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Factors of Influence on Purchasing Behavior, A Model with Latent Variables

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Abstract

The present study analyzes the factors that influence consumer purchasing behavior in shopping centers in five intermediate cities in Colombia (Cúcuta, Montería, Pasto, Tunja, and Villavicencio). A structural equation model based on partial least squares (PLS-PM) was utilized to assess the interaction among sociocultural, psychological, and marketing factors in regard to purchasing behavior. The data presented herein were collected through the implementation of a structured survey, which was administered to 1,750 consumers. The findings suggest that marketing factors exert the most substantial direct influence on purchasing behavior ($\beta=0.662$). The impact of sociocultural factors on psychological aspects is significant ($\beta=0.431$), and these factors, in turn, exert a notable influence on purchasing behavior ($\beta=0.111$). Marketing factors have also been demonstrated to exert an influence on psychological factors ($\beta=0.269$). The model accounts for 51.4% of the variance in purchasing behavior. The findings of this study offer valuable implications for commercial managers seeking to develop effective strategies that are adapted to the expectations of the contemporary consumer in the Colombian context.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Shopping Centers, Sociocultural Factors, Psychological Factors, Marketing, PLS-SEM, Colombia.

Introduction

Consumer purchasing behavior is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by a variety of interrelated factors, including sociocultural, psychological, and marketing aspects. This interaction has been extensively documented, recognizing that purchasing decisions are shaped not only by rational or economic factors, but also by emotional, cultural, and contextual elements. These elements have been transformed with technological progress and recent social changes (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2019; Calvo-Porrall & Lévy-Mangin, 2019; BBVA Research, 2019).

In the early stages of research in the field of consumer purchasing behavior, the primary focus was on economic rationality. Researchers posited that individuals sought to maximize their utility within the confines of their budgetary constraints and individual preferences, as delineated by Samuelson in 1938. However, advancements in consumer research have facilitated the development of a more comprehensive understanding that incorporates variables such as

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motivation, perception, learning, attitudes, and sociocultural factors. This enhanced framework offers a more extensive and applicable foundation for interpreting the current market context (Howard & Sheth, 1969; Solomon, 2018).

Sociocultural factors are recognized as key forces in the purchase decision, since they profoundly influence consumer preferences and behaviors. The establishment of consumption patterns is determined by a variety of factors, including family, social class, and reference groups. These factors can encourage or inhibit the purchase of certain products or services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2019; Solomon, 2018). Furthermore, consumer segmentation based on sociocultural variables enables shopping centers and businesses to adapt their offerings to specific market expectations, thereby optimizing their commercial strategies (Kuruville & Joshi, 2020).

In addition, psychological factors have been demonstrated to play a crucial role in explaining consumer behavior, especially in terms of how individuals process commercial information and make decisions in response to different stimuli. Emotions, in particular, have been identified as key drivers of buying behavior, especially in commercial settings such as shopping malls where sensory and emotional experiences can enhance impulsive behaviors or repurchase intentions (Das & Varshneya, 2017; Gilboa et al., 2020).

Concurrently, marketing strategies have undergone substantial evolution, shifting towards a digital and personalized approach. In this new paradigm, the quality of service, physical comfort, security, and specific promotions have emerged as pivotal factors in cultivating consumer loyalty. Digitalization and social networks have fundamentally transformed the landscape of consumer-brand interaction, thereby creating novel opportunities to personalize experiences and enhance consumer perception and loyalty (Ramos, 2018; BBVA Research, 2019). In this regard, effective strategies must encompass not only the promotion of the product, but also the cultivation of privacy and trust in the brand (Gutiérrez et al., 2023; Dolega et al., 2021).

The evolution of retail spaces has also played a significant role in the realm of purchasing behavior. Recent studies have indicated that factors such as location, interior design, the comfort of basic services (bathrooms, parking, mobility), and the variety of the commercial mix are critical to attracting consumers and promoting constant and quality traffic (Vargas, 2018; Kuruville & Joshi, 2020). This phenomenon has been particularly evident in intermediary cities in Colombia, where shopping centers have assumed a prominent role, functioning not only as commercial spaces but also as venues for social interaction and leisure (Vargas, 2018).

Moreover, the advent of the novel Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) has precipitated a paradigm shift in consumer behavior, engendering heightened awareness regarding the allocation of spending and the selection of products with reduced environmental impact. In response to these shifts in consumer behavior, companies have been compelled to swiftly recalibrate their strategic approaches, placing greater emphasis on sustainability and strategies that promote consumer well-being and emotional security (EY, 2020).

This study aims to address the need to identify and comprehensively analyze the factors that affect purchasing behavior in Colombian shopping centers. To this end, an analytical model based on structural equations based on partial least squares (PLS-PM) is employed. This methodology will facilitate a more profound evaluation and comprehension of the interrelationships among sociocultural, psychological, and marketing variables. It will provide significant insights for commercial managers to formulate effective strategies that will meet and

surpass the expectations of contemporary consumers (Gilboa et al., 2020; Kuruvilla & Joshi, 2020).

Literature Review

Concept of Purchasing Behavior

The study of consumer purchasing behavior has been the subject of numerous classical and contemporary definitions. Consumer behavior was initially understood primarily from an economic perspective, in which the consumer was regarded as a rational agent who sought to maximize utility and minimize costs (Samuelson, 1938). However, Howard and Sheth's seminal 1969 study expanded upon this earlier research by incorporating psychological and social variables into their theoretical model. This integration of factors led to the recognition of a more intricate and multidimensional process underlying consumer decision-making. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2019), the term "consumer behavior" refers to the actions individuals undertake when seeking, acquiring, utilizing, and assessing products or services that align with their needs or preferences.

In contemporary approaches, the study of purchasing behavior has incorporated interdisciplinary perspectives that encompass emotional, cognitive, and social components. Kotler and Keller (2020) underscore the significance of comprehending the consumer in a digital and globalized context, emphasizing that the process of making purchasing decisions is influenced by numerous online channels and stimuli, thereby substantially altering conventional consumption patterns. In their 2018 study, Hoyer and Macinnis (2018) underscored the significance of variables such as quality perception, brand loyalty, and emotional experience in the contemporary conceptualization of consumer behavior.

Sociocultural Factors

Sociocultural factors emerge as a pivotal determinant of consumer purchasing behavior, underscoring the pivotal role of familial influences, reference groups, and the cultural context of the consumer. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2019), these factors influence social norms, cultural traditions, and family dynamics, thereby establishing specific purchasing patterns within social groups.

Conversely, recent research has underscored the significance of consumer segmentation based on sociocultural variables. In their 2020 study, Kuruvilla and Joshi identified various consumer segments within shopping malls, including "young enthusiasts" and "bargain hunters." The researchers noted that each segment exhibited distinct patterns related to the influence of social reference groups, lifestyles, and family structure.

Psychological Factors

Psychological factors, such as motivation, perception, attitudes, and emotions, play a pivotal role in consumer decision-making. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2019), motivations, attitudes, and perceptions significantly shape consumers' responses to commercial stimuli. Furthermore, recent research has underscored the pivotal role of emotions in the consumer experience, demonstrating that the pleasure and excitement derived from the commercial environment can significantly increase impulsive consumption and customer loyalty (Das & Varshneya, 2017).

A multitude of contemporary models underscore the significance of the psychological stages

involved in decision-making. These models, including the Consumer Decision Process Model by Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard, elucidate the intricacies inherent in the decision-making process, encompassing the recognition of needs and the subsequent post-purchase evaluation (Solomon, 2018).

Marketing Strategies and their Impact

Marketing plays a critical role in shaping consumer behavior through the implementation of specific product, price, communication, and distribution strategies. Ramos (2018) posits that elements such as safety, comfort, and the quality of service exert a direct influence on consumer perception and the intention to make frequent visits to shopping centers.

In recent times, digital strategies and social media presence have gained relevance due to their ability to generate personalized and constant interactions between brands and consumers. Dolega et al. (2021) emphasize the substantial impact of social media campaigns on digital traffic, noting a moderate increase in sales. This highlights the necessity to comprehend the influence of diverse digital content types on purchasing decisions. Gutiérrez et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of effective management of consumer privacy on social networks in order to maintain and increase purchase intent and engagement with brands.

Analysis Models Used in Previous Studies

In the field of consumer behavior research, structural equation models, particularly the PLS-PM approach, have emerged as a prominent methodology. This prominence can be attributed to the models' capacity to assess intricate causal relationships between latent variables (Hair et al., 2019). This methodological approach facilitates not only the identification of significant relationships but also the analysis of complex interactions between psychological, sociocultural, and marketing variables, thereby facilitating a profound understanding of the purchasing process.

A growing body of research has recently employed PLS-PM to investigate the impact of sociocultural, psychological, and business strategies on purchasing decision-making processes. These studies underscore the model's capacity to manage intricate data and yield substantial results that provide actionable insights for strategic decision-making within authentic business contexts (Hair et al., 2019; Gilboa et al., 2020). The method's adaptability in handling small samples and non-parametric data renders it particularly advantageous for studies conducted in specific environments, such as shopping malls or digital platforms (Hair et al., 2022).

Methodology

Research Design

The methodological design of this research is descriptive-correlational, with a non-experimental quantitative approach. This methodological framework facilitates the identification and quantification of relationships between predefined variables, obviating the need for deliberate manipulation of experimental conditions (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2019). A partial least squares-based structural equation model (PLS-PM) was selected for its capacity to manage diminutive sample sizes and non-parametric variables. This model is particularly well-suited for exploratory studies that aim to assess and substantiate intricate theoretical relationships between multiple latent variables (Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, & Danks, 2022).

Variables and Model Construction

Definition of latent variables

The development of the PLS-PM model was predicated on the delineation of four primary groups of latent variables. These variables were selected for their empirical and theoretical relevance in recent specialized literature, as determined by a thorough literature review (Gilboa et al., 2020; Kuruvilla & Joshi, 2020; Ramos, 2018).

Indicators used

Each latent variable was measured using specific indicators, derived from the literature review and adapted to the Colombian reality:

- **Sociocultural factors:** family influence, social group influence, and cultural perception of consumption (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2019).
- **Psychological Factors:** Indicators related to the perception of quality, emotions generated during the purchase and the attitude towards products or services (Das & Varshneya, 2017).
- **Marketing Factors:** They considered advertising, promotions, perceived price, convenience of the establishment, and digital marketing strategies (Dolega et al., 2021).
- **Purchasing Behavior Factors:** Purchase decision, frequency and degree of unplanned purchases, as well as the perceived emotional influence during the purchase process, especially highlighting aspects such as excitement, emotional satisfaction and the impact of the commercial environment on spontaneous decisions (Das & Varshneya, 2017; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Data Collection and Processing

Data source and sample size

The data were collected through a structured survey administered in five intermediate cities in Colombia. The following cities were identified: Cúcuta, Montería, Pasto, Tunja, and Villavicencio. The total sample comprised 1,750 consumers, distributed proportionally according to the population of each city, with the objective of attaining statistical representativeness. The survey incorporated both open-ended and closed-ended questions, enabling the collection of precise data on consumption habits and perceptions.

Statistical techniques applied

To process and analyze the data, advanced statistical techniques were employed, utilizing the statistical software R and the *plspm* library. An initial descriptive analysis of the sample was conducted to demographically characterize consumers and evaluate the effect of latent variables. A structural equation model was then employed, utilizing partial least squares (PLS) PLS-PM. This approach enabled the identification of the effect of causal relationships between sociocultural, psychological, and marketing variables on consumer purchasing behavior (Hair et al., 2022).

Measuring Instrument

Sociocultural Factors (SOC)

- **SOC.1:** Your Family's Opinion Influences Your Purchase Decision.

- **SOC.2:** The opinion of your friends and colleagues influences your purchase decision.
- **SOC.3:** A foreign seller's attention influences their purchase decision.

Psychological Factors (PSI)

- **PSI.1:** Social status (social class) influences your purchase decision.
- **PSI.2:** Your lifestyle is a factor that influences your purchase decision in Shopping Centers.
- **PSI.3:** Feelings and emotions influence your purchase decision.
- **PSI.4:** Have you ever bought a product due to the influence of people outside your environment?

Marketing Factors (MKT)

- **MKT.1:** The convenience of parking inside a Shopping Center influences your purchase decision.
- **MKT.2:** Comfort in the bathroom battery influences your purchase decision.
- **MKT.3:** The convenience of mobility within a Shopping Centre influences your purchase decision.
- **MKT.4:** The hygiene and cleanliness of Shopping Centers influence your purchase decision.
- **MKT.5:** The quality of the Shopping Centre influences your purchase decision.
- **MKT.6:** Security in the Shopping Center is a factor that influences your purchase decision.
- **MKT.7:** The location of the Shopping Centre influences your purchase decision.
- **MKT.8:** Social media is influential for your choice to visit a shopping mall.
- **MKT.9:** The advertising or promotion strategies used by different stores influence your purchase decision.

Purchase Behavior (CPC)

- **CPC.1:** The prices that are sometimes in Shopping Centers influence your purchase decision.
- **CPC.2:** The promotions that occasionally exist in Shopping Centers influence your purchase decision.
- **CPC.3:** You have purchased products in the Shopping Centers that you did not plan to buy.
- **CPC.4:** The different payment methods that exist in Shopping Centers influence your purchase decision.
- **CPC.5:** The variety of products and services offered in Shopping Centers influences your purchase decision.
- **CPC.6:** The design, presentation, and placement of products in the store influences your

- **CPC.7:** The prizes and/or discounts offered by the Shopping Centers influence your purchase decision.
- **CPC.8:** The good service of the Shopping Centers influences your purchase decision.
- **CPC.9:** The location of the stores or premises within the Shopping Centers influences your purchase decision.

Results and Analysis

Description of the Sample

Sociodemographic Profile of the Participants

The sample under study was composed of 1750 consumers, distributed proportionally in five intermediate cities of Colombia: Cúcuta, Montería, Pasto, Tunja and Villavicencio. The population distribution of the respondents was based on the official population projection of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE, 2018), thus guaranteeing adequate geographical and demographic representativeness.

Regarding gender, 55.1% of respondents were women and 44.9% men, which shows a relatively equal and balanced distribution in terms of gender. Regarding age, the sample considered different age groups: early childhood (0 to 5 years), childhood (6 to 12 years), adolescence (13 to 18 years), young (19 to 24 years), young adult (25 to 34 years), adult (35 to 54 years) and older adults (over 54 years), adapted according to the classification of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF). The predominant groups were young adults and adults, showing greater representation of economically active segments, key to studies on purchasing behavior.

In relation to marital status, the majority of respondents stated that they were single (46%), followed by married people (28.8%) and in a common-law union (21.2%), this being a relevant aspect for the segmentation of commercial strategies in shopping centers.

Regarding employment, independent workers predominate (32%), followed by professionals (27%), students (14%), people dedicated themselves to the home (8%) and people without a defined occupation (4%). This distribution allows inferring about the time available for purchasing activities, as well as the potential purchasing power of consumers.

In terms of income, most of the respondents (57%) reported income between 1 and 3 current legal minimum monthly wages (SMMLV). 27% reported revenues of up to 1 SMMLV, while 11% reported revenues greater than 3 SMMLV. This income distribution provides key insights into the purchasing power and price sensitivity of the consumers studied.

Finally, it is relevant to note that more than 51.8% of respondents said they had pets, which implies an emerging factor of influence on purchasing decisions and could guide specific commercial strategies related to "pet-friendly" spaces and products in shopping centers.

This sociodemographic profile allows a detailed understanding of the characteristics of the population studied, facilitating a more in-depth analysis of the factors that affect their purchasing behavior.

Descriptive Analysis

The percentage distribution of responses on a Likert scale (from 1 to 5), for different variables

related to purchasing behavior, grouped into categories of sociocultural factors (SOC), psychological factors (PSI), marketing factors (MKT) and purchasing behavior itself (CPC). A notable variability is observed in the distribution of responses between the different variables evaluated, evidencing a diversity in the perceptions and attitudes of consumers towards the different factors analyzed.

Specifically, in the variables associated with purchasing behavior (CPC), there is a marked trend towards high ratings (4 and 5 on the Likert scale). In particular, the variables CPC.1 and CPC.2 stand out with a high concentration of responses at the highest value of the scale (5), indicating a very high agreement regarding these dimensions. CPC.7 presents a more balanced distribution between intermediate and upper levels, suggesting less consensus or a less intense perception regarding this specific dimension of purchasing behavior.

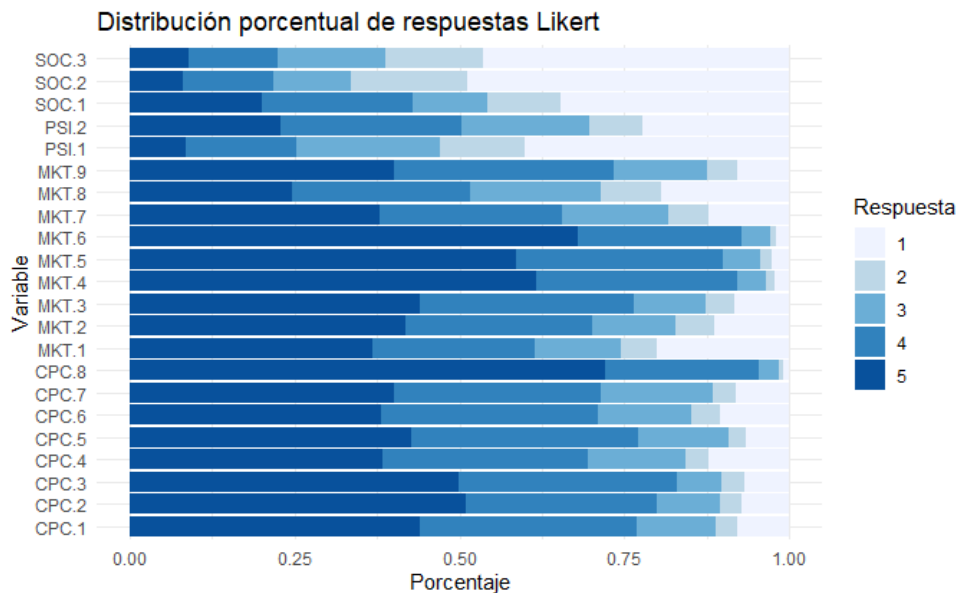


Fig. 1. Percentage Distribution of the Variables on the Likert Scale.

Source: Authors.

In relation to marketing factors (MKT), it is observed that variables such as MKT.6, MKT.4 and MKT.5 present significant concentrations of high responses, which indicates a favorable perception by the respondents about these commercial strategies. In contrast, variables such as MKT.9 and MKT.2 present more dispersed distributions with higher proportions in intermediate (3) or low (2 and 1) responses, reflecting a more neutral or critical opinion regarding these specific strategies, which could indicate potential areas for improvement in terms of marketing.

Finally, the variables related to sociocultural (SOC) and psychological (PSI) factors show less concentrated and more variable distributions. The responses to the SOC variables tend towards intermediate and low values, especially SOC.3, which may reflect a lower perceived influence of these specific sociocultural aspects on purchasing behavior. On the other hand, psychological variables such as PSI.1 and PSI.2 show tendencies towards higher responses, although with a notable dispersion, indicating that psychological factors have some relevance, but also present a considerable diversity in perception among the consumers surveyed.

Structural Model

The measurement model was evaluated by examining the factor loads (λ) of the indicators on their respective latent variables. All indicators presented statistically significant factor loads ($p < 0.001$ or $p < 0.01$), which confirms their suitability to measure the proposed latent constructs.

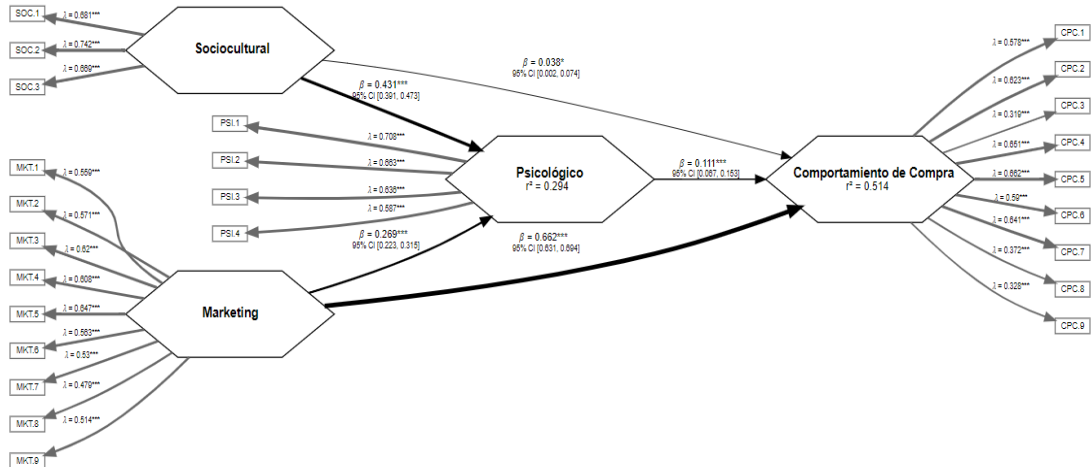


Fig. 2. Measurement Model and Structural Model.

Source: Authors.

Sociocultural Factors (SOC): The selected indicators, such as family opinion (SOC.1: $\lambda=0.831***$) and the opinion of friends (SOC.2: $\lambda=0.742***$), showed high and significant burdens. The indicator on the attention of a foreign seller (SOC.3: $\lambda=0.669***$) was also significant. **Psychological Factors (PSI):** The four indicators, including the influence of social status (PSI.1: $\lambda=0.780***$), lifestyle (PSI.2: $\lambda=0.863***$), feelings and emotions (PSI.3: $\lambda=0.806***$), and the influence of outsiders (PSI.4: $\lambda=0.857***$), demonstrated a strong relationship with the construct. **Marketing Factors (MKT):** The nine indicators presented significant loads. For example, mall safety (MKT.6: $\lambda=0.863***$), mall quality (MKT.5: $\lambda=0.838***$), and hygiene and cleanliness (MKT.4: $\lambda=0.808***$) showed robust loads. Other indicators such as parking comfort (MKT.1: $\lambda=0.556***$) and advertising strategies (MKT.9: $\lambda=0.614***$) were also significant.

Purchasing Behavior (CPC): All the indicators of this construct, such as the influence of promotions (CPC.2: $\lambda=0.623***$), the variety of products and services (CPC.5: $\lambda=0.681***$), and good service (CPC.8: $\lambda=0.841***$), presented significant loads, validating their contribution to the construct.

Evaluation of the Structural Model

The structural model was evaluated to determine the strength and significance of the hypothesized relationships between the latent variables. The route coefficients (β) and R2 values for endogenous variables are detailed below.

- **Determinants of Psychological Factors (PSI):**

- Sociocultural Factors exert a positive and highly significant influence on Psychological Factors ($\beta=0.431^{***}$, 95% CI [0.381, 0.473]).
- Marketing Factors also showed a positive and significant impact on Psychological Factors ($\beta=0.269^{***}$, 95% CI [0.223, 0.315]).
- Together, Sociocultural and Marketing Factors explain 29.4% of the variance of Psychological Factors ($R^2=0.294$).

- **Determinants of Purchasing Behavior (CPC):**

- Sociocultural Factors have a direct, positive and significant effect, although of lesser magnitude, on Purchasing Behavior ($\beta=0.030^{**}$, 95% CI [0.003, 0.074]).
- Marketing Factors proved to be the strongest predictor of Purchasing Behavior, with a positive and highly significant direct effect ($\beta=0.662^{***}$, 95% CI [0.591, 0.694]). This finding is consistent with the literature emphasizing the critical role of marketing in shaping buying behavior.
- Psychological Factors also have a direct, positive and significant influence on Purchasing Behavior ($\beta=0.111^{***}$, 95% CI [0.057, 0.153]). Previous research has highlighted the crucial role of emotions and other psychological factors in the shopping experience and consumption.
- The model explains 51.4% of the variance of Purchasing Behavior ($R^2=0.514$), which indicates a considerable predictive capacity of the factors included.

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study identified and analyzed the factors that influence purchasing behavior in Colombian shopping centers, using a structural equation model (PLS-PM). The findings indicate a multifaceted interplay among sociocultural, psychological, and marketing factors.

The most significant impact on Purchasing Behavior (CPC) is attributable to Marketing Factors ($\beta=0.662$). This finding aligns with extant literature emphasizing the pivotal function of marketing in influencing consumer behavior. In our model, we measured aspects such as safety, convenience, and quality of service, which are directly influenced by marketing strategies. These marketing strategies, as indicated by indicators such as MKT.1, MKT.4, MKT.5, and MKT.6, have been shown to exert a significant impact on consumer perceptions and the intention to visit. Digitalization and social networks (MKT.8) are also part of these evolutionary strategies that seek to improve consumer perception and loyalty.

The analysis revealed a significant relationship between sociocultural factors (SOC) and psychological factors (PSI), with a beta coefficient of 0.431. This finding lends further support to the notion that family dynamics (SOC.1) and reference groups (SOC.2) play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviors and perceptions. While the direct impact of sociocultural factors on purchasing behavior was negligible ($\beta=0.030$), their role in the development of psychological predispositions is foundational.

Marketing factors have been demonstrated to exert a significant influence on psychological factors ($\beta=0.269$). Marketing strategies have been shown to influence not only direct transactions but also emotional and sensory experience in commercial environments. This, in turn, has the

potential to enhance impulsive behaviors or repurchase intentions.

Consequently, Psychological Factors (PSI) exert a direct influence on Purchasing Behavior ($\beta=0.111$). This finding aligns with research emphasizing the pivotal role of emotions, motivations, and perceptions in decision-making processes. The pursuit of pleasure and the experience of excitement within the commercial environment have been demonstrated to have a positive correlation with impulsive consumption and loyalty.

The model demonstrated a satisfactory explanatory capacity, with 51.4% of the variance in Purchasing Behavior and 29.4% of the variance in Psychological Factors being explained, aligning with the objective of comprehending these interactions in greater depth through PLS-PM. As has been previously demonstrated in extant studies on consumer behavior, this method has the capacity to assess complex causal relationships between latent variables.

Implications for Industry and Marketing

The findings of this study provide a number of practical implications for shopping mall managers and marketing professionals in Colombia.

1. **Prioritization of Comprehensive Marketing Strategies:** Given the strong direct impact of marketing factors on purchasing behavior and their influence on psychological factors, it is crucial for shopping malls to invest in well-informed marketing strategies. This includes optimizing physical comfort (MKT.1, MKT.2, MKT.3), safety (MKT.6), overall site quality (MKT.5), and hygiene (MKT.4). Promotions (MKT.9), advertising, and social media presence (MKT.8) must be strategically managed to attract and retain customers.

2. **Foster Psychologically Positive Experiences:** Recognizing the influence of psychological factors, strategies must go beyond the transactional to create memorable and emotionally rewarding shopping experiences. Interior design (related to CPC.6), atmosphere, quality of service (CPC.8), and customer service can improve the perception of quality and foster positive affective states.

3. **Consider Sociocultural Influences:** Marketing strategies can appeal to family (SOC.1) and group of friends (SOC.2) influences through campaigns that encourage group buying, family events, or referral programs. Understanding the local culture and social dynamics can help tailor the commercial offer.

4. **Adapting to New Consumer Trends:** The high proportion of respondents with pets (51.8%) suggests an opportunity to develop "pet-friendly" strategies, such as allowing pets to enter and offering specific services for them, which could be an important differentiator.

5. **Strategic Use of Social Media:** Effective interactions on social media are essential to motivate consumers toward purchase. However, it is crucial for brands to consider privacy concerns in order to maintain consumer trust.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the significant findings, this study has certain limitations that should be considered:

1. **Geographic Generalizability:** The research focused on five intermediate cities in Colombia. Therefore, the results may not be directly generalizable to large metropolitan areas of the country or to other cultural contexts. As Gilboa et al. (2020) point out, shopping mall experiences are not universal and can be moderated by national culture.

2. **Cross-sectional design:** The study used a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. This limits the ability to establish definitive causal relationships and to observe the evolution of consumer perceptions and behaviors over time.
3. **Data Self-Report:** Relying on self-reported survey data can introduce biases, such as social desirability or memory errors on the part of participants.
4. **Factors not considered:**
 - Although the model is robust, there are other factors that could influence purchasing behavior and that were not included, such as the specific impact of the respondents' individual economic situation, debt levels, or the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the prioritization of spending and the search for health security.
 - The study does not delve into how shopping behavior could vary significantly depending on specific categories of products or services within the mall.
5. **Non-Experimental Nature:** The design is non-experimental, meaning that relationships and correlations are identified rather than manipulating variables to establish direct causality.

Future Lines of Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, the following lines are proposed for future research:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting longitudinal studies would allow us to analyze how influences on purchasing behavior change over time, in response to economic, social or specific marketing strategies.
2. **Comparative and Cross-Cultural Research:** It would be valuable to replicate the study in large Colombian cities and in other countries to compare the results and understand the moderating role of culture and the development of the shopping mall industry.
3. **Deepening of the Technological Impact:** Investigate in greater detail the role of specific digital marketing tools, omnichannel and the impact of emerging technologies (augmented reality, artificial intelligence) on the shopping experience in shopping centers, complementing the findings on social networks.
4. **Sustainable and Ethical Consumption:** To explore the growing importance of sustainability and ethical considerations in consumer purchasing decisions in the context of Colombian shopping malls.
5. **Analysis by Consumer Segments:** Future research could apply this model to different consumer segments (defined by demographics, psychographics, or purchase orientation) to identify whether the relative importance of factors varies between groups, as suggested by Kuruvilla & Joshi (2020).
6. **Impact of Specific Policies:** Investigate the effect of specific initiatives, such as pet-friendly policies, on visitor traffic, dwell time, and sales volume, given the reported high pet ownership.
7. **Qualitative and Experimental Studies:** Employ qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the emotions and cognitive processes underlying purchasing decisions, or

experimental designs to causally test the impact of specific modifications in the marketing environment.

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