


# The role of brand trust in purchase intention: The case of a chain food and beverage business

Kamil Pekaydın

Lecturer, Gaziantep University, Tourism and Hotel Management Vocational School  
Gaziantep, Türkiye

Email: [kamilpekaydin@gmail.com](mailto:kamilpekaydin@gmail.com)

Orcid Id: 0000-0002-2760-5072 

## Abstract

*This study examines the role of brand trust in influencing consumers' preferences for chain food and beverage establishments through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The TPB framework includes three main components: attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Using a sample of 399 respondents, the study employs a survey methodology to measure these components as well as brand trust. The results show that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control significantly influence purchase intention towards chain food and beverage establishments. Furthermore, brand trust was found to moderate the relationship between perceived behavioral control and purchase intention and strengthen this link. However, brand trust did not significantly moderate the relationships between attitudes, subjective norms and purchase intention. These findings suggest that although brand trust is crucial in enhancing perceived behavioral control, its influence on attitudes and subjective norms may be less pronounced. The study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the importance of brand trust in consumer decision-making processes and offers practical implications for marketing strategies in the food and beverage industry. Future research should explore the long-term effects of brand trust and consider different demographic and cultural contexts to further generalize the findings.*

**Keywords:** Theory of planned behavior, Chain food and beverage businesses, Brand trust

## 1. Introduction

Eating and drinking is not only one of the most basic needs of today's societies, but also a social and cultural activity of great importance. In this context, chain food and beverage establishments play an important role in meeting these needs of consumers with their ability to provide fast and standardized service. Changes in people's lifestyles, especially with globalization and urbanization, have also affected their eating habits and increased the demand for such establishments (Demirkol, 2004; Özdemir, 2010).

Chain food and beverage businesses are businesses that are managed from a certain center and offer the same service standards in all their branches. The biggest advantage of these businesses is that the quality and standards of the products and services they offer to consumers are the same in every branch. This increases consumers' trust in these businesses and increases their preference rates (Krieger et al., 2013). Brand trust refers to consumers' loyalty and commitment to a brand. Brand trust represents consumers' confidence

in a brand and their belief in its ability to fulfill its promises (Ballester & Alemán, 2005). Brand trust plays an important role especially in the service industry and directly influences consumer behavior (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of brand trust in the tendency to prefer chain food and beverage establishments within the framework of TPB. TPB is a theory developed to explain individuals' intentions to perform a certain behavior and the process of transforming these intentions into behavior (Ajzen, 1991). According to this theory, individuals' behaviors are determined by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control.

This study examines how attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, which are the variables of TPB, affect consumers' tendency to prefer chain food and beverage establishments and the regulatory role of brand trust in this effect. The contribution of the research to the literature is to better understand consumer behavior towards chain food and beverage

establishments and to shed light on brand management strategies in this field. This study aims to fill the gaps in the marketing and brand management literature by addressing the impact of brand trust on consumer preferences.

In this context, the purpose of the study can be summarized as follows: To examine the role of brand trust in the tendency to prefer chain food and beverage establishments within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior and to determine the effects of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control variables in this context.

## 2. Literature Review

### *Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)*

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a theory developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) that explains individuals' intentions to perform a certain behavior and the process of turning these intentions into behavior. TPB suggests that individuals' behaviors are determined by three main factors: attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

**Attitudes:** It is an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a certain behavior. A positive attitude increases the likelihood of performing that behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). For example, positive attitudes towards chain food and beverage establishments may increase the likelihood of choosing such establishments.

**Subjective Norms:** These are the expectations of the individual's social environment about performing that behavior. Social pressure or approval can affect an individual's behavior (Ajzen, 1991). For example, the support of the close environment for going to chain food and beverage establishments may increase the individual's intention to prefer these establishments. **Perceived Behavioral Control:** It is the individual's perception of control over performing a certain behavior. This control is based on the individual's past experiences and available resources (Ajzen, 2002). Ease of access to chain food and beverage establishments and financial situation may affect this perception. TPB has been successfully applied in various fields and has been accepted as an effective model for predicting individuals' behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

### *Brand Trust*

Brand trust refers to consumers' confidence in the products or services of a particular brand. Trust stems from consumers' positive experiences with the brand and its ability to deliver on its promises (Ballester & Alemán, 2005). Brand trust is an important factor

affecting consumer behavior and is directly related to brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Brand trust plays an important role, especially in the service sector. Chain food and beverage businesses increase consumer loyalty with the standard service quality and reliability they offer to consumers (Harris & Goode, 2004). Consumers show more loyalty to brands they trust and are more likely to choose these brands again (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

### *Chain Food and Beverage Establishments*

Chain food and beverage businesses are restaurant businesses that are managed by a certain center, adopt a common standard of procedures at all stages of production and have a certain number of branches (Demirkol, 2004; Özdemir, 2010). These businesses reassure consumers with the quality and standards of the products they offer (Krieger et al., 2013). Chain restaurants operate under a specific brand name and this brand provides trust to consumers (Keller, 1993).

Chain food and beverage establishments are the places that consumers prefer to save time and access standard quality products. Brand trust plays an important role in the success of these businesses (Hsu & Huang, 2012). Consumers prefer and maintain their preference for these businesses thanks to brand trust (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

### *Hypothesis development*

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a theory that explains individuals' intentions to perform a certain behavior and the process of transforming these intentions into behavior. The three main elements of TPB, namely attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, determine individuals' behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). The hypotheses related to this expectation were formed as follows:

H1: Attitude has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H2: Subjective norm has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H3: Perceived behavioral control has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Brand trust is another important factor that shapes consumers' intentions. Accordingly, brand trust can be expected to have a moderating role in the effect of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control on behavioral intentions. This expectation can be explained as follows;

Attitude is an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a certain behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Positive attitudes towards chain food and beverage establishments may increase consumers'

intention to prefer these establishments. However, brand trust plays an important role in transforming this positive attitude into behavioral intention. Brand trust represents consumers' confidence in the brand and belief in its ability to fulfill its promises (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). A trusted brand can facilitate the transformation of consumers' positive attitudes into behavioral intentions. For example, a consumer may have favorable opinions about a particular chain restaurant, but the transformation of these favorable opinions into an actual preference intention is reinforced by trust in the brand (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore, brand trust may have a moderating effect on the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention.

H4a: Brand trust has a moderating effect on the effect of attitude on purchase intention. Subjective norm is the expectations of the individual's social environment about performing that behavior. Social pressure or approval can influence an individual's behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Trust in a brand plays a critical role in transforming these social expectations into behavioral intentions. The social environment's approval of a brand can increase consumers' trust in that brand and this trust can strengthen an individual's behavioral intention (Hsu & Huang, 2012). For example, the social environment's preference for a chain restaurant may increase an individual's intention to prefer that restaurant. However, in order for this intention to be strengthened and realized, trust in the brand must be high. Brand trust can increase an individual's motivation to fulfill social expectations, which reinforces the relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intention (Harris & Goode, 2004).

H4b: Brand trust has a moderating effect on the effect of subjective norm on purchase intention.

Perceived behavioral control is an individual's perception of control over performing a certain behavior. This control is based on the individual's past experiences and available resources (Ajzen, 2002). Trust in a brand may play a moderating role in the transformation of an individual's perceived control into behavioral intention. A trusted brand may strengthen consumers' perception of control over performing a particular behavior. For example, when consumers trust that a particular chain restaurant offers quality service, they may feel more control over choosing that restaurant. This trust strengthens the relationship between perceived control and behavioral intention (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

H4c: Brand trust has a moderating effect on the effect of perceived behavioral control on purchase intention.

### 3. Methodology

#### *Instrument*

The measurement tool used in this study is a questionnaire form developed to determine the respondents' tendency to prefer chain food and beverage establishments. In addition to demographic questions, the questionnaire includes items related to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and brand trust. The three main components of TPB, namely attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, were measured using scales validated in previous studies (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

The survey items were answered using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Attitudes consisted of items measuring positive or negative evaluations of chain F&B establishments. Subjective norms were assessed with items reflecting the expectations of the respondents' social environment about their preference for these establishments. Perceived behavioral control was measured with items that identify respondents' perceptions of control over their choice of these establishments. Brand trust was measured using the scale developed by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001).

#### *Sampling and data collection*

The population of this study consists of individuals who have eating and drinking experience in chain food and beverage establishments. Determining population size is important for the general validity of the research. However, considering the difficulties of reaching a large population in terms of time and cost, the convenience sampling method was preferred. Convenience sampling is when the researcher selects a sample consisting of volunteer participants with easy access (Altunışık, Coşkun, Bayraktaroğlu & Yıldırım, 2007). In this study, 399 participants were reached, and data were collected. The sample size was considered sufficient for statistical analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

#### *Data analysis*

The data collected to achieve the purpose of the study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Processing of the data elimination process, validity analysis, analysis of hypotheses with regression and process were done with SPSS.

## 4. Findings

### Demographic findings

Demographic findings are summarized as follows: 55.6% of the participants were male and 44.4% were female. 44.1% were married and 55.9% were single. 50.9% were bachelor's degree graduates and 20.8% were master's/doctoral degree graduates. While 44.4% of the participants are in the income group of 10001 TL and above, 30.3% are in the income group of 5500 TL and below. 89.7% of the participants have visited chain food and beverage establishments three or more times. Generation Y was represented by 69.2%, Generation Z by 19.3%, Generation X by 9.3% and Generation Alpha by 2.3%.

**Table 1. Demographic findings**

| N=399                  | n   |
|------------------------|-----|
| Gender                 |     |
| Female                 | 177 |
| Male                   | 222 |
| Marital status         |     |
| Married                | 176 |
| Single                 | 223 |
| Education              |     |
| Elementary             | 5   |
| High                   | 49  |
| Associate              | 59  |
| Undergraduate          | 203 |
| Postgraduate           | 83  |
| Income                 |     |
| 5500 TL and less       | 121 |
| 5501-7500 TL           | 36  |
| 7501-10000 TL          | 65  |
| 10001 TL and more      | 177 |
| Visiting to restaurant |     |
| 1                      | 25  |
| 2                      | 16  |
| 3 and more             | 358 |
| Generations            |     |
| X                      | 37  |
| Y                      | 276 |
| Z                      | 77  |
| Alpha                  | 9   |

Source: Elaborated by Author

### Validity results

Exploratory Factor Analyses showed that the scales were unidimensional and valid. KMO Barlett Values and significance levels confirm that the scales are suitable for factor analysis.

The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) of all scales used in the research were found to be above .70 and it was concluded that they have high reliability (Ex: Attitude Scale = .939, Subjective Norm Scale = .931,

Perceived Behavioral Control Scale = .811, Purchase Intention Scale = .864, Brand Trust Scale = .903).

**Table 2. Reliability of scales**

| Name of the scale            | n | Cronbach Alpha |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Attitude                     | 5 | .939           |
| Subjective norm              | 5 | .931           |
| Perceived behavioral control | 4 | .811           |
| Purchase intention           | 3 | .864           |
| Brand trust                  | 6 | .903           |

Source: Elaborated by Author

### Test of hypothesis

The relationship between consumers' attitudes towards chain food establishments and purchase intention was found to be positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.326$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Consumers' subjective norms have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.119$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Perceived behavioral control has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.212$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The moderating effect of brand trust on the relationship between attitude and purchase was not significant ( $\beta = 0.109$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). The moderating effect of brand trust on the relationship between subjective norm and purchase was not significant ( $\beta = 0.064$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). The moderating effect of brand trust on the relationship between perceived behavioral control and purchase was significant ( $\beta = 0.238$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 3. Moderating effect of brand trust on the relationship between attitude and purchase intention**

| Variable              | Model 1: Purchase intention |         |      |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------|------|
|                       | $\beta$                     | SE      | p    |
| Constant              | 7.131                       | .087    | .000 |
| Attitude              | 1.329                       | .099    | .000 |
| Brand trust           | .527                        | .099    | .000 |
| Brand trust* Attitude | .109                        | .068    | .111 |
| F                     | 89.7                        | 162.405 |      |
| P                     |                             | .000    |      |
| R <sup>2</sup>        | 9.3                         | .552    |      |

Source: Elaborated by Author

**Table 4. Moderating effect of brand trust on the relationship between attitude and purchase intention**

| Variable                    | Model 1: Purchase intention |         |      |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|------|
|                             | $\beta$                     | SE      | p    |
| Constant                    | 7.160                       | .092    | .000 |
| Subjective norm             | .994                        | .104    | .000 |
| Brand trust                 | .768                        | .104    | .000 |
| Brand trust*Subjective norm | .064                        | .068    | .344 |
| F                           |                             | 117.244 |      |
| P                           |                             | .000    |      |
| R <sup>2</sup>              |                             | .471    |      |

Source: Elaborated by Author

**Table 5. Moderating effect of brand trust on the relationship between perceived behavioral control and purchase intention**

| Variable                                 | Model 1: Purchase intention |      |      |
|--|-----------------------------|------|------|
|  | $\beta$                     | SE   | p    |
| Constant                                 | 7.133                       | .095 | .000 |
| Perceived behavioral control             | .212                        | .099 | .034 |
| Brand trust                              | 1.216                       | .102 | .000 |
| Brand trust*Perceived behavioral control | .238                        | .086 | .006 |
| F  | 75.079                      |      |      |
| P  | .000                        |      |      |
| R <sup>2</sup>                           | .363                        |      |      |

Source: Elaborated by Author

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

In this study, the effects of Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) elements of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control on purchase intention and the moderating role of brand trust in this effect were investigated. The findings show that consumers' attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control towards chain food and beverage establishments have significant effects on purchase intention. Moreover, brand trust was found to play a partial moderating role on these effects.

Consumers' positive attitudes towards chain food and beverage establishments were found to increase their intention to choose these establishments. This finding supports that attitudes have a strong effect on behavioral intention as predicted by TPB theory (Ajzen, 1991). Expectations of the social environment were found to positively affect individuals' behavioral intention to choose chain food and beverage establishments. Social pressure and approval have been found to play an important role in shaping individuals' behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). It was found that individuals' perception of control over their choice of chain food and beverage establishments significantly increased their intention to choose these establishments. This result shows that individuals' perception of control over performing a certain behavior reinforces behavioral intention (Ajzen, 2002). Brand trust was found to play a moderating role in the relationship between perceived behavioral control and purchase intention. This finding reveals that consumers' trust in the brand strengthens behavioral intentions and influences consumer behavior (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). However, the moderating effect of brand trust on the relationship between attitude and subjective norm and purchase intention was not significant. This suggests that brand trust has a more significant effect on the perception of control.

Several recommendations are presented within the framework of these findings:

Chain food and beverage businesses should maintain quality standards and make continuous improvements to increase consumer confidence in the brand. A customer satisfaction-oriented service approach should be adopted, and complaints should be resolved quickly and effectively (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

Effective advertising campaigns and promotions should be organized to enhance consumers' positive attitudes towards chain catering establishments. These campaigns should emphasize the brand's strengths and unique value propositions (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Given the influence of social norms on behavioral intentions, businesses should actively participate in social media platforms and build customer communities. Consumers' endorsement and support from their social circles will increase the likelihood of brand preference (Hsu & Huang, 2012).

To increase perceived behavioral control, businesses should invest in applications that facilitate the customer experience. Conveniences such as online ordering systems, mobile applications and fast service options will positively affect consumers' preferences (Ajzen, 2002).

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## Author Bio



**Kamil Pekaydın**

He completed his undergraduate education in the Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department at Necmettin Erbakan University. He prepared his Master's thesis titled "The role of brand trust in the invention to prefer chain food and beverage establishments" at Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University in 2023. He started to work as a lecturer at Gaziantep University Tourism and Hotel Management Vocational School in 2024.

His reserch interest areas: Gastronomy tourism, Food tourism, Food experience, Local food and local tourism.

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