The influence of a premium private label on retailers’ store image.

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I Management Summary

The starting point for this research was to investigate the role of premium private labels (PPLs) on the store image of the retailer. The problem statement of this research is: “What is the effect of premium private labels in a retailers’ assortment on retailer brand image and how is this effect moderated by the ‘perceived fit’, ‘premium private label preference’, ‘retailer format’ and ‘premium private label branding strategy’?”. 

Based on previous research and relevant academic literature, image was assumed to transfer between PPLs and the store, along three dimensions, which are price, quality and values. Moreover, the constructs of ‘perceived fit’, ‘premium private label preference’, ‘retailer format’ and ‘premium private label branding strategy’ were assumed to have a moderating influence on the image transfer between PPLs and the store. These assumptions were hypothesized in order to conduct research on these assumptions. Through an online questionnaire, the data needed to provide for an answer to the problem statement was collected. In order to measure the influence of the retailer format and the PPL branding strategy, the questionnaire was published at random based on four different supermarkets, covering two retailer formats and PPL two branding strategies. Thereafter, the data was analyzed by conducting both bivariate and multiple regression analyses.

The results of the analyses suggest that PPL image indeed significantly influences store image. Moreover, the findings show evidence that image transfers between PPLs and the store on the price, quality, and on three values dimensions. This research did not provide evidence that supports the interaction effect of the moderating variables, ‘perceived fit’, ‘premium private label preference’, ‘retailer format’ and ‘premium private label branding strategy’, on the image transfer between PPLs and the store. Furthermore, the dataset contains enough information to provide for an additional analysis, which was conducted in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the role of the moderating factors in the PPL image. However, the findings suggest no significant influence of the interaction effects of the moderating variables on the PPL image.

A better understanding of the role PPLs play in retail branding is useful for managers in retailing, as it opens windows for influencing the image building in the minds of the consumer. Moreover, managers can build their PPL portfolio in such a manner that it complements the store image. Further research is necessary in order gain deeper understanding of image transfer and what factors are of influence on image building.
II Preface

This thesis represents the final chapter of my life as a student and is the last step in obtaining my Master’s degree in Business Administration, specialization Marketing Management. Looking back at a great student life in Groningen I am ready to head for the next challenge; a real job in marketing.

A special word of thanks goes out to my parents, as without them I would not have gotten to where I am. They unconditionally supported, motivated and believed in me throughout my study period in Groningen, for which I am most grateful.

Also, I would like to thank Stefan, for his moral support, encouraging words, and patience with me during the process of writing this thesis.

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I wish you a pleasant time reading my Master’s thesis.

Elize ter Balkt
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Private labels (PLs) are considered to be of great competition to national brands on both the value and quality dimension (Nielsen, 2011). A study by SymphonyIRI (2011) shows that European consumers buy even as many private label products as they buy national brands, and view them as equal to or better than many manufacturer brand products. Moreover, the same report states that private label products are now available in nine out of every ten FMCG categories. The increasing importance of private labels in the FMCG landscape is inescapable and should therefore receive considerable attention by marketers.

The growth and development of private labels not only has implications for national brands, but also for retailers. They should be aware of the impact that their private label portfolio can have on their marketing activities. As private labels are part of the assortment, store image can be influenced by the introduction of private labels (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Furthermore, the private label portfolio can be an important determinant in retailer branding and positioning (Kremer and Viot, 2012). Image transfer is likely to occur from the private label product to the retailer brand and vice versa. For example, Kremer and Viot (2012) found that the price image of the PL has a positive influence on the retailer brand image under the assumption that PLs were the cheaper alternative to national brands.

The widespread introduction of premium private labels (PPLs) may cause image transfer in a similar manner, by transferring the price or quality image.

However, what if the premium product does not fit the positioning and the image the retailer aimed for? For example, when discounters include premium private labels in their assortment, it can be argued that this is contradictory to their positioning. Provided that image transfer between the premium private label and the retailer indeed does occur, this could weaken the strategic positioning of the retailer. Another, more positive, scenario would be that the retailer addresses a much wider consumer base through which new, additional, clientele could be attracted.

This first chapter serves as an introduction to the research, in which theoretical background information is provided, the problem statement and the research questions are proposed and, finally, the structure of this thesis will be outlined.
1.2 Private Labels

Sethuraman and Cole (1999) state that private labels are generally brands that are owned, controlled, and sold exclusively by retailers. In the literature, the concept of private label is used interchangeably with the concepts of PL, manufacturer’s brand, store brand and own label. Private labels (PLs) were developed by retailers to compete with national brands on several levels. The most important incentives for retailers to introduce PLs are stated below:

1. Establishing store loyalty and differentiation of the store

Through the introduction of PLs in their stores, retailers seek to establish store loyalty (cf. Baltas et al., 1997; Corstjens and Lal, 2000; Ailawadi and Harlam, 2004; Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007; Liu and Wang, 2010). Ailawadi et al. (2008) conducted a study on the relationship between PL use and store loyalty. They found that PL share significantly affects behavioral loyalty. In addition, they found that behavioral loyalty has significant effect on PL share. Therefore, it can be concluded that introducing a PL could lead to a higher loyalty toward the store. Moreover, implementing a private portfolio strategy helps differentiate the retailer, which improves their competitive positioning with respect to competitors. A retailer has somewhat of a local monopoly on its PL because competing retailers do not carry the same PL, though they do carry the same national brands.

2. Increasing returns with higher margin products

Private label products generate higher profit margins than national brand products (Hoch and Banerji, 1993). According to Ailawadi and Harlam (2004), this is primarily due to the fact that PL suppliers have little market power in contrast to national brands. In addition, manufacturers’ advertising costs are high for national brands, these costs are reflected in higher wholesale prices of the brands. Furthermore, Ailawadi and Harlam (2004) found that percentage retail margins on PL brands are higher than on national brands but also that high PL share enables retailers to earn higher percentage margins on national brands. However, the margin per unit may be smaller for PLs because of their lower retail price. The authors conclude that it is important for retailers to maintain a balance between PLs and national brands to attract and retain the most profitable customers. These are the customers contribute to sales and profit of the retailer the most and are therefore important to retain.
3. Improving the trade position

According to Dunne and Narasimhan (1999), PLs remove a key source of manufacturers’ influence over consumers, and in turn, their leverage over merchants. Consequently, retailers’ leverage over national brands increases due to their PL. For example, retailers can negotiate harder when it comes to issues such as pricing and shelf space.

4. Positioning the retailer as a brand

The most recent advantage that retailers have become aware of is that PLs could also play a role in the process of positioning the retailer’s shop formula as a brand (Steenkamp et al., 2004; Luijten and Reijnders, 2009). By strengthening their position as a brand, retailers can increase their distinctiveness in comparison to other retailers.

1.3 Multi-tier Private Labels

In the past, when retailers first introduced PLs in their assortment, PL products were mainly economy PLs, which are low quality products for low prices. Over the years however, PL portfolios have differentiated into multiple tiers, which holds that the PL portfolio has differentiated on quality and price level. Geyskens et al. (2010) defined three PL portfolio strategies: low-quality tier, mid-quality tier, and top-quality tier. These are also known as economy, standard and premium private labels respectively.

Such multi-tier strategies in the private labels portfolio offers retailers the opportunity to serve a wide array of consumers, including specialized and niche categories, which could lead to increased traffic to the stores by attracting more diverse consumer groups. When retailers follow a multi-tier private label strategy, they enable themselves to compete with national brands on multiple levels, such as price and quality. Moreover, retailers have developed PLs to such extent that the modern PL is increasingly imbued with emotion and imagery (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007), which makes the PL an experience, just like national brands. This is in great contrast with the functionality that dominated PLs a generation ago. Especially the development of the premium private label (PPL) portfolio is a threat to national brands, as these products are positioned in a similar way. These PPLs are the focus of this study.

1.4 Store Image

The existing literature on store image defines store image in many slightly different ways. A comprehensive definition by Grewal et al. (1998) states that store image is defined as: ‘a set of
perceptions and attributes linked to a store, as reflected in the associations consumers hold in memory'. Moreover, they state that store image is an important predictor of store choice, which makes it an important attribute to retailers. According to Keller (2008), the store image of the retailer consists of associations in consumers’ minds with regard to product assortment, pricing, and quality of service. Further, store image is described in the current literature as the overall attitude toward a store, based upon perceptions of relevant store attributes and perceptions (Steenkamp and Wedel, 1991). In their research, Ailawadi and Keller (2004) state that store image is composed of five dimensions; 1) access, (2) in-store atmosphere, (3) price and promotion, (4) cross-category product/service assortment, and (5) within-category brand/item assortment. Each dimension influences the total perceptions and attributes consumers link to a store.

Within the scope of this study, the store image will be considered at chain level. That is, the store image under a particular PL or retailer brand will be measured according to the previous described dimensions. When measuring store image at store level, results can vary amongst each supermarket, being influenced by location, fellow-consumers and all other factors that may influence a specific store.

The importance of store image to the retailer can be explained threefold. Firstly, store image is important to retailers as they use it as a manner to connect with their consumer group (Steenkamp and Wedel, 1991). Second, the congruity between consumers’ self-image and store image relates to increasing store loyalty (Bellenger, Steinberg, and Stanton, 1976; Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Dick and Basu, 1994). Therefore, retailers seek to align the store image to their target groups’ self-image, thereby increasing store loyalty. This is in line with the findings of Martenson (2007), who states that a favorable store image is likely to increase satisfaction with the store, which in turn increases store loyalty. Furthermore, retailers are eager to develop a favorable store image as it is a critical aspect of their ability to maintain and grow their market positions (Steenkamp and Wedel, 1991). Nijssen and Douglas (2008), state that retailers have increasingly placed greater emphasis on social and customer community values in their communications and store image building efforts.

Store image is an important factor in this study, as it is partially influenced by the assortment of the retailers. In their article on store image, Ailawadi and Keller (2004), state that consumer’ assortment breadth perceptions have a positive influence on store image. The introduction of a PL portfolio broadens the assortment and the introduction of multiple-tiers of PLs even more so. Therefore, it can be assumed that the introduction of PLs have a positive influence on store image.
1.5 Image Transfer

The previous paragraph reaffirmed the importance of the PL portfolio to the retailers as it influences store image. An explanation for this influence has its foundations in the psychological literature on image transfer. Image transfer occurs in many instances. For example, past research has shown that store image can attribute to a positive PL image in the minds of the consumer. The transfer of image takes place in the mind of the consumer and is described in the literature in many different situations, such as co-branding and brand extensions.

The occurrence of image transfer is an important factor for retailers to consider when developing their PL portfolio. With this knowledge, retailers can implement the best strategy in order to maximize positive this positive relationship. The concept of image transfer from the store to the PL portfolio to the PL and the implications for the retailer will be discussed in more depth in chapter two.

1.6 Problem Statement and Research Questions

The objective of this research is to explore what role PPLs can play in retail branding. That is, the role of image transfer from the PPL to the retailer brand is researched. Moreover, the moderating effect of the ‘perceived fit’, ‘PPL preference’, ‘retailer format’, and the ‘PPL branding strategy’ in this relationship will be researched by testing the case on both conventional supermarkets and discounters.

The objective of this research has led to the following problem statement;

What is the effect of premium private labels in a retailers’ assortment on retailer brand image and how is this effect moderated by the ‘perceived fit’, ‘premium private label preference’, ‘retailer format’ and ‘premium private label branding strategy’?

In order to provide an answer to the problem statement as stated above, the following sub-questions were defined;

1. What are premium private labels?
2. How does image transfer take place between premium private labels and retailer brand image and how can this be measured?
3. What is the influence of the perceived fit on image transfer?
4. What is the influence of consumers’ preference toward premium private labels on the image transfer between PPL and the retailer?
5. How can premium private labels be branded?
6. What is the influence of the retailer format on the image transfer between PPL image and retailer image?

1.7 Relevance of the Study

A review of current literature learns that there is a need for better understanding of the role of private label brands in building retailer image, as previous research merely focused on the opposite relationship (cf. Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003; Ailawadi and Keller, 2004; Vahie and Paswan, 2006; Semeijn et al, 2004). Kremer and Viot (2012) conducted research upon how PLs build retailer image, but the role of PPLs specifically was not researched. Moreover, no other factors that could possibly influence this relationship were reviewed. Due to the specific focus and thorough exploration of other influences, this research aims at providing a deeper understanding of the role that PPL brands can play in retailer branding.

The introduction of a premium range to the PL portfolio of the retailer is a considerable investment, which influences consumers’ perceptions of the store (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). In the end, the consumer determines the failure or success of an introduction of a PL, but there are ways to positively influence this. Therefore, it is valuable to the retailer to obtain knowledge of factors that have a positive contribution toward the success of the introduction and, more importantly, what effect this has on the image of the retailer. The current academic literature on image transfer between PLs and the retailer lacks in providing an answer to what factors are of influence in this process, and to more specific conclusions on premium ranges. This research aims at providing understanding of what influence retailers can have on this relationship through their branding strategy and seeks to give insight in factors which affect the imaging of the consumer. Moreover, as this research focus is specifically on PPL’s influence on retailer image, the results could be of practical value to retailers. Finally, a goal of this research is to provide managers with new insights and handles to base their PPL strategic decisions on.

1.8 Structure of Research

In order to provide an answer to the problem statement, this research is structured as follows (see figure 1); Firstly, the theoretical framework will be outlined, in which concepts will be defined and relations between the concepts are explored. Second, the research design will be presented. The subsequent chapter deals with the empirical research, and consists of regression analyses and discussion of the empirical data. Thereafter, a short summary will describe the findings of this
research. Lastly, recommendations, limitations and directions for further research will be discussed in the final chapter.

Figure 1: Structure of Research
2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the relevant academic literature will be discussed in order to provide for a theoretical framework which will result in the answers to the problem statement and the research questions as stated in the previous chapter. By discussing the relevant literature, a theoretical foundation for the answer to the problem statement will be laid.

2.1 What are premium private labels?

Whereas in the past private labels were of low quality at economy prices, PLs have evolved into true quality brand alternatives, which reflects the implementation of a clear marketing approach in retailing (Burt, 2000). Retailers seek differentiation of their PL portfolio through the use of multiple tiers (Geyskens et al., 2010), each tier offering specific advantages to consumers (see Figure 2.1).

![Figure 2.1: Positioning of Choice Set Along Quality-Tier and Brand-Type Dimensions (Geyskens et al., 2010)](image)

One of the most recent trends in PLs is the introduction of premium private labels (PPLs), which are PLs with a ‘premium’ positioning similar to the positioning of national brands. In their book on private label strategy, Kumar and Steenkamp (2007), state that a PPL is superior in both quality and price to the traditional copycat private label, by which they refer to standard PLs. According to Burt (2000), standard PLs are generally positioned as a mid-quality/mid-price alternative, at par with mainstream quality national brands (Alpi, 2004; Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007). Standard PLs are
mostly available under umbrella store branding or category specific own labels, and are traditionally similar to national brands, but at a cheaper price and lower quality standards.

Moreover, Kumar and Steenkamp (2007) state that in comparison to leading manufacturer brands, that PPLs are priced lower but advertised as being of superior quality. Quality, however, is a delicate and subjective topic, in which positioning and the look and feel of the product play an important role. Palmeira and Thomas (2011), state that the design and communication are important in distinguishing the premium products from a ‘regular’ PL. For example, retailers invest in attractive packaging and ‘premium’ brand names, such as ‘Finest’, ‘Superior’, and ‘Excellent’ to enhance the premium feel of the products and to influence consumer perception of the premium tier. By doing so, a different route is chosen from the positioning of standard PLs. No attempt is made to copy manufacturer brands and consumers cannot be mistaken that they are buying anything else but the PPL. The strategy is to develop a unique positioning for the retailer (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007).

Due to the positioning of the top-tier quality PLs, the premium private labels, these products became direct competitors of national brands and therefore are an important factor in retail branding. Whereas premium-quality national brands used to only experience competition from other premium-quality national brands, the introduction of PPLs formed a major competitor for premium-quality national brands. Moreover, because of the explicit differences in positioning of the PL tiers, it may not come as a surprise that consumers perceive PPLs as different groups of brands compared to value private labels according to Nenycz-Thiel and Romaniuk (2010).

Retailers’ arguments for introducing a PPL to their portfolio are similar to reasons for introducing a PL in the first place. As outlined in the introduction, four reasons were stated, which are the following; (1) establishing store loyalty and differentiation of the store, (2) increasing returns with higher margin products, (3) improving the trade position, and (4) positioning the retailer as a brand. However, the introduction of a premium private label offers some advantages over an undifferentiated private label portfolio. According to Corstjens and Lal (2000), the introduction of PPLs was intended to compete with leading manufacturers’ brands on quality and image, not just on price. By competing with national brands, retailers are enabled to address a much broader consumer base.

In an extensive analysis on the PPL, Kumar and Steenkamp (2007), state that successful premium PLs:

- Offer unique products, ingredients and flavors
- Come in distinctive packaging in order to emphasize the difference with manufacturer brands rather than mimicking them through the copycat strategy.
- Aspire to price at par with the mainstream manufacturer brands and command a premium price to some of them.
- Build the explicit quality challenge in their selling proposition.
- Contain some brand imagery.

According to Palmeira and Thomas (2011), PPLs’ introduction was found to be the most effective in stores where a regular PL was offered as well, as this leads to an even higher perception of the product being premium.

On the topic of PLs a multitude of research has been conducted, mostly regarding either standard PLs or the total PL portfolio without a distinction between different tiers. Little research has been conducted on PPLs specifically. Due to the explicit difference in positioning and the differences in consumer perception of PPLs, it is likely that PPLs have a different influence on store image than standard PLs. That is, attributes consumers associate with PPLs are different mainly on price, quality and a more luxurious appearance.

2.2 How does image transfer take place between premium private labels and retailer brand image and how can this be measured?

The first scholars to review the link between retailer and brand images were Jacoby and Mazursky (1984). They found that when brand image and retailer image become associated, the consumers with a favorable image of either one party will transfer this image to the other party. This phenomenon is also applicable to an unfavorable image of a brand or retailer, which will cause an unfavorable image of the other party as well. This research was conducted on the relation between retailer image and national brands. The following section will explore how image transfer takes place, in general and in marketing specifically, and how this can be measured.

2.2.1 General Image Transfer

The phenomenon of image transfer is also known as the ‘halo effect’, which is a term first used by Thorndike (1920). He used it to describe the tendency of a judge to rate individual traits according to the rater’s general impression of the object that is being rated. In their research, Nisbett and DeCamp Wilson (1977) define the halo effect as the influence of a global evaluation on evaluations of individual attributes of a person. The term halo effect is also known as the halo error, as it distorts ratings on individual dimensions (Leuthesser et al., 1995).

In marketing research, a similar problem with regard to the halo effect exists. As Leuthesser et al. (1995) outline in their paper, individual attribute ratings of a product might be distorted in a similar
manner, if evaluations of individual product attributes are influenced by a person’s overall attitude toward the product being rated. A halo error, in such a situation, could lead to biased brand evaluations, which could positively or negatively influence conclusions with regard to competitive positioning. In their paper, Leuthesser et al. (1995) state an explanation for the halo effect in the minds of the consumers, which will be elaborated upon in the following paragraph.

In accordance with the cognitive dissonance theory, people have an intrinsic drive to minimize cognitive dissonance, which is the tension that arises when people experience that they hold two or more conflicting cognitions. When minimizing cognitive dissonance, thereby creating cognitive consonance, people (unconsciously) revise or rationalize beliefs and attitudes in order to create a consistent belief system. In other words, people seek to alter their attitude to accommodate their behavior. This theory was first described by Festinger (1957) and provides for an explanation of why the halo effect exists. According to Leuthesser et al (1995), the cognitive consistency manifests itself as higher-than-actual correlations between attribute ratings because individuals are psychologically motivated to ‘level out’ discrepancies which appear in belief structures at a micro level.

The transfer of a consumers’ attitude from a brand toward a new product or a brand extension is called the ‘reciprocity effect’ by Park et al. (1993). Moreover, several scholars mention the leveraging effect of a brand to express the halo phenomenon (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Keller, 2003). McCracken (1989) writes about the meaning transfer process. All these models focus upon the same process, namely the transfer of an image from one entity to another. Therefore, in order to remain consistent, throughout this report the term image transfer will be used to describe the process.

Following the literature on image transfer in brand extensions, PPLs should be subject to a halo effect, as they are regarded to be brand extensions of the regular PL portfolio of a retailer. The literature therefore implies that image transfer from the standard PL to a PPL should occur. Moreover, image transfer from the store image to the PPL should take place, as store image is part of the associations of the consumer with the brand. This is in line with the findings of Collins-Dodd and Lindley (2003).

In conclusion, consumers’ tendency to achieve cognitive consistency explains for the halo effect, which causes image transfer.

2.2.2 Image transfer between PL brands and PLs

Most research hitherto has focused on the relation of the concepts of store image on PLs. That is, prior research has found that a favorable store image has a positive influence on PL brand image (Collins and Lindley, 2003; Semijn et al, 2004; Vahie and Paswan, 2006; Liu and Wang, 2010).
Moreover, Liu and Wang (2010) found that store image is the most important predictor of PL attitude. Moreover, prior research on the relation between PL and store image has only focused on the role of PLs on store image in the broadest sense of these concepts, without taking into account the role of different tiers of PLs. The following section will review the existent literature on the influence of store image on PLs.

Ailawadi and Keller (2004) have defined five dimensions of retailer image and state that consumers perceptions of these dimensions of retailer image can help develop strong and unique retail brand associations in the minds of consumers. Some of the dimensions relate to the products a retailer offers, such as the assortment and price. Therefore, through their PL strategy, retailers can contribute to store differentiation in the minds of the consumer (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003).

Retailers are becoming more aware of new advantages with regard to their PL portfolio, which is that their PLs can play a role in the positioning of the retailer or PL (Steenkamp et al., 2004; Luijten and Reijnders, 2009; Kremer and Viot, 2012; Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003). This phenomenon concerns the image transfer between the PL brands and the PLs.

Kremer and Viot (2012) conducted research on whether image transfer takes place between PL brands and the retailer brand. They found a positive relationship between PL and the retailer image. That is, the PL brand can influence the store image of the retailer. This research was based on the presence of standard PLs and the influence of PPLs on the store image was indicated to be a topic for further research.

Based on the literature explored in this chapter, consumers are likely to link attributes they allocate to one entity to the other entity as well. In the case of PPLs, this would mean that image transfer takes place between the premium private label and the store, if these entities are associated with each other. Therefore, from the above reviewed literature, the following hypothesis can be drawn;

\[ H1: \text{A retailers’ premium private label has a positive contribution toward store image.} \]

2.2.3 Measuring Image Transfer

In order to measure the transfer of image, as hypothesized above, store image should be measured. Therefore, the following section will provide a definition of store image and a framework for measuring dimensions of store image.

As mentioned in the introduction, store image is defined as a set of perceptions and attributes linked to a store, as reflected in the associations consumers hold in memory (Grewal et al., 1998).
Moreover, it was outlined that these sets of perceptions and attributes are linked to multiple dimensions. In the current literature, multiple dimensions of measurement for store image were provided. Keller (2008) states store image is dependent upon three dimensions, which are product assortment, pricing, and quality of service. In their research, Ailawadi and Keller (2004) distinct five dimensions, based on prior research of Lindquist (1974) and Jacoby and Mazursky (1986), of retailer image in their research on understanding retail branding. As stated before, this resulted in the following dimensions; (1) access, (2) in-store atmosphere, (3) price and promotion, (4) cross-category product/service assortment, and (5) within-category brand/item assortment. Furthermore, in their research on the influence of private label image on store image, Kremer and Viot (2012) stated that PL image depends on three dimensions, which are price, supply and values. The price dimension refers to low prices, good deals and value for money. The supply dimension relates to the perceived quality of PLs, packaging, innovation and to the possibility of consumers arbitrating between national brands and PLs. The final dimension, the values dimension, harnesses values such as proximity, affordability, convenience, and sustainability.

The focus of this research is on measuring whether image transfer from the PPL product to the store occurs or not. In other words, research on the transfer of perceptions and attributes linked to the products to the store is examined. The literature on store image, however, also describes attributes such as store convenience and employee service that are not applicable to products. Therefore, none of the above models to measure store image is entirely relevant for this research.

This research will follow the approach of Kremer and Viot (2012) and shall measure the transfer of image according to three dimensions; price, supply and values. However, as this research involves PPL products, each dimension will be altered to measure the transfer of the premium perceptions and attributes. In figure 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4, each dimension will be outlined respectively.

![Price Dimension](Figure 2.2: Price Dimension)
Based on the literature described in this paragraph, it can be concluded that image transfer between the constructs of a premium private label and the retailer brand take place on three dimensions of store image, namely price, quality and values. Therefore, the following hypotheses are stated;

**H1a:** The perceived price image of the premium private label has a positive contribution toward store price image.

**H1b:** The perceived quality image of the premium private label has a positive contribution toward store quality image.

**H1c:** The perceived value image of the premium private label has a positive contribution toward store value image.

### 2.3 What is the influence of the perceived fit on image transfer?

Image transfer occurs in many situations in which a brand is associated with another brand or another entity. The following section will seek to evaluate the effect of the perceived fit on image transfer. In order to provide for an answer to this sub-question, the literature regarding image transfer in other marketing activities will be evaluated. More specifically, the literature on image transfer in the case of celebrity endorsement, co-branding and brand extensions is reviewed respectively. By reviewing the existing literature concerning brand extensions or other brand associations, conclusions on when image transfer is positively evaluated can be drawn.
2.3.1 Image Transfer in Other Marketing Activities

McCracken (1989) conducted research upon the image transfer from celebrity endorsement in marketing campaigns to the brand. He found that the use of celebrity endorsement in marketing influences the meaning of the product in the eyes of the consumer. In other words, the celebrity image transfers to the product, which alters the image in the minds of the consumer. With this knowledge, manufacturers should carefully consider the celebrities used in their campaign as consumers’ associations with the celebrity will be transferred to the product they market. Therefore, a celebrity should be selected based on the ‘fit’ with the brand. This is based on the ‘match-up hypothesis’ (Kamins, 1990), which suggests that endorsers are more effective when there is a greater perceived fit between the endorser and the endorsed product or brand.

A similar mechanism can be found in co-branding. Co-branding represents a long-term brand alliance strategy, in which one product is branded and identified simultaneously by two brands (Helmig et al., 2008). Recently, Thompson and Strutton (2012), suggested that by partnering with brands that have a higher perceived degree of fit in the extension category (i.e. co-brand), brands can achieve more favorable positions for their extensions than could be realized if firms acted independently.

Furthermore, image transfer is common in brand extensions. In the case of a brand extension, consumers take into account the knowledge they have about the parent brand. PLs can be perceived as brand extensions of the brand name of the store itself, specifically when the name or logo is displayed on the packaging (Collins-Dodd and Lindley, 2003). Moreover, they state that image transfer from the store to the PL, and vice versa, should apply in brand extensions just as it does with other brand extensions. Park et al. (1991) found that the evaluation of a brand extension is dependent upon the perception of fit between the parent brand and the brand extension. Moreover, consumers specifically take into account product feature similarity and brand concept consistency, which are two dimensions on which ‘goodness of fit’ is determined (Park et al, 1991).

2.3.2 Perceived Fit

In the above evaluated marketing activities, perceived fit favored the evaluation of the activity in the mind of the consumer. Aaker and Keller (1990), state that perceptual fit is the degree to which consumers perceive the brand extension to be consistent with the parent brand. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Park et al. (1991), distinguished between two types of perceived fit. According to the article, product feature similarity perceptions are dependent upon the identification of relationships between product extensions and the incumbent products of the brand. With regard to this research specifically, product feature similarity is not relevant, as the retailer image does not entail any product and therefore, product feature similarity cannot be measured. As stated by Park et
al (1991), concept consistency perceptions rely on the ability of the extension product to accommodate the brand concept. In the article it is stated that brand concepts position products in the minds of consumers and differentiate given products from other brands in the same product category. In this research, brand concept consistency relates to the PPL concept and the concept of the retailer as a brand. That is, are the positioning and differentiation strategies of the PPL concept consistent with the positioning and the differentiation strategies of the retailer?

In conclusion, according to the literature on image transfer in marketing activities, including celebrity endorsement, co-branding and brand extensions, it can be stated that a higher fit with the parent brand serves as a leverage, which leads to a more positive evaluation of the store image. In this research, perceptual fit is the degree to which consumers find the PPL brand concept consistent with the parent brand. 

As PPL are regarded as brand extensions from either the retailer brand or the incumbent PL portfolio of a retailer, it can be assumed that the perceived fit, based on brand concept consistency, between the PPL and the retailer brand has a positive influence on store image evaluations and vice versa. The perceived fit of the premium PL concept and the retailer brand then would serve as a moderating factor in the image transfer between PPL and the retailer brand. From this, the following hypothesis can be derived:

\[ H2: \text{The perceived fit has a positive contribution to the image transfer from the premium private label to the store image.} \]

2.4 What is the influence of consumers’ preference toward premium PLs on the image transfer between PPL and the retailer?

Kara et al. (2009) conducted research upon the question why consumers experience preferences toward PLs. The authors examined the factors affecting consumers’ purchasing behavior of PLs. Through an extensive literature review they found that consumers are purchasing PLs due to their affordability, increased alternatives, guarantees offered by a local familiar store, perceived value for money, loyalty or high switching costs, convenience and time saving, hedonic benefits or consumption pleasure, and to fulfill a unique need. Based on these findings, Kara et al (2009) built a model in which they assume that PL preference is based on PL perceptions, which are based on consumer value consciousness and their previous positive experiences with the brand.

In order to provide for a thorough understanding of this model, the constructs of consumers’ value consciousness and consumers’ previous experiences are outlined into more depth in this paragraph.
Value consciousness is defined in the literature as consumers’ evaluation of product quality relative to the price required for purchase (cf. Lichtenstein et al, 1993; Dick et al, 1995; Kara et al, 2009; Bao and Mantrik, 2004). Consumers’ learning of products takes place in previous experiences, which is based on familiarity and previous usage (Kara et al, 2009). Therefore, consumers’ previous experience with the PL are said to be based on familiarity and previous usage.

In conclusion, PL preferences are based on the way consumers perceive the PL, or the store image. Therefore it is plausible to believe that the factors influencing PL perceptions are also of influence on the relationship researched in this article; the influence of premium PL image on retailer image. This results in the following hypothesis;

\[ H_3: \text{Consumers’ preference toward premium PLs has a positive influence on the relationship between the premium private label image and retailer image.} \]

2.5 How can premium private labels be branded?

The following section will outline different branding strategies for PPLs that retailers can implement. Before outlining the different strategies, it should be noted that the branding strategy of a PPL starts with the positioning. That is, Kumar and Steenkamp (2007), distinct between two types of PPLs with their own positioning, which are: ‘premium-lite’ and ‘premium-price’ PLs. The former proposes to be equal to or better and cheaper, whereas the latter proposes to be superior in both quality and price. The most important feature in both propositions is that they are both positioned as the best quality consumers can buy.

Retailers can apply several strategies or branding approaches for their PPL range (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007). A subbrand strategy entails clear store identification for the premium range. For example, the Dutch supermarket Albert Heijn named their premium range AH Excellent and the U.S. based supermarket chain Safeway has a premium range called Safeway Select. By using this strategy, retailers can clearly communicate that the PPL is at the top-end of their total PL portfolio.

A different strategy that retailers can adopt is to offer a separate premium brand. Wal-Mart did this with their premium brand Sam’s Choice and the Dutch discounter Lidl implements this strategy through their PPL Delicieux. The main reason for adopting this strategy would be that this product clearly distinguishes itself from the rest of their PL products, which could be beneficial. On the other hand, in implementing such a strategy, consumers may not directly recognize this product as being a private label product. That is, when consumers have a positive store image, PL brands are more likely
to be favorably evaluated (Collins and Lindley, 2003; Semeijn et al, 2004). This phenomenon will be discussed in more detail later.

Another strategy for a premium range is to adopt a **cobranded** strategy with a prominent brand manufacturer. For example, for its Costco’s Kirkland Signature range, Costco cooperates with Starbucks on their coffee products, with Nestlé in candy, with Quaker on cereal and so on. This strategy offers the opportunity to retailers to achieve a higher positioning in a category than otherwise would be possible. However, a major disadvantage is that margins have to be split with the co-brand owner.

Finally, a fourth strategy defined by Steenkamp and Kumar (2007) is the strategy to **delink** the premium product line to the store. In this way, the products are branded without mentioning the PL, which seems to be similar to the **separate premium branding** strategy. A slight difference in these strategies is that the delinking strategy has no mention of the store brand whatsoever, whereas the separate premium brand does. By using the **delinked brand**, the retailer allows the premium brand greater positioning and pricing flexibility since it does not have to reconcile its offer with the overall store image (Steenkamp and Kumar, 2007). Similar to the separate premium brand strategy, a drawback would be that the consumer does not recognize the brand as a PL brand.

In conclusion, the branding strategy retailers decide to implement could have influence on the image transfer from the product to the store. When a product explicitly is associated with the retailer it could be assumed that the likelihood of image transfer increases. This has led to the following hypothesis:

\[ H4: \text{Image transfer between premium private labels and the retailer brand is more likely when a subbrand strategy is implemented than when the PPL is separate to the retailer brand.} \]

### 2.6 What is the influence of the retailer format on the image transfer between premium private labels and the retailer?

Levy and Weitz (2009) define a retail format as: ‘the nature of the retailer’s operations - its retail mix (type of merchandise and services offered, pricing policy, advertising, and promotions programs, store design and visual merchandising, typical locations, and customer services)’. Retailers can adopt different formats through which they can position themselves in the grocery market. By choosing a particular format, or developing a unique and new format, the retailer sets a positioning in the market and may seek to differentiate from other grocery retailers.
Four types of grocery retail formats are defined according to the works of Zielke (2010). A distinction is made between discount stores, supermarkets, organic food stores, and weekly markets. Supermarkets are subdivided into conventional supermarkets, superstores and hypermarkets. Discounters and conventional supermarkets are the most widespread formats in Europe (Cleeren et al., 2010) and in the Netherlands. Therefore this research will focus on these two formats while organic food stores and weekly markets will not be elaborated upon.

2.6.1 Supermarkets

As mentioned before, Zielke (2010) subdivides the supermarket format into three sub-formats, which are conventional supermarkets, superstores and hypermarkets. Conventional supermarkets are self-service stores offering groceries, meat, and produce, as well as some nonfood items, such as health and beauty aids and general merchandise (Levy and Weitz, 2009). Both superstores and hypermarkets differ from conventional supermarkets mainly in size, with hypermarkets being the largest.

In the Dutch grocery market, conventional supermarkets are the dominant format. Not every conventional supermarket is the same, as each retailer defined their own retail mix. A focus on price and service are the main dimensions on which supermarkets seek to differentiate from each other. Moreover, conventional grocery retailers seek to differentiate through their PL strategy, which was found to be an important determinant of differentiation.

2.6.2 Discounters

Discounter stores offer a limited assortment of food products at very low prices and mostly offering solely PLs (Zielke, 2010; Aggarwal, 2003). In order to enable themselves to offer low prices, discounters mostly offer no-frills stores, with limited promotional and merchandising activities and little new product developments (Deleersnyder et al., 2007). Discounters can be distinguished from conventional supermarkets in that they generally offer only PL products of similar quality to national brands in their stores.

A trend amongst discounters is to introduce PPLs in their portfolio, thereby differentiating from competitors and strengthening their competitive positioning. Moreover, discounters see opportunities to opportunity to attract a new group of consumers and thereby broadening their target group. In 2005, Aldi launched their ‘Specially Selected’ PL range in the UK, which is a PPL range. Lidl introduced a premium range with luxury products especially for the holidays. According to an article based on research by GfK that was published in Foodmagazine (Kuipers, 2010), Lidl has the second largest fair share of PPL brands from all supermarkets in the Netherlands in 2009 (see table
2.1 below). Fair share is defined by GfK as the market share of a product/range that reasonably could be achieved if this is compared to the market share of a higher level assortment. Following this reasoning, the article states that Albert Heijn sells 2.7 times more AH Excellent products than can be expected from the market share of this range.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPL Brand</th>
<th>Retailer</th>
<th>Fair Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AH Excellent</td>
<td>Albert Heijn</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delicieux</td>
<td>Lidl</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superieur</td>
<td>Super de Boer</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bon Appetit</td>
<td>Plus</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumbo Exclusief</td>
<td>Jumbo</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Top 5 Fair Share PPL Brands 2009 (Kuipers, 2010)

The introduction of a PPL range in a discounters’ assortment seems rather conflicting however. That is, PPLs positioning contradicts the positioning of the discounter as a whole. According to the literature explored so far, the addition of a PPL should lead to image transfer from the PPL to the retailer brand. However, such image transfer does not seem to benefit the retailer brand in the case of a discounter, as the positioning is contradictory.

In conclusion, the store format is an important factor for retailers in building their store image. As mentioned before, the store image is composed of five dimensions according to research by Ailawadi and Keller (2004); (1) access, (2) in-store atmosphere, (3) price and promotion, (4) cross-category product/service assortment, and (5) within-category brand/item assortment. As outlined above, precisely these dimensions are dimensions on which discounters and conventional supermarkets differentiate from one another. Therefore, store format is stated a moderating factor in store image.

**H5: A conventional supermarket retail format has a positive contribution on the image transfer between premium private labels and the retailer brand.**
2.7 Conceptual Model

Based on the reviewed literature and the hypotheses build in this chapter, the following conceptual model was developed. This model reflects all theoretical relations between constructs and defines the relationships that will be researched.

![Conceptual Model Diagram]

Figure 2.5: Conceptual Model
3. Research Design

The following chapter outlines the research methods that will be used, in order to provide an answer to the hypotheses and problem statement as described in the previous chapter. The research design and the data collection will be outlined below. Finally, the plan of analysis will be stated. This chapter can be seen as the blueprint or the framework of conducting the marketing research project (Malhotra, 2007).

3.1 Research Methods

The research conducted in this thesis is a descriptive conclusive research design, which is defined according to the works of Malhotra (2007). He states that conclusive research is based on large, representative samples, and the data obtained are subjected to quantitative analysis. Moreover, Malhotra (2007) states that the analysis in such research designs should be based upon quantitative data and the results of the analysis will be used to make conclusions and recommendations. Furthermore, Malhotra (2007) makes a distinction between causal and descriptive conclusive research. A descriptive conclusive research is characterized by the preceding formulations of hypotheses, therefore stressing the importance of clearly defined research problems. Therefore, the research conducted in this thesis is defined to be a descriptive conclusive research.

In order to provide for an answer to the hypotheses, this research will be conducted with the use of an online questionnaire (see Appendix), in which respondents are requested to give their opinion on each of the constructs measured. This questionnaire will be distributed amongst respondents that are familiar with the two distinctive retailer formats, which will consist mostly of co-students, relatives and acquaintances of the researcher. The questionnaire will be distributed online for several reasons. According to Malhotra (2007), online questionnaires offer the ability to ensure comparability of the data, increase speed and accuracy or recording and facilitate data processing.

In order to test the hypotheses, including retailer format and premium private label branding strategy, four different questionnaires are developed (see Table 3.1), which will be randomly distributed amongst the respondents.
Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retailer Format</th>
<th>Subbrand Branding Strategy</th>
<th>Separate Premium Branding Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Supermarket</td>
<td>Albert Heijn - AH Excellent</td>
<td>Albert Heijn - The Best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discount</td>
<td>Lidl - Lidl Finest</td>
<td>Lidl - Delicieux</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Operationalizations

The following section will operationalize the constructs that will be used, in order to test the hypotheses stated in chapter two. The operationalizations of the constructs include store image, product image, perceived fit, PPL preference, retailer format, and PPL branding strategy (see Table 3.2).

The main scaling technique used for the online questionnaire is a Likert scale. This scale is a rating scale that requires the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of a series of statements about the stimulus objects. In this research, most items will have seven response categories, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. In addition to the items mentioned above, one item in the questionnaire has a nominal measurement scale (gender) and one item has an interval measurement scale (age).

The constructs and the corresponding items through which they will be measured can be found in Table 3.2.

3.2.1 Store image

Store image will be measured with a scale adjusted from Kremer & Viot (2012), which measures premium private labels’ influence on store image. This scale defines store image, based on three dimensions: price, quality and values. The respondents are asked to rate a total of ten statements along the three dimensions of price, quality and value (Table 3.2). Three statements are related to price, four statements are related to quality and three statements are related to values. Each construct will be rated based on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.
3.2.2 Product Image

The scale measuring product image of the premium private labels is based on the model developed by Kremer and Viot (2012) as well. The respondents are asked to rate a total of ten statements about the product along the dimensions price, quality and value. Three statements are related to price, four statements are related to price and three statements are related to values. The respondents are asked to rate these constructs on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

3.2.3 Perceived Fit between PPL Image and Store Image

As explained in chapter two, perceived fit is based on brand concept consistency as defined by Park et al. (1991). In order to measure total perceived fit between PPL image and store image, a new scale is developed by the researcher that is based on the works of Keller and Aaker (1992), DelVecchio and Smith (2005), and Park et al. (1991) (see Table 3.2). This scale consists of two constructs, which are ‘general perceived fit’ and ‘perceived brand concept consistency’. The respondents are asked to rate a total of six items based on a 7-point Likert Scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

3.2.4 Premium PL Preference

Based on the literature review, the construct of premium PL preference is measured through two constructs; ‘value consciousnesses’ and ‘previous experience’.

Value Consciousness

Value consciousness will be measured with the scale developed by Kara et al. (2009). In order to measure the value consciousness of the consumer, the respondents are asked to rate a total of three statements, based on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

Previous Experience

In order to test the construct of previous experience, it was subdivided into two dimensions of ‘familiarity’ and ‘previous usage’, according to the works of Dick et al. (1995) and Kara et al. (2009). The respondents are asked to rate a total of five statements, two on familiarity and three on previous usage. The measurement of previous experience is based on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.
3.2.5 Retailer Format

In order to measure the moderating effect of the retailer format, not all respondents will fill out the same questionnaire. Two questionnaires will be distributed in order to find out whether there is a difference in the transfer of premium private label image to store image in conventional supermarkets and discounter formats. The Dutch conventional supermarket format Albert Heijn and the Dutch discounter format Lidl will be used in order to test this hypothesis.

3.2.6 Premium Private Label Branding Strategy

In order to measure the effect of the premium private label branding strategies defined in the literature, each retailer format questionnaire will be subdivided in to two questionnaires. One questionnaire tests the effect of a subbrand branding strategy, the other one tests the delinked branding strategy. In both retailer formats, the existing premium private label will be tested, which is the AH Excellent-label and the Lidl Delicieux-label. Moreover, to test the delinked branding strategy, for both retailer formats a non-existent premium private label that uses a delinked branding strategy will be tested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Image</strong></td>
<td>Kremer &amp; Viot (2012)</td>
<td><strong>Price:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>(I think product X has a high price.)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think product X offers value for money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think product X is a good deal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Quality:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think product X is a high quality product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think product X offers variety in the current assortment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think product X is the best product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I find the packaging of product X attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Values:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With product X I can indulge myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think product X is a fair product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think product X is convenient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Store Image</strong></td>
<td>Kremer &amp; Viot (2012)</td>
<td><strong>Price:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>(I think retailer X is more expensive than retailer Y.)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I believe retailer X offers value for money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think retailer X offers good deals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Quality:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I think that retailer X has a high quality assortment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I think retailer X has a high assortment variety.  
I think retailer X offers the best products  
I find the atmosphere at retailer X pleasant  

**Values:**  
Retailer X has a luxurious store.  
Retailer X is sustainable.  
Retailer X makes consumers’ life easier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Fit</th>
<th>Researcher, derived from; Keller and Aaker (1992), DelVecchio and Smith (2005), Park et al. (1991)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **General Perceived Fit:** | This premium private label brand extension is suitable for Retailer X.  
This premium private label brand extension is logical.  
This premium private label brand extension is easy to explain. |
| **Brand Concept Consistency:** | Product X fits the image of retailer X.  
Product X and retailer X are strongly connected.  
Product X is a suitable extension of the private label portfolio of retailer X. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Consciousness</th>
<th>Kara et al. (2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Premium PL products offer great value for money.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Premium PL items are considered to be a good buy.** |  
**Premium PL items appear to be a bargain.** |

| Previous Experience | Kara et al. (2009)  
Dick et al. (1995) |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| **Familiarity:** | I have much experience with premium PL grocery items.  
I am very familiar with the various premium PL grocery items available in the marketplace.  
**Previous Usage:** | I am very satisfied with premium PL grocery products.  
I recommend premium PL grocery products to my friends.  
I would not hesitate to buy premium PL grocery products. |

* Paragraph 3.5 shows insignificant values on the Cronbach’s Alpha for this item. Therefore, the item was deleted from the scale.

Table 3.2: Operationalizations

### 3.3 Pre-test

In order to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and to identify and eliminate possible problems, Malhotra (2007) recommends pre-testing the questionnaire. To this end, the
questionnaire was distributed amongst ten respondents. Based on the feedback some alterations and improvements to statements were made that contributed to a clear and better understandable questionnaire.

3.4 Population and Sample

The target population of this research consists of consumers that are familiar with the concept of premium private labels. Moreover, they should be familiar with conventional supermarkets and discounters. As the survey is distributed online, the sample consists of all respondents that participate in the online questionnaire. According to Malhotra (2007), the target sampling size for a study like this is 200 respondents. As this study tests four conditions each condition was set to have a minimum of 50 respondents.

The sampling technique used in this research is the ‘convenience sampling’ technique, which is stated by Malhotra (2007) to make use of respondents that are in the right place at the right time. Using convenience sampling, snowball sampling is likely to occur. This is a situation in which an initial group of respondents is selected randomly, but where subsequent respondents are selected based on the referrals or information provided by the initial respondents (Malhotra, 2007). A snowball effect will increase the number of respondents.

In total, 243 respondents participated in the online survey. However, the results of three respondents were excluded because of too many missing values in the dataset. The total dataset therefore consists of 240 respondents.

Of the respondents that filled out the online questionnaire, 48.3 per cent is female and 51.7 per cent is male. The average age of the respondents is 37 years old, with the youngest participant has the age of 16 and the oldest is 72. More than half of the total sample is younger than 31 years old.

3.5 Reliability

In order to check for the reliability of the questionnaire, the Cronbach’s Alpha’s are determined for each construct (see table 3.3). In doing so, it is tested whether multiple items can be combined into a new construct. Cronbach’s Alpha is the average of all possible split-half coefficients resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items (Malhotra, 2007). The value of this coefficient varies from 0 to 1 and as stated by Malhotra (2007), Cronbach’s Alpha’s have to be .6 or higher for internal consistency reliability. If below .6, the construct is unreliable and cannot be used in the analysis.
The Cronbach’s Alpha for product price image is insignificant (α < .6) with a value of .449. By deleting the first item of price image, the alpha becomes reliable with a value of .851. Therefore, the first item to measure PPL price image is deleted. Also, the Cronbach’s Alpha for retailer price image is insignificant (α < .6) with a value of .211. By deleting the first item of price image, the alpha becomes reliable with a value of .717.

Product value image does have an insignificant value of the Cronbach’s Alpha and deletion of one item will not result in a significant alpha. Therefore, this construct cannot be incorporated in the analysis, which means that hypothesis H1c will not be researched. In order to still incorporate the values dimension in the research, the relation between each item on the product values dimension
and the corresponding item on the store values dimension will be researched. This has led to the following hypotheses:

\( H1cI: \) The perceived level of indulgence of the premium private label has a positive contribution toward perceived luxuriousness of the store.

\( H1cII: \) The perceived level of sustainability of the premium private label has a positive contribution toward perceived sustainability of the store.

\( H1cIII: \) The perceived level of convenience of the premium private label has a positive contribution toward perceived convenience of the store.

All other constructs show significant values in the calculation of the Cronbach Alpha’s, as they are all >.6.

3.6 Plan of Analysis

3.6.1 Main Analysis

Chapter 4 will consist of a description of the analysis. In this research, the analysis will consist of regression analyses. According to Malhotra (2007), regression analysis is a statistical procedure for analyzing associative relationships between a metric-dependent variable and one or more independent variables. In order to measure all hypotheses proposed, three types of regression analyses will be conducted.

The first part will consist of simple linear regressions, or bivariate regression, in order to measure the effect of the independent variable to the dependent variable. In the simple regression analysis for this research the dependent variable is store image and the independent variable is premium private label image. As outlined in the conceptual model, both constructs are subdivided into three dimensions, which will also be analyzed through bivariate linear regressions. The equation models for these regressions are formulated as follows;

\[ Y \text{ (Store Image Total)} = \alpha + \beta_i \cdot X_i + \epsilon_i \]

\[ Y \text{ (Store Price Image)} = \alpha + \beta_i \cdot X_i + \epsilon_i \]

\[ Y \text{ (Store Quality Image)} = \alpha + \beta_i \cdot X_i + \epsilon_i \]

\[ Y \text{ (Store Values Image I)} = \alpha + \beta_i \cdot X_i + \epsilon_i \]
In order to measure the influence of the moderating variables on the bivariate regressions, multiple regression analyses will be conducted. The moderating variables in this research are ‘perceived fit’, ‘premium private label preference’, ‘retailer format’ and ‘premium private label branding strategy’. In order to distinguish between the main effects and the interaction effects of the regression model, both analyses will be conducted, resulting in six regression equations with only the main effects and six regression equations including the interaction effects.

The equation of the multiple regression models with only the main effects of the five independent variables is formulated as follows;

\[
Y \text{ (Store Image Total)} = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \epsilon_i
\]

\[
Y \text{ (Store Price Image)} = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \epsilon_i
\]

\[
Y \text{ (Store Quality Image)} = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \epsilon_i
\]

\[
Y \text{ (Store Values Image I)} = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \epsilon_i
\]

\[
Y \text{ (Store Values Image II)} = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \epsilon_i
\]

\[
Y \text{ (Store Values Image III)} = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \epsilon_i
\]

The equation of the multiple regression models with five independent variables including the interaction effects is formulated as follows;

\[
Y \text{ (Store Image Total)} = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \beta_6 * X_2 + \beta_7 * X_3 + \beta_8 * X_4 + \beta_9 * X_5 + \epsilon_i
\]

\[
Y \text{ (Store Price Image)} = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_5 * X_5 + \beta_6 * X_2 + \beta_7 * X_3 + \beta_8 * X_4 + \beta_9 * X_5 + \epsilon_i
\]
Y (Store Quality Image)
\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4 + \beta_5 \cdot X_5 + \beta_6 \cdot X_6 + \beta_7 \cdot X_7 + \beta_8 \cdot X_8 + \beta_9 \cdot X_9 + \epsilon_i \]

Y (Store Values Image I)
\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4 + \beta_5 \cdot X_5 + \beta_6 \cdot X_6 + \beta_7 \cdot X_7 + \beta_8 \cdot X_8 + \epsilon_i \]

Y (Store Values Image II)
\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4 + \beta_5 \cdot X_5 + \beta_6 \cdot X_6 + \beta_7 \cdot X_7 + \beta_8 \cdot X_8 + \epsilon_i \]

Y (Store Values Image III)
\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4 + \beta_5 \cdot X_5 + \beta_6 \cdot X_6 + \beta_7 \cdot X_7 + \beta_8 \cdot X_8 + \epsilon_i \]

\( \alpha \) = regression intercept
\( \beta_i \) = regression coefficient
\( X_i \) = independent variable
\( \epsilon_i \) = error term

The output of the analysis will provide for an answer to the hypotheses. The Adjusted \( R^2 \) shows the proportion of the total retailer image intention variation explained by \( X_i \) in the population. The standardized coefficient shows the sign and magnitude of the linear relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. This coefficient is denoted as ‘Beta’ or ‘ß’ in the sections to come. The value of ‘Sig.’ explains for the significance of the results, which is at a value of <.05. The results of the analysis will be explained and discussed in chapter four.

When conducting a multiple regression analysis, multicollinearity should be taken into account as this could disturb the regression results. Multicollinearity is a state of high intercorrelations among independent variables (Malhotra, 2007). In other words, the independent variables in the model correlate so closely that it is difficult to distinguish what variable is explaining for the dependent variable most. In SPSS, multicollinearity can be checked for using the Collinearity Diagnostics function. The Tolerance-values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) will indicate the occurrence of multicollinearity. A Tolerance-value of below .1 or a VIF-value of higher than 10 is considered to be too much multicollinearity and will invalidate the results of the analysis (Field, 2005). Multicollinearity can be overcome by conducting the multiple regression analyses with the use of the mean centered variables.
3.6.2 Additional Analyses

The data collected in this research is quite rich, which opens a window of opportunities to run other analyses as well. As this research focuses upon the role of the premium private labels, the data is used to gain deeper understanding on how PPL image is composed. This was done in twofold; Firstly, an ANCOVA was performed and thereafter another regression was run. The following paragraphs will elaborate on both.

**ANCOVA**

For this additional study, a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted in which the influence of the moderating factors on PPL image is tested. ANCOVA is a statistical procedure that uses the F-ratio to test the overall fit of a linear model controlling for the effect that one or more covariates have on the outcome variable (Field, 2000). The dependent variable is ‘PPL image’, the factors ‘retailer format’ and ‘PPL branding strategy’, and the covariates are ‘PPL preference’ and ‘perceived fit’. An assumption in the analysis of covariance is homogeneity of regression slopes. This is the assumption that the relationship between the covariate and the outcome variable is constant across different treatment levels (Field, 2000). Based on the findings, the ANCOVA could not be executed, as some interactions between the covariates and the factors are significant, which means that there is no homogeneity of slopes.

**Regression Analysis**

The second additional analysis that was performed in order to gain a deeper understanding of how PPL image is composed is a multiple regression analysis. The dependent variable in this analysis is ‘PPL image’ and the independent variables consist of ‘perceived fit’, ‘PPL preference’, ‘retailer format’, ‘PPL branding strategy’, which leads to the following equations;

\[
Y (PPL \ Image) = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4 + \beta_2 \cdot X_1 X_4 + \beta_3 \cdot X_2 X_4 + \beta_4 \cdot X_3 X_4 + \beta_5 \cdot X_1 X_3 + \beta_5 \cdot X_2 X_3 + \epsilon_i
\]

\[
Y (PPL \ Price \ Image) = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot X_1 + \beta_2 \cdot X_2 + \beta_3 \cdot X_3 + \beta_4 \cdot X_4 + \beta_2 \cdot X_1 X_4 + \beta_3 \cdot X_2 X_4 + \beta_4 \cdot X_3 X_4 + \beta_5 \cdot X_1 X_3 + \beta_5 \cdot X_2 X_3 + \epsilon_i
\]
\[ Y \text{ (PPL Quality Image)} \]
\[ = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_2 * X_1X_4 + \beta_3 * X_2X_4 + \beta_4 \]
\[ * X_3X_4 + \beta_5 * X_3X_3 + \beta_5 * X_2X_3 + \varepsilon_i \]

\[ Y \text{ (PPL Values Image I)} \]
\[ = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_2 * X_1X_4 + \beta_3 * X_2X_4 + \beta_4 \]
\[ * X_3X_4 + \beta_5 * X_3X_3 + \beta_5 * X_2X_3 + \varepsilon_i \]

\[ Y \text{ (PPL Values Image II)} \]
\[ = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_2 * X_1X_4 + \beta_3 * X_2X_4 + \beta_4 \]
\[ * X_3X_4 + \beta_5 * X_3X_3 + \beta_5 * X_2X_3 + \varepsilon_i \]

\[ Y \text{ (PPL Values Image III)} \]
\[ = \alpha + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \beta_3 * X_3 + \beta_4 * X_4 + \beta_2 * X_1X_4 + \beta_3 * X_2X_4 + \beta_4 \]
\[ * X_3X_4 + \beta_5 * X_3X_3 + \beta_5 * X_2X_3 + \varepsilon_i \]

\( \alpha \) = regression intercept

\( \beta_i \) = regression coefficient

\( X_i \) = independent variable

\( \varepsilon_i \) = error term
4. Results

This chapter will present the results of the analyses conducted, which consist of the main analysis, and the additional analysis as presented in chapter three. The results will lead to acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses stated in chapter two. Moreover, this chapter will serve as a foundation for chapter five, in which conclusions and recommendations will be drawn. All analyses are conducted with the use of SPSS and the relevant output can be found in the tables in this chapter.

4.1 Regression Analysis

The following section will present and discuss the results per hypothesis. In table 4.1 and 4.2, the results of all regression analyses are presented. In total six analyses were conducted in order to provide answers to the corresponding hypotheses (H1, H1a, H1b, H1cI, H1cII and H1cIII), in which model 1, model 2 and model 3 will be distinguished. Model 1 consists of the bivariate regression analysis, which is the original hypothesis as defined in the conceptual model and measures the image transfer between PPL and store image. Model 2 and model 3 consist of the multiple regression analysis excluding and including the interaction effects respectively. The multiple regression analysis considers the influence of the moderating variables in the analysis. Model 2 is included in the analysis to provide insight in the added value of the interaction effects. In table 4.1, an overview of the results of the first three hypotheses (H1, H1a, and H1b) can be found. In table 4.2, the results of the hypotheses regarding the values dimensions (H1cI, H1cII, and H1cIII) can be found.

4.1.1 H1: Store Image Total

**MODEL 1**

The Adjusted R² in this analysis has a value of .188, indicating that 18.8% of the variance in store image can be explained from the premium private label image. The β-value is .473 at a significance level of p<.05, which indicates that the hypothesis is supported. The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis:

\[ Y (\text{Store Image Total}) = 15075.68 + .437 * \text{PPL Image} \]
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Store Price Image</th>
<th>Store Quality Image</th>
<th>Store Image Total</th>
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* = Significant on 90%, α<.10
** = Significant on 95%, α<.05
*** = Significant on 99%, α<.01

Table 4.1: Results Regression Analysis H1, H1a, and H1b
Table 4.2: Results Regression Analysis H1cI, H1cII and H1cIII

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<th>Store Values Image III</th>
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</table>

* = Significant on 90%, α<.10
** = Significant on 95%, α<.05
*** = Significant on 99%, α<.01
n/a = not applicable
In order to measure the influence of the moderators on the relation between PPL image and store image, two multiple regression analyses are conducted. Both results showed signs of multicollinearity, with Tolerance values below .1 and VIF values higher than 10. As explained before, the results cannot be interpreted when multicollinearity exist. Therefore, the regression analysis was conducted with the mean centered variables.

MODEL 2

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .494, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 49.4%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 43.221 and $p < .05$.

Table 4.1 shows the results from the regression analysis. Multicollinearity is no issue as the values of Tolerance are >.1 and the VIF-values are below 10. Moreover, the table shows a significant influence at 99% of retailer format on the relationship between PPL image and store image. The minus sign of the $\beta$ indicates that this is a negative influence. PPL Branding Strategy and Perceived fit both show influence at the tested relationship at a significance level of 95%. These relationships are both positive with $\beta$-values of .113 and .152 respectively. The results of the analysis have led to the following equation for the main effects of this hypothesis;

$$Y (\text{Store Image Total}) = 13739.812 + .350 \times PPL \text{ Image} + .152 \times Perceived \text{ Fit} + \beta_3 \times PPL \text{ Preference} + -.502 \times Retailer \text{ Format} + .113 \times PPL \text{ Branding Strategy}$$

MODEL 3

The Adjusted $R^2$ has a value of .497, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 49.7% of the store image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 24.748 and $p < .05$. The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

$$Y (\text{Store Image Total}) = .033 + .350 \times PPL \text{ Image} + .132 \times Perceived \text{ Fit} + \beta_3 \times PPL \text{ Preference} + -.500 \times Retailer \text{ Format} + .100 \times PPL \text{ Branding Strategy} + \beta_6 \times (PPL \text{ Image} \times Perceived \text{ Fit}) + \beta_7 \times (PPL \text{ Image} \times PPL \text{ Preference}) + \beta_8 \times (PPL \text{ Image} \times Retailer \text{ Format}) + \beta_9 \times (PPL \text{ Image} \times PPL \text{ Branding Strategy}) + \beta_{10} \times (PPL \text{ Image} \times Retailer Format \times PPL \text{ Branding Strategy}) \times PPL \text{ Preference}$$
In conclusion, the findings of this analysis show that the H1 hypothesis should be supported, as the
outcome shows a β-value of .437 at a significance level of 99%. The main effects of the multiple
regression analysis show significant effects of the retailer format, PPL branding strategy and
perceived fit, in which the former at a significance level of 99% and the latter at a level of 95%.
However, the findings show no signs of influence of the interaction effects on the image transfer
between the PPL and the store. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant interaction
effect between the moderating variables and the image transfer between PPL and store image,
which leads to rejection of the H2, H3, H4, and H5 hypotheses with regard to the image transfer
between PPL image and store image (H1).

H1a: Store Price Image

MODEL 1

The Adjusted R² in this analysis has a value of .142, indicating that 14.2% of the variance in store
price image can be explained from the premium private label price image. The β-value is .382 at a
significance level of p<.05, which indicates that the hypothesis is supported. The results lead to the
following equation for this hypothesis;

\[ Y \ (\text{Store Price Image}) = 16628.10 + .382 \times PPL \text{ Price Image} \]

MODEL 2

The Adjusted R² in this regression analysis has a value of .105, meaning that the independent
variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 10.5%. Also, the model shows to be
significant with an F-value of 6.299 and p <.05.

Table 4.1 shows the results from the regression analysis. Multicollinearity is no issue as the values of
Tolerance are >.1 and the VIF-values are below 10. The results of this multiple regression do not
show significant results of the moderating variables on store price image. The results of the analysis
have led to the following equation for the main effects of this hypothesis;

\[ Y \ (\text{Store Price Image}) = 17032.529 + .335 \times PPL \text{ Price Image} + \beta_2 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_3 \\
* PPL \text{ Preference} + \beta_4 \times \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_5 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} \]
The results of the regression analysis show signs of multicollinearity (T<.1, VIF>10). As explained before, the results cannot be interpreted when multicollinearity exist. Therefore, the multiple regression analysis will be executed again with the mean centered values of each variable. This led to the results below.

Table 4.1 shows the overall results for the multiple regression analysis performed with the mean centered variables. The Adjusted $R^2$ has a value of .111, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 11.1% of the store price image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 4.132 and $p < .05$.

The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

$$Y \text{ (Store Price Image)} = .049 + .321 \ast PPL \text{ Price Image} + \beta_2 \ast \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_3 \ast PPL \text{ Preference} + \beta_4 \ast \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_5 \ast PPL \text{ Branding Strategy} + \beta_7 \ast (PPL \text{ Price Image} \ast \text{Perceived Fit}) + \beta_8 \ast (PPL \text{ Price Image} \ast PPL \text{ Preference}) + \beta_9 \ast (PPL \text{ Price Image} \ast \text{Retailer Format})$$

In sum, the H1a hypothesis should be accepted as the $\beta$-value of .382 is significant at a 99% level. However, findings of the multiple regression analysis, in both analyses, showed no evidence for the moderating effects. That is, the influence of the moderating variables on the image transfer between PPL Price image and Store Price image was not supported by this research. Therefore, hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5 with regard to the image transfer between PPL Price image and Store Price image (H1a), will be rejected.

**H1b: Store Quality Image**

**MODEL 1**

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this analysis has a value of .124, indicating that 12.4% of the variance in store image can be explained from the premium private label image. The $\beta$-value is .358 at a significance level of $p < .05$, which indicates that the hypothesis is supported. The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis:
MODEL 2

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .536, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 53.6%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 51.519 and $p < .05$.

Table 4.1 shows the results from the regression analysis. Multicollinearity is no issue as the values of Tolerance are >.1 and the VIF-values are below 10. Furthermore, the analysis shows that both perceived fit and retailer format have a significant influence on store store quality image. With a $\beta$ of .214, the variable perceived fit has a positive influence on store image. The $\beta$ of retailer format shows a negative influence on store image with a value of -.557. The results of the analysis have led to the following equation for the main effects of this hypothesis;

$$Y (Store\ Quality\ Image) = 14965.39 + .358 \times PPL\ Quality\ Image$$

MODEL 3

The results of the regression analysis show signs of multicollinearity ($T < .1, VIF > 10$). As explained before, the results cannot be interpreted when multicollinearity exist. Therefore, the multiple regression analysis will be executed again with the mean centered values of each variable. This led to the results below.

Table 4.1 shows the overall results for the multiple regression analysis performed with the mean centered variables. The Adjusted $R^2$ has a value of .534, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 53.4% of the store quality image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 28.894 and $p < .05$.

In table 4.1 the rest of the results of the analysis are presented. Multicollinearity is no longer an issue as the mean centered variables were used. However, the interaction effects in the analysis are insignificant with $p > .05$.

The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

$$Y (Store\ Quality\ Image) = 11463.672 + .218 \times PPL\ Quality\ Image + .214 \times Perceived\ Fit + \beta_3 \times PPL\ Preference + -.557 \times Retailer\ Format + \beta_5 \times PPL\ Branding\ Strategy$$
To conclude, the H1b hypothesis should be accepted, as the $\beta$-value of .358 and significant at a level of 99%. The main effects of Perceived Fit and Retailer Format both show significant influence on store quality image, with $\beta$-values of .214 and -.548 respectively. There is, however, no evidence for significant interaction effects. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant interaction effect between the moderating variables and the image transfer between PPL Quality and Store Quality image, which leads to rejection of the H2, H3, H4, and H5 hypotheses with regard to the image transfer between PPL Quality image and Store Quality image (H1b).

H1cI: Store Values Image I

MODEL 1

The Adjusted R$^2$ in this analysis has a value of .044, indicating that 4.4% of the variance in store image can be explained from the premium private label image. The $\beta$-value is .219 at a significance level of $p<.05$, which indicates that the hypothesis is supported. The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

$$Y (\text{Store Values Image I}) = 16950.08 + .219 \times \text{PPL Values Image I}$$

MODEL 2

The Adjusted R$^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .621, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 62.1%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 75.064 and $p <.05$.

Table 4.2 shows the results from the regression analysis. Multicollinearity is no issue as the values of Tolerance are >.1 and the VIF-values are below 10. Moreover, the table shows a significant influence of both perceived fit and retailer format on Store Luxuriousness. The Beta ($\beta$) value of Perceived Fit indicates a positive relationship, with a value of .217. The minus sign of the $\beta$ of Retailer Format
indicates that this is a negative relationship, with a value of -.667. The results of the analysis have led to the following equation for the main effects of this hypothesis;

\[ Y (\text{Store Values Image I}) = 9847.678 + \beta_1 \times \text{PPL Values Image I} + .217 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_3 \times \text{PPL Preference} + -.677 \times \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_5 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} \]

**MODEL 3**

The results of the regression analysis show signs of multicollinearity (T<.1, VIF>10). As explained before, the results cannot be interpreted when multicollinearity exist. Therefore, the multiple regression analysis will be executed again with the mean centered values of each variable. However, still the results are biased due to multicollinearity. Therefore is can be concluded that no significant effects exist of the moderating variables on the relationship between Store Luxuriousness and PPL Indulgence Level.

In conclusion, the H1cI hypothesis should be accepted, as the \( \beta \)-value of .219 is significant at a level of 99%. The main moderating effects perceived fit and retailer format seem to influence the store values image I. However, no evidence for significant interaction effects was found in the research, as the analysis with mean centered variable also showed signs of multicollinearity. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant interaction effect between the moderating variables and the image transfer between PPL Values I and Store Values I image, which leads to rejection of the H2, H3, H4, and H5 hypotheses with regard to the image transfer between PPL Values I image and Store Values I image (H1cI).

**H1cII: Store Values Image II**

**MODEL 1**

The Adjusted \( R^2 \) in this analysis has a value of .194, indicating that 19.4% of the variance in store image can be explained from the premium private label image. The \( \beta \)-value is .444 at a significance level of \( p<.05 \), which indicates that the hypothesis is supported. The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

\[ Y (\text{Store Values Image II}) = 14880.57 + .444 \times \text{PPL Values Image II} \]
MODEL 2

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .308, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 30.8%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 21.244 and p <.05.

Table 4.2 shows the results from the regression analysis. Multicollinearity is no issue as the values of Tolerance are >.1 and the VIF-values are below 10. Moreover, the table shows a significant influence at a 99% significance level of both Retailer Format and PPL Branding Strategy on Store Values image II of -.265 and .170 respectively. The results of the analysis have led to the following equation for the main effects of this hypothesis;

$$Y \ (\text{Store Values Image II}) = 9931.318 + .412 \times \text{PPL Values Image II} + \beta_2 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_3$$

$$\times \text{PPL Preference} + -.265 \times \text{Retailer Format} + .170$$

$$\times \text{PPL Branding Strategy}$$

MODEL 3

The results of the regression analysis show signs of multicollinearity (T<.1, VIF>10). As explained before, the results cannot be interpreted when multicollinearity exist. Therefore, the multiple regression analysis will be executed again with the mean centered values of each variable. This led to the results below.

Table 4.2 shows the overall results for the multiple regression analysis performed with the mean centered variables. The Adjusted $R^2$ has a value of .301, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 30.1% of Store Values image II. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 11.853 and p <.05.

The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

$$Y \ (\text{Store Values Image II}) = .014 + .390 \times \text{PPL Values Image II} + \beta_2 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_3$$

$$\times \text{PPL Preference} + -.264 \times \text{Retailer Format} + .169$$

$$\times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} + \beta_6 \times (\text{PPL Values Image II} \times \text{Perceived Fit})$$

$$+ \beta_7 \times (\text{PPL Values Image II} \times \text{PPL Preference}) + \beta_8$$

$$\times (\text{PPL Values Image II} \times \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_9 \times (\text{PPL Values Image II} \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy})$$
In conclusion, the H1cII hypothesis should be accepted, as the $\beta$-value in the bivariate regression analysis is .444 at a significance level of 99%. Furthermore, significant influences in the main effects of both retailer format and PPL branding strategy were found, with $\beta$-values of -.265 and .170 respectively. However, no evidence for the significant influence of the interaction effects was found in the multiple regression analysis. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant interaction effect between the moderating variables and the image transfer between PPL Values II and Store Values II image, which leads to rejection of the H2, H3, H4, and H5 hypotheses with regard to the image transfer between PPL Values II image and Store Values II image (H1cII).

**H1cIII: Store Values Image III**

**MODEL 1**

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this analysis has a value of .051, indicating that 5.1% of the variance in store image can be explained from the premium private label image. The $\beta$-value is .235 at a significance level of $p<.05$, which indicates that the hypothesis is supported. The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

\[
Y (\text{Store Values Image III}) = 17192.96 + .235 \times \text{PPL Values Image III}
\]

In conclusion, the analyses all showed significant results, which means that all hypotheses should be accepted based on the bivariate regression analyses conducted in this paragraph.

**MODEL 2**

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .119, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 11.9%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 7.102 and $p < .05$.

Table 4.2 shows the results from the regression analysis. Multicollinearity is no issue as the values of Tolerance are >.1 and the VIF-values are below 10. The findings show a significant influence of retailer format on Store Values image III, with a $\beta$-value of -.211 at a significance level of 99%. Moreover, perceived fit has a $\beta$-value of .123 at a significance level of 90%. The results of the analysis have led to the following equation for the main effects of this hypothesis;
The results of the regression analysis show signs of multicollinearity (T<.1, VIF>10). As explained before, the results cannot be interpreted when multicollinearity exist. Therefore, the multiple regression analysis will be executed again with the mean centered values of each variable. This led to the results below.

Table 4.2 shows the overall results for the multiple regression analysis performed with the mean centered variables. The Adjusted R^2 has a value of .118, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 11.8% of Store Values image III. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 4.373 and p <.05.

The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

\[
Y \ (\text{Store Values Image III}) = .065 + .222 \times \text{PPL Values Image III} + .139 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + \ .009 \\
* \ \text{PPL Preference} + -.216 \times \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_5 \\
* \ \text{PPL Branding Strategy} + -.160 \\
* (\text{PPL Values Image III} \times \text{Perceived Fit}) + \beta_7 \\
* (\text{PPL Values Image III} \times \text{PPL Preference}) + \beta_8 \\
* (\text{PPL Values Image III} \times \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_9 \\
* (\text{PPL Values Image III} \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy})
\]

In sum, the H1cIII hypothesis should be accepted, as the β-value of .235 is significant at a level of 99%. The main effects of the moderating variables show that perceived fit and retailer format seem to have a positive and negative influence on store values image III respectively. However, the findings showed no results of significant interaction effects. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant interaction effect between the moderating variables and the image transfer between PPL Values III and Store Values III image, which leads to rejection of the H2, H3, H4, and H5 hypotheses with regard to the image transfer between PPL Values III image and Store Values III image (H1cIII).
4.2 Additional Analysis

In this paragraph, the results of the additional multiple regression analysis will be presented. The goal of this analysis is to check what the influence is of the independent variables ‘perceived fit’, ‘PPL preference’, ‘retailer format’, and ‘PPL branding strategy’ on the dependent variable ‘PPL image’. As outlined in the previous chapter, the regression analyses were conducted excluding the interaction effects of the moderator variables and including the interaction effects, model 1 and model 2 respectively. Model 2 is included in the analysis to provide insight in the added value of the interaction effects. All results are summarized in table 4.3.

Each multiple regression analysis including interaction effects in this research showed signs of multicollinearity, with Tolerance values below .1 and VIF values higher than 10. As explained before, the results cannot be interpreted when multicollinearity exist. Therefore, all regression analyses presented in this paragraph were conducted with the mean centered variable, which has led to the following results.

**H1: PPL Image Total**

The goal of this analysis was to determine the influence of the moderating variables on PPL image.

**MODEL 1**

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .291, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 29.1%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 23.852 and $p < .05$. The variables perceived fit and PPL preference both have an influence on PPL image Total at a significance level of 99%, with $\beta$-values of .429 and .291 respectively. These results signify a positive relationship. Moreover, retailer format has a positive influence on PPL image Total as well with a $\beta$-value of .137 at a significance level of 95%.

The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

\[
Y (\text{PPL Image Total}) = -.007 + .429 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + .291 \times \text{PPL Preference} + .137 \\
* \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_4 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy}
\]
### Table 4.3: Results Additional Regression Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PPL Image Total</th>
<th>PPL Price Image</th>
<th>PPL Quality Image</th>
<th>PPL Values Image I</th>
<th>PPL Values Image II</th>
<th>PPL Values Image III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Inter.</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>Inter.</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>Inter.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Perceived Fit</td>
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<td>,309***</td>
<td>,315***</td>
<td>,462***</td>
<td>,466***</td>
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<td>PPL Preference</td>
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<td>,261***</td>
<td>,282***</td>
<td>,251***</td>
<td>,178***</td>
<td>,158***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailer Format</td>
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<td>,149**</td>
<td>,188**</td>
<td>,202***</td>
<td>,105</td>
<td>,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPL Branding Strategy</td>
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<td>,056</td>
<td>,027</td>
<td>,019</td>
<td>,057</td>
<td>,084</td>
</tr>
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<td>PPL Branding Strategy*Retailer Format</td>
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<td>.057</td>
<td>.075</td>
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<td>.093</td>
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<td>,004</td>
<td>,038</td>
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<td>,139*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>,064</td>
<td>,059</td>
<td>,057</td>
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<td>,013</td>
<td>,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailer Format*PPL Preference</td>
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<td>,137**</td>
<td>,112*</td>
<td>,080</td>
<td>,098</td>
<td>,121*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.291</td>
<td>23.852</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Significant on 90%, $\alpha<.10$

** = Significant on 95%, $\alpha<.05$

*** = Significant on 99%, $\alpha<.01$
MODEL 2

The Adjusted $R^2$ has a value of .317, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 31.7% of the store image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an $F$-value of 12.482 and $p < .05$. The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

$$ Y (PPL \text{ Image Total}) $$

$$ = -.015 + .436 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + .261 \times \text{PPL Preference} + .149 \times \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_4 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} + \beta_5 $$

$$ + \beta_6 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} \times \text{Retailer Format} $$

$$ + \beta_7 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} \times \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_8 \times \text{PPL Preference} + \beta_9 \times \text{Retailer Format} \times \text{PPL Preference}$$

In conclusion, the main effects of the research show that perceived fit, PPL preference and retailer format have a positive influence on PPL Image Total. However, the findings show no signs of influence of the interaction effects between the moderating variables on the PPL Image Total. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant influence of the moderating variables perceived fit, PPL preference, retailer format, and PPL branding strategy combined on the PPL image.

H1a: PPL Price Image

The goal of this analysis was to determine the influence of the moderating variables on PPL Price image.

MODEL 1

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .206, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 20.6%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an $F$-value of 15.693 and $p < .05$. The findings show significant results for perceived fit, PPL preference and retailer format, with $\beta$-values of .309, .282, and .188 respectively. The positive value of the $\beta$ signifies a positive relation on the PPL Price image.

The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

$$ Y (PPL \text{ Price Image}) $$

$$ = -.003 + .309 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + .282 \times \text{PPL Preference} + .188 \times \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_4 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} $$
MODEL 2

The Adjusted $R^2$ has a value of .213, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 21.3% of the store image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 7.217 and $p < .05$. The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis:

$$Y (PPL \text{ Price Image}) = .002 + .315 \times Perceived \text{ Fit} + .251 \times PPL \text{ Preference} + .202 \times Retailer \text{ Format} + \beta_4 \times PPL \text{ Branding Strategy} + \beta_5 \times PPL \text{ Branding Strategy} \times Perceived \text{ Fit} + \beta_7 \times PPL \text{ Branding Strategy} \times PPL \text{ Preference} + \beta_8 \times Retailer \text{ Format} \times PPL \text{ Preference}$$

To conclude, the main effects of the research show that perceived fit, PPL preference and retailer format have a positive influence on PPL Price image, at the significance level of 99%. However, the findings show no signs of influence of the interaction effects between the moderating variables on the PPL Price image. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant influence of the moderating variables perceived fit, PPL preference, retailer format, and PPL branding strategy combined on the PPL Price image.

H1a: PPL Quality Image

The goal of this analysis was to determine the influence of the moderating variables on PPL Quality image.

MODEL 1

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .243, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 24.3%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 19.157 and $p < .05$. The multiple regression analysis shows that both perceived fit and PPL preference have a positive influence on PPL Quality image, with $\beta$-values of .462 and .178 at significance levels of 99%.

The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;
MODEL 2

The Adjusted R² has a value of .271, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 27.1% of the store image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 10.334 and p < .05. The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis:

\[
Y (PPL Quality Image) = .005 + .462 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + .178 \times \text{PPL Preference} + \beta_3 \\
* \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_4 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy}
\]

In sum, the findings of the main effects shows that perceived fit and PPL preference have a positive influence on PPL Quality image. However, the analysis in which the interaction effects are considered shows no signs of significant influence of the moderating variables on the PPL Quality image. For this reason, it is concluded that there is no significant influence of the moderating variables perceived fit, PPL preference, retailer format, and PPL branding strategy combined on the PPL Quality image.

H1a: PPL Values Image I

The goal of this analysis was to determine the influence of the moderating variables on PPL Values image.

MODEL 1

The Adjusted R² in this regression analysis has a value of .222, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 22.2%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 17.110 and p < .05. The multiple regression analysis shows that both
perceived fit and PPL preference have a positive influence on PPL Values image I, with β-values of .409 and .204 at significance levels of 99%.

The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

\[
Y (PPL \text{ Values Image I}) = -.016 + .409 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + .204 \times \text{PPL Preference} + \beta_3 \\
\times \text{Retailer Format} + .110 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy}
\]

**MODEL 2**

The Adjusted R\(^2\) has a value of .240, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 24% of the store image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 8.937 and p <.05.

The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

\[
Y (PPL \text{ Values Image I}) = -.058 + .02 * \text{Perceived Fit} + .192 * \text{PPL Preference} + \beta_6 \\
\times \text{Retailer Format} + .127 * \text{PPL Branding Strategy} + \beta_5 \\
\times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} * \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_6 \\
\times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} * \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_7 \\
\times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} * \text{PPL Preference} + \beta_8 * \text{Retailer Format} \\
\times \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_9 * \text{Retailer Format} * \text{PPL Preference}
\]

In sum, the main effects of the research show that perceived fit and PPL preference have a positive influence on the PPL Values image I, with β-values of .409 and .204 respectively. Considering the interaction effects in the analysis shows no significant influence of the interaction terms on the PPL Values I image. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant influence of the moderating variables perceived fit, PPL preference, retailer format, and PPL branding strategy combined on the PPL image.

**H1a: PPL Values Image II**

The goal of this analysis was to determine the influence of the moderating variables on PPL Values image II.
MODEL 1

The Adjusted $R^2$ in this regression analysis has a value of .085, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 8.5%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 6.280 and $p < .05$. The only construct that has a significant influence on PPL Values image II is PPL Preference. The $\beta$-value for this construct is .279 at a significance level of 99%.

The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

\[
Y (PPL \text{ Values Image II}) = -.016 + \beta_1 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + .279 \times \text{PPL Preference} + \beta_3 \\
* \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_4 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy}
\]

MODEL 2

The Adjusted $R^2$ has a value of .078, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 7.8% of the store image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 3.145 and $p < .05$. The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis;

\[
Y (PPL \text{ Values Image II}) = -.010 + \beta_1 \times \text{Perceived Fit} + .252 \times \text{PPL Preference} + \beta_3 \\
* \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_4 \times \text{PPL Branding Strategy} + \beta_5 \\
* \text{PPL Branding Strategy} \times \text{Retailer Format} + \beta_6 \\
* \text{PPL Branding Strategy} \times \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_7 \\
* \text{PPL Branding Strategy} \times \text{PPL Preference} + \beta_8 \times \text{Retailer Format} \\
* \text{Perceived Fit} + \beta_9 \times \text{Retailer Format} \times \text{PPL Preference}
\]

In conclusion, the main findings show that the moderating factor, which has a influence on PPL Values image II is PPL Preference. However, the findings show no significant results of the interaction effects in the research. Therefore, it can be concluded that the moderating variables altogether do not have a positive influence on the PPL image.

H1a: PPL Values Image III

The goal of this analysis was to determine the influence of the moderating variables on PPL Values image III.
MODEL 1

The Adjusted $R^2_1$ in this regression analysis has a value of .090, meaning that the independent variables contribute to the store image with a variation of 9%. Also, the model shows to be significant with an F-value of 6.561 and $p < .05$. The only construct that has a significant influence on PPL Values image III is perceived fit. The $\beta$-value for this construct is .278 at a significance level of 99%.

The results lead to the following equation for this hypothesis:

$$Y (PPL Values Image III) = -.005 + .278 * Perceived Fit + .131 * PPL Preference + .142 * Retailer Format + \beta_4 * PPL Branding Strategy$$

MODEL 2

The Adjusted $R^2_2$ has a value of .123, indicating that the independent variables altogether explain for 12.3% of the store image. Moreover, the regression is significant with an F-value of 4.522 and $p < .05$. The results show no significant interaction effects in this research and lead to the following equation for this hypothesis:

$$Y (PPL Values Image III) = -.005 + .281 * Perceived Fit + .116 * PPL Preference + .121 * Retailer Format + \beta_4 * PPL Branding Strategy + \beta_5$$
$$+ PPL Branding Strategy * Retailer Format + \beta_6$$
$$+ PPL Branding Strategy * Perceived Fit + \beta_7$$
$$+ PPL Branding Strategy * PPL Preference + \beta_8 * Retailer Format$$
$$+ Perceived Fit + \beta_9 * Retailer Format * PPL Preference$$

In conclusion, the main effects of the research show that perceived fit has a positive influence on PPL Values image III. However, the findings show no signs of influence of the interaction effects between the moderating variables on the PPL Image Total. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant influence of the moderating variables perceived fit, PPL preference, retailer format, and PPL branding strategy combined on the PPL image.
5. Discussion

The starting point for this research was to investigate the role of PPLs on the store image of the retailer. This stems from the trend in retailing to use the PL portfolio to position the retailer as a brand (Steenkamp et al., 2004; Luijten and Reijnders, 2009). The guideline for this research was the problem statement as stated in the introduction, which reads as follows;

*What is the effect of premium private labels in a retailers’ assortment on retailer brand image and how is this effect moderated by the ‘perceived fit’, ‘premium private label preference’, ‘retailer format’ and ‘premium private label branding strategy’?*

In this chapter, the conclusions to the problem statement will be drawn based on the results of the analysis as presented in chapter four. By doing so, this research aims at helping managers to understand the importance of premium private label branding in their strategic decision making. Moreover, as this research was the first to explore the effects of premium private labels on retailer image, it can be seen as a starting point for further research.

1. **How does image transfer take place between premium private labels and retailer brand image and how can this be measured?**
2. **What is the influence of the perceived fit on image transfer?**
3. **What is the influence of consumers’ preference toward premium PLs on the image transfer between PPL and the retailer?**
4. **How can premium private labels be branded?**
5. **What is the influence of the retailer format on the image transfer between PPL image and retailer image?**

Finally, this chapter will also explore the results that were generated by running the additional analysis on the available data. These results concern the analysis of what factors are of influence on PPL image.

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Main research

Based on research by Kremer and Viot (2012), it was assumed that premium private labels’ image has a positive influence on store image. This research found proof for this relationship, with the significant results for the hypotheses H1, H1a, H1b, H1cI, H1cII and H1cIII. The strongest relationship
was tested in hypothesis HcII, which measured the transfer of sustainability from the PPL to the store image. More specifically, the PPL sustainability image explains for 19.4% of the store sustainability image. Overall, it can be concluded that the PPL image has a positive influence on the store image of the retailer, on all dimensions as specified in this research, at a significance level of 99%. These findings support the assumption that image is transferred from the PPL to the store. The image transfer is the least noticeable in the Values I dimension, in which PPL indulgence image explains for 4.4% of the store indulgence image.

After reviewing the literature on image transfer, it was expected that perceived fit would have a significant influence on the image transfer between PPL and store image. However, no significant results were found to prove this relationship. That is, there were no significant interaction effects on store image, which means that the H2 hypothesis is rejected. However, the main effect of perceived fit has been found in the analysis. Significant effects from perceived fit were found on store image total, store quality image, store sustainability image, and store convenience image. Therefore, it can be concluded that perceived fit has a positive influence on these constructs.

The effect of PPL preference on the relationship between PPL image and store image was researched as well. The findings, however, showed no significant results for this assumption, which leads to the rejection of the H3 hypothesis. The conclusion that consumers’ PPL preference does not influence the image transfer between the premium private label and the store can be drawn. Moreover, this research did not find results of the influence of PPL preference on the store image.

Another construct that was considered in this research is the retailer format. It was assumed that the conventional supermarket retailer format would have a positive influence on the image transfer between PPLs and the store. However, no significant results could be derived from this research that can substantiate this assumption. Therefore, the H4 hypothesis is rejected. However, the main effects showed the influence of the retailer format on the store image. The value of the Beta indicates a negative influence from the retailer format on store image total, store quality image, store indulgence image, store sustainability image and store convenience image.

The final construct for which the moderating effect on the image transfer between PPLs and the store was researched is the PPL branding strategy. With regard to the moderating effects, no significant results were found that support the hypothesis that this construct has a positive influence on the image transfer between PPLs and the store. Therefore, the H5 hypothesis is rejected. The research does show a positive influence of the PPL branding strategy on the store values image II, which concerns the store sustainability image. Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that the PPL
branding strategy, either the subbrand or the separate branding strategy, has an influence on the sustainability image of the store.

In sum, this research found evidence that the PPL image has a positive influence on the retailer brand image, on each dimension, which led to the acceptance of H1, H1a, H1b, H1cI, H1cII, and H1cIII. No evidence was found for moderating effects by ‘perceived fit’, ‘premium private label preference’, ‘retailer format’ and ‘premium private label branding strategy’, which has led to the rejection of the H2, H3, H4, and H5 hypotheses. These results provide an answer to the problem statement. Moreover, this research supports the assumption that image transfers from the PPL to the store, on each dimension specified.

5.1.2 Additional Research

As mentioned in chapter three, an additional analysis on the data was conducted in order to learn more about the factors of influence on the PPL image. This section will draw conclusions on the results of this analysis presented in chapter 4.2.

As expected from the literature reviewed in chapter 2, perceived fit was expected to have an influence on the image transfer between PPL and the store. The evidence found in this research was not significant. However, the results of the additional analysis show signs of significant influence of perceived fit on total PPL image, as was assumed from the literature. Therefore, it can be concluded that perceived fit indeed has an influence on the total PPL image. Higher perceived fit leads to a more positive PPL image and vice versa. Moreover, perceived fit shows significant results of perceived fit on the price, quality, indulgence and convenience dimensions specified. The only construct on which no significant results of perceived fit could be found is the sustainability dimension. The interaction effects did not show significant results in the analysis.

Additional research on the dummy variable PPL preference showed significant results on the hypotheses tested, excluding the Values III dimension, which regards convenience. Based on these results, it can be concluded that PPL preference has a positive influence on PPL mage Total, PPL price image, PPL quality image, PPL indulgence image, and PPL sustainability image. The interaction effects that were considered in the analysis did not show significant results.

Retailer format was also considered in the additional analysis. From the literature review it was concluded that the retailer format could have an influence on the PPL image. Mainly the differences in positioning of the PPL and the discounter retailer format were expected to negatively influence the PPL image. The results from the analysis show significant influence of the retailer format on the PPL price image dimension. Also, significant results at 95% of retailer format to PPL image total were
found. The results show no evidence of the influence of retailer format on the other dimensions specified.

The final construct for which the influence on PPL image was researched in the additional analysis is PPL Branding Strategy. For this construct, no significant results were found. Therefore, it can be concluded that the PPL Branding Strategy has no influence on the overall image of the PPL.

In sum, the additional analysis that was conducted supports the notion that perceived fit, PPL preference and retailer format explain for PPL image total and PPL Price image. Furthermore, the findings show that perceived fit and PPL preference have a positive influence PPL Quality image and PPL indulgence image. The only construct moderating PPL sustainability image is PPL Preference and the only construct moderating PPL convenience image is perceived fit.

5.2 Implications

Theoretical Implications

This research shows that PPLs have a positive contribution toward store image. The effect of PLs’ influence on the brand image was already known due to research by Kremer & Viot (2012), but the differences in positioning of PPLs, the influence will be significantly different as well.

Whereas previous research by Kremer and Viot (2012) has demonstrated the reciprocity effect from the regular PL to the PL, in this research it is empirically validated that the PPL has a positive contribution toward store image as well. Moreover, this research validated the image transfer of price and quality.

In advance, the image transfer was hypothesized to operate according three dimensions, which are price, quality and values. Through this research, the image transfer according to two of the three hypothesized dimensions was validated. Price and quality image was found to transfer between the PPL products to the store image. Premium private labels associated with high prices and good quality positively contribute to the price and quality related image of the retailer. Evidence for such a link based on the values dimension as a whole was not found.

Practical/Managerial Implications

This research highlights the role of premium private labels on the retailer image. Therefore, the outcomes contribute to the understanding managers have on the role PPLs play in retail branding. By having empirical evidence of certain effects, retailer managers will have a better insight in the
effects their PPL portfolio has on their store image. A favorable store image is relevant to the retailer, as store image was found to be an important predictor of store choice (Grewal et al., 1998), it serves as a manner to connect with the consumer group (Steenkamp and Wedel, 1991), it can help increase store loyalty (Bellenger, Steinberg, and Stanton, 1976; Sirgy and Samli, 1985; Dick and Basu, 1994), and a favorable store image is a critical aspect of a retailers’ ability to grow and maintain their market positions (Steenkamp and Wedel, 1991).

Furthermore, this research sheds light on the relevance for retailers to invest in innovative and qualitative premium private label programs as image transfer is expected to happen. Provided that focusing upon price and quality fits the strategic direction the retailer aims for. Moreover, the marketing and communication efforts should focus on the PPL products more, as this helps establishing the retailer image.

Under the assumption that most retailers have the goal to establish a favorable price position with respect to competitors and national brands, managers should seek to incorporate the price dimension of their PPL in the retail branding strategy provided their PPL products are cheaper than national brands. Moreover, by creating awareness of the high quality of these products, this will contribute to the overall quality image of the retailer. By touching upon these dimensions in their branding strategies and communication efforts, managers will have a hand in establishing their own retailer image.

5.3 Recommendations

Managers should be aware of the influence PPLs can have on the overall store image and the underlying dimensions of price, quality and values. Most importantly, the image transfer should be kept in mind when developing or growing a PL portfolio. As the image transfers from the PPL to the store, the PPL should fit or complement the positioning of the retailer. If not, the transfer of image could be disadvantageous to the store. Therefore, it is recommended to managers that their PPL range should carefully considered and marketed in such a manner that it is in line with the store image the retailer wants to convey. Moreover, it is recommended to consider the outcomes with regard to the image of the PPL and the store before making great investments on the PL portfolio.

Despite no evidence of any interaction effects between the moderating variables on the PPL image in this research, the influence of perceived fit, PPL preference and retailer format on PPL image should be kept in mind as well. The findings showed a significant influence of these constructs on the PPL Image Total. Indirectly, therefore, the constructs will have an influence on store image as well.
Therefore, managers need to take this into consideration when building their PL portfolio. In particular, the perceived fit and retailer format could affect the managers’ decisions.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

This research has several limitations that should be taken into account when drawing conclusions and that will lead the way for further research. Firstly, in this research two retailers were used to measure the effect of the retailer format. The retailers, Albert Heijn and Lidl, were chosen as they both represent one of the retailer formats and have high brand awareness in the Netherlands. Further research should be conducted in order to make more founded conclusions on the influence of the retailer format on the image transfer between PPL image and store image.

Secondly, in order to measure the effect of the PPL branding strategy, two different branding strategies for two retailers were used. The PPL labels with a separate branding strategy and a subbrand strategy from Albert Heijn and Lidl respectively are fictitious labels solely created in order to measure the PPL branding strategy influence on the image transfer between PPLs and the retailer.

A final limitation of this research is the sampling size, which may not represent the total population properly and therefore can lead to biased results. Future research could use a bigger sample in order to overcome this problem. Moreover, the respondents of the online questionnaire are connected to the researcher to some extent, which may also bias the results of the research. Future research could take into account sample diversity.

5.5 Concluding Remark

The outcomes of this research provided an insight in what role PPLs can play in retail branding. Despite its limitations, this research generated concrete findings on which can be stated that PPL image transfers directly to the store image, along the three dimensions of price, quality and values. Not only did this research shed a light on the influence of PPL image on the store image. It also provides implications for practitioners in the field of retail marketing and opened up an interesting and dynamic new field of research for marketing studies.
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Appendix

Questionnaire

Enquête

Beste respondent,

Alvast bedankt voor het invullen van mijn enquête. De enquête zal maximaal 5 minuten van uw tijd in beslag nemen en daarmee helpt u mij enorm met mijn afstudeeronderzoek. De resultaten zullen vertrouwelijk worden behandeld en uitsluitend gebruikt worden ten behoeve van mijn masterscriptie.

De enquête zal bestaan uit twee delen. Het eerste gedeelte omvat vragen over een premium huismerk dat wordt aangeboden door een specifieke supermarktketen. Het tweede gedeelte gaat over uw mening met betrekking tot deze retailer. Gedurende de enquête zal u worden gevraagd de vragen beantwoorden door middel van het waarderen van elke vraag op een schaal van 1 tot 7, waarbij 1 staat voor “zeer mee oneens”, 4 voor “neutraal” en 7 voor “zeer mee eens”.

Nogmaals hartelijk dank!

Elize ter Balkt

Om te beginnen, vul de onderstaande vragen over uzelf in.

1. Wat is uw geslacht?
   0 Vrouw
   0 Man

2. Wat is uw leeftijd?

Hieronder staat informatie over het onderwerp van deze studie, Albert Heijn en haar premium huismerk AH Excellent. Leest u deze informatie alstublieft aandachtig door.

AH Excellent

Albert Heijn heeft een uitgebreide huismerkenportefeuille, met onder andere een premium lijn genaamd AH Excellent. Hieronder staan een aantal producten afgebeeld van premium huismerk producten van Albert Heijn.

De eerstvolgende vragen zullen gaan over dit huismerk van Albert Heijn, AH Excellent.

---

**Premium Huismerken en Albert Heijn**

De volgende vragen gaan over premium huismerken en Albert Heijn. Geef aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ik ben bekend met premium huismerken.</th>
<th>Ik koop premium huismerken.</th>
<th>Albert Heijn is de primaire supermarkt waar ik boodschappen doe.</th>
<th>Wanneer ik de keuze heb tussen verschillende supermarkten prefereer ik mijn inkopen te doen bij Albert Heijn.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Zeer Eens 0</td>
<td>Zeer Oneens 0</td>
<td>Zeer Eens 0</td>
<td>Zeer Oneens 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AH Excellent

De volgende vragen gaan over het premium huismerk van Albert Heijn, AH Excellent. Geef aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Zeer Eens</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zeer Oneens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat AH Excellent duur is.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat AH Excellent waar voor uw geld biedt.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat AH Excellent een goede deal biedt.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat AH Excellent een hoogwaardig product is.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat AH Excellent variatie biedt in het assortiment van Albert Heijn.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat AH Excellent het beste product is.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ik vind de verpakking van AH Excellent aantrekkelijk.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Met AH Excellent kan ik mijzelf verwennen.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat AH Excellent een eerlijk product is.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat AH Excellent gemakkelijk is.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Albert Heijn

De volgende vragen gaan over de supermarktketen Albert Heijn. Geef aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Zeer Eens</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zeer Oneens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat Albert Heijn duurder is dan andere supermarkten.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ik denk dat je bij Albert Heijn waar voor je geld krijgt.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Ik denk dat Albert Heijn goede deals biedt. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
4. Ik denk dat Albert Heijn een hoogwaardig assortiment biedt. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
5. Ik denk dat Albert Heijn een gevarieerd assortiment biedt. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
6. Ik denk dat Albert Heijn de beste producten biedt. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
7. Ik vind de sfeer bij Albert Heijn aangenaam. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
8. Albert Heijn heeft luxe winkels. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
9. Ik denk dat Albert Heijn duurzaam is. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
10. Albert Heijn maakt het leven van de consument gemakkelijker. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Albert Heijn & AH Excellent

The volgende vragen gaan over de match tussen Albert Heijn en AH Excellent. Geef aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

1. De uitbreiding van de huismerken portefeuille door een premium huismerk is geschikt voor Albert Heijn. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
2. De uitbreiding van de huismerken portefeuille door een premium huismerk is logisch voor Albert Heijn. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
3. De uitbreiding van de huismerken portefeuille door een premium huismerk is makkelijk te verklaren. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
4. AH Excellent past bij het imago van Albert Heijn. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
5. AH Excellent en Albert Heijn zijn sterk verbonden. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
6. AH Excellent is een passende uitbreiding van de huismerk portefeuille van Albert Heijn. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Premium Huismerken

Dit gedeelte van de enquête gaat over uw eerdere ervaringen met premium huismerken in het algemeen. Geef aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

...
1. Ik heb veel ervaring met premium huismerk producten. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
2. Ik ben heel bekend met verschillende premium huismerken verkrijgbaar in de markt. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
3. Ik ben heel tevreden met producten van premium huismerken. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
4. Ik beveel producten van premium huismerken aan aan mijn vrienden. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
5. Ik aarzel niet om producten van premium huismerken aan te schaffen. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
6. Premium huismerken bieden waarde voor uw geld. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
7. Premium huismerken worden beschouwd als een goede koop. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
8. Premium huismerken worden gezien als een koopje. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Dank voor uw medewerking!

De antwoorden op deze vragenlijst worden strikt vertrouwelijk en anoniem behandeld en zijn uitsluitend bestemd voor onderzoeksdoeleinden.

*Elize ter Balkt*