The Impact of Perceived Quality and Brand Trust on Purchase Intention: Evidence from Laghouat Mills

L'impact de la qualité perçue et de la confiance envers la marque sur l'intention d'achat : une étude empirique des Moulins de Laghouat

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Abstract: *This study examines the determinants of purchase intention towards Laghouat Mills products in Algeria. Using survey data from 100 consumers and PLS-SEM analysis, the results show that Brand Integrity, Product Quality, and Packaging positively influence purchase intention, while Product Reliability has a negative effect. The findings provide managerial implications for strengthening competitiveness in the local agri-food sector.*

Keywords: *Purchase Intention; Brand Trust; Perceived Quality; Packaging; Agri-food Industry.*

Jel Classification Codes : M31; L66; Q13.

Résumé:*Cette étude examine les déterminants de l'intention d'achat des consommateurs à l'égard des produits des Moulins de Laghouat en Algérie. À partir de données recueillies auprès de 100 consommateurs et analysées à l'aide du modèle PLS-SEM, les résultats montrent que l'intégrité de la marque, la qualité perçue du produit et le conditionnement influencent positivement l'intention d'achat, tandis que la fiabilité du produit exerce un effet négatif. Ces résultats offrent des implications managériales pour renforcer la compétitivité du secteur agroalimentaire local*

Mots clés: *Intention d'achat ; Confiance envers la marque ; Qualité perçue ; Conditionnement ; Industrie agroalimentaire.*

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1. Introduction

The agri-food sector represents a strategic pillar of the Algerian economy, undergoing significant transformation due to market liberalisation and changing consumer lifestyles. In this increasingly competitive landscape, local enterprises, such as public milling companies, are no longer solely judged by product availability but by their ability to build enduring relationships with consumers. Consequently, understanding the determinants of Purchase Intention (PI) has become imperative for survival and growth. Marketing literature suggests that purchase intention is not merely a reaction to price, but a complex outcome of multidimensional factors including Brand Trust, Perceived Quality, and Visual Presentation (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Existing literature extensively documents the positive impact of brand equity on consumer behaviour in developed economies. For instance, Brand Credibility and Integrity serve as signals of quality that reduce perceived risk and information costs for consumers (Erdem & Swait, 2004). When consumers perceive a brand as credible—competent and truthful—they are more likely to form a purchase intention. Similarly, Product Quality Perception is often cited as a primary driver of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Zeithaml, 1988). Furthermore, in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, Packaging and Presentation act as the "silent salesman," influencing impulse buying and brand differentiation at the point of sale (Silayoi & Speece, 2007).

However, a critical research gap remains within the context of the Algerian milling industry. While generic studies on consumer behaviour in Algeria exist, there is a scarcity of empirical research specifically examining how distinct dimensions of trust (Credibility, Integrity) and product attributes (Quality, Reliability, Packaging) simultaneously interact to influence purchase intention for legacy national brands like Laghouat Mills. Furthermore, prior research often aggregates "Product Quality" into a single construct, potentially overlooking the nuanced distinction between "Perceived Quality" (excellence) and "Product Reliability" (consistency and dependability), which this study seeks to disentangle.

The significance of this study is twofold. Theoretically, it contributes to the marketing literature by validating Western consumer behaviour models within an emerging North African market context. Managerially, it provides actionable insights for the decision-makers at Laghouat Mills to optimise their branding strategies, improve packaging designs, and enhance quality perception to secure market share against private competitors.

To address the identified research gap, this study poses the following main research question: **What are the key determinants of consumers' purchase intention towards Laghouat Mills products?**

From this central question, the following sub-questions arise:

1. Does the credibility and integrity of the corporate brand influence consumer purchase intention?
2. To what extent do tangible product attributes (Quality, Reliability, Packaging) drive the decision to purchase?

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical objectives, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H_1: Brand Credibility positively influences Purchase Intention.

H_2: Brand Integrity and Trustworthiness positively influence Purchase Intention.

H_3: Product Quality Perception positively influences Purchase Intention.

H_4: Product Reliability positively influences Purchase Intention.

H_5: Packaging and Presentation Quality positively influence Purchase Intention.

2. Methodology and Research Instruments

This study adopts a positivist research paradigm and follows a deductive approach to examine the determinants of purchase intention within the context of Laghouat Mills in Algeria. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed to test the hypothesised relationships between brand-related factors, product attributes, and consumers' purchase intention using inferential statistical techniques.

2.1 Research Design and Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to consumers of Laghouat Mills products. The survey was distributed both physically at selected retail outlets in Laghouat and

electronically via online platforms in order to increase response reach and diversity. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that the study was conducted exclusively for academic purposes. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly ensured.

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was adopted due to accessibility constraints within the local market environment. Although this sampling strategy limits statistical generalisation, it is considered appropriate for explanatory regression-based studies conducted in specific organisational contexts.

A total of 112 questionnaires were collected, of which 100 were deemed valid and suitable for analysis after data screening procedures (removal of incomplete responses and outliers). The final sample size of 100 observations satisfies conventional requirements for multiple linear regression analysis, ensuring an adequate ratio between predictors and observations.

Prior to full deployment, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 15 consumers to assess clarity, wording precision, and contextual appropriateness. Minor revisions were introduced to enhance item comprehensibility and measurement consistency.

2.2 Measurement of Variables

All variables were measured using multi-item scales adapted from established marketing and consumer behaviour literature, with contextual adjustments to reflect the Algerian agri-food market.

Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).

The study includes one dependent variable and five independent variables:

- Purchase Intention (PI) – measured through items capturing consumers’ intention to repurchase Laghouat Mills products and to recommend them to others.
- Brand Credibility (BC) – assessing the extent to which the brand is perceived as competent and believable.
- Brand Integrity and Trustworthiness (BI) – reflecting perceptions of honesty, ethical conduct, and reliability.

- Product Quality Perception (PQ) – measuring consumers' evaluation of overall product excellence and consistency.
- Product Reliability (PR) – capturing the perceived dependability and performance stability of the products.
- Packaging and Presentation Quality (PP) – assessing perceptions of packaging attractiveness, clarity of information, and visual appeal.

All variables were treated as composite observed variables derived from averaged scale scores for regression analysis.

2.3 Data Analysis Technique

Data were analysed using SMART PLS (version 4.1.1.6). Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the direct effects of brand and product-related variables on purchase intention.

The regression model was specified as follows:

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BC + \beta_2 BI + \beta_3 PQ + \beta_4 PR + \beta_5 PP + \varepsilon$$

where PI represents purchase intention, β_0 is the intercept, β_1–β_5 are regression coefficients, and ε denotes the error term.

Prior to hypothesis testing, several diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure the robustness of the regression model. These included:

- Assessment of multicollinearity using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values
- Examination of normality through skewness and kurtosis statistics
- Evaluation of homoscedasticity via residual plots
- Detection of influential observations using Cook's distance

Model fit and explanatory power were evaluated using R^2 and adjusted R^2 values. The overall significance of the model was assessed through the F-statistic, while individual hypotheses were tested using standardised beta coefficients and corresponding t-values at a 5% significance level.

Finally, to assess the statistical significance of the path coefficients, a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure (with 5,000 subsamples) was applied

This analytical approach ensures statistical rigour while maintaining methodological coherence with the study's predictive objective.

3. RESULT

3.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the study variables, including the mean, standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis. The results indicate that Product Quality Perception recorded the highest mean score (M=7.810, SD=1.389), suggesting that respondents generally perceive the product quality favourably. Conversely, Product Reliability showed the lowest mean score (M=3.672,SD=0.697), indicating a relatively moderate to low perception of reliability among the sample. The dependent variable, Purchase Intention, exhibited a high mean value (M=6.918,SD=1.186), reflecting a strong inclination towards purchasing the product.

Regarding the normality of the data distribution, the values for skewness and kurtosis ranged between −1.132and +0.735. These figures fall well within the acceptable threshold of ±2 , confirming that the data follows a normal distribution, which satisfies the assumption for parametric testing (George & Mallery, 2010).

Table N° 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Constructs

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Brand Credibility	100	5.805	1.309	-0.092	-0.522
Brand Integrity & Trustworthiness		5.123	1.067	0.377	0.410
Packaging & Presentation Quality		5.442	1.202	-0.136	-0.586
Product Quality Perception		7.810	1.389	-0.245	-1.132
Product Reliability		3.672	0.697	0.660	0.735
Purchase Intention		6.918	1.186	0.078	-0.791

Source: Prepared by the authors based on SmartPLS 4 data.

To examine the relationships between the variables and check for potential multicollinearity, a Pearson correlation matrix was generated (see Table 2). The results reveal positive and significant correlations between the

independent variables and the dependent variable, Purchase Intention. Specifically, Packaging & Presentation Quality demonstrated the strongest correlation with purchase intention (r=0.603), followed by Brand Credibility (r=0.551) and Brand Integrity & Trustworthiness (r=0.500). Interestingly, Product Reliability showed the weakest positive correlation with purchase intention (r=0.283).

Furthermore, the inter-correlations among the independent variables were examined to detect multicollinearity. The highest correlation coefficient observed was between Brand Integrity & Trustworthiness and Product Reliability (r=0.792). Although this value indicates a strong relationship, it remains below the critical threshold of 0.80 or 0.90, which typically signals severe multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010). Consequently, discriminant validity is supported, and multicollinearity is not considered a threat to the regression analysis.

Table N° 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Brand Credibility	1					
2. Brand Integrity & Trustworthiness	-0.061	1				
3. Packaging & Presentation Quality	0.561**	0.230*	1			
4. Product Quality Perception	0.477**	-0.152	0.106	1		
5. Product Reliability	-0.053	0.792**	0.140	-0.137	1	
6. Purchase Intention	0.551**	0.500**	0.603**	0.486**	0.283**	1

*Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Source: Prepared by the authors based on SmartPLS 4 data.

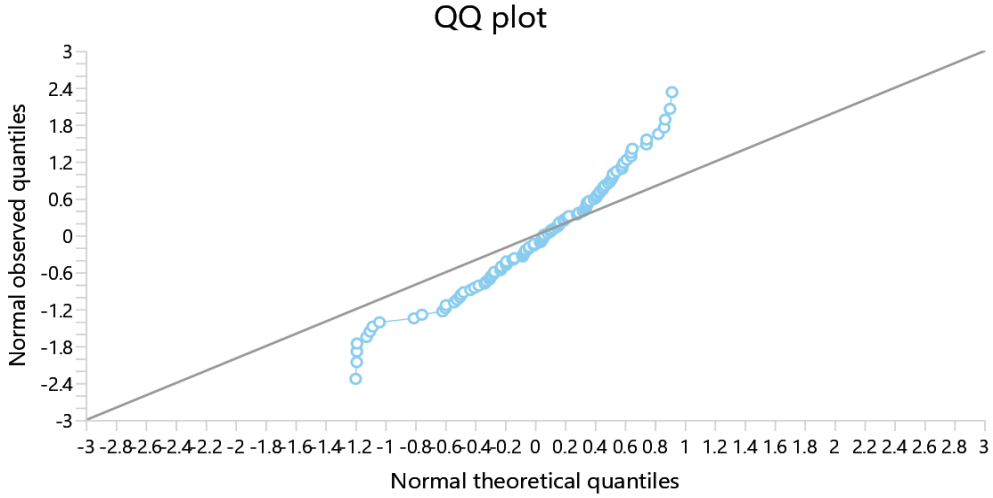
3.2 Verification of Regression Assumptions

Before interpreting the regression coefficients, a series of diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the underlying assumptions of multiple linear regression. These assumptions include the normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, linearity, and the absence of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019).

3.2.1. Normality of Residuals

The normality of the error terms was assessed visually using the Normal Probability Plot (P-P Plot) and the residual histogram. As illustrated in Figure 1, the observed values adhere closely to the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals follow a normal distribution. Furthermore, the skewness (−0.622) and kurtosis (−0.104) values of the residuals (see descriptive statistics) fell well within the acceptable range of ±2, confirming that the assumption of normality is satisfied.

Figure N° 1: Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residuals.



Source: SmartPLS 4 output

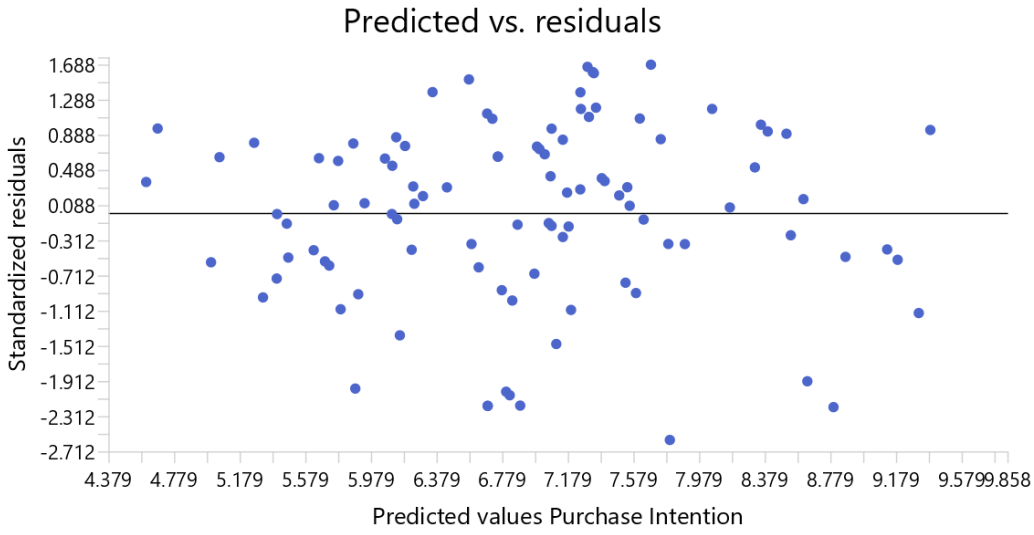
3.2.2. Homoscedasticity (Homogeneity of Variance)

Homoscedasticity implies that the variance of residual error should be constant for all values of the independent variables. This assumption was

tested both visually and statistically. Visual inspection of the scatterplot of standardized residuals against predicted values (Figure 2) reveals a random dispersion of points around zero, with no discernable funnel shape or pattern.

To confirm this statistical validity, the Breusch-Pagan test was performed. The results yielded a test statistic of 4.037 with a p-value of 0.544. Since the p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05 , we fail to reject the null hypothesis, thereby confirming that the data is homoscedastic and the variance of errors is constant.

Figure N° 2: Scatterplot of standardized residuals vs. predicted values.



Source: SmartPLS 4 output

3.2.3. Multicollinearity Assessment

To ensure that the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other, Collinearity Statistics were examined using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance levels. As presented in Table 3, the VIF values for all predictors ranged from 1.373 to 2.880, which are consistently below the conservative threshold of 3.0 (and well below the common threshold of 10). This indicates that multicollinearity is not a concern in this study.

Table 3: Collinearity Statistics (VIF and Tolerance)

Independent Variables	Tolerance	VIF
Brand Credibility	0.492	2.033
Brand Integrity & Trustworthiness	0.347	2.880
Packaging & Presentation Quality	0.588	1.701
Product Quality Perception	0.728	1.373
Product Reliability	0.370	2.701

Note: Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on SmartPLS 4 data.

3.3. Evaluation of the Structural Model

Having confirmed the validity of the regression assumptions, the structural model was assessed to determine its overall predictive power and statistical significance. The evaluation primarily focused on the coefficient of determination (R_2), the adjusted R_2 , and the F-test derived from the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

As presented in Table 4, the ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F=71.058$, $p<0.001$). This confirms that the combination of the five independent variables significantly predicts the dependent variable, Purchase Intention.

Regarding explanatory power, the model yielded an R_2value of 0.791, with an adjusted R_2 of 0.780. This implies that the predictors (Brand Credibility, Brand Integrity & Trustworthiness, Packaging & Presentation Quality, Product Quality Perception, and Product Reliability) collectively account for 79.1% of the variance in Purchase Intention. According to scholarly standards (e.g., Cohen, 1988; Chin, 1998), R_2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 are described as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. Therefore, the obtained R_2 of 0.791 demonstrates a substantial level of predictive accuracy.

Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson statistic was calculated to test for autocorrelation in the residuals. The value obtained was 2.449, which falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5 (Field, 2013), confirming the independence of errors and the stability of the model.

Table 4: Structural Model Fit Summary

Metric	Value	Threshold / Criterion	Decision
R_2	0.791	>0.67 (Substantial)^a^	High Predictive Power
Adjusted R_2	0.780	-	-
ANOVA (F-value)	71.058	p<0.05	Significant
Significance (p)	0.000	<0.001	Significant
Durbin-Watson	2.449	1.5<d<2.5	No Autocorrelation

Note: ^a^ Thresholds based on Cohen (1988).

Source: Authors' calculation based on SmartPLS 4 (Regression Analysis).

3.4. Hypothesis Testing

To test the proposed research hypotheses and validate the statistical significance of the path coefficients, a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure was performed using SmartPLS 4 (with 5,000 subsamples, bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) confidence intervals). This method ensures that the significance levels are robust and not solely dependent on distributional assumptions.

The standardized path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values are summarised in Table 5. The results reveal that four out of the five predictors have a significant positive influence on Purchase Intention, while one predictor shows a significant negative effect.

Specifically, Brand Integrity & Trustworthiness emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention (β=0.697), with the bootstrapping results confirming its high statistical significance (p<0.001). This provides strong empirical support for H_2. Similarly, Product Quality Perception demonstrated a substantial positive impact (β=0.432,p<0.001), supporting H_4.

Furthermore, Packaging & Presentation Quality was found to have a moderate yet highly significant positive effect on purchase intention

(β=0.323,p<0.001), supporting H_3. Brand Credibility also showed a positive and significant relationship (β=0.192,p=0.001), thereby supporting H_1.

Interestingly, Product Reliability exhibited a significant but negative relationship with purchase intention (β=−0.245,p=0.002), which contradicts the anticipated positive direction. This finding suggests a potential suppression effect or a nuanced consumer perception within the specific context of this study, thus H_5 is statistically significant but in the opposite direction.

Table N°5: Hypothesis Testing Results (Bootstrapping)

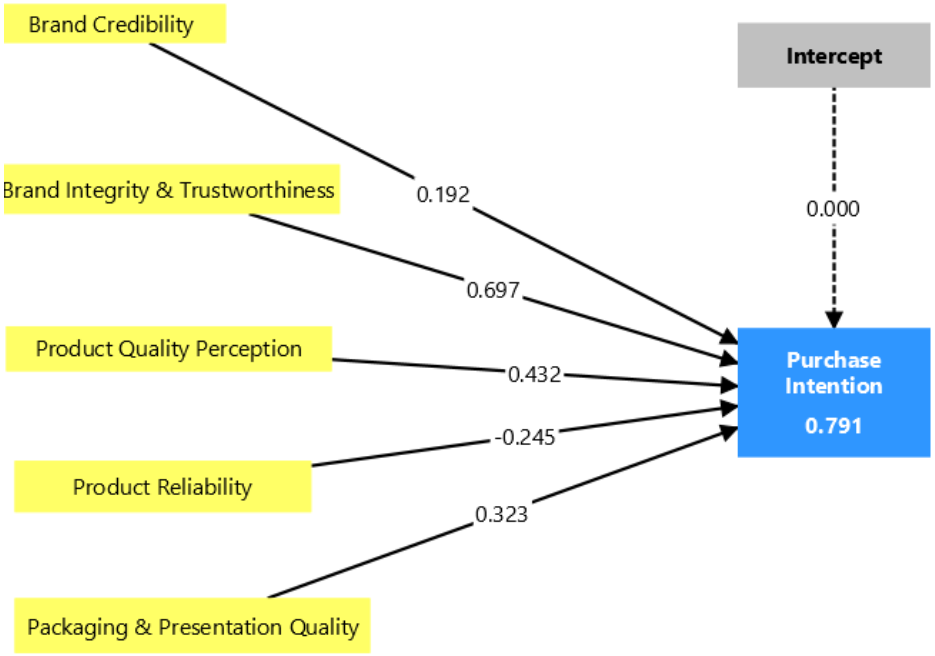
Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Std. Beta	T-Value	P-Value	95% CI	Decision
H_1	Brand Credibility →→ Purchase Intention	0.192	3.218	0.001	[0.075, 0.313]	Supported
H_2	Brand Integrity →→ Purchase Intention	0.697	6.573	0.000	[0.500, 0.920]	Supported
H_3	Packaging & Presentation →→ Purchase Intention	0.323	5.116	0.000	[0.199, 0.447]	Supported
H_4	Product Quality Perception →→ Purchase Intention	0.432	7.453	0.000	[0.318, 0.548]	Supported
H_5	Product Reliability →→ Purchase Intention	-0.245	3.036	0.002	[-0.425, -0.104]	Supported (Negative)

Note : <small>Notes: Std. Beta = Standardized Path Coefficient; CI = Bias-Corrected 95% Confidence Interval [Lower Bound, Upper Bound]; Significance estimates (T-Value and P-Value) are based on a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples.</small>

Source: Authors' calculation based on SmartPLS 4 (Regression Analysis).

The graphical representation of the structural model, including path coefficients and significance levels, is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure N° 3: Structural model results showing path coefficients (β) and R_2 value.



Source: SmartPLS 4 output

Based on the structural model assessment and the significant path coefficients obtained (see Table 5), the final estimated regression equation for predicting Purchase Intention (PI) can be formulated using the standardized coefficients as follows:

$$PI=0.192(BC)+0.697(BI)+0.323(PP)+0.432(PQ)-0.245(PR)$$

Note: The equation utilizes standardized coefficients (β) to illustrate the relative strength and direction of each independent variable's impact on Purchase Intention.

4. Discussion

This study set out to examine the determinants of purchase intention (PI) towards Laghouat Mills products by simultaneously assessing brand-related dimensions (credibility and integrity) and product-related attributes (perceived quality, reliability, and packaging). The findings demonstrate that

brand integrity and trustworthiness, perceived product quality, packaging quality, and brand credibility positively influence purchase intention, while product reliability exerts a significant but negative effect.

The model explains a substantial proportion of variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.791$), indicating strong predictive power and reinforcing the central role of intangible brand assets and perceived quality cues in shaping consumer behaviour within the Algerian agri-food sector.

4.1 Brand Credibility and Purchase Intention

The positive and significant impact of brand credibility ($\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.001$) aligns with signalling theory and prior empirical evidence suggesting that credible brands reduce perceived risk and information asymmetry. Erdem and Swait (2004) argue that brand credibility-defined as the believability of a brand's product information-enhances consumer confidence and increases purchase likelihood by lowering perceived uncertainty. Their empirical work demonstrates that credible brands generate higher choice probabilities across product categories.

Similarly, Baek, Kim, and Yu (2010) found that brand credibility positively influences perceived quality and purchase intention, particularly in competitive markets where consumers rely on brand cues as heuristics.

In the context of Laghouat Mills, credibility likely functions as a reassurance mechanism in a market increasingly characterised by private-label and imported competitors. Consumers may interpret brand competence and consistency as signals of product safety and authenticity, which are particularly salient in food-related purchases.

4.2 Brand Integrity, Trustworthiness, and Purchase Intention

Brand integrity emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention ($\beta = 0.697$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with relationship marketing theory, which posits that trust is a cornerstone of long-term exchange relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).Trust reduces perceived vulnerability and fosters commitment, thereby increasing behavioural intentions. In a consumer-brand context, Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001)

demonstrated that brand trust significantly affects both purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Within the agri-food industry, integrity may be particularly influential because food consumption involves health and safety considerations. Algerian consumers may associate ethical conduct, transparency, and honesty with product safety and regulatory compliance. Thus, integrity becomes not merely a reputational asset but a risk-reduction mechanism.

4.3 Perceived Product Quality and Purchase Intention

The strong positive effect of perceived product quality ($\beta = 0.432$, $p < 0.001$) corroborates foundational work by Zeithaml (1988), who conceptualised perceived quality as a consumer's judgement about a product's overall excellence.Perceived quality has consistently been shown to drive behavioural intentions across industries. For example, Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991) found that perceived quality significantly influences purchase intention, mediating the effects of price and brand information.

In FMCG contexts, quality perception is often formed through prior consumption experience, sensory evaluation, and brand reputation. For Laghouat Mills, high mean scores for perceived quality suggest that consumers recognise the intrinsic performance of the product, reinforcing repeat purchase intentions.

4.4 Packaging and Presentation Quality

Packaging and presentation quality also demonstrated a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.323$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with research highlighting packaging as a critical extrinsic cue influencing consumer decision-making at the point of sale. Silayoi and Speece (2007) argue that visual and informational elements of packaging directly affect consumer evaluation and purchase decisions, especially in low-involvement product categories. Moreover, Underwood and Klein (2002) showed that packaging communicates brand personality and enhances product perceptions.

In the Algerian milling context, where products may appear functionally similar, packaging differentiation can serve as a strategic tool to

capture attention and convey modernity, hygiene, and quality assurance.

4.5 The Unexpected Negative Effect of Product Reliability

Contrary to hypothesis H5, product reliability exhibited a significant negative relationship with purchase intention ($\beta = -0.245$, $p = 0.002$). Theoretically, reliability-defined as consistency and dependability-should enhance behavioural intention (Garvin, 1987). However, this unexpected direction may be interpreted in several ways. First, a suppression effect may exist due to the strong correlation between brand integrity and reliability ($r = 0.792$). When both constructs are entered simultaneously, shared variance may distort the coefficient sign.

Second, consumers may implicitly associate "reliability" with product standardisation rather than superior quality. In traditional food markets, some consumers may prioritise freshness, authenticity, or artisanal attributes over strict uniformity.

Third, cultural context may moderate the reliability–intention relationship. Research by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) indicates that emotional brand trust often exerts stronger behavioural influence than purely performance-based evaluations. Thus, in this study, affective trust dimensions (integrity) may overshadow cognitive performance assessments (reliability).

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the determinants of purchase intention towards Laghouat Mills products by integrating brand-related dimensions (credibility and integrity) and product-related attributes (perceived quality, reliability, and packaging quality) within a unified structural model. The empirical findings demonstrate substantial explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.791$), confirming that both intangible brand assets and tangible product cues significantly shape consumer behavioural intentions in the Algerian agri-food context.

The results indicate that brand integrity and trustworthiness constitute the most influential predictor of purchase intention, followed by perceived product quality, packaging quality, and brand credibility. These findings underscore the central role of trust-based brand management and quality

perception in reinforcing consumer confidence and purchase propensity. Conversely, product reliability exhibited a significant but negative effect, suggesting the presence of contextual or statistical dynamics that warrant further scholarly investigation.

In light of the findings, several strategic implications emerge for Laghouat Mills:

- Prioritise brand integrity and transparent communication to strengthen consumer trust and long-term relational commitment.
- Enhance packaging design and informational clarity to increase product attractiveness and competitive differentiation at the point of sale.
- Sustain and communicate superior perceived quality as a core value proposition.
- Reassess the positioning of product reliability, ensuring that it complements rather than dilutes perceived value and brand differentiation.

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