

Designing a Consumer Purchase Process Model in the Construction Industry

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study is to explore the consumer purchase process in the construction industry.

Methodology: This qualitative research adopts the Glaserian grounded theory approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 19 experts in the construction industry and analyzed using open, selective, and theoretical coding with MAXQDA software. The study evaluated trustworthiness using Lincoln and Guba's criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability).

Findings: The core category identified was the "consumer purchase process," influenced by causes such as persuasion, demographics, input stimuli, and perspectives. Correlated factors included marketing capabilities, personal factors, and real estate price fluctuation determinants. Contingencies such as individual factors, pre-purchase satisfaction, and company-related elements moderated the process. Mediating conditions, including purchase intention, product advantages, and financial factors, shaped outcomes like continuous improvement, advanced marketing, and innovation. Contextual elements, such as cultural, psychological, and social factors, were critical to the model's applicability.

Conclusion: The study provides a comprehensive model integrating multi-dimensional interactions of consumer purchase processes in the construction industry. It highlights the need for future research to measure individual process stages, explore consumer behavior in other industries, and examine practical applications for improved marketing strategies and customer engagement.

Keywords: Purchase process, consumer, construction industry, grounded theory.

1 Introduction

Housing is one of the three fundamental human needs, alongside food and clothing, making it the third essential necessity for humanity. Economically, housing holds a prominent and unique position, with estimates indicating that approximately one-third of the world's assets are tied to the housing market. In the cultural context of the country, unlike in some Western nations, homeownership is one of the primary goals and aspirations of families. Economically, 85% of the average assets of Iranian households, 30% of the gross fixed capital of the country, 30% of liquidity and economic transactions, and approximately 20% to 40% of annual national investments are allocated to the housing sector (Reivandi et al., 2021).

However, the 2010s can be regarded as a decade of freefall for the construction industry in Iran, during which all critical indicators assessing the state of this market have been in a state of alarm for some time. Among the most significant indicators used to evaluate this sector are the volume of new investments and the level of consumer purchases. According to the government's official report, as of November 2023, the number of residential apartments transacted in Tehran alone reached only 6.3 thousand units, representing a 55.1% decrease compared to the same month the previous year (Abdollahi, 2023).

The deteriorating conditions in the construction industry, along with the resulting problems, particularly for low-income groups, have drawn attention to the need for further examination of the consumer purchase process in this sector (Abdollahi, 2023). Furthermore, the constant evolution of today's business environment has led to ongoing changes in the type and level of customer demand, transforming the business landscape into a competitive arena. This underscores the necessity of understanding customer behaviors and preferences and fostering relationships with them as critical factors for the success and survival of companies (Purwanto, 2022).

Marketing, therefore, is considered one of the most critical activities within contemporary business systems. A key aspect of marketing involves understanding the behavioral characteristics of buyers and consumers (Huyssteen & Rudansky-Kloppers, 2023). According to Hawkins' theory, consumer behavior refers to the study of all processes related to the selection, use, and disposal of products, services, experiences, and ideas by individuals, groups, and organizations. This field examines how and why

these needs are satisfied and investigates the impact of various processes on customers (Rousta & Bathaee, 2006).

The study of the purchase process and the factors influencing it is a focal point in consumer behavior science. Based on this understanding, individuals form mental hypotheses and lifestyles influenced by internal and external factors, which then consciously or unconsciously activate the purchase process when faced with relevant situations (Purwanto, 2022). It is important to note that customers may articulate their needs and desires in one way but behave differently in practice due to their lack of awareness of their deep and intrinsic motivations (Prentice et al., 2019).

As a result, industry professionals must consistently and accurately assess customer needs, desires, perceptions, and purchasing behaviors (Brandenburg et al., 2017). Gaining a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior and identifying the factors influencing their purchase process is crucial. This knowledge can provide a cognitive foundation for planning and developing effective marketing strategies, benefiting managers (Abror et al., 2019).

The construction industry is one of the largest and most significant sectors in contemporary societies, encompassing activities related to the construction of buildings and associated infrastructure. Although at first glance it may appear that only a limited segment of the workforce is engaged in this industry, a closer examination reveals that more than 100 sectors are directly and indirectly linked to it. In Iran, the construction industry constitutes a substantial portion of the country's economy, with any positive or negative developments in this sector significantly impacting the broader economy (Razi, 2023; Zhang & London, 2011, 2012).

The literature on consumer purchasing behavior highlights various factors influencing decision-making across different industries. Huyssteen and Rudansky-Kloppers (2023) identified internal and external influences on vehicle insurance buyers in South Africa, including marketing strategies, socio-cultural environment, communication resources, psychological traits, and demographic variables (Huyssteen & Rudansky-Kloppers, 2023). Sembring (2020) analyzed the purchase decision model among construction project managers in Jakarta, revealing that product branding, distribution, and promotions together accounted for 81% of purchase decisions, with the remaining 19% attributed to cultural, personality, and social factors (Sembring, 2020). Ramya and Mohamed (2016) underscored the interplay of cultural, social, psychological, and habitual factors in consumer

behavior, along with marketers' strategies to align campaigns with consumer needs (Ramya & Mohamed, 2016). In the real estate sector, Mahpour and Akbari (2021) demonstrated the positive impact of virtual reality experiences on consumer emotions, purchase perceptions, and post-purchase intentions (Mehpour & Akbari, 2021). Saeedi et al. (2021) presented a pre-purchase behavior model that emphasized the critical role of contextual, psychological, and social factors across need recognition, information search, and product evaluation stages (Saeedi et al., 2021). Reivandi et al. (2021) categorized factors affecting housing market decisions under environmental uncertainties, such as economic stability and consumer perceptions (Reivandi et al., 2021). Similarly, Karamali et al. (2020) highlighted branding and architectural considerations in the housing market (Karamali et al., 2020). Lastly, Samadi et al. (2020) examined shopping behaviors in Iranian malls, identifying aesthetics, convenience, brand identity, and social responsibility as key determinants (Samadi et al., 2020). Collectively, these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors shaping consumer purchase behavior across industries.

A review of the existing literature and research in credible domestic academic databases reveals no scientific study examining the consumer purchase process within the context of the country's construction industry. Such research could adapt this concept to local conditions, enabling organizations and companies in the construction sector to benefit from the findings. Given the above considerations and the significant potential of domestic companies to create value in this field, the current contribution to the development and clarification of factors influencing the consumer purchase process appears insufficient. Despite the deep-rooted economic causes behind the stagnation of the construction industry, the full recession or recovery of this market cannot be attributed to a single factor. Research findings indicate that customers play a significant role in shaping the dynamics of the construction sector. For example, Briscoe et al. (2004) argue that customers, as the ultimate decision-makers regarding the purchase of building materials, can greatly influence the vitality of the construction industry. The skill of sellers in persuading buyers to finalize their purchases is of paramount importance (Briscoe et al., 2004). Moreover, consumers make purchases when they feel that, despite addressing some of their immediate needs, their decision will yield desirable benefits in the future (Karl, 2018).

Since decision-making rarely occurs in an environment of full transparency, it often involves considerable complexity. This complexity can lead to doubt and hesitation in the consumer purchase process (Reivandi et al., 2021). Thus, a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing customer purchase behavior in the construction market is essential for facilitating this process and guiding customer purchase decisions.

The persistent stagnation in this market highlights the inability of businesses in the construction industry to attract buyers, indicating a failure to identify the underlying causes of delayed or suspended purchases. Understanding these behaviors and providing accurate information from industry experts are crucial steps toward resolving this issue.

The researcher's review of domestic and international academic and specialized databases, including Humanities Comprehensive Portal, Noormags, Civilica, Magiran, ScienceDirect, Emerald, Springer, Scopus, Sage, and SID, revealed that few studies have examined the factors influencing customer purchase processes. Among these studies, most focus on fast-moving consumer goods and impulsive purchases, neglecting the fundamental differences between consumer goods and durable, capital-intensive goods.

Given the significance of the construction market and its macro- and micro-level impacts on society, it is essential to conduct applied research to examine and propose effective models and frameworks for factors influencing the purchase process and consumer behavior in the construction sector. This study focuses on the unique characteristics of the construction industry and its key differences from other consumer markets, aiming to address the following question:

What is the consumer purchase process model in the construction industry?

2 Methods and Materials

This research is fundamentally oriented toward theory development, as it proposes a model for the consumer purchase process in the construction industry. Regarding data collection, it is classified as descriptive research. The data collection method involved semi-structured interviews with experts. This study employs a qualitative approach and uses the grounded theory methodology with a Glaserian approach to gather and analyze data.

The statistical population of the study, based on its subject domain, included academic experts and active managers in the construction industry. Interviews were

conducted with 19 participants selected through purposive sampling combined with the snowball technique. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation of the categories was achieved. The primary data collection tool was semi-structured interviews.

Based on the grounded theory approach, the data coding process followed three main steps: (1) open coding, (2) selective coding (referred to as substantive coding for the first two steps), and (3) theoretical coding. At the final stage of substantive coding, a set of concepts or codes that were similar were grouped into categories. Glaser introduced the concept of "coding families" to integrate substantive codes (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Holton, 2005). One of these families, the "6 Cs" coding family (Glaser, 1978), was utilized in this study. Data coding was performed using MAXQDA software, version 18.

The trustworthiness (validity and reliability) of the findings was evaluated using the four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was ensured by completing the study to the point of data saturation, presenting the data to participants for their feedback, allocating sufficient time for conducting interviews, and involving multiple coders in the process. Transferability was addressed by providing a detailed description of the research conditions, including the research population, sampling methods, study year, data collection methods, and interpretation of the information.

Dependability of the data was achieved through systematic application of grounded theory methods, detailed and thorough documentation of data collection, precise and diverse coding, repetition of coding, and analysis and interpretation of the data. Confirmability was ensured by careful selection of samples, presenting evidence and findings to experts and participants, using technical and field notes, employing strategies to enhance theoretical

sensitivity, and avoiding bias throughout the research process.

3 Findings and Results

As mentioned, data coding in the Glaserian grounded theory method is conducted in three stages: open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding. These stages are explained below with an example, and their results are presented. The same procedure was followed for other conceptual components.

Step 1: Open Coding

In this stage, after transcribing the conducted interviews, open coding was performed line by line. Initially, significant statements were extracted from the interviews, and separate and distinct initial codes were identified. For example, the statement: "When individuals earn more income due to their job and promotions, they essentially have greater liquidity, which drives them toward making more and luxurious purchases for their buildings" was coded as "access to liquidity." Ultimately, 262 initial codes were identified during this phase.

Step 2: Selective Coding

In the next stage, selective coding, the initial codes that were similar were merged, resulting in 50 secondary codes. These secondary codes were then grouped to form concepts. Based on the relationships among these concepts, the "6 Cs" coding family provided the best framework for integrating these concepts. The results of the selective coding are shown in Table 1.

Step 3: Theoretical Coding

The final stage, theoretical coding, involves abstract models that integrate categories into a theory. In this stage, the "6 Cs" coding family introduced by Glaser was used to combine concepts and categories. Figure 9 illustrates the consumer purchase process model in the construction industry, where each element of the "6 Cs" is displayed.

Table 1

Results of Selective Coding and 6 Cs Components

6 Cs	Concepts	Example Codes
Consumer Purchase Process	Problem recognition	Current situation, desired state, mismatch, perceived quality, product performance expectations, product features and benefits, personal preferences, rich social media, ease of accessing information, sellers and marketers, market environment, information quality, newspapers, internet, friends
	Option evaluation	
	Information search	
	Purchase decision	

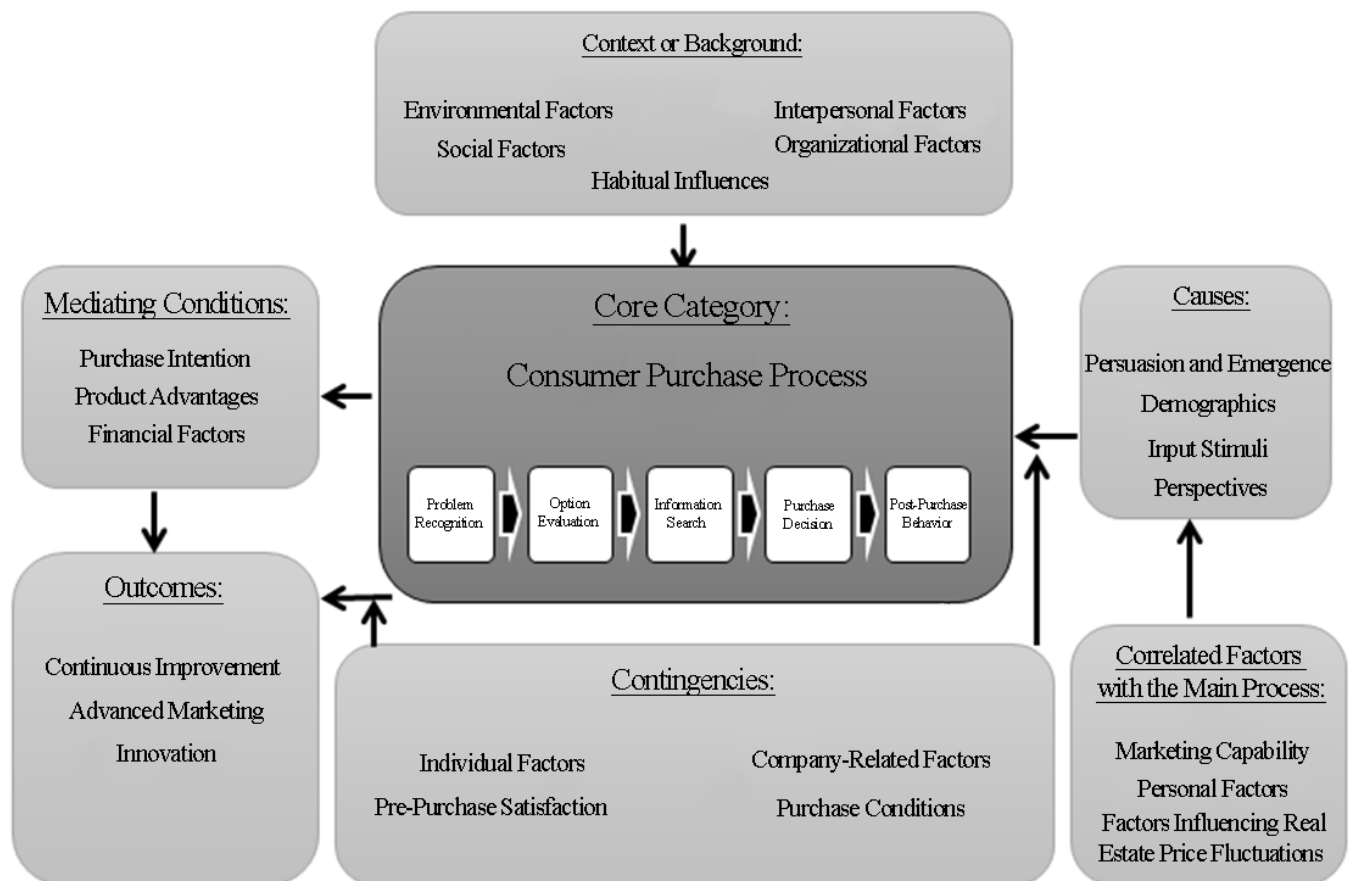
	Post-purchase behavior	
Causal Factors	Persuasion and emergence Demographics Input stimuli Perspectives	High appeal, reasonable pricing, attractive packaging, availability, appealing price promotions, emergence of new needs, personal growth, monthly income, roles, family, reference groups, social position, others' attitudes, information flow, quality, price
Correlated Factors	Marketing capability Personal factors Factors influencing property price fluctuations	Advertising, discounts and incentives, brand trust-building, responsiveness, after-sales service, economic conditions, lifestyle, outlook on life, mental image of individuals Confidence, independence, per capita income, housing loans, housing taxes, unemployment rate, building material price index
Contingencies	Individual factors Pre-purchase satisfaction Company-related factors Purchase conditions	Transaction security, product alignment with buyer expectations, possibility of additional discounts, lower price compared to competitors, positive purchase attitude, rational perspective, product lacking desirable quality, company size, company reputation, perceived fairness of company pricing, company collaborations, company staff, buyer role, store environment factors
Mediating Conditions	Purchase intention Product advantages Financial factors	Chat rooms and friend groups, recommendations from others, others' opinions and ratings, transaction security, positive attitude toward the company, brand perception, selection criteria, motivation, time pressure, product quality, product aesthetics, product health, free sample trials, type of offer, inflation-adjusted price
Contextual Factors	Cultural factors Psychological factors Personality factors Environmental factors Social factors Interpersonal factors Organizational factors Habit-related factors	Desires, diverse behaviors, ideologies and beliefs, groups with shared values, habits and customs, shared life experiences, structured and relatively stable social groups, similar values, similar interests, similar behaviors, hedonism, uniqueness, perfectionism, social issues, technological changes, friends, neighbors, colleagues, virtual communities, parents, spouses, education level, personal position, general search, stimulus ambiguity, precision, perceptual bias, goals, purchase policies, resources, time and place of consumption, positive and negative beliefs
Outcomes	Continuous improvement Advanced marketing Innovation	Risk-taking and intelligence, global goal focus, creating unique approaches, organizational flexibility, continuous improvement, enhanced competitive potential, creating sustainable competitive advantage, increased customer satisfaction, increased customer loyalty, business growth, improved promotion methods, supporting business environment provision, technological innovation, product development-based innovation

The "consumer purchase process" is the core category in this research. This concept refers to the set of actions consumers undertake regarding the purchase of goods or services, beginning with consumer stimulation and recognition of need and continuing through their evaluation

of the purchasing process. In the decision-making process, consumers typically pass through five stages: problem recognition, information search, option evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior.

Figure 1

Consumer Purchase Process Model in the Construction Industry



A. Causes

In the "6 Cs" coding family, causes refer to the reasons and explanations for the occurrence of the core category. The results of selective coding revealed that companies approach the consumer purchase process through four perspectives: persuasion and emergence, demographics, input stimuli, and perspectives.

Persuasion and Emergence:

The consumer purchase process typically begins with a stimulus or a sense of need arising from various factors. According to the findings, these factors may include attractive price promotions, the emergence of new needs, personal growth, or specific mental states. Examples also include reasonable pricing and access to liquidity.

Demographics:

Demographic factors significantly influence consumer purchases and the initiation of the purchase process. These

factors include education, age, gender, family size, residential area, marital status, profession, and monthly income.

Input Stimuli:

Stimuli influencing the purchase process are categorized into internal and external stimuli. Internal stimuli include psychological factors such as ability, knowledge, attitude, and personality, while external stimuli include social factors, which are highly impactful because consumers are surrounded by their environment and community and experience direct interactions.

Perspectives:

Decision-making is analyzed through three perspectives: rational, experiential, and behavioral. By focusing on the assumptions of these perspectives, valuable insights into individual decision-making processes can be obtained.

B. Correlated Factors

These are factors correlated with the causes of the main process, namely the "consumer purchase process." The results of selective coding showed that actors in the construction industry explain the purchase process and its causes based on the following factors:

Marketing Capability:

Marketing methods and techniques used to attract customers can significantly impact all stages of the marketing process. These methods, developed through customer research and assessment, include discounts, incentives, brand trust-building, responsiveness, after-sales services, affordability, and observing others' purchases.

Personal Factors:

Personal factors, which are unique to each individual, strongly influence purchase decisions. For example, targeting customers within a specific age group or economic status with suitable marketing methods can effectively influence their purchasing behavior.

Factors Affecting Real Estate Price Fluctuations:

Unique factors influencing the construction industry include real estate price fluctuations. These include land prices, construction costs, completed housing supply, community liquidity, the efficiency of competing markets, per capita income, housing loans, property taxes, unemployment rates, and construction material price indices.

C. Contingencies

Contingencies refer to moderating factors that affect the relationship between the causes of the purchase process, the core category, and the outcomes. Moderating factors identified in this model include:

Individual Factors:

These factors influence consumers' initiation of the purchase process, primarily through perceived risk, perceived benefit, and attitude.

Pre-Purchase Satisfaction:

Satisfaction in previous purchase aspects, such as salesperson services, store attractiveness, transportation costs, product return risks, brand diversity, pricing, information delivery, perceived ease, company-related factors, and purchase conditions, plays a critical role in repeat purchases or repurchase processes.

Company-Related Factors:

These include factors such as company reputation, size, brand prestige, perceived pricing fairness, company collaborations, and staff behavior.

Purchase Conditions:

Managers should consider buyer roles, store environmental factors, store physical conditions, organizational impact, and buyer sentiment to facilitate the "consumer purchase process."

D. Mediating Conditions

In the Glaserian approach, conditions refer to mediating variables. In this model, these variables shape the outcomes of the core category before they emerge. Mediating variables identified include:

Purchase Intention:

The first mediating variable identified was purchase intention. A positive perception of the company and a proper understanding of the brand can build trust in the company and its products, encouraging consumers toward purchasing.

Product Advantages:

This includes product-specific factors such as quality, aesthetic appeal, brand reputation, warranties, pricing, after-sales services, and other product-related elements that can lead to consumer purchases and their outcomes.

Financial Factors:

Financial conditions aligned with the timing of product offerings significantly shape the purchase process. These include inflation-adjusted pricing, increased wages, exchange rates, supply-demand levels, and similar considerations.

E. Outcomes

Outcomes refer to the results derived from the core category. This research identified three categories of positive outcomes:

Continuous Improvement:

This involves both structural improvements and business advancements. Structural improvements include enhancing brand development, hiring experienced marketing professionals, fostering intercompany collaboration, embracing risk-taking and intelligence, focusing on global objectives, creating unique approaches, organizational flexibility, comprehensive support, and participation. Business outcomes benefit stakeholders by fostering competitiveness through modern technologies, increasing competitive potential, creating sustainable advantages, improving customer satisfaction and loyalty, business growth, and addressing fundamental challenges.

Advanced Marketing:

The consumer purchase process and successful product sales gradually enhance a company's marketing expertise. Marketing advancements include improving store dynamics,

adopting modern marketing practices, producing high-quality products, optimizing distribution methods, improving promotion strategies, and supporting the business environment.

Innovation:

Another outcome of the consumer purchase process is innovation, which is essential for financial sustainability and has broader implications for stakeholders and society. Innovation helps identify and meet current market needs and trends.

F. Context or Background

Finally, in the "6 Cs" coding family of the Glaserian approach, context refers to environmental and individual factors within the studied community. This study demonstrated that contextual factors significantly influence the consumer purchase process, affecting the core category, correlated factors, contingencies, and mediating conditions.

Cultural Factors:

Cultural upbringing and local cultural attributes influence consumer purchase processes. These factors include fundamental values, perceptions, desires, differing behaviors, ideologies, beliefs, and shared values among community groups.

Psychological Factors:

Individual personality differences affect purchasing behavior with companies.

Personality Factors:

Personality-related factors, such as subjective norms, self-control, ethical attitudes, experience, extroversion, and behavioral stability, influence consumer purchases. Companies often overlook these factors.

Environmental Factors:

Legal, economic, social, and technological factors heavily impact consumer purchasing processes. In regions with significant economic instability, such as in this study, consumers face numerous challenges.

Social Factors:

Interactions and relationships with others significantly influence purchase type and quantity, from family dynamics to broader societal interactions. Social status also plays a critical role, as many individuals make purchasing decisions based on their social position rather than their needs.

Interpersonal Factors:

Interviewees indicated that interpersonal factors affect the consumer purchase process, but companies often disregard these in their marketing strategies. Factors such as strong relationships, education levels, and personal positions

are not adequately leveraged by companies to attract customers.

Organizational Factors:

Organizational factors such as goal-setting, purchase policies, resource allocation, and the structure of purchasing units are crucial background elements influencing this process.

Habitual Factors:

According to interviewees, habits strongly influence the purchase process. These habits may stem from prior consumption experiences, consumption time and location, positive or negative beliefs, and potential consumption barriers.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to develop a localized model for the consumer purchase process in the construction industry, addressing the confusion among Iranian companies regarding its nature, functions, goals, methods, factors, dimensions, and components. The research examined causes, correlated factors, contingencies, mediating conditions, and outcomes around the core category within a single model. The main causes identified included persuasion and emergence, demographics, input stimuli, and perspectives, with the core category being the "consumer purchase process."

Researchers (Huysteen & Rudansky-Kloppers, 2023; Purwanto, 2022) agree that companies stimulate consumers' purchasing process by introducing new products with superior performance, attractive price promotions, or addressing emerging issues. Correlated factors, such as marketing capabilities, personal factors, and real estate price fluctuation determinants, act as triggers for the consumer's five-stage purchase process. Findings from previous studies (Ramya & Mohamed, 2016; Sembiring, 2020) confirm the role of marketing capabilities in this process. Marketing methods and techniques designed to attract customers are highly influential throughout the marketing process. Examples include discounts, incentives, brand trust-building, responsiveness, after-sales services, affordability, and observing others' purchases.

Personal factors, such as age, life stage, occupation, economic status, lifestyle, and personality type, are key determinants of purchasing decisions. Additionally, factors unique to the construction industry—such as construction costs, completed housing per capita, societal liquidity, competing market efficiency, and per capita income—are

critical, as confirmed in previous studies (Reivandi et al., 2021). These factors support the primary causes identified in this research.

In the contingencies section, pre-purchase satisfaction emerged as a key requirement for the purchasing process. Saeedi et al. (2021) emphasize pre-purchase satisfaction based on past purchasing experiences or service delivery and trust-building as essential elements of the purchase process. Kazaghi (2020) suggests that companies can leverage individual factors such as perceived risk and perceived benefit to initiate the purchase process. Notably, attitudes were identified as a novel individual factor influencing the purchase process in this study.

Company-related factors and purchase conditions are components that companies must address in their marketing efforts to encourage consumer purchases. These findings align with the results of prior studies (Mehpour & Akbari, 2021; Qazzafi, 2019, 2020). Mediating conditions were another novel finding of this research. If trust-building for customers and the creation of appropriate product advantages to address problems and meet needs are properly implemented, this can effectively initiate the purchasing process. Moreover, incorporating financial factors into the consumer purchase process can result in greater benefits for stakeholders, enabling the realization of final outcomes from the process.

The study identified context or background as a category encompassing cultural, psychological, personality, environmental, and social factors, which significantly influence the consumer purchase process. Saeedi et al. (2021) highlight that consumer purchases result from continuous interactions between consumers and the contextual factors surrounding their activities (Saeedi et al., 2021). Sembiring (2020) emphasizes the importance of this interaction (Sembiring, 2020). Huyssteen and Rudansky-Kloppers (2023) also identify cultural and social factors as contextual influences on the consumer purchase process (Huyssteen & Rudansky-Kloppers, 2023).

Ultimately, this study demonstrated that all identified components interact multidimensionally within the consumer purchase process, producing outcomes in three categories: continuous improvement, advanced marketing, and innovation. In addition to identifying new components in the present model, this research highlighted the coherence and relationships among elements not observed in other models.

The study provides a broad scope for future research. It can serve as a starting point for exploring each concept and

component. Future studies are recommended to measure each stage of the consumer purchase process independently and to examine this process in other industries.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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