

### **IMPACT OF SENSORY MARKETING AND BRAND EXPERIENCE ON PERCEIVED BRAND PRESTIGE AND ITS IMPACT ON BRAND LOYALTY IN LUXURY RETAIL: THE ROLE OF CONSUMER PERSONALITY TRAITS**

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#### **Abstract**

Brands are compelled to move beyond functional product attributes and emphasize symbolic and sensory elements that foster emotional connections with consumers. Within this evolving context, perceived brand prestige has emerged as a crucial psychological mechanism through which marketing stimuli translate into brand loyalty. Despite growing interest in experiential and sensory marketing, limited research has examined how these external brand strategies interact with internal consumer dispositions to shape loyalty outcomes, particularly in emerging market settings. This study aims to investigate the influence of sensory marketing and brand experience on brand loyalty through the mediating role of perceived brand prestige, while also assessing the moderating impact of consumer personality traits on these relationships. Adopting the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R)

theoretical framework, the study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional design with data collected from 329 consumers of premium and luxury retail brands in urban centers across Pakistan. Using SmartPLS 4 for structural equation modeling, the study empirically tests the proposed mediation and moderation effects within the conceptual framework. The results reveal that both sensory marketing and brand experience significantly enhance perceived brand prestige, which exerts a strong positive effect on brand loyalty. These findings confirm the centrality of prestige as a mediating psychological construct linking marketing stimuli to consumer behavioral outcomes. However, the moderating role of consumer personality traits was not supported, suggesting that sensory and experiential effects on prestige are relatively consistent across personality profiles in this context. The study contributes to marketing literature by offering a nuanced understanding of how brand prestige is constructed and sustained through symbolic stimuli. It also provides practical insights for brand managers aiming to build loyalty in experience-rich environments. Future research is encouraged to explore additional mediators and moderators, including emotional attachment, cultural values, and self-congruity, to further enrich the model.

**Keywords:** Sensory Marketing, Brand Experience, Brand Loyalty, Perceived Brand Prestige and Consumer Personality Traits

### Introduction

In an era of intensified global competition and digital disruption, brand differentiation has evolved beyond traditional advertising toward more immersive, experiential forms of consumer engagement. Contemporary consumers no longer perceive value solely in the functional attributes of products; instead, they increasingly prioritize emotional, sensory, and

symbolic experiences embedded within brand interactions. As markets grow more saturated, brands must actively cultivate deeper consumer relationships that transcend transactions, fostering psychological connections and perceptions of prestige. This strategic pivot aligns with the growing academic consensus that consumer engagement is a multidimensional construct shaped not only by marketing stimuli but also by internal consumer dispositions (Aslam et al., 2025; Rehman & Khan, 2025; Akbar, 2021). The emergence of experiential and sensory marketing practices has further complicated the consumption landscape, pushing scholars to examine how individuals internalize and assign value to brand encounters. Within this broader discourse, questions persist about what sustains long-term brand loyalty in a fragmented and hyper-stimulated market. Understanding the interplay between external brand strategies and internal consumer perceptions is critical for decoding the mechanisms through which brand prestige is constructed and maintained. It is within this complex and evolving landscape that the present study situates itself, aiming to explore the psychological and perceptual pathways that link marketing strategies with consumer loyalty outcomes.

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized that consumer loyalty is rooted not merely in repeated purchase behavior, but in the perceived symbolic value and prestige associated with a brand (Ali et al., 2023; Wang & Lee, 2022). Sensory marketing, which involves targeting consumers' five senses, has demonstrated a significant effect on emotional and cognitive brand evaluation (Kim & Park, 2022). Likewise, brand experience, encompassing affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions, has emerged as a potent predictor of consumer satisfaction and attachment (Nguyen et al., 2022). Studies have also shown that consumers' personality traits influence

how marketing stimuli are processed and evaluated, affecting their brand perceptions and loyalty (Chaudhary & Gupta, 2023). While these streams of research have illuminated various antecedents of brand loyalty, they often operate in silos (Akbar et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2024; Anjum et al., 2025). Limited research has comprehensively examined the mediating role of perceived brand prestige in linking these variables, particularly in the context of personality-driven consumer responses to sensory and experiential marketing efforts.

Brand loyalty is not merely a desirable marketing outcome; it is a strategic imperative in today's volatile and saturated global markets. According to a recent McKinsey & Company (2023) report, over 70% of consumers in Asia and the Middle East are willing to switch brands based on minor experiential advantages. This presents a critical concern for brand managers who must differentiate not just on product quality, but on brand meaning and symbolic value. In Pakistan and other emerging economies, where the retail landscape is increasingly influenced by digital platforms and social media aesthetics, sensory appeal and brand experiences play an outsized role in shaping consumer perceptions (Anjum et al., 2025). Simultaneously, the fragmentation of consumer attention and the overexposure to marketing stimuli have elevated the importance of personalizing brand experiences according to individual traits and predispositions. The proliferation of lifestyle branding strategies across luxury, fashion, and technology sectors further highlights the urgency of understanding how brand prestige is perceived and internalized. Yet, despite growing recognition of these factors, many firms struggle to sustain brand loyalty over time, suggesting a need to better understand how sensory cues and brand experiences are psychologically translated into enduring consumer-brand relationships (Akbar & Adeel, 2022).

Bridging this gap could offer valuable insights for both global corporations and regional brands seeking competitive advantage.

While prior research has established the influence of both sensory marketing and brand experience on consumer attitudes, the literature remains fragmented in terms of explaining how these constructs contribute to the perceived prestige of a brand, a factor known to significantly impact loyalty. Consumer personality traits are recognized as influential moderators in marketing research, their role in shaping perceptions of brand prestige remains underexplored (Haque & Javed, 2022). This lacuna is particularly evident in contexts where symbolic consumption and experiential branding are prominent, such as in lifestyle and luxury markets (Akbar, 2022; Khan et al., 2025). Existing models often fail to integrate psychological dispositions (like personality traits) into frameworks that explain how environmental stimuli (e.g., sensory cues) translate into psychological constructs (e.g., prestige) and ultimately into behavioral outcomes (e.g., loyalty). As a result, the dynamic interplay between brand-initiated stimuli and consumer-internalized traits is inadequately theorized. Most notably, few empirical studies have tested this mediation-moderation model within emerging market contexts, where consumer perceptions may differ substantially due to socio-cultural and economic factors (Akbar et al., 2021; Anjum et al., 2025). This study addresses these gaps by proposing a comprehensive model that positions perceived brand prestige as a mediating mechanism between sensory marketing, brand experience, and brand loyalty, while incorporating consumer personality traits as a key moderator. In doing so, the research aims to clarify how both brand-driven and consumer-inherent factors interact to shape loyalty outcomes, an area that remains underdeveloped in both theoretical and practical marketing discourse.



Understanding how brand prestige is shaped and sustained is vital for both academia and industry. In academic discourse, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how experiential and sensory marketing tactics influence consumer loyalty through the perceptual filter of brand prestige, a construct often overlooked in empirical loyalty models. From a managerial standpoint, insights into this psychological mediation can guide marketers in resource allocation and strategic branding efforts. Brands that fail to appreciate the symbolic dimensions of consumer perception risk investing heavily in campaigns that deliver only superficial or transient engagement. In practical terms, companies must increasingly tailor marketing strategies to align with consumer psychographics, particularly personality traits that govern evaluative tendencies (Akbar, 2021). This is especially critical in emerging markets, where consumer sophistication is rising and brand narratives play a decisive role in shaping market behavior. The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted consumer preferences toward emotional and experiential brand connections, reinforcing the urgency of understanding what drives perceived prestige and, by extension, loyalty. Thus, the present research is timely and significant, addressing a core issue in marketing theory and practice that directly influences customer retention, brand equity, and competitive advantage.

This study contributes to the literature by integrating sensory marketing, brand experience, and consumer personality traits into a unified framework that explains brand loyalty through perceived brand prestige. Unlike prior studies that have examined these variables in isolation, this research explores their interactive effects, offering a more holistic understanding of consumer-brand dynamics. By focusing on emerging market contexts, it also fills a critical empirical gap and enhances the generalizability

of existing theories. The study's conceptual model, grounded in psychological and marketing theory, provides a valuable roadmap for future research and practical implementation in consumer engagement strategies. The study is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, which posits that environmental stimuli (sensory marketing and brand experience) influence internal cognitive or emotional states (perceived brand prestige), which then drive behavioral responses (brand loyalty). By incorporating consumer personality traits as moderators, the model extends the traditional S-O-R paradigm to include individual differences in stimulus interpretation. This theoretical lens provides coherence to the proposed relationships and enhances the explanatory power of the model. The findings are expected to inform both theory development in consumer psychology and practical strategies in brand management and experiential marketing.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, originally formulated by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and rooted in early behaviorist psychology, has undergone substantial evolution and remains a foundational theory for understanding consumer cognition and behavior (Brendl & Sweldens, 2023; Hameed et al., 2022). The theory developed as a more moribund expansion to the more straightforward stimulus response theory to expressly embrace the intervening inner psychological conditions, the organism so connecting extrinsic environmental stimuli with observable behavior. In this model, the environmental inputs are considered as the triggering of internal affective and cognitive conditions. Such internal states intervene between the effects of local or promotional triggers and outer behaviors, as envisioned as approach or avoidance reactions (Eroglu et al., 2001; Frontiers Consortium, 2022). This structure helps researchers to shift

off the view of causality and points out that inner evaluative processes, which include feelings perception and thoughts, are critical in establishing the reason as to why the consumers react differently to similar external stimuli. The trend of this evolution can be viewed as a more general rethinking of marketing theory, in which the complexity of consumer interpretation and psychological processing has to be considered.

Recent applications have utilized the S–O–R framework in diverse modern contexts such as omnichannel commerce, livestreaming e-retailing, and luxury branding (Pereira et al., 2023; empirical studies 2022). By way of example within an omnichannel retailing context, convenience and integration as stimuli will lead on to the generation of empowerment perceptions, perceptions of trust, and perceptions of value (organism) that will affect impulsive purchasing behaviors (response) (Pereira et al., 2023). On the same note, the findings of livestreaming commerce studies show that digitally provided sensory and interactive stimuli influence the thoughts and emotional consumers process, which further gives rise to the intentions to purchase (Frontiers Consortium, 2022). Such modern-day confirmations are evidence of the strength and flexibility of the S-O-R theory in new marketing phenomena. With regard to the conditions of prestige-formation and the loyalty, the S-O-R conceptualizes the possibilities of the environmental branding schemes (such as the sensory brand involvement and the experiential interactions with a brand) to inspire internal judgments about the symbolic worth and status. It comprehensively explains the way such judgments, which exist as the cognitive, and affective processes within an individual, ultimately comes into sustainable behavior actions. The framework has always been used to comprehend intra mediating processes as opposed to mere direct effects and it is all the more appropriate to the proposed model



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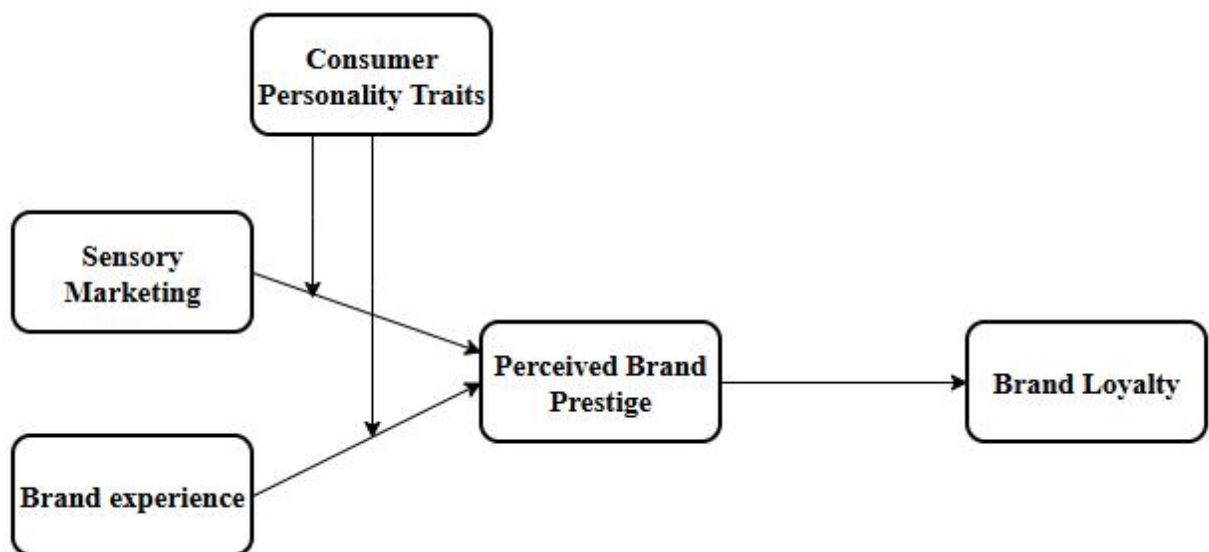
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where prestige is used as an internal psychological variable that mediates brand stimuli and loyalty responses. The S-O-R model provides a conceptually consistent and theoretically sound basis on understanding the way marketing stimuli are processed internally that causes downstream loyalty expressions. S-O-R has been very useful in the modern research aiming at unlocking the psychological processes of symbolic and experiential brands effects in emerging markets as it explicitly takes into consideration the internal organismic states or states of internal entities (Brendl & Sweldens, 2023; Hameed et al., 2022; Pereira et al., 2023).



**Figure 1: Research Model**

### **Hypothesis Development**

In contemporary consumer markets, the act of purchasing is no longer confined to mere product utility or functional value; it has evolved into a multidimensional experience that engages the senses and emotions of the individual. Amidst this paradigm shift has been sensory marketing, which has come out as an extremely powerful technique as it determines the perceptions and associations made by the consumers to the brands. As the active use of the visual, aural, somatosensory, gustatory, and olfactory senses to alter the perceptions of customers, sensory marketing has been defined as an approach that develops engulfing environments that induce a sense of pleasure, meaning, and attachment (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014; Zha et al., 2023). Such cues that become emotional and symbolic associations with a brand usually work under the threshold of conscious awareness and such cues last over the years. The concept of perceived brand prestige, which advises how a consumer appraises the social status, exclusivity and status symbol of brands, has grown much popular in marketing research. The assumed prestige of a brand is often characterized by a set of features indicating the "quality" or performance of an object, but also symbolic power to suggest some sort of refinement, elitism and cultural capital (Sup de Luxe, 2024; Zha et al., 2023). When carefully designed to express notions of elegance, luxury, and uniqueness, sensory environments have more chances to be perceived as prestigious, given that these environments can positively influence the affective responses and cognitive assessments.

The theoretical foundation of this relationship lies within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, which suggests that environmental stimuli (such as sensory marketing efforts) trigger internal evaluative processes (organism), which then lead to behavioral or attitudinal

outcomes (response) (Hameed et al., 2022). Sensory marketing functions as an external stimulus that stimulates affective and cognitive processes, enabling consumers to appraise brands not only based on tangible attributes but also on perceived symbolic value and social elevation. Several empirical studies affirm that sensory branding elements, such as ambient lighting, curated soundtracks, material textures, and signature scents, contribute to consumer perceptions of luxury and brand status (Krupka, 2023; Pereira et al., 2023). In light of this theoretical and empirical context, it becomes evident that sensory marketing has the potential to enhance perceived brand prestige by shaping the way consumers internalize and emotionally experience a brand. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***H1: Sensory marketing positively influences perceived brand prestige.***

Modern marketing scholarship increasingly highlights that meaningful brand interactions extend well beyond sensory cues to encompass the totality of the brand experience, a composite of affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions through which consumers engage with a brand (Ferreira et al., 2022; engagement marketing concept). These immersive encounters serve not only to inform or entertain but also to embed symbolic narratives, emotional resonance, and cognitive evaluations. Indeed, intellectually stimulating and emotionally engaging brand experiences have been shown to activate deeper attachment mechanisms such as brand love and brand trust, which blend into consumers' symbolic assessment of the brand (Ferreira et al., 2022). Concurrently, brand prestige is conceptualized as an elevated consumer appraisal of a brand's symbolic value, exclusivity, and status-enhancing potential. Recent empirical work affirms that positive brand experiences significantly strengthen such prestige perceptions (Muhammad et al., 2025) .

For example, a Pakistan-based study demonstrated that favorable consumer experiences with cosmetic brands fostered higher perceptions of brand prestige alongside increased loyalty (Kazmi & Khalique, 2023). Similarly, studies within retail and lifestyle contexts have identified multiple experiential components, educational, aesthetic, entertainment, escapist, as key enhancers of prestige perceptions (Nadine & Roostika, 2022).

From a theoretical standpoint, the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework provides a coherent lens: brand experience functions as an environmental stimulus that activates internal cognitive and affective states, the organism, culminating in the evaluative perception of prestige. In this way, brand experience enables consumers to internalize symbolic value that transcends mere functionality, aligning with prestige constructs of social status and cultural elevation. Integrating theoretical rationale with empirical evidence suggests that richer, more positive brand experiences facilitate stronger prestige evaluations. Grounded in the S–O–R paradigm and supported by recent research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***H2: Brand experience positively influences perceived brand prestige.***

Within contemporary consumer behavior discourse, symbolic and social dimensions of brands have become central to sustaining long-term customer allegiance. A growing body of research suggests that consumers' perceptions of a brand's exclusivity, status, and symbolic capital, not only its functional attributes, play a critical role in fostering enduring loyalty (Islam et al., 2023; Widyarini & Heriman, 2022). This aligns with concepts of prestige pricing and image-driven consumption in which elevated brand identity reinforces commitment behaviors (Silverstein & Fiske, 2024). Theoretically, through the lens of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, the prestige

perceived by the consumer functions as an internal cognitive–affective state (organism) shaped by environmental brand cues. This state anchors deeper brand attachment and commitment, translating into repeat behavior and advocacy (Hameed et al., 2022). Empirical investigations offer support: a recent study among Bangladeshi consumers of home appliances found that brand prestige significantly contributes to brand attitude, which drives loyalty behavior (Islam et al., 2023). Similarly, research on Indonesian Batik consumers demonstrated that prestige perceptions exerted a significant positive effect on brand loyalty (Widyarini & Heriman, 2022). These findings reinforce that when consumers internalize the prestige of a brand, perceiving it as exclusive, high-status, and credible, they are more likely to exhibit loyalty. Even literature from hospitality contexts (albeit older, yet conceptually relevant) documents brand prestige as a key antecedent of customer loyalty, mediated via satisfaction and trust (Jin et al., 2015), illustrating the enduring influence of prestige on consumer retention. Together, these trends in global and emerging market research affirm that perceived prestige serves as a powerful motivational mechanism in defining brand allegiance. Consequently, integrating theoretical insights and empirical evidence illuminates that higher levels of perceived brand prestige are expected to underpin stronger levels of brand loyalty among consumers. The hypothesis is posited as follows:

***H3: Perceived brand prestige positively influences brand loyalty.***

In contemporary consumer research, increasing attention is being devoted to understanding how personality traits shape individuals' processing of brand-related stimuli. Personality, as a relatively stable set of psychological characteristics, plays a fundamental role in influencing consumer behavior, preferences, and perceptions (John et al., 2022). Most especially in the fields of symbolic consumption and luxury marketing, the openness to experience,



need of uniqueness, extraversion, and narcissism traits have been found to have considerable effect on how consumers perceive sensor stimuli and brand experiences (Sarkar & Sarkar, 2022; Aniceto et al., 2023). #Sensory marketing appeals to the five senses in developing an immersive setting of the brand to enrich the consumer perception and attachment. Nevertheless, their sensory cues do not have the same impact of causing an improvement of the perceived brand prestige to all consumers. This is mediated by personality traits. As an example, openness to experience or hedonic orientation makes people more receptive towards sensory stimuli because they are open to new things, aesthetics, as well as multisensory interactions (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2021). On the contrary, individuals with utilitarian tendencies or the low receptivity of senses may fail to confer the same prestige to such marketing stimuli. The character traits serve as the inner filters that either enhance or blunt the interpretation of the sensory information in the symbolic brand value context. Similarly, brand experience, encompassing sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions, contributes significantly to how consumers evaluate brand prestige. Yet, this evaluation is likely to be conditioned by personality factors. For example, extraverted individuals may value socially interactive and emotionally charged brand experiences more than introverted individuals, thereby perceiving higher prestige from the same experiential environment (Menidjel et al., 2017). Additionally, narcissistic consumers, driven by status and self-enhancement, may derive greater prestige from luxury-oriented experiential brands (Sarkar & Sarkar, 2022). In this way, brand experiences are subjectively interpreted through the lens of individual traits. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework supports this interaction, positing that external stimuli (e.g., sensory marketing, brand experiences) influence internal evaluations (e.g., perceived prestige) through mediating and

moderating factors, here, personality traits function as key organismic characteristics that shape the organism's interpretation of stimuli (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Eroglu et al., 2023). By integrating personality traits into the sensory-experience–prestige pathway, the model allows for nuanced insights into consumer heterogeneity in luxury or premium brand contexts.

***H4: Consumer personality traits moderate the relationship between sensory marketing and perceived brand prestige.***

***H5: Consumer personality traits moderate the relationship between brand experience and perceived brand prestige.***

### **Methodology**

This study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional research design, which is well-suited for empirically examining the structural relationships among sensory marketing, brand experience, consumer personality traits, perceived brand prestige, and brand loyalty. With a cross-sectional design, the harvesting of information can be obtained at one moment in time making it an easy option to assess the correlations and predictive links among constructs without time and resource imperatives of using longitudinal designs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample size of this study would include premium and luxury retail brands consumers in Pakistan and, in particular, those people who interact with brands in sensory retail setting (e.g., fashion stores, beauty shops, designer shops). The information of customers will be collected in high-end retail shops in large cities like Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad. This demographic is especially important because this is the group of consumers who are more prone to experiencing structural sensory marketing campaigns and engulfment by the brand experience and could benefit most in terms of informing about the impact that these stimuli may have on perceptions of brand prestige and brand loyalty (Atwal & Williams, 2017). The ability to

target urban retail customers opens the door of people having a larger exposure to globalized consumption patterns and brand symbolism.

A convenience sampling technique is employed due to its practicality in accessing consumers within retail outlets and malls. While non-probability sampling may introduce some bias, it remains an acceptable method for exploratory and confirmatory studies in consumer research when target respondents are naturally occurring in high-traffic locations (Hair et al., 2022). To determine the sample size, the Item Response Theory (IRT) framework is utilized, specifically considering the recommendation that for each item in a structural equation model, a minimum of 10–15 responses is required to ensure statistical power and model stability (Embretson & Reise, 2013). Given that the proposed model consists of approximately 30 observed items across all constructs, a minimum sample of 300–450 is considered adequate. However, to enhance generalizability and to meet the assumptions of SEM techniques, the final sample target is 329 respondents, allowing for robust estimations even under conditions of data non-normality or missingness. Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire administered in person at selected retail locations. Participation is voluntary and anonymity will be ensured. At the analysis stage, one shall use SPSS (version 26) to perform a descriptive and inferential statistics, frequency distribution, reliability test (Cronbach alpha) and correlation analysis. The SPSS Server is especially applied to preliminary screening of data, identification of outliers, and test-testing assumptions (Pallant, 2020). SmartPLS 4 will be run to perform the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Models (PLS- SEM) in order to test the proposed model as well as the moderating effects. This method is desirable as it fits predictive models, medium-sized to small sample size, and it is resistant to a breach of normality (Hair et al., 2021). The complex elaboration

of the moderation models and calculation of the indirect effects can be tested as well in SmartPLS, which makes it a suitable assessment tool according to the needs of the given research.

### **Measurement**

All constructs in the model are measured using previously validated scales adapted from the extant literature. Items are assessed using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree, which allows for greater granularity in responses and increased measurement sensitivity (Joshi et al., 2015). Sensory Marketing is measured using items adapted from Krishna (2012) and Hultén (2011), encompassing visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and taste stimuli. Brand Experience is measured using the multidimensional scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009), which includes sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual experiences. Perceived Brand Prestige is assessed using items adopted from Baek et al. (2010), capturing consumers' perception of brand exclusivity and social status. Brand Loyalty is measured using the scale by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), focusing on both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. Consumer Personality Traits are measured using selected subscales from the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10), focusing on traits relevant to marketing stimuli interpretation (Rammstedt & John, 2007).

### **Data Analysis**

**Table 1: Validity Statistics**

		<b>BE</b>	<b>BL</b>	<b>CPT</b>	<b>PB</b>	<b>SM</b>
<b>Brand Experience</b>	<b>BE1</b>	0.869				
	<b>BE2</b>	0.906				
	<b>BE3</b>	0.872				

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<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	<b>BE4</b>	0.911	
	<b>BE5</b>	0.845	
	<b>BE6</b>	0.869	
	<b>BL1</b>	0.836	
	<b>BL2</b>	0.827	
	<b>BL3</b>	0.824	
	<b>BL4</b>	0.860	
	<b>BL5</b>	0.847	
	<b>BL6</b>	0.786	
<b>Consumer Personality Traits</b>	<b>CPT1</b>		0.858
	<b>CPT2</b>		0.880
	<b>CPT3</b>		0.862
	<b>CPT4</b>		0.890
	<b>CPT5</b>		0.909
	<b>CPT6</b>		0.936
	<b>CPT7</b>		0.886
	<b>CPT8</b>		0.909
<b>Perceived Brand Prestige</b>	<b>PB2</b>		0.792
	<b>PB3</b>		0.769
	<b>PB4</b>		0.805
	<b>PB5</b>		0.874
	<b>PB6</b>		0.794
	<b>PB7</b>		0.825



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<b>Sensory Marketing</b>	<b>SM1</b>	0.889
	<b>SM2</b>	0.866
	<b>SM3</b>	0.850
	<b>SM4</b>	0.830
	<b>SM5</b>	0.864
	<b>SM6</b>	0.889
	<b>SM7</b>	0.812
	<b>SM8</b>	0.909

Factor loadings are the measure of the relationships among observed items and the latent constructs of a measurement model which is vital towards determining the reliability and robust validity of a measurement model. The accepted loadings are 0.70 or more in confirmatory research and 0.40 or more in exploration (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). In the present study, item loadings are larger than the recommended value of 0.70, meaning that construct validity is high. Brand Experience is between 0.845 and 0.911, Brand Loyalty 0.786-0.860 and Consumer Personality Traits 0.858-0.936. Perceived Brand Prestige and Sensory Marketing also record a high loading at 0.769- 0.874 and 0.812 to 0.909 respectively. These findings indicate that all of the indicators have a reliable representation of the construct, and none of them requires the removal of an item. The results also endorse the convergent validity of the model and the omission of none of the measurement items.

### Validity Statistics

**Table 2: Reliability and AVE values**

	Cronbach's alpha	(rho_a)	(rho_c)	(AVE)
<b>Brand Experience</b>	0.941	0.943	0.953	0.773
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	0.910	0.915	0.930	0.690
<b>Consumer Personality Traits</b>	0.964	0.991	0.969	0.795
<b>Perceived Brand Prestige</b>	0.895	0.899	0.920	0.657
<b>Sensory Marketing</b>	0.952	0.955	0.959	0.747

The quality of the measurement models in structural equation modeling is subject to an important requirement such as internal consistency reliability and convergent validity. To assess the degree to which indicators within the construct share a common variance, Cronbach Alpha (the index of internal consistency), rho\_A and Composite Reliability (rho\_C) are used (Hair et al., 2021). Since we need to know to which extent the items converge in measuring the underlying construct, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is carried out (Hair et al., 2021). The acceptable reliability limits are usually set to 0.70 or higher Cronbach Alpha, rhoa, and rhoC, whereas, an acceptable AVE must measure 0.50 or higher, as an indication of appropriate convergent validity (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Findings of this study equally exhibit desirable internal consistency of all constructs. In the case of Brand Experience (BE), values of Cronbach Alpha, rho\_A, and rho\_C are all much higher than the threshold and equal to 0.941, 0.943, and 0.953 respectively, whereas an AVE value of 0.773 states an excellent convergent validity. In the same lines, Brand Loyalty (BL) also sustains high reliability (alpha = 0.910, rho\_C = 0.930) and

sufficient AVE (0.690). Consumer Personality Traits (CPT) demonstrates the greatest internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.964$ ,  $\rho_A = 0.991$ ) showing a high degree of reliability and an AVE of 0.795. All requirements are also satisfied with the consumer spirit of Perceived Brand Prestige (PB) and Sensory Marketing (SM) whose reliability coefficients are greater than 0.89 and 0.657 and 0.747 respectively. These values confirm correctness of all constructs which are statistically reliable and theoretically reasonable which means that the measurement model is robust.

### **Discriminant Validity**

**Table 3: HTMT Values**

	BE	BL	CPT	PB	SM
<b>Brand Experience</b>					
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	0.617				
<b>Consumer Personality Traits</b>	0.076	0.040			
<b>Perceived Brand Prestige</b>	0.468	0.488	0.117		
<b>Sensory Marketing</b>	0.581	0.639	0.101	0.434	

Discriminant validity makes sure constructs in a structural equation model are conceptually not similar and empirically diverse and measure different phenomena. Among the strongest approaches to the evaluation of the discriminant validity is the so-called Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio that contrasts the correlational averages across the constructs with the correlations within the construct. Those values that have less than 0.85 are advised to be strictly evaluated and those that are less than 0.90 only are checked in looser approaches (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Exceeding these thresholds indicates potential issues with construct redundancy or conceptual overlap. Based on the HTMT values presented, all

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inter-construct correlations fall within acceptable ranges. The HTMT values between Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty (0.617), Brand Experience and Perceived Brand Prestige (0.468), and Sensory Marketing and Brand Loyalty (0.639) are comfortably below the 0.85 cut-off, indicating clear discriminant separation. Notably, Consumer Personality Traits demonstrate low HTMT ratios with all other constructs (ranging from 0.040 to 0.117), reinforcing its conceptual distinctiveness. Additionally, the correlation between Sensory Marketing and Perceived Brand Prestige (0.434) and Brand Experience and Sensory Marketing (0.581) remains within the conservative threshold, indicating adequate discriminant validity across constructs. As none of the HTMT ratios exceed even the liberal benchmark of 0.90, the results provide strong empirical evidence that all constructs are sufficiently distinct, satisfying the requirements for discriminant validity.

### Model Fitness

**Table 4: Fitness Indicators**

	<b>Saturated model</b>	<b>Estimated model</b>
<b>SRMR</b>	0.053	0.120
<b>d_ ULS</b>	1.647	8.533
<b>d_ G</b>	1.045	1.147
<b>Chi-square</b>	1911.963	2033.362
<b>NFI</b>	0.829	0.818

The fit indices reported for the saturated and estimated models provide insight into the model fit in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is a commonly used absolute measure of fit, where values below 0.08 indicate good model fit, and values below 0.10 are considered acceptable in exploratory contexts (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler et al., 2016). In this case, the

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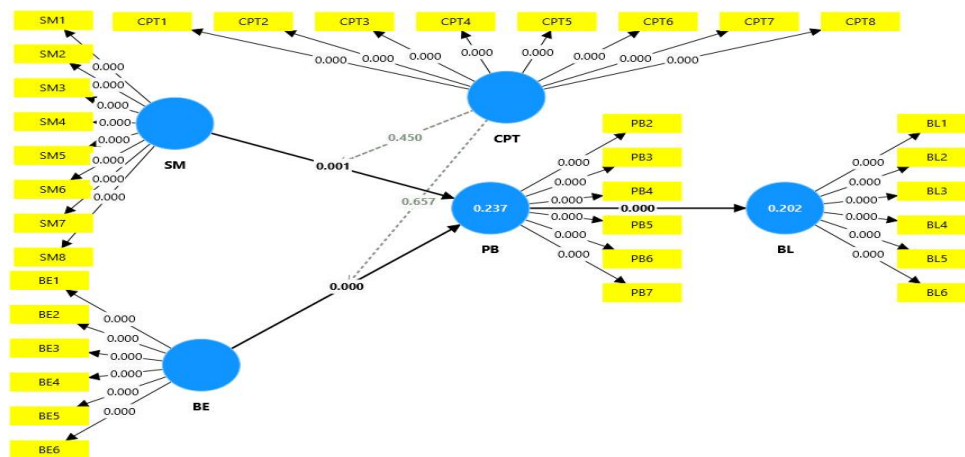
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SRMR for the saturated model is 0.053, which meets the strict cutoff, indicating a well-fitting model. However, the SRMR for the estimated model is 0.120, which exceeds the recommended thresholds, suggesting room for improvement in the specified structural paths. The Chi-square difference (1911.963 vs. 2033.362) reflects the incremental fit deterioration when moving from the saturated to estimated model, but this index is sensitive to sample size and less emphasized in PLS-SEM contexts. Lastly, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) values of 0.829 (saturated) and 0.818 (estimated) approach the acceptable threshold of 0.90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), though they remain slightly below ideal. Collectively, the indices suggest the saturated model fits well, but the estimated model may benefit from refinement in its path structure or model specification.



**Figure 2: Structural Equation Modelling**

**R Square**

**Table 5: R Square**

	<b>R-square</b>	<b>R-square adjusted</b>
<b>BL</b>	0.202	0.199
<b>PB</b>	0.237	0.225



The R-square values indicate the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the model. For Brand Loyalty (BL), an  $R^2$  of 0.202 suggests that approximately 20.2% of the variance is explained by its predictors, while Perceived Brand Prestige (PB) has an  $R^2$  of 0.237, indicating 23.7% explanatory power. The adjusted  $R^2$  values (0.199 for BL and 0.225 for PB) account for model complexity. While these values are modest, they are acceptable in consumer behavior research where multiple external factors influence outcomes (Hair et al., 2021).

### Hypotheses Testing

**Table 6: Findings**

	Original sample (O)	(M)	(STDEV)	T statistics	P values
<b>SM -&gt; PB</b>	0.233	0.238	0.068	3.431	0.001
<b>BE -&gt; PB</b>	0.302	0.299	0.064	4.729	0.000
<b>PB -&gt; BL</b>	0.449	0.453	0.056	8.067	0.000
<b>CPT x SM -&gt; PB</b>	0.061	0.060	0.081	0.755	0.450
<b>CPT x BE - &gt; PB</b>	-0.029	- 0.027	0.065	0.443	0.657

The results of the hypotheses testing indicate varying levels of support for the proposed relationships within the structural model. The cause relationship between Sensory Marketing and Perceived Brand Prestige (SM SM) is statistically significant with the path coefficient (beta) of 0.233, t-value of 3.431, and a value of 0.001. The findings demonstrate that sensory marketing has a considerable and positive effect on the perception of brand prestige by consumers confirming the respective hypothesis. In the same way, Brand experience and perceived brand prestige (BE PB) relationship has also got

their support with a higher path coefficient of 0.302, t-value of 4.729 and p-value of 0.000. This implies that there is a lot of influence on the brand on the perceptions of its customers based on the experience they have with the brand, as indicated in previous literature, where experience branding is mentioned as a factor that contributes to symbolic brand value. The effect of Perceived Brand Prestige on Brand Loyalty (PB Perceived Brand Prestige) is strong and significant accordingly; the path coefficient of 0.449 takes the value, t-value of 8.067 and p-value of 0.000. The result shows that the assumption that elevated perceptions of prestige will provide significant boost on the consumer loyalty is indeed true, which concurs with the assumption that symbolic attributes of brands will lead to long-term consumer loyalty. Consumer Personality Traits moderating effects do not produce any statistical significance. The moderation effect of the interaction term CPT x SM - PB has a path coefficient value of 0.061, t-value of 0.755 and p-value (insignificant) of 0.450. Equally, the interaction term CPT X BE > PB is not significant as the path coefficient equals to -0.029, the t-value is 0.443, and p-value is 0.657. These findings indicate that personality variables are not sizeable determinants in the perception of the consumer toward sensory or experiential branding in terms of prestige invalidating the hypothesis of moderation. The insignificance could be the indication that sensory and experiential stimuli and perceived prestige correlation in this regard is quite stable among various personality profiles.

### **Discussion**

The discussion of the findings is structured according to the hypotheses tested, reflecting both their statistical significance and theoretical relevance. This approach ensures a thorough and critical engagement with the results by

contextualizing them within existing literature and frameworks such as the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model.

The first hypothesis which suggested that sensory marketing has a positive effect on perceived brand prestige was assisted by the data. This outcome supports theoretical claims that rely on the SOR framework, which states that external stimuli, including sensory observations, may induce internal appraisal guiding consumer behaviour (Hameed et al., 2022). The strong correlation cannot be ignored as extremely well-designed sensory settings do encourage the development of symbolic meaning consumers invest in brands. This is consistent with what has already been demonstrated in previous researches that visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and tasting components generate atmospheres that place consumers in an exclusive and sophisticated position (Krishna, 2012; Zha et al., 2023). These sensory features no longer remain secondary stimuli but become resources of semiosis in which social meaning and social status are deduced by consumers (Krupka, 2023). Sensory marketing seems particularly effective at producing high brand appraisals in the emerging economies such as Pakistan where there is the increasing sophistication of consumers and an intensifying symbolic consumption. The empirical sense of this finding will be beneficial to brands, which attempt to signal status and cultural capital in multi-sensory engagement, primarily in luxury retail markets.

The second hypothesis, asserting that brand experience significantly influences perceived brand prestige, was also supported with a higher path coefficient. This finding supports the multidimensional nature of brand experience conceptualization, which includes affective-cognitive, cognitive-behavioral and affective-behavioral engagement dimensions, which influence the internalization and the evaluation of brand interactions among the

consumers (Brakus et al., 2009). Based on the S-O-R model, brand experience is considered to be an environmental stimulus triggering inner evaluations, which in this scenario appears in the form of prestige perceptions. This conclusion is in line with the previous empirical evidence that proves the effectiveness of immersive and emotionally rich experiences to increase brand symbolism and status perception (Kazmi & Khalique, 2023; Nadine & Roostika, 2022). In the case of lifestyle and luxury brands, where brand stories are typically full of meaning and emotional connotations, those experiences (known as experiential touchpoints) play a critical role in giving life to a concept of exclusivity and brand value in the minds of consumers (Ferreira et al., 2022). This hypothesis has been well backed pilot study suggesting that brand managers have to go beyond functional and transactional points of contact to more emotionally evocative and cognitively challenging interactions in order to maintain the prestige of brands. It is especially topical in those markets which undergo the digitalization process and the greater access of consumers to the international standards of experience.

The third hypothesis, which posited a positive relationship between perceived brand prestige and brand loyalty, also received robust empirical support. This finding supports the notion that brand loyalty is more than engendered by utilitarian or habit-based motive and more established in the psyche and symbolism. In accordance with S-O-R model, brand prestige can be classified as an internal or evaluative state developed by a consumer contact with marketing stimuli that has great influence of behavioral outcome i.e., loyalty (Islam et al., 2023). The previously published studies have included support of the motivational power of prestige in generating brand commitment particularly in such situation where the underlying issues include social

comparison and aspiration purchase (Widyarini & Heriman, 2022; Jin et al., 2015). This relationship is stronger in the present study to indicate a point that when consumers have perceived a brand as high-status or exclusive they tend to show attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. This is especially so in the luxury and premium category where the symbolism aspect of the brand value usually outweighs the functional ones. The role of prestige is even greater in the situation with the emergence of consumer markets in the developing countries, where people tend to be more brand-aware and concerned with symbolic consumption. The findings indicate how the strategic development of prestige is a key tool that the marketers need to use to increase consumer loyalty.

The fourth and fifth hypotheses, which proposed that consumer personality traits moderate the relationships between sensory marketing and perceived brand prestige, and between brand experience and perceived brand prestige respectively, were not supported. There were also no statistically significant interaction effects, so the personality traits did not play a significant role in conditioning the effects of sensory and experiential cues on perceptions of prestige in this scenario. These finding contradictions refute the previous literature that focused more on moderating effects of the traits like openness, extraversion, and need of uniqueness on the responses to the symbolic and experiential stimulus (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2021; Menidjel et al., 2017). A probable field in which this unexpected result is observed is the scope of methodology of the given study. The BFI-10 has a limited number of subscales that could be used to measure the personality traits, and they are parsimonious, these scales might not be sensitive enough to show additive interactions revealed by combining two scale items (Rammstedt & John, 2007). It is also possible that the retail settings to which the researches were



conducted approximated constant high levels of sensory and experience branding, such that the variance of personality individual differences was reduced too little to act on. Yet another reason may have to do with cultural/contextual homogeneity; social norms/aspirational consumption patterns may take precedence over psychological predispositions in determining prestige judgments in the Pakistani, premium retailing sector. This understanding could be explained by the research that found that the types of collectivist cultures are more likely to put the accent on social conformity and common stock of symbolic values, making the individual differences less significant (Sarkar & Sarkar, 2022).

The identification of significant moderating effects also indicates towards the theoretical implications. It implies the potential of the basic pathways between sensory and experiential input, and prestige to be strong across types of personalities in this market situation, which points to universality in brand prestige construction. The result should prompt the consideration of alternative moderators besides cultural capital, social identity, or consumer involvement that can be attractive to distinguish heterogeneity in the perception of prestige. In future studies, other more detailed personality inventories may be used, or an experiment design may be used in order to better determine the trait differences in consumer reactions. The findings of moderation effects insignificance were counterintuitive, they provide an invaluable explanation of the weakness of the stimuli valence of branding and the possible drawbacks of dispositional moderators only when examining the consumer behavior.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Despite yielding theoretically robust and empirically significant results, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged to

contextualize its findings and guide future inquiry. The research employed a cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between constructs. The structural relationship patterns as observed are statistically significant and theoretically confirmed, they are limited to associations at one point of time and do not illustrate the temporal nature of consumer perceptions and behaviors completely. Future research would also benefit with a longitudinal design to determine causal validity of the model by identifying how the perceptions regarding brand prestige and loyalty as they develop over time in the face of prolonged exposure to the brand sensory and experiences (Hair et al., 2022). A convenience sampling type, which was applied in this research, appeals to the problem of sampling bias and diminishes the possibility of generalizing the results, as it includes only consumers of specific retail stores in Pakistani cities. Even though urban consumers are inclined to experience organized controlling sensory environments and luxury branding actions, the perceptions of the urban consumers are not reflective to the view of other people, particularly the rural or less affable groups. Due to cultural and socio-economic nature of the Pakistani consumers, it is quite possible that Pakistani consumer reactions towards prestige and branding stimuli might have been unique and this is what has reduced the usefulness of the model in other cultural settings. The probability-based sampling or a stratified design in various geographic areas should be used in future research with higher focus on representativeness and external validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Though the validated measurement tools used in conducting the study were adapted versions of some of the previous research findings, the short nature of some of the scales especially the measurement of subject personality traits using the BFI-10 could have limited the degree of psychological profiling. The moderate size of

the traits scale may partly show the lack of a significant moderation effect in the model. Future studies should potentially investigate other areas of use by using multidimensional scales in order to measure finely tuned dimensions of personality (John et al., 2022). Furthermore, need uniqueness, materialism, or status consumption as trait-specific moderators could be having greater explanatory strength when it comes to how people respond differently to stimuli coming from brands (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2021).

The current study examined only a select set of variables sensory marketing, brand experience, perceived brand prestige, consumer personality traits, and brand loyalty within a specific theoretical framework. Although this style is clear and defined, it is at the same time restrictive in terms of the development of other possibly relevant psychological, social or contextual considerations. As an example, consumer involvement, emotional brand attachment, and self-congruity can be used as the possible mediators that advance knowledge about the mechanism of action between the marketing stimuli and loyalty (Zha et al., 2023). In a similar fashion, situational aspects, such as store environment, peer influence, or brand community interaction, can modulate these relations and as such should be of future empirical interest. Future consideration of such constructions may help provide a more comprehensive exemplification of consumer-brand relationships, especially those created in an atmosphere of symbolic consumption. In addition, the findings will be based on self-report and carry the risk of common method bias, even though anonymity and the effect of social desirability were minimized. However, in spite of relatively good resilience to such concerns, it would perhaps provide better data validity and decrease bias by including multi-source data or behavioral data like actual purchase data or observational data (Hair et al., 2021). Internal validity may also be stronger

and allow testing of causality in variations of personality profile under experimental designs, where the sensory and experiential variables are manipulated in controlled conditions.

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