

**Examining the impact of stress-inducing factors, consumer self-efficacy, and trust in the platform on the intention for continuous purchasing with the mediating role of brand trust
(Case Study: Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan)**

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Abstract

The main objective of the present research is to examine the impact of stressors, consumer self-efficacy, and trust in the platform on the intention of continuous purchasing with the mediating role of brand trust. The research is applied in nature and falls under the category of descriptive-survey research. The statistical population of the research includes all customers of Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan, which is an unlimited number. Non-probability convenience sampling method was used for sampling, and the sample size was determined to be 385 individuals based on Cochran's formula. Data collection in the present study was done using both library and field methods. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient were used. These coefficients range from 0 to 1, and values above 0.70 indicate good reliability. Since both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients for all questionnaire variables are above 0.70, it can be concluded that the questionnaire is reliable. Content validity was assessed using the CVR index, which, with a value of 1, is higher than 0.99, indicating good content validity of the questionnaire. Additionally, the Smart PLS3 software was used to answer research questions and hypotheses, and SPSS25 software was used for descriptive statistical analysis. The research results show that stressors and trust in the platform have a positive and direct impact on brand trust, while the relationship between consumer self-efficacy and brand trust is inverse. Furthermore, brand trust mediates the relationship between stressors, consumer self-efficacy, and trust in the platform on the intention of continuous purchasing.

Keywords: Stressors, Consumer Self-Efficacy, Platform Trust, Continuous Purchase Intent.

Introduction

In today's competitive world, marketing managers need to be aware of how consumers react and make choices in order to gain a competitive advantage over their rivals. The importance of this becomes evident when we realize that the lack of scientific and accurate information about

consumer decision-making is a major reason for the inefficiency and lack of profitability of companies. In fact, the failure of marketing programs to a large extent is influenced by a lack of precise understanding of consumer behavior and the decision-making process (Ariffin et al., 2018). The challenge that companies face today is not a shortage of goods and services but rather a shortage of customers for these goods and services. In successful organizations, customers are the primary source of information about current products and services, as well as the origin of new ideas for future products and services. Emphasizing the customer and meeting their needs, satisfaction, and contentment is a guarantee of an organization's successful performance (Amron, 2018). With increased competition in the country's service industries and professions, the need for greater attention to customers and meeting their needs and expectations is more pronounced. In an environment where customers are informed and have the power to choose, neglecting their needs and expectations is no longer possible. Therefore, continuous attention to customer expectations for service quality is considered vital for service-based enterprises (Andrews & Boyle, 2008). There is a two-way relationship between expectations and satisfaction. Expectations are linked to the performance and appearance of products and services (Attiq et al., 2017). On the other hand, organizations, in order to ensure their survival and protect their interests, are always seeking to maintain customer interactions and increase their numbers. The repetition of individuals' visits to any organization as customers signifies an increase in the organization's income, and this is achieved by understanding customer needs. Leadership in global markets belongs to organizations that meet customer needs or go beyond them (Kim & Peterson, 2017). The concept of customer satisfaction was introduced in the early 1980s in the United States. Due to its great importance, it has been highlighted as one of the important criteria for performance and operational efficiency in service and manufacturing organizations (Kellett & Bolton, 2009). Neglecting customer desires can lead to exiting the competitive market. Therefore, the use of tools that can focus on customer needs and product innovation in the competitive environment is palpable (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Prioritizing customer features and needs can direct organizational efforts towards improving consumer evaluations and thus create a competitive advantage for the organization. In this research, the main goal is to model the perceived risks of the internet and trust in the platform as stimuli, consumer self-efficacy, stress in maintaining privacy, and trust in the brand as organisms, and purchase intention as a behavioral response. Given what has been said, this research aims to answer the question of whether stress-inducing factors, consumer self-efficacy, and trust in the platform significantly affect continuous purchase intention as mediated by trust in the brand. Therefore, paying attention to these two issues is very essential and important. Identifying potential online shoppers and the reasons for such purchases is essential. As far as it is clear, there is limited research or even no research that has tested these variables in a similar model. In addition, this research examines variables that are changeable, unpredictable, and even abnormal in terms of consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors in the context of crisis and uncertainty. Also, by introducing the concept of stress in maintaining privacy, a new understanding of the inevitable and continuous use of online shopping in uncertain conditions is gained. In contrast to the current background, this research provides new insights into consumers' continuous purchase intentions.

Literature Review

Stress is defined as the experience of challenges or threats that individuals deem important and believe they cannot effectively cope with (Clark, 2010). In the formal definition, stress is described as "an adaptive response shaped by individual characteristics or psychosocial factors; meaning that the result of an action, situation, or external event that imposes physical or psychological demands on a person that arise from daily pressures and unavoidable threats" (Bent & Welsh, 2010). It is important to note that an individual's exposure to these daily pressures determines the level of stress experienced (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

The increasing number of internet users and how users utilize this interactive tool as an effective part of their purchasing decisions and actions have garnered the attention of experts and opinion leaders. As internet usage continues to expand, it has become a strategic aspect for companies (Bagheri et al., 2023, a). Having effective communications with customers through the internet is a critical and vital aspect for companies, and most businesses utilize websites as a communication tool. The online marketing environment provides sellers with the opportunity to offer various features for retail to users (Jian et al., 2014). The acceptance and performance of online shopping to a large extent depend on consumers' attitudes and how individuals interact with computers. To attract customers, online activities by companies must be profitable for them. marketing is not just about production capabilities but is based on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's feelings or attitudes toward a product or service after using it (Chen et al., 2012). One of the recent innovations in web applications is the online shopping experience, which has given rise to a new form of commerce called e-commerce (Bagheri et al., 2015). Among the emerging capabilities of the internet, e-commerce has continuously expanded. The business process through the web and internet space has been established to exchange opinions and ideas of different individuals worldwide regarding various products and services (Patel et al., 2014).

Consumer Self-Efficacy

Consumer self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to use products and services effectively. In other words, consumer self-efficacy is determined by a person's confidence and trust in their ability to use a specific product or service (Yang, 2014). Studies have shown that consumer self-efficacy has a significant impact on a person's decision-making in purchasing products and services (Bandura, 1997).

Platform Trust

Platform trust refers to consumers' trust in an online platform. This trust includes confidence in security and privacy, product and service quality, accurate and useful information provision, and customer support (Bagheri et al., 2023,b). Trust in the platform is a crucial factor in customers' decision-making to purchase from an online platform (McKnight et al., 2002).

Brand Trust

Brand trust is the customer's trust in the quality and performance of a brand's products and services. Brand trust encompasses trust in reliability, quality, value, and brand recognition. Trust in the brand is a critical factor in customer decision-making for brand purchases and maintaining brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the intent or desire to purchase a product or service. This concept involves the customer's decision-making process for purchase, identifying needs, and considering the features of products and services that align with those needs. Purchase intention is one of the most important factors in the customer's purchasing process and decision-making (Engel et al., 1995).

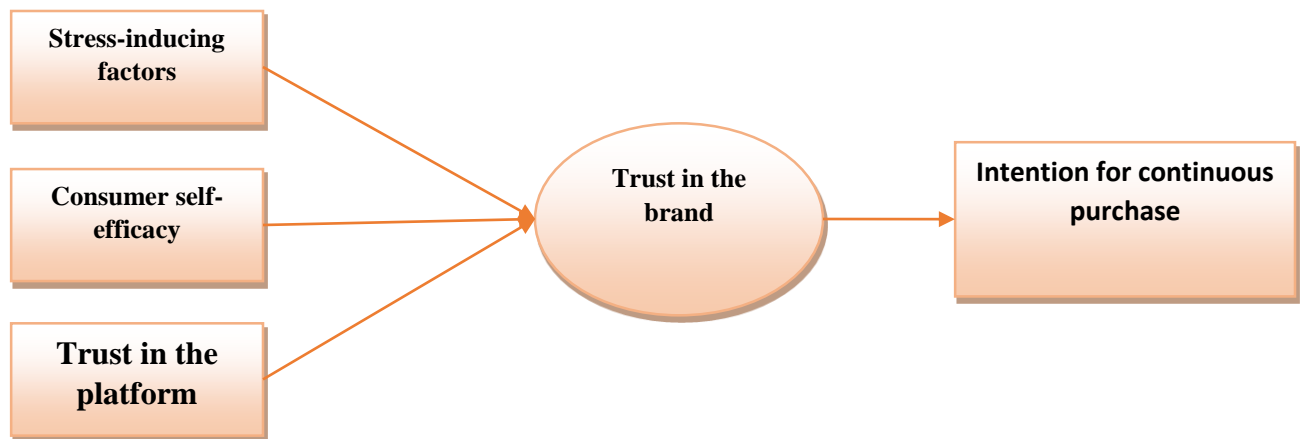


Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this research.

Research Methodology

The purpose of selecting a research method is to determine which research approach is necessary to investigate a specific topic. It should be noted that the findings largely depend on the researcher's investigative approach. The choice of research method depends on the research objectives, the nature of the research topic, and the available resources. Therefore, when deciding on the research method and its execution, the nature of the research topic, objectives, and the scope of the study should be well-defined. The current research is applied in nature and falls into the category of analytical survey research, primarily using quantitative variables and a cross-sectional time frame. Both library research and field research methods were employed to gather information. In the library research method, necessary information was obtained from reputable books, articles, theses, and journals. In the field research method, tools such as questionnaires were used for data collection and analysis. The questionnaire distributed in this study includes two parts: demographic questions for respondents and the main research questions. Given that the current research aims to examine the impact of stress-inducing factors, consumer self-efficacy, and trust in the platform on continuous purchase intention with brand trust as a mediating variable, the statistical population of the study consists of customers of Milad Ice Cream Afghanistan. Non-probability sampling was used for sampling. Considering the unknown population error, the sample size is usually 0.05, which results in a sample size of 384 individuals. Face validity is a minimum criterion for content validity and was confirmed in this study based on the opinions of the supervisors and advisors.

Criterion-related validity is introduced when a measurement tool predicts differences between individuals based on a criterion, which is not applicable in this research since the research's objective is not to examine differences among individuals. Finally, structural validity is determined through factor analysis. Structural validity assesses how well the results obtained from applying a measurement tool correspond to the theories on which the test is based. To measure reliability, a statistic called the "reliability coefficient" is used, which ranges between 0 and 1. A score of 0 indicates no reliability, while a score of 1 indicates perfect reliability. In other words, the higher the score, the higher the measurement tool's reliability. The most famous tool for testing reliability is Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was above 0.7 in this research, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the measured variables.

Research Findings

Data analysis is of particular importance for validating or rejecting hypotheses in any type of research. Today, in most research studies that rely on collected data related to the research topic, data analysis is considered one of the most essential and significant parts of the research. Raw data is subjected to statistical techniques for analysis, and after processing, it becomes information available to the users. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has been used to examine the distribution of data (data normality) in order to determine whether the study sample is obtained from a population with a normal distribution or not. The results of this test are presented in Table 1.

Hypotheses for data distribution testing for research variables:

1. Data distribution is normal. H₀
2. Data distribution is not normal. H₁

Table 1: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Variables	Z Statistics	Significance Level
Stressors	0.135	0.000
Consumer Self-Efficacy	0.127	0.000
Platform Trust	0.235	0.000
Brand Trust	0.129	0.000
Purchase Intent	0.08	0.000

Since the significance level obtained for all research variables is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H₀) of normal data distribution is rejected. Since the assumption of normality is rejected, structural equation modeling with partial least squares approach is used to test hypotheses.

The main goal of confirmatory factor analysis is to determine the extent to which the factor model fits the observed data. In this study, it was focused on 22 questionnaire items in the form of independent variables such as stressors, consumer self-efficacy, and trust in the platform, as well as dependent variables including brand trust and continuous buying intention. Confirmatory factor analysis is used to specify the measurement equations for these variables. When the factor loading is less than 0.4, it is considered small and should be removed from the model. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis using Smart PLS3 software are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Research Variables

Variables	Questions	Loading Factor	T-value	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Stress Factors	Question 1	0.534	11.754	0.526	0.834	0.834
	Question 2	0.65	16.456			
	Question 3	0.819	43.05			
	Question 4	0.685	22.211			
	Question 5	0.705	23.692			
	Question 6	0.806	42.142			
	Question 7	0.731	25.168			
Consumer Self-Efficacy	Question 8	0.831	43.211	0.565	0.794	0.799
	Question 9	0.864	42.905			
	Question 10	0.834	38.193			
Platform Trust	Question 11	0.47	8.267	0.536	0.701	0.709
	Question 12	0.62	12.978			
	Question 13	0.737	25.307			

	Question 14	0.706	20.085			
	Question 15	0.805	44.677			
Brand Trust	Question 16	0.693	21.314	0.569	0.776	0.768
	Question 17	0.831	54.71			
	Question 18	0.872	76.218			
	Question 19	0.669	18.191			
Purchase Intent	Question 20	0.676	24.419	0.552	0.783	0.767
	Question 21	0.89	75.035			
	Question 22	0.903	88.21			

The results in Table 2 indicate that since the factor loadings for all variables are greater than 0.4, the validity of the questionnaire is confirmed. In the examination of the T statistic, since all values obtained from the T statistic are above 1.96, which indicates the confirmation of all research questions for measuring research variables. Based on the results obtained in this section, it can be stated that none of the research questions are removed. The Cronbach's alpha value higher than 0.70 indicates acceptable reliability. In Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value for each of the factors is estimated. The reliability analysis of the questionnaire shows that the questionnaire has good reliability for measuring research variables.

Composite Reliability (CR) is a criterion that surpasses Cronbach's alpha in that its reliability of constructs is calculated not in absolute terms, but rather based on the interrelatedness of their constructs with each other. Based on the values obtained in Table 3, it is clear that composite reliability is acceptable for all research variables.

Table 3: R2 Values

variables	Shared Values	R2
Stress Factors	0.411	-
Consumer Self-Efficacy	0.71	-
Trust in the Platform	0.458	-
Brand Trust	0.594	0.664
Purchase Intent	0.688	0.485

Convergent validity is the second criterion for examining the fit of measurement models. Convergent validity examines the extent to which each construct's indicators (items) are correlated

with each other; the higher the correlation, the better the fit. In Table 2, since the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all variables is greater than 0.5, convergent validity is confirmed. In the technique of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), to assess the model fit, the Coefficient of Determination (R²), Goodness of Fit (GOF) index, and Incremental Fit Indices are used. The second measure for assessing the fit of the structural model in research is the R² coefficients related to latent (dependent) variables within the model. The R² is an indicator of the effect of exogenous variables on an endogenous variable and three values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 are considered for weak, moderate, and strong R² values. If in a model, an endogenous construct is influenced by only one or two exogenous constructs, an R² value of over 0.33 indicates a strong relationship between that construct and the exogenous constructs. This measure is also shown in the Structural Model part of the research in the form of standardized factor loadings. It should be noted that since the variables "stressors, consumer self-efficacy, and trust in the platform" are independent variables of the model, this measure is not reported for these variables because it is not applicable to independent variables. Based on the values in Table 3, most of the R² values in the model are higher than 0.33 (the benchmark for moderate values), indicating that the structural model has an adequate fit according to this measure.

Table 3: Path Coefficients and T-statistics for Hypothesis Testing

	P-Values	T-Statistic	Standard Deviation	Sample Mean	Path Coefficient
Stress Factors --> Brand Trust	0	4.996	0.062	0.308	0.312
Consumer Self-Efficacy -> Brand Trust	0.001	3.499	0.047	0.158-	0.164-
Platform Trust --> Brand Trust	0	14.676	0.046	0.676	0.678
Brand Trust --> Continuous Purchase Intention	0	25.634	0.027	0.696	0.696
Stress Factors --> Brand Trust --> Continuous Purchase Intention	0	4.692	0.046	0.215	0.217
Consumer Self-Efficacy -> Brand Trust --> Continuous Purchase Intention	0.001	3.408	0.034	0.110-	0.114-
Platform Trust --> Brand Trust --> Continuous Purchase Intention	0	13.029	0.036	0.47	0.472

The overall model consists of both the measurement and structural model components, and by confirming the fit of the overall model, the fit of the complete model is examined. To evaluate the fit of the overall model, a single measure called GOF (Goodness of Fit) is assessed:

$$GOF = \sqrt{((Average\ Communalities) * (Average\ R^2))}$$

To calculate the (Average R²), the average of all R² values in the model is taken into account, resulting in an (Average R²) equal to 0.574. Therefore, the GOF measure is calculated as follows:

$$GOF = \sqrt{(0.572 * 0.574)} = 0.573$$

Considering the three values of 0.10, 0.25, and 0.36 as benchmarks for weak, moderate, and strong GOF values, obtaining a value of 0.573 indicates an appropriate fit of the overall research model.

Hypothesis Testing

Structural equation modeling has been a common research tool in management sciences, medicine, and social sciences in recent decades. Based on the content presented in this section, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the mentioned factors is examined using Smart PLS3, and subsequently, indicators for assessing the factors and the determination coefficient of the factors under investigation are discussed. Structural equation modeling is investigated in two modes: standardized coefficients and significance coefficients, and decisions are made based on the obtained results regarding the acceptance or rejection of hypotheses. The T-value indicates the significance of the variables' effects. If the value of this statistic in the output obtained from the Smart PLS 3 software is greater than 1.96, it means that there is a positive and significant effect. If it falls between 0 and 1.96, it means there is no significant effect. It's important to note that in this software, negative values for this statistic are not reported, and the determination of whether there is a negative effect or not depends on the path coefficient. The path coefficient also indicates the strength of the effect of the influencing variable on the affected variable. If the path coefficient is above 0.60, it signifies a strong relationship between the two variables; if it falls between 0.30 and 0.60, it indicates a moderate relationship, and if it's below 0.30, it suggests a weak relationship. Negative path coefficients also follow these interpretations, indicating an inverse relationship between the variables, where an increase in the influencing variable results in a decrease in the affected variable. Figure 4-1 illustrates the model in terms of significance values (T-Value).

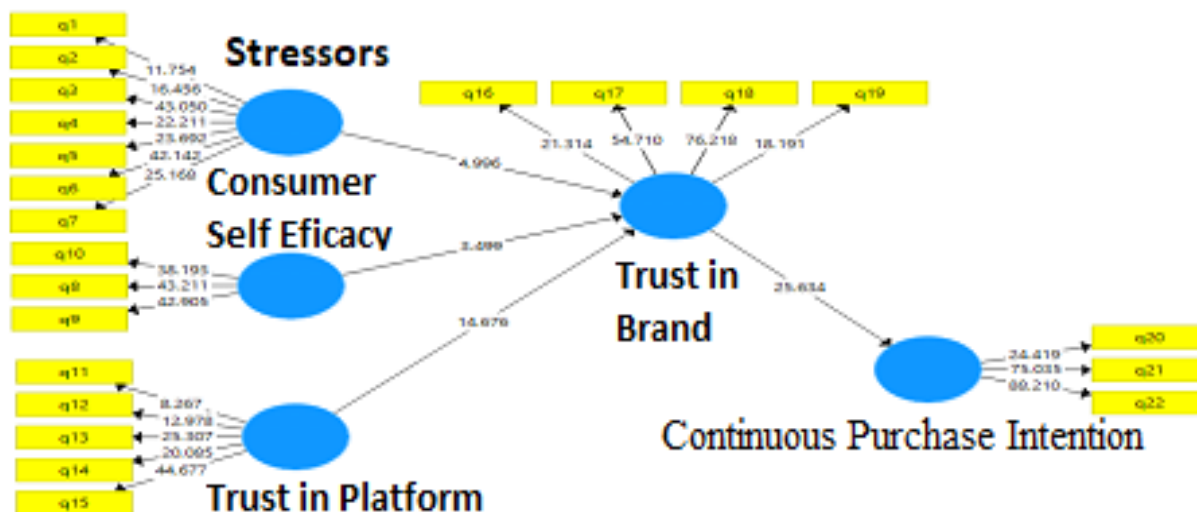


Figure 1: Model in Terms of Significance Values (T-Value)

Based on Figures 1 and Table 3, we can examine the research hypotheses. As mentioned earlier, these 7 hypotheses have been investigated.

Hypothesis 1: Stressful factors have a positive and significant impact on brand trust.

The impact of stressful factors is 0.312, and its significance level is 4.996. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, so the proposed hypothesis is confirmed, indicating that stressful factors have a positive and direct effect on brand trust (hypothesis confirmed).

Hypothesis 2: Consumer self-efficacy has a positive and significant impact on brand trust.

The impact of consumer self-efficacy is -0.164, and its significance level is 3.499. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, so the proposed hypothesis is confirmed. However, since the path coefficient is negative, it can be stated that consumer self-efficacy has an inverse effect on brand trust (hypothesis confirmed).

Hypothesis 3: Trust in the platform has a positive and significant impact on brand trust.

The impact of trust in the platform is 0.678, and its significance level is 14.676. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, so the proposed hypothesis is confirmed, indicating that trust in the platform has a positive and direct effect on brand trust (hypothesis confirmed).

Hypothesis 4: Brand trust has a positive and significant impact on continuous purchase intention.

The impact of brand trust is 0.696, and its significance level is 25.634. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, so the proposed hypothesis is confirmed, indicating that brand trust has a positive and direct effect on continuous purchase intention (hypothesis confirmed).

Hypothesis 5: Brand trust mediates the relationship between stressful factors and continuous purchase intention.

The mediating effect of brand trust on the relationship between stressful factors and continuous purchase intention is 0.217, and its significance level is 4.692. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, so the proposed hypothesis is confirmed, indicating that brand trust mediates the relationship between stressful factors and continuous purchase intention (hypothesis confirmed).

Hypothesis 6: Brand trust mediates the relationship between consumer self-efficacy and continuous purchase intention.

The mediating effect of brand trust on the relationship between consumer self-efficacy and continuous purchase intention is -0.114, and its significance level is 3.408. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, so the proposed hypothesis is confirmed, indicating that brand trust mediates the relationship between consumer self-efficacy and continuous purchase intention (hypothesis confirmed).

Hypothesis 7: Brand trust mediates the relationship between trust in the platform and continuous purchase intention.

The mediating effect of brand trust on the relationship between trust in the platform and continuous purchase intention is 0.472, and its significance level is 13.029. As it is evident, the T-statistic is

greater than 1.96, so the proposed hypothesis is confirmed, indicating that brand trust mediates the relationship between trust in the platform and continuous purchase intention (hypothesis confirmed).

Discussion and Conclusion

During the course of the research, we began by reviewing the literature to formulate hypotheses. Subsequently, we evaluated these hypotheses through a survey. The analysis of the findings indicated the confirmation of most of the research hypotheses. In this section, we briefly summarize the results and findings of this study, as well as compare them to similar research. To test the normality of the research variables, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. Given the rejection of the first hypothesis and the non-normality of the research variables, hypothesis testing was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, using Smart PLS3 software. The results of the reliability tests showed that the measurement models have adequate reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient). Additionally, concerning the examination of questionnaire validity, since the factor loadings for all factors are greater than 0.4, it can be concluded that the questionnaire has acceptable validity. However, since this alone is not sufficient evidence of validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) index was calculated and showed that all research questions fall within an acceptable range. The impact of stress-inducing factors is 0.312 with a significance level of 4.996. As the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, the proposed hypothesis is confirmed. It can be concluded that stress-inducing factors have a positive and direct effect on brand trust (hypothesis confirmed). Given the increasing competition in today's markets, trust in the brand is of paramount importance for companies. Therefore, studying the factors that influence brand trust is highly valuable. In this study, we examine the impact of stress-inducing factors on brand trust in Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan. Since stress is one of the factors that affect individuals' performance and behavior, investigating its effect on brand trust in Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan is essential. According to the conducted research, stress-inducing factors include poor interaction with colleagues, inadequate working conditions, financial pressures, and long working hours. The research results show that these factors have a positive and significant impact on brand trust within Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan. With these results in mind, the company can improve brand trust by enhancing working conditions, reducing financial pressures, and improving colleague interactions, in addition to improving the work environment. Improving working conditions and reducing associated stress can increase employee satisfaction and motivation, which will, in turn, enhance the quality of the company's products and services. Therefore, these actions can have a positive and significant impact on brand trust for Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan. The impact of consumer self-efficacy is 0.164, with a significance level of 3.499. As the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, the proposed hypothesis is confirmed. However, since the path coefficient is negative, it can be concluded that consumer self-efficacy has an inverse effect on brand trust (hypothesis confirmed). Consumer self-efficacy, as one of the most important concepts in consumer behavior, plays a crucial role in building brand trust. It signifies those consumers can choose and use a product successfully and efficiently, thereby increasing trust in the brand. Considering the importance of consumer self-efficacy in building brand trust, examining its impact on brand trust in Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan can be useful. Based on the results obtained,

consumer self-efficacy is related to previous product experience, information received from others, and environmental factors such as culture and social values. The research results indicate that consumer self-efficacy has a positive and significant impact on brand trust within Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan. With higher consumer self-efficacy, consumers purchase the company's products with more confidence in their quality and the company's ability to provide services, which increases trust in the brand. In light of these results, Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan can enhance consumer trust by developing and providing accurate and sufficient information about its products and services, reinforcing positive consumer experiences with its products, and increasing their self-efficacy. These actions can lead to improved consumer satisfaction and, consequently, increased brand trust for the company. The impact of trust in the platform is 0.678, with a significance level of 14.676. As the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, the proposed hypothesis is confirmed. It can be concluded that trust in the platform has a positive and direct effect on brand trust (hypothesis confirmed). In the digital age, online platforms are essential marketing and sales tools for companies. However, trust in online platforms can also affect brand trust. Given the importance of trust in the platform in building brand trust, examining its impact on brand trust in Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan can be valuable. Based on the results obtained, factors such as transparency, security, ease of use, service quality, and user experience have been identified as factors that influence trust in the platform. The research results indicate that trust in the platform has a positive and significant impact on brand trust within Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan. With trust in the platform, consumers purchase the company's products with more confidence in their quality and the company's ability to provide services, which increases trust in the brand. Considering these results, Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan can strengthen consumer trust by improving its online platform, enhancing transparency and security, providing a better user experience, and increasing consumer trust in both the platform and the brand. Improving the online platform and user experience can lead to increased consumer satisfaction and, consequently, increased brand trust for the company. The level of trust in the brand has an impact of 0.696, and its significance level is 25.634. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, confirming the proposed hypothesis. It can be stated that trust in the brand has a positive and direct effect on the percentage of continuous purchasing (hypothesis confirmed). Trust in the brand, as one of the most important concepts in the field of marketing, plays a significant role in consumer behavior, product selection, and purchase. However, examining the influence of trust in the brand on the intention of continuous purchase at Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan can be beneficial. Based on the obtained results, trust in the brand has a positive and significant effect on the intention of continuous purchase. With trust in the brand, consumers are more inclined to purchase and use the company's products in the future. This trust in the brand is created due to the quality and performance of products, consumers' good experiences with the products and services of the company, and the company's loyalty to consumer values. Given these results, Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan can strengthen brand trust by providing quality products, offering a good consumer experience, and adhering to consumer values, ultimately increasing consumers' intention for continuous purchase. Additionally, providing post-sales services and appropriate support is associated with improving consumer satisfaction, which can help increase trust in the brand and, consequently, the intention for continuous purchase. In general, building trust in the brand as one of the most important factors in marketing can lead to an increase in the

intention of continuous purchase and consumer loyalty to Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan. The impact level of stress-inducing factors on the intention of continuous purchase, considering the mediating role of brand trust, is 0.217, with a significance level of 4.692. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, confirming the proposed hypothesis. It can be stated that brand trust mediates the relationship between stress-inducing factors and the intention of continuous purchase (hypothesis confirmed). Based on the conducted research, everyday stresses can be considered one of the important factors influencing consumer behavior. In cases where consumers face everyday stressors such as financial concerns, work pressures, and relationship tensions, their inclination toward continuous purchases decreases. However, trust in the brand can act as a mediating factor in the relationship between everyday stressors and the intention of continuous purchase. According to the research results, trust in the brand can serve as a factor that reduces the impact of everyday stresses. With trust in the brand, consumers have more confidence in the quality and performance of products, leading to a higher inclination for continuous purchase and simultaneously reducing their everyday stressors. Therefore, Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan should focus on strengthening trust in its brand and strive to provide quality products and valuable services to its customers. The results of this study align with the research by Tang and Wang (2022). The impact level of consumer self-efficacy on the intention of continuous purchase, considering the mediating role of brand trust, is -0.114, with a significance level of 3.408. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, confirming the proposed hypothesis. It can be stated that brand trust mediates the relationship between consumer self-efficacy and the intention of continuous purchase (hypothesis confirmed). Consumer self-efficacy is recognized as one of the important factors influencing consumer behavior. Self-efficacy refers to the consumer's belief in their ability to perform a task or improve their situation in a specific area. However, trust in the brand can act as a mediating factor in the relationship between consumer self-efficacy and the intention of continuous purchase. According to the research results, trust in the brand can serve as a factor that enhances the effect of consumer self-efficacy. With trust in the brand, consumers, due to increased confidence and trust in the quality and performance of products, exhibit greater self-efficacy in their purchasing and usage of the company's products, and at the same time, they have a greater inclination for continuous purchase. Therefore, Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan should focus on strengthening trust in its brand and enhancing consumer self-efficacy by providing quality products and a positive consumer experience. Additionally, providing post-sales services and appropriate support can help improve consumer satisfaction, ultimately increasing trust in the brand and consumer self-efficacy. These efforts can lead to a greater inclination among consumers for continuous purchase.

In conclusion, as trust in the brand has positive effects on consumer behavior and can also mediate the impact of self-efficacy, Milad Ice Cream Company in Afghanistan should work on strengthening trust in its brand and providing quality products and valuable services to its customers. Offering accurate and transparent information about products and services to consumers can also contribute to increased trust in the brand and consumer self-efficacy. Moreover, providing consumer counseling and suitable solutions for using the company's products can enhance consumer self-efficacy and improve their experience with the products and services, ultimately increasing their inclination for continuous purchase. The impact of trust in the platform on continuous purchasing intention, considering the mediating role of brand trust, is 0.472, with a

significance level of 13.029. As it is evident, the T-statistic is greater than 1.96, which confirms the formulated hypothesis, and it can be stated that brand trust mediates the relationship between trust in the platform and continuous purchasing intention (hypothesis confirmed). In general, brand trust is a concept beyond trust in a specific product or service, encompassing trust in the overall company and its values. In this context, trust in the platform is also highlighted as one of the aspects of brand trust. Trust in the platform refers to trust in the quality and performance of the platform that users consider as one of the primary sources for receiving the company's services and products. According to the results, trust in the platform can act as one of the mediating factors in the relationship between brand trust and continuous purchasing intention. With trust in the platform, users gain more trust and confidence in the brand due to higher trust and confidence in the quality and performance of the platform, while also having a greater inclination for continuous purchases from the company. Given these results, Milad Ice Cream Afghanistan can strengthen its trust in its platform and, consequently, its brand trust by providing quality platform performance and delivering a good user experience. Since the company's platform serves as one of the most important sources for providing products and services to customers, offering quality services and better performance, improving customer satisfaction, and thus increasing trust in the platform and the company's brand. Additionally, providing appropriate support and guidance to platform users can help enhance their experience of using the company's products and services, ultimately leading to increased trust in the platform and the company's brand. For example, providing precise guidance on how to use the platform and the company's services can assist in increasing user self-efficacy and their willingness to make continuous purchases. As a result, Milad Ice Cream Afghanistan, considering the importance of brand trust and trust in the platform in relation to customers' intention for continuous purchases, can strengthen its platform's trust by providing high-quality performance and support services, ultimately leading to growth and development for the company.

Research Recommendations:

- Stress-inducing factors have a positive and significant impact on brand trust: - Theoretical recommendations: According to the selective attention theory, stressors cause individuals to pay full attention to the desired product or brand and develop sustained trust in it. Additionally, the return of trust theory suggests that after a negative experience, an individual may lose trust in a product or brand but regain it after a subsequent positive experience. - Practical recommendations: Companies can increase customer trust by offering post-sales services, providing quality products, and offering sufficient information about the product or brand, thus increasing their intent for continuous purchases.
- Consumer self-efficacy has a positive and significant impact on brand trust: - Theoretical recommendations: According to the self-efficacy theory, individuals who have confidence in their abilities make the best efforts and achieve the best results. For example, in the case of electronic products, individuals who are confident in their ability to use the product achieve the best results. - Practical recommendations: Companies can improve customer self-efficacy by providing necessary training to customers, thereby creating trust in their brand and increasing their intent for continuous purchases.

- Trust in the platform has a positive and significant impact on brand trust: - Theoretical recommendations: According to the social influence theory, individuals tend to use others' behavior for their own decision-making. In this regard, trust in the platform can contribute to an increase in brand trust. Additionally, the consumer expectations theory suggests that consumers expect the platforms they purchase from to have the best security, quality, and post-sales services. - Practical recommendations: Companies can help increase customer trust in their platform and brand by providing quality and secure services on their platform, as well as by providing direct communication with customers and addressing their complaints and issues.
- Brand trust mediates the relationship between stress-inducing factors and continuous purchase intention: - Theoretical recommendations: According to the return of trust theory, trust in the brand can be restored after a negative experience, thereby increasing the intention for continuous purchases. Additionally, the selective attention theory shows that stressors can cause individuals to fully pay attention to the product or brand and develop sustained trust in it. - Practical recommendations: Companies can increase customer trust by offering post-sales services, providing quality products, and offering sufficient information about the product or brand, thus increasing their intent for continuous purchases. Additionally, companies can strive to provide a positive experience for customers by offering discounts and special offers, thus improving trust in their brand.
- Brand trust mediates the relationship between consumer self-efficacy and continuous purchase intention:

Recommendations for Future Research:

Based on the findings of the current research, the following recommendations for future research appear necessary:

- Utilize decision-making tools to examine the impact and influence of components on each other or rank the components.
- Identify the gap between the current state and the desired state for generating more revenue.
- Researchers should design separate questionnaires regarding the psychology of color, music, animation, and visual information and create profiles for each of the customers that encompass their information and purchasing satisfaction. This can create a database about customers that can be useful in the future. Using this database, online stores can personalize their offerings for each customer, leading to customer satisfaction and ultimately loyalty.
- Researchers can use various statistical methods to assess the relationships between multiple components that impact customer satisfaction.

Research Limitations:

Usually, every researcher encounters obstacles and limitations in starting and continuing their research. In this research, several foreseeable problems and limitations exist, which are detailed below:

- Time Constraint: This research is limited to one academic term and less than one year.

- Bias and Unwillingness: Some respondents may exhibit bias or reluctance in providing accurate answers to the questions.
- Some individuals have provided biased or unwilling responses to certain questions for various reasons, and controlling all aspects of this matter was beyond the researcher's control.
- Limitation in the exclusive use of questionnaires.

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