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FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER REPURCHASE INTENTION OF RED MEAT IN CHAIN SUPERMARKETS IN MTHATHA**Athanathi Mtintweni ^{1*}, Medicine Magocha ²**^{1*,2} Walter Sisulu University, South AfricaE-mails: ^{1*} amtintweni@wsu.ac.za (Corresponding author); ² mmagocha@wsu.ac.za

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Abstract. In today's knowledge society, the reputation of any brand is becoming increasingly important, whether it's a consumer good or a service provided by an organisation. Customers assess a brand's reputation before deciding whether to accept or reject it. This study is one of the few in the South African context to examine the factors influencing consumers' repurchase intentions for supermarkets in Mthatha. A set of postulated hypotheses was tested, and a sample consisting of 150 permanent and contingent workers from a supermarket in M was used in this study. A Structural Equation Modelling approach using Smart PLS was employed to test all the postulated hypotheses empirically. The findings suggest that repurchase intention in this context is significantly influenced by store service quality, store brand image, store brand loyalty, store brand trust, and red meat repurchase intention. Based on the current study results, insights for academia, practice, and management were provided. Furthermore, recommendations on possible strategies and policies that management or government can adopt, particularly regarding store service quality and red meat repurchase intention, were provided based on the current study's findings.

Keywords: red meat; store service quality; store brand image; store brand loyalty; store brand trust; red meat repurchase intention

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JEL Classifications: Q01, D90

1. Introduction

Consumers have become aware of the negative aspects of conventional meat, including environmental impacts, animal welfare concerns, and consumer health (Coucke et al., 2022). Alternative meats (i.e., cultured meat and plant-based meat alternatives) have been introduced recently to address these problems, and the rapid growth of the alternative meat market could pose a threat to the conventional meat market. It is necessary to identify the features of alternative meat that affect consumers' purchase intentions (Treiblmaier & Garaus, 2022).

According to Mazhar et al. (2022), repurchase intention is very important for profitability and is an objective discussed in company evaluations. In addition, repurchase intention also refers to the extent to which consumers are willing to buy a product or service again and is a simple, objective, and observable purchase behaviour expected (Istanbulluoglu & Sakman, 2022; Wang et al., 2023).

Previous studies by other researchers mostly focused on the relationships among brand image, service quality, and price for consumers in large retail stores, and they didn't focus on price because consumers consider the store to charge reasonable prices. Some studies (not all) focused on consumers' consideration of reasonable prices.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors influencing consumer repurchase intention for red meat in chain supermarkets in Mthatha. The authors will examine the influence of all variables on repurchase intention rather than as separate predictors. Store service quality, store brand image, store brand trust, and store brand loyalty may all influence red meat repurchase intention at South African supermarkets, particularly in Mthatha. One can hardly find a study with these four important variables in the Eastern Cape context, particularly in Mthatha. This study will examine factors influencing consumers' repurchase intention for red meat in chain supermarkets in Mthatha.

2. Problem statement

Despite the growing presence of chain supermarkets in Mthatha and the continued importance of red meat in consumers' diets, there is limited understanding of the factors influencing consumers' intentions to repurchase red meat from these outlets. Consumers are increasingly concerned about meat quality, freshness, price fluctuations, food safety, product availability, animal welfare, and health-related issues, all of which may affect their purchasing decisions (Buys et al., 2020; Fetscherin et al., 2024). For chain supermarkets, repeat purchases are essential for maintaining customer loyalty, profitability, and competitive advantage. However, variations in consumer preferences and perceptions may lead to inconsistent purchasing behaviour and reduced customer retention (Ip & Liang, 2024). The lack of empirical evidence on the determinants of red meat repurchase intention in the Mthatha context creates a knowledge gap that may hinder supermarkets from developing effective marketing and customer retention strategies (Chauhan, 2023). Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the key factors influencing consumers' repurchase intentions for red meat in chain supermarkets in Mthatha, providing insights that can support both retail management and consumer satisfaction.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical model or framework explains previously proven theories and how they may apply to the new study (Bouncken et al., 2021).

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

This theory served as the basis for the study, as established by Icek Ajzen in 1991 (Hagger et al., 2022). The theory of Planned Behaviour started as the Theory of Reasoned Action in 1980 to predict an individual's intention to engage in behaviour at a specific time and place (Soomro et al., 2022). The theory of planned behaviour is effectively adapted to ground this study, as customers' intentions regarding products such as red meat are based on their behavioural decisions, their awareness of the supermarket brand, and the communication (Hill-Sullins et al., 2025).

4. Review of literature

Attitudes towards Red Meat

Purchasing intentions for red meat are influenced by a combination of economic, social, cultural, and product-related factors (Fetscherin et al., 2024). Price and household income may play a major role, as consumers often balance affordability with perceived quality. Product attributes such as freshness, taste, tenderness, nutritional value, safety, origin, and production methods also affect buying decisions Samarakoon (Mudiyanselage et al., 2025). Health concerns about fat content and cholesterol, as well as links between excessive red meat consumption and certain diseases, can reduce demand among some consumers. Meat consumption itself has several peculiarities compared with other foods: it is often associated with status, tradition, celebrations, and social identity; consumption patterns vary significantly across regions, age groups, and income levels; and demand is highly sensitive to health information, food safety incidents, and ethical concerns (Singh et al., 2025). Furthermore, while many consumers value meat for its flavour and protein content, growing interest in

sustainability and alternative protein sources is influencing consumption habits and shifting purchasing behaviour (Nguyen et al., 2022; Kantono et al., 2021).

Store Service Quality

According to Tran (2022), service quality is a measurement of how well a company meets the expectations of the clients who hire it to provide services in response to their demands. Service quality measures how closely a service given meets the client's expectations (Karunaratna, 2022). It encompasses aspects such as the friendliness and professionalism of staff, prompt customer assistance, store cleanliness, efficient checkout services, proper handling and display of meat products, and the availability of knowledgeable employees who can provide information on meat quality and freshness (Junior et al., 2022). When consumers experience high service quality, they are more likely to develop trust and satisfaction with the supermarket, which, in turn, increases their willingness to buy red meat from the same store again (Morales, Ehmke & Sheridan, 2024).

Store Brand Image

The way a customer perceives a brand is known as its "brand image." It is the culmination of customers' perceptions, thoughts, and impressions of the brand. Brand image is the customers' current perception of a company. It can be characterised as a particular collection of associations held by the target audience. It denotes what the brand currently represents. It is a group of beliefs people hold about a particular brand. Brand image is how consumers see your business and how it communicates emotional value (Liu et al., 2025; Fatma & Khan, 2025).

Store Brand Trust

Customer trust in your brand's capacity to deliver on its promises is known as brand trust. The branding effect known as "brand trust" describes the connection between a brand and its customers (Febrian & Fadly, 2021). Brand trust develops from a variety of factors, such as prestige and service quality, but the manner of communication also plays a crucial role (Zhang, Xu & Ye, 2022).

Store Brand Loyalty

According to Julian and Ferdinan (2022), brand loyalty occurs when a customer repeatedly purchases a product from a competitor. For example, some people will always buy Coke at the grocery store, while others will always buy Pepsi. Brand Loyalty is the faithfulness a customer develops toward a brand. Brand loyalty develops in a consumer's mind after the consumer finds the product or service useful (Vikaliana et al., 2021).

Red Meat Repurchase Intention

According to Miao et al. (2021), repurchase intention is the process by which an individual purchases goods or services from the same firm, and the reason for repurchasing is primarily based on past purchase experience. Repurchase Intention is very important for profitability and is a factor discussed in company evaluations (Anshu, Gaur & Singh, 2022).

6. Research Methodology

According to Schwendicke et al. (2021), research methodology is an outline of how a given piece of research is carried out. It defines the techniques or procedures used to identify and analyse information on a specific research topic. This study is quantitative research; it is a major category in the research sphere, alongside qualitative research (Hafner et al., 2022; Sun & Moon, 2025). Quantitative data were collected from 150 customers who bought red meat online, using a questionnaire, as part of the target population. Random probability sampling was utilised because it involves selecting numbers from a list assigned to the sample in a fully randomised process.

7. Presentation and analysis of research findings

Accordingly, quantitative data was collected from 300 customers who purchased goods and services online using a questionnaire. Composite Reliability was employed to evaluate the measurement scale and confirm the instrument's internal consistency. According to Baharum et al. (2023), if the composite reliability is greater than 0.6, the instruments are reliable. In this study, Smart PLS was used to compute the composite reliability, and the results depict that all variables meet the acceptable threshold of 0.6. Hence, all the measurement instruments used in this study are deemed reliable.

According to Cheung et al. (2024), convergent validity is evaluated using factor loadings and average variance extracted. According to Santos and Cirillo (2023), factor loadings should be above 0.5, but 0.4 is marginally acceptable, while average variance extracted should be 0.7 and above, but 0.4 is marginally acceptable.

Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was employed to evaluate the measurement scale's internal consistency and reliability, according to Bujang et al. (2024). Cronbach's Alpha value should be greater than 0.7 to be reliable. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the instruments' reliability. All Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.7, confirming that the measurement instruments used in this study are reliable.

Composite Reliability

According to Baharum et al. (2023), if the composite reliability is greater than 0.6, the instruments are reliable. In this study, Smart PLS was used to compute the composite reliability, and the results depict that all variables meet the acceptable threshold of 0.6. Hence, all the measurement instruments used in this study are deemed reliable. Based on these two indicators meeting the recommended threshold, the study is reliable, as the researcher aimed to assess its reliability and validity (see Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability test results: Cronbach Alpha and Composite reliability

Research constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Red meat repurchase intention	0.944	0.944	0.960
Store brand image	0.903	0.904	0.932
Store brand loyalty	0.920	0.920	0.949
Store brand trust	0.952	0.953	0.963
Store service quality	0.888	0.896	0.930

Average variance extracted

Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE is expected to be > 0.5, the acceptable threshold. However, an AVE that is above 0.4 is regarded as marginally acceptable, while 0.5 is regarded as excellent. Therefore, the AVEs in this study range from marginally acceptable to acceptable. In the current study, the lowest AVE is 0.774, while the highest AVE is 0.862 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Validity test results: Average variance extracted

Research constructs	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Red meat repurchase intention	0.856
Store brand image	0.774
Store brand loyalty	0.862
Store brand trust	0.839
Store service quality	0.817

Based on this indicator, the data collected from the respondents converged well in this study, as all AVEs met the recommended threshold. The aim of using this indicator was to check convergent validity.

Four hypotheses were tested, and the path coefficients are provided in Figure 1 below. The significant levels were assessed using p-values and t-statistics. Respectively using the p-values. Hypotheses are viewed as significant at a 95% or higher level of significance ($\geq 95\%$), where the p-value is ≤ 0.05 (Selvaraj et al., 2022). The t-statistics are expected to exceed 1.96 for the proposed relationship to be deemed acceptable. The proposed hypotheses and path coefficients are presented first, followed by t-statistics and p-values indicating the significance level of the proposed relationships. Finally, the last column provides the researcher's decision on whether to accept or reject the proposed hypotheses based on the research findings. The path coefficients demonstrate the strength of the relationships between the dependent and the independent variables (Sarstedt & Danks, 2022). Upon assessing the probability value, also referred to as the p-value, it was demonstrated that four hypotheses postulated were significant at $p < 0.05$.

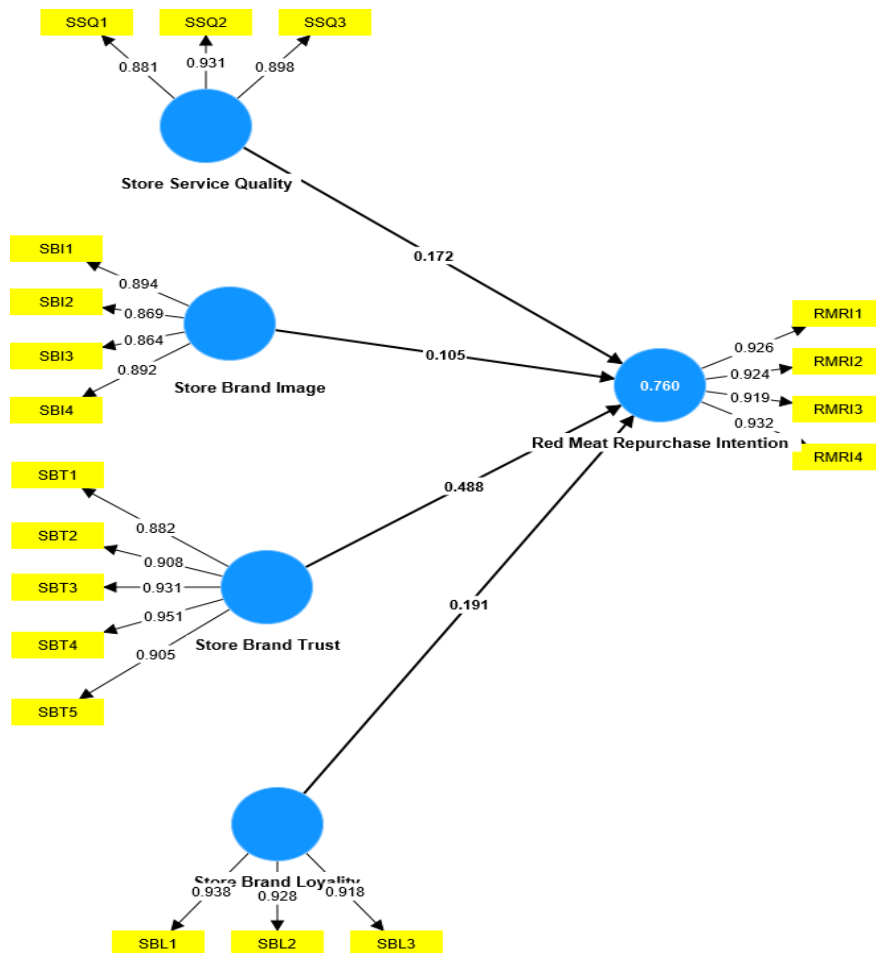


Figure 1. Structural equation modelling

Note: SSQ=Store Service Quality; SBI= Store Brand Image; SBT=Store Brand Trust; SBL= Store Brand Loyalty; RMRI= Red Meat Repurchase Intention.

Path Analysis Results

Similarly, to obtain and validate the directed dependencies among the variables, a Path Analysis was conducted, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Path analysis

Hypothesised relationship	Hypotheses	Path coefficient	T-statistics	P-value	Outcome
SSQ>RMRI	H ₁	0.105	2.990	0.003	Significant & supported
SBI>RMRI	H ₂	1.928	1.093	0.274	Insignificant & unsupported
SBT>RMRI	H ₃	0.488	5.105	0.000	Significant & supported
SBL>RMRI	H ₄	0.172	1.928	0.054	Insignificant & unsupported

Note: SSQ = store brand image; SBI = store brand image; SBT = store brand trust; SBL = store brand loyalty; RMRI = red meat repurchase intention.

Four hypotheses were proposed in the study. All hypotheses except H₂ and H₄ are statistically significant. The strongest relationship was between SSQ and RMRI, with $\beta=0.105$, $t=2.990$, and $p=0.000$. This was followed by the relationships between SBI and RMRI ($\beta=0.191$; $t=1.093$; $p=0.274$), SBT and RMRI ($\beta=0.488$; $t=5.105$; $p=0.000$), and SBL and RMRI ($\beta=0.172$; $t=1.928$; $p=0.054$), respectively.

(a) Results after testing Hypothesis 1

The results of the H₁ test confirmed that there is an association between store service quality (SSQ) and red meat repurchase intention (RMRI). A path coefficient of 0.105 was realised after testing H₁. This means that store service quality (SSQ) positively influences red meat repurchase intention (RMRI). Furthermore, the results indicate that the relationship between store service quality (SSQ) and red meat repurchase intention (RMRI) is positively significant ($t=2.391$, $p=0.003$).

(b) Results after testing Hypothesis 2

The results of the H₂ test confirmed that there is an association between store brand image (SBI) and red meat repurchase intention (RMRI). A path coefficient of 0.191 was realised after testing H₂. This means that store brand image (SBI) has a positive relationship with red meat repurchase intention (RMRI). Furthermore, the results indicate that the relationship between store brand image (SBI) and red meat repurchase intention (RMRI) is positive but insignificant ($t=1.928$, $p=0.274$).

(c) Results after testing Hypothesis 3

The results of the H₃ test confirmed that there is an association between store brand trust and red meat repurchase intention (RMRI). A path coefficient of 0.488 was realised after testing H₃. This means that store brand trust (SBT) positively influences red meat repurchase intention (RMRI). Furthermore, the results indicate that the relationship between store brand trust (SBT) and red meat repurchase intention (RMRI) is positively significant ($t=5.105$, $p=0.000$).

(d) Results after testing Hypothesis 4

The results of the H₄ test confirmed that there is an association between store brand loyalty and red meat repurchase intention (RMRI). A path coefficient of 0.172 was realised after testing H₄. This means that store brand loyalty (STL) positively influences red meat repurchase intention (RMRI). Furthermore, the results indicate that the relationship between store brand loyalty (STL) and red meat repurchase intention (RMRI) is positively significant ($t=1.928$, $p=0.054$).

Limitations of the study

Research limitations are potential weaknesses or constraints within a study's design, methodology, or scope that can influence its outcomes and the extent to which the results can be applied. Acknowledging them demonstrates academic integrity and helps readers properly interpret the study's findings (Balta-Salvador et al., 2025). For this

study, the following research limitations may be acknowledged. The study may be limited by its geographical scope, as it focuses only on consumers purchasing red meat from chain supermarkets in Mthatha. Consequently, the findings may not be generalisable to consumers in other towns, rural areas, or different retail formats such as butcheries and informal markets (Makusha et al., 2023). Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to response and social desirability biases, as well as to inaccurate recall of purchasing behaviour. The study may also be constrained by time and financial resources, limiting sample size and the ability to collect data from a broader population (Zhu, Greene, & Dolnicar, 2024). Furthermore, consumer repurchase intention may be influenced by external factors such as economic conditions, inflation, seasonal changes, meat shortages, food safety incidents, and cultural preferences, which may not be fully captured by the study (Zurek & Rudy, 2024).

8. Conclusions

The major objective of this study was to investigate the impact of store service quality, store brand image, store brand trust, and store brand loyalty on supermarkets in Mthatha. To accomplish this purpose, a conceptual model was developed, and hypotheses were postulated. Moreover, a research questionnaire was used to collect data, and Smart PLS software was used for structural modelling and data analysis. Overall, the findings confirmed that all the proposed hypotheses were positive, although only two were significant. The following section will discuss the findings for each of the three tested relationships in light of the prior empirical literature.

The literature review revealed a lack of evidence on the use of a mixed-methods approach in red meat repurchase intention. The use of a structural modelling approach for a quantitative research study and a qualitative study (mixed-methods approach) contributed new insights. It provided in-depth knowledge of store service quality, store brand image, store brand trust, and store brand loyalty as predictors, and red meat repurchase intention as the outcome variable. This study paves the way for other researchers to conduct follow-up studies using a mixed-methods approach. The following suggestions for future studies have been picked up:

- future studies should evaluate the factors that limit the current study, such as expanding the conceptual model;
- the results should be checked in other populations, in other provinces, across the country, and beyond;
- the population size should be increased to achieve better, more robust results.

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