

**PERCEPTION OF THE BRAND PERSONALITY OF A SUPERMARKET BRAND: THE
CASE OF BİM DISCOUNT SUPERMARKET****Assoc. Prof. Yıldırım YILDIRIM (Ph.D.)** **ABSTRACT**

Brand personality refers to attributing human characteristics to a brand and assigning human traits to it. Through brand personality, businesses differentiate themselves and achieve a more favourable positioning in consumers' minds compared to their competitors, thereby gaining a competitive advantage. This study investigates the brand personality of BİM supermarket, one of Turkey's most important discount supermarket chains, and aims to determine whether consumers' perceptions of this brand personality differ according to their shopping habits. A survey was conducted with 1,000 participants selected through systematic sampling. The results reveal that the BİM supermarket brand is predominantly associated with the brand personality dimensions of sincerity, competence, and capability. Furthermore, brand personality perceptions were found to vary according to age, gender, income, and occupation. Women perceived the BİM brand as more sincere, exciting, and feminine compared to men, while consumers aged 18–29 perceived the brand as more original and competent than those over 40. Significant differences were also identified between consumers' frequency of visiting grocery stores and supermarkets and their perceptions of brand personality.

Keywords: Brand Personality, Brand, Supermarket, Retailing, BİM.

JEL Code: M1, M10, M30, M31.

1. INTRODUCTION

Supermarkets are a type of retail outlet that offer self-service, operate with numerous branches and a large workforce, provide a wide variety of products, and encourage consumption through spacious shopping aisles based on shelf arrangements. BİM supermarket, together with A101 and ŞOK, is positioned within an oligopolistic market among discount supermarkets and they are direct competitors. Supermarkets within the same segment need strategies such as brand personality in order to attract more customers, increase their share of wallet, and differentiate themselves in terms of image. Compared to other supermarkets, BİM discount supermarket is known to stand out and rank first in terms of branch numbers, market penetration, revenue, and profitability (www.tr.euronews.com, Worldfood Istanbul,

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2025). Supermarkets are also considered to promote a certain lifestyle and are seen as major centres of convenient shopping, consumer culture, and hedonic shopping.

This study contributes to the relatively limited body of research on brand personality in relation to discount supermarkets and expands the literature in this field. Although studies exist on reasons for preferring discount supermarkets, consumers' motivations to shop at these outlets, and comparisons of different supermarkets from various perspectives, the lack of research on the brand personality of supermarkets represents a significant gap in the literature. In order to fill this gap, the present study investigates the brand personality of the BİM supermarket brand and aims to determine whether this brand personality differs according to consumers' shopping habits—specifically, whether they shop at supermarkets or neighbourhood grocery stores. The results of the study provide important insights for retail managers and brand professionals.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section explains the concept of brand personality and focuses on the antecedents of brand personality as well as its effects on consumer behavior. In addition, the results of previous studies that examined the relationship between supermarkets and brand personality are summarized.

2.1. Brand Personality

Offering only low prices or promotions is not sufficient to attract customers and compete with other businesses. How a retailer positions itself in the consumer's mind to achieve differentiation is important. Atıgan (2019) states that the concept of brand personality is effective in establishing a prominent position in the consumer's mind in industries where there are no significant differences among product features. Kuruoğlu (2016) emphasizes that brand personality is a good tool for identity differentiation, creating brand value, and forming better customer perceptions. Most modern retailers try to differentiate their supermarket chains by giving them a unique brand personality (Zentes, Morschett and Schramm-Klein, 2008).

A retail brand's personality can be formed in many ways. User image, visual product presentation, lighting, in-store scent, background music, the number and image of private-label products, store atmosphere, employees, advertisements, and price are some of these factors. Retailers that implement brand personality in their stores can enhance perceptions of price/quality, strengthen customer relationships, and differentiate themselves distinctively from competitors (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). In the retail sector, brand personality has become increasingly important as supermarket chains expand globally. Leading retail companies such as Wal-Mart, Tesco, Migros, and Carrefour have developed unique images and brand personalities to distinguish their retail chains from competitors (Wanninayake and Chovancová, 2012b).

Brand personality is defined as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997) and plays an important role in shaping brand identity. Attributing human characteristics to a commercial object or a store can make consumers’ perceptions of that object/store more concrete. Moreover, retail brand personality attracts more consumers and is more successful in preference and customer retention when it aligns with the personality of the target audience. In other words, when a brand or store’s personality is perceived by consumers as consistent with their real or ideal self, it influences consumer behavior (Sirgy, 2018). Consumers tend to purchase brands whose personality traits are close to their self-image (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). Put differently, consumers prefer brands with personality traits consistent with their own personalities as a way of self-expression (Maehle and Rotem, 2010; Harris and Fleming, 2005; Phau and Lau, 2001; Aaker, 1999). In this context, it can be said that brand personality has a positive effect on purchasing behavior (Atıgan, 2019). Brand personality actually provides a concrete reason for purchase and is used as a metaphor (Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido, 2001). When people choose among brands, they attribute lasting human characteristics to brands and select those that best match themselves and their personality. For example, Aksoy and Özsoyer (2007) showed that 70% of the variation in consumer brand preferences can be explained by brand personality, while de Chernatony (2006) empirically demonstrated that consumers make brand choices based on their personality dimensions.

Aaker’s “brand personality scale” consists of five dimensions and a total of fifteen traits. Developed based on the Big Five human personality traits, this scale includes the dimensions of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Aaker’s brand personality scale has been used in many studies and is considered the only brand personality scale that has been comprehensively examined in the academic field (Glynn and Widjaja, 2015; Wanninayake and Chovancová, 2012b).

2.2. Previous Studies Investigating the Brand Personality of Supermarkets

Creating a brand personality in supermarkets is seen as a key factor for establishing a loyal customer base (Anselmsson and Johansson, 2014; Wanninayake and Chovancová, 2012a) and for developing store loyalty (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Ouwersloot and Tudorica (2001) also emphasized that businesses should use brand personality as a strategic tool to satisfy customers and foster brand loyalty.

In a study investigating the effect of brand personality on customer choice decisions in supermarkets in Sri Lanka, survey data were collected from 240 customers visiting three supermarkets in Colombo: Cargills, Keels, and Arpico. The results showed a positive relationship between supermarket brand personality and customer choice decisions. Moreover, sincerity and excitement were found to be the most important dimensions of brand personality (Wanninayake and Chovancová, 2012a). In another study by the same authors conducted in two different countries, it was found that brand

personality influences customers' behavioral intentions. The study highlighted the importance of understanding which aspects of supermarket brands can trigger greater customer responses and emphasized that retailers in both countries should consider innovative ways to position their brands (Wanninayake and Chovancová, 2012b).

In a study measuring consumers' perceptions of the quality of a private-label product offered in two different supermarkets, the brand personality scale was used, and the results showed that the trust and sincerity dimensions significantly influenced perceived quality of private-label products (Glynn and Widjaja, 2015).

Maehle and Sheneor (2010) investigated how Aaker's brand personality dimensions vary across supermarkets and how these dimensions align with human personality. The study found that people with different personalities are drawn to and adopt different brand personalities. For instance, task-oriented individuals did not favor the excitement dimension, whereas more relationally oriented individuals preferred the sincerity dimension. Furthermore, each supermarket showed high averages in different brand personality dimensions. Accordingly, some supermarket brands scored higher than others in sincerity, competence, excitement, and sophistication, while there was no difference among brands in the ruggedness dimension.

Willems and Swinnen (2011), in their store personality research across different discount stores, found that store personality is closely related to self-congruence. Accordingly, store personality varies depending on different retail formats, consumer segments, and even the different purchasing situations of the same customer. In another study, the effects of retail brand personality and self-congruence on store loyalty were examined, and it was found that both brand personality and self-congruence significantly affect loyalty (Das, 2014).

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology section discusses the research purpose, data collection tools, research questions, and hypotheses. In a scientific study, methodology is the section that systematically and transparently explains how the research is conducted. This section directly affects the reliability and validity of the study (Kothari, 2004). Reducing subjectivity, maintaining methodological consistency, highlighting the innovative aspects of the research, and demonstrating its contribution to the literature depend on following a proper methodology. Additionally, methodology provides detailed explanations of the methods used, data collection tools, sample, and analysis processes, enabling other researchers to replicate the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Neuman, 2014). The study includes research questions instead of hypotheses. The questions addressed in the study are explained in the "data collection tools and sample" section of the article.

3.1. Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to reveal the brand personality of BİM, a discount supermarket operating in Türkiye, and to determine whether brand personality differs according to demographic characteristics and shopping habits. Research on discount stores in the literature is much more limited compared to studies on other types of retailers (Yıldırım and Kurtuluş, 2008; Koç and Dölekoğlu, 1998). Therefore, the results of this study are important for practitioners and aim to contribute to the limited literature in this area.

3.2. Significance of the Study

Although numerous scientific studies have been conducted on brand personality, there has been no research in Turkish on supermarket brand personality. In the literature, supermarket brand personality is referred to as store brand personality, and researchers frequently study it in relation to brand trust, brand loyalty, brand image, brand awareness, brand love, and store atmosphere. Consequently, this study is considered one of the pioneering studies investigating supermarket brand personality and is expected to contribute to Turkish literature.

3.3. Data Collection Tools and Sample

The research was conducted using a face-to-face survey, a quantitative method, and participants were selected through systematic sampling. Numbers 1–10 were written on paper and placed in a bag, and a number was randomly drawn. According to the drawn number, a survey was administered to every n-th customer exiting the BİM supermarket. In this study, the number 4 was drawn, so surveys were administered to the 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, 20th... customers exiting the store. This ensured randomness and eliminated potential survey bias. The research was conducted in nine BİM supermarkets located in Düzce/Akçakoca. There are a total of nine BİM stores in Akçakoca: four in Osmaniye neighbourhood, two in Ayazlı neighbourhood, two in Yalı neighbourhood, one in Hacıyusuflar neighbourhood, and one in Yeni neighbourhood.

The survey was conducted over a three-month period from April 1 to June 30, reaching a sample size of 1,000 participants. No specific day was chosen for data collection, but the days were divided into time slots and the survey was conducted at specific hours. The survey was administered seven days a week, in three different time slots: 10:00–12:00 in the morning, 15:00–17:00 in the afternoon, and 20:00–21:00 in the evening. The survey included demographic questions such as age, gender, and occupation, as well as questions about shopping habits, including frequency of shopping at local grocery stores or supermarkets, and types of needs purchased from supermarkets.

In the final part of the survey, J. Aaker's Brand Personality Scale, consisting of 42 items and 5 sub-dimensions, was used. Although the scale has been criticized for not containing negative items, it

has been widely used in marketing research, and its validity and reliability have been confirmed multiple times.

The main research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. Which brand personality dimensions does BİM Supermarket prominently exhibit?
2. Does BİM Supermarket's brand personality vary according to consumers' demographic characteristics?
3. Does BİM Supermarket's brand personality vary according to consumers' shopping habits?

4. FINDINGS

In this section, the study findings are presented, including descriptive analyses, ANOVA, t-tests, and factor analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive Analyses of Participants

Variables	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Under 18	46	4,6
	18-29	619	61,9
	30-39	168	16,8
	40	167	16,7
	Total	1000	100
Gender	Male	537	53,7
	Female	463	46,3
	Total	1000	100
Monthly Household Income	17.000-34.000	250	25,0
	35.000-52.000	352	35,2
	53.000-70.000	247	24,7
	Above 70.000	151	15,1
	Total	1000	100
Occupation	Public sector	86	8,6
	Private sector	284	28,4
	Other (retired, Housewife, student, unemployed)	630	63,0
	Total	1000	100

Examining the table, it is observed that the majority of participants are aged 18–29, have a monthly income between 20,000–40,000 TL, and are male. In terms of occupation, the “Other” category, consisting of the unemployed, homemakers, and retirees, forms the largest group. The high frequency of this category is due to the inclusion of multiple occupational groups. The second-largest group in terms of occupation is employees working in the private sector.

Table 2. Descriptive Analyses Regarding Supermarket Shopping

Variables	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
Frequency of shopping at BIM Supermarkets	Often	518	58,3
	Occasionally	313	31,3
	Rarely	92	9,2
	Never	12	1,2
	Total	1000	100
Frequency of shopping at Grocery Stores	Often	294	29,4
	Occasionally	399	39,9
	Rarely	243	24,3
	Never	64	6,4
	Total	1000	100
Which one do you prefer?	Local supermarkets	734	73,4
	National supermarkets	266	26,6
	Total	1000	100

Examining the table, it is observed that participants shop at supermarkets frequently, while they shop at local grocery stores occasionally. However, nearly three-quarters of participants prefer local supermarkets, with only 26.6% shopping at national supermarkets.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Items Frequently Purchased from Supermarkets

Variables	Response Options	Frequency	Percentage
What type of products do you usually purchase from supermarkets?	Dry foods/Legumes	838	22,4
	Stationary	251	6,7
	Cleaning products	750	20,0
	Cosmetic/personal care	433	11,6
	Breakfast products	791	21,1
	Deli products	681	18,2
	Total	3744	100

Note: The total exceeds the sample size because multiple responses were allowed.

In the table above, participants were asked which types of products they usually purchase from supermarkets. Since multiple responses could be selected, the total N exceeds the sample size of 1,000. Examining the responses, it is observed that participants most frequently purchase dry food and legumes from supermarkets. This is followed by breakfast products, cleaning products, and deli products, respectively. Stationery, cosmetics, and personal care products are purchased the least.

Table 4. Factor Analysis of the Brand Personality Scale

Dimension	Item	Factor Loading	Explained Variance	Cronbach's Alpha
Sincerity (Eigenvalue =9,250)	Sincere	,776	25,000	0,81
	Honest	,743		
	Realistic	,702		
	Family-oriented	,655		
	Healthy	,595		
	Original	,451		
Competence (Eigenvalue=3,087)	Hardworking	,796	8,345	0,83
	Successful	,769		
	Intelligent	,761		

	Confident	,649		
	Reliable	,553		
Sophistication (Eigenvalue =2,096)	Glamorous	,765	5,664	0,75
	Attractive	,701		
	Upper class	,655		
	Unique	,479		
Feminine (Eigenvalue =1,632)	Gentle	,708	4,411	0,72
	Good looking	,693		
	Outgoing	,569		
	Feminine	,567		
Excitement (Eigenvalue =1,410)	Emotional	,770	3,811	0,74
	Friendly	,730		
	Cheerful	,690		
	Fashionable	,508		
Tough (Eigenvalue =1,278)	Tough	,773	3,453	0,66
	Masculine	,718		
	Strong	,570		
	Western	,463		
Innovative (Eigenvalue =1,178)	Cool	,730	3,184	0,66
	Young	,670		
	Lively	,526		
	Creative	,519		
Original (Eigenvalue =1,076)	Independent	,740	2,908	0,66
	Up-to-date	,612		
	Brave	,567		
Proficiency (Eigenvalue=1,025)	Collaborative	,751	2,769	0,63
	Technical	,662		
Total Explained Variance %59,545				
KMO=0,905>0,60; Cronbach Alfa=0,819 ve Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (X ² = 12897,029; sd=666; p= 0,000)				

A factor analysis was applied to Aaker's five-dimensional Brand Personality Scale, revealing that the factor structure consists of nine sub-dimensions. Some original dimensions split into two, while new dimensions emerged. Accordingly, the first dimension with six items was named Sincerity, second dimension with five items was named Competence, third dimension with four items was named Sophistication, fourth dimension with four items was named Feminine, fifth dimension with four items was named Excitement, sixth dimension with four items was named Tough, seventh dimension with four items was named Innovative, eighth dimension with three items was named Original and the ninth dimension with two items was named Proficiency.

The KMO value of 0.905 indicated suitability for factor analysis, and Bartlett's Test confirmed the adequacy of the sample size. During factor analysis, eigenvalues greater than 1, factor loadings above 0.45, and items loading on only one factor were considered. Varimax rotation was applied. The overall Cronbach's Alpha of 0.81 showed high reliability. Individual dimension reliability values ranged from $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$, indicating satisfactory reliability for each dimension.

Table 5. ANOVA Analysis Determining Differences in Brand Personality According to Frequency of Shopping at Grocery Stores

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	Sd.	F	p	Difference
Sincerity	Frequently	294	3,31	,804	2,618	0,05	2>4
	Occasionally	399	3,36	,727			
	Rarely	243	3,26	,766			
	Never	64	3,09	,985			
Competence	Frequently	294	3,46	,831	2,997	0,03	3>4
	Occasionally	399	3,55	,793			
	Rarely	243	3,60	,737			
	Never	64	3,31	,991			
Proficiency	Frequently	294	3,02	,815	2,753	0,04	1>4
	Occasionally	399	2,99	,771			
	Rarely	243	2,89	,846			
	Never	64	2,75	,971			

An ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine the differences in BİM supermarket's brand personality according to the frequency of shopping at grocery stores. Statistically significant differences were found between brand personality perceptions and grocery shopping frequency. Consumers who shop at grocery stores frequently, occasionally, or rarely perceived BİM supermarket as more sincere, competent, and proficient compared to those who never shop at grocery stores. In other words, the average brand personality ratings of sincerity, competence, and proficiency for consumers who never shop at grocery stores were lower than those for consumers who shop frequently, occasionally, or rarely. There were no significant differences between other brand personality dimensions (sophistication, feminine, excitement, tough, innovative, original, proficiency) and the frequency of shopping at grocery stores.

Table 6. ANOVA Analysis Determining Differences in Brand Personality According to Frequency of Shopping at Supermarkets

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	Sd.	F	p	Difference
Sincerity	Frequently	583	3,29	,806	2,946	0,03	1>4 2>4 3>4
	Occasionally	313	3,34	,739			
	Rarely	92	3,34	,680			
	Never	12	2,68	1,040			
Competence	Frequently	583	3,50	,825	3,423	0,01	1>4 2>4 3>4
	Occasionally	313	3,55	,753			
	Rarely	92	3,62	,818			
	Never	12	2,86	,999			

An ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine the differences in BİM supermarket's brand personality according to the frequency of shopping at supermarkets. Statistically significant differences were found between brand personality perceptions and supermarket shopping frequency. Consumers who shop at supermarkets frequently, occasionally, or rarely perceived BİM supermarket as more sincere and competent, with higher average ratings for these brand personality traits. In contrast, consumers who never shop at supermarkets had lower average ratings for sincerity and competence.

Table 7. t-Test for Determining Differences in Brand Personality According to Gender

	Dimension	Group	N	Mean	Sd.	t	p	Difference
Brand Personality Dimension	Sincerity	Male	537	3,25	,789	-2,231	0,02	2>1
		Female	463	3,36	,766			
	Feminine	Male	537	2,84	,856	-2,492	0,01	2>1
		Female	463	2,97	,826			
	Excitement	Male	537	2,86	,831	-2,343	0,01	2>1
		Female	463	2,98	,824			

A t-Test was conducted to determine whether brand personality perceptions differed by gender, and statistically significant differences were found between men and women. Women perceived BİM supermarket as more sincere, more feminine, and more exciting than men. In other words, the average ratings for sincerity, femininity, and excitement in brand personality were higher among women compared to men.

Table 8. ANOVA Analysis for Determining Differences in Brand Personality by Age

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	Sd.	F	p	Difference
Originality	Under 18	46	3,11	,926	4,020	,007	2>4
	Between 18-29	619	3,26	,926			
	Between 30-39	168	3,07	,998			
	40 and above	167	3,03	,905			
Competence	Under 18	46	2,91	,960	4,217	,006	2>3 2>4
	Between 18-29	619	3,03	,945			
	Between 30-39	168	2,85	,971			
	40 and above	167	2,82	,929			

The ANOVA analysis conducted to determine differences in brand personality by age revealed that the perception of BİM supermarket's brand personality varies with age. Specifically, consumers aged 18–29 perceive the brand as more original and more competent compared to those aged 40 and above. In other words, younger consumers view BİM supermarket as having a more distinctive and capable brand personality.

Table 9. ANOVA Analysis for Determining Differences in Brand Personality by Occupation

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	Sd.	F	p	Difference
Competence	Public sector	86	3,48	,820	5,301	0,005	3>2
	Private sector	284	3,40	,861			
	Other	629	3,58	,775			
Originality	Public sector	86	3,07	,985	2,943	0,05	3>2
	Private sector	284	3,10	,955			
	Other	630	3,23	,838			

An ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine whether brand personality differs according to occupation, and it was found that BİM supermarket's brand personality varies by occupational group. There are significant differences between the "Other" category (unemployed, retired, homemakers, students) and the private sector group. Consumers in the "Other" occupation group perceive BİM supermarket as having higher competence and higher originality compared to consumers working in the private sector. In other words, BİM supermarket is perceived as more competent and more original by consumers in the "Other" occupational group than by those in the private sector. The "Other" occupation group includes housewives, students, retirees, and unemployed individuals.

Table 10. ANOVA Analysis Determining the Difference of Brand Personality by Income

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	Sd.	F	p	Difference
Sincerity	17.000-34.000 TL	250	3,27	,736	4,785	,003	2>4
	35.000-52.000 TL	352	3,42	,761			
	53.000-70.000 TL	247	3,27	,832			
	Above 70.000 TL	151	3,16	,778			
Sophistication	17.000-34.000 TL	250	2,55	,872	4,990	,002	2>4
	35.000-52.000 TL	352	2,66	,865			
	53.000-70.000 TL	247	2,56	,909			3>4
	Above 70.000 TL	151	2,32	,980			
Feminine	17.000-34.000 TL	250	2,99	,817	4,936	,002	1>3
	35.000-52.000 TL	352	2,97	,824			
	53.000-70.000 TL	247	2,75	,826			2>3
	Above 70.000 TL	151	2,82	,929			

Brand personality varies according to consumers' income, and there are statistically significant differences between income and the sincerity, sophistication, and femininity dimensions of brand personality. According to the ANOVA analysis, consumers earning between 35,000–52,000 TL perceive the BİM brand as more sincere and sophisticated than consumers earning over 70,000 TL, while consumers with an income of 17,000–34,000 TL and 35,000–52,000 TL perceive the BİM brand as more feminine compared to those earning 53,000–70,000 TL.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to determine the brand personality of the BİM discount supermarket and to examine whether the brand personality varies according to demographic factors and shopping habits. One of the limitations of this study is that it was conducted solely in BİM supermarkets. In Turkey, other supermarket chains such as A101 and ŞOK also operate in the market. Conducting

multiple comparisons in future studies could be important for developing strategies. Another limitation of the study is the onset of a large-scale boycott movement in Turkey against global brands and the businesses selling them. This boycott may have influenced consumers' evaluations of supermarket personalities. Under normal conditions (without boycott, economic crisis, pandemic, etc.), an assessment of brand personality could yield different results.

The majority of participants are aged 18–29 and belong to the occupational groups of housewives, retirees, students, and unemployed individuals. Gender and income distribution appear to be balanced and similar, meaning that both high-income and low-income consumers shop at the supermarket. When visiting a discount store, one can see both Fiat and BMW cars in the parking lot, indicating that people from all economic segments can shop at discount stores. Price is generally a determining factor for all age groups, and discounts or promotions influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Hamzaev and Akgün, 2025). Nielsen (2016) emphasizes that eight out of ten Portuguese consumers shop at discount stores, try to save on supermarket purchases, and make food shopping decisions primarily based on price. Especially when the price gap between supermarkets increases and the variety of products narrows, the customer share of discount stores doubles compared to supermarkets and hypermarkets. In other words, when people encounter cheaper prices and more variety, they prefer discount stores over supermarkets and hypermarkets (Fornari et al., 2020). Price-value consistency and perceived value have been identified as factors affecting supermarket preference in previous studies (Teller and Gittenberger, 2011; Yeniçeri et al., 2010; Erciş et al., 2008).

Nearly 60% of participants frequently shop at supermarkets. The proportion of those who shop occasionally is 31.3%, while those who never shop at supermarkets account for only 1.2%. The shopping habit at local stores shows a balanced distribution. The largest group is those who shop occasionally at 39.9%, followed by frequent shoppers at 29.4% and rare shoppers at 24.3%. While occasional shoppers dominate at local stores, frequent shoppers dominate at supermarkets. Supermarkets and local stores differ in many aspects, including price levels, product variety, number of staff, proximity to home, location, and number of stores. Sales promotion activities, discounts, discount announcements, gifts, and point-money schemes applied by supermarkets influence consumers (Yıldırım and Aydın, 2012), and it is known that consumers prefer supermarkets offering economic prices (Kuduz and Bürhan, 2020; Uyar and Oralhan, 2019). Perceptions of domestic and international supermarkets may also differ. In a study on BİM and DiaSA supermarkets, DiaSA scored higher in general evaluation, while BİM scored higher in overall satisfaction. Accordingly, consumers evaluated the DiaSA brand more positively and perceived it as more successful than BİM (Yıldırım and Kurtuluş, 2008). This may explain why consumers shop occasionally at local stores but more frequently at supermarkets.

One notable finding of the study is that 73.4% of participants answered “I prefer local supermarkets” to the question “Which do you usually prefer for shopping?” Proximity to home and convenient location are reasons for this preference (Öztürk et al., 2016). Literature also shows

differences in evaluating local and national supermarkets. Consumers perceive local supermarkets as more expensive, while national supermarkets are seen as cheaper, offering higher quality and more variety (Erciş et al., 2008). Furthermore, during the period of this study, the ongoing Palestine-Israel conflict may have triggered a consumer boycott of foreign-origin products and the stores selling them, potentially influencing these results. During boycotts or crises, negative emotions such as anger, resentment, shame, and disgust can affect brand preference and personality perception. Brand personality can be updated based on newly emerging information in addition to existing knowledge. The nature of new information and individual perception allows brand personality to be updated (Hassan and Rahman, 2012). Therefore, a retail brand perceived as cheap, consumer-friendly, and reliable can later be associated with some negative personality traits depending on contextual circumstances.

Participants generally purchase dry goods/legumes, breakfast items, and cleaning products from supermarkets. Stationery and cosmetic/personal care products are the least purchased categories. Food products are the riskiest, while cosmetics are the least risky (Yüce, 2014). Therefore, consumers may prefer to buy risky products from a seller with a strong brand image, positive personality traits, and whom they can interact with (BİM supermarket). Brand personality is an integral part of brand image, and brand image and brand reliability significantly contribute to positive brand evaluation (Loureiro, 2017). Consumers make supermarket choices based on the supermarket's image (Tabak et al., 2005). The emotional dimension of brand image can be more important than the functional dimension; people may value a supermarket's admirable and distinctive personality above all else (Loureiro, 2017).

In the study, Aaker's (1997) five-dimensional brand personality scale was used, and in this study, the scale resulted in nine dimensions. Some dimensions split into sub-dimensions and new sub-dimensions were formed. The resulting dimensions are named sincerity, competence, sophisticated, feminine, excitement, tough, innovative, original, and proficiency. Participants perceived BİM's brand personality as sincere, competent, and sophisticated. Although traditional supermarkets outperform discount markets in many areas, some studies highlight that discount markets stand out in terms of personality dimensions such as trust, sincerity, and integrity, as well as accessibility and product variety (Duh and Pwaka, 2023; Willems, 2022; Anselmsson and Johansson, 2014).

ANOVA analysis conducted to examine whether brand personality varies according to shopping habits at local stores found that consumers who shop frequently, occasionally, or rarely at local stores perceive BİM supermarket as more competent, sincere, and capable than those who never shop there. The smaller product variety, smaller space, fewer staff, and higher prices at local stores compared to supermarkets may lead consumers to perceive BİM as sincere, competent, and capable. Price, service quality, store atmosphere, and product variety are among the most influential factors in supermarket preference (Hamzaev and Akgün, 2025; Uyar and Oralhan, 2019; Avcılar and Yakut, 2016; Tabak et al., 2005). A similar study found that perceived value is the most dominant factor affecting retail brand

loyalty, meaning consumers seek advantages in price and want the costs they endure to be lower than the benefits they gain (Dwivedi et al., 2012).

ANOVA analysis examining whether brand personality varies by supermarket shopping frequency showed that consumers who shop frequently, occasionally, or rarely at supermarkets perceive BİM as more sincere and competent than those who never shop there. In other words, the sincerity and competence brand personality means of frequent, occasional, and rare shoppers are higher than those who do not shop. This may result from the experience consumers have with the brand. Consumers who frequently, occasionally, and rarely visit BİM have interacted with the brand, met employees, experienced the product variety, and developed familiarity with the brand. Brand experience is one of the factors influencing brand personality. Interaction with sales personnel and customers is considered a key point in the shopping experience (Güven, 2018). Polite, helpful, and attentive staff enrich the shopping experience and increase perceived service quality. This relationship capital positively contributes to the supermarket's brand equity and brand personality perception (Dwivedi et al., 2012).

Significant differences were found between brand personality and gender. For example, women perceive BİM as more sincere, feminine, and exciting compared to men. That is, the means of sincerity, femininity, and excitement brand personality are higher among women. Men and women differ in reasons for supermarket preference (Okumuş and Bulduk, 2003) and in responses to sales promotion activities (Kuduz and Bürhan, 2020). Age also revealed some differences. Consumers aged 18–29 perceive BİM as more original and competent than those aged 40 and above. Consumers in the occupational group of housewives, retirees, and unemployed perceive BİM as more competent and original than those working in the private sector. Literature shows that supermarket perceptions may vary according to demographic factors. For instance, customers with lower income and education perceive discount supermarkets as more competent and higher quality, while higher income and education lead to lower evaluation scores (Akdoğan et al., 2005). Significant relationships exist between income level, car ownership, and supermarket preference (Tabak et al., 2005). Price has been emphasized as an important criterion in determining supermarket image in many studies (Hutcheson and Moutinho, 1998; Koç and Dölekoğlu, 1998). Yüce (2014) found that financial risk, one of the risks faced by consumers, varies depending on the supermarket where the shopping occurs. Therefore, sometimes consumers perceive supermarkets as inadequate in terms of staff behavior and customer service, resulting in negative gaps between expectations and perceptions (Nakip et al., 2006).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Creating brand personality is a way to differentiate and provides unique opportunities for retailers. BİM is a nationally recognized discount supermarket with numerous branches. It competes fiercely with other national brands such as ŞOK and A101, as well as local brands such as Düzpaş, Onur Market, Hakmar, and Yunus Market. To overcome the destructive effects of competition and differentiate, new

strategies are needed. One such strategy is to create a brand personality and make it meaningful to consumers. The following recommendations can provide practical benefits to retailers and managers:

- BİM stands out with sincere, competent, and sophisticated personality traits, and consumers perceive it as honest, realistic, reliable, successful, high-class, and attractive. Accordingly, BİM can improve shelf layout, open premium supermarkets through brand extension, and adapt its logo, brand colour, and font in some branches to align with a sophisticated brand personality. Consumers tend to prefer prestigious, high-quality brands with a positive image (İlban, Akkılıç and Yılmaz, 2011). Additionally, consumers' overall perception of quality has an impact on brand loyalty. It is known that hedonistic (pleasure-based) brand perception has a positive and significant effect on consumers' overall perception of quality (Yılmaz and Yaprak, 2018).

- BİM has been perceived as realistic, healthy, and reliable. In this context, it can present prices comparably to consumers, emphasize the sale of healthy and organic products, and highlight honesty in advertisements and slogans to strengthen consumer trust. There is a reciprocal relationship between service revenues and the service confidence index (Zeybek, Yılmaz and Başarır, 2023). Consumers can generate an increase in revenues by purchasing more products and a wider variety of products from supermarkets they trust. Selling more products overall and selling more of each product is important for revenues and market share within supermarkets. Building honesty and trust can be seen as a good way to increase revenue.

- To compete with local supermarkets, BİM can collaborate with local stores, supporting them in promotions, point-money systems, and discounts. This approach enhances social responsibility, strengthens stakeholder cooperation, and increases the relational value of the BİM brand.

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