

Research Article

The Effect of Country of Origin and Price on Purchase Intention Mediated by Trust: A Study on Mixue Global Franchising Consumers in Malang City

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Abstract: This study investigates the effect of Country of Origin and Price towards Purchase Intentions, with trust serving as a mediating variable among consumers of Mixue Global Franchising. This study adopts an explanatory research design with a quantitative approach, utilizing online surveys distributed to 150 respondents for data collection. The data is analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method. The results of this research show that country of origin, price, and trust have a significant effect on purchase intention. Trust is also able to strengthen the relationship between the country of origin towards purchase intention and the relationship between price towards purchase intention. These findings suggest that Mixue has the potential to emphasize its strength by implementing a branding strategy that highlights its advantages, encourages positive reviews on social media to increase trust, and uses marketing strategies to attract consumers by providing promotions such as discounts or bundling to increase consumers' purchase intentions.

Keywords: Country of Origin, Price, Trust, Purchase Intention.

I. INTRODUCTION

Trade in products and services has experienced rapid development that caused many foreign brands to enter the Indonesian market. This is due to the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement, which makes it easier for foreign investors or franchisees when enter the Indonesian market. Indonesia has the largest portion of foreign franchises, estimated at around 67% [1].

Currently, the franchises that are developing and favored by the Indonesian people are mostly in the food and beverage sector, with a dominance of 56 percent of the total foreign franchises that are registered and operating in Indonesia [2]. One of the foreign franchises registered in Indonesia and currently making massive and expansive penetration is Mixue, a beverage company originating from China. As a new foreign beverage provider in Indonesia, the uniqueness of Mixue's business and massive and expansive growth are interesting to examine.

Based on the numbers distributed, in fact Mixue outlets dominate the market. However, other competitors such as Chatime, Xiboba, Ai-Cha, Mamoyo, and Cooler City are also competing for consumers and impact its sales. The number of competitors that appear is very important for the sustainability of Mixue, especially from the consumer side regarding their interest in purchasing.

This problem caused Mixue's revenue to decrease from IDR 220,178,892,900 at the start of its hype in 2021 to IDR 52,904,133,980 in 2022 [3]. Several Mixue branches in various places in Indonesia have reportedly closed. The resilience and sustainability of Mixue are starting to become a question mark, even though it is still operating, its popularity is not like what it was when it first appeared.

Based on the data presented previously, Mixue needs to focus on increasing purchasing intentions for the new customer share, one of which is by assessing consumer's intentions and assessing the attractiveness of the brand from external factors that consumers can evaluate before making a purchase, such as country of origin image, price, and consumers' trust of Mixue that lead towards purchase intention. In the context of sustainable marketing, increasing purchase intentions is very important. It has been proven to have a positive impact on business sustainability, as this can drive demand for products and services [4][5]. Therefore, it is necessary to review what is behind consumer behavior so that they are interested in making a purchase.

This study is explanatory research examined using a quantitative analysis approach. Aimed to understand the effect between country of origin and price towards purchase intention using trust as mediation variables. Primary data is fully taken from collected samples, and secondary data are obtained from empirical results.



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A) Consumer Behavior

In the present study, consumer behavior is defined as the processes by which individuals or groups select, purchase, utilize, or discard goods, services, concepts, or encounters in order to satisfy their requirements and wants [6]. Kotler & Lee [7] also revealed that consumer behavior in making purchasing decisions is influenced by several factors, namely cultural, social, personal and psychological. The essence of the consumer behavior model, according to Philip Kotler, is that there is stimulation that consumers receive. Then, there is a response that Stimuli are carried out by consumers in the form of a marketing mix, including price and product, along with other stimuli that can influence consumers. However, the role of these factors can be different for each product, considering the characteristics of consumers in the decision-making process. That's why marketers must really take this into account to develop marketing strategies.

B) Theory of Reasoned Action

Behavior can be derived from a combination of consumer attitudes towards the product and subjective norms regarding that behavior. Quoted by Maichum et al. [8], attitude is an interaction in memory between a particular object and an evaluation summary of that object. An essential factor impacting the desire of customers to purchase products is a strong positive attitude, which has been found to have a bigger impact on product purchases [9]. Attitude will most likely reveal consumers' psychological assessment of a product [10].

Through the concept of 'subjective norms' this theory recognizes the power of other people in influencing behavior [11]; it takes into account other people's views on a particular behavior and is moderated by the extent to which consumers are motivated to adhere to those views. Subjective norms are the perceived societal pressures to act in certain ways or not [12]. According to research by Zukin & Maguire [13], social norms have a significant impact on purchasing. Furthermore, human behavior is guided by the expectations of other people, such as friends, family, the surrounding environment, and social norms [14].

C) Country of Origin

COO is the "nationality" of a food and beverage product when it enters a foreign country [15]. Many factors impact international markets, including product evaluation. Factors such as brand name, country perception and many country of origin parameters are said to be the most important because they have a significant influence on this competitive market [16] [17]. Quoted from Lin & Chen [18] COO creates customer stereotypes from one particular country. Consumers have different perceptions about the country of origin of products which is gradually becoming one of the main issues in marketing throughout the world. Consumer purchasing preferences are a function of their cognitive activities, especially the perception and evaluation of their products [19] [20]. Therefore, the Country of Origin (COO) can influence preferences and purchase intentions [21] [22].

COO brand reputation is also often associated with a product intrinsic signal [23] [24]. The perception of the image of a particular country can change the way trust is built. Therefore, among the factors that generate trust, reputation as an evaluation criterion occupies a prominent position, especially as a generator of trust for foreign products [25] [26] [27] [28]. Various researchers such as Jimenez [29], Abdelrahman & Lehota [30] and Michaelis et al. [31] have found that Country of Origin can facilitate higher levels of trust.

H₁: Country of origin has a significant effect on purchase intention

H₃: Country of origin has a significant effect on trust

D) Price

Price is perceived by customers as a fair amount they are prepared to pay for a product that meets their needs and will benefit them [32]. Price reveals how much it will cost to buy goods and considerably influences customers' attitudes and purchasing intentions for various types of services or products [33] [34].

Currently, affordable prices are one of the key factors that attract consumers to brand products, leading to increased purchase intentions [35]. However, the amount that consumers pay should be appropriate for the product they get [36].

H₂: Price has a significant effect on purchase intention

H₄: Price has a significant effect on trust

E) Trust

Consumer trust has become a concern for foreign companies to enter global trade, because trust can affect consumers' propensity to buy. It can help companies to overcome strong competition in the global [16]. From the standpoint of the customer, trust is a critical component of effective relational exchanges in global marketplaces. [37]. Research shows that the

existence of trust will make people achieve a tendency to buy. In the long-term future effects, trust will increase consumer satisfaction and reduce consumer uncertainty [38] [29].

H₅: Trust has a significant effect on purchase intention

H₆: Trust mediates the effect between country of origin and purchase intention

H₇: Trust mediates the effect between price and purchase intention

F) Purchase Intention

Intention represents a person's motivation and decision to carry out a behavior or action [39]. In addition, purchase intention is the consumer's willingness to buy goods or services to fulfill needs or satisfy desires, which is influenced by various factors or situations faced by consumers. Several factors that can influence purchasing interest are price, product quality, and brand name [40]. Consumer Preferences and Purchase Intentions are a function of consumers' cognitive activities, especially their product perception and evaluation [19] [41] [20]. Customers' intentions to buy can be influenced by a number of things, including their emotions and moods. Customers' intentions to buy something can be strengthened when they have high expectations for a good or service, but they may decide not to buy if their expectations are not realized [42].

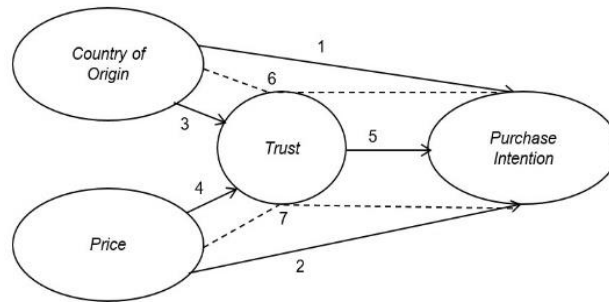


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

This research adopts an explanatory approach with a quantitative method, focusing on exploring the relationships between variables using a Likert scale instrument that has a range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The study's target population includes consumers of Mixue Global Franchising, with the sample consisting of 150 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The criteria of respondents are people who know Mixue and currently live in Malang City with the age of 18 or above. After the data was collected, Structural Equation Modelling by Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) were used to analyze extracted data.

Each variable in this study utilizes indicators that have been adapted from Lin and Chen [18], Bulibuli *et al.* [43], Martin and Eroglu [44] for country of origin; Lichtenstein *et al.* [45] and Diamantopoulos *et al.* [27] for price; Jan Hofstede *et al.* [26] and Xuan and Cheng [46] for trust; Dodds *et al.* [47], Klein *et al.* [48] and Meshreki *et al.* [49] for purchase intention.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A) Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 shows respondent characteristics. Based on gender, potential Mixue customers are dominated by female (57%). These results are not too different between females and males, but it shows that females tend to be more up-to-date and aware of the latest trends and brands that are present in their surroundings compared to males. Based on the age range, it is known that the majority of potential Mixue customers are in the range of 18-25 years old, which is Gen Z (71%). These results show that Gen Z dominates the respondents of this study; this age group is productive age and is more active in following new trends in the surrounding environment, then in this age group, each individual has the capacity to purchase affordable Mixue, and This is influenced by the individual's desire to enjoy beverages products from the Mixue brand, such as various types of ice cream and tea which are popular among young people. Based on income level, it is known that the majority of potential Mixue customers are in the income range < IDR 3.000.000 (51%). Actually, it shows that products from the Mixue brand are in demand from all social class proxies. The affordable prices also make products from the Mixue even dominated by enthusiasts from lower incomes, even though this product is not a convenience good needed in everyday life; however, Other social class proxies such as lower middle income, upper middle income and higher income also have interest in products from the Mixue, because in this research there is also diversification of respondents from all social class proxies where all groups can enjoy Mixue products. Based on how respondents know about Mixue products, it is known that the majority of potential customers know Mixue brand directly (36%), followed by potential customers who know Mixue from social media or the internet (33%), and then followed by potential customers who know Mixue from friends or relatives (31%). These results are actually not too different from one discovery method to another, but this proves that Mixue is well-known everywhere, and the strong influence

from information on social media or from friends or relatives in the environment ultimately influences people to increase awareness about Mixue and discover the existence of this brand.

Table 1: Demographic Respondents

	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	65	43
	Female	85	57
Age	18-25	106	71
	26-33	23	15
	34-41	10	7
	42-55	7	5
	>55	4	3
Income Level	< IDR 3.000.000	76	51
	IDR 3.000.000 – IDR 5.000.000	39	26
	IDR 5.000.001 – IDR 10.000.000	24	16
	> IDR 10.000.000	11	7
Consumers' Product Knowledge	Directly discover	52	36
	Discover from social media	49	33
	Discover from relatives	47	31

B) Measurement Model Analysis

The measurement of validity analysis involves evaluating the outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) using SmartPLS 3.0. The results of this validity analysis are presented below.

Table 2: Validity Analysis

Measurement Item(s)	Convergent Validity		Discriminant Validity	
	Outer Loading	Result	AVE	Result
<i>Country of Origin</i>			0.645	
I feel that beverage products originating from China use the latest manufacturing technology	0.712	Valid		Valid
I feel that beverage products originating from China have good quality	0.831	Valid		Valid
I feel confident in consuming beverages products that come from China	0.799	Valid		Valid
I feel that beverage products originating from China are reliable products.	0.863	Valid		Valid
<i>Price</i>			0.656	
I feel that the composition stated on the Mixue product is appropriate for the offered price	0.792	Valid		Valid
I feel that the price offered by Mixue is more worth it after I compare it with other competitors	0.799	Valid		Valid
I feel that the price of Mixue products is affordable	0.797	Valid		Valid
I feel that the price of Mixue products is reasonable.	0.850	Valid		Valid
<i>Trust</i>			0.567	
I believe in Mixue because it has good reviews from my friends	0.770	Valid		Valid
I believe in Mixue because it is a well-known brand	0.743	Valid		Valid
The clarity regarding the product composition information offered by Mixue made me believe it	0.779	Valid		Valid
Mixue's halal certification makes me feel safe in consuming its products.	0.719	Valid		Valid
<i>Purchase Intention</i>			0.697	
I have the likelihood to purchase Mixue products	0.888	Valid		Valid
I am considering purchasing Mixue products	0.736	Valid		Valid
I am willing to buy Mixue products	0.872	Valid		Valid

As shown in Table 2, the outer loading scores from each item in country of origin, price, trust, and purchase intention scored more than 0.7, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) also scored above 0.5, which was confirmed as valid. Thus, this result fulfills the prerequisite for subsequent analysis. The assessment of reliability analysis is by examining the value of composite reliability scores and Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Country of Origin	0.815	0.878
Price	0.825	0.884
Trust	0.745	0.840
Purchase Intention	0.786	0.873

Table 3 displays the composite reliability value for each variable exceeding 0.7, along with Cronbach's alpha value also exceeding 0.7. Consequently, it is concluded that all items are considered reliable.

C) Structural Model Test

The inner model analysis predicts the causality between variables using the determinant coefficient (R²), predictive relevance (Q²), and goodness of fit. The determinant coefficient on each variable was assessed, with purchase intention exhibiting a good score (0.535) followed by trust (0.518). The level of predictive relevance in this study is 0.776, which indicates robust and strong predictive capability as it is nearly approaching a value of 1. As for goodness of fit, the result scores 0.581 and has surpassed the value of 0.36, which is included in the large GoF category. It affirms that this research model is classified as a good model.

D) Hypothesis Test

The direct impact can be observed through the t-statistic and p-value between variables using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS 3.0. Hypotheses were considered significant if the t-statistic score exceeded 1.97 with a significance of 5% and the p-value was less than 0.05.

Table 4: Direct Hypothesis Testing

Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	Result
Country of Origin → Purchase Intention	0.159	2.008	0.045	Accepted
Price → Purchase Intention	0.348	4.619	0.000	Accepted
Country of Origin → Trust	0.429	6.191	0.000	Accepted
Price → Trust	0.377	4.687	0.000	Accepted
Trust → Purchase Intention	0.331	3.805	0.000	Accepted

Table 4 explains direct hypothesis testing: country of origin has a significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.159$; $t = 2.008$; $p < 0.05$), whereas price has a significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.348$; $t = 4.619$; $p < 0.05$), and trust has a significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.331$; $t = 3.805$; $p < 0.05$). As a result, H1, H2, and H5 are supported. Both country of origin and price also significantly affect trust ($\beta = 0.429$; $t = 6.191$; $p < 0.05$ and $\beta = 0.377$; $t = 4.687$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, it also supported H3 and H4.

The examination of indirect effects in hypothesis testing involves analyzing the path coefficient scores and assessing the significance through t-statistics and p-values derived from the original sample data.

Table 5: Indirect Hypothesis Testing

Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	Result
Country of Origin → Trust → Purchase Intention	0.142	3.334	0.001	Accepted
Price → Trust → Purchase Intention	0.125	2.607	0.009	Accepted

According to Table 5, the result of the indirect effect of trust between country of origin to purchase intention ($\beta = 0.142$; $t = 3.334$; $p < 0.05$) and trust between price to purchase intention ($\beta = 0.125$; $t = 2.607$; $p < 0.05$) show mediating effect towards purchase intention. Trust is found to partially mediate the relationship between country of origin and purchase intention, as well as between price and purchase intention. Consequently, hypotheses H6 and H7 are supported based on these findings.

E) Discussion

The results of this research contribute to concepts related to country of origin image, price, trust, and purchase intention. This research can be used as a reference for studies related to foreign businesses or franchises operating in local areas with the topic of country of origin image and price in influencing purchase intentions with customer trust as mediation. This research shows several things that will increase consumers' purchasing intentions towards foreign franchises, especially in the food and beverages sector. Purchase intention is explained through the grand theory of consumer behavior regarding how individuals or groups choose, buy, use or dispose of a product to fulfill needs and desires, which are influenced by several factors, namely cultural, social and personal. This is also related to the theory of reasoned action, where behavioral intentions are derived from

a combination of consumers' personal attitudes based on product evaluations as well as subjective norms or the power of other people and the social environment in influencing behavior, which in this research is the intention to buy a product.

The results of this research show that country of origin image is proven to be a factor that can increase consumer purchasing intentions. Based on the results of this research, it is also shown that the country of origin image can increase purchase intentions directly or indirectly through the mediation of customer trust. Empirically, this research supports previous research proposed by Yunus & Rashid [50], Chen et al. [51], and Al-Aali et al. [52], which stated conclusions showing that country of origin has a direct effect on purchase intention. Research by Rezvani et al. [16] also supports this, concluding that the country of origin influences purchase intentions because the image of the country of origin is an extrinsic cue that influences consumer perceptions of the product and overall product evaluation.

Prices are explained through indicators, including price consciousness and value consciousness. In this research, the results found that price is proven to be a dominant factor in consumer evaluation before purchasing and can increase purchase intentions directly or indirectly through the mediation of consumer trust. Empirically, the results of this research support the theory put forward by Hati et al. [34], who conducted research in Indonesia with the aim of finding out the effect of price on purchase intentions. The findings in this research show that price has a positive effect on purchase intentions, and lower prices tend to influence consumers' purchase intentions more than other factors. In research by Chong et al. [53] conducted in Malaysia using SEM-PLS analysis also concluded that price can have a significant influence on consumer purchasing intentions. A similar thing was also found in Calvo-Porral & Lévy-Mangin [54] that price influences consumers' purchasing intentions. So, based on the evaluation of the price offered, the better the affordability of a product and the more appropriate the value that consumers take into account to get the desired product, the higher their intention to buy it will be.

Trust is explained using reputation, certification and specification indicators, which have an impact on consumer purchasing intentions. This shows that when consumer confidence increases, consumer purchasing intentions will also increase. This is in line with the findings of research conducted by Al-ekam [55] which used SEM-PLS involving 711 respondents in Yemen, showing that trust has a significant effect on consumer purchase intentions. Likewise, research conducted by Karunasingha and Abeysekera [56] shows that trust has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase intentions. Research conducted by Wu et al. [57] produced conclusions that support the influence of trust on purchase intentions, where initial trust plays a key role in the purchase process. Buyers who have a high initial trust tend to perceive higher value and spend less time completing the transaction. This strengthens the relationship between trust and purchase intention.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that two independent variables, namely country of origin and price, significantly affect purchase intention. Trust is also proven to partially mediate the connection between country of origin to purchase intention and price to purchase intention. To maximize the potential of its country of origin image, Mixue can emphasize its strength by implementing a branding strategy through advertising that highlights Mixue's historical advantages. Then, in terms of price, promotions can be added, such as bundling, buy 1 get 1, or discounts to increase the attraction for potential consumers. In terms of trust, Mixue can increase the trust aspect by utilizing social media by encouraging product reviews from influencers (food vloggers) and consumers who have tried it before, which has a positive impact on the reputation and clarity of product information so that the trust gained from potential customers will be greater.

As a suggestion, further research could explore the association of halal values, particularly in the food and beverages industry. And another variable, such as loyalty, may be considered for future research to examine the continuity of consumers' purchase intention. Subsequent research is also expected to broaden the scope of the study by including foreign franchise objects with a national scope to achieve broader findings.

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