



The Relationship between Cultural Values and Purchasing Behavior of Clothing Customers Considering the Mediating Role of Brand Choice (Case Study: Technique Sportswear in Khuzestan)

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examines the mediating role of brand choice in the causal relationship between cultural values and the purchasing behavior of customers of the Technique sportswear brand in Khuzestan Province.

Method: The research methodology is descriptive-correlational, applied, and cross-sectional. The statistical population includes all customers of the Technique sportswear brand and sportswear manufacturers in Khuzestan. A sample size of 216 individuals was selected using a non-random convenience sampling method. Data collection tools included standardized questionnaires on Hofstede's cultural values, the marketing mix from the customers' perspective, and factors influencing brand choice by Mirdavoodi (2015). Data analysis was conducted using one-sample t-tests and structural equation modeling with Smart PLS version 3 and SPSS version 26 software.

Results: The results showed that cultural values influence the brand choice of sportswear customers and that brand choice partially mediates the causal relationship between cultural values and the purchasing behavior of customers of the Technique sportswear brand.

Conclusions: It is recommended that companies and brands adjust their marketing strategies by understanding the cultural values of their customers, and update products, packaging, advertising, and customer experience in line with cultural changes. Additionally, continuous collection and analysis of customer feedback and implementing improvements based on this feedback are essential for greater success.

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Introduction

In the contemporary globalized marketplace, the interplay between cultural values and consumer purchasing behavior has become a subject of escalating significance (Chekima et al., 2018). Deciphering the influence of cultural values on consumer decision-making processes yields critical insights for enterprises striving to forge meaningful connections with their target demographics (Hussain and Huang, 2022). Sportswear marketing remains deeply susceptible to cultural shifts and lifestyle evolutions, where the socio-cultural milieu fundamentally shapes the decision-making patterns of athletic consumers. For instance, emerging trends—such as the expanding purchasing power of women and the demographic shift toward an aging population—are fundamentally altering patterns of sports-related consumption (Funk et al., 2022). Although globalization has fostered a degree of cultural convergence, it remains imperative to examine the impact of specific cultural values on the purchasing behavior of sportswear consumers within local contexts, such as the Khuzestan province of Iran, to ensure the efficacy of targeted marketing strategies (Zam et al., 2022).

The expansion of the sportswear market toward non-athletic consumers, coupled with shifting lifestyles and rising income levels, underscores the profound impact of cultural determinants on product marketing (Tong & Li, 2013). Furthermore, the economic and cultural transformations precipitated by globalization necessitate that sports enterprises recalibrate their marketing frameworks to maintain global competitiveness. As sports increasingly intersect with personal identity, there is a heightened urgency for sportswear marketing to align with these evolving social dynamics (Zhang et al., 2017).

Lifestyle marketing serves as a reflection of individual preferences and attitudes; consequently, sportswear marketing strategies must accurately mirror the values of the target segment (Zarotis & Tokaroski, 2020). The proliferation of sports and their burgeoning cultural significance have opened new avenues for sportswear marketing, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of commercialization, gender identity, and emerging theoretical paradigms in sports research (Nufer et al., 2016). Cultural values—defined as the shared beliefs, customs, and behaviors transmitted across generations (Zort et al., 2023) play a pivotal role in shaping brand selection among consumers (Sikandar & Ansari, 2022). Given the market's expansion beyond professional athletes and the ascending role of lifestyle in brand preference, it is essential to analyze the role of cultural values in the purchasing behavior of sportswear consumers across global markets, including Iran.

Cultural values exert a significant influence on the selection of sportswear brands, as evidenced in various studies. Culture profoundly affects consumer behavior and brand preferences, with cultural factors continuously shaping the choices across different age groups, families, and religious affiliations (García & Yábar, 2023). This complexity is reflected in the diverse motivations of sports enthusiasts, who align with varying cultural value orientations, suggesting that both individualism and collectivism play a key role in shaping preferences for sports-related products (Vakil, 2022). Even global brands must consider local cultural values to ensure effective product marketing, as seen in the adaptation of advertising strategies to align with local cultural cues (Xing & Jin, 2023). Given the profound impact of cultural values on brand selection among sportswear consumers and the role of such choices in shaping market

dynamics, it is essential to investigate the relationship between these two concepts within the sportswear industry, particularly in the Iranian market (Xing & Jin, 2023).

Brand selection in sportswear refers to the alternative options available to consumers, which fundamentally influence both consumer choice and market behavior. A high number of available brands can intensify competition and lead to price-driven rivalry (Chekima et al., 2018). However, an excessive range of choices may lead to consumer confusion, potentially diminishing their ability to make informed decisions and leaving them susceptible to exploitation (Nufer et al., 2016). In the sports industry, brand selection significantly shapes consumer preferences and market trends, influenced by factors such as brand awareness, product quality, design appeal, and pricing stability (Pei, 2023). Developing a strong sports brand culture involves various strategies, including media advertising, event sponsorship, and celebrity endorsements, all aimed at enhancing the perceived value and cultural significance of sports products (Liu et al, 2026). Ultimately, brand selection in sports products represents a balance between stimulating competition and empowering the consumer (Opelík et al, 2025). Understanding the complexities of brand selection in the sportswear industry—by considering the interactions between cultural values, personal identity, and brand-related factors—can facilitate the development of more effective and relevant marketing strategies for sports brands in global markets, including Iran (Sadeghi et al., 2023).

Brand selection serves as a critical mediator in expressing the cultural identity of consumers. Brands reflect the cultural backgrounds and commitments of consumers, bridging the gap between personal identity and social norms. Research indicates that consumers, particularly in unfamiliar environments, gravitate toward recognized brands, highlighting the significant influence of brand familiarity on decision-making processes (Opelík et al, 2025). It has been established that cultural attributes, such as power distance, influence preferences for foreign-branded products, suggesting that cultural dimensions can fundamentally shape product selection (The Impact of Power Distance Belief on Consumers' Brand Preferences, 2022). Furthermore, cultural disparities in consumer behavior—including preferences for novelty, quality, and country of origin—underscore the substantial impact of culture on brand choice, with political and ethical beliefs also playing a contributory role (Garcia, 2023). Collectively, these findings illustrate the complex relationship between brand selection, cultural background, and consumer behavior, emphasizing the role of brands in articulating cultural identity and commitments.

Studies suggest that cultural values, environmental awareness, and perceived effectiveness directly and indirectly influence the green purchasing intentions of Chinese consumers (Hussain et al., 2022). Specifically, cultural dimensions such as power distance, individualism, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity play a pivotal role in shaping attitudes toward cultural products and subsequent purchase intentions (Chekima et al., 2018). Similarly, in India, consumer buying behavior is heavily influenced by social values, beliefs, and traditions, which in turn affect preferences for personal care products (Zam et al., 2022). Beyond these factors, brand awareness—a fundamental aspect of brand equity—is vital for both emerging and established brands (Tulasi, 2012). This awareness significantly impacts consumer behavior, including brand recall and the probability of purchase (Garcia, 2023).

However, its effect on consumer choice may be moderated by factors such as quality differentials between brands (Dhurup, 2014). To build brand power, marketers must focus on creating positive brand experiences and enhancing brand awareness in an economically and operationally efficient manner (Lakshmi, 2017).

Iran possesses a unique cultural and religious landscape that profoundly influences the design and reception of sportswear. The country's diverse climatic conditions and rich cultural heritage have shaped a distinct environment, affecting various societal aspects, including sportswear preferences. Ancient architectural traditions, such as the Qanat system (Vakili, 2012), and the significance of natural landscapes in branding (Maghsoudi, 2021), reflect the deep-seated connection between culture, environment, and human activity. Moreover, cultural values play a significant role in consumer behavior and influence brand preferences, such as the selection of sportswear ((Liu et al, 2026).

Research examining the intersection of sportswear design with cultural and religious norms can facilitate the development of culturally appropriate and inclusive sportswear solutions. Investigating the performance and comfort of athletic apparel under varying environmental conditions may lead to the creation of specialized sportswear tailored to the specific conditions of Iran (Chekima et al., 2018). Sportswear brands must navigate these complexities to effectively supply diverse markets. For instance, the emergence of Islamic sportswear, such as the 'burkini,' demonstrates how companies like Ahida have integrated modesty requirements with functional athletic wear to meet the needs of Muslim women, reflecting a broader trend of adapting products to religious commitments (Tung & Verbeke, 2010). This adaptation transcends mere compliance with religious tenets; rather, it represents a strategic commitment to fostering the success and equity of Muslim women in sports. By redefining the intersection of faith and athleticism, such inclusive designs challenge the prevailing narrative that faith-compliant products are inherently restrictive or exploitative, framing modesty instead as a vehicle for empowerment and professional agency). Hoyer& Brown '1990)

Cultural norms significantly influence consumer behavior, as seen in self-congruity theory, where consumers' brand preferences align with their self-image and cultural values. This is particularly crucial for marketers targeting specific demographics, such as Iranian consumers (Liu et al, 2026). Furthermore, the role of religion in shaping consumer behavior is evident in the strong influence of religiosity on purchase objectives, highlighting the necessity for tailored marketing strategies across different religious and cultural groups (Wall, 2017). Consequently, the intersection of sportswear design with cultural and religious norms represents a dynamic interplay of adaptation, consumer behavior, and cultural alignment.

The findings of Kaur et al. (2022) indicate that religiosity has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intention (PI). This study further demonstrates that factors such as location, sample size, and product category act as moderators in the relationship between religiosity and PI. Similarly, the research by Idris et al. (2023) reveals that religiosity positively influences brand image through the design of religious visual communications in advertising. Additionally, the work of Zam et al. (2022) shows that psychological variables, such as self-confidence, play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior, suggesting that a strong sense of self-confidence can affect how individuals interact with products and make purchasing

decisions in the market. While religious symbols in advertising are easily associated with brand image, caution is required to avoid exaggeration or misrepresentation.

Building upon these socio-religious and psychological drivers, recent empirical evidence suggests that the operationalization of brand assets and strategic marketing further modulates consumer responses in the sports sector. For instance, Hassami et al. (2022) demonstrated that brand evidence—encompassing brand name, price, core services, employee services, and the service environment—alongside brand reputation, significantly drives brand citizenship behavior in the sports goods industry. Notably, their findings highlight that brand differentiation serves as a critical mediator, amplifying the impact of evidence and reputation on consumer advocacy. In the context of luxury sports services, Niknam and Milasi (2025) established that narrative branding and brand social identity positively affect behavioral intentions, with brand image serving as a pivotal mediator. These results underscore the strategic importance of storytelling and the cultivation of social identity in high-end, competitive markets to foster positive consumer engagement. Moreover, the medium through which these brand values are delivered also plays a significant role. Khosravi and Mohammadi (2025) utilized a causal-comparative method to analyze the efficacy of various marketing channels, revealing that a "click-and-brick" (hybrid) strategy significantly outperforms single-channel approaches. Their study indicates that maintaining a continuous presence in both digital and physical environments enhances customer satisfaction, trust, and word-of-mouth (WOM) across all stages of the consumer journey. Collectively, these studies suggest that while cultural and religious alignments provide the foundation for consumer acceptance, the integration of strategic brand differentiation, narrative engagement, and omnichannel accessibility is essential for maximizing consumer behavioral intentions in the modern sports market.

Cultural and lifestyle evolutions significantly influence the marketing of sportswear. A comprehensive understanding of attire, attitudes, and behaviors facilitates a deeper comprehension of consumer behavior patterns. In the Iranian context, attire is heavily influenced by political and religious determinants, which subsequently shape consumer preferences and strategic marketing approaches. Analyzing the correlation between attire attitudes and socio-religious values can aid in the development of tailored products and appropriate marketing communications. Furthermore, recognizing the impact of political and religious factors allows enterprises to enter the Iranian market with greater sensitivity. Consequently, prioritizing cultural values and lifestyle shifts is paramount to achieving success in sportswear marketing. The 'Technique' brand, for instance, has gained significant popularity in Iran, driven by factors such as product quality, competitive pricing, and celebrity endorsements. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the impact of cultural values on the purchasing behavior of Technique sportswear consumers in Khuzestan province, with brand selection serving as a mediating variable.

The primary research question of this study is as follows: What is the mediating role of brand selection in the causal relationship between cultural values and the purchasing behavior of Technique sportswear customers in Khuzestan province?

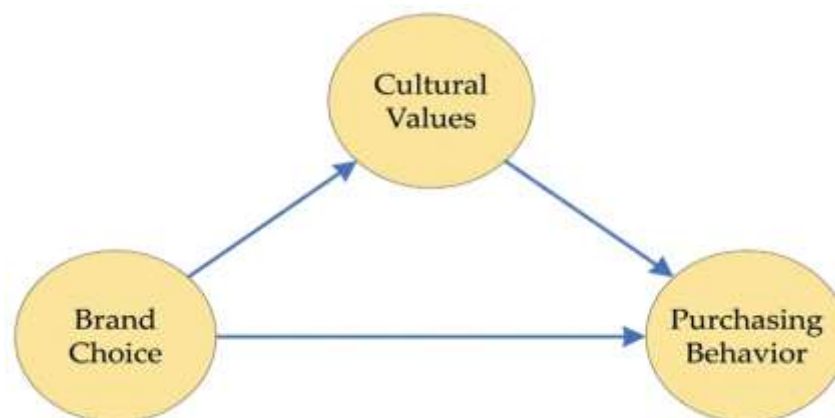


Figure 1. Conceptual research model

Method

This study employs an applied, descriptive-correlational research design, utilizing both library and field data collection methods. The statistical population consists of all customers of the 'Technique' sportswear brand in Khuzestan province, which is regarded as an infinite population. The sampling size was determined based on the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, adhering to the guideline of 10 to 20 times the number of variables. Given that there were approximately 20 components and variables, 230 questionnaires were distributed. After excluding outliers and indifferent responses, a final sample of 216 valid responses was analyzed using SmartPLS 3 and SPSS 26. The questionnaires were administered online through Technique brand communities in Khuzestan, with distribution supported by information provided by the brand's manufacturers and retail stores.

Data collection was conducted using three standardized instruments: the Hofstede's Cultural Values questionnaire (1980), a modified framework based on the transition from the 4Ps to the 4Cs of marketing (SolvInnov, 2021), and Mirdavoodi's brand selection factors questionnaire (2015). In addition to their established validity in previous research, the instruments were reviewed and approved by 12 professors specializing in sports management to ensure face and content validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all variables were within acceptable limits, demonstrating high reliability and stability of the research tools. Furthermore, as the instruments were developed in earlier periods, the researcher conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to verify construct validity. This evaluation included an assessment of factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Additionally, convergent and discriminant validity were examined, and the quality of the measurement model was evaluated and validated using the CVCOM and CVR indices.

"The descriptive results indicated that the majority of respondents were female (54.2%), while 45.8% were male, suggesting a slight overrepresentation of women in the sample. In terms of educational attainment, 54.6% of participants held a bachelor's degree, 38.4% an associate degree, and 6.9% a master's degree. The mean age of the respondents was 38.95 years with a standard deviation of 7.31, reflecting a relatively diverse age distribution within the sample.

The inferential statistical analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the observed and hypothetical means regarding sports motivations ($t = 7.45$, $p < .01$). This indicates that the status of cultural values for the 'Technique' brand in the studied sample is slightly superior to the hypothetical mean. Similarly, a statistically significant difference was observed among the components of cultural values ($p < .01$); specifically, the dimensions of individualism, power distance, and long-term orientation were found to be desirable, whereas collectivism and uncertainty avoidance were not.

Furthermore, a significant difference was found between the observed and hypothetical means for sportswear brand selection ($t = 16.99$, $p < .01$), suggesting that the status of brand selection for 'Technique' is slightly better than the hypothetical mean. The results of the one-sample t-test further confirmed a statistically significant difference in the components of brand selection ($p < .01$), indicating a favorable status relative to the hypothetical mean. Regarding consumer purchasing behavior, a significant difference was also noted ($t = 4.58$, $p < .01$), showing that the purchasing behavior in the sample is slightly superior to the hypothetical mean. Additionally, the results indicated significant differences among the components of purchasing behavior ($p < .05$), where customer-friendly values, purchasing convenience, and customer relations were found to be desirable, while the 'customer cost' component was not. The results of the one-sample t-tests are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of Relative Status of Research Variables

Significance level	Degrees of freedom	T - statistics	The average and standard deviation observed	Hypical mean	Concept	Row
0/001	215	7/45	3/22+ 0/43	3	Cultural Values of Sport Brand Technique	1
Significance level	Degrees of freedom	T - statistics	The average and standard deviation observed	Hypical mean	Components of cultural values	Row
0/001	215	17/421	3/74 + 0/63	3	Individualism	1
0/001		-5/570	2/74 + 0/66		Collectorism	2
0/001		4/088	3/15 + 0/55		Power distance	3
0/004		-2/913	2/89+ 0/53		Avoid ambiguity	4
0/001		13/326	3/86 +0/73		Long orientation	5
Significance level	Degrees of freedom	T - statistics	The average and standard deviation observed	Hypical mean	Variable	Row

0/001	215	16/99	3/41 ± 0/36	3	Selection of sports brand	1
Significance level	Degrees of freedom	T - statistics	The average and standard deviation observed	Hypical mean	Sports brand selection components	Row
0/001	215	6/37	3/32+ 0/74	3	Pricing conditions	1
0/005		2/87	3/14+ 0/72		Commercial motivation	2
0/001		6/26	3/23+ 0/54		Consumer motivation	3
0/001		20/43	3/78+ 0/56		Distribution channel performance	4
0/001		15/51	3/83+0/79		profit marigin	5
0/001		4/99	3/33+0/98		Payment Terms	6
Significance level	Degrees of freedom	T - statistics	The average and standard deviation observed	Hypical mean	Variable	Row
0/001	215	4/58	3/11 ± 0/37	3	Customer Purchase Behavior	1
Significance level	Degrees of freedom	T - statistics	The average and standard deviation observed	Hypical mean	Customer Purchase Behavior Components	Row
0/001	215	6/78	3/31+ 0/68	3	Customer -friendly values	1
0/016		-2/43	2/90+ 0/54		Customer Cost	2
0/001		5/24	3/17+ 0/48		Easy Buy	3
0/064		0/46	3/01+ 0/61		Relationships with customers	4

The results indicated a statistically significant correlation between cultural values and customer purchasing behavior ($r = 0.67$, $p < .01$), with a shared variance of 45%. Similarly, a significant relationship was observed between brand selection and customer purchasing behavior ($r = 0.55$, $p < .01$), with a shared variance of 30%. Furthermore, a statistically significant correlation was found between cultural values and brand selection ($r = 0.62$, $p < .01$), with a shared variance of 38%. Subsequently, to elucidate the effects between the research variables and the mediating role of brand selection in the causal relationship between cultural values and the purchasing behavior of Technique sportswear customers, the structural model was implemented.

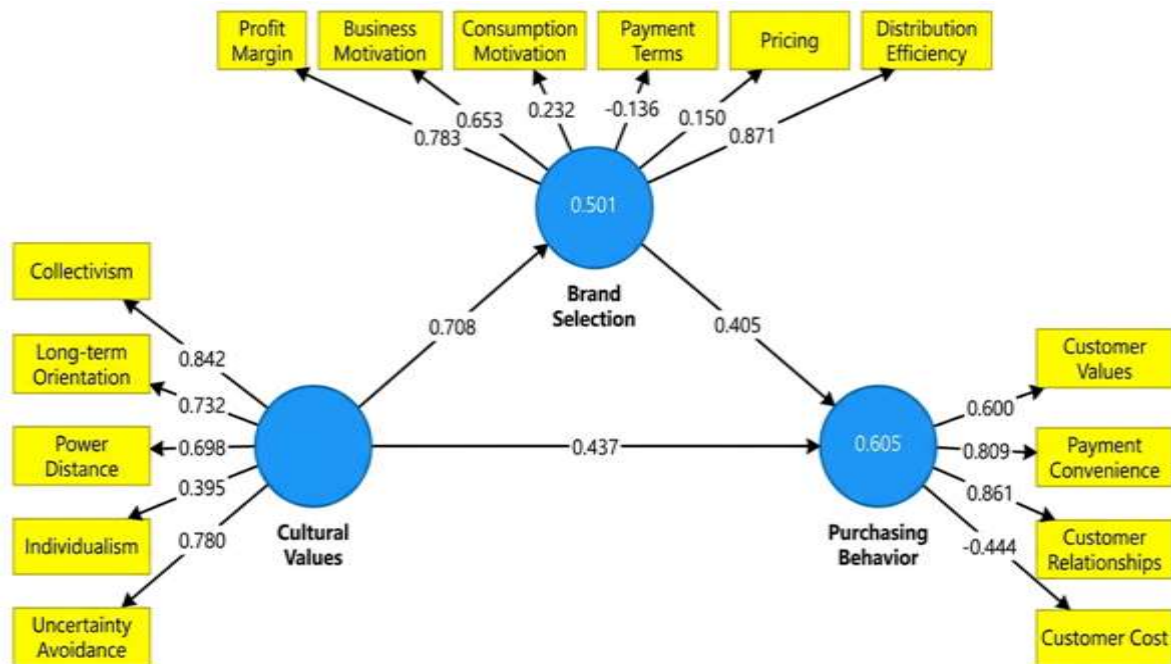


Figure 2. Structural Model of Research in Standard Coefficient Mode

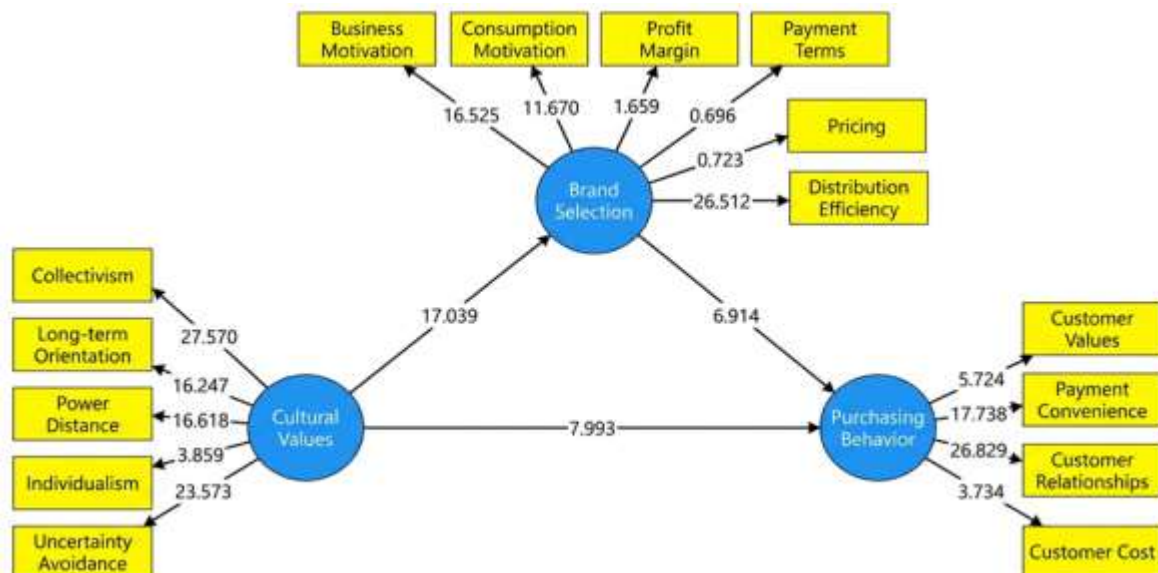


Figure 3. Structural Model of Research in Significant Coefficient Mode

Based on the structural model, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) were examined and validated. Convergent validity was confirmed, as all observed AVE values exceeded 0.5 and all composite reliability coefficients were higher than their corresponding AVE values. Furthermore, the discriminant validity of the model was verified utilizing the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Consequently, the results regarding the impact of cultural values on purchasing behavior, with brand selection as a mediating variable, are presented in the table below.

Table 2. The effect of independent variable on dependent and mediated variables

Behavior	Variables		
0/437	β	cultural values	Independent
7/993	T-Value		

0/708	β	cultural values	Independent
17/309	T-Value		
0/405	β	Brand selection	Independent
6/914	T-Value		

Based on the data in Table 2, the effect of cultural values on purchasing behavior ($\beta = 0.437$, T-value = 7.993) is positive and significant. Similarly, the effect of cultural values on brand selection ($\beta = 0.708$, T-value = 17.039) is positive and significant. Furthermore, the effect of brand selection on purchasing behavior ($\beta = 0.405$, T-value = 6.914) is positive and significant. Subsequently, to evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the structural model, the coefficient of determination (R²) was examined. Table 5 presents the R² results

Table 3. The value of the determination coefficient of R²

Result	Condition	criterion	The coefficient of determination
Structural model fit At a strong level	Weak	0/19	(0/501) Brand selection
	medium	0/33	
	Strong	0/67	(0/605) Purchase Behavior

The results of the coefficient of determination indicated that the R² index is at an adequate level. To evaluate the quality of the measurement tools, the shared index was utilized. This index is calculated by dividing the sum of squared prediction errors of the latent variables by the sum of squared observations of the latent variables, minus one. The values obtained for this index for all latent variables must be positive. Given the results in Table 6 and the positive values of the shared validity for all latent variables, it can be concluded that the measurement model possesses adequate quality.

Table 4. Results of Research Structural Structures Credit Index

1-SSE/SSO	SSE	SSO	Statistics
Structure			
0/273	785/273	000/1080	cultural values
0/111	319 / 1115	000/1296	Brand selection
0/191	710/698	000/846	Purchase behavior

Subsequently, the following table is presented to determine the mediating effect of brand selection on the causal relationship between cultural values and the purchasing behavior of Technique sportswear brand customers.

Table 5. The indirect effects of variables

T-Value	SD	Indirect effect	The dependent variable	Mediator	Effective variable
7/111	0/040	0/286	Purchase behavior	Brand selection	cultural values

The mediating variable, brand selection, has a significant mediating role ($\beta = 0.286$, T-value = 7.111) in the causal relationship between empowerment and purchasing behavior. To determine the strength of the mediating effect of brand selection, the VAF statistic is utilized, which provides a value between 0 and 1. The closer this value is to 1, the greater the influence of the mediating variable. The following formula was used for its calculation:

$$VAF = \frac{a*b}{(a*b)+c} = \frac{0.708*0.405}{(0.708*0.405)+0.437} = 0.40$$

a: Coefficient of the effect of the exogenous variable (cultural values) on the mediating variable (brand selection)

b: Coefficient of the effect of the mediating variable (brand selection) on the endogenous variable (purchasing behavior)

c: Coefficient of the effect of the exogenous variable (cultural values) on the endogenous variable (purchasing behavior).

The value of 0.40 indicates that less than half of the total effect of cultural values on purchasing behavior is explained indirectly through the mediating variable of brand selection. Nevertheless, this value indicates a partial mediation by the brand selection variable.

Table 6. VAF value and judgment on its value

Result	Condition	The criterion	Mediator
Partial mediation	Without mediation minor Complete mediation	/0/20 Smaller than 0/80 Equal to 20 equal to or smaller than 0/81 and above	Brand selection

Discussion

Based on the obtained results regarding the cultural values of the Technique sportswear brand, there is a significant difference between the observed and hypothetical means. This result indicates that the state of cultural values for the Technique sportswear brand in the research sample is slightly better than the hypothetical state. In other words, the cultural values of the Technique sportswear brand in the research sample are more desirable than the hypothetical condition. Regarding the components of cultural values, the results show a significant difference between the observed and hypothetical means for individualism, power distance, and long-term orientation. This indicates that the status of these components in the research sample is desirable. However, no such desirable status exists for the components of collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. To improve individualism, power distance, and long-term orientation within the Technique sportswear brand, strategies such as training and awareness enhancement, creating a committing environment, increasing motivation and goal setting, effective communication and interaction, modeling successful athletes, providing participation opportunities, and utilizing evaluation and feedback can be implemented. By conducting courses and training on cultural values, creating a supportive environment, and encouraging positive behaviors, the Technique sportswear brand can guide athletes toward a more purposeful path aligned with its cultural values. Furthermore, by modeling successful athletes and enabling their participation in decision-making processes, the brand can strengthen the sense of ownership and involvement, leading to significant improvement in the components of individualism and long-term orientation.

Based on the empirical findings, it can be concluded that the status of brand selection for the 'Technique' sportswear brand has significantly improved within the research sample, demonstrating a statistically significant difference between the observed and hypothetical means. Furthermore, all components of brand selection for the Technique brand performed better than the hypothetical state, with significant differences observed across all dimensions.

To further optimize the brand selection process for Technique sportswear, the following strategies are recommended: implementing educational programs to enhance awareness of cultural values and brand selection criteria; fostering committed environments by encouraging positive behaviors and effective interpersonal interactions; and strengthening athlete motivation and goal-setting through the provision of growth opportunities and challenges. Additionally, establishing robust communication channels via group meetings and constructive feedback, leveraging the experiences of successful athletes as role models, and encouraging athlete participation in decision-making processes are essential. Finally, conducting periodic evaluations and providing continuous feedback are critical for the sustainable improvement of the brand selection framework.

By implementing these measures, the Technique sportswear brand will achieve significant improvements in the components of individualism and long-term orientation, leading to optimal results in brand selection.

One of the most effective strategies for improving the brand selection status of the Technique sportswear brand is the creation of a comprehensive program for education and awareness for athletes regarding the values, benefits, and techniques of sportswear brand selection. This program should include educational sessions, workshops, and group activities that provide athletes with the necessary information about various brands, their features, and advantages. Additionally, successful and experienced athletes can be involved to share their insights and experiences. Such education and experience-sharing can help athletes make better and more informed decisions regarding sportswear brands and foster a stronger connection between athletes and the brands.

Based on the obtained results regarding the purchasing behavior of customers of the Technique sportswear brand, it appears that the purchasing behavior of customers in the research sample has improved, and a significant difference is observed between the observed and hypothetical means. To enhance customer purchasing behavior and improve the overall performance of the Technique sportswear brand, the following strategies can be implemented:

First, strengthening customer-centric values by offering products and services that respond to the needs and desires of customers. Second, reducing customer costs and encouraging a more seamless purchasing

experience with more affordable pricing through discounts and special offers. Third, improving the ease of purchase by simplifying the buying process and providing accurate and sufficient information about products. Fourth, developing customer relationships through regular communication, responsiveness to needs and complaints, providing updates, and organizing customer-oriented events and activities. By adopting these strategies, the Technique sportswear brand can improve customer purchasing behavior and enhance its overall performance. Based on the statistical results, the findings demonstrate a significant relationship between cultural values and the purchasing behavior of customers for the sportswear brand, indicating that cultural values have a substantial impact on purchasing behavior. The findings of this research have important implications for the Technique brand and other companies active in the sportswear industry. These results indicate that understanding the cultural values of customers is essential for developing effective marketing strategies. By understanding these cultural

values, brands can design their products and marketing messages to align with these values, thereby increasing customer loyalty and commitment.

Therefore, to strengthen customer relationships and increase sales, strategies such as incorporating cultural values into product and service design, utilizing marketing strategies aligned with cultural values, providing customer education and awareness, and conducting further research in this area can be employed. These actions can help establish a stronger connection with customers by leveraging cultural values, ultimately increasing their satisfaction and loyalty.

According to the statistical findings, the results indicate a significant relationship between brand selection and customer purchasing behavior in the sportswear brand. Furthermore, the shared variance is 30%, indicating that 30% of the variations in customer purchasing behavior can be explained by brand selection. This suggests that the factors influencing a customer's brand selection likely also impact their purchasing behavior. These factors include brand awareness, brand image, product quality, price, and customer service (Garcia & Dhurup, 2014; Lakshmi, 2017). Therefore, it can be concluded that brand selection has a significant influence on customer purchasing behavior. To improve customer relationships and increase sales, focus should be placed on strengthening brand recognition, developing attractive marketing strategies, conducting competitive analysis, and performing continuous evaluations. Implementing these suggestions can help enhance customer engagement and boost sales.

Statistical findings from various studies demonstrate a significant correlation between brand selection and customer purchasing behavior in sportswear brands, highlighting the multifaceted nature of consumer preferences and decision-making processes. Research by Alfifto et al. (2023) shows that both celebrity endorsers and brand image significantly influence purchasing decisions, with celebrity endorsers having the most substantial impact on Adidas sportswear among university students. Similarly, Alatawy (2023) posits that consumer attitudes, social representations, and preferences play a pivotal role in shaping purchase behaviors toward brands such as Adidas and Puma within the Saudi Arabian market. This underscores the critical influence of socio-cultural determinants and digital engagement in driving consumer decision-making processes. Vukasović and Petrič (2022) found that brand quality, reliability, and value for money are crucial for consumers when selecting sports equipment, and strong brand loyalty is observed once a suitable brand is identified. Mehdi Falahati Marvast et al (2022) . Liu and Huang (2026) presented a comprehensive measurement model illustrating various purchasing decision styles among apparel consumers, reflecting a complex set of factors influencing brand selection. Their research reveals that quality, comfort, price, and innovation are primary determinants of consumer choice. Furthermore, strategic advertising and brand endorsements significantly shape customer purchasing behavior.

The sportswear industry is a highly competitive market where brands vie for customer attention and loyalty. In this dynamic landscape, understanding the factors that influence customer purchasing behavior is essential for brands to gain a competitive advantage. One of the key factors that can significantly impact purchasing decisions is brand selection.

Correlation analysis results revealed a positive and significant correlation between brand selection and customer purchasing behavior ($r = 0.405$, $p < 0.001$). This finding confirms our

hypothesis and indicates that customers who choose the Technique brand are more likely to exhibit positive purchasing behaviors, such as repeat purchases, recommending the brand to others, and overall brand loyalty.

The findings of this study have important implications for Technique sportswear and other brands within the industry. By recognizing the importance of brand selection in influencing customer behavior, brands can develop effective marketing strategies that resonate with their target audience and ultimately drive an increase in sales.

The statistical analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between cultural values and brand selection within the sportswear industry. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.62$) indicates a robust association between these two variables. Based on these empirical findings, it can be inferred that cultural values exert a pronounced influence on the brand selection process among sportswear consumers.

This result is consistent with existing literature. For instance, research conducted on sports drink consumers within Indonesian fitness centers demonstrates that brand positioning, brand image, and perceived value significantly modulate brand selection (Andyka et al., 2016). Similarly, Tong and Lee (2013) asserted that individual cultural values, country-of-origin perceptions, and national cultural characteristics play pivotal roles in shaping consumer preferences and purchasing behavior. Furthermore, Chowdhury et al. (2020) observed that brand equity is more effectively leveraged in highly individualistic cultures and in societies characterized by low uncertainty avoidance, high masculinity, low power distance, and short-term orientation, thereby enhancing overall corporate value.

Drawing upon these results, the following strategic interventions are proposed to optimize brand alignment and consumer acquisition:

- Implementation of Granular Cultural Research: Systematic research and consumer surveys should be conducted to achieve a profound understanding of the cultural values prevalent among target demographics and their specific impact on brand selection. Such empirical data is essential for integrating cultural nuances into the brand's core design and marketing architecture.
- Holistic Cultural Integration: Cultural values must be seamlessly integrated across all brand touchpoints, including product design, packaging, strategic messaging, and the overall customer experience. Enhancing the congruence between the consumer's cultural values and the brand identity will facilitate greater brand attraction and resonance.
- Dynamic Strategic Adaptation: A mechanism for the continuous monitoring of societal cultural shifts and evolving norms should be established. This ensures that the brand's strategies and product offerings remain synchronized with the dynamic cultural landscape, thereby maintaining long-term relevance and consumer appeal.
- Competitive Benchmarking and Market Intelligence: Comprehensive analysis of competitors and a deep exploration of market trends and consumer inclinations are imperative. Such intelligence allows the brand to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage and execute targeted strategies that appeal to specific cultural segments.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that firms and brands calibrate their marketing strategies to achieve a more profound understanding of consumer cultural values and foster meaningful engagement. Organizations should dynamically update their product offerings and service portfolios in alignment with ongoing societal cultural shifts. Furthermore, cultural values must be explicitly integrated into the design of packaging, promotional communications, and the overall customer experience to ensure optimal brand resonance and alignment with consumer expectations. To sustain a competitive advantage and optimize market performance, it is imperative for companies to implement a systematic and continuous loop of collecting and analyzing consumer feedback. Such a customer-centric approach, centered on the recognition of cultural values, facilitates the establishment of sustainable and meaningful long-term relationships, thereby ensuring institutional stability within a highly competitive market landscape. Regarding the structural model, the results indicate that the mediating role of brand selection in the relationship between cultural values and the purchasing behavior of sportswear consumers does not exhibit the requisite fit. This finding diverges from the established literature, specifically contrasting with the results reported by Sikandar& Ansari. (2022), and Tung et al. (2010), whose research suggested that brand selection serves as a critical mediator in this relationship. While previous studies argue that focusing on determinants of brand selection—such as brand awareness, product quality, and design aesthetics—increases the probability of selection among consumers with strong cultural inclinations, the empirical evidence in the current study does not support this mediating mechanism.

Nevertheless, the analysis of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the inter-construct correlations confirms that the model maintains an acceptable level of fit, and discriminant validity is statistically validated. Moreover, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio remained below 1, confirming the reliability and validity of the constructs. Consequently, the results substantiate a direct and significant relationship between cultural values and purchasing behavior, independent of the mediating influence of brand selection.

To further leverage these insights, several recommendations are proposed for future practice and research. First, it is essential to conduct more granular empirical inquiries to further decompose the dimensions of cultural values and their specific interactions with consumer behavior. Second, brands should integrate these values directly into their overarching marketing frameworks to enhance consumer conversion. Third, the establishment of longitudinal monitoring systems for customer purchasing patterns is recommended to identify emerging trends. Finally, future research should investigate additional latent variables that may modulate the interaction between cultural values and purchasing behavior, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the consumer decision-making process.

A primary limitation of the present study is its narrow focus on a single brand (Technique) within a specific geographical region (Khuzestan Province). Consequently, further research encompassing a diverse array of brands and multiple geographical territories is imperative to enhance the generalizability of the findings and to derive a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between cultural values, brand selection, and purchasing behavior within the

sportswear industry. Moreover, extending future investigations to explore how specific cultural dimensions modulate purchasing behaviors across various domains—such as product selection, pricing strategies, and distribution channels—would yield significant theoretical and practical insights. Furthermore, a more nuanced exploration of the intricate interactions between cultural values, personal identity, and brand-related determinants (e.g., brand awareness, perceived product quality, and design aesthetics) is crucial for formulating more resonant and effective marketing strategies for sportswear brands operating in globalized markets.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Conceptualization, N.B., H.P.Z. and R.S.; methodology, N.B., H.P.Z. and R.S.; software, N.B.; validation, N.B., H.P.Z. and R.S.; formal analysis, N.B. and H.P.Z.; investigation, N.B. and H.P.Z.; resources, H.P.Z.; data curation, N.B.; writing—original draft preparation, N.B.; writing—review and editing, N.B., H.P.Z. and R.S.; visualization, N.B.; supervision, H.P.Z. and R.S.; project administration, H.P.Z.; funding acquisition, H.P.Z. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [Bale AI/ChatGPT] in order to improve the language and polish the English translation of the manuscript. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical considerations

The authors avoided data fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, and any form of misconduct. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Payame Noor University, Karaj Branch.

Data availability statement

Data available on request from the authors.

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