STUDY OF THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE FEMALE LOYALTY TO BRANDS

ESTUDO DOS FATORES QUE INFLUENCIAM A FIDELIDADE FEMININA ÀS MARCAS

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A B S T R A C T

The present study aims to analyze how female perfectionism, women's brand awareness, female quality awareness and female satisfaction are related to female brand loyalty. A survey was carried out with 349 self-declared female consumers. Data were treated using Structural Equations. As main results, the present study shows that: a) A brand focused on women's clothing that generates brand awareness positively influences female satisfaction with the brand the interviewee has in mind; b) The awareness of feminine quality positively influences brand awareness, female loyalty to the brand, and female satisfaction with the brand; c) Female perfectionism positively interferes with brand awareness and quality, as well as female satisfaction. In a practical way, it expands the possibility for managers to carry out marketing actions with the aim of female loyalty. The research contributes to understand female behavior around female loyalty. Through the findings, it was possible to reveal a theoretical model that demonstrates some antecedents of such a construct. To date, no model has been found that reveals such conditions.

K E Y W O R D S

Consumer Behavior; Brand Loyalty; Brand Awareness; Quality Awareness; Perfectionism.

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R E S U M O

O presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar como o perfeccionismo feminino, a consciência de marca feminina, a consciência de qualidade feminina e a satisfação feminina se relacionam com a fidelidade feminina à marca. Foi realizado um survey com 349 consumidoras autodeclaradas. Os dados foram tratados por meio de Equações Estruturais. Como principais resultados, o presente estudo demonstra que: a) Uma marca focada em vestuário feminino que gera consciência de marca influencia positivamente a satisfação feminina com a marca que a entrevistada tem em mente; b) A consciência da qualidade feminina influencia positivamente a consciência de marca, a lealdade feminina à marca e a satisfação feminina com a marca; c) O perfeccionismo feminino interfere positivamente na consciência e na qualidade da marca, bem como na satisfação feminina. De forma prática, amplia a possibilidade de gestores realizarem ações de marketing com o objetivo de fidelizar mulheres. A pesquisa contribui para a compreensão do comportamento feminino em relação à fidelização feminina. Por meio dos achados, foi possível desvendar um modelo teórico que demonstra alguns antecedentes de tal construto. Até o momento, não foi encontrado nenhum modelo que revele tais condições.

P A L A V R A S - C H A V E

Comportamento do Consumidor; Fidelidade à Marca; Conscientização da marca; Conscientização da qualidade; Perfeccionismo.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have devoted considerable effort to unraveling consumers' attention towards clothing acquisition because this industry is expansive spatially and highly competitive (Goldsmith et al., 2012). Additionally, the clothing market is multifaceted, involving innovation, creativity, and brand history. Traditionally, brands like Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, and Prada have followed social movements such as the Second World War, which influenced the promotion of various refined fabrics in somber colors and the pursuit of women's expression of freedom, that began in the 1960s with the Hippie movement. Due to these issues of frequent style changes, consumer taste, and involvement of high economic values, the way women consume fashion clothing becomes intriguing for researchers. This article aims to analyze how female perfectionism, brand consciousness elaborated by women, female quality consciousness, and women's satisfaction relate to brand loyalty.

The companies in the apparel sector constitute an important group of organizations that are directly associated with either promoting the transformation of social practices and values or perpetuating female stereotypes portrayed through models in the media (Castro Longhi & Vianna, 2020; Godart, 2010). These companies have access to a wide range of information regarding the demographics and profiles of women (Kawamura, 2018; Keiser et al., 2017). However, despite the abundance of data on female consumers and the interest of consumers, companies, and apparel market researchers, there is still a scarcity of studies aimed at understanding what may foster

the sales of brands recognized by Brazilian women for their superior quality. Specifically, most of the available studies seek to understand luxury goods consumption behavior and its underlying motivations. Moreover, based on a search conducted in databases such as EBSCOhost, Web of Science, and Scopus (Clarivate Analytics, 2025; EBSCO Information Services, 2025; Elsevier, 2025), no model was identified that integrates the variables described in the objective of this study.

The discussion centered on the female figure gained deeper attention in academia from 1975 onwards, titled and designated by the UN as the International Women's Year. Through publications and theoretical discussions concerning the female figure in society and its implications, it became possible to problematize and question aspects related to taboos, norms, and behaviors imposed on women in various contexts (Kanan, 2010).

Despite the evidence of debates and progress in social discussions about the female figure, it is evident that in the field of fashion remains an environment that often disregards the satisfaction of its consumers. Models still follow a standard of behavior rooted in a stereotyped association of women, fashion, and glamour. The image of the thin and tall model had icons in the 1950s such as Lucky, who was Christian Dior's favorite top model; Twiggy in the 1960s, but it was in the 1980s that the tall and thin figure was established as the norm (Horton, 2014). In the 2000s, women's interest increased in having a positive body image that diverged from previous standards (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015), prompting them to seek clothing brands that promoted individuality and feminine characteristics, influencing significant figures in fashion.

In recent years, this context has brought about changes in the positioning of professionals and the brands they represent. In 2012, Karl Lagerfeld, the creative director of Chanel, made the following statement seemingly attempting to praise singer Adele: '(...) the thing at the moment is Adele. She is a little fat, but she has a beautiful face and a divine voice.' (ABC News, 2012). In response, the singer stated, 'I represent the majority of women, and I'm very proud of that.' (Murray, 2012). In 2013, a group of women filed a complaint against the designer for defamation and discrimination due to the following statement: 'No one wants to see curvy women on the runway' (Allen, 2013). However, the following year, Lagerfeld showcased a feminist demonstration for Chanel and stated: 'It's not a collection that has to be worn entirely, but rather playing with the elements. It's less about fashion than a way of life,' Lagerfeld declared, and then added: 'Here, it's not about someone telling you what to wear, there's no reason to do that. Do it yourselves. Dress yourselves,' Lagerfeld defended. 'For Chanel, women's day is every day' (Da Redação, 2014). This demonstrates how the relationship between fashion and women's satisfaction inspires professionals and enables a change in opinion by brands.

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Perfectionism refers to the consumer's desire for a quality that surpasses what is normally found in a product or service in the market (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). This construct can have positive characteristics (dispositional) when associated with anxiety and anger, for example (Frost et al., 1990), or negative ones (non-dispositional) when people aim to meet goals and achieve

objectives (Longbottom et al., 2012; Oliveira, 2009). It can have a motivational origin (Smith et al., 2022) and, thus, is also incited by people intending to self-reward for an accomplishment (Eastman & Eastman, 2015). Therefore, perfectionistic individuals have concerns about errors and make their expectations regarding the accuracy of acquiring a product realistic (Chen et al., 2023). In other words, perfectionist consumers tend to seek a balance between expectations and product performance to satisfy the need to be correct (Kopalle & Lehmann, 2001).

Recent studies demonstrate that perfectionist consumers tend to give up on tasks when achieving perfect results becomes impossible (He, 2016). Empirical work associates perfectionism with academic goals (Bernabé et al., 2023) and excessively high standards for life (Koutra et al., 2023; Lasalle & Hess, 2022). This leads to the belief that perfectionism is linked to the quality of decisions an individual makes (Silvia et al., 2012). Based on these findings, it's believed that the perfectionist consumer expects brands to show perceptible evidence of quality in their products (Chen et al., 2023), as they seek not to fall short of established personal ideals (Chernishenko et al., 2021). Therefore, the perfectionist consumer profile represents a motivation to consume products and brands that possess attributes considered superior, reflecting a desire for quality that holds personal significance (Eastman & Eastman, 2015; Pereira & Teixeira, 2018).

A perception of quality involves aspects such as consistent utility and superior functionality (Bae & Jeon, 2022; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). Perfectionist consumers enjoy being seen as aware of their high-quality perception and intelligent (Truta & Nitoiu, 2014). This awareness of quality reflects consumers' judgments regarding the overall excellence or superiority of a brand (Sprott & Shimp, 2004; Zeithaml, 1988). Therefore, it's expected that perfectionist consumers seek a greater propensity to maximize utility when acquiring a good (Kokkoris, 2019). This utility maximization is linked to heightened personal standards (Ma et al., 2023) by striving for the highest possible quality (Polman & Maglio, 2022).

On the other hand, brand consciousness regards to a consumer's mental orientation toward well-known, well-advertised products, symbols of status, and prestige (Husain et al., 2022; Sprotles & Kendall, 1986). For the consumer to be brand aware, it is important that they become familiar with it and develop a superior recognition process (Raffaelli et al., 2024). Brands with superior characteristics involves the concept that names are pivotal in the psychological pre-purchase process (Nelson & McLeod, 2005) and offer consumers the perception of real, emotional, or functional value (Han & Kim, 2020), assisting companies in understanding brand value based on this foundation (Chung et al., 2013). Hence, it involves a mental orientation that steers consumers toward choosing goods with well-known brands (Ye et al., 2012). Consumers become aware of and form their brand awareness through effective marketing strategies in the communication channel (Rubio et al., 2014). Brand-conscious consumers use brands as a means of self-expression due to the symbolism and representativeness they embody (Sayin & Gürhan-Canlı, 2024; Han & Kim, 2020; Kotler & Keller 2024).

In the same way that people exercise caution in choosing friends with personalities similar to theirs, brands are also recognized as unique symbols of images and denote similar care in consumer choice (Alvarez et al., 2023). The consumption of brands known to the consumer builds trust and is part of an individual's identity formation (Xi et al., 2022) through connection with human

personality traits (Xu et al., 2023). This suggests that brands play a role in people's socialization and the creation of group identity (Kuo, 2022; Wang et al., 2009). Brand-conscious consumers believe that brands can symbolize group prestige (Osmanova et al., 2023; Husain et al., 2022) as they gradually foster a sense of comfort and confidence in the consumer's mind (Açikgöz et al., 2024).

Based on what has been outlined, the study presents the first three hypotheses:

H1. *Perfectionism is positively related to brand awareness.*

H2. *Perfectionism is positively related to quality consciousness.*

H3. *Quality consciousness is positively related to brand awareness.*

When consumers understand the message of a brand, they tend to strengthen the significance they attach to it and reinforce the loyalty between them and the brand (Gao & Shen, 2024). It is reasonable to argue that many products people use from deliberately chosen brands are, in a sense, items that have produced positive results from the interplay between expectations before consumption and the experience after consumption (Mazhar et al., 2022; Fernandes & Moreira, 2019). The perception of the outcome of this cognitive connection is defined as satisfaction (Oliver, 1997; Tse & Wilton, 1988). Emotionally speaking, satisfaction arises from the consumer's experience and individual standards (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1997) when obtaining a product or service (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991) and from their judgment regarding whether the product or a specific brand meets their expectations (Wang & Fan, 2022; Westbrook, 1987), possibly resulting in fulfilment (Oliver, 1999).

Popularly, a well-known and consciously chosen branded product inherently implies the definition of quality (Ye et al., 2012). Using and displaying consciously recognized brands such as Prada, Gucci, and Coca-Cola in clothing, for instance, showcase brands that are universally acknowledged due to their success and symbolic representation of something superior (Farias & Santos, 2000). Therefore, it makes complete sense to think that a significant number of people who use products consciously perceived as superior due to their brand tend to be loyal to these brands (Xi et al., 2022). Building on the above, the study introduces the fourth and fifth hypotheses:

H4. *Perfectionism is positively related to satisfaction.*

H5. *Quality consciousness is positively related to satisfaction.*

The initial studies on brand loyalty were developed on the premise that this construct involves a process of repeated purchases by the consumer (Amine, 1998). These early analyses originated from behavioral research rather than theoretical definitions of the construct (Dawes, 2022). More than fifty behavioral measures in studies on brand loyalty have been identified; however, brand loyalty is a dynamic process and lacks a strong conceptual foundation (Sari et al., 2023). To conceptualize loyalty as a recurring purchase process, the initial principle was the repeated purchase of a single brand (Amine, 1998). This perspective can be seen as a way in which there is a brand monopoly, and the consumer is directed to a singular choice of a brand within product categories (Bronnenberg & Dubé, 2017). This holds true for the purchase of durable goods that are acquired less frequently or in markets with a limited number of companies (Bertolotti et al., 2023; Gong et al., 2022). Furthermore, loyal consumers are beneficial to organizations by assisting in the retention and acquisition of new customers (Asif et al., 2015).

Behavioral scholars have deliberated on the most purchased brand within a product category rather than the acquisition of a single brand as a predominant indicator for loyalty (Dawes, 2023; Lin & Bowman, 2022). The repetition of purchases can be motivated by factors such as lower prices, retail location, buying habits, promotions, etc., which do not necessarily imply brand loyalty (Dekimpe et al., 2023; Dudziak et al., 2023). Therefore, this leads to the consideration that loyalty does not solely result from the behavioral dimension of repeated purchases of the same brand (Robertson et al., 2022) but also involves factors such as ongoing experiences (Grace et al., 2020) and quality (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022). When continuous experiences remain positive, the consumer's connection with the brand, generated from emotional indicators (commitment, love, etc.), influences people's desire to develop a long-lasting connection with the brand (Bagozzi et al., 2017; Batra et al., 2012). In addition to involving repeat purchase behavior, loyalty is also observed through the recommendation of a brand to others (Lin et al., 2022). Therefore, consumer loyalty to a brand can be defined as "an aggregate of behaviors (i.e., accommodation/forgiveness, willingness to sacrifice) and cognitions (i.e., derogation of alternatives, cognitive interdependence, and positive illusions) that maintain the stability and durability of the relationship" (Grace et al., 2020, p. 2).

In general, loyalty is conditioned on a positive level of satisfaction (Evanschitzky et al., 2022), but loyalty is not necessarily an implication of satisfaction. Satisfaction is a reflection of a positive emotional state resulting from the experiences individuals have in consumer relationships (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012). Therefore, if a consumer can meet their expectations when making a purchase, there is a higher likelihood of repeating this event and also recommending the purchase to other consumers (Lin et al., 2022). In accordance with the above, the study presents the sixth, seventh, and eighth hypotheses:

H6. *Brand awareness is positively related to brand loyalty.*

H7. *Quality consciousness is positively related to brand loyalty.*

H8. *Female satisfaction is positively related to brand loyalty.*

STUDY METHOD

The data collection method used in the present study was a survey. A total of 349 questionnaires were collected between August 15, 2021, and January 30, 2022, from Brazilian women who identify with the female gender and are between 18 and 30 years of age. Data collection was conducted non-face-to-face through the Google Forms platform. The sample size was determined following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2009), who recommend 5 to 20 times the number of research variables. Since the research involved 28 independent variables, the minimum acceptable sample size was 140 questionnaires. Non-probabilistic sampling was employed in the collection process.

The use of a questionnaire as a data collection method allowed for its division into three parts. The first part intentionally presented filter questions to select a sample that represents the desired population: "Are you a Brazilian citizen?" "Could you recommend a brand that represents fashion satisfactorily for you?".

With the selection of the audience, we could proceed to the second stage of the questionnaire, which comprises the independent variables of the model:

Board 1 - Independent variables of the model

Construct	Scales	Var.	Authors
Feminine perfectionism	I buy the perfect clothing or I don't buy it at all.	B1	Adapted from Smith et al. (2016)
	I don't like clothing that is anything less than the best.	B2	Adapted from Kopalle and Lehmann (2001)
	One of the goals when I buy clothing is that it be perfect.	B3	Adapted from Kopalle and Lehmann (2001)
	I would be upset to buy clothing that is not perfect.	B4	Adapted from Kopalle and Lehmann (2001)
	Small flaws in clothing bother me.	B5	Adapted from Kopalle and Lehmann (2001)
Quality awareness	When the product is not from a recognized brand, its quality is inferior.	C1	Adapted from Rubio et al. (2014)
	The more a product is advertised, the better its quality.	C2	Adapted from Rubio et al. (2014)
	I feel confident buying a brand whose advertising I've seen in a media outlet I know.	C3	Adapted from Rubio et al. (2014)
	I usually try to buy the overall best quality brand.	C4	Sprotles and Kendall (1986)
	Obtaining good quality is very important to me.	C5	Sprotles and Kendall (1986)
	I usually buy the first product or brand I find that I consider "good enough."	C6	Sprotles and Kendall (1986)
	I am more concerned with the function and quality of products than with their price and style.	C7	Sprotles and Kendall (1986)
Female satisfaction	I am very satisfied with the brand I am thinking of.	D1	Adapted from Sahin et al. (2011)
	I am very pleased with this brand.	D2	Adapted from Sahin et al. (2011)
	Using this brand is usually a very satisfying experience.	D3	Adapted from Sahin et al. (2011)
	The brand I am thinking of meets my expectations.	D4	Adapted from Fernandes and Moreira (2019)
	I made the right choice when I chose the brand I am thinking of.	D5	Adapted from Fernandes and Moreira (2019)
	This brand completely meets my needs.	D6	Adapted from Spreng et al. (1996)

Construct	Scales	Var.	Authors
Brand awareness	I pay attention to the brand names of the clothes I buy.	E1	Nelson and McLeod (2005)
	I pay attention to the brand of most products I purchase.	E2	Nelson and McLeod (2005)
	I believe that well-known brands are better for me.	E3	Ye et al. (2012)
	Brands tell me something about clothing.	E4	Adapted from Hur et al. (2020)
Female brand loyalty	I consider myself a loyal buyer of the brand I like.	F1	Adapted from Campo et al. (2000)
	I prefer sticking with a brand I usually buy than trying another brand I don't know.	F2	Adapted from Campo et al. (2000)
	I recommend the brand I like to my friends and family.	F3	Adapted from Ganesh et al. (2000)
	I buy this brand whenever I can.	F4	Westhuizen (2018)
	If this brand were not available, it would make a big difference to me if I had to use another brand.	F5	Westhuizen (2018)
	I make an effort to use this brand.	F6	Westhuizen (2018)

SOURCE: ELABORATED BY THE AUTHORS, 2025.

The variables reported in Board I were adapted for the study's context. This reason justified the use of observable variables from different sources. To achieve this, a reverse translation of the validated scales from the authors presented in Board I was performed. Subsequently, the scales were evaluated by three researchers in the field of marketing, proficient in the English language, regarding their suitability for each construct in the proposed model and scale adaptation. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure each variable, with the following options: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Furthermore, the adaptation of the scales also encompassed the linguistic conventions of the Brazilian audience, as recommended by the experts who reviewed the scales.

The data analysis was conducted using the R software. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was chosen as the technique to address the study's objective. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Path Analysis were the approaches employed. The first aimed to link the observable variables to the constructs and determine them. The second demonstrates the relationships between the constructs.

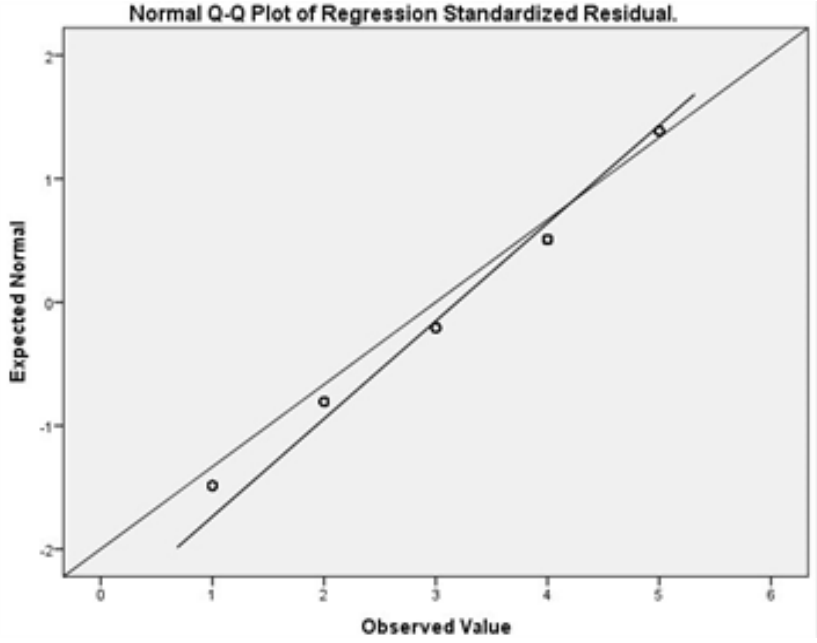
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Descriptive and exploratory results

With the first exploratory stage of the study, the dimensionality, univariate frequencies, normality, homoscedasticity, linearity, and factorial structure of the items were examined, and the scales were purified. Additionally, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was applied in this stage. After two rounds of EFA, it was decided to remove six independent variables due to factor loadings below 0.35 (Hair et al., 2009), namely: B2; C1; C6; C7; E2, and F2.

A normality of the data was observed through skewness and kurtosis, in addition to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests (Kline, 2023). The results indicated that the data originates from a normal distribution, as they showed a p-value > 0.05 (KMO = 0.904). Homoscedasticity was assessed through ANOVA and the Levene test. The results demonstrated that heteroscedastic latent variables did not occur in each of the exogenous variables. The linearity of the data could be observed through the study of bivariate scatterplots (Pestana & Gageiro, 2000). Note, through Figure 1 (oblique regression line), that an increase in X corresponds to an increase in Y, and there is no evidence of quadratic or cubic curves.

Figure 1 - Oblique regression line



SOURCE: ELABORATED BY THE AUTHORS, 2025.

The correlation matrices were significant at the 0.01 level. Bartlett's sphericity test showed overall significance of the correlation matrix. The indicators were the chi-square: 481.17; Degrees of Freedom: 201, and Sig. 0.000.

The data fit level followed the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test. The adequacy has a minimum value of 0.50. The KMO presented a value of 0.904. Principal Component Analysis considered factor loadings between 0.30 and 0.4 minimally acceptable, and above 0.5 is ideal (Hair et al., 2005). The values proved to be adequate, as can be seen in Table 1, which presents the extraction of the principal factors.

Table 1 - Principal components of the EFA

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
B1	,733				
B3	,750				
B4	,743				
B5	,458				
C2		,887			
C4		,489			
C5		,671			
D1			,749		
D2			,792		
D3			,629		
D4			,760		
D5			,810		
D6			,759		
E1				,842	
E3				,418	
E4				,799	
E5				,409	
F1					,542
F3					,428
F4					,736
F5					,411
F6					,531

SOURCE: ELABORATED BY THE AUTHORS, 2025.

Model estimation and adequacy indexes

The model's adequacy was guided by Baseline comparisons. The model estimation was based on the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method. It is worth noting that the sample size and the number of variables in the model, as indicated by Hair et al. (2005), were considered for model fit. These are essential for achieving acceptable standards of absolute, incremental, and parsimonious fit measures.

Absolute fit was assessed through the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Incremental fit could be measured through the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) proposed by Tucker and Lewis (1973), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI). Additionally, parsimonious fit was analyzed using the Normed Chi-Square (CMIN/DF). The results, acceptable values, and references can be seen in Board 2:

Board 2 - Results and acceptable values

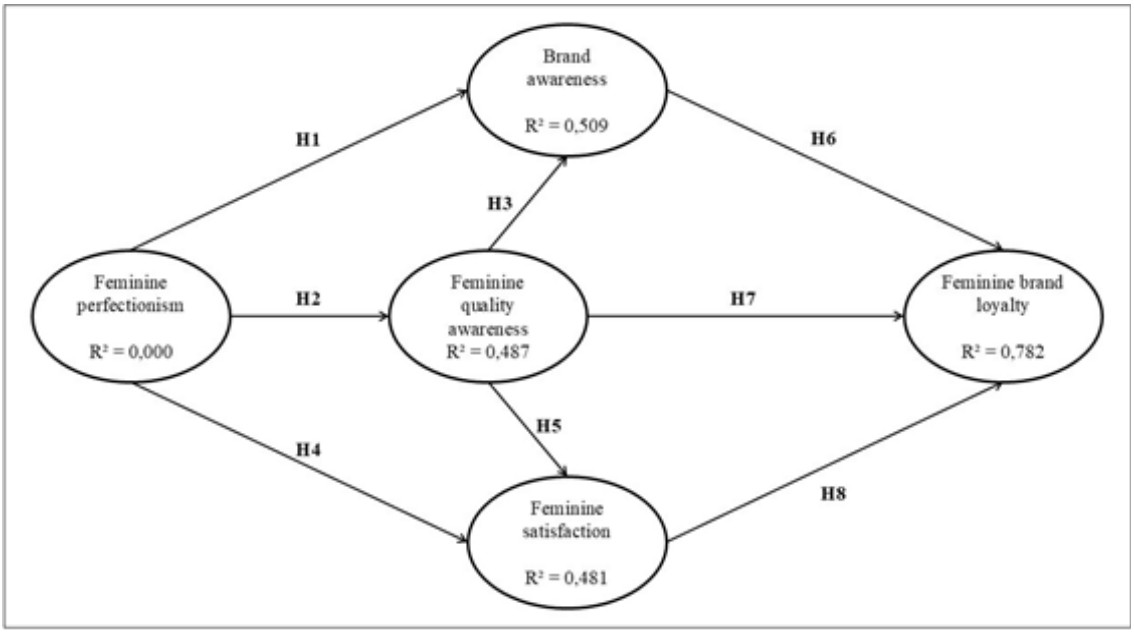
Indexes	Results obtained	Suggested values	References
RMSEA	0,063	0,05 < Valor < 0,08	Hair et al. (2009)
GFI	0,985	> 0,90	Hair et al. (2009)
SRMR	0,057	< 0,10	Hair et al. (2009); Kline (2023)
AGFI	0,956	> 0,90	Hair et al. (2009)
TLI	0,893	> 0,90	Hair et al. (2009)
NFI	0,852	> 0,90	Hair et al. (2009)
CFI	0,907	> 0,90	Hair et al. (2009)
(CMIN/DF)	2,08	< 3	Hair et al. (2009)

SOURCE: ELABORATED BY THE AUTHORS, 2025.

The data presented in Board 2 indicates that the model has mostly acceptable indices for incremental, absolute, and parsimonious fit. Despite TLI and NFI presenting indices below the recommended threshold, AGFI showed an index that exceeded the minimum indicated by the literature. This suggests that when compared to a null model, the fit approaches the ideal. The model fit could be improved with some modifications, but following the recommendations of Marsh et al. (2004), it was decided not to make such changes. This is because it would lead to more profound alterations in the literature's recommended theoretical model formation. The authors further argue that cutoff parameter values should be guiding rather than inflexible norms.

Sequentially, figure 2 is presented, demonstrating the latent variables of the final model in the study:

Figure 2 - Final model



SOURCE: ELABORATED BY THE AUTHORS, 2025.

Figure 2 demonstrates that the construct "Brand Awareness" can be explained by 50.9% (R^2 = 0.509) through the combination of the constructs "Feminine Perfectionism" and "Feminine Quality Awareness". "Feminine Quality Awareness" can be explained by 48.7% (R^2 = 0.487) through "Feminine Perfectionism". "Feminine Satisfaction" is explained at 48.1% (R^2 = 0.481) by the association of the constructs "Feminine Quality Awareness" and "Feminine Perfectionism". Finally, "Feminine Loyalty" can be explained at 78.2% (R^2 = 0.782) through "Brand Awareness", "Feminine Quality Awareness", and "Feminine Satisfaction" collectively.

The factor loadings of the overall model can also be observed. The indices are shown below:

Table 2 - Factor loadings

Variables	Coefficient	P-value
B1 ← Feminine perfectionism	1.000	0,000
B3 ← Feminine perfectionism	0.905	0,000
B4 ← Feminine perfectionism	1.183	0,000
B5 ← Feminine perfectionism	0.881	0,000
C2 ← Feminine quality awareness	1.000	0,000

Variables	Coefficient	P-value
C4 ← Feminine quality awareness	0.775	0,000
C5 ← Feminine quality awareness	0.185	0,000
D1 ← Feminine satisfaction	1.000	0,000
D2 ← Feminine satisfaction	1.050	0,000
D3 ← Feminine satisfaction	1.121	0,000
D4 ← Feminine satisfaction	1.146	0,000
D5 ← Feminine satisfaction	1.304	0,000
D6 ← Feminine satisfaction	1.347	0,000
E1 ← Brand awareness	1.000	0,000
E3 ← Brand awareness	0.996	0,000
E4 ← Brand awareness	0.510	0,000
E5 ← Brand awareness	0.486	0,000
F1 ← Feminine brand loyalty	1.000	0,000
F3 ← Feminine brand loyalty	0.700	0,000
F4 ← Feminine brand loyalty	0.790	0,000
F5 ← Feminine brand loyalty	1.233	0,000
F6 ← Feminine brand loyalty	1.074	0,000

SOURCE: ELABORATED BY THE AUTHORS, 2025.

The table 2 demonstrates that the values were significant (< 0.05). To this end, the following parameters were followed: P < 0.01* (strong evidence against H0); 0.01 <= P < 0.05** (moderate evidence against H0); and 0.05 <= P < 0.10*** (suggestive evidence against H0). Thus, the tested model has statistical validity and robustness. Next, the significance of the model will be presented:

Table 3 - Relation between the constructs

Variables	Coef. (γ)	P-value	Interpretation	Hypothesis
Brand awareness ← Perfectionism	0,421	0,000	Confirmed	H1
Quality awareness ← Perfectionism	0,258	0,000	Confirmed	H2
Brand awareness ← Quality awareness	0,632	0,000	Confirmed	H3
Satisfaction ← Perfectionism	0,165	0,000	Confirmed	H4
Satisfaction ← Quality awareness	0,427	0,000	Confirmed	H5

Variables	Coef. (γ)	P-value	Interpretation	Hypothesis
Feminine brand loyalty ← Brand awareness	0,149	0,000	Confirmed	H6
Feminine brand loyalty ← Quality awareness	0,516	0,000	Confirmed	H7
Feminine brand loyalty ← Satisfaction	0,844	0,000	Confirmed	H8

SOURCE: ELABORATED BY THE AUTHORS, 2025.

Table 3 presented the relationship between the model's constructs. The hypothesis test demonstrated that 'Perfectionism' positively influences 'Brand Awareness' ($\gamma = 0.42$, p-value < 0.05) and 'Quality Awareness' ($\gamma = 0.25$, p-value < 0.05). 'Quality Awareness' positively influences 'Brand Awareness' ($\gamma = 0.63$, p-value < 0.05). It is also informed that feminine satisfaction is positively influenced by 'Perfectionism' ($\gamma = 0.16$, p-value < 0.05) and by 'Quality Awareness' ($\gamma = 0.42$, p-value < 0.05). Additionally, 'Feminine Brand Loyalty' is influenced by 'Brand Awareness' ($\gamma = 0.14$, p-value < 0.05), 'Quality Awareness' ($\gamma = 0.51$, p-value < 0.05), and 'Satisfaction' ($\gamma = 0.84$, p-value < 0.05). Through these indices, the research hypotheses were confirmed.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Perfectionism has proven to be a significantly important antecedent factor of women's awareness of a brand (Frost et al., 1990; Kopalle & Lehmann, 2001). This indicates that, at first, when a woman sets high performance standards for herself, she also transfers the development of this proposition to brands (Eastman & Eastman, 2015; Pereira & Teixeira, 2018). In other words, if a woman has the condition of being perfectionistic, she will apparently conceive her concept of perfectionism and extend it to brands (Silvia et al., 2012; Chernishenko et al., 2021).

In a way, the confirmation of hypothesis one directs brands to understand female thinking regarding brands. For example, a brand can be characterized as superior due to the attention given to female thoughts (Eastman & Eastman, 2015; Pereira & Teixeira, 2018). And this can indicate opinions heard and taken into consideration regarding aspects such as respect, diversity, comfort, quality, age, ethnicity, profession, etc. (Koutra et al., 2023).

The results also demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between female perfectionism and female quality awareness (Silvia et al., 2012). It seems that when consumers desire a superior product, this influences the analysis and what is understood as superior (Eastman & Eastman, 2015; Pereira & Teixeira, 2018).

There is evidence that women, when having positive perspectives about a brand, often believe this is an important factor in evaluating such a brand (Truta & Nitoiu, 2014). In this case, it is noted that there may be an intentional effort to achieve the best possible results when choosing a brand (Chen et al., 2023). A brand that presents itself as superior tends to demonstrate in its appearance a set of factors that elevate the exceptional nature of its products and feminine representation

(Nelson & McLeod, 2005; Han & Kim, 2020). Perhaps this suggests that the exclusivity of a brand is something considered a reward due to the effort expended to acquire it (Eastman & Eastman, 2015). In this case, the observed benefit embedded in the product is the quality of the materials used (Bae & Jeon, 2022; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). It may also include the equality of representation and the appreciation of what it means to be feminine, which are linked to the product. From this perspective, the expression of representativeness is what appears to be a psychological reward (Nelson & McLeod, 2005).

It should also be noted that when people perceive a brand as superior, they subsequently provide a justification explaining such thoughts (Kuo, 2022; Wang et al., 2009). It is common to encounter female consumers stating, "Clothing brand X is superior because it has some attributes." However, you rarely find the following argumentation: "These attributes make clothing brand X superior." (Kokkoris, 2019). The logic of the sentences refers to the idea that first, the perception of a brand's quality is demonstrated in the minds of women, and later, the justification for why the consumer judges it as superior (Sprott & Shimp, 2004; Zeithaml, 1988). In reality, brands are names, symbols, etc., that seek to identify an organization. Therefore, it is natural for them to differentiate themselves in the consumer's mind due to their qualitative attributes, and not the other way around (Alvarez et al., 2023). This is because quality influences the brand's image (Ng et al., 2014).

On the other hand, understanding the formation and operationalization of the consumer satisfaction construct becomes important because the organizational environment is dynamic and competitive (Farias & Santos, 2000). Therefore, understanding possible antecedents is crucial and helps update studies on satisfaction. In the case of the study model, it was observed that perfectionism is a construct that significantly influences female satisfaction. Thus, it can be understood that perfectionism contributed to improving the explanation of female satisfaction.

One possible explanation for the positive relationship between perfectionism and satisfaction may lie in the multidimensionality of the first construct (Frost et al., 1990; Longbottom et al., 2012). If perfectionism is analyzed positively, it is correlated with self-determination motivation, and individuals seek to adapt to adverse or stressful situations (Oliveira, 2009). Since satisfaction results from experiences and individual standards (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1997), dispositional perfectionist women seek to achieve a good feeling and, for that, they resort to positive characteristics related to perfectionism (Chernishenko et al., 2021). Thus, these women possibly have high levels of dispositional perfectionism and, consequently, may have high levels of satisfaction. Therefore, these individuals tend to seek higher standards of personal achievement and are motivated for success (Lasalle & Hess, 2022).

Based on the research findings, it can be further supported that the hypothesis that female quality consciousness is positively related to female satisfaction. According to Kotler et al. (2024), it is common for consumers to choose and use brands that reflect their real self-image, that is, how they see themselves or how they would like to see themselves. Therefore, to satisfy consumption-related desires that reflect their self-image, female consumers may consider whether the brand meets their expectations and needs, and if any previous experience with such a brand has been satisfactory (Mazhar et al., 2022; Fernandes & Moreira, 2019). Analyzing these factors,

female consumers understand that their chosen brand has superior quality compared to others, resulting in overall female satisfaction with the consumption experience (Eastman & Eastman, 2015; Pereira & Teixeira, 2018).

It is also possible to complementarily argue that consumers commonly use heuristics for decision-making, and in this context, understanding the formation of brand consciousness can be especially significant for companies, as it helps organizations manage customer-based brand equity (Chung et al., 2013). In this study, women can gain awareness through media such as television, social networks, and social media (Rubio et al., 2014). Indeed, it is known that managing this entire process by the organization incurs costs. However, considering that loyal customers benefit organizations by helping reduce their organization's marketing expenses, such as acquiring and maintaining new customers (Asif et al., 2015), this leads to the understanding that the relationship between brand awareness and female loyalty can contribute to guiding and retaining consumers.

The study's respondents, who consider themselves aware of a particular brand, believe that the brand's name and influence indicate prestige. This opinion likely stems from experiences with the brand's products (Grace et al., 2020). When the consumption of such products generates positive experiences and results for consumers, there is a tendency for them to continue consuming, creating a repetition of this behavior, which is brand loyalty (Bagozzi et al., 2017; Batra et al., 2012).

Quality brands are designated as such due to the prestige concept attributed by the consumer (Rubio et al., 2014). This statement suggests that if a brand is perceived as superior, the consumer likely considers it of high quality (Sprott & Shimp, 2004; Zeithaml, 1988). Thus, it can be assumed that quality awareness influences the recognition of brand superiority, which, in turn, encourages consumer repurchase, a key determinant of loyalty (Amine, 1998). This pathway may explain the positive relationship between female awareness of quality and female brand loyalty (Bae & Jeon, 2022; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Gao & Shen, 2024).

According to the arguments of Dekimpe et al. (2023) and Dudziak et al. (2023), loyalty involves both past purchases and continuous purchases. If women have based their choices on past purchases and/or are currently buying products from brands they recommend, it is likely because they believe that such products represent the quality associated with the brand (Dekimpe et al., 2023). Therefore, it has an impact on the act of purchasing and, consequently, on the likelihood of developing loyalty (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022).

In this study, the support for hypothesis seven provides an understanding of aspects such as durability and exclusivity in consumer/brand relationships that support brand loyalty. It is worth noting that indicators define measures, and thus, the observable variables of the brand loyalty construct in this study were defined based on variables that observed a set of consumer behaviors. Therefore, it is prudent to affirm that the findings align with the behavioral propositions that constitute the loyalty concept indicated by Grace et al. (2020).

From another point of view, satisfaction is a construct linked to the confirmation of expectations (Mazhar et al., 2022). As it is composed of the consumer's judgment of the performance of an offer (Wang & Fan, 2022) or the evaluation of judgment about the use of a product from a specific brand (Westbrook, 1987), there is a tendency for this construct to be one of the main predictors of loyalty (Evanschitzky et al., 2022).

Although it is understood that the findings of this study, in which there is confirmation of the influence of satisfaction on the loyalty of female consumers, are not sufficient to explain the loyalty construct, it is understood that it helps in women's responses to a purchase context. This is because satisfaction is a response to fulfillment (Oliver, 1999) that rationally measures a post-purchase evaluation (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study presented and tested a model that examines how female perfectionism, female brand knowledge, female quality knowledge, and female satisfaction are related to female loyalty. Literarily, this study contributes by presenting a novel model, as no existing model was found that grouped the variables presented in this article. Additionally, through the filtering questions, it was possible to identify that women's clothing brands possibly incorporate these variables into their strategic formulations but do not clearly highlight them. Practically, the importance of models like this is emphasized for the implementation of strategies that highlight such constructs in the process of attracting the female audience for brands aspiring to achieve prestige. It can be considered that: a) If a brand focused on women's clothing invests in brand awareness, it will positively affect female satisfaction; b) If a company invests in female quality awareness, it influences brand awareness, loyalty, and satisfaction; and c) It is known that female perfectionism positively interferes with brand and quality awareness, as well as female satisfaction.

Although the study confirmed the proposed hypotheses, it presents certain limitations that should be taken into consideration. The first is that the data were collected using a non-probabilistic method. This occurred due to the difficulty of conducting probabilistic sampling in a country with continental dimensions such as Brazil. Another reason is that, at the time of data collection, the COVID-19 pandemic was ongoing, which restricted the researchers' access to data sources. Additionally, access to the Internet and to devices required for participating in an online data collection process is limited due to socioeconomic vulnerability contexts.

The second limitation concerns the concentration of respondents within the age range of 18 to 30 years. Although this group represents a significant portion of the Brazilian population, as the country's age pyramid shows a predominance of younger women, it limits the generalizability of the study's findings when considering the broader female population in Brazil. This may also be related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as older women tend to face greater difficulties using online technologies than younger women and, therefore, may have been more affected by this scenario.

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