

# Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Trust and Brand Image: Unveiling Consumer Purchase Intentions for Private-Label Brands



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## Abstract

The growing market share of private-label products highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the factors that influence consumer purchase intentions. This study aims to investigate the relationships between brand awareness, perceived quality, trust, and brand image in the context of private-label products in Turkey and their direct and indirect effects on purchase intention. The convenience sampling method was used in the study and the survey form was prepared online and delivered to the participants. 238 of the obtained data were usable and were used for the analyses. In addition, SPSS and SmartPLS programs were used for the analyses. The findings reveal that although brand awareness does not directly affect brand image, it positively affects both trust and purchase intention. Additionally, it was concluded that perceived quality significantly affects both trust and brand image,

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and that these variables have a mediating role in the effect on purchase intention. Trust plays a critical role by positively affecting brand image and purchase intention. Furthermore, brand image has a strong direct effect on purchase intention. The study also reveals significant indirect effects, where trust and brand image mediate the relationships between awareness, perceived quality, and purchase intention.

**Keywords:** Private-label product, brand awareness, trust, perceived quality, brand image

## Marka Farkındalığı, Algılanan Kalite, Güven ve Marka İmajı: Özel Markalı Ürünler İçin Tüketici Satın Alma Niyetlerinin Ortaya Çıkarılması

### Öz

Özel markalı ürünlerin pazar payının büyümesi, tüketici satın alma kararlarını etkileyen faktörlerin daha iyi anlaşılmasını gerekli kılmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de özel markalı ürünler bağlamında marka farkındalığı, algılanan kalite, güven ve marka imajı arasındaki ilişkileri ve bunların satın alma niyeti üzerindeki doğrudan ve dolaylı etkilerini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmış olup, anket formu online olarak hazırlanmış ve katılımcılara ulaştırılmıştır. Elde edilen verilerden kullanılabilir olan 238 tanesi analizler için kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, analizler için SPSS ve SmartPLS programları kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, marka farkındalığının marka imajını doğrudan etkilemese de hem güveni hem de satın alma niyetini olumlu yönde etkilediğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, algılanan kalitenin hem güveni hem de marka imajını önemli ölçüde etkilediği, satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisinde ise bu değişkenlerin aracı rolü olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Güven, marka imajını ve satın alma niyetini olumlu yönde etkileyerek kritik bir rol oynamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, marka imajının satın alma niyeti üzerinde güçlü bir doğrudan etkisi vardır. Çalışma ayrıca, güvenin ve marka imajının farkındalık, algılanan kalite ve satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkilere aracılık ettiği önemli dolaylı etkileri ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Özel-markalı ürün, marka farkındalığı, güven, algılanan kalite, marka imajı

## Introduction

The growing dominance of private-label brands (PLBs) in retail markets has become a focal point of academic and industry discussions in recent years. By the end of 2023, private label items' market share had grown to 26%, according to PLAT (Private Label Association of Türkiye) statistics, while turnover in 2022 had risen by 99% over the year before. According to PLMA (Private Label Manufacturers Association) International Council, the market share of private label products increased by 0.5% from the first half of 2023 to 38.6% in the first half of 2024 on a global scale. With the rapid expansion of global retail chains and supermarkets, private-label products have evolved from low-cost alternatives to mainstream national brands to serious competitors with enhanced quality and brand equity. Research indicates that private-label brands account for a significant portion of retail sales globally, and their market share continues to increase annually (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007; Baltas and Argouslidis, 2007). This trend highlights the importance of understanding the key factors that drive consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing behaviors toward these products.

Several studies emphasize that consumers' awareness, perceived quality, trust, and brand image are central components influencing the purchase intention of private-label products (Cakiroglu, 2023). Awareness is critical as it forms the foundation of consumer perception, driving the initial interaction between consumers and brands (Atilgan et al., 2005; Beneke and Carter, 2014). On the other hand, perceived quality directly affects trust and brand loyalty, ultimately shaping the consumer's purchasing decision (Yang, 2012). Trust, vital in the consumer-brand relationship, can mitigate the perceived risk of purchasing private-label products, especially in markets where national brands dominate (Sindhuja and Rani, 2024). The concept of brand image also significantly affects consumer intention to purchase, with research suggesting that a positive brand image reinforces trust and loyalty (Maharani et al., 2020; Sarantidou, 2018).

Despite the growing body of literature on consumer behavior and private-label products, specific gaps still need to be explored. For exam-

ple, while previous studies have focused on the role of individual factors such as quality and trust (Calvo-Porrall and Levy-Mangin, 2017; Rubio et al., 2017; Dhurup et al., 2018), limited attention has been given to the mediating effects between these factors and how they collectively shape consumer purchase intentions. Additionally, the contextual differences between emerging markets, such as Turkey, and more developed markets in terms of private-label brand development are underrepresented in the literature (Durmaz and Efendioglu, 2016; Sarkar et al., 2016; Baran, 2019; Baran, 2021a; Baran, 2021b; Czczotko et al., 2022; Ndlovu and Heeralal, 2022; Özkan and Koç, 2023). This study addresses these gaps by exploring the direct and indirect relationships between awareness, perceived quality, trust, brand image, and purchase intention in the Turkish retail context.

The contribution of this research lies in its comprehensive model, which integrates various factors influencing consumer behavior toward private-label products, and examines both direct and mediated effects. By focusing on the Turkish market, this study offers valuable insights into the dynamics of consumer behavior in emerging markets, where private-label brands are gaining traction but still face challenges in competing with established national brands. The findings provide practical implications for retailers and marketers aiming to optimize their private-label branding strategies, increase market share, and enhance customer loyalty.

This study not only expands the existing literature on private-label brands by incorporating multiple dimensions of consumer perception but also fills a significant gap by providing empirical evidence from an emerging market. The results will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role that awareness, quality, trust, and brand image play in shaping consumer purchase intentions, offering a solid foundation for future research on private-label brand management.

## **Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### **Relationships between brand awareness, trust, brand image and purchase intention for private-label product**

Brand awareness is defined as the ability of consumers to recognize and recall a brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). According to Aaker (1991), brand awareness refers to the recognition of a brand in the market and consumers' ability to differentiate it from competitors. Keller (1993) describes brand awareness as the level of brand presence in the consumer's mind and highlights its impact on consumer behavior. Especially for private-label products, brand awareness plays a critical role in developing consumer trust and shaping purchase intentions toward these products.

Numerous studies in the literature have examined the effects of brand awareness on consumer behavior, particularly in the context of private-label products (DelVecchio, 2001; Beneke and Carter, 2015). Beneke and Carter (2015) emphasized that awareness of private-label products increases consumer trust, which directly affects purchase intention. Consumers with high levels of brand awareness tend to form positive perceptions of the quality of private-label products, which in turn positively influences their intention to purchase. DelVecchio (2001) pointed out that although private-label products generally offer a price advantage, consumer awareness and trust in these products play a strong role in their purchase decisions. Awareness, especially through the mechanism of trust, is seen to shape consumer intentions. In this context, high awareness of private-label products strengthens consumer trust in the brand, thereby positively impacting purchase intention. Recent studies have also revealed that awareness of private-label products is a key factor in their market success (Baltas and Argouslidis, 2007; Ari and Kayabasi, 2020). Specifically, when consumers become aware of the price-performance balance that private-label products offer, their trust and purchase intentions increase accordingly (Cop and Turkoglu, 2008).

The relationship between brand awareness and brand image is crucial in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes, especially in the case of

private-label products (Wu et al., 2011). In private-label branding, where brand differentiation is key, higher levels of brand awareness often lead to more favorable brand images in the minds of consumers. Studies in the literature show that brand awareness positively affects brand image in the context of private-label products. For example, Beneke (2010) found that as consumers become more familiar with private-label brands, their perceptions of these products as being high-quality and trustworthy improve, which enhances the overall brand image.

### **Relationships between perceived quality, trust, brand image and purchase intention for private-label product**

Quality encompasses elements such as technical specifications, durability, reliability, and performance, while perceived quality refers to the overall judgment formed in the consumer's mind based on these elements (Solin and Curry, 2023). Perceived quality is defined as the consumer's subjective assessment of the overall excellence of a product or service (Zeithaml, 1988).

Perceived quality is a crucial factor that shapes consumers' sense of trust in a product. Studies show that a high perception of quality enhances consumers' trust in a brand (Wang et al., 2020). Trust plays a critical role, especially in private-label products, as the low price of these products may lead consumers to question their quality (Beneke, 2010). Delvecchio (2001) demonstrated that perceived quality directly influences consumer trust in private-label products and that trust, in turn, has a significant effect on consumer loyalty. The impact of quality on trust becomes particularly evident when private-label products are evaluated based on their price-performance ratio (Olbrich et al., 2017).

Perceived quality also has a strong influence on brand image. A high perception of quality positively impacts the brand's overall reputation and perceived value (Aaker, 1991). Keller (1993) highlighted that higher perceived quality strengthens brand image, leaving a favorable impression on consumers. In the context of private-label products, this relationship is enhanced when brands offer quality alongside price advantages,

leading consumers to view the brand more positively (Beneke and Carter, 2014). Studies have shown that private-label brands with high perceived quality gain prestige in the eyes of consumers, thereby increasing brand loyalty (Glynn and Chen, 2009).

Perceived quality is one of the most significant factors influencing purchase intention. Consumers tend to prefer products they perceive as high-quality (Dodds et al., 1991). This relationship is even more critical in private-label products, as consumers may initially harbor doubts about quality due to the low price (Richardson et al., 1996). However, a high perception of quality can dispel these doubts, increasing the consumer's purchase intention (Beneke, 2010). Private-label products that offer high quality at a lower price encourage consumers to choose them, thereby strengthening purchase intention (Delvecchio, 2001).

### **Relationships between trust, brand image and purchase intention for private-label product**

Morgan and Hunt (1994) define trust as “the belief that a partner is reliable and has integrity.” This definition highlights the critical role that trust plays, particularly in brand-consumer relationships. When consumers trust a brand, they believe that the brand will deliver the promised quality and that it will not engage in behavior that could harm or mislead the consumer. This trust strengthens the bond between the brand and the consumer, increasing consumers' loyalty to the brand. Trust is directly related to the belief in the brand's quality, and this belief contributes to strengthening the brand's image (Roceroto and Mosca, 2012). At the same time, when trust is high, it has been observed that consumers' purchase intentions for these products also increase.

Particularly when it comes to private-label products, the positive impact of trust on brand image has been widely discussed in the literature (Dewanti et al., 2010). Bryden (2022) found that trust in private-label products positively influences brand perception, with consumers choosing these brands not only for their price advantage but also for their reliability. Similarly, the impact of trust on purchase intention has also been

frequently emphasized in the literature. Researchers such as Bertoli et al. (2020) stated that trust in private-label products increases consumers' likelihood of repurchasing these products. Likewise, Shah et al. (2020) suggested that trust in private-label products positively effects purchase intention.

### **Relationships between brand image and purchase intention for private-label product**

The relationship between brand image and purchase intention has been widely examined in the marketing literature. Brand image relates to how consumers perceive a brand, and this perception can directly influence consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards the brand. Aaker (1991) suggests that brand image helps consumers distinguish a brand from others and develop either positive or negative attitudes towards it. Particularly in the context of private-label products, brand image plays a crucial role in gaining consumer trust and increasing purchase intention. The positive relationship between brand image and purchase intention in private-label products has been supported by various studies. For instance, Diallo (2012) found that the perceived brand image of private-label brands directly affects consumers' purchase intentions. When consumers trust the quality of private-label brands, they develop a positive image of these brands, which strengthens their purchase intentions. Porral and Lang (2015) highlighted that, in addition to the cost advantage of private-label brands, brand image has a significant impact on purchasing behavior. According to these researchers, when a brand's image is strong and positive, consumers' purchase intentions towards that brand increase. Similarly, Wu et al. (2011) found results supporting the positive relationship between the brand image of private-label products and purchase intention.

As a result of the literature review and in line with the aims of the research, the following hypotheses were developed.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Brand awareness of private-label products positively effects a) trust, b) brand image, and c) purchase intention.*



*H<sub>2</sub>: Perceived quality of private-label products positively effects a) trust, b) brand image, and c) purchase intention.*

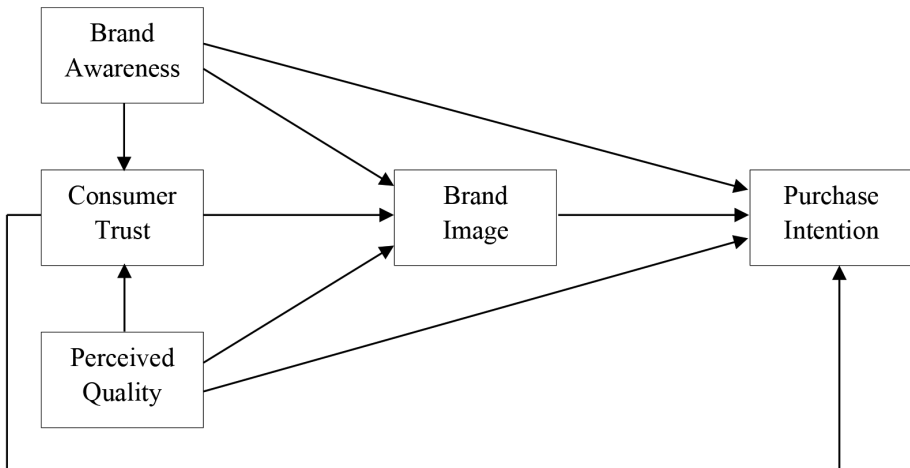
*H<sub>3</sub>: Trust in private-label products positively effects a) brand image and b) purchase intention.*

*H<sub>4</sub>: Brand image of private-label products positively effects purchase intention.*

*H<sub>5</sub>: Brand awareness of private-label products indirectly effects a) brand image through trust, b) purchase intention through trust and brand image, and c) purchase intention through trust d) purchase intention through brand image.*

*H<sub>6</sub>: Perceived quality of private-label products indirectly effects a) brand image through trust, b) purchase intention through trust and brand image, and c) purchase intention through trust d) purchase intention through brand image.*

*H<sub>7</sub>: Trust in private-label products indirectly effects purchase intention through brand image.*



**Figure 1: The Research Model**

## **Methodology**

The data obtained within the scope of the research was collected through a survey. An online survey form was created for the data collected through the convenience sampling and was sent to the participants via e-mail, social media, etc. In the first part of the survey form, the participants were informed about the nature of the private-label products, visuals of the private-label products were given, and then they were asked how often they purchased/consumed these products. A 5-point Likert-type scale (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither Agree, Nor Disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree) was used for brand awareness, trust, perceived quality, brand image, and purchase intention scales within the scope of the study. Data were collected within the scope of the research between February and June 2023. A total of 335 surveys were collected, and after the incorrect answers given to the control questions were removed, 238 data were used for analysis.

For the brand awareness scale (5 items) used in the research, the study of Baldauf et al. (2003) was used, for the trust scale (5 items) and perceived quality scale (4 items) the study of Ahmed et al. (2014), for the brand image scale (4 items) the study of Chang and Chieng (2006) and for the purchase intention scale (3 items) the study of Hung et al. (2011) was used.

## **Research Findings**

### **Participants' demographic characteristics**

The demographic analysis of the participants reveals that 55.5% were female, while 44.5% were male. In terms of marital status, 49.2% of the participants were married, while 50.8% were single. Regarding educational attainment, the largest group comprised participants with a bachelor's degree (48.7%), followed by high school graduates (23.5%), and those with a master's degree (11.3%), while only 0.8% of participants held a doctorate. The average income of the respondents was calculated at approximately 11,802.52 TL, with the average age being 33.78

years. Furthermore, 58% of the participants were actively employed or self-employed, while 23.9% were either unemployed or still pursuing their education. Additionally, 18% of the respondents identified themselves as housewives, retirees, or belonged to other categories. These findings provide a comprehensive overview of the participants' demographic characteristics, contributing valuable insights to the study.

### **Participants' attitudes toward purchasing private-label products**

When examining the frequency of participants purchasing private-label products, 45% of respondents frequently buy these items, while 24.8% buy them occasionally. On the other hand, a smaller percentage of participants, 13.4%, always purchase private-label products, and only 1.7% reported that they never buy these products. These results highlight that private-label products hold a significant place in consumer behavior, being preferred by a wide range of users with varying degrees of frequency.

### **Analysis of the measurement model**

The measurement model was analyzed using Smart PLS 4. Initially, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the factor structure. Subsequently, key validity and reliability metrics such as Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), and the Fornell-Larcker criterion were calculated to evaluate the model's reliability and validity comprehensively.

**Table 1: Confirmatory factor analysis**

Items	Awareness	Trust	Quality	Intention	Image
AWA1	0.823				
AWA2	0.886				
AWA3	0.837				
AWA4	0.753				
AWA5	0.755				
TRUST1		0.909			
TRUST2		0.931			
TRUST3		0.856			
TRUST4		0.780			
TRUST5		0.898			
QUAL1			0.886		
QUAL2			0.901		
QUAL3			0.789		
QUAL4			0.805		
INT1				0.942	
INT2				0.915	
INT3				0.933	
IMAGE1					0.768
IMAGE2					0.855
IMAGE3					0.840
IMAGE4					0.760

AWA: Brand Awareness, TRUST: Consumer Trust, QUAL: Perceived Quality, INT: Purchase Intention, IMAGE: Brand Image

The factor loadings for each item across the constructs of Awareness, Trust, Quality, Intention, and Image are reported. All factor loadings exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating strong indicator reliability for each item in their respective constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Specifically, awareness items show loadings between 0.753 and 0.886, trust items range from 0.780 to 0.931, quality items range from 0.789 to 0.901, intention items range from 0.915 to 0.942, and image items range from 0.760 to 0.855. These results suggest that the constructs are well-represented by their respective indicators.

At this stage, the values for Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were calculated. The results obtained are presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Alpha, CR, and AVE**

Variables	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
Awareness	0.871	0.882	0.660
Trust	0.924	0.929	0.769
Quality	0.868	0.873	0.717
Intention	0.923	0.934	0.865
Image	0.821	0.829	0.651

$\alpha$ : Cronbach's alpha, CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted

The factor loadings table and the table for Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE are evaluated for two different aspects. First, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) are calculated to assess reliability, and both values are expected to exceed 0.70. AVE and factor loadings are used for convergent validity. AVE values are expected to be above 0.50, while factor loadings in PLS analyses should ideally exceed 0.70. Upon examining these two criteria, it is observed that both the AVE values and factor loadings meet the desired thresholds (Hair et al., 2010). Furthermore, convergent validity is confirmed, as the constructs demonstrate sufficient variance shared with their respective indicators.

**Table 3: HTMT Ratio**

Variables	Awareness	Trust	Quality	Intention	Image
Awareness					
Trust	0.326				
Quality	0.186	0.735			
Intention	0.314	0.571	0.460		
Image	0.223	0.747	0.766	0.656	

**Table 4: Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

Variables	Awareness	Trust	Quality	Intention	Image
Awareness	<b>0.813</b>				
Trust	0.301	<b>0.877</b>			
Quality	0.165	0.662	<b>0.847</b>		
Intention	0.293	0.545	0.420	<b>0.930</b>	
Image	0.195	0.663	0.649	0.581	<b>0.807</b>

The HTMT ratio and the Fornell-Larcker criterion are employed to assess discriminant validity. When evaluating the HTMT table, the correlation values within the matrix should not exceed the threshold of 0.85 (Hair et al., 2010). As for the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the values on the diagonal, which are typically bolded, must be higher than the corresponding correlation values in the matrix (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Based on these analyses, we can confidently conclude that the scales demonstrate adequate discriminant validity, ensuring that each construct is distinct from the others.

### Testing of the Structural Model

The structural model was analyzed using the Smart PLS4 software. Initially, the direct effects were examined, followed by the testing of the indirect effects present in the model.

In Smart PLS analysis, before testing the structural model, it is essential to evaluate the model's significance by calculating SRMR, R-Square, and F-Square values (Hair et al., 2010). Additionally, Cohen's (1988) effect size interpretations are used to understand the strength of relationships between variables.

First, the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) value is 0.069, which indicates a good model fit. According to Hair et al. (2010), an SRMR value below 0.08 suggests acceptable model fit. This result indicates that the difference between observed and predicted correlations is at an acceptable level, confirming the model's adequacy.

The R-Square values indicate the variance explained by the independent variables for each dependent variable. For Trust, the R-Square is 0.476, meaning the model explains 47.6% of the variance in the trust variable. For Intention, the R-Square is 0.402, indicating that 40.2% of the variance is explained by the model. For Image, the R-Square is 0.512, meaning 51.2% of the variance is accounted for by the model. These values suggest a reasonably strong predictive power of the model (Hair et al., 2010).

Regarding F-Square values, Cohen (1988) classifies effect sizes as small (0.02), medium (0.15), and large (0.35). According to these criteria, we can interpret the F-Square values in the model. The effect of Awareness on trust is 0.072, representing a small effect size. Similarly, awareness has a small effect on intention, with an F-Square of 0.030. The Trust variable has a small effect on intention (0.045) and a medium effect on image (0.177), showing that trust plays a significant role, particularly in influencing the image. The Quality variable has a large effect on trust, with an F-Square of 0.736, indicating a substantial impact. According to Cohen's criteria, this is a strong effect, showing that quality has a significant role in influencing trust. However, the effect of quality on intention is minimal (0.001), while its effect on image is moderate (0.162). Finally, the Image variable has a small-to-medium effect on intention, with an F-Square of 0.142.

Overall, these analyses suggest that the model is highly significant and valid. The SRMR value confirms a good model fit, and the R-Square and F-Square values, evaluated according to Cohen's effect size criteria, indicate that the independent variables have significant and meaningful effects on the dependent variables (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2010).

**Table 5: Testing of the Structural Model - Direct Effects**

Relationships between Variables	Std. Beta	Sample Mean	Std. Dev.	T	P	Hypothesis	Result
Awareness -> Trust	0.197	0.200	0.059	3.314	0.001	<b>H<sub>1a</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Awareness -> Image	0.013	0.016	0.049	0.264	0.792	H <sub>1b</sub>	Reject
Awareness -> Intention	0.141	0.143	0.057	2.453	0.014	<b>H<sub>1c</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Quality -> Trust	0.630	0.629	0.049	12.790	0.001	<b>H<sub>2a</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Quality -> Image	0.375	0.378	0.067	5.590	0.001	<b>H<sub>2b</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Quality -> Intention	-0.036	-0.037	0.059	0.614	0.540	H <sub>2c</sub>	Reject
Trust -> Image	0.406	0.403	0.064	6.377	0.001	<b>H<sub>3a</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Trust -> Intention	0.246	0.243	0.075	3.260	0.001	<b>H<sub>3b</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Image -> Intention	0.418	0.420	0.063	6.667	0.001	<b>H<sub>4</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>

H<sub>1</sub> hypothesized that awareness positively affects trust, image, and purchase intention toward private-label products. The results indicate that awareness positively influences trust ( $\beta = 0.197$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), confirming H<sub>1a</sub>. However, awareness does not have a significant impact on brand image ( $\beta = 0.013$ ,  $p = 0.792$ ), leading to the rejection of H<sub>1b</sub>. Despite this, awareness has a positive effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.141$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ), supporting H<sub>1c</sub>.

H<sub>2</sub> proposed that quality positively affects trust, image, and purchase intention. The findings show that quality has a strong positive influence on trust ( $\beta = 0.630$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and image ( $\beta = 0.375$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), confirming H<sub>2a</sub> and H<sub>2b</sub>. However, quality does not significantly impact purchase intention ( $\beta = -0.036$ ,  $p = 0.540$ ), resulting in the rejection of H<sub>2c</sub>.

H<sub>3</sub> suggested that trust positively influences both brand image and purchase intention. The analysis confirms that trust has a significant positive impact on brand image ( $\beta = 0.406$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.246$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), supporting both H<sub>3a</sub> and H<sub>3b</sub>.

Finally, H<sub>4</sub> proposed that brand image positively affects purchase intention. The results strongly support this hypothesis, as image has a significant positive effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.418$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ).



**Table 6: Testing of the Structural Model - Indirect Effects**

Relationships between Variables	Std. Beta	Sample Mean	Std. Dev.	T	P	Hypothesis	Result
Awareness -> Trust -> Image	0.080	0.081	0.029	2.748	0.006	<b>H<sub>5a</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Awareness -> Trust -> Image -> Intention	0.033	0.034	0.013	2.486	0.013	<b>H<sub>5b</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Awareness -> Trust -> Intention	0.048	0.049	0.022	2.224	0.026	<b>H<sub>5c</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Awareness -> Image -> Intention	0.005	0.007	0.021	0.259	0.796	H <sub>5d</sub>	Reject
Quality -> Trust -> Image	0.256	0.253	0.041	6.208	0.001	<b>H<sub>6a</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Quality -> Trust -> Image -> Intention	0.107	0.106	0.023	4.550	0.001	<b>H<sub>6b</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Quality -> Trust -> Intention	0.155	0.152	0.048	3.211	0.001	<b>H<sub>6c</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Quality -> Image -> Intention	0.157	0.159	0.039	3.969	0.001	<b>H<sub>6d</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>
Trust -> Image -> Intention	0.170	0.169	0.036	4.657	0.001	<b>H<sub>7</sub></b>	<b>Accept</b>

The analysis of indirect effects in the structural model reveals several significant pathways between variables. First, awareness demonstrated a positive indirect effect on image via trust ( $\beta = 0.080$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ), lending support to H<sub>5a</sub>. Awareness was found to impact intention indirectly through both trust and image ( $\beta = 0.033$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ), supporting H<sub>5b</sub> in this pathway. Awareness was found to positively influence intention through trust ( $\beta = 0.048$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ), confirming the indirect relationship proposed in H<sub>5c</sub>. However, awareness did not demonstrate a significant indirect effect on intention through image ( $\beta = 0.005$ ,  $p = 0.796$ ), leading to the rejection of H<sub>5d</sub> in this context.

The indirect effect of quality on image through trust ( $\beta = 0.256$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) was also significant, supporting H<sub>6a</sub>. Quality had a significant indirect effect on intention through both trust and image ( $\beta = 0.107$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), validating H<sub>6b</sub>. Furthermore, quality also exhibited a direct indirect effect on intention through trust alone ( $\beta = 0.155$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), affirming H<sub>6c</sub>. Similarly, quality showed a significant indirect effect on intention through image ( $\beta = 0.157$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), confirming H<sub>6d</sub>.

Finally, trust was shown to affect intention indirectly through image ( $\beta = 0.170$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), supporting H<sub>7</sub>.

## Conclusion and Suggestions

This study aimed to examine the factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions toward private-label products, specifically focusing on the roles of brand awareness, perceived quality, trust, and brand image. The research investigated both the direct and indirect effects of these variables on purchase intention, using the Turkish retail market as the context. By analyzing these relationships, the study provides insights into the key drivers behind consumer preferences for private-label brands, which have increasingly become a competitive force against national brands.

The participants' attitudes toward private-label products indicated a general acceptance of these products, with 45% frequently purchasing private-label items and 24.8% buying them occasionally. A smaller percentage, 13.4%, always buys private-label products, while only 1.7% reported never purchasing them. These figures highlight the significant role that private-label products play in consumer behavior, showing that they are widely accepted and integrated into consumers' purchasing habits.

While brand awareness positively affects trust and purchase intention for private label products, it has no effect on brand image. This suggests that consumers who are more familiar with private-label products tend to trust them more, likely because awareness creates a sense of reliability or comfort with the product. Retailers should focus on increasing awareness through marketing and promotion to build trust with consumers. Brand awareness did not significantly impact brand image. This indicates that simply being aware of a private-label product does not automatically lead to a positive perception of its image. Marketers need to do more than just raise awareness; they should ensure that awareness is tied to positive attributes like quality or reliability to influence brand image. Brand awareness positively influenced purchase intention. Consumers familiar with private-label products are more likely to consider purchasing them, confirming the importance of visibility in the market. Investing in brand visibility and awareness campaigns can effectively drive sales for private-label products.

Perceived quality positively affects trust and brand image, but not purchase intention. Perceived quality had a strong positive impact on trust. This result highlights that when consumers believe a private-label product is of high quality, their trust in the brand increases significantly. Retailers should prioritize maintaining and communicating high product quality to build and sustain trust. Quality positively affects brand image. This suggests that high-quality perceptions lead to a more favorable brand image. Focusing on product quality can help improve the overall perception of the private-label brand, making it a strong competitor to national brands. Quality did not significantly impact purchase intention. This suggests that while quality may build trust and improve brand image, it does not directly translate into an intention to purchase unless other factors like trust are present. Quality alone is not enough to drive purchases; it needs to be paired with trust and positive brand image.

Trust in private-label products positively influences brand image and purchase intention. Trust significantly improved brand image. When consumers trust a private-label product, they are more likely to have a positive perception of its brand. Building trust with consumers is crucial for enhancing the reputation of private-label products. Trust positively influenced purchase intention. This confirms that trust is a key driver of purchase decisions for private-label products. Retailers should focus on building consumer trust to increase the likelihood of purchase, especially for products competing against well-known national brands.

Brand image positively affects purchase intention. A positive brand image significantly increases the likelihood of consumers choosing private-label products. A strong and positive brand image is essential for motivating consumers to choose private-label products over competing national brands.

Awareness positively influenced brand image through trust. This indicates that awareness can enhance brand image if it is paired with consumer trust. Trust-building efforts should be integrated with awareness campaigns to improve brand image. Awareness influenced purchase intention through trust and brand image. This means that awareness can

lead to purchase intention if trust and a positive brand image are in place. Retailers should not only focus on awareness but also ensure that it is supported by trust and a strong brand image to drive sales. Awareness did not significantly affect purchase intention through brand image alone. This suggests that trust is a necessary factor in converting awareness into purchase intention. Building trust is critical in moving from awareness to actual purchasing behavior.

Quality positively affects brand image through trust. This highlights the mediating role of trust in the relationship between quality and brand image. Retailers should leverage high-quality perceptions to build trust, which will, in turn, improve brand image. Quality affected purchase intention through both trust and brand image. This suggests that both trust and brand image are essential mediators in the relationship between quality and purchase intention. Implication: High-quality perceptions must be paired with efforts to build trust and improve brand image to fully realize their impact on purchase intention.

Trust influences purchase intention indirectly through brand image, and this hypothesis was supported. Trust strengthens brand image, which in turn increases purchase intention. Retailers should focus on trust-building as a strategy to enhance brand image and ultimately drive purchase intention.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the factors that influence consumers' purchase intentions toward private-label products, specifically in the Turkish retail market. The results confirm the importance of brand awareness, perceived quality, trust, and brand image as key drivers of purchase intention, aligning with the existing literature on private-label brands. This study also contributes to the growing body of knowledge by exploring the direct and indirect effects of these variables on consumer behavior.

The role of brand awareness in shaping consumer trust and purchase intention was confirmed, with significant results for both relationships.

These findings are consistent with the work of Beneke and Carter (2015), who emphasized that awareness plays a critical role in establishing trust, which in turn influences purchase behavior. The fact that brand awareness did not have a significant direct impact on brand image suggests that while awareness is important, it does not automatically translate into a positive perception of the brand. This is in line with DelVecchio (2001), who pointed out that awareness alone is not sufficient to shape favorable consumer attitudes toward private-label products. Therefore, retailers must not only focus on increasing visibility but also ensure that this awareness is linked to positive attributes such as quality and reliability.

The findings related to perceived quality further reinforce its crucial role in building trust and enhancing brand image. As suggested by Zeithaml (1988) and confirmed in this study, perceived quality remains a fundamental factor that shapes consumer perceptions of product excellence. The strong positive effect of perceived quality on trust aligns with the findings of Beneke (2010), who argued that high-quality perceptions are necessary to overcome initial skepticism about private-label products. Furthermore, the positive impact of perceived quality on brand image echoes the conclusions of Keller (1993) and Aaker (1991), who both emphasized the importance of quality in creating a strong, favorable brand image. However, the lack of a direct relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention suggests that other mediating factors, such as trust and brand image, play a critical role in translating quality perceptions into actual buying behavior. This underscores the importance of fostering trust and building a positive brand image, as highlighted by Cop and Turkoglu (2008).

The findings regarding trust were particularly significant, confirming its role as a central mediator in the relationships between both brand awareness and perceived quality, and brand image and purchase intention. This aligns with the Commitment-Trust Theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), which posits that trust is essential in forming strong, loyal consumer-brand relationships. In the context of private-label products, trust is especially important due to the perceived risk as-

sociated with lower-priced alternatives to national brands, as noted by DelVecchio (2001). The positive relationship between trust and purchase intention also supports the findings of Bertoli et al. (2020), who demonstrated that trust increases the likelihood of repeat purchases. Therefore, building trust should be a priority for private-label brand managers seeking to enhance customer loyalty and purchase intention.

The significant impact of brand image on purchase intention underscores the importance of cultivating a strong and positive image for private-label brands. These findings are consistent with the conclusions of Diallo (2012) and Porral and Lang (2015), who found that a favorable brand image is crucial in driving consumer purchase decisions, especially for private-label products. The role of brand image as a mediator between trust and purchase intention, as well as between perceived quality and purchase intention, highlights the importance of creating and maintaining a consistent brand image that resonates with consumers.

Moreover, the indirect effects observed in this study emphasize the complex nature of the relationships between awareness, quality, trust, brand image, and purchase intention. The mediating roles of trust and brand image suggest that retailers need to adopt a more holistic approach when designing their marketing strategies for private-label products. Simply increasing awareness or improving quality is not enough; these efforts must be supported by trust-building initiatives and efforts to improve brand perception.

In conclusion, the results of this study align with the existing literature on private-label products and provide empirical evidence that awareness, perceived quality, trust, and brand image are all crucial in shaping consumer behavior. Retailers aiming to strengthen their private-label brands should focus on these factors, particularly on building trust and improving brand image, to enhance consumer purchase intentions. The findings offer practical implications for private-label marketers, particularly in emerging markets like Turkey, where private-label brands are growing but still face challenges from well-established national brands.

## **Future Research**

While this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer purchase intentions toward private-label products, several areas remain open for further investigation. Future research could expand upon the current findings by exploring additional variables that may impact consumer behavior, such as price sensitivity, social influence, or cultural factors. Incorporating these variables would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding private-label product purchasing.

Additionally, future studies could explore the long-term effects of trust and brand image on customer loyalty and repurchase intentions. While this study focused primarily on purchase intention, understanding whether trust and a positive brand image lead to sustained customer loyalty could offer deeper insights for retailers and marketers looking to build long-term relationships with consumers.

Cross-cultural comparisons would also be valuable in extending the findings of this study. As this research focused on the Turkish retail market, future studies could examine how these relationships differ across different countries or regions, especially in more developed or mature markets where private-label brands have an even stronger presence. This would help determine whether the dynamics observed in this study are specific to emerging markets or more universal in nature.

Lastly, future research could benefit from using longitudinal study designs to assess how perceptions of private-label products evolve over time. As consumer attitudes and market conditions change, it would be insightful to understand how factors like trust, brand image, and perceived quality shift and affect purchasing behavior in the long run.

## **Limitations**

Despite the valuable contributions of this study, it is not without limitations. First, the research was conducted in the context of the Turkish retail market, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other

cultural or economic contexts. Consumer behavior toward private-label products can vary significantly across different regions and markets, especially between emerging and developed economies. Future research could address this by conducting comparative studies in different countries.

Another limitation lies in the use of cross-sectional data, which captures consumer attitudes at a single point in time. This approach does not allow for an examination of how consumer perceptions may change over time, particularly in response to changes in market conditions or brand strategies. A longitudinal study would provide a more dynamic understanding of how factors such as trust and brand image evolve and influence purchase intentions over time.

Additionally, the study primarily focused on four key factors-brand awareness, perceived quality, trust, and brand image. While these are important determinants of purchase intention, other factors such as price, product availability, and personal values were not considered in this research. These factors could provide a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in future studies.

Finally, the study used self-reported survey data, which may be subject to social desirability bias or response bias, where participants might provide answers they believe are more socially acceptable rather than reflecting their true behavior. Future studies could benefit from combining survey data with actual purchasing behavior to minimize this limitation.

### **Research and Publication Ethics Statement**

This research was carried out in accordance with the rules of scientific research and publication ethics.

### **Authors' Contribution Rates to The Article**

The authors contributed equally to the study.

### **Statement of Interest**

This research is not subject to any conflict of interest.



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**Geniřletilmiř Özet****Marka Farkındalıęı, Algılanan Kalite, Güven ve Marka İmajı: Özel Markalı Ürünler İin Tüketici Satın Alma Niyetlerinin Ortaya ıkarılması**

Bu alıřmada, Türkiye’de tüketicilerin sıklıkla tercih ettięi, ok sayıda řubeleri bulunan zincir marketlerin kendi markaları olarak bilinen, market markalı, bir bařka deyiřle özel markalı ürünlere yönelik tüketici tutumlarının ortaya ıkarılması amalanmaktadır. Bu ama doęrultusunda, marka farkındalıęı, tüketici güveni, algılanan kalite, marka imajı ve satın alma niyeti deęiřkenleri arasındaki iliřkiler incelenmiřtir. Ülkemizde, özellikle daha ekonomik olarak algılanan bu markalar birok kiři tarafından tercih edilmektedir. Dolayısıyla, bu markalara yönelik tüketicilerin algı ve tutumları büyük önem arz etmektedir.

Arařtırma kapsamında, tüketicilerden veri toplamak iin online olarak hazırlanan anket formu katılımcılara sosyal medya, e-mail vb. yollarla ulařtırılmıřtır. alıřmada öncelikle, katılımcılar iin, market markalı ürünlerin tanımı yapılmıř ve bu markaların görselleri sunulmuřtur. Ayrıca, arařtırmada kullanılan marka farkındalıęı, güven, algılanan kalite, marka imajı ve satın alma niyeti ölekleri iin 5’li Likert tipi ölek (1-Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum, 2-Katılmıyorum, 3-Ne Katılıyorum, Ne Katılmıyorum, 4-Katılıyorum, 5-Kesinlikle Katılıyorum) kullanılmıřtır. Elde edilen veriler SPSS ve Smart PLS4 programları kullanılarak analiz edilmiřtir.

Elde edilen sonuçlara göre, marka farkındalıęı güveni ve satın alma niyetini anlamlı ve pozitif řekilde etkilerken, marka imajı üzerinde herhangi bir etkisi bulunmamaktadır. Algılanan kalitenin güven ve marka imajı üzerinde etkisi varken, satın alma niyeti üzerinde etkisi bulunmamaktadır. Güven ise, marka imajını ve satın alma niyetini anlamlı ve pozitif bir řekilde etkilemektedir. Marka imajının ise, satın alma niyeti üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif etkisi olduęu ulařılan sonuçlar arasındadır. Dolaylı etki analizleri sonuçlarına göre, marka farkındalıęının imaj üzerindeki etkisinde güvenin; satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisinde ise güven ve imajın birlikte aracı etkisi bulunmaktadır. Ancak, marka farkındalıęının satın alma niyeti üzerinde imajın tek bařına bir aracı etkisi bulunmamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, algılanan kalitenin marka imajı üzerindeki etkisinde de güvenin aracı etkisi bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca, algılanan kalitenin satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisinde güven ve marka imajının aracı etkisi bulunmaktadır. Son olarak, güvenin satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisinde marka imajının aracı etkisi bulunmaktadır.

Bu sonuçlara göre, sektör temsilcilerine ve konuyla ilgili araştırma yapacak akademisyenlere çeşitli önerilerde bulunmak mümkündür. Bu alanda faaliyet gösteren temsilciler, tüketicilerin algı ve tutumlarını göz önünde bulundurarak faaliyetlerine yön verebilirler ve satın alma niyetinin gelişmesi için çalışmalar yürütebilirler. Akademik olarak ise, algı ve tutumların demografik değişkenler açısından farklılık gösterip göstermediği, kültürler arasında bu markalara yönelik tutumlar arasında farklılık olup olmadığı araştırılabilir.