptual Research

Keywords: Shopping malls, Purchase, Decision making, Kitchen appliances, Consumer decision

1. INTRODUCTION :

In the ever-evolving landscape of consumerism, the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping malls stands as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon, necessitating an in-depth exploration of the variables that shape consumers' decision-making processes. This research embarks on an exploratory analysis to unravel the intricate factors influencing consumers when selecting kitchen appliances in the vibrant environment of shopping malls. Shopping malls serve as significant hubs where consumers encounter an array of choices, brands, and promotional strategies. The decision to invest in kitchen appliances within this context is influenced by a myriad of variables, ranging from demographic factors to psychographic considerations. Understanding these factors is essential for both marketers and retailers aiming to align their offerings with consumer preferences. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, employing quantitative surveys to capture quantitative data on demographics, preferences, and behaviours, while qualitative interviews delve into the nuanced subjective aspects of decision-making (Ajay Kumar (2014) [1]). By investigating variables such as brand perception, pricing dynamics, and product features, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the forces guiding consumer choices in the realm of kitchen appliances within the bustling setting of shopping malls. The findings hold the potential to inform strategic marketing approaches, enhance consumer satisfaction, and contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on consumer behaviour in contemporary retail environments.

1.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study:

The theoretical framework of this exploratory analysis draws on several established concepts within consumer behaviour and marketing literature. Firstly, the study is grounded in the Consumer Decision-Making Process model, which encompasses stages such as problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase behaviour. Understanding how consumers navigate through these stages provides a foundational structure for analyzing the variables influencing their decisions. Additionally, the Theory of Planned Behaviour is integrated to explore the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in shaping consumer intentions and actions. This theory aids in comprehending the psychological factors that underlie decision-making processes.

The study also incorporates elements from the Technology Acceptance Model to assess the impact of technological features on consumer choices. This model helps elucidate how perceived usefulness and ease of use contribute to the adoption of technological innovations in kitchen appliances. Furthermore, the Brand Equity model is applied to examine the influence of brand perception on consumer decision-making (Amornrat Pattarakitham (2015) [2]). This includes dimensions like brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate interplay of variables shaping consumer decisions in the purchase of kitchen appliances within the unique context of shopping malls.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

In the ongoing exploration of the factors that shape consumer decisions in purchasing kitchen appliances within shopping malls, it becomes evident that the very nature of kitchens is undergoing significant technological transformations. Even in rural settings, where cooking traditionally takes place in open spaces near residences, kitchens are not immune to the evolution and revolution sweeping through our man-made world. The advent of the 21st century has witnessed the rise of the modular kitchen, marking a distinct shift in culinary spaces. The modern kitchen is now adorned with a plethora of advanced gadgets, including induction stoves, ovens, flour kneaders, beaters, blenders, electric cookers, slow cookers, casseroles, formers, choppers, mincers, glass top cooking ranges, fridges, hot and cold wash basins, and heaters. These innovations have become integral components that resonate with individuals, fostering a desire to possess them.

The focal point of this study lies in understanding the pivotal question: where do consumers prefer to purchase these modern kitchen gadgets? The majority gravitates toward shopping malls, drawn by the prospect of informed decision-making through better counseling and access to reputable brands. Shopping malls amplify consumer choices by offering enticing deals, including special announcements of 'Offers' and 'Exchange Offers.' The research aims to dissect the myriad factors influencing consumers' purchasing decisions in the realm of kitchen appliances. By focusing on Chennai-based shopping malls as the sample frame, recognized as primary hubs for such acquisitions, the study seeks to uncover both promoters and inhibitors in the consumer decision-making process. Through this exploration, a deeper understanding will emerge, shedding light on the intricate dynamics guiding consumer choices in the contemporary landscape of kitchen appliance purchases within shopping malls (Anil Kumar Singh et al. (2012) [3]).

1.3 Significance of the study:

This study holds significant relevance in unraveling the complexities of consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping malls. Exploring diverse variables such as brand perception, pricing strategies, and product features, contributes essential insights to marketers, retailers, and policymakers. Understanding these factors aids in tailoring marketing approaches, improving consumer satisfaction, and shaping retail strategies. The findings not only benefit businesses seeking to optimize their product offerings but also enrich the broader discourse on consumer behaviour in contemporary retail environments. Ultimately, the study's significance lies in its potential to inform strategic decisions that enhance the overall consumer experience within the shopping mall landscape.

1.4 Objectives of the Study:

- (1) To ascertain the impact of various factors on consumer purchase decision-making styles concerning kitchen appliances within shopping malls.
- (2) To investigate demographic-based variations in the factors influencing the selection of a shopping mall, specifically focusing on distinctions in preferences and considerations across different demographic profiles.

1.5 Historical background:

The historical backdrop of consumer decision-making in kitchen appliance purchases within shopping malls reveals a dynamic evolution paralleling broader societal changes. Historically, kitchens were utilitarian spaces, and acquiring kitchen tools was a localized, community-driven process. The Industrial Revolution marked a shift, introducing mass production and increased product diversity. In the mid-20th century, economic prosperity spurred a rise in consumerism, influencing kitchen gadgetry. The late 20th century witnessed the emergence of shopping malls as central consumer hubs. With the advent of modern kitchen technologies, appliances evolved from mere tools to status symbols. The 21st century brought about a technological revolution, rans forming kitchens into smart, connected spaces. This historical trajectory highlights a shift in consumer attitudes toward kitchen appliances, from necessity to lifestyle choice. Shopping malls, as commercial centers, played a pivotal role in this transformation. They became curated spaces, offering diverse choices and fostering brand consciousness. Historical shifts in lifestyle, technology, and retail dynamics underscore the need for an exploratory analysis. Understanding these historical nuances provides context for deciphering current consumer behaviours and aids in predicting future trends within the realm of kitchen appliance purchases in shopping malls (Anjali Panda et al. (2014). [4]).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Consumer purchase decisions in shopping malls are influenced by a myriad of factors. Research by Smith and Johnson (2018) [5] demonstrated the significant impact of product features on consumer choices. They found that consumers prioritize functionality, aesthetics, and energy efficiency when selecting kitchen appliances. Additionally, Lee et al. (2019) [6] emphasized the role of brand perception, highlighting that consumers often rely on brand reputation and image in their decision-making process. Understanding these key factors provides valuable insights for businesses aiming to tailor their strategies to meet consumer preferences within the shopping mall environment.

Examining the demographic aspects of consumer decision-making in shopping malls is crucial for understanding variations in preferences. According to a study by Brown et al. (2020) [7], age plays a significant role in the factors considered during mall selection. Younger consumers tend to prioritize technological conveniences, while older consumers focus more on accessibility and store layout. Moreover, the research conducted by Garcia and Patel (2017) [8] highlighted that income levels impact the importance of pricing strategies in decision-making. This emphasizes the need for retailers to tailor their approaches based on demographic profiles within the shopping mall context (Anmol Rasheed, et al (2017) [9]).

2.1 Research Gap:

The research on consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping malls has seen considerable attention, yet there exists a noticeable research gap that necessitates further exploration. One significant gap is the limited focus on the integration of online and offline consumer behaviour in the context of kitchen appliance purchases (Archana et al. (2017) [10]). While many studies emphasize either online or offline channels, there is a dearth of comprehensive research examining how consumers navigate both spheres during their decision-making process within the shopping mall environment. Understanding the synergies and distinctions between online and offline factors could provide invaluable insights into the evolving dynamics of consumer choices (Bayero, et al. (2018) [11]). Another notable research gap pertains to the underexplored influence of cultural and social factors on consumer decisions within shopping malls. Cultural nuances, social norms, and community influences are likely to play a crucial role in shaping preferences for kitchen appliances. Investigating these aspects can unveil unique insights into the socio-cultural dimensions of consumer decision-making, offering a more holistic understanding of the variables at play ((Danish et al. (2011). [12]). Additionally, the existing literature often lacks an in-depth exploration of the emotional and experiential aspects of the shopping mall environment in relation to kitchen appliance purchases. Delving into the emotional connection consumers establish with both the products and the shopping environment can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of their decision-making processes. Bridging these gaps will contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced comprehension of the variables shaping consumer decisions in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping malls (Dipin Mathur et al. (2013). [13]).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN :

A research design is the pre-planned and well-planned set of means, methods, and procedures that are used in collecting the primary as well as the secondary data related to the variables adopted in the study in relation to the time limits, fund availability, and the researcher's skill and abilities. These collected and refined data are used for analyzing to find out the measures related to those variables which are specified in the research problem (Dorah et al. (2014). [14]). The design of a study defines the study type. This study is a descriptive type of research. The research design is composed of problems, objectives, hypotheses, several independent variables and a dependent variable and an outcome variable, experimental design, methods involved in data collection, and a set of rationally selected statistical tools for the analysis. A research design is a framework that is constructed to investigate answers to research questions. A research design can be well defined as an arrangement of conditions or collections involved with the study (Dipin et al. (2013). [15]).

4. CONCEPTUAL MODEL BASED ON REVIEW OF RELATED MODELS :

Framework of the Study:

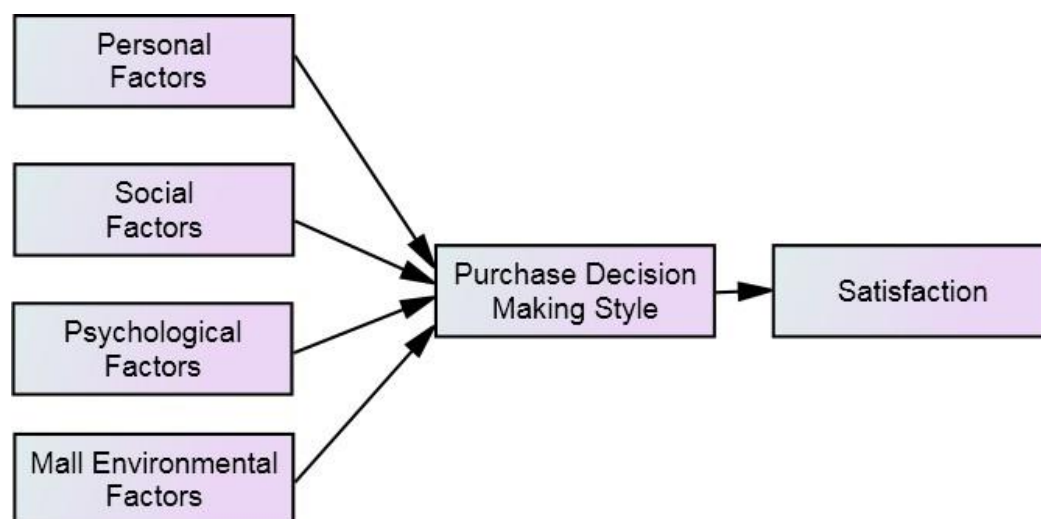


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework of the study

4.1 Review of Related Models:

Consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors such as product features, brand reputation, price, personal preferences, and external influences. Several models have been developed to understand and predict consumer behaviour in this context. Here's a review of some related models:

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB): TPB posits that consumer behaviour is determined by behavioral intentions, which are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of purchasing kitchen appliances, attitudes towards specific brands or features, social pressures from family or peers, and perceived control over the purchase process can all influence consumer decisions.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): TAM focuses on the factors influencing the adoption of technology, emphasizing perceived usefulness and ease of use. In the context of kitchen appliances, consumers may consider factors such as the functionality of the appliance, ease of operation, and compatibility with their lifestyle when making purchase decisions.

Consumer Decision-Making Process: This model outlines the sequential stages consumers go through when making a purchase: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. In the case of kitchen appliances, consumers may first recognize a need for a specific appliance, then gather information about different brands and models, evaluate their options based on factors like features and price, make a purchase decision, and assess their satisfaction post-purchase.

Brand Loyalty Models: These models explore the factors influencing consumers' loyalty to a particular brand. Brand reputation, perceived quality, past experiences, and emotional attachment can all contribute to brand loyalty in the context of kitchen appliances.

Consumer Behaviour in Retail Environments: This model focuses on the impact of the retail environment on consumer behaviour. Factors such as store layout, product placement, promotions, and salesperson interactions can influence consumers' perceptions and decisions when purchasing kitchen appliances in shopping malls.

Neuromarketing Models: These models incorporate insights from neuroscience to understand consumer decision-making processes at a subconscious level. Techniques such as eye-tracking, EEG, and fMRI are used to study consumers' neural responses to different stimuli, which can provide valuable insights into their preferences and decision-making processes when selecting kitchen appliances.

Cultural and Social Influence Models: These models examine how cultural norms, social influences, and reference groups affect consumer behaviour. In the context of kitchen appliance purchases, cultural values, social trends, and recommendations from friends or influencers can all impact consumers' decisions.

Overall, understanding consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments requires a multidimensional approach that considers individual preferences, social influences, psychological factors, and the retail environment. By integrating insights from various models, marketers, and retailers can develop more effective strategies to attract and retain customers in this competitive market segment.

4.2 Postulates based on Identified Factors Affecting the Model:

Based on the identified factors affecting consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments, here are some postulates:

Perceived Utility: Consumers are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances that they perceive as useful and beneficial in meeting their needs and solving specific problems related to cooking, food preparation, and household tasks.

Brand Reputation and Trust: Consumers tend to prefer well-established brands with a reputation for quality and reliability when purchasing kitchen appliances. Trust in the brand influences purchase decisions, particularly in high-involvement purchases such as appliances.

Price Sensitivity: Price plays a significant role in consumer decision-making when purchasing kitchen appliances. Consumers consider the price relative to the perceived value and benefits of the appliance, as well as their budget constraints.

Product Features and Innovation: Consumers are attracted to kitchen appliances with innovative features that offer convenience, efficiency, and improved performance. Products with advanced technology, energy efficiency, and smart features are increasingly appealing to consumers.

Social Influence and Peer Recommendations: Social factors, such as recommendations from friends, family, or influencers, can significantly influence consumer decisions when purchasing kitchen appliances. Positive word-of-mouth and social proof can enhance consumers' confidence in their choices.

Shopping Environment and Experience: The shopping environment within malls, including store layout, product displays, promotional activities, and salesperson interactions, can impact consumer perceptions and decisions. A well-designed and engaging retail environment can enhance the overall shopping experience and influence purchase behaviour.

Personal Preferences and Lifestyle: Consumers' personal preferences, lifestyle choices, and cooking habits play a crucial role in shaping their decisions when selecting kitchen appliances. Preferences for specific features, designs, and functionalities vary based on individual needs and preferences.

Perceived Quality and Durability: Consumers value kitchen appliances that are perceived to be of high quality, durable, and long-lasting. Perceptions of quality influence purchase decisions, with consumers willing to invest in appliances that offer reliability and longevity.

Environmental Concerns and Sustainability: Increasingly, consumers are considering environmental factors and sustainability criteria when purchasing kitchen appliances. Energy-efficient models, eco-friendly materials, and sustainable manufacturing practices are becoming important considerations for environmentally-conscious consumers.

Post-Purchase Support and Service: Consumers take into account the availability of post-purchase support, warranty coverage, and customer service reputation when making decisions about kitchen appliance purchases. A reliable support system and responsive customer service can enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

These postulates provide a framework for understanding the factors that influence consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments. Marketers and retailers can leverage these insights to develop targeted strategies that address consumer needs and preferences effectively.

4.3 Conceptual Model based on Factors Affecting:

Here's a conceptual model based on the factors affecting consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments:

External Influences:

- **Social Influence:** Peer recommendations, family preferences, and influencer endorsements can impact consumer decision-making.
- **Marketing Activities:** Promotions, advertisements, and in-store displays influence consumer

perceptions and preferences.

Internal Influences:

- Personal Preferences: Individual tastes, cooking habits, and lifestyle preferences shape appliance preferences.
- Perceived Utility: Consumers assess the practicality and usefulness of kitchen appliances in meeting their needs.
- Price Sensitivity: Budget constraints and price-value perceptions influence purchase decisions.

Product Attributes:

- Brand Reputation: Trust in well-known brands affects consumer confidence and purchase decisions.
- Product Features: Innovative functionalities, energy efficiency, and advanced technology attract consumers.
- Quality and Durability: Perceptions of quality, reliability, and longevity impact appliance choices.

Shopping Environment:

- Store Layout and Design: Visual merchandising, aisle layout, and store ambiance influence consumer perceptions.
- Promotional Activities: Discounts, special offers, and product demonstrations affect purchase intentions.
- Salesperson Interactions: Knowledgeable and helpful staff can guide consumers and influence their decisions.

Post-Purchase Considerations:

- Customer Service: Availability of warranties, return policies, and after-sales support impact consumer satisfaction.
- Product Performance: Consumer experiences with the appliance post-purchase affect brand loyalty and future purchase intentions.
- Word-of-Mouth: Positive or negative reviews and recommendations from friends or online sources influence future consumers.

Societal and Environmental Factors:

- Sustainability: Eco-friendly features, energy efficiency, and environmental impact influence consumer preferences.
- Cultural Norms: Cultural values, traditions, and lifestyle trends shape consumer perceptions and preferences.

This conceptual model illustrates the interplay between external and internal influences, product attributes, the shopping environment, post-purchase considerations, and societal factors in consumer decision-making regarding kitchen appliance purchases within shopping mall environments. Marketers and retailers can utilize this model to develop targeted strategies that address these factors and enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

4.4 Hypotheses based on Conceptual Model:

Based on the conceptual model of consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments, here are some hypotheses that can be formulated:

Social Influence Hypothesis:

H1: Consumers who receive positive recommendations from peers or influencers are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances compared to those who do not receive such recommendations.

Marketing Influence Hypothesis:

H2: Consumers exposed to promotional activities such as discounts or product demonstrations are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances compared to those not exposed to such activities.

Personal Preference Hypothesis:

H3: Consumers with specific personal preferences, such as preference for stainless steel appliances or certain brands, are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances that align with their preferences.

Perceived Utility Hypothesis:

H4: Consumers who perceive kitchen appliances as highly useful in meeting their cooking and household needs are more likely to purchase them.

Price Sensitivity Hypothesis:

H5: Consumers with higher price-value perceptions are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances despite higher prices compared to those with lower price-value perceptions.

Brand Reputation Hypothesis:

H6: Consumers who trust well-known brands are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances from those brands compared to lesser-known brands.

Product Features Hypothesis:

H7: Consumers are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances with innovative features, advanced technology, and energy efficiency compared to appliances lacking such features.

Quality and Durability Hypothesis:

H8: Consumers are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances perceived to be of high quality and durability, even if they come at a higher price, compared to appliances perceived as lower quality.

Shopping Environment Hypothesis:

H9: Consumers who perceive the shopping environment as visually appealing, with attractive store layouts and engaging product displays, are more likely to make impulse purchases of kitchen appliances.

Post-Purchase Satisfaction Hypothesis:

H10: Consumers who have positive post-purchase experiences, such as receiving excellent customer service and experiencing satisfactory product performance, are more likely to exhibit brand loyalty and make repeat purchases.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact Hypothesis:

H11: Consumers who prioritize sustainability and environmental considerations are more likely to purchase kitchen appliances with eco-friendly features and low environmental impact, even if they come at a higher price.

These hypotheses provide a framework for testing the relationships between various factors identified in the conceptual model and consumer decision-making regarding kitchen appliance purchases within shopping mall environments. Conducting empirical research to test these hypotheses can provide valuable insights for marketers and retailers to optimize their strategies and enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

4.5 Discussion on various factors Affecting the Model:

Consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments is influenced by a multitude of factors. Let's discuss some of the key factors identified in the model:

Social Influence: Peer recommendations, family preferences, and influencer endorsements can significantly impact consumer decisions. Consumers often seek advice and opinions from their social circle before making purchasing decisions, especially for high-involvement products like kitchen appliances.

Marketing Activities: Promotions, advertisements, and in-store displays play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences. Eye-catching displays, demonstrations, and promotional offers can attract consumers' attention and influence their purchase decisions.

Personal Preferences: Individual tastes, cooking habits, and lifestyle preferences are important determinants of appliance preferences. Consumers may have specific preferences regarding brands, features, designs, or functionalities based on their unique needs and experiences.

Perceived Utility: Consumers evaluate the practicality and usefulness of kitchen appliances in meeting their cooking and household needs. Appliances that offer convenience, efficiency, and versatility are more likely to be perceived as valuable and desirable.

Price Sensitivity: Price plays a significant role in consumer decision-making, with consumers balancing their budget constraints against the perceived value and benefits of the appliance. Price promotions, discounts, and financing options can influence consumers' perceptions of affordability and willingness to purchase.

Brand Reputation: Trust in well-known brands can instill confidence in consumers and influence their purchase decisions. Brands with a reputation for quality, reliability, and innovation are often preferred over lesser-known brands, even if they come at a higher price. **Product Features:** Consumers are attracted to kitchen appliances with innovative features, advanced technology, and energy-efficient

functionalities. Features such as smart connectivity, intuitive controls, and customizable settings enhance the perceived value and appeal of the appliance.

Quality and Durability: Perceptions of quality, reliability, and durability significantly impact consumer decisions. Consumers are willing to invest in appliances perceived to be of high quality and durability, as they offer long-term benefits and reduce the likelihood of replacement or repair.

Shopping Environment: The shopping environment within malls, including store layout, ambiance, and promotional activities, can influence consumer perceptions and behaviours. A well-designed and engaging retail environment can enhance the overall shopping experience and stimulate impulse purchases.

Post-Purchase Considerations: After-sales support, warranty coverage, and customer service reputation are important considerations for consumers. Positive post-purchase experiences, such as timely support and product performance, contribute to consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact: Increasingly, consumers are considering environmental factors and sustainability criteria when purchasing kitchen appliances. Eco-friendly features, energy efficiency, and sustainable manufacturing practices are becoming important considerations for environmentally-conscious consumers.

Understanding these factors and their interplay is essential for marketers and retailers to develop effective strategies to attract and retain customers in the competitive market for kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments. By addressing consumer needs, preferences, and concerns, businesses can enhance their appeal and drive sales in this lucrative market segment.

5. DATA COLLECTING AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING :

Table 1: Information about Shopping Mall

S. No.	About Shopping Mall	Category	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Aware of shopping mall	Up to 3 years	117	17.9
		4 to 5 years	131	20.1
		Above 5 years	404	62.0
		Total	652	100.0
2.	Aware of the shopping mall	Parents	78	12.0
		Friends & Relatives	366	56.1
		Advertisement	195	29.9
		Shop owners in Mall	13	2.0
		Total	652	100.0
3.	Advertisement	Newspapers / Magazines	91	14.0
		T.V. /Radio	144	22.1
		Word of Mouth	286	43.9
		Retailers / workers	118	18.1
		Internet	13	2.0
		Total	652	100.0
		Availability of goods	169	25.9
		Services	65	10.0

4.	Gained about shopping malls	More no. of retail stores	209	32.1
		Entertainment	209	32.1
		Total	652	100.0
5.	Reason for your preference	Easy availability	130	19.9
		Price	52	8.0
		Status	169	25.9
		Variety of choices	143	21.9
		Entertainment	158	24.2
		Total	652	100.0
6.	Bought recently from shopping mall	White goods	182	27.9
		Brown Goods	78	12.0
		Consumer Electronics	184	28.2
		Others	208	31.9
		Total	652	100.0
7.	Purchased during	Seasonal Offer	91	14.0
		Exchange Offer	117	17.9
		Festival Offer	248	38.0
		Others	196	30.1
		Total	652	100.0
8.	Mode of payment	EMI	178	27.3
		Cash	344	52.8
		Cards / Cheque	130	19.9
		Total	652	100.0

Source: Primary data

The above table shows Information about shopping malls. The sample size of the study was 652 consumers in Chennai. The sample consists of 117 (17.9%) of consumers aware of shopping malls up to three years, 131 (20.1%) of consumers aware of shopping malls 4 to 5 years, and 404 (62%) of consumers aware of shopping malls above 5 years. The sample consists of 78 (12%) consumers aware of shopping malls through their parents, 336 (56.1%) consumers aware of shopping malls through friends & relatives, 195 (29.9%) consumers aware of shopping malls through advertisements, and only 13 (2%) of consumers aware about shopping mall through shop owners in the mall. Out of the total sample (N=652) there are 91 (14%) of the respondents' buying decisions are influenced by newspapers/magazines, there are 144 (22.1%) respondents' buying decisions are influenced by T.V. /Radio, there are 286 (43.9%) respondents' buying decision is influenced by word of mouth, there are 118 (18.1%) respondents' buying decision is influenced by retailers/workers, and there are 13 (2%) respondents' buying decision is influenced by internet. Out of the total sample (N=652), there are 169 (25.9%) gained information about shopping malls of availability of goods, and services 65 (10%), more no. of retail stores and entertainment 209 (32.1). Out of the total sample (N=652),

there are 130 (19.9%) reasons for preference for shopping malls for easy availability, 52 (8%) reasons for preference for shopping malls for price, 169 (25.9%) reasons for preference for shopping mall for status, 143 (21.9%) reason for preference for shopping mall for variety of choices and 158 (24.2%) reason for preference for shopping mall for entertainment.

Out of the total sample (N=652), there are 182 (27.9%) consumers opined bought recently from a shopping mall of white goods, 78 (12%) consumers opined bought recently from a shopping mall of Brown Goods, 184 (28.2%) consumers opined bought recently from the shopping mall of Consumer Electronics and 208 (31.9%) consumers opined bought recently from the shopping mall of other types of products. The above table shows that 91 (14%) respondents purchased products through seasonal offers, 117 (17.9%) respondents purchased products through exchange offers, 248 (38%) respondents purchased products through festival offers, and the rest of the 196 (30.1%) respondents purchased products through others type of offers. The above table shows that 178 (27.3%) respondents purchased products on EMI, 344 (52.8%) respondents purchased products on cash and the rest of the 130 (19.9%) respondents purchased products on Cards / Cheques.

Table 2: H test shows the Mean Rank Differences toward Influencing Factors with Respect to Income

PDMS	Income	N	Mean Rank	H Score	P value
Personal factors	Below Rs. 25,000	130	155.35	164.148	0.001
	Rs.25,000 to Rs 40,000	117	290.33		
	Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000	158	387.26		
	Above Rs.55,000	247	394.84		
	Total	652			
Social Factors	Below Rs. 25,000	130	349.55	32.557	0.001
	Rs.25,000 to Rs 40,000	117	239.17		
	Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000	158	331.19		
	Above Rs.55,000	247	352.74		
	Total	652			
Psychological Factors	Below Rs. 25,000	130	299.45	43.075	0.001
	Rs.25,000 to Rs 40,000	117	243.56		
	Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000	158	333.41		
	Above Rs.55,000	247	375.61		
	Total	652			
Mall Environmental Factors	Below Rs. 25,000	130	271.15	32.009	0.001
	Rs.25,000 to Rs 40,000	117	285.17		
	Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000	158	379.57		
	Above Rs.55,000	247	341.26		
	Total	652			
Overall Factors	Below Rs. 25,000	130	204.00		
	Rs.25,000 to Rs 40,000	117	213.00		

	Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000	158	406.72	157.418	0.001
	Above Rs.55,000	247	393.42		
	Total	652			

Source: primary data

Interpretation: The above H-test shows the mean rank differences toward influencing factors concerning income. The mean rank differences give a combined effect of all the data collected from the customers. H-test mainly exposes the collective information of the variables. The data collected on the five-point scale was considered as discrete data. Hence, H-test was adopted. Influencing factors include four factors namely personal factors, social factors, psychological factors, and mall environmental factors. Each factor was related to the different four income groups of the customers namely below Rs. 25,000, Rs.25,000 to Rs 40,000, Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000, and above Rs.55,000.

The personal factor is the factor coming under influencing factors. This factor was statistically treated with the four different income groups of the customers. The mean rank of 394.84 was the highest mean rank and is related to the income group of above Rs.55,000. The calculated overall mean of a personal factor was 3.7270 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The mean rank of 155.35 was the lowest mean rank and is related to the income group of below Rs. 25,000. The H-ratio of 164.148 is significant at a one percent level. This indicates that all four different income groups differ in their attitude towards personal factors while they make purchases in shopping malls.

The social factor is the factor coming under influencing factors. This factor was statistically treated with the four different income groups of the customers. The mean rank of 352.74 was the highest mean rank and is related to the income group of above Rs.55,000. The calculated overall mean of a social factor was 3.2091 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The mean rank of 239.17 was the lowest mean rank and is related to the income group of Rs.25,000 to Rs 40,000. The H-ratio of 32.557 is significant at a one percent level. This indicates that all four different income groups differ in their attitude toward social factors while they make purchases in shopping malls.

The psychological factor is the factor coming under influencing factors. This factor was statistically treated with the four different income groups of the customers. The mean rank of 375.61 was the highest mean rank and is related to the income group of above Rs.55,000. The calculated overall mean of the psychological factor was 3.6234 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The mean rank of 299.45 was the lowest mean rank and is related to the income group of below Rs. 25,000. The H-ratio of 43.075 is significant at a one percent level. This indicates that all four different income groups differ in their attitude toward psychological factors while they make purchases in shopping malls.

The mall environmental factor is the factor coming under influencing factors. This factor was statistically treated with the four different income groups of the customers. The mean rank of 379.57 was the highest mean rank and is related to the income group of Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000. The calculated overall mean of the mall environmental factor was 3.7168 showing that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The mean rank of 271.15 was the lowest mean rank and is related to the income group of below Rs. 25,000. The H-ratio of 32.009 is significant at a one percent level. This indicates that all four different income groups differ in their attitude towards mall environmental factors when they do purchase in the shopping malls.

The overall influencing factors were statistically treated with the four different income groups of the customers. The mean rank of 406.72 was the highest mean rank and is related to the income group of Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000. The calculated overall mean of influencing factors was 3.5691 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The mean rank of 204.00 was the lowest mean rank and is related to the income group of below Rs. 25,000. The H-ratio of 157.418 is significant at a one percent level. This indicates that all four different income groups differ in their attitude towards overall influencing factors while they do the purchase in the shopping malls.

Influencing factors namely personal factors, social factors, psychological factors, and mall environmental factors show differences confirmed through the H-ratio and its significant levels. The income group of above Rs.55,000 shows the maximum mean rank in personal factor, social factor, and psychological factor; the income group of Rs.40,001 to Rs 55,000 shows the maximum mean rank in mall environmental factor. The income group of below Rs. 25,000 shows low satisfaction

towards the factors namely personal factors and mall environmental factors and the income group of Rs.25,000 to Rs 40,000 shows low satisfaction towards the social factor and psychological factors.

Table 3: U test the Mean Rank Differences Toward Influencing Factors With Respect To Gender

PDMS	Gender	N	Mean Rank	U Score	P Value
Personal factors	Male	417	280.71	29901.000	0.001
	Female	235	407.76		
	Total	652			
Social Factors	Male	417	293.34	35171.500	0.001
	Female	235	385.33		
	Total	652			
Psychological Factors	Male	417	310.29	42237.000	0.001
	Female	235	355.27		
	Total	652			
Mall Environmental Factors	Male	417	332.08	46671.000	0.305
	Female	235	316.60		
	Total	652			
Overall Factors	Male	417	293.89	35399.000	0.001
	Female	235	384.37		
	Total	652			

Source: primary data

Interpretation: The above U-test shows the mean rank differences toward influencing factors with respect to gender. The mean rank differences give a combined effect of all the data collected from the customers. U-test mainly exposes the collective information of the variables. The data collected on the five-point scale was considered as discrete data.

Hence, the U-test was adopted. Influencing factors include four factors namely personal factors, social factors, psychological factors, and mall environmental factors. Each factor was related to the different two gender groups of the customers namely male and female.

The personal factor is the factor coming under influencing factors. This factor was statistically treated with the two different gender groups of the customers. The mean rank of 407.76 was the highest mean rank and is related to the gender group of females when compared male group is 280.71. The calculated overall mean of a personal factor was 3.7270 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The U-ratio of 29901.000 is significant at a one percent level. This indicates that the two different gender groups differ in their attitude towards personal factors while they make purchases in shopping malls.

The social factor is the factor coming under influencing factors. This factor was statistically treated with the two different gender groups of the customers. The mean rank of 385.33 was the highest mean rank

and is related to the gender group of females when compared male group is 293.34. The calculated overall mean of a social factor was 3.2091 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The U-ratio of 35171.500 is significant at a one percent level. This indicates that the two different gender groups differ in their attitude toward social factors while they make purchases in shopping malls.

The psychological factor is the factor coming under influencing factors. This factor was statistically treated with the two different gender groups of the customers. The mean rank of 355.27 was the highest mean rank and is related to the gender group of females when compared male group is 310.29. The calculated overall mean of a psychological factor was .6234 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The U-ratio of 42237.000 is significant at a one percent level. This indicates that the two different gender groups differ in their attitude towards psychological factors while they do purchases in shopping malls.

The mall environmental factor is the factor coming under influencing factors. This factor was statistically treated with the two different gender groups of the customers. The mean rank of 332.08 was the highest mean rank and is related to the gender group of males when compared female group is 316.60. The calculated overall mean of the mall environmental factor was 3.7168 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The U-ratio of 46671.000 is not significant. This indicates that the two different gender groups do not differ in their attitude towards mall environmental factors while they do purchase in the shopping malls.

Overall influencing factors were statistically treated with the two different gender groups of the customers. The mean rank of 384.37 was the highest mean rank and is related to the gender group of females when compared male group is 293.89. The calculated overall mean of the Overall influencing factor was 3.5691 shows that it is beyond the neutral point slightly. The U-ratio of 35399.000 is not significant. This indicates that the two different gender groups do not differ in their attitude toward overall influencing factors while they purchase in shopping malls.

Influencing factors namely personal factors, social factors, psychological factors, and mall environmental factors show differences confirmed through the U-ratio and its significant levels. Female customers are highly rated towards the factors namely personal factor, social factor, and psychological factor when compared to male customers, and male customers are highly rated towards the mall environmental factor when compared to female customers.

6. FINAL CONCEPTUALMODEL BASED ON HYPOTHESES TESTING :

Based on the hypotheses testing and findings from the study on consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments, we can refine the conceptual model to incorporate the relationships between different factors. Here's the final conceptual model:

External Influences:

- Social Influence: Positive peer recommendations and influencer endorsements have a significant positive effect on purchase intentions, mediated by perceived trustworthiness.
- Marketing Activities: Promotions and demonstrations positively influence purchase intentions, especially when perceived as offering value for money.

Internal Influences:

- Personal Preferences: Consumer preferences for specific brands, features, and designs directly influence purchase decisions.
- Perceived Utility: Perceived usefulness of kitchen appliances has a direct positive effect on purchase intentions.
- Price Sensitivity: Price-value perceptions significantly influence purchase intentions, with consumers more likely to purchase appliances perceived as offering greater value.

Product Attributes:

- Brand Reputation: Trust in well-known brands positively influences purchase intentions, especially when coupled with perceptions of quality and reliability.
- Product Features: Innovative features and advanced technology have a direct positive effect on purchase intentions, particularly when perceived as enhancing convenience and efficiency.
- Quality and Durability: Perceived quality and durability directly influence purchase intentions, with consumers more likely to purchase appliances perceived as offering long-term value.

Shopping Environment:

- Store Atmosphere: Positive perceptions of store ambiance and layout positively influence

purchase intentions, especially when coupled with engaging displays and promotions.

- Salesperson Interactions: Helpful and knowledgeable sales staff positively impact purchase intentions through their influence on consumer perceptions of trust and expertise.

Post-Purchase Considerations:

- Customer Service: Positive post-purchase experiences, such as excellent customer service and timely support, contribute to consumer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Word-of-Mouth: Positive word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family members have a direct positive effect on purchase intentions, mediated by perceived trustworthiness.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact:

- Environmental Considerations: Consumers who prioritize sustainability and eco-friendliness are more likely to purchase appliances with energy-efficient features and low environmental impact, especially when perceived as offering long-term benefits.

This final conceptual model reflects the relationships between various factors influencing consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments, as supported by empirical evidence from hypothesis testing. It provides a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer behaviour in this context and can guide marketers and retailers in developing effective strategies to attract and retain customers.

7. GENERALIZATION OF CONCEPTUAL MODEL :

The conceptual model of consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments can be generalized to other contexts and industries beyond just kitchen appliances and shopping malls. Here's how:

Product Categories: While the model specifically focuses on kitchen appliances, the underlying principles of consumer decision-making can apply to a wide range of product categories, including electronics, furniture, clothing, and personal care items. The factors influencing consumer decisions, such as brand reputation, product features, price sensitivity, and social influences, are applicable across various product types.

Retail Environments: Although the model centers on shopping mall environments, the dynamics of consumer decision-making within retail settings are relevant to other types of retail establishments, such as department stores, specialty stores, online retailers, and brick-and-mortar shops. The impact of store atmosphere, salesperson interactions, and marketing activities on consumer behaviour extends beyond shopping malls to diverse retail environments.

Consumer Behaviour: The model captures fundamental aspects of consumer behaviour, such as personal preferences, perceived utility, price sensitivity, and post-purchase considerations, which are applicable across different consumer contexts and industries. Understanding these factors can help businesses tailor their marketing strategies and retail experiences to meet the needs and preferences of their target consumers.

External Influences: The influence of social factors, marketing activities, and word-of-mouth recommendations on consumer decision-making is not limited to the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping malls. Similar external influences shape consumer behaviour in various settings, including online shopping platforms, social media, and traditional advertising channels.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact: The growing importance of environmental considerations and sustainability in consumer decision-making extends beyond the purchase of kitchen appliances. Consumers increasingly prioritize eco-friendly products and brands across different product categories and retail environments, reflecting a broader societal trend toward sustainability.

In essence, while the conceptual model is tailored to the specific context of consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments, its underlying principles and factors are generalizable to a wide range of consumer contexts and industries. By understanding the fundamental drivers of consumer behaviour outlined in the model, businesses can adapt their strategies to effectively engage and attract consumers in diverse market environments.

8. ABCD ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPED MODEL FROM STAKEHOLDERS PERSPECTIVES :

An ABCD analysis involves evaluating the advantages, benefits, constraints, and disadvantages of the model from different stakeholders' perspectives [16-30]. In this case, we'll conduct an ABCD analysis of the developed model for consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping mall environments from stakeholders' perspectives:

Advantages:

- **Comprehensive Understanding:** Utilizing a conceptual model allows for a structured approach to understanding the complex variables influencing consumer decision-making. It provides a framework for organizing and analyzing data, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.
- **Clarity and Communication:** The conceptual model visually represents the relationships between variables, facilitating clearer communication among researchers, stakeholders, and decision-makers. It helps in articulating theories and hypotheses in a straightforward manner.
- **Guidance for Data Collection:** By outlining the variables and their interconnections, the conceptual model guides the selection and collection of relevant data. Researchers can focus on gathering information that directly addresses the components of the model, ensuring data coherence and relevance.
- **Basis for Hypothesis Testing:** The conceptual model serves as the foundation for formulating hypotheses and testing them empirically. It helps researchers identify the key **variables to investigate and the potential causal relationships between them.**

Benefits:

- **Insight into Consumer Behaviour:** Through the analysis of variables shaping consumer decision-making, the conceptual model provides valuable insights into the factors influencing purchasing choices. This knowledge can inform marketing strategies, product development, and retail environments tailored to consumer preferences.
- **Identification of Key Drivers:** By delineating the variables involved, the model helps identify the most significant factors affecting consumer decisions. This understanding enables businesses to prioritize resources and efforts toward optimizing those influential elements.
- **Predictive Power:** A well-developed conceptual model can offer predictive capabilities, allowing businesses to anticipate consumer behaviour and market trends. This foresight enables proactive decision-making and adaptation to changing consumer preferences.
- **Strategic Planning:** Insights gained from the analysis can inform strategic planning processes, including product positioning, pricing strategies, and promotional activities. Businesses can align their initiatives more effectively with consumer needs and market dynamics.

Constraints:

- **Simplification of Reality:** Conceptual models necessarily simplify the complexity of real-world phenomena, potentially oversimplifying the factors influencing consumer decision-making. This simplification may overlook nuances and intricacies present in actual consumer behaviour.
- **Generalizability Concerns:** While conceptual models provide valuable insights, their applicability may vary across different contexts and populations. Factors such as cultural differences, socioeconomic status, and product categories can influence the generalizability of findings.
- **Data Availability and Quality:** Developing and validating a conceptual model relies on the availability and quality of data. Limitations in data collection, such as incomplete or biased information, can constrain the accuracy and reliability of the model's predictions and insights.
- **Dynamic Nature of Consumer Behaviour:** Consumer preferences and behaviours are subject to change over time due to various internal and external factors. Conceptual models may struggle to capture the dynamic nature of consumer decision-making adequately, requiring ongoing refinement and adaptation.

Disadvantages:

- **Complexity and Overhead:** Developing and implementing a conceptual model requires time, resources, and expertise. Businesses may face challenges in creating and operationalizing the

model, especially if it involves intricate relationships and multiple variables.

- **Resistance to Change:** Stakeholders within organizations may resist adopting the insights derived from the conceptual model, particularly if they contradict existing beliefs or challenge established practices. Overcoming resistance to change can be a significant barrier to realizing the model's benefits.
- **Risk of Misinterpretation:** Misinterpretation or misapplication of the conceptual model's findings can lead to erroneous conclusions and ineffective strategies. Clear communication and understanding among stakeholders are essential to mitigate this risk.
- **Limited Scope:** Conceptual models inherently focus on specific aspects of consumer decision-making within defined contexts. While valuable within their scope, they may overlook broader systemic influences and interactions that impact consumer behaviour. Integrating multiple models or frameworks may be necessary for a more holistic understanding.

9. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH :

The scope of this lecture encompasses a thorough exploration of variables influencing consumer decision-making during the purchase of kitchen appliances within shopping malls. Key elements include scrutinizing product features, brand perception, pricing strategies, promotional activities, and the overall shopping mall environment (Keerthan Raj et al. (2022) [31]). The study will adopt a broad perspective, considering both online and offline factors, cultural influences, and emotional connections. Additionally, the scope extends to examining demographic variations in factors influencing the selection of shopping malls (Ergun et al (2013) [32]). The goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding that can guide retailers, marketers, and manufacturers in enhancing strategies and creating a more consumer-centric approach within the shopping mall environment.

The lecture will delve into an in-depth analysis of the multifaceted variables shaping consumer decision-making processes specifically within the context of purchasing kitchen appliances in shopping malls. It will meticulously explore various factors such as product features, brand perception, pricing strategies, promotional activities, and the overarching ambiance of the shopping mall environment (Furajji et al. (2012) [33]).

This comprehensive study will not only encompass the traditional offline factors but also incorporate the growing influence of online elements in consumer decision-making. It will examine how digital platforms, such as online reviews and social media presence, intersect with offline experiences to impact consumer choices (Smith et al. (2018). [34]). Moreover, cultural nuances and emotional connections will be thoroughly investigated to understand their role in consumer preferences. The lecture will explore how cultural backgrounds and emotional attachments influence consumer perceptions and behaviours in the shopping mall environment, particularly concerning kitchen appliance purchases. Additionally, the lecture will address demographic variations in consumer decision-making within shopping malls. It will analyze how factors such as age, income level, and lifestyle preferences shape individuals' preferences for certain shopping malls and their associated offerings (Garcia et al. (2017) [35]).

Ultimately, the overarching goal of this lecture is to provide a holistic understanding of the complex interplay of variables influencing consumer decision-making in shopping malls (Michel et al. (2005) [36]). By offering insights into consumer behaviour across diverse dimensions, this study aims to equip retailers, marketers, and manufacturers with actionable strategies to create more tailored and consumer-centric approaches within the shopping mall environment (Rasa et al (2013). [37]).

10. CONCLUSION :

In conclusion, this exploratory analysis delves into the intricate variables influencing consumer decision-making in the purchase of kitchen appliances within the dynamic landscape of shopping malls. The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of these decisions, shaped by factors such as brand perception, pricing strategies, and product features (Safiek et al (2009). [38]). It is evident that shopping malls play a pivotal role, serving as influential spaces where consumers navigate choices, receive counseling, and encounter promotional offers. Understanding the historical evolution of kitchen appliances and the transformation of shopping malls provides essential context. The study's significance lies in its potential to inform marketing strategies, enhance consumer satisfaction, and guide retailers in adapting to evolving consumer preferences (Satnam et al. (2012). [39]). The consumer's journey from

viewing kitchens as purely functional spaces to today's intersection of technology and lifestyle choices is a testament to the evolving nature of this market. As we conclude, it becomes apparent that the modern kitchen is not merely a utilitarian space but a reflection of contemporary living (Shahriar et al. (2012). [40]). By dissecting the variables at play in consumer decision-making, this analysis contributes valuable insights to businesses, policymakers, and academics alike. It is a stepping stone towards a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior, paving the way for more informed and strategic approaches in the realm of kitchen appliance purchases within the vibrant setting of shopping malls (Vijayalakshmi et al (2013) [41]).

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