Global versus Local: Analyzing the Purchase Preferences of Young IT Professionals in India across High-Involvement and Low-Involvement Products

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Abstract

The shift towards globalization and digitalization has fundamentally altered the marketing environment, enabling both international corporations and local businesses to compete more

equally. Concurrently, advances in information technology (IT) have changed how young consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions.This study aims to identify the key factors influencing brand preferences among young IT professionals, explore the relationships between these factors, and determine a model that differentiates preferences for global versus local brands.

A survey using a self-administered structured questionnaire with a 7-point Likert scale was distributed to 554 randomly sampled young IT professionals. The data was analyzed for reliability and consistency, followed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to validate the factors affecting purchase decisions for both high-involvement products (smartphones) and low-involvement products (Marie biscuits). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was then applied to the validated factors.

Key findings reveal that a variety of factors influence purchase preferences, depending on the product type:High-involvement products (smartphones): Factors include consumer ethnocentrism, brand trustworthiness, affordability, brand familiarity and comprehension, environmental concerns, and brand affiliation and allegiance; Low-involvement products (Marie biscuits): Factors include brand familiarity and reliability, brand publicity, brand charm and fascination, brand crush and attachment, and brand engagement. The study concludes that marketing practitioners need to be aware of these distinct factors when developing branding strategies targeting IT professionals.

Keywords: global brand, high involvement product, IT (Information Technology) professionals, local brand, low involvement product, purchase preference, structural equation modelling (SEM)

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Both globalization and digitization have altered the total structure of brands, the outcome of which has brought about explicit changes in the marketing landscape (Berlie & Benard, 2022; Ďaďo*et al*., 2017;Kurebwa, 2020; Özsomer, 2012; Straker & Wrigley, 2016; World Trade Organisation, 2012). This has provided a common platform where not only the global brands from multiple nations can freely operate but at the same time, it has also enabled the growth of numerous local brands in the market (Kapferer, 2002; Winit *et al*., 2014; Xie *et al*., 2015).Due to the increased competition, both local and international businesses are working hard to maintain and strengthen their positions in the crowded market (Singh & Rastogi, 2018).

The rise of strong local brands in the market has prompted companies to re-examine their marketing strategies since they are proving to be an important threat to the global brands (Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004). In this current backdrop, it seems quite pertinent to study the purchase preference of young professionals working in the IT sector towards global versus local brands.The young IT professionals have been selected for the study as they constitute an important customer segment backed by a robust spending capacity and a heightened urge for discretionary purchases. Further, they have an open mind and are conscious and receptive

towards the recent happenings in the market. The proposed research study thus seeks to analyze the buying behavior of young IT professionals towards global versus local brands by considering the significant influencers which may have a profound impact on their purchase decision process. Its purpose is to understand the mind-set or the psyche of young IT professionals as smart shoppers and to provide a direction to the brand managers in understanding their purchase behavior in the new light. It also aims to enrich the existing marketing literature by adding a valuable stream of knowledge which may be beneficial for further research in this area.

1.2 Concept of Global Brand and Local Brand

A global brand refers to the brand that follows the same marketing strategy and marketing mix throughout all the markets it serves (Levitt, 1983). Ex- Starbucks, Amazon, Google, Nestle, Coke. Global brands "have global awareness, availability, acceptance and desirability and are often found under the same name with consistent positioning, image, personality, look and feel in major markets enabled by standardized and centrally coordinated marketing strategies and programs" (Ozsomer *et al.*, 2012, p.2).

A local brand refers to a brand that is mainly confined to one country or is available within a limited geographical area (Wolfe, 1991). Ex- Bisk Farm, Patanjali, Pran, Emami, Lakme, Amul, Haldiram's. Local brands are recognized as key figures, icons, or symbols of the community (Ger, 1999; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003). They also excel at fostering a sense of local pride in local customers and forging stronger bonds with them (Ozsomer, 2012; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003). The various points of distinction between global brands and local brands is discussed in Table 1:

Table 1. Comparison of Global Brand versus Local Brand

Global Brand	Local Brand
It operates in multiple markets with the same marketing strategy and marketing mix throughout.	It operates in a single market or a limited geographical area with different marketing strategy and marketing mix for individual markets.
It follows a global positioning strategy.	It follows a local positioning strategy.
There is widespread recognition and distribution in the case of global brands.	There is limited distribution in the case of local brands.
Global brands are an epitome of global culture.	Local brands are an epitome of local culture.

*Note.*Sources: Dalmoro *et al.*, 2015; Levitt, 1983; Ozsomer, 2012; Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004; Winit *et al.*, 2014; Wolfe, 1991

1.3 Local Brand Matrix

Although several studies have been conducted on global brands but there is still dearth in understanding the concept of local brands. Based on the literature review, it seems pertinent to construct a two-by-two matrix to clarify the concept of local brands. This is depicted in Figure 1 below:
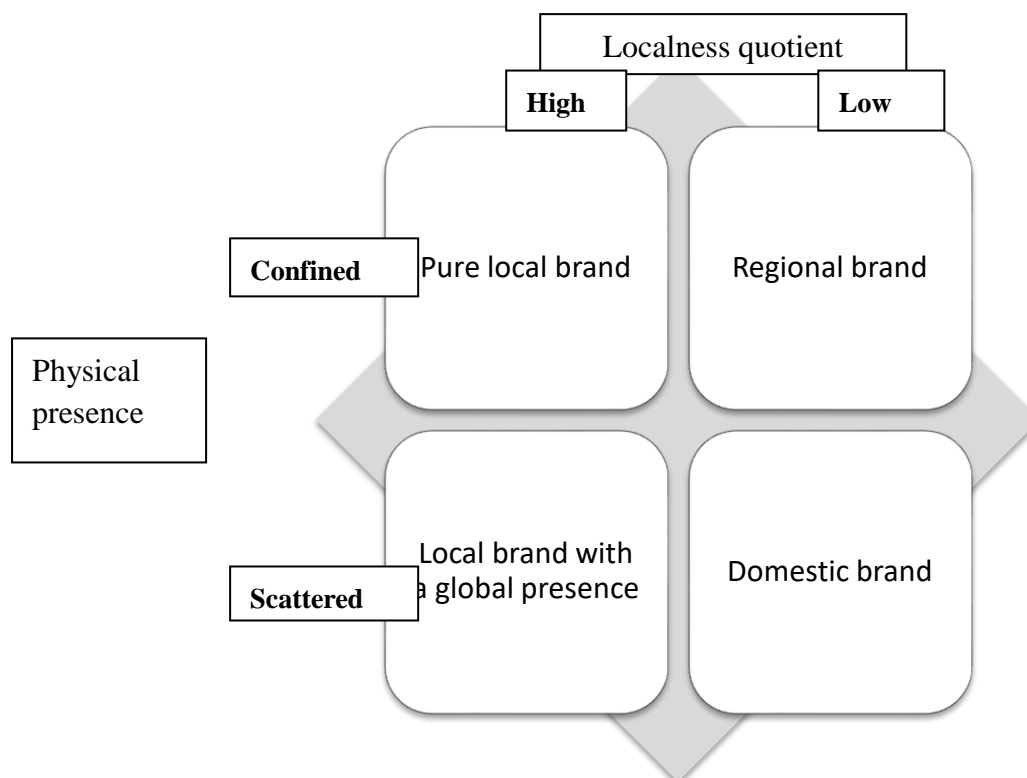

Figure 1. Local Brand Matrix

Note: Developed by the authors

The matrix as depicted in Figure 1 above consists of two dimensions namely localness quotient and physical presence. Localness quotient refers to the degree to which the brand conforms to the local tastes and preferences as well as how uniquely it is able to process the local demands of customers. Physical presence refers to the availability as well as accessibility of the local brand which may be confined or restricted and scattered.

2. Review of literature

A local brand is one that is only sold in a certain nation or region (Safeer *et al*., 2022). On the other hand, a global brand is one that applies the same marketing mix and approach across all of the areas it serves (Levitt 1983). Pike (2009) examined the brands and the branding in the geographical context. He argued that brands and branding processes are impacted through various forms of geographical entanglements or connections due to differences in economy, society, culture and political motives (Jung *et al*., 2020). He also emphasized on various types of geographical entanglements which have profound implications on brands and branding

processes such as material, symbolic, discursive, visual and aural.Fan and Weiming (2023) showed in their research study that regional image of agricultural products significantly enhances perceived quality and purchase intention with perceived quality acting as a mediating factor. The study also illustrates that regional or geographical brands are defined through features such as geographical dependence, cultural and historical distinctiveness and socio-economic factors thereby highlighting the role of place-based factors in branding. The study further elucidates that firms should take these factors into consideration and collaborates with local governments to strengthen regional brand development. Bronnenbarg *et al*. (2009) based their study on understanding the effect of the timing of market entry on the market shares of brands. The findings showed that early entry had a significant impact on the brand market shares (Dykes & Kolev, 2018). Further, it was observed that domestic brands that were located closer to the city of origin had a larger market share compared to brands that were geographically distanced from the city of origin. This further validates the significant impact of geography on brands. Margarisová and Vokáčová (2016) emphasized on the importance of regional branding with the help of a theoretical model which focused on the main brand building blocks, competitive positioning as well as aligning it with the interests of various stakeholders (Michaelis Aharon & Alfasi, 2022).

Ahmed (2014) examined how individual traits and brand-specific factors affected Bangladeshi consumers' inclination to buy international brands as opposed to local ones. The findings indicated that consumers' extensive brand exposure in the media was the most crucial consideration when choosing global brands, followed by cost, performance quality, distinctive qualities, brand image and legacy, social standing, friends and family, and place of origin (Jung *et al*., 2020).Positive customer perceptions of the performance quality of foreign goods led to greater consumer preference for foreign brands at the expense of Bangladeshi native brands.

He and Wang (2017) examined the impact of local cultural elements on the consumer purchase likelihood of global brands in the Chinese context. They also analyzed the mediating effect of local brand iconness as well as the moderating effect of local identity and global identity on the relationship between cultural compatibility and brand purchase likelihood. The study's conclusions showed that local cultural features had both a direct and positive influence on the likelihood of brand purchase and an indirect influence via the mediation of perceived local icon-ness. Further, local identity had a positive moderating effect whereas global identity had a negative moderating effect. Dalmoro *et al*. (2015) focused on understanding the cultural antecedents impacting the customers' preference for global brands in Brazil. The cultural antecedents considered for the purpose of the study included personal cultural values, global identification and global susceptibility. The findings of the study revealed that personal cultural values had a positive impact on the brand choices for global brands. The results indicate the moderating effect of global identification on global brand choices as well as the mediating effect of global susceptibility on the preference towards global brands. Firat *et al*. (2013) studied the interrelationship between consumption, consumer culture and society and found that consumption patterns, cultural influences and societal makeup have a significant influence on brands. Dončić and Đurek (2017) examined

how local sustainability is relevant to the growth of a local brand. He emphasized on four different kinds of sustainability namely ecological sustainability, social sustainability, cultural sustainability and institutionalized sustainability through a model which are important for the long-term sustenance of a local brand. Ghosh *et al.* (2016) highlighted on the significant influence of culture on brands in the context of the Indian market. The findings from the study revealed that global brands must align their portfolio keeping into account the cultural preferences of consumers in order to compete successfully with local brands which has the added advantage of tuning their market offerings which is compatible with the local culture.

According to Kurebwa (2020), consumers residing in developed countries exhibited higher levels of ethnocentric tendencies towards local goods relative to foreign goods. This clearly indicates that the residents from developing and least developed countries have more affinity towards foreign goods than domestic goods. Based on this perspective, Karoui and Khemakhen (2019) examined the association between consumer ethnocentrism and the consumers' willingness to buy domestic products in the developing country of Tunisia. They also analyzed the moderating impact of product country of origin and conspicuous consumption behavior of foreigners residing in the countries of France, Italy, China and Turkey. Data analysis showed that consumer ethnocentrism positively affected the buying intention of Tunisian consumers towards domestic products. The analysis also revealed that country of origin and conspicuous consumption are moderating variables affecting the strength of relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and the inclination towards domestic goods.Sampaothong (2018) used brand equity, customer satisfaction, and place of origin impacts to examine possible variations in the establishment of brand loyalty with regard to local and international brands across Thai consumer groups. The results demonstrated that, with regard to both domestic and international brands, brand association, perceived quality, and customer happiness had a strong beneficial impact on the development of brand loyalty through the perceived country of origin effect. According to Siddiqui *et al.* (2019), customer loyalty and satisfaction are crucial mediators for brand selection.Trehan (2025) explored how the country-of-origin (COO) effect shapes Indian consumers' preferences for local versus global brands in Pune. Using mixed methods (surveys and interviews), the study finds that brand heritage, perceived quality, and cultural affinity strongly influence buying decisions. Global brands are seen as high-quality and aspirational, while Indian brands are preferred for affordability and cultural relevance. The study suggests that marketers should use localized branding strategies to build trust and strengthen brand equity in India.

The global brands were found to be more trustworthy compared to the local brands which are in line with the earlier studies (Batra *et al.*, 2000; Iyer&Kalita, 1997; Shashidhar, 2004). Dogerlioglu-Demir and Tansuhaj (2011) did a comparative study on consumers in two Asian countries- Thailand and Turkey by examining the effect of personality characteristics and consumers' value systems on their inclination to buy global brands relative to local brands. The results revealed that Thai and Turkish consumers differed in their approaches as far as purchase preferences towards global brands and local brands are concerned. The traditionalism element was found to be quite active in the purchase of local brands whereas

the susceptibility element played a significant role in the purchase of global brands.

Lee *et al*. (2008) studied the effect of country and brand differences on consumer behavior by considering brand associations, brand impressions and brand commitment as the main antecedents. Results indicated that different brand behavioral patterns exist among consumers located in various countries. With a particular focus on comparisons between European and Asian cultures, Rehman *et al*. (2018) investigated the effects of several psychological characteristics, including consumers' life satisfaction, ethnocentrism, perceived quality, and demand for uniqueness, on consumer purchase intentions (U.K. and Pakistan). According to the study's findings, consumers in both nations perceive and choose global companies in different ways based on the suggested factors.

Eren-Erdogmas and Dirsehan (2017) studied the contrasting brand associations of global versus local brands in the Turkish market using brand concept mapping. Findings of the study revealed stark contrasts among the global as well as local brand associations which get reflected in the positioning of such brands. The global brands reflected more on global connotations whereas the local brands emphasized more on local nuances.

Steenkamp *et al*. (2003) examined the influence of perceived brand globalness (PBG) on the likelihood of brand purchase. It also studied the influence of perceived brand globalness on perceived brand quality and brand prestige as well as how brand local icon value impacts brand purchase likelihood. Further, it also examined the moderating role of consumer ethnocentrism on the main constructs. The findings demonstrated a positive relationship between perceived brand quality and prestige and perceived brand globalness (PBG). It follows that greater perceived quality and prestige are important contributors to increased customer value for global brands. Furthermore, it was shown that for customers who were more ethnocentric, the impacts of perceived brand globalness were smaller.

Global consumer orientation (GCO), global identity, and consumer ethnocentrism were all investigated by Xiaoling (2013) in relation to customer attitudes toward global brands from developed as opposed to emerging nations. The findings of the study revealed that consumers residing in developing countries projected greater affinity towards global brands compared to their local counterparts. This can be attributed due the global orientation and the level of consumer awareness created as being part of the global community.

A research was done by Ismail *et al*. (2012) to find out whether consumers favor international brands over local ones. The findings revealed that the price and quality of the goods in issue are the most crucial aspects that affect a consumer's selection. A brand that is priced too low is typically thought of as having bad quality products since people typically equate a brand's price with its quality. A product with an excessive price tag could not be accessible to many consumers. Customer ethnocentrism, country of origin, social position, price comparability with rival products, family, and friends are other variables that affect consumer choices. Deari and Balla (2013) analyzed and explored the factors that influence consumer trust in the case of global brands. The findings showed that customers trust international companies regardless of their gender, age, level of education, or wealth. Additionally, brand trust and customer preferences for international brands are strongly correlated.

The impact of status-seeking motivation on the perceived quality of a global versus local brand was explored by Ing *et al*. (2012). According to the findings, a worldwide brand is often chosen in terms of perceived quality in relation to success, income, and elevated social statuses. The results confirm those of previous researchers who found that local brands in emerging and underdeveloped nations tend to be seen as being of lower quality than international ones. The survey also showed that customers with high and low status expectations thought that global brands were of greater quality.

The characteristics influencing customers' inclinations to purchase mobile phones from local versus foreign brands were analyzed by Arif *et al*. (2015) who discovered that when it came to cell phones, multinational brands were favoured above local brands. Thus, it can be concluded that consumer preference for local versus global brands vary across product categories. Other factors considered relevant to the study included color choice preference, smart features and cultural effects. Islam and Fatema (2014) did a comparative study on global and domestic brands of soft drinks in Bangladesh. The results highlighted that, in terms of competitive positioning, share of mind and heart, brand awareness, consumers' advertising awareness, and ranking of soft drinks, the global brand is in a significantly superior position. Baten *et al*. (2018) studied the factors that have an impact on Bangladeshi consumers' buying behavior towards local and global clothing brands. The findings revealed a major shift taking place in favor of local brands in comparison to international brands. According to the survey results, local brands were popular among all age groups and income brackets in comparison to international brands.

The influence of product category traits on the performance of international and regional brands was examined by Pablo (2014). The findings demonstrated a strong relationship between local tastes and subscriptions and local company success. Additionally, the findings demonstrated a negative correlation between high technology and global citizenship and local brand performance. Dado *et al*. (2017) tried to understand how consumers select global brands within a given product category and the reasons for their preferred choice. The results indicated a variation in the preferred choice of consumers in the selection of global brands or local brands within a given product category. Llonch *et al*. (2014) examined the relevant factors influencing local brand purchase likelihood in emerging markets. The findings showed that brand familiarity and perceived quality and prestige bias in favor of local businesses are characteristics that are positively correlated with the likelihood of brand purchase for local brands in developing economies.

Boolaky et al., (2017) examined the role of Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model developed by Keller on local and international brand in Nigerian sugar sector. A number of factors were taken into account, including brand identification (brand salience), brand meaning (brand performance and brand imagery), brand reactions (brand judgements and brand sentiments), and brand connection (brand resonance). The findings showed that both the local and multinational brands' brand salience was essentially the same. In terms of brand performance, the regional brand provided greater needs fulfillment than the global brand. The most prevalent brand picture for the global brand was its history with respondents dating back to their early years, followed by its pricey nature. The local brand, on the other hand, was

most associated with its convenience and affordability. As far as brand judgement is concerned, the respondents believed that they were getting value for money from both the brands. Further, both the international brand and the local brand were highly trusted by their customers. As far as brand feelings were concerned, the international brand elicited a feeling of self-respect more than the local brand. As far as brand resonance was considered, the results revealed that both brands have loyal customers with the international brand having a marginally higher loyalty compared to the local brand.

Kinra (2006) investigated the differing perspectives and awareness of consumers towards domestic as well as foreign brand names in multiple product categories. The study also examined the implications of country of origin and consumer ethnocentrism on purchase behavior. Results indicated that country of origin had an important bearing on the purchase decision of consumers. As far as consumer ethnocentrism is concerned, Indian consumers were found to be highly ethnocentric with regard to purchase preferences of foreign or Indian brands.

Riesenbeck and Freeling (1991) attempted to analyze the challenges faced by global brands as a result of diversification. They formulated a three step process which emphasized on focusing on the competitive advantage of global brands, standardizing only the core elements of the brands as well as restructuring the organizational elements which proposes to enhance the global benefits and optimize the risks. They further stressed that diversification must be a well thought out strategy and must not rest on a set of four not always validated assumptions such as homogenization of taste, economies of scale, international expansion and organization.

Ural and Kucukaslan (2011) examined the potential antecedents of consumers' attitude towards global brands such as global consumption orientation, materialism, susceptibility to normative influence, ethnocentrism, global mass media and globalizing travel influences. The findings from the study revealed that all the above factors had a significant impact on the consumers' attitude towards global brands except susceptibility to normative influence whose impact was found to be insignificant according to the abovementioned study.

In two phases, exploratory study by Schuling and Kapferer (2004) studied the distinctions between national and international brands. Interviews with foreign marketers made up the first phase, while the second part featured secondary analysis of Brand Asset Valuator, a large database maintained by Young and Rubicam (Y and R). The study brought into focus the relative importance of local brands in contrast to international brands and brought into focus the various advantages of local brands such as better response to local needs, flexible pricing strategy, well-balanced portfolio of brands, opportunity to focus on the needs not met by international brands as well as fast entry into new markets. In the discussion of brandmanagement framework in the context of underdog brands, Schmidt and Steenkamp (2022) has made a concluding comment that it is becoming more and more crucial to address the issue of how smaller market participants can still succeed as entrepreneurs in this climate.

Kaushal and Kaur (2021) examined the factors influencing consumer perception of Indian consumers towards Indian products relative to foreign products and found out that the Indian

consumers were very much inclined towards foreign products even though the Indian products were very much at par with the foreign products in terms of quality and price. This very much emphasizes the fondness of Indian consumers towards foreign products compared to 'Made in India' products.

In a recent study, cosmopolitanism was found to be a significant factor influencing the purchase intention of global brands compared to local brands(Srivastava *et al*., 2023). This reiterates the fact that foreign brands are considered to be more preferable than local brands.

Consumer affinity and perceived value were also found to be dominant precursors affecting the purchase decision of global brands as highlighted by Nassem and Yaprak (2023). This clearly indicates that emotional connection plays a significant role in building up consumer relatedness towards global brands which ultimately gets reflected in their buying behavior.

A pertinent study made by Randrianasolo (2024) provides valuable inputs for multinational enterprises (MNEs) who are trying to foray in the base of pyramid (BOP) markets. The study highlighted two psychological constructs namely admiration and animosity which could act as a guide for companies in framing their brand positioning strategies in such markets. Further, these constructs can serve as major decisive factors to formulate market-friendly global or local brand strategies.

Studies by Niu *et al*. (2024) explore how geopolitical conflicts and natural disasters force companies to reconfigure their branding strategies. Such disruptions alter the global supply chain and may put pressure on global brands relying on overseas procurement to consider local suppliers leading to price wars. The study helps to understand the strategic decisions which the global brands make in a co-opetitive environment where both cooperation and competition co-exist.

According toChen *et al*. (2024), brand innovativeness was found to be an important construct influencing the consumers' purchase intention towards global brands. The consumers' purchase intention was further enhanced by consumers' perceptions of the brands' globalness (PBG) and localness (PBL). In addition, consumer ethnocentrism was also found to influence the brand attitude towards global brands. These findings offer valuable insights for both theoretical understanding and practical applications in marketing strategies.

Consumer cultural identity also plays a significant role in shaping the consumers' perception of global and local brands' efforts towards environmental sustainability (Strizhakova & Coulter, 2024). Thus it stresses that both multinational and local companies must address environmental and social sustainability to meet consumer expectations and stay competitive.

Ndichu and Upadhyaya (2025) based their study on how consumers in an emerging market engage with global brands in the context of an online marketplace. The findings of the study indicate that consumers in emerging markets hold mixed opinions towards globalization and localization and this dilemma often gets reflected in their buying behavior and consumption habits.

3. Identification of the Research Gap and Formulation of the Research Objectives

3.1 Identification of the Research Gap

In the recent years, there has been a notable development in the IT sector which has opened up new avenues for the budding IT professionals. The digitization drive across organizations had led to a spurt in the demand for various IT enabled services globally. This has created a surge in the employability of IT professionals in emerging areas such as cloud computing, data analytics, machine learning, Internet of Things (IOT) and artificial intelligence. Due to the burgeoning demand for technology-based services, reputed IT companies such as TCS, Infosys, Cognizant, Capgemini and Wipro have increased their hiring spree and are also offering lucrative salaries to the professionals who are employed in the IT sector in order to retain the best of talents. The outcome of these phenomena has led to an increase in their purchasing capacity leading to an elevated demand for various global brands and local brands as a result of good brand exposure. Also, they are in a better position to make a comparison between global and local brands and offer good judgement which can be highly beneficial for brand planners to frame their future brand strategies keeping into account the mindset of such privileged customers. However, the existing marketing literature lacks in offering any detailed configuration to understand the buying motives influencing the purchase preference of IT professionals with reference to global brands versus local brands.

Thus, taking into consideration the above scenario, the research gap has been identified as under:

Research Gap 1: A gap in understanding the buying psychology and mind-set of these young professionals as prospective consumers which the proposed study seeks to explore further.

Research Gap 2: There is also a gap in the availability of any validated model for understanding such purchase behavior.

Research Gap 3: Further, a gap exists in the marketing literature to understand the various purchase drivers influencing the buying framework of young IT professionals.

3.2 Formulation of the research objectives:

In the present study, an attempt has been made to explore the significant purchase influencers that affect the purchase behavior of the working IT professionals. The research objectives of the proposed study may be summarized as under:

1. To identify the main determinants influencing the brand preferences of global brands and local brands among professionals employed in the IT sector and formulating a theoretical framework based on the identified constructs.

2. To examine how IT sector professionals perceive global brands and local brands across high-involvement and low-involvement product categories and to understand whether any interrelationships exist among them.

3. To identify a discriminating function that demarcates between the preference for global and local brands among IT professionals in the selected product categories.

4. Development of Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

4.1 Explanation of the Theoretical Constructs

Based on the literature review, the various theoretical constructs as identified in the conceptual model is discussed as under in Table 2:

Table 2. Theoretical Constructs

Construct Name	Relevant citations	Definition
Brand Knowledge	(Alimen & Cerit, 2010;Driesener & Romaniuk, 2006;Dutta, 2012; Esch *et al*., 2006)	Brand Knowledge is the understanding that consumers have about a brand. Brand Knowledge can be understood on the basis of two components namely brand awareness and brand image. Keller (1993, 2001)
Brand Trust	(Alhaddad, 2015; Brudvig & Susan, 2015; Delgado-Ballester *et al*., 2003; Rani & Suradi, 2017; Soong *et al*., 2011)	"Consumer's willingness to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function". Chaudhuri and Holbrook(2001)
Brand Loyalty	(Cucca *et al.*, 2010; Srivastava, 2007;Tabaku & Mercini,2015)	"Brand loyalty is a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred brand consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same brand set purchasing despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior". Oliver(1999)
Brand Engagement	(Ashraf *et al*.,2018; Fernandes &Moreira,2019;Merrilees,2016; Pongpaew *et al*., 2017; Risitano *et al*., 2017)	Consumer brand engagement has been defined as "a consumer's cognitive, emotional, behavioural, co-creative brand-related activities related to specific interactions". Hollebeek *et al*.(2014)
Consumer Ethnocentrism	(Bawa,2004; Dogi,2015; Jain & Jain,2013; Shimp & Sharma,1987; Siamagka& Balabanis, 2015)	Consumer ethnocentrism or consumer ethnocentric tendency (CET) refers to the appropriateness and morality of purchasing foreign goods and maintaining loyalty to domestically produced goods. Shimp

Construct Name	Relevant citations	Definition
		and Sharma(1987)
Emotions	(Bagozzi et al., 1999; Martin *et al*., 2008; McDonald et al., 2011; Richins,1997)	"Emotions are consciousness of the occurrence of some physiological arousal followed by a behavioural response along with appraisal meaning of both". Sheth *et al*. (1999,p.356)
Word-of-mouth	(East *et al*., 2008; Hossain *et al*., 2017; Kardes *et al*., 2011;Solomon,2013 Sweeney *et al*.,2012)	Word-of-mouth is the act of one consumer talking to another about a brand and it can happen face-to-face and indirectly via phone, mail or the internet. While word-of-mouth can be either positive or negative in nature, marketers attempt to generate positive word-of mouth about their products and services. Kardes, *et al*.(2019,p.467)
Affordability/ Price factor	(Kotler *et al*., 2018)	"Price is the amount of money charged for a product or a service or the sum of the values that customers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service". Kotler,Armstrong and Agnihotri(2018,p.285)
Product involvement	(Kotler *et al*., 2018; Petty &Cacioppo, 1986; Saxena,2009)	According to the Elaboration Likelihood model (ELM) proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), product involvement refers to the consumers' level of involvement based on motivation, ability and opportunity. It can be high or low depending on the product type and consumers' active participation. Product involvement is elevated in case of high involvement products where consumers like to devote a lot of time and effort compared to low involvement products where the active participation of the consumers is subdued as it does not involve

Construct Name	Relevant citations	Definition
		huge monetary investment.
Environmental concerns	(Kotler *et al*., 2018)	Environmental concerns refer to the growing consciousness and awareness among consumers towards eco-friendly or recycled products. Environmental sustainability refers to "developing strategies and practices that create a world economy that the planet can support indefinitely". Kotler,Armstrong& Agnihotri(2018,p.77,588)
Purchase preference	(Kung*et al*., 2021; Ma, J. *et al*., 2021; Mai & Smith, 2012; Zhen Li & Hou, 2019)	Purchase preference refers to an interest, passion or longing of a consumer towards a product, service or brand. (Kung *et al*., 2021)

4.2 Development of the Conceptual Model

Based on the theoretical constructs identified from the literature review, the conceptual model has been framed as shown in Figure 2:
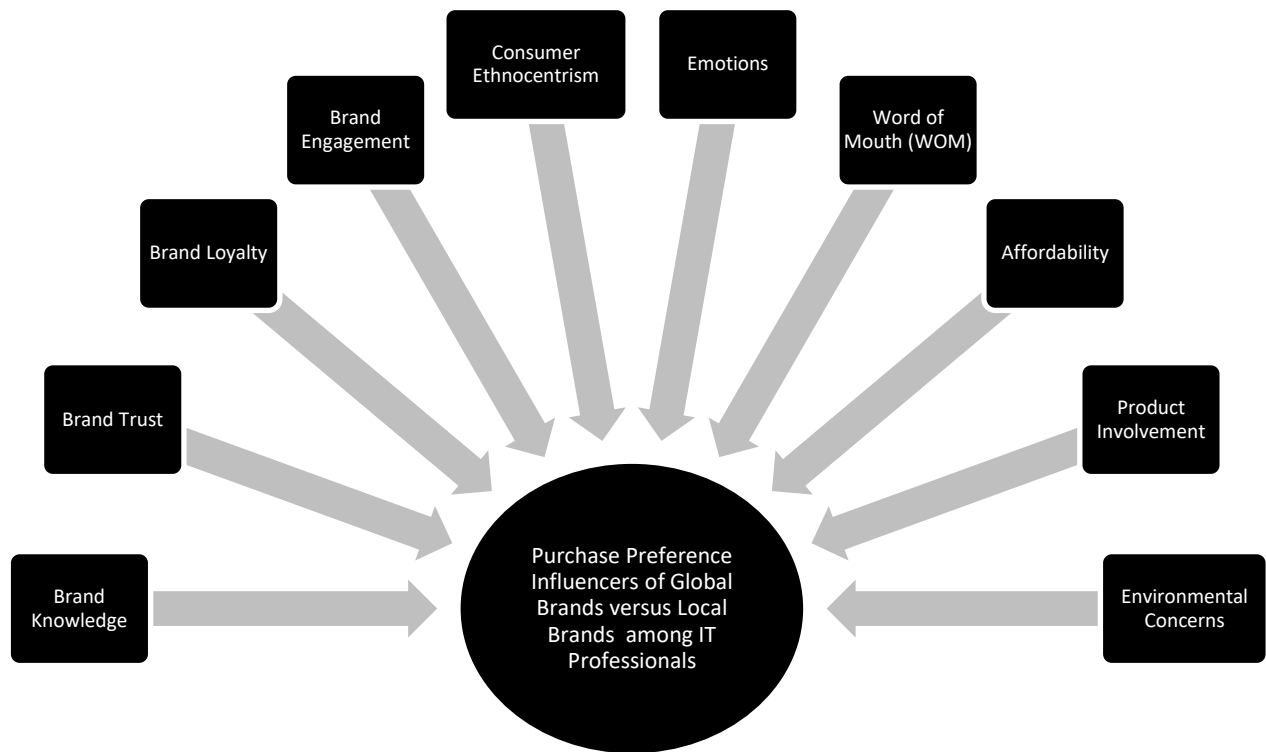
Figure 2. Conceptual Model

The theoretical framework of the proposed study consists of the formulation of a conceptual model signifying the important variables affecting the purchase preference of young IT professionals towards global brands vis-à-vis local brands. The model takes into consideration the role of relevant brand factors namely brand knowledge, brand trust, brand loyalty and brand engagement as well as other external influences such as consumer ethnocentrism, emotions, word of mouth effect, product category involvement, affordability and environmental concerns which have a significant impact on the brand choice of IT professionals.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Selection of Sample &Its Justification:

The sample for the present study includes the young professionals working in the IT sector. The IT professionals have been selected for the above-mentioned study as they are the most vibrant, tech-savvy and well-paid lot of individuals who have a decent taste for various products and brands. Their purchasing power or ability to spend is much more compared to their counterparts engaged in other professions. Some of them are also the aspirational buyers of tomorrow. The market for IT and business services in India is anticipated to grow to $19.93 billion by 2025. This is very much likely to create a lot of new employment opportunities in the upcoming years.

5.2 Sampling Method

For the present study, multi-stage sampling was being adopted to obtain a representative sample of the participants. The various stages involved are outlined below:

1st stage (PSUs – Primary sampling units) – Listing of IT companies in Kolkata.

2nd stage (SSUs - Secondary sampling units) – Selection of 11 IT companies based in Kolkata engaged in various IT and IT related activities). The companies selected included:

- TCS (Tata Consultancy Services)
- Capgemini
- Wipro
- Aegis
- IBM
- ITC Infotech
- Cognizent Technology Solutions
- Globiva
- JK Technosoft Ltd.
- Srijan Tech Park
- Deloitte

3rd stage (USUs – Ultimate sampling units) – The final stage included the random selection of participants from the screened out IT companies.

5.3 Sample Size

554 people made up the whole sample size for this investigation. With a confidence level of 95%, a matching z-score of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.5, the necessary sample size of 385 was determined using Cochran's formula (1977) for an indefinite population. The following formula is used to determine an appropriate sample size:

Sample size (n) for indefinite population = (Z-score)^2 * p* (1-p)/ Confidence interval

By applying the formula, the desired sample size is:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \, (0.5) \, (0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 385$$

5.4 Questionnaire Design

The research study used a self-administered structured questionnaire using a 7-point Likert

scale to assess the factors influencing the purchase preference of young IT professionals with reference to global brands versus local brands. It then conducted an online survey via Google Forms. Two sets of questionnaires were devised for the smartphones (including global and local brands across high involvement product category) and Marie biscuits (including global and local brands across low involvement product category) for the research study. The questionnaire items were formulated based on the constructs from the past learnings. Questions in the questionnaire have been randomized to eliminate bias. In addition some of the questions have been reverse coded. The various steps involved in the questionnaire design are:

STEP 1: Formulation of Research Objectives

STEP 2: Validation of Main Constructs/Parameters [11 constructs have been used for the study]

STEP 3: Chalking out the Respondent Profile [Sample: IT Professionals]

STEP 4: Framing of Questions for two separate questionnaires involving two product categories namely smartphones (high involvement) and Marie biscuits (low involvement)

[Important considerations such as content, wording, type of questions, scaling,

sequence and time taken to complete the survey have been decided upon]

STEP 5: Mode of distribution of Questionnaire [Online through Google Forms]

STEP 6: Distribution of questionnaire to Respondents [IT Professionals]

STEP 7: Data collection via structured questionnaire

5.4.1 Explanation

Step 1- The first step in questionnaire design involved understanding the research objectives well so that the framing of the questions is in parity with the identified research objectives.

Step 2- Based on the literature review, eleven constructs or parameters for the research study were identified namely brand knowledge, brand trust, brand loyalty, brand engagement, consumer ethnocentrism, word of mouth (WOM), emotions, affordability, product involvement, environmental concerns and purchase preference. The scales for the identified constructs were taken from previous studies and have been duly validated.

Step 3- The next step in the questionnaire design involved understanding the profile of IT professionals used as sample for the present research study. The IT professionals working in and around Sector- V, Kolkata were used for the present research study.

Step 4- After the sample for the present study has been finalized, the research instrument i.e. the questionnaire was devised. Two separate questionnaires were formulated involving two product categories namely smartphones (high involvement product) and Marie Biscuits (low involvement product). Important considerations such as content, wording of questions, type

of questions, scaling, sequence and time taken to complete the survey were decided upon during this step.

Step 5- The next step involved deciding upon the mode of distribution of the questionnaire. It was decided to conduct online surveys using Google Forms.

Step 6- The next step involved the distribution of the questionnaire to the respondents (IT professionals) via email or WhatsApp.

Step 7- Finally, the final data was obtained through the responses submitted by the respondents for the two questionnaires for smartphones and Marie Biscuits.

5.5 Data Collection

The primary data was collected from respondents (IT professionals) working in various IT companies based in Kolkata and engaged in IT and IT related services. Data was mainly obtained through online surveys using Google forms as the research instrument. Apart from these, few personal interviews were also conducted to understand the mental makeup and buying psychology of the respondents. The responses were collected using a self-administered structured questionnaire. Out of the 700 respondents approached, 560 participants responded to the survey and the remaining sample was rejected due to non-response errors and missing and irrelevant data. Finally, valid samples of 554 respondents were considered for the present research study.

5.6 Place of Study

The study is conducted in Kolkata and mainly covered areas in and around Salt Lake Sector-V, the IT hub of Kolkata.

5.7 Statistical Tools Used

Exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and covariance-based structuralequation modeling (CB-SEM) using AMOS 23.0 are the statistical methods employed in thisstudy.

6. Data Analysis andResults

The primary data collected through the survey, was first checked for reliability and consistency. The observable variables were then subjected to an exploratory factor analysis to see if some unobservable constructs may be validated. The identified constructs were subsequently validated using confirmatory factor analysis. A structural equation modeling was conducted using the validated constructs. The above-mentioned steps were followed, in turn, for high involvement products (smartphones) as well as for low involvement products (Marie biscuits) as discussed in the various sub-sections as under:

6.1 Reliability Analysis for High Involvement Product (Smartphones):

The reliability analysis for the study pertaining to smartphones was conducted using IBM SPSS and AMOS 23.0.The reliability of the questionnaire involving 35 items as well as the validation of the scale was done using Cronbach's Alpha as well as the Spearman-Brown

Coefficient to check the internal consistency between the items. The alpha coefficient was found to be 0.908 which is higher than the minimum level of 0.70 as mentioned by Nunnally (1978). Thus, internal consistency was found to be excellent suggesting sufficient reliability of the items. No significant enhancement of Cronbach Alpha was found on removal of any variable.

Spearman- Brown Coefficient in the split-half test was found to be 0.793 which is also greater than the accepted level of 0.6. Thus, it can be concluded that the items are reliable and satisfactory as highlighted below in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 3. Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	274	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	274	100.0
Note: a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Table 4. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.908	35

Table 5. Split- half Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.840
		N of Items	18[a]
	Part 2	Value	.871
		N of Items	17[b]
	Total N of Items		35
Correlation Between Forms			.657
Spearman-Brown	Equal Length		.793
Coefficient	Unequal Length		.793
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient			.790

Note: a. The items are: BK_1, BK_2, BK_3, BE_1, BE_2, BE_3, BE_4, BT_1, BT_2, BT_3, BL_1, BL_2, BL_3, EM_1, EM_2, EM_3, EM_4, AFF_1.

b. The items are: AFF_1, AFF_2, AFF_3, PI_1, PI_2, PI_3, CE_1, CE_2, CE_3, ENV_1, ENV_2, ENV_3, PP_1, PP_2, PP_3, WOM_1, WOM_2, WOM_3.

6.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis for High Involvement Product (Smartphones)

The 35 items used to measure the purchase preference of IT professionals pertaining to smartphone brands were subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal axis factoring and Varimax rotation. The results from the exploratory factor analysis depicted a eight factor solution explaining 51.064% of the total variance as depicted in Table 7. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy depicted a value of 0.864 (as indicated in Table 6) which is greater than the acceptable value of 0.60 (Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999). Bartlett's test of sphericity which signifies the strength of relationship among the variables was also found to be significant as the value is less than 0.001 as shown in Table 6. Results from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) yielded seven latent constructs namely *'Brand Affiliation & Allegiance', 'Purchase Potentiality', 'Brand Trustworthiness', 'Brand Familiarity &Comprehension', 'Consumer Ethnocentrism', 'Environmental Concerns' and 'Affordability'* with respective items and factor loadings as shown in Table 8.

Table 6. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.864
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4373.328
	Df	595
	Sig.	.000

Table 7. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.927	25.506	25.506	8.444	24.127	24.127	4.605	13.158	13.158
2	4.333	12.381	37.887	3.909	11.169	35.296	2.988	8.537	21.695
3	1.996	5.702	43.589	1.500	4.286	39.582	2.354	6.725	28.419
4	1.692	4.835	48.424	1.201	3.430	43.012	2.127	6.078	34.497
5	1.348	3.852	52.275	.896	2.561	45.573	1.964	5.610	40.107
6	1.262	3.605	55.880	.766	2.189	47.762	1.803	5.153	45.260
7	1.136	3.247	59.127	.602	1.720	49.482	1.374	3.926	49.185
8	1.061	3.031	62.158	.554	1.582	51.064	.657	1.879	51.064

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 8. Constructs and items emerged from Exploratory Factor Analysis for High Involvement Product (Smartphones)

Name of the factor with items	*Labels with coding*	*Factor Loadings*
FACTOR 1: Brand Affiliation & Allegiance		
EMOTIONS: [This brand makes me easily bored.]	EM_3	0.826
BRAND TRUST: [This brand is not reliable and safe.]	BT_2	0.793
BRAND LOYALTY: [This brand will not be purchased and supported by me even after a previous bad experience.]	BL_3	0.788
EMOTIONS: [Using this brand leaves me with a lot of regrets.]	EM_4	0.769
BRAND KNOWLEDGE: [This brand does not seem to align well with my needs.]	BK_3	0.735
BRAND ENGAGEMENT: [This brand does not gel well with my personality.]	BE_2	0.685
PURCHASE PREFERENCE: [When it comes to making a purchase, this brand of smartphone is not always my first choice.]	PP_2	0.477
PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT: [It is not desirable to put too much effort into choosing this smartphone brand.]	PI_3	0.425
FACTOR 2: Purchase Potentiality		
PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT: [In the case of purchase of smartphone, my involvement is quite high.]	PI_1	0.593
WORD OF MOUTH: [Any positive piece of advice about this brand is of utmost importance to me.]	WOM_1	0.523
EMOTIONS: [This brand is quite exciting to use.]	EM_2	0.513
PURCHASE PREFERENCE: [This is my most preferred brand in the smartphone category.]	PP_1	0.475
EMOTIONS: [This brand gives me real joy and contentment.]	EM_1	0.454
PURCHASE PREFERENCE: [This smartphone brand is more likeable compared to other brands in the same category.]	PP_3	0.420
WORD OF MOUTH: [Positive comments or reviews about this brand is always shared by me with others.]	WOM_3	0.415
CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM: [It gives a sense of pride to be attached to brands which are made in India.]	CE_2	0.403
FACTOR 3: Brand Trustworthiness		
BRAND TRUST: [This brand performs well and always fulfills its promises.]	BT_3	0.686
BRAND LOYALTY: [This brand is very well relatable.]	BL_1	0.581
BRAND TRUST: [This brand is quite trustworthy.]	BT_1	0.565
BRAND LOYALTY: [This brand is usually recommended by me to all friends and relatives.]	BL_2	0.564
FACTOR 4: Brand Familiarity & Comprehension		
BRAND KNOWLEDGE: [This brand is easily recognizable.]	BK_1	0.625
BRAND KNOWLEDGE: [This brand is always on the top-of-my-mind whenever I think of this product category.]	BK_2	0.603
BRAND ENGAGEMENT: [The overall journey of this brand fascinates me greatly.]	BE_3	0.585
BRAND ENGAGEMENT: [This brand bonds well and occupies a special position in my mind.]	BE_4	0.576
FACTOR 5: Consumer Ethnocentrism		
CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM: [It is considered righteous on my part to purchase local brands and make them more self-reliant.]	CE_1	0.723
CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM: [Local brands seem to be more familiar to me and are easily available.]	CE_3	0.531

Name of the factor with items	Labels with coding	Factor Loadings
WORD OF MOUTH: [Negative comments related to this brand is always heeded to by me.]	WOM_2	0.531
FACTOR 6: Environmental Concerns		
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: [Brands which are eco-friendly in nature and without any harmful effects are always preferable.]	ENV_1	0.663
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: [Spending a bit more is not much of an issue in the case of eco-friendly products.]	ENV_2	0.652
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: [Brands which adheres to the environmental standards are always recommended by me.]	ENV_3	0.477
FACTOR 7: Affordability		
AFFORDABILITY: [Price has no significant influence on the choice of smartphone brands.]	AFF_1	0.649
AFFORDABILITY: [Even if a rival smartphone brand with the same configuration and attributes is offered to me at a reduced price, I will stick to this brand only.]	AFF_3	0.531
AFFORDABILITY: [Paying a higher price for this brand of smartphone is justifiable if it provides good customer value.]	AFF_2	0.436

6.3 Explanation of the Emerged Factors

The first factor titled **'Brand Affiliation and Allegiance'** refers to the emotional connectivity which the consumer shares with the brand as well as how well they relate with the brand or it aligns well with their self-concept. Itconsists of eight items namely *'This brand makes me easily bored', 'This brand is not reliable and safe', 'This brand will not be purchased and supported by me even after a previous bad experience', 'Using this brand leaves me with a lot of regrets', 'This brand does not seem to align well with my needs', 'This brand does not gel well with my personality', 'When it comes to making a purchase, this brand of smartphone is not always my first choice', and 'It is not desirable to put too much effort into choosing this smartphone brand'*with the highest factor loading of 0.826 and the least being 0.425.

The second factor titled **'Purchase Potentiality'** involves understanding the potential buying motives of consumers related to the purchase in the selected product category. This factor consists of eight dimensions namely *'In the case of purchase of smartphone, my involvement is quite high', 'Any positive piece of advice about this brand is of utmost importance to me', 'This brand is quite exciting to use',' This is my most preferred brand in the smartphone category', 'This brand gives me real joy and contentment', 'This smartphone brand is more likeable compared to other brands in the same category', 'Positive comments or reviews about this brand is always shared by me with others', and 'It gives a sense of pride to be attached to brands which are made in India'* with the highest factor loading of 0.593 and the least being 0.403.

The third factor titled **'Brand Trustworthiness'** refers to the trust and loyalty factor associated with the brand. Brand trust and brand loyalty are complementary to each other as brand trust leads to loyalty. Thus, this factor involves the ability of the brand to fulfill its brand promises and live up to the customers' expectations. This factor also involves the behavioral as well as the attitudinal loyalty exhibited by the brand. This factor consists of

four dimensions namely *'This brand performs well and always fulfills its promises', 'This brand is very well relatable', 'This brand is quite trustworthy',* and *'This brand is usually recommended by me to all friends and relatives'* with the highest factor loading of 0.686 and the least being 0.564.

The fourth factor titled **'Brand Familiarity and Comprehension'** refers to how easily consumers can recognize and recall the brands with ease. It includes how knowledgeable consumers are about brands with respect to the product attributes and benefits offered by them. This factor consists of four dimensions namely *'This brand is easily recognizable', 'This brand is always on the top-of-my-mind whenever I think of this product category', 'The overall journey of this brand fascinates me greatly',* and *'This brand bonds well and occupies a special position in my mind'*, with the highest factor loading of 0.625 and the least being 0.576.

The fifth factor titled **'Consumer Ethnocentrism'** refers to the tendency of consumers to laud domestic products relative to foreign products as a belief system or a sign of morality to protect the domestic economy (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). In other words, such consumers will always idolize the local brands and vouch for them and undermine global brands as a measure to defend the domestic industries. This factor consists of three dimensions namely *'It is considered righteous on my part to purchase local brands and make them more self-reliant', Local brands seem to be more familiar to me and are easily available',* and *'Negative comments related to this brand is always heeded to by me'* with the highest factor loading of 0.723 and the least being 0.531.

The sixth factor titled **'Environmental Concerns'** refers to the preference of consumers towards eco-friendly products and awareness among them to protect the environment and aim for economic sustainability. This factor consists of three dimensions namely *'Brands which are eco-friendly in nature and without any harmful effects are always preferable', 'Spending a bit more is not much of an issue in the case of eco-friendly products',* and *'Brands which adheres to the environmental standards are always recommended by me'* with the highest factor loading of 0.663 and the least being 0.477.

The seventh factor titled **'Affordability'** includes the price factor or the monetary considerations involved in the purchase of the product. This is a significant factor as it involves heavy investment in the case of high involvement product. It includes three dimensions namely *'Price has no significant influence on the choice of smartphone brands', 'Even if a rival smartphone brand with the same configuration and attributes is offered to me at a reduced price, I will stick to this brand only',* and *'Paying a higher price for this brand of smartphone is justifiable if it provides good customer value'* with the highest factor loading of 0.649 and the least being 0.436.

6.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for High Involvement Product (Smartphones)

Using AMOS 23.0, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to examine the applicability of the questionnaire's items (Byrne, 2010). Results indicate a good model fit with a chi-square value (CMIN) of 1139.470, $P < 0.001$ and degrees of freedom (DF) = 474 and the ratio of

chi-square and degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF = 2.404) was found to be less than 4 (Schreiber *et al*., 2006). Comparative-Fit-Index (CFI) is 0.823 and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) is 0.803 which signifies a good fit (Byrne, 2010). Goodness of Fit Indicator (GFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was found to be 0.801 and 0.803 respectively which is well within the prescribed limits (Byrne, 2010). Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was found to be 0.072 which is well below 0.1 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Thus, based on the above parameters, the model appears to be a good fit. The standardized regression weights as projected by the seven latent factors identified through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) namely *'Brand Affiliation &Allegiance', 'Purchase Potentiality', 'Brand Trustworthiness', 'Brand Familiarity & Comprehension', 'Consumer Ethnocentrism', 'Environmental Concerns' and 'Affordability'* is depicted in Figure 3 below:
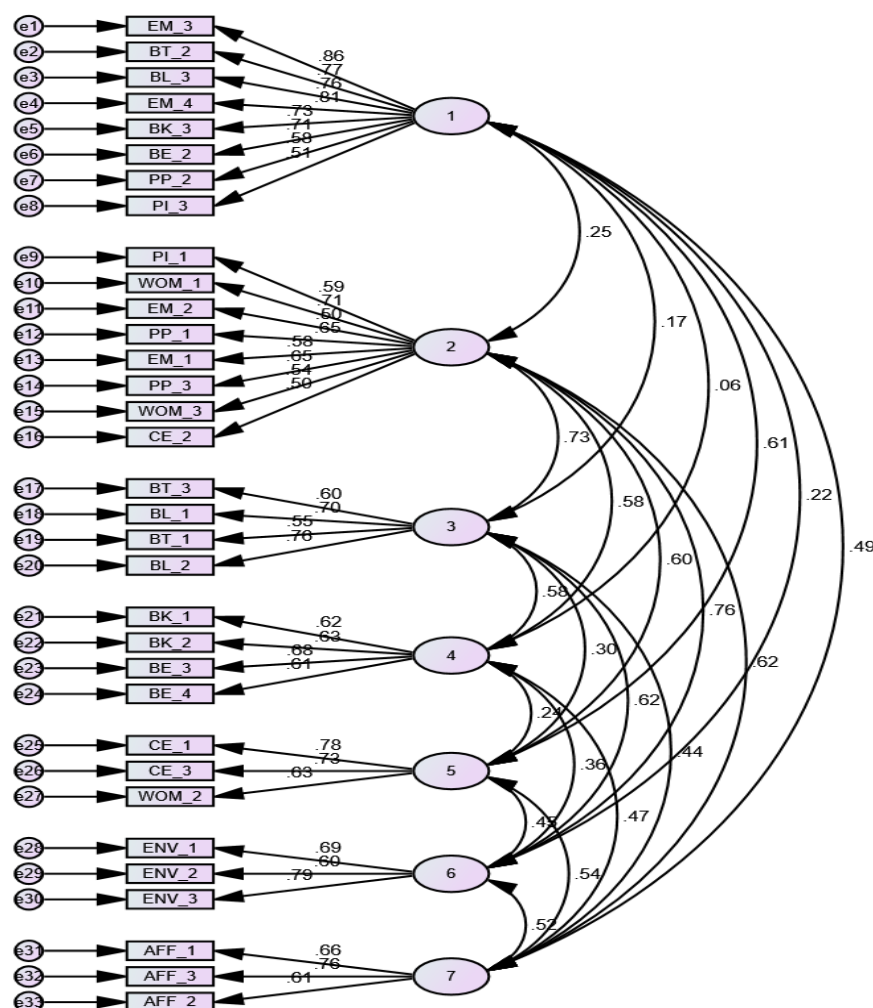

Figure 3. CFA Standardized Estimates

6.5 Explanation of the CFA Model

As is evident from the CFA model, all the items are associated with the related factors. In the case of the first factor 'Brand Affiliation and Allegiance' all the eight items were found to be

associated with the first factor. Out of these, EM_3 (This brand makes me easily bored) was found to be highly associated (0.86) and PI_3 (It is not desirable to put too much effort into choosing this smartphone brand) was found to be least associated (0.51).

The second factor 'Purchase Potentiality' consists of eight items and all were found to be associated with the second factor. Out of these, WOM_1 (Any positive piece of advice about this brand is of utmost importance to me) was found to be highly associated (0.71) whereas EM_2 (This brand is quite exciting to use) and CE_2 (It gives a sense of pride to be attached to brands which are made in India) were found to be least associated (0.50, 0.50).

The third factor 'Brand Trustworthiness' consists of four items, and all were found to be associated with the third factor. Out of these, BL_2 (This brand is usually recommended by me to all friends and relatives) was found to be highly associated (0.76) and BT_1 (This brand is quite trustworthy) was found to be least associated (0.55).

The fourth factor 'Brand Familiarity and Comprehension' consists of four items and all were found to be associated with the fourth factor. Out of these, BE_3 (The overall journey of this brand fascinates me greatly) was found to be highly associated (0.68) and BE_4 (This brand bonds well and occupies a special position in my mind) was found to be least associated (0.61).

The fifth factor 'Consumer Ethnocentrism' consists of three items, and all were found to be associated with the fifth factor. Out of these CE_1 (It is considered righteous on my part to purchase local brands and make them more self-reliant) was found to be highly associated (0.78) and WOM_2 (Negative comments related to this brand is always heeded to by me) was found to be least associated (0.63).

The sixth factor 'Environmental Concerns' consists of three items, and all were found to be associated with the sixth factor. Out of these, ENV_3 (Brands which adheres to the environmental standards are always recommended by me) was found to be highly associated (0.79) and ENV_2 (Spending a bit more is not much of an issue in the case of eco-friendly products) was found to be least associated (0.60).

Finally, the seventh factor 'Affordability' consists of three items and all were found to be associated with the seventh factor. Out of these, AFF_3 (Even if a rival smartphone brand with the same configuration and attributes is offered to me at a reduced price, I will stick to this brand only) was found to be highly associated (0.76) whereas AFF_2 (Paying a higher price for this brand of smartphone is justifiable if it provides good customer value) was found to be least associated (0.61).

6.6 Structural Equation Model with Standardised Estimates for High Involvement Product (Smartphones)

The seven latent constructs validated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) have been used to validate further through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The structural model for high involvement product (smartphones) with standardized estimates is depicted in Figure 4.
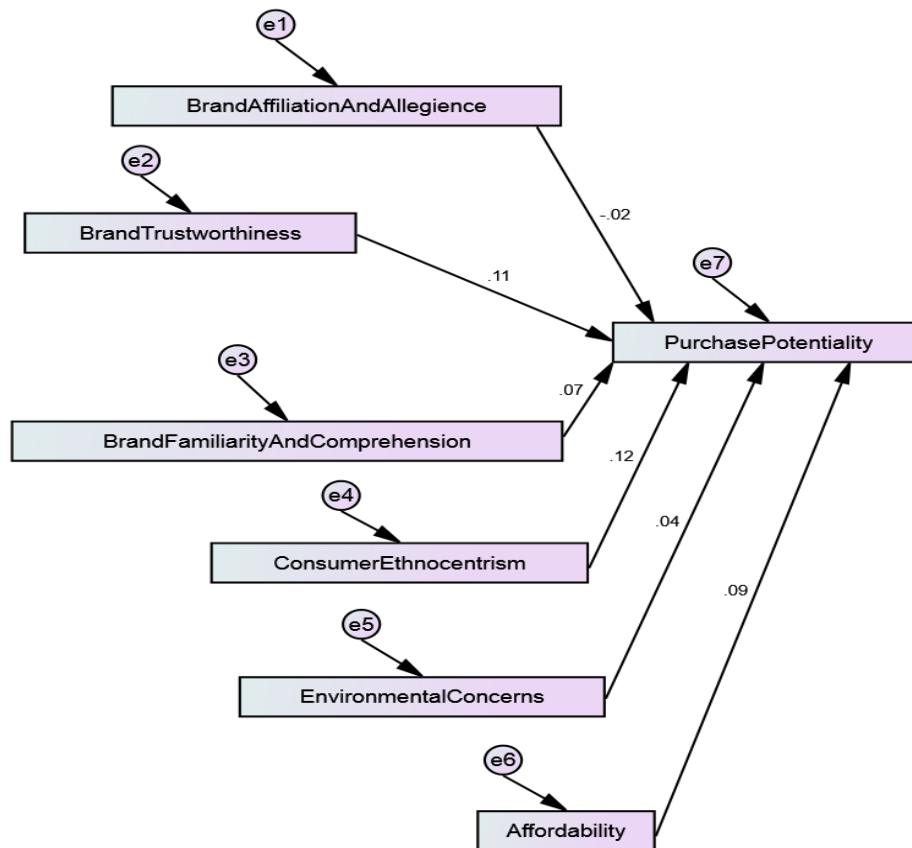
Figure 4. Structural Model for High Involvement Product (Smartphones) with Standardized Estimates

The model fit indices for the structural model depicted above have been calculated to test whether the structural model is a good fit. Results as highlighted in Table 9 shows a good model fit with a chi-square value (CMIN) of 10.451, P= 0.790 and degrees of freedom (DF) = 15 and the ratio of chi-square and degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF = 0.697) was found to be less than 4 (Schreiber et al., 2006). Comparative-Fit-Index (CFI) is 1.000 and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) is 1.533 which signifies a good fit (Byrne, 2010). Goodness of Fit Indicator (GFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was found to be 0.990 and 3.520 respectively which is well within the prescribed limits (Byrne, 2010). Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was found to be 0.000 which is well below 0.1 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Thus, based on the above parameters, the model appears to be a good fit. The model fit indices illustrates that the structural model clearly fits the sample data as they are within the acceptable range. (Hair *et al*., 2021).

Table 9. Model Fit Summary

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	13	10.451	15	.790	.697
Saturated model	28	.000	0		
Independence model	7	23.527	21	.317	1.120

RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.027	.990	.980	.530
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.040	.975	.967	.732

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.556	.378	1.533	3.520	1.000
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.000	.000	.038	.984
Independence model	.021	.000	.057	.893

6.6 Explanation of the SEM Model

The structural equation model (SEM) as depicted in Figure 4 reflects on the key influencers impacting the purchase potentiality of IT professionals as applicable in the case of high involvement product (smartphones). The first relevant factor found to have a significant influence on the purchase preference of IT professionals is 'Consumer Ethnocentrism' with a regression weight of 0.12. This implies that the ethnocentric tendencies among the IT professionals are quite prominent which impacts their purchase decisions.

The next relevant factor is 'Brand Trustworthiness' with a regression weight of 0.11. This implies that brand trust is also equally important which is quite logical in the case of purchase

of smartphones as the degree of involvement is high for such products.

The third factor is 'Affordability' with a regression weight of 0.09 which clearly indicates that price is also an important consideration in the case of purchase of high involvement product such as smartphones as applicable to IT professionals.

The fourth factor is 'Brand Familiarity and Comprehension' with a regression weight of 0.07. This implies that brand familiarities as well as brand knowledge are important purchase considerations as applicable to the IT professionals.

The fifth factor is 'Environmental Concerns' with a regression weight of 0.04 which signifies the relevance of environment friendly products among IT professionals.

Finally, the sixth factor 'Brand Affiliation and Allegiance' with a regression weight of -0.02. This implies that the emotional bonding with the brands is quite nominal and has a negative impact on the purchase potentiality of IT professionals.

6.8 Reliability Analysis for Low Involvement Product (Marie Biscuit)

The reliability analysis for the study pertaining to Marie Biscuits was also conducted through the same pattern followed for the high involvement product by using IBM SPSS and AMOS 23.0. The internal consistency of 35 items were evaluated using Cronbach alpha and was found to be 0.935 as depicted in Table 12 which is higher than the minimum level of 0.70 as mentioned by Nunnally (1978). Thus, internal consistency was found to be excellent suggesting sufficient reliability of the items.

Spearman- Brown Coefficient in the split-half test as depicted in Table 13 was found to be 0.871 which is also greater than the accepted level of 0.6. Thus, it can be concluded that the items are reliable and satisfactory as portrayed in Table 10, Table 11 and Table 12.

Table 10. Case Processing Summary

		N	%
	Valid	280	100.0
Cases	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	280	100.0

Note:a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 11. ReliabilityStatistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.935	35

Table 12. Split-half Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.894
		N of Items	18[a]
	Part 2	Value	.884
		N of Items	17[b]
	Total N of Items		35
Correlation Between Forms			.771
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length		.871
	Unequal Length		.871
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient			.861

Note: a. The items are: BK_1, BK_2, BK_3, BE_1, BE_2, BE_3, BE_4, BT_1, BT_2, BT_3, BL_1, BL_2, BL_3, EM_1, EM_2, EM_3, EM_4, AFF_1.

b. The items are: AFF_1, AFF_2, AFF_3, PI_1, PI_2, PI_3, CE_1, CE_2, CE_3, ENV_1, ENV_2, ENV_3, PP_1, PP_2, PP_3, WOM_1, WOM_2, WOM_3.

6.9 Exploratory Factor Analysis for Low Involvement Product (Marie Biscuit)

The 35 items used to measure the purchase preference of IT professionals pertaining to Marie Biscuit brands were subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal axis factoring and Varimax rotation.The results from the exploratory factor analysis depicted a seven factor solution explaining 48.113% of the total variance as depicted in Table 14. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy depicted a value of 0.917 (as indicated in Table 13) which is greater than the acceptable value of 0.60 (Hutcheson &Sofroniou, 1999). Bartlett's test of sphericity was also found to be significant as the value is less than 0.001 as shown in Table 13. Results from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) yielded six latent constructs namely *'Brand Charm & Affection', 'Brand Familiarity & Reliability', 'Purchase Potentiality', 'Brand Crush & Attachment', 'Brand Publicity', and 'Brand Engagement'* with respective items and factor loadings as shown in Table 15.

Table 13. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.917
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4365.193
	df	595
	Sig.	.000

Table 14. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.085	31.670	31.670	10.586	30.244	30.244	5.051	14.432	14.432
2	2.947	8.420	40.090	2.494	7.126	37.371	2.992	8.550	22.982
3	1.673	4.781	44.871	1.157	3.307	40.677	2.011	5.745	28.727
4	1.323	3.780	48.651	.809	2.311	42.988	1.951	5.575	34.302
5	1.198	3.424	52.075	.686	1.959	44.947	1.859	5.312	39.614
6	1.095	3.128	55.203	.590	1.684	46.631	1.504	4.298	43.912
7	1.049	2.997	58.201	.519	1.482	48.113	1.471	4.202	48.113

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 15.Constructs and items emerged from Exploratory Factor Analysis for Low Involvement Product (Marie Biscuits)

Name of the factor with items	*Labels with coding*	*Factor Loadings*
FACTOR 1: Brand Charm and Fascination		
BRAND TRUST: [This brand is not reliable and safe.]	BT_2	0.840
EMOTIONS: [This brand makes me easily bored.]	EM_3	0.784
BRAND ENGAGEMENT: [This brand does not gel well with my personality.]	BE_2	0.771
BRAND LOYALTY: [This brand will not be purchased and supported by me even after a previous bad experience.]	BL_3	0.695
BRAND KNOWLEDGE: [This brand does not seem to align well with my needs.]	BK_3	0.679
EMOTIONS: [Using this brand leaves me with a lot of regrets.]	EM_4	0.665
PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT: [In the case of purchase of MARIE biscuit brand, my involvement is quite low.]	PI_1	0.528
WORD OF MOUTH: [Negative comments related to this brand is always heeded to by me.]	WOM_2	0.524
FACTOR 2: Brand Familiarity and Reliability		
BRAND TRUST: [This brand performs well and always fulfills its promises.]	BT_3	0.621
BRAND TRUST: [This brand is quite trustworthy.]	BT_1	0.573
BRAND KNOWLEDGE: [This brand is easily recognizable.]	BK_1	0.546
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: [Brands which are eco-friendly in nature and without any harmful effects are always preferable.]	ENV_1	0.448
BRAND KNOWLEDGE: [This brand is always on the top-of-my-mind whenever I think of this product category.]	BK_2	0.446
FACTOR 3: Purchase Potentiality		
PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT: [Considerable time is hardly devoted by me on gathering information about various MARIE	PI_2	0.580

Name of the factor with items	Labels with coding	Factor Loadings
biscuit brands.]		
PURCHASE PREFERENCE: [When it comes to making a purchase, this brand of MARIE biscuit is not always my first choice.]	PP_2	0.546
PURCHASE PREFERENCE: [This MARIE biscuit brand is more likeable compared to other brands in the same category.]	PP_3	0.453
FACTOR 4: Brand Crush and Attachment		
EMOTIONS: [This brand gives me real joy and contentment.]	EM_1	0.611
BRAND LOYALTY: [This brand is usually recommended by me to all friends and relatives.]	BL_2	0.487
EMOTIONS: [This brand is quite exciting to use.]	EM_2	0.466
BRAND LOYALTY: [This brand is very well relatable.]	BL_1	0.400
FACTOR 5: Brand Publicity		
WORD OF MOUTH: [Positive comments or reviews about this brand is always shared by me with others.]	WOM_3	0.664
AFFORDABILITY: [Price has no significant influence on the choice of MARIE biscuit brands.]	AFF_1	0.478
WORD OF MOUTH: [Any positive piece of advice about this brand is of utmost importance to me.]	WOM_1	0.465
FACTOR 6: Brand Engagement		
BRAND ENGAGEMENT: [The overall journey of this brand fascinates me greatly.]	BE_3	0.583
BRAND ENGAGEMENT: [This brand is actively followed by me on social networking sites and is quite enjoyable to interact with through comment/share/like options.]	BE_1	0.547
BRAND ENGAGEMENT: [This brand bonds well and occupies a special position in my mind.]	BE_4	0.469

6.10 Explanation of the Emerged Factors

The first factor titled **'Brand Charm and Fascination'** refers to the emotional bonding of the consumers with the brand as well as the brand's charisma. This factor consists of eight

dimensions namely *'This brand is not reliable and safe', 'This brand makes me easily bored', 'This brand does not gel well with my personality', 'This brand will not be purchased and supported by me even after a previous bad experience', 'This brand does not seem to align well with my needs', 'Using this brand leaves me with a lot of regrets', 'In the case of purchase of MARIE biscuit brand, my involvement is quite low', and 'Negative comments related to this brand is always heeded to by me'* with the highest factor loading of 0.840 and the least being 0.524.

The second factor titled **'Brand Familiarity and Reliability'** refers to the consumers' awareness about the brand and its trustworthiness. This factor consists of five dimensions namely *'This brand performs well and always fulfills its promises', 'This brand is quite trustworthy', 'This brand is easily recognizable', 'Brands which are eco-friendly in nature and without any harmful effects are always preferable'* and *'This brand is always on the top-of-my-mind whenever I think of this product category'* with the highest loading of 0.621 and the least being 0.446.

The third factor titled **'Purchase Potentiality'** involves understanding the potential buying motives of consumers related to the purchase in the selected product category. This factor consists of three dimensions namely *'Considerable time is hardly devoted by me on gathering information about various MARIE biscuit brands', 'When it comes to making a purchase, this brand of MARIE biscuit is not always my first choice', and 'This MARIE biscuit brand is more likeable compared to other brands in the same category'* with the highest factor loading of 0.580 and the least being 0.453.

The fourth factor titled **'Brand Crush and Attachment'** reflects the emotional attachment as well as the behavioral loyalty associated with the brand. This factor consists of four dimensions namely *'This brand gives me real joy and contentment', 'This brand is usually recommended by me to all friends and relatives', 'This brand is quite exciting to use', and 'This brand is very well relatable'* with the highest factor loading of 0.611 and the least being 0.400.

The fifth factor titled **'Brand Publicity'** refers to the word of mouth communication both positive as well as negative having a significant impact on the purchase decision taken by consumers. This factor consists of three dimensions namely *'Positive comments or reviews about this brand is always shared by me with others', 'Price has no significant influence on the choice of MARIE biscuit brands'* and *'Any positive piece of advice about this brand is of utmost importance to me'* with the highest factor loading of 0.664 and the least being 0.465.

The sixth factor titled **'Brand Engagement'** involves active participation as well as continuous interaction of the consumers with the brands. This factor includes three dimensions namely *'The overall journey of this brand fascinates me greatly', 'This brand is actively followed by me on social networking sites and is quite enjoyable to interact with through comment/share/like options'* and *'This brand bonds well and occupies a special position in my mind'* with the highest factor loading of 0.583 and the least being 0.469.

6.11 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Low Involvement Product (Marie Biscuit)

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS 23.0 in order to test the validity of the items used in the questionnaire (Byrne, 2010). Results indicate a good model fit with a chi-square value (CMIN) of 584.101, P < 0.001 and degrees of freedom (DF) = 284 and the ratio of chi-square and degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF = 2.057) was found to be less than 4 (Schreiber *et al*., 2006). Comparative-Fit-Index (CFI) is 0.897 and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) is 0.898 which signifies a good fit (Byrne, 2010). Goodness of Fit Indicator (GFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was found to be 0.865 and 0.882 respectively which is well within the prescribed limits (Byrne, 2010). Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was found to be 0.062 which is well below 0.1 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Thus, based on the above parameters, the model appears to be a good fit. The standardized regression weights as projected by the six latent factors identified through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) namely *'Brand Charm & Affection'*, *'Brand Familiarity & Reliability'*, *'Purchase Potentiality'*, *'Brand Crush & Attachment'*, *'Brand Publicity'*, and *'Brand Engagement'*'s projected in Figure 5.
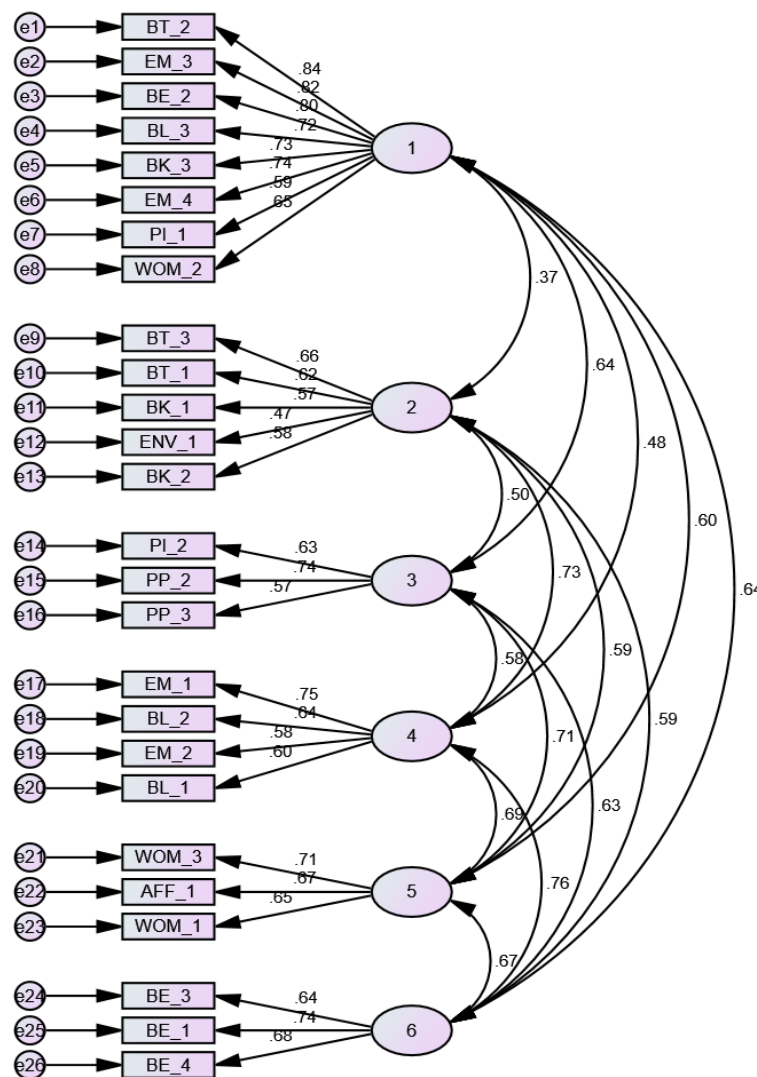

Figure 5. CFA with Standardized Estimates

6.12 Explanation of the CFA Model

As is evident from the CFA model, all the items are associated with the related factors. In the case of the first factor 'Brand Charm and Fascination' all the eight items were found to be associated with the first factor. Out of these, BT_2 (This brand is not reliable and safe) was found to be highly associated (0.84) and PI_1 (In the case of purchase of MARIE biscuit brand, my involvement is quite low) was found to be least associated (0.59).

The second factor 'Brand Familiarity and Reliability' consists of five items that were found to be associated with the second factor. Out of these, BT_3 (This brand performs well and always fulfills its promises) was found to be highly associated (0.66) and ENV_1 (Brands which are eco-friendly in nature and without any harmful effects are always preferable) was found to be least associated (0.47).

The third factor 'Purchase Potentiality' consists of three items that were found to be associated with the third factor. Out of these, PP_2 (When it comes to making a purchase, this brand of MARIE biscuit is not always my first choice) was found to be highly associated (0.74) PP_3 (This MARIE biscuit brand is more likeable compared to other brands in the same category) was found to be least associated (0.57).

The fourth factor 'Brand Crush and Attachment' consists of four items that were found to be associated with the fourth factor. Out of these, EM_1 (This brand gives me real joy and contentment) was found to be highly associated (0.75) and EM_2 (This brand is quite exciting to use) was found to be least associated (0.58).

The fifth factor 'Brand Publicity' consists of three items that were found to be associated with the fifth factor. Out of these, WOM_3 (Positive comments or reviews about this brand is always shared by me with others) was found to be highly associated whereas WOM_1 (Any positive piece of advice about this brand is of utmost importance to me) was found to be least associated (0.65).

Finally, the sixth factor 'Brand Engagement' consists of three items that were found to be associated with the sixth factor. Out of these, BE_1 (This brand is actively followed by me on social networking sites and is quite enjoyable to interact with through comment/share/like options) was found to be highly associated (0.74) and BE_3 (The overall journey of this brand fascinates me greatly)   was found to be least associated (0.64).

6.13 Structural equation model with standardized estimates for Low Involvement Product

(Marie Biscuit):

The six latent constructs validated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) have been used to validate further through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The structural model for lowinvolvement product (Marie Biscuit) with standardized estimates is depicted in Figure 6.
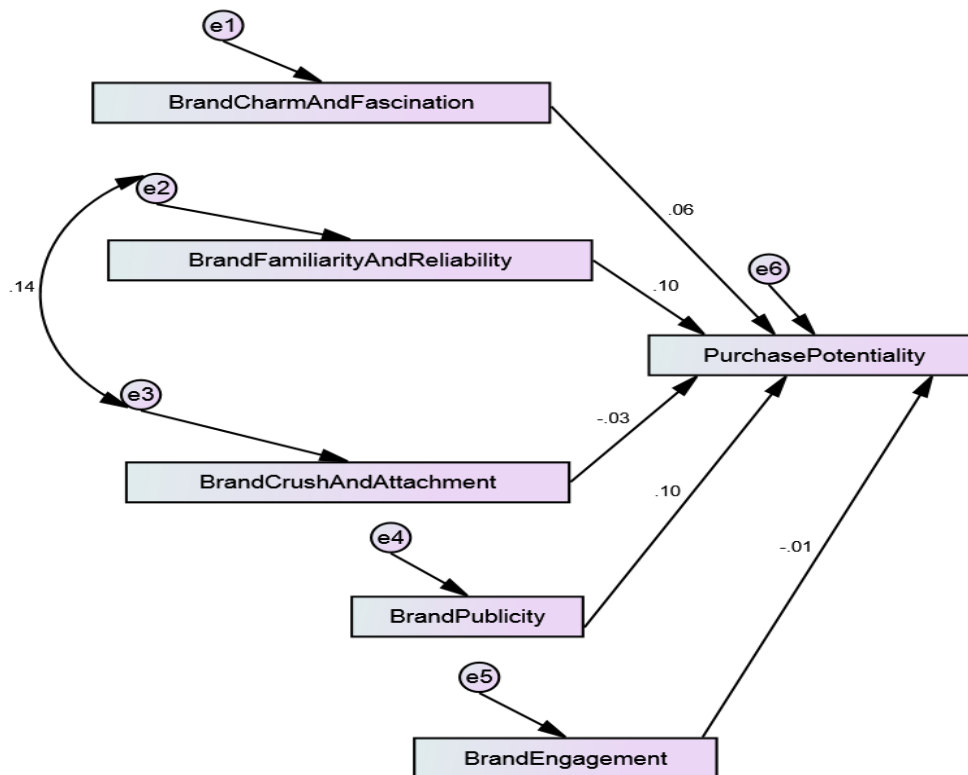
Figure 6. Structural Model for Low Involvement Product (Marie Biscuit) with Standardized Estimates

The model fit indices for the structural model depicted above have been calculated to test whether the structural model is a good fit. Results shows a good model fit with a chi-square value (CMIN) of 9.290, P= 0.411 and degrees of freedom (DF) = 9 and the ratio of chi-square and degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF = 1.032) was found to be less than 4 (Schreiber et al., 2006). Comparative-Fit-Index (CFI) is 0.959 and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) is 0.978 which signifies a good fit (Byrne, 2010). Goodness of Fit Indicator (GFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was found to be 0.989 and 0.932 respectively which is well within the prescribed limits (Byrne, 2010). Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was found to be 0.011 which is well below 0.1 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Thus, based on the above parameters, the model appears to be a good fit.

6.14 Explanation of the SEM Model

The structural equation model (SEM) as depicted in Figure 6 reflects on the key influencers impacting the purchase potentiality of IT professionals as applicable in the case of lowinvolvement product (Marie Biscuit). Two equally important factors that were found to have a significant influence on the purchase preference of IT professionals are 'Brand Familiarity and Reliability' and 'Brand Publicity' with a regression weight of 0.10 for both the factors. This implies that brand awareness in the form of brand recall and recognition as well as brand publicity through word-of-mouth communication are important factors affecting the purchase potentiality of IT professionals as applicable in the case of low

involvement product (Marie Biscuit).

The next relevant factor is 'Brand Charm and Fascination' with a regression weight of 0.06. This implies that consumer obsession as well as the degree of involvement in the case of low involvement product such as Marie biscuits is low which is clearly understandable considering the amount expended on such products.

The next factor is 'Brand Crush and Attachment' with a regression weight of -0.03. This factor has a negative impact on the purchase potentiality of IT professionals as brand loyalty as well as the emotional attachment is very low for such products.

Finally, the factor which has a least influence on the purchase potentiality of IT professionals is 'Brand Engagement' with a regression weight of -0.01. This is understandable as the nature of such products is such that the consumers do not wish to spend much time and effort on such products.

7. Discussion on the Findings of the Study

7.1 Discussion on Key Factors Influencing the Purchase Potentiality of Global Brands Versus Local Brands as Applicable in the Case of High-Involvement Product (Smartphones)

In the case of *high involvement product (smartphones)*, the purchase preference is significantly influenced by six latent constructs namely consumer ethnocentrism (0.12), brand trustworthiness (0.11), affordability (0.09), brand familiarity and comprehension (0.07), environmental concerns (0.04) and brand affiliation and allegiance (-0.02). It may be noted that brand affiliation and allegiance negatively influence the purchase preference in a mild way. However, consumer ethnocentrism as well as brand trustworthiness are significant factors influencing the purchase preference of tech savvy consumers. This gives a strong indication that ethnocentric tendencies among IT professionals are quite prevalent during purchases, and this may provide a lot of opportunities to the local brands which can position their products in the market by taking into account these parameters which will help it compete with the global brands in the marketplace. Equally important is brand trustworthiness which is an important purchase driver in case of high involvement product as proven through previous studies. Also, affordability or price quotient is important as it involves financial investment and consumers are always on the lookout of a good return on investment. Brand familiarity and comprehension factor mainly covers the brand recall and recognition which is quite evident in the case of global brands as well as active engagement rather than passive receivers of communication. This implies that brand interaction is an essential component of engagement which is important in case of IT professionals as enlightened consumers of today. Environmental concerns mainly include consumer awareness and concern for environmental sustainability among IT professionals who mainly prefer using environment friendly products. Finally, the role of brand affiliation and allegiance or the affective component is the least in case of purchase preference of high involvement products.

7.2 Discussion on Key Factors Influencing the Purchase Potentiality of Global Brands Versus Local Brands as Applicable in the Case of Low-Involvement Product (Marie Biscuit)

For low-involvement products, such as Marie biscuits, purchase decisions are significantly affected by five hidden factors: brand familiarity and reliability (0.10), brand publicity (0.10), brand charm and fascination (0.06), brand crush and attachment (-0.03), and brand engagement (-0.01).Key findings indicate: (a) Brand familiarity and reliability, along with brand publicity (word-of-mouth), are equally important for predicting the likelihood of purchasing low-involvement items among IT professionals. Brand awareness and word-of-mouth communication enhance consumer brand knowledge and act as complementary factors; (b) Brand charm and fascination relate to how receptive consumers are to trying new products, which is a key consideration for products with high switching behavior; (c) Brand crush and attachment show a low and negative influence, suggesting that brand loyalty and emotional connection are not major drivers for these consumers in this product category; (d) Brand engagement also has a low and negative impact, which makes sense given that consumers typically expend minimal effort or participation for low-involvement purchases.

8. Summary and Conclusion

The core objective of the research was to identify and validate a structural model for the primary purchase drivers that influence young IT professionals' preferences for global versus local brands. The study intended to enhance existing marketing literature and offer practical guidance for branding managers developing appropriate strategies and policies.

The study holds practical relevance by providing branding managers with the necessary framework and guidelines to understand the buying habits of this aspirational and tech-savvy consumer group. This demographic is a significant market due to its considerable purchasing power, exposure to global trends, and high engagement in digital and physical marketplaces. A clear understanding of their brand preferences allows companies to segment markets more effectively, position their products competitively, and customize communication strategies.

The primary limitations of the study are its exclusive focus on IT professionals and its restriction to only two product categories: smartphones and Marie biscuits. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to other consumer segments or product types. These limitations suggest opportunities for future research to expand the study across diverse customer segments and a broader range of products to validate and extend these findings. Future research could also explore additional constructs to further enrich the structural models.

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Authors' contributions

Dr. Amit Kundu, Dr. Dev Narayan Sarkar and Dr. Chitralekha Sengupta were responsible for

the subject selection and finalizing the research topic for the study. In addition, they also contributed to the development of the conceptual framework and research model. Dr. Chitralekha Sengupta conducted the literature review, theoretical framework of the research paper and was also involved in questionnaire development which was being revised and edited by Dr. Amit Kundu and Dr. Dev Narayan Sarkar for better clarity and understanding. Dr. Dev Narayan Sarkar was responsible for writing the abstract of the paper and carried out the data analysis and interpretation using SPSS AMOS. Dr. Dev Narayan Sarkar and Dr. Chitralekha Sengupta contributed to the conclusion and future research directions. Dr. Amit Kundu and Dr. Dev Narayan Sarkar provided the overall guidance and support for the research design and methodology. Finally, Dr. Amit Kundu was responsible for the overall correspondence and coordination regarding the publication of the research paper. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Macrothink Institute.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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