

THE ROLE OF SIMILAR AND COPYCAT BRAND PERCEPTIONS ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF STORE BRANDS: A FIELD STUDY IN PROVINCE OF KIRIKKALE

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the development of modern chain stores in Turkey has allowed firms to market their products under their own brand. At this point, retailer brands have similarities with national or producer brands. In this study, it is aimed to determine the basic factors, mainly perceptions of similarity and copycat about store brands, which affect the preference tendency of consumers. The study is important in terms of taking attention to imitation and similarity perceptions about store brands and contributing to the gap in the domestic literature about the subject in Turkey. Within the scope of the research, survey is carried out with the discount retail store customers determined in Kırıkkale province. The obtained data are analyzed through statistical package program and the findings are interpreted. In the research; it is seen that "store brand preference tendency" variable is positively related with; "attitudes toward store brand", "moral perception towards store brands", "feelings about store brands", "price sensitivity" and "selection difficulty-complexity". On the other hand, it is understood that "copycat perception toward store brand" variable is negatively related with "store brand preference tendency". In addition, difference analyses are conducted to depict differences with respect to gender, education level and income level. Finally, research findings are interpreted and suggestions for businesses are developed.

Keywords: Brand Similarity, Brand Copycat Perceptions, Store Brand Preference Tendency

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing practices in the form of production of products similar to competitive business and brands are widespread today. In particular, the size and the increased number of the modern chain markets in Turkey leads to the creation of private labels in the face of the brands which are engaged in manufacturing at the national level. The chain stores that have become an important and powerful part of the value chain of procurement, production, and marketing are able to compete with the national brands of producer through their own private-label brands. At this point, with national brands; market brands are formed with similar quality, design, packaging, color, and theme. However, it is seen that the market brands having similarities with national brands and the related consumer reactions are ignored in the local marketing literature. Knowing the marketing practices and their effects that cause customer's perception of similarity and analyzing the results of these practices are important particularly in today's marketing environment where market brands are rapidly increasing.

The aim of this study is to reveal the perceptions of similarity/copycat about producer's brands and its outcomes in terms of consumers. It is possible that the perception of similarity and copycat may negatively affect the consumer's cognitive appraisals and preferences. In this context, in this study the literature about the subject is examined; a question form developed, initial data gathered,

obtained data are analyzed and it is tried to reveal the importance for such marketing practices for the business.

Customers are gradually consuming more and more products with information that they get from more different channels and more diverse promotional ways. Under these circumstances, such factors as similarity of brands, excess of information, and presence of directional and unclear information, which result in confusion for the customer on the market, are emerging. 'Customer confusion' is a cognitive and behavioral *concept* which can arise from which the stimuli encountered are similar, too numerous and rather ambiguous and appear before or after purchase (Mitchell et al., 2005: 143).

Customers often meet with copycat brands. Approximately two-thirds of store customers are confused with counterfeit packages and one in three of them states that they buy wrong brand for this way (Poulter, 2009). It is also possible for copycat brands to disrupt the effect of appearance of leading brands, dilute brand rights, damage brand capital, and reduce brand revenue (Zaichkowsky, 2006). Therefore, methods should be developed to detect the damage to the leading brand and the confusion that the copycat brand leads to the consumer, due to the copycat brand (Satomura and et al., 2014: 1). It is thought that the perception of market brands as "copycat" and the understanding of the results of them, in the face of the firms created after the high investments, will benefit to customers and producers.

2. TYPES OF INFRINGEMENT OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTIES

Infringement of intellectual property has four types of "fake", "piracy", "copycat", and "gray area". Forgery is the exact duplication of brand. It is aimed that customers buy original brand in fake products (money, spare parts, etc.) (Warneminde, 1991). In the case of fake, if the counterfeit goods are not in the quality of the original goods but are likened to it particularly, it is harmful to the society. If the fake goods are priced and displayed close to the original, the consumer cannot know that the product is whether original or not, and the company (sales drops), the consumer (the needs are not adequately met), and the society is generally damaged. However, when the fake product is priced fairly cheaper than general price, the consumer thinks that the product is knockoff or counterfeit (CD, software, etc.). The consumer may consciously receive them as well or request the original product. For example, counterfeit luxury products can provide prestige benefits to those customers who are not economically viable and can lead to make them feel better. In this case, however, customers who prefer the fake brand can damage the image and value of the original brand (Wilke and Zaichkowsky, 1999: 10-11). Despite "piracy" is a kind of forgery, the customer knows that the product is an unauthorized type, and the delusion of the customer is not always deceptive (McDonald and Roberts, 1994). At this point, it is the case that businesses try to deal with fake and piracy products. Applying for legal means and employing detectives are some of these ways.

Trademark infringements are particularly important issues for international brands. Especially in the developing countries where low labor costs and inadequate production are, intellectual properties must be protected. Although the level of sensitivity is variable, consumers know that the brand counterfeiting is unethical. For example, while the customers of Hong Kong are more aware of and are more loyal to global brands, the customers in The People's Republic of China and Taiwan are less aware of counterfeit goods. It is necessary for the businesses to educate their customers that they are the leader, or the original brand and to control, block, and understand the demand for counterfeiting products (Kay and Zaichkowsky, 1999: 179, 181).

3. COPYCAT BRANDS AND EFFECTS

In the copycat brands, as the product features of the counterfeiting and counterfeited brand are not the same, they are similar in terms of content, name, shape, meaning, etc. The counterfeiting of the name, shape, symbol, color, and general appearance of a successful brand is a widely used method

to take advantage of the power and image of the original brands under today's crowded market conditions and to attract customers from them.

Copycat brands copycat the commercial look of the leading brand such as name or package design (size, shape, color, etc.) (Vincent-Wayne and Ide, 2002; Femke van and Rik, 2012: 246). Generally, copycat brands have their own name, logo, and/or package style, but they look like the leading brand. Consumers often do not confuse this technicality that has little similarity with the original brand. In other words, customers know that copycat brand is not the leading brand or is a store brand (Wilke and Zaichowsky, 1999).

Copycat brands benefit from leading brand capital as free of charge by copycating the features of leader brands. Generally, the more copycat brand is likened to the leader brand, the more the consumer goes in confusion, and the copycat brand is thought to be successful by positively evaluating (Warlop and Alba, 2004; Howard and et al., 2000). However, thanks to the fact that the leading brand is on the rack contrarily, it is more successful for the copycat that there are fewer similarities with the leading brand when the customers comparatively compare the products. In other words, copycat brands can get the advantages of the leading brand without brand confusion (Horen and Pieters, 2012: 83).

Copycat brands negatively affect the sales of the original brand as well as a positive experience with copycat brands negatively affects the assessments about the quality and image of the original brand. That is, if the quality of the copycat brands is similar to the original brand, consumers evaluate the original brand as negative, but if the copycat brand is not as good as the original brand, consumers evaluate the original brand more positively. In addition, some studies show that consumers can buy copycat brand which they have a positive experience at a price difference of 10% (Zaichkowsky and Simpson, 1996: 31).

Copycat brands can lead to negative consequences because they will pass dissatisfaction to the original brand when customers do not have the ability to distinguish. On the other hand, the studies show that the customer can take a positive attitude towards the copycat brand if the customer is satisfied with the copycat brand and realizes that the brand is copycatted (Foxman and et al., 1990). So the positive experiences that consumers have with copycat brands and the positive attitudes that arise from the experiences are important variables affecting customer's preference, tendency, and behaviors to the store brand.

As well as copycat can be in terms of such features as name, voice, font, visuality of the brand, it can be also in terms of theme widely. For example, the colors and name of the 'Milka' brand can be copycatted as well as the message "*freshness of the milk*" can be copycatted. The studies on the subject show that customers interpret the copycat of the product's appearance as unacceptable and unfair. However, although customers are aware of the copycat of theme, they consider it as more acceptable and less unfair (Horen and Pieters, 2012: 246).

The situations that cause the perceived similarity between the copycat brand and the leading brand should be identified. Pieters (2010) shows that the copycat strategy (copycat of visual features or copycat of theme) and the consumer's mind (characteristic or relational) interact with the perceived similarity. First of all, it seems that feature-based copycats are perceived in similar to the leading brand more without being dependent on the consumer's understanding. In addition, customers who have an understanding of relational-minded liken the theme-oriented copycat brands more to the leading brand according to the customers who have an understanding of feature (Pieters, 2010).

The success of copycat brands is mostly explained by brand confusion (Warlop and Alba, 2004). That is, when the brand confusion happens, people can choose copycats because they confuse the copycat brands with the original brands (Loken and et al., 1986; Kapferer, 1995). However, the current studies show that people are aware of the copycats and that copycat brands are less preferred than differentiated brands. However, the work of Horen and Pieters (2013) points that consumers can opt for copycat goods despite copycat tactics are used in uncertainty. People do not like copycat

brands if the uncertainty is low on the other side. For example, while making a research on energy drinks on an overseas trip, the unknownness of all brands leads to uncertainty about the quality of products. However, in case of similarity of a brand to Red Bull due to its package and if the Red Bull brand is not in the store, the possibility of preference the brand increases (Horen and Pieters, 2013: 54). In other words, customers feel familiarity with quality, performance, and reliability according to their familiarity with package design in cases of uncertainty (Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999). It can be expected this situation to be available also in the situations that the brand knowledge of consumers is low in the local markets. However, researches should be made on the validity of this argument.

In addition to these, it is suggested that copycat products inhibit innovations in social sense even if they are controversial. However, copycat small businesses are able to learn innovations and add innovations to them. On the other hand, investment by large enterprises on innovations that require investment may be reduced due to the negative effects of sales of copycat brands. Under these circumstances, brands need to be legally protected to make innovations. In terms of competition, it is unfair that the copycat business is supposed to take innovations without enduring any investment. Additionally, the increase of copycat and counterfeit products cause damage to the language of brand by damaging the brand's confidence building, risk reducing, and communicational characteristics. At this point, when the quality of the copycat is low, since the customer does not regard the copycat brand as a substitute product, the copycatted company does not suffer much damage. However, when the copycat firm keeps prices low, customers who have price sensitivity continue to make purchases, and the original brand value (identifiability, remembrance, image) is damaged. Especially, when consumers of luxurious products see that brands are consumed by everyone and asked them whether *e.g.* Rolex watches are fake or not, it can prevent them from choosing the brand. Table 1. shows the effects of copycat brands according to different situations (Wilke and Zaichkowsky, 1999: 11-13, 16).

Table 1. Effects of Copycat Brands

		Quality of Copycat by Original Brand		
		Better	Equal	Worse
Customer's Copycat or Original Brand Awareness	Knowledgeable	Better for society	Tied to the price ratio: better value, better for society	Potential to damage original brand
	Complex	Damages the language of brands	Damages the language of brands	Damages the language of brands and may damage the entire product category

4. AN EXAMINATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF BRAND COPYCAT PERCEPTIONS, PRODUCT PREFERENCE TENDENCY, AND CONSUMER ASSESSMENTS: A FIELD RESEARCH IN KIRIKKALE PROVINCE

4.1. Material and Method

Within the research, a face-to-face survey was conducted with the customers of a discount chain store in Kırıkkale Province. At the realization of the survey, it was received support from the Scientific Research Projects Coordination Office of Kırıkkale University. In the research, it was used the systematic sampling method in the random sampling methods. In this regard, a survey was applied to one of every five customers who went out from the stores.

In formulating the research questionnaire, it was adapted the expressions, which were used to measure the related variables in the marketing literature, to the research topic. Accordingly, for the expressions formed to measure similarities and copycat perceptions of producer brands and market brands, it was benefitted from the studies of Walsh and et al. (2010). The works of Goldsmith and et al. (2000), Hsu and Lin (2015), Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002), and Wu and Wang (2005) were used to measure the customer's preference tendency of the market brand. The works of Breivik and et al. (1999) and Nowlis and et al. (2002) have been helpful to construct the expressions about the difficulty and the complication experienced while choosing between market brands and producer

brands. The work of Brunk (2012) was used to form the statements about ethical perceptions of consumers for market brands. It was benefitted from the studies of Holbrook and Batra (1987) and McAlexander and et al. (2002) to measure customer feelings for market brands. In order to determine general attitudes towards the market brand, it was utilized from the work of Garretson and et al. (2002). In addition, the studies of Ofir (2004), Lichtenstein (1993) and Wakefield and Inmann (2003) were reviewed and utilized in designing the expressions related to price consciousness of the customer, which is thought that it is closely related with the preference of store brand. Finally, under the research, some questions were raised about the demographic characteristics of research participants such as age, gender, education, income, and occupation.

The analysis of the data obtained within the scope of the research was completed by transferring it to the statistical data analysis program (SPSS). Firstly, the exploratory factor analysis was applied to the variables in the research questionnaire. Then reliability coefficients of the research variables were calculated, and the mean values were examined. Mean and standard deviation values from the central tendency measures are given for the numeric variables. In order to examine the bilateral relationship between the research variables, the correlation analysis was conducted; to determine differences, the t-test was used, and to examine the role of independent variables in foreseeing the preference of a store brand, the regression analysis was applied.

4.2. Demographic Features

Totally 1000 people participated in the survey. While 97% of people are in the age range of 20-27 years; 0.2% are 28-35 years; %, 0.4% are 36-43 years; 0.4% are 44-50 years; and 2% are over the age of 51. 71.8% of participants were female, and 28.2% were male. 3,2% are high school graduates, 11,4% are associate degree graduates, 84% are graduates, and 1,2% are postgraduates (master's degree or doctorate). While the income of 81.6% was in the range of 0-900 TL, 8.2% of them were 901-1800 TL, 3.6% of them were 1801-2700 TL, 5.4% were 2701-3600 TL, and 1.3% are 3601 TL or over. The occupation of 2.3% are trade, 2.9% of them are paid officers, 0.4% are paid workers, and 94.3% are others. 81.5% of the participants prefer more the producer-national brand.

4.3. Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis for the expressions formed within the research has been carried out. As a result of the analysis, the KMO conformity coefficient was found to be 0.821 and 'significant'. The expressions prepared according to this are collected under 7 sub-factors. The factors are named according to the purpose of preparation of the expressions that they contain. The factors have taken such names: the first factor; "*Attitudes Towards Store Brands*", the second factor; "*Perception of Ethics for Store Brands*", the third factor; "*Feelings for Store Brands*", the fourth factor; "*Price Sensitivity*", the fifth factor; "*Tendency of Preference for Store Brand*", the sixth factor; "*Selection Difficulty/Complexity*", and the seventh factor; "*Sense of Similarity*".

Table 1. Factor Analysis

	Factor Loads	Core value	Explained Variance %	Total Variance %
1. Factor: Attitudes Toward Store Brands		7,068	25,243	25,243
I prefer store brands to get my money back.	,837			
The store-branded products are quality.	,830			
The store brands are the best choice in the most product categories.	,802			
I always think I do a good job when I buy a store branded product.	,771			
The best choice is to buy a store-branded product.	,756			
It makes me feel good to buy store-branded products.	,724			
2. Factor: Perception of Ethics For Store Brands		3,324	11,870	37,113
Fulfills his/her social responsibilities.	,852			
It is good.	,822			
Avoids harm to others.	,809			
Conforms to the moral norms.	,788			
Takes decisions with all their consequences in mind.	,775			

3. Factor: Feelings for Store Brands		3,195	11,412	48,525
I feel enthusiastic.	,884			
I feel alive.	,853			
I feel happy.	,827			
I feel pleased.	,737			
4. Factor: Price Sensitivity		2,102	7,506	56,032
I am sensitive to price differences.	,861			
I go for multiple stores to find low prices.	,856			
I make extra efforts to find low prices.	,825			
I can change the brand which I plan due to the price difference.	,793			
5. Factor: Tendency of Preference for Store Brand		1,737	6,202	62,234
The taste of the store brand can also be nice.	,767			
I do not mind choosing the store brand.	,757			
I can easily choose the store brand	,726			
If it is a little cheap, I might prefer the store brand.	,715			
6. Factor: Selection Difficulty/Complexity		1,565	5,589	67,823
I am forced to be unstable.	,879			
I feel confused.	,811			
I confuse products.	,775			
7. Factor: Similarity Perception		1,209	4,317	72,140
It is difficult to identify the differences between store and national brands	,811			
It is quite similar to each other.	,785			

Following the factor analysis performed, a reliability analysis was performed for the factor groups. One of the most frequently used criterion for assessing scale reliability is Cronbach's alpha, which is a measure of internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha value is calculated for the factors. Accordingly, it is seen that the reliability levels of all factors are sufficient and high. Then, when the general averages of the factors are treated, it appears that the averages are around the instability. It is noteworthy that the copycat perception is significantly higher than the perception of similarity.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitudes Toward Store Brands	2,86	0,85
Perception of Ethics for Store Brands	2,85	0,86
Feelings for Market Brands	2,50	0,89
Price Sensitivity	2,94	0,94
Tendency of Preference For Store Brand	3,12	0,93
Selection Difficulty/Complexity	2,37	0,95
Factor: Similarity Perception	2,80	0,97
Copycat perception	3,76	1,15

4.4. Examination of Differences According to Sex

As a result of the t-test performed to identify possible differences according to sex, research variables were found to be indifferent, except for the copycat perception. Therefore, attitudes towards market brands, perception of ethics, feelings, price sensitivity, selection difficulty, and sense of similarity do not change according to sex. On the other hand, it is understood that copycat perceptions for market brands are statistically significantly higher in females compared to males.

Table 1. Differences According to Gender

	Gender	Average	Sig.
Attitudes Toward Store Brands	Female	2,88	0,172
	Male	2,80	
Perception of Ethics For Store Brands	Female	2,86	0,273
	Male	2,80	
Feelings For Store Brands	Female	2,48	0,318
	Male	2,54	
Price Sensitivity	Female	2,96	0,238
	Male	2,88	

Tendency of Preference For Store Brand	Female	3,15	0,085
	Male	3,03	
Selection Difficulty/Complexity	Female	2,34	0,215
	Male	2,43	
Similarity Perception	Female	2,76	0,020
	Male	2,92	
Copycat Perception	Female	3,81	0,023
	Male	3,62	

4.5. Examination of Differences According to Education Level

The independent sample t-test was applied to examine differences according to educational status. According to the results of the analysis, there were differences according to the education level for the variables, except for selection difficulty/complexity. According to this, positive attitudes towards store brands, perception of ethics for store brands, feelings for store brands, tendency of preference for store brand, and similarity for store brands are significantly higher in those who have education at the high school and lower levels than those who are at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. On the other hand, it is seen that the copycat perceptions of store brand and price sensitivity are higher in the customers who are at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The following table summarizes the differences according to the education level.

Table 2. Differences According to Education Level

	Education Level	Average	Sig.
Attitudes Toward Store Brands	High School and below	3,19	0,00
	Undergraduate and above	2,80	
Perception of Ethics For Store Brands	High School and below	3,20	0,00
	Undergraduate and above	2,78	
Feelings For Store Brands	High School and below	2,80	0,00
	Undergraduate and above	2,45	
Price Sensitivity	High School and below	2,79	0,04
	Undergraduate and above	2,97	
Tendency of Preference For Store Brand	High School and below	3,29	0,02
	Undergraduate and above	3,09	
Selection Difficulty/Complexity	High School and below	2,37	0,99
	Undergraduate and above	2,37	
Similarity Perception	High School and below	2,99	0,01
	Undergraduate and above	2,77	
Copycat Perception	High School and below	2,04	0,02
	Undergraduate and above	2,27	

4.6. Examination of Differences According to Monthly Income

As a result of the independent sample t test, there are differences between those who have income level between 0-900 TL and those who have 901 TL or over, only in the variables of tendency of preference for store brand and in the selection difficulty/complexity. Accordingly, those who have a low income level prefer the store brand more, and less selection difficulty/complexity.

Table 3. Differences According to Monthly Income

	Monthly Income	Average	Sig.
Attitudes Toward Store Brands	900 TL and below	2,84	0,121
	901 TL and above	2,96	
Perception of Ethics For Store Brands	900 TL and below	2,84	0,193
	901 TL and above	2,94	
Feelings For Store Brands	900 TL and below	2,50	0,136
	901 TL and above	2,61	
Price Sensitivity	900 TL and below	2,96	0,797
	901 TL and above	2,94	

Tendency of Preference For Store Brand	900 TL and below	3,19	0,002
	901 TL and above	2,95	
Selection Difficulty/Complexity	900 TL and below	2,31	0,000
	901 TL and above	2,67	
Similarity Perception	900 TL and below	2,81	0,732
	901 TL and above	2,77	
Copycat Perception	900 TL and below	3,74	0,141
	901 TL and above	3,88	

4.7. Examination of Differences by More Preferred Brand

When the differences are examined according to the brand situation that the customers prefer more; it is seen that those who prefer the store brand have attitudes towards market brands at a statistically higher level, positive feelings for market brands, a price sensitivity, tendency of preference, and senses of similarity. On the other hand, it is understood that those who prefer store brands have less copycat perceptions than those who prefer national brands. The following table shows averages and level of importance according to the more preferred brand status.

Table 4. Differences According to More Preferred Brand

	More Preferred Brand Type	Average	Sig.
Attitudes Toward Store Brands	National-Producer Brand	2,78	0,000
	Store Brand	3,14	
Perception of Ethics For Store Brands	National-Producer Brand	2,86	0,189
	Store Brand	2,95	
Feelings For Store Brands	National-Producer Brand	2,43	0,000
	Store Brand	2,91	
Price Sensitivity	National-Producer Brand	2,90	0,000
	Store Brand	3,28	
Tendency of Preference For Store Brand	National-Producer Brand	3,07	0,000
	Store Brand	3,45	
Selection Difficulty/Complexity	National-Producer Brand	2,36	0,914
	Store Brand	2,37	
Similarity Perception	National-Producer Brand	2,76	0,001
	Store Brand	3,04	
Copycat Perception	National-Producer Brand	3,83	0,016
	Store Brand	3,60	

4.8. Relationship Analysis

A correlation analysis was conducted to examine the bilateral relationships between the research variables. According to the results of the analysis, the tendency of preference of the store brand is statistically significantly and positively related to the variables of “attitudes towards market brands”, “perception of ethics for market brands”, “feelings for market brands”, “price sensitivity”, “selection difficulty/complexity”, and “sense of similarity”. On the other hand, it is understood that the “copycat perception” is related to the preference tendency of the market brand in the opposite direction and low level.

According to the result of correlation analysis; the most related variables with preference tendency of market brand are “feelings for market brands” and “sense of similarity”. The following table summarizes the results of correlation analysis.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis I

		Tendency of Preference of Market Brand
Attitudes Toward Store Brands	Pearson Correlation	,291**
	Sig.	,000
Perception of Ethics For Store Brands	Pearson Correlation	,278**
	Sig.	,000

Feelings For Store Brands	Pearson Correlation	,422**
	Sig.	,000
Price Sensitivity	Pearson Correlation	,360**
	Sig.	,000
Selection Difficulty/Complexity	Pearson Correlation	,216**
	Sig.	,000
Similarity Perception	Pearson Correlation	,309**
	Sig.	,000
Copycat Perception	Pearson Correlation	-,066*
	Sig.	,037

In addition to the relationship of the research variables with the preference tendency of market brand, a more correlation analysis was carried out with respect to the feelings, perceptions, and attitudes of the copycat perception toward the store brands. According to the results of the analysis, positive attitudes and feelings, selection difficulty and perception of ethics towards the brand of the market are decreasing due to the increase of the copycat perception. In this case, it is supported the conclusion that the copycat perceptions are negatively related to the perception, attitude, and feelings of the customer.

Table 6. Correlation Analysis II

		Attitudes Toward Store Brands	Perception of Ethics For Store Brands	Feelings For Store Brands	Selection Difficulty/Complexity
Copycat Perception	Pearson Correlation	-,188**	-,124**	-,095**	-,195**
	Sig.	,000	,000	,003	,000

4.9. Regression Analysis

Under the research, a regression analysis was conducted, in order to search the explanation level of research variables of preferring tendency. According to the results of the analysis, it is determined that the R coefficient is 0,583 and the R² value is 0,339 and that the importance of regression is significant. Therefore, it is concluded that the research variables are effective variables to foresee the preference tendency of the store brand. Tables 9. summarize the results of the regression analysis.

Table 7. Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	t	sig.
(Constant)		4,120	,000
Attitudes Toward Store Brands	,108	3,674	,000
Perception of Ethics For Store Brands	,108	3,788	,000
Feelings For Store Brands	,268	8,680	,000
Price Sensitivity	,216	7,747	,000
Selection Difficulty/Complexity	,072	2,537	,011
Similarity Perception	,198	7,133	,000
Copycat Perception	-,100	-3,609	,000
F	72,522	Sig. 0,000	
R	0,590		
R ²	0,348		

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

According to the results of the independent sample t-test for the gender differences of the research variables; men perceive store brands as similar to national brands according to women, while women perceive them as more copycat. Therefore, the prioritization of women is thought to be meaningful in eliminating perceptions of copycat, which is expected to play a negative role in the preference of store brands. When the differences are examined according to the educational status within the scope of the research, it is seen that the attitudes and tendencies towards the brand names

are significantly higher in those who has relatively low education. When the differences are examined according to the monthly income; it is understood that the preference tendency of the store brand is higher in the low income groups and that this group experiences fewer selection difficulty.

Besides; the levels of the attitudes towards the store brand, the feelings towards the store brand, the price sensitivity, the preference tendency of the store brand, and the similarity perception are higher for those who intensively prefer the market brand. On the other hand, the copycat perception for market brands was found to be higher in the customers who prefer national brands.

According to the results of correlation analysis carried out in order to examine the relations between the research variables, it is observed that the preference tendency of the store brand is positively and statistically significant related to feelings for store brands, price sensitivity, sense of similarity with producer's brand, attitudes towards store brands, and perception of ethics for store brands. On the other hand, it is understood that copycat perception towards the store brand is related to the preference tendency of the market brand in negative and low level. As a result of the correlation analysis performed, besides; it is seen that the perception of ethics for store brands, attitudes, and feelings of the customer in relation to the copycat perceptions of market brands changed in the negative direction and the difficulty of selection decreased.

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the research's independent variables in predicting the preference tendency of the store brand as a dependent variable. Accordingly, the regression model which was generated is significant, and the research variables play important role to explain the preference tendency of the store brand. As a result, it is understood that copycat perceptions, similarity perceptions, attitudes and feelings towards market brands, ethical/moral evaluations, and price sensitivity of customers are the important variables that affect the preference tendency of the store brand. Therefore, it is proposed for the retailer enterprises producing store brands to be aware of the perceptions of customers that producer brands are copycatted, to prevent their occurrence and take precautions to ensure their reducing. In addition, it is also recommended that the retailer businesses establish positive attitudes and feelings towards store brands (building quality, establishing quality communications, emphasizing good preferences, sharing positive customer experiences, etc.) and that the customer monitor and improve ethical considerations. In the direction of reducing copycat perceptions, it is thought that it would be beneficial to give priority to the women who are determined to have a higher level of perception and those who have a higher education level.

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