

# How Country of Origin and Brand Image Shape Consumer Purchase Intention in the Skincare Market

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## ABSTRACT

The skincare industry has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by increasing consumer awareness of personal care and product quality. In this competitive market, consumer perceptions play a crucial role in shaping purchasing decisions. Among the various factors influencing consumer behavior, country of origin and brand image are considered important determinants that affect how consumers evaluate skincare products and form purchase intentions. This research adopts a quantitative approach by collecting primary data through structured questionnaires distributed to consumers who are familiar with skincare products. The study examines how perceptions related to the origin of a product and the overall image of the brand influence consumer trust, product evaluation, and ultimately their intention to purchase. The data are analyzed using statistical methods to evaluate the relationships among the research variables and to determine the extent to which country of origin and brand image contribute to shaping consumer purchase intentions. The findings indicate that both country of origin and brand image have a significant influence on consumer purchase intention. Products originating from countries perceived to have strong reputations in the cosmetics industry tend to generate higher levels of consumer trust and positive product evaluations.

**Keywords:** Consumer Perception, Purchase Intention, Country of Origin, Brand Image

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## INTRODUCTION

Changes are constantly happening, and to address these changes, adjustments must be made by both large and small companies. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, major shifts occurred in the fields of economics, socio-culture, and health. Companies had to adapt their operational activities to stay relevant and continue to grow. This included changes in product demand, procurement of raw materials, and operational methods shifting more towards digital approaches. This was especially true for the marketing sector, which needed to consider changes in consumer needs, affecting demand. People, who limited their time outside, chose to use their digital devices to seek information and make transactions. Although the pandemic has passed, behaviors from the New Normal era have remained embedded in society.

If we examine consumer behavior regarding beauty products, significant changes have also taken place. Consumers have become more attentive to health and personal care. Several media outlets have reported that since the pandemic, consumers have preferred skincare products over cosmetics (Ngantung, 2020; Trilatifah, 2020). This skincare routine habit has continued, and the routine use of cosmetics has returned to pre-pandemic levels now that outdoor activities have normalized. Public awareness of skin health is increasing, especially among people in large cities with high pollution levels. Both men and women need skin care, from facial skin to other areas of the body. Skin care has become essential, as it can impact their overall health. Many companies offer skincare products through advertisements and other promotions across various online and offline media. However, there are still few business owners who understand their consumers well enough, needing insight into the most influential factors that drive consumers to purchase their products. Various studies have been conducted to explore this, including research on the effects of country of origin (COO) perception, brand image, and perceived quality on consumers' purchase intentions.

To better understand skincare consumers, it is essential to identify what drives them to purchase a product. Typically, consumers seek more information before making a purchase (Ghalandari et al., 2012), paying attention to intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the product. Intrinsic factors include all information directly related to the product, while extrinsic factors are more variable and unrelated to the inherent qualities of the product (Rezvani et al., 2017). When knowledge about the intrinsic

qualities of a product is not available, consumers look at the country of origin to make purchasing decisions (Luong et al., 2017; Dreifald et al., 2019). Consumers prefer not to spend too much time researching a product's intrinsic qualities in detail before purchasing but still desire to make informed buying decisions (Javed et al., 2013; Adenan et al., 2018).

The process by which individuals or consumers select, organize, and interpret information—known as perception—is more important than reality itself, as it influences their actual behavior toward the product (Rahmawati, 2016). In other words, perception greatly drives consumer actions toward a product. Research by Luong mentions that the perception of a product's country of origin positively influences consumers' evaluations, showing a positive effect on purchase interest. However, this perception may vary for consumers in different countries (Luong et al., 2017). In another study, the effect of country-of-origin perception was found to have a more significant impact on luxury products than on necessity products (Piron, 2000).

Perceived quality is often closely linked with the effect of country of origin on consumer purchase intent. Research by Lie shows that country of origin, perceived quality, and brand image influence purchase intention for Etude House cosmetic products. The study found that country of origin did not impact the purchase intention for Etude House cosmetics, while perceived quality and brand image had positive effects on purchase intent (Lie et al., 2019). On the other hand, Rezvani's study concluded that overall, country of origin influences purchase intent, although there are still limitations regarding other variables that may impact consumer purchase intent (Rezvani et al., 2012).

Brand influence is often more evident in consumer behavior than the country-of-origin image. Although the country-of-origin image may be less favorable, a brand can sometimes override this because of associations with a particular country (Luong, 2017).

Consumers recognize a product by looking at its intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics. In many cases, a detailed understanding of the product may be lacking, and limited product knowledge leaves consumers uncertain in determining their purchase intentions. To foster purchase intentions, consumers often choose extrinsic factors as a reference for better recognizing the product. Skincare companies need to understand which extrinsic factors most influence their target consumers, allowing them to develop strategies to attract these consumers. The next

steps include determining marketing strategies and tactics, from choosing the right type of promotion and advertising to designing a comprehensive product marketing process that aligns with their target consumers.

## METHOD

Changes are constantly happening, and to address these changes, adjustments must be made by both large and small companies. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, major shifts occurred in the fields of economics, socio-culture, and health. Companies had to adapt their operational activities to stay relevant and continue to grow. This included changes in product demand, procurement of raw materials, and operational methods shifting more towards digital approaches. This was especially true for the marketing sector, which needed to consider changes in consumer needs, affecting demand. People, who limited their time outside, chose to use their digital devices to seek information and make transactions. Although the pandemic has passed, behaviors from the New Normal era have remained embedded in society.

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In many cases, a detailed understanding of the product may be lacking, and limited product knowledge leaves consumers uncertain in determining their purchase intentions. To foster purchase intentions, consumers often choose extrinsic factors as a reference for better recognizing the product. Skincare companies need to understand which extrinsic factors most influence their target consumers, allowing them to develop strategies to attract these consumers. The next steps include determining marketing strategies and tactics, from choosing the right type of promotion and advertising to designing a comprehensive product marketing process that aligns with their target consumers.

This study examines whether there is a direct and indirect influence of country-of-origin perception, brand image perception, and perceived quality perception on the consumer purchase intention variable. Using a quantitative method, it performs a linear regression test with SPSS version 26, and the results will later be translated into managerial implications to meet the expectations of target consumers. Regarding the duration of skincare product use, 53.5% use it every day, 28% rarely or do not use it, and 13% use it when going to places that will be exposed to sunlight. In terms of the purpose of skincare, 40% use it to repair damaged skin, 33% to protect skin from UV rays, and 15.5% to moisturize the skin.

### **Development of Variables X and Y with Several Indicators as Follows:**

#### **X<sub>1</sub>: Country of Origin (4 Indicators)**

In variable X<sub>1</sub>, the indicators consist of country of origin viewed from the perspective of technology, reputation, innovation, and celebrity associations.

#### **X<sub>2</sub>: Perceived Quality (5 Indicators)**

In variable X<sub>2</sub>, the indicators consist of perceived quality as it relates to the product or its attributes being durable, safe to use, aesthetically pleasing in packaging, and high-class.

#### **X<sub>3</sub>: Brand Image (3 Indicators)**

In variable X<sub>3</sub>, the brand image indicators consist of a positive brand image for consumers, quality, and the influence of celebrities using that brand.

**Y: Consumer Purchase Intention (5 Indicators)**

In variable Y, the consumer purchase intention indicators consist of interest in using the product, interest in buying, recommending to others, interest in repurchasing, interest in seeking information, and interest in buying other products from the same brand.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****Table 1. Testing Validity and Reliability**

| Variables                    | Indicators            | R count | R table 5% (200) | Sig. Value | Validity | Cronbach's Alpha |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|------------------|------------|----------|------------------|
| Country of Origin Perception | COO Tech              | 0,725   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    | 0,810            |
|                              | COO Reputation        | 0,714   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                              | COO Inovation         | 0,719   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                              | COO Seleb             | 0,887   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
| Quality Perception           | Durable Qual          | 0,749   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    | 0,793            |
|                              | Safe Qual             | 0,732   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                              | Estetic Qual          | 0,687   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                              | Premium Qual          | 0,797   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
| Brand Image preception       | Brand Image excellent | 0,531   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    | 0,746            |
|                              | Brand Quality         | 0,484   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                              | Brand idol            | 0,895   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                              | Interested in using   | 0,872   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |

| Variables          | Indicators  | R count | R table 5% (200) | Sig. Value | Validity | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--------------------|---|---------|------------------|------------|----------|------------------|
| Consumer Intention | Interested in buying                                  | 0,873   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    | 0,903            |
|                    | Recommending  | 0,898   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                    | Repurchasing  | 0,876   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                    | Interested in seeking information                     | 0,898   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |
|                    | Interested in trying other products of the same brand | 0,896   | 0,1381           | 0,000      | Valid    |                  |

Source: Output SPSS

The calculated r values for the country-of-origin perception variable range from 0.714 to 0.887, for the perceived quality variable range from 0.687 to 0.797, and for the brand perception variable range from 0.484 to 0.895. Cronbach's alpha is used to test reliability, with a threshold that Cronbach's alpha should be higher than 0.6. The obtained Cronbach's alpha values are between 0.746 and 0.875. All variables are valid and reliable, meaning that the data processing tools can be utilized.

Based on descriptive statistics, the mean and standard deviation values are as follows:

**Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation**

| Variable                      | Mean      | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Country of Origin Perception  | 3,42-3.99 | 0.709-0.989    |
| Quality Perception            | 3.73-4.17 | 0.668-0.844    |
| <i>Brand Image</i> Perception | 4.15-4.43 | 0.643-0.671    |

Source: Output SPSS

Thus, the average country of origin perception ranges from 3.42 to 3.99, with a standard deviation ranging from 0.709 to 0.989. The average perceived quality ranges from 3.73 to 4.17, with a standard deviation of 0.668 to 0.844. The average brand perception is between 4.15 and 4.43, with a standard deviation of 0.643 to 0.671, and the average BPOM certificate rating is between 4.01 and 4.23, with a standard deviation of 0.694 to 0.765.

### Hypotheses Tests



**Table 3. Hypotheses Tests**

| Hypothesis | Direct Effect | Indirect Effect | q-Value | Decision |
|------------|---------------|-----------------|---------|----------|
|------------|---------------|-----------------|---------|----------|

|  |       |       |       |  |               |
|--|-------|-------|-------|--|---------------|
| H1: Country of origin perception has an effect on consumer purchase intention. |       |       | 0,163 |  | Not Supported |
| H2: Brand image perception has an effect on consumer purchase intention.       | 0,071 |       | 0,000 |  | Supported     |
| H3: Perceived quality has an effect on consumer purchase intention.            | 0,271 |       | 0,000 |  | Supported     |
| H4: Brand image perception can mediate COO on consumer purchase intention.     | 0,547 | 0,462 | 0,000 |  |               |
| H5: Perceived quality can mediate COO on consumer                              |       | 0,914 | 0,000 |  | Supported     |

Source: Output SPSS

The analysis of the hypotheses from the table above is as follows: H1 not supported means that country of origin perception does not have a direct effect on consumer purchase intention. H2 supported means that brand image perception has a direct effect on consumer purchase intention.

## CONCLUSION

There is also a notion that the image of a country can reflect its technological capabilities in producing goods; however, not all similar products from that country necessarily possess the same level of quality. Certain brands may also use non-natural raw materials or specific chemicals that may not suit all users. Therefore, in general, respondents who are already skincare users consider country of origin as not a primary factor in determining their intention to purchase products for the first time or for repeat purchases, in accordance with research on cosmetic products related to country of origin (Lie et al., 2019), which differs for other products (Permana, 2014). Research by Luong (2019) also mentions that the influence of COO varies for different products, different respondents, and different research timelines. From the perspective of brand perception, it shows a very strong influence in determining consumer purchase intention. A brand can be in the form of a logo or the identity of a product from a company. Brands are often easily remembered by consumers because when they have tried a product before or are about to try it—especially if it is recommended by family or friends—it becomes much easier for potential consumers to recall the brand name when they feel the need to search for that product. Furthermore, survey results indicate that more than 50% of respondents look for skincare products through e-commerce platforms and online advertisements and promotions.

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