

# **The Influence of Trust as Mediation: Between Brand Image and Country of Origin on Fast Food Purchase Decisions**

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of brand image and country of origin on Mixue consumer purchasing decisions through trust as an intervening variable. The population contained in this study are all consumers who have purchased Mixue products in Indonesia. This study uses non probability sampling with purposive sampling technique, because purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2013). The criteria for selecting respondents used in this study are everyone who has purchased Mixue products at least once in the last month, namely in June 2023. The data collection technique in this study was to use a questionnaire (Google Form). Determination of the sample size in this study is based on Roscoe's opinion which states that to determine the sample size, several suggestions can be used, one of which depends on the number of indicators used in all variables formed. The number of sample members must be at least 10 times the number of variables studied. The indicator category in this study amounted to 14 indicators, and the appropriate sample size in the study was between 40 and 180, meaning that the minimum sample was 40 respondents and the maximum was 180 respondents. The results showed that brand image, country of origin, and trust have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. In addition, trust mediates the influence of brand image and country of origin on purchasing decisions.*

**Key Word:** *brand image; country of origin; trust; purchase decision.*

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Date of Submission: 25-06-2023

Date of Acceptance: 05-07-2023

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## **I. Introduction**

The fast food franchise has experienced significant growth since its emergence in the early 1950s. The well-known brands in this industry have successfully spread all over the world and become highly recognized global brands. Based on a report from katadata.co.id in 2021, McDonald's leads as the most global fast food franchise outlets with a total of 40,030 outlets. Subway takes second place with 37,000 outlets, followed by Starbucks with 33,833 outlets (Annur, 2022).

Advances in technology and easier access to information have made Indonesian consumers more aware of new products from abroad. According to Irawan in (Firmansyah, 2018) some Indonesian consumers prefer foreign products to domestic products, because they think the quality is better than Indonesian products. Therefore, it is not surprising that many foreign brands have entered Indonesia to offer their products. One foreign brand that is relatively new and is trying to offer its products in the Indonesian market is Mixue. This brand has gone viral and has become the subject of discussion recently, because this fast-food chain from China is aggressively expanding new outlets in Indonesia (Sandi, 2023).

Mixue is a contemporary drink brand and has many branches spread across Indonesia. The company based in Zhengzhou, Henan, China, currently has more than 300 branches throughout Indonesia. In its own country, until March 2021, Mixue has opened 21,619 branches (Aulia, 2023). This study will discuss the influence of brand image and country of origin on purchasing decisions through trust as variables that are considered to mediate these independent variables.

## **II. Literature Review**

Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) state that consumer behavior is the study of the processes that occur when individuals or groups select, buy, use, or stop using products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy certain wants and needs.

Schiffman and Kanuk, as quoted by Sangadji & Sopiah, (2018, p. 120) define purchasing decisions by choosing between two or more alternatives. Kotler and Armstrong (2016, p. 152), stated five stages that influence the buying decision process, namely need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchasing decisions, and behavior after purchase.

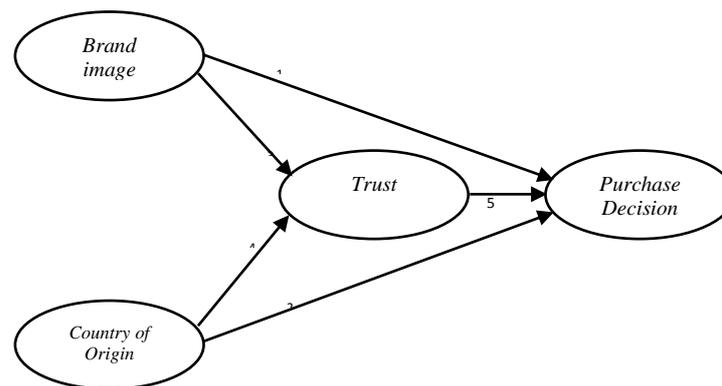
According to Sumarwan in (Sangadji & Sopiah, 2018, p. 201) trust is the strength that a product has certain attributes. Trust is often called object-attribute linkage, namely consumer confidence about the possibility of a relationship between an object and its relevant attributes. While Mowen and Minor in (Firmansyah, 2018) define consumer trust as all knowledge possessed by consumers, and all conclusions made by consumers about objects, attributes, and benefits.

Kotler and Keller (2016, p. 284) explain that brand image is a set of perceptions and beliefs that a person has about a particular brand, which is reflected in brand associations that exist in consumer memory and is retrieved when the brand is mentioned or thought about. According to Caputo (2021), Aaker (2020), and Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, Hansen (2019) quoted in (Wardhana, 2022, p. 109) consumer perceptions of brand image are influenced by information related to brands as well as various types brand associations that exist in the minds of consumers. These various types of brand associations play an important role in shaping brand image, including; Strength of Brand Association, Favorability of Brand Association, and Uniqueness of Brand Association.

Country of origin is defined as a person's mental association and belief in a product that is triggered by the country of origin of the product (Van Der Merwe, 1972, p. 614). Hsieh, Pan, and Setiono (2004) classify that country of origin image can be defined at three levels, namely: (1) Overall country image, (2) Aggregate product country image, and (3) Specific product country image .

### III. Conceptual Model

The variables used in this study consisted of two independent variables, one intervening variable and one dependent variable. Independent variables include brand image, country of origin. The intervening variable is trust. The dependent variable is a purchase decision. Based on these variables, the conceptual framework is as follows.



#### Hypothesis

The influence of brand image on purchasing decisions.

When a brand is considered popular in the minds of consumers with superior product attributes and benefits, consumers will have a satisfied impression and they will evaluate the brand positively. Characteristics or uniqueness of the product that is difficult for competitors to imitate adds to the value of the brand, it is easy to remember because it is different from the others. The research results of Rozjiqin & Ridlwan (2022), Cuong (2022) state that brand image has a significant positive effect on consumer purchasing decisions. Therefore, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis;

H1: brand image influences the purchasing decision of Mixue products.

The influence of country of origin on purchasing decisions

The country of origin of a product that is attached to a brand and company can lead to diverse views. The existence of different consumer stigma in viewing the country of origin of a product/brand/company can affect consumer perceptions and consequently can influence consumers in purchasing decisions. If consumers view a country as positive and in line with their expectations, this will have an impact on consumer actions to decide to buy the product. The results of research by Lin & Chen (2006), Febriyanti & Anik (2016) prove that country of origin image has a significant positive effect on consumer purchasing decisions on the involvement of different products.

H2: country of origin influences purchasing decisions

The influence of brand image on trust

Brand image or brand image is one of the factors that can influence consumer confidence in a brand or product. The more positive the brand image or brand image of a product, the higher the level of consumer confidence in the product. Research by Santoso (2020) and Febriani & Sudaryanto (2018) proves that brand image has a significant positive effect on consumer trust.

H3: brand image has an effect on consumer trust

The influence of country of origin on trust

Country of origin or country of origin of a product can also affect consumer confidence in the product. Consumers tend to view products from certain countries with certain perceptions based on the image or stereotype they have of that country. If their perception is positive about the product's country of origin, consumers are more likely to trust and result in a purchase. The results of research by Jiménez and San Martín (2014) and (Suhaily & Darmoyo, 2017) show that customer trust has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

H4: Country of origin has an effect on trust

The influence of trust on purchasing decisions

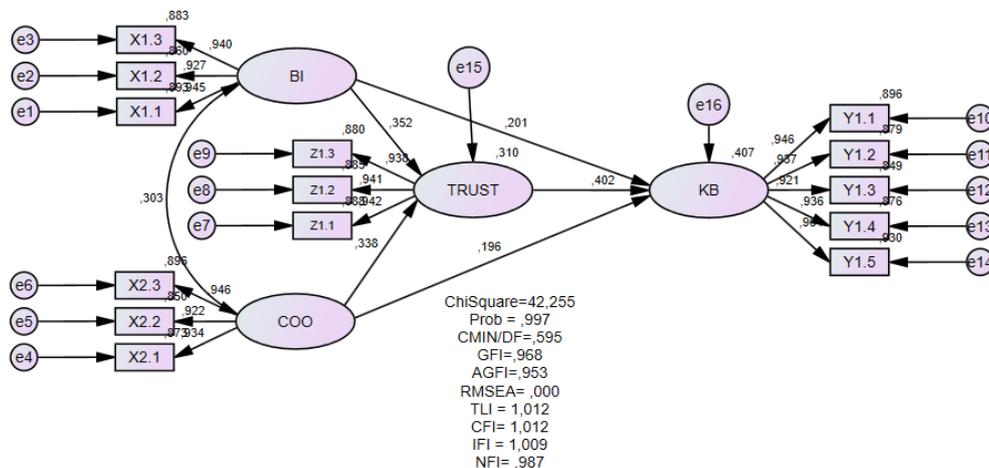
When consumers have high trust in a brand or product, they tend to be more likely to buy that product compared to other brands or products they do not trust. The higher the level of consumer trust in a brand, product, or even a company, the higher the opportunity for consumers to make purchases. Research by Canestren & Saputri (2019) and Solihin (2020) proves that partially the trust variable has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions. So, researchers assume that;

H5: Trust has an effect on purchasing decisions.

IV. Discussion

There were 180 respondents to this study who were consumers who had purchased products from Mixue. The sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling with the criteria of having purchased Mixue products at least once. The results of distributing the questionnaires obtained the characteristics of the respondents as follows.

There were 55 male respondents (30.6%), while 125 female respondents (69.4%). This indicates that the majority of respondents are women. Respondents aged between 17 to 25 years were 85 people (47.2%), aged between 26 to 35 years were 84 people (46.7%), aged between 35 to 45 years were 5 people (2.8%) and aged more than 45 years as many as 6 people (3.3%). This indicates that the majority of respondents are aged between 17 to 25 years. Respondents with the last education at high school/vocational school level were 61 people (33.9%), D1/D2/D3 were 6 people (3.3%), S1/D4 undergraduate were 95 people (52.8%) and postgraduate S2 /s3 as many as 18 people (10%). This indicates that the majority of respondents have an undergraduate degree/d4 degree. Respondents work as state-owned enterprises/asn/army/police as many as 12 people (6.7%), housewives as many as 22 people (12.2%), students as many as 82 people (45.6%), employees/private employees as many as 37 people (20.6%), entrepreneurs as many as 22 people (12.2%) and others as many as 5 people (2.6%). This indicates that the majority of respondents are students. There were 176 Muslim respondents (97.8%) while non-Muslims were 4 people (2.2%). This indicates that the majority of respondents are Muslim. Respondents came from Aceh as many as 1 person (0.6%), Bali as many as 20 people (11.1%), DKI Jakarta as many as 7 people (3.9%), East Java as many as 117 people (65%), West Java as many as 30 people (16.7%), Kalimantan 2 people (1.1%), Riau Islands 1 person (0.6%) and Yogyakarta 2 people (1.1%). This indicates that the majority of respondents came from the East Java region.



Brand image has an effect on purchasing decisions as evidenced by the results of the causality test which shows a positive path coefficient value of 0.204 with a CR of 2.878 and a probability (p) with a

significance level of 0.05 which is equal to 0.004 which means brand image has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions. This indicates that the better the brand image, the purchasing decisions of Mixue consumers will increase. Kotler and Keller (2016, p. 284) explain that brand image is a set of perceptions and beliefs that a person has about a particular brand, which is reflected in brand associations that exist in consumer memory and is retrieved when the brand is mentioned or thought about.

Country of origin has an effect on purchasing decisions as evidenced by the results of the causality test which shows a positive path coefficient value of 0.202 with a CR of 2.828 and a probability (p) with a significance level of 0.05, which is 0.005, which means that the country of origin has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions. This indicates that the better the country of origin, the purchasing decisions of Mixue consumers will increase. The country of origin of a product that is attached to a brand and company can lead to diverse views.

Brand image has an effect on trust as evidenced by the causality test results which show a positive path coefficient value of 0.351 with a CR of 5.002 and a probability (p) with a significance level of 0.05 which is equal to 0.000, which means brand image has a significant positive effect on trust. This indicates that the better the brand image, the consumer trust of Mixue will increase.

Country of origin has an effect on trust as evidenced by the results of the causality test which shows a positive path coefficient value of 0.34 with a CR of 4.804 and a probability (p) with a significance level of 0.05, which is 0.000, which means that country of origin has a significant positive effect on trust. This indicates that the better the country of origin, the consumer confidence of Mixue will increase. The image of the country of origin refers to the image, reputation and stereotypes that consumers and business people attach to products from certain countries (Murtiasih et al., 2014).

Trust has an effect on purchasing decisions as evidenced by the results of the causality test which shows a positive path coefficient value of 0.410 with a CR of 5.341 and a probability (p) with a significance level of 0.05, which is equal to 0.000, which means that trust has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions. This indicates that the better the consumer's trust, the consumer's purchasing decision on Mixue will increase.

Brand image influences purchasing decisions through Mixue's consumer trust as evidenced by the results of the indirect effect which is greater than the direct effect ( $0.204 > 0.144$ ). This indicates that a good brand image will generate consumer trust which leads to the emergence of buying behavior. Tjiptono (2015, p. 217) explains that brand image is a description of consumer associations and beliefs about certain brands.

Country of origin influences purchasing decisions through Mixue's consumer trust as evidenced by the results of the indirect effect which is greater than the direct effect ( $0.202 > 0.140$ ). This indicates a good country of origin will generate consumer trust and will ultimately lead to consumer purchasing decisions on Mixue.

## **V. Conclusion**

Based on the results of research on the variables brand image, country of origin, trust and purchasing decisions, the conclusions of this study are as follows.

1. Brand image influences purchasing decisions on Mixue. When the Mixue brand is considered popular in the minds of consumers with superior product attributes and benefits, such as good quality but affordable prices, consumers will have an impression of satisfaction and they will evaluate positively and the results of a positive assessment have the opportunity to make a decision to buy Mixue products.
2. Country of origin influences purchasing decisions on Mixue. Different views can arise regarding Mixue's country of origin, namely China, which is related to the brand and the company. The existence of a positive stigma from consumers towards Mixue's country of origin can influence consumer perceptions and, as a result, can influence consumers' purchasing decisions for Mixue products.
3. Brand image influences consumer trust in Mixue. Brand image or brand image is one of the factors that can influence consumer confidence in a brand or product. The more positive Mixue's brand image, the higher the level of consumer confidence in the products it offers.
4. Country of origin influences consumer confidence in Mixue. Consumers tend to view Mixue originating from China with a good image or stereotype because developed countries can produce good and quality products. Positive perception of the country of origin of the Mixue product, which makes it more likely that consumers will have more trust and will result in purchasing Mixue products.
5. Trust influences consumer purchasing decisions on Mixue. When consumers have high trust in Mixue because the ice cream menu is delicious and guaranteed to be halal, they tend to be more likely to buy Mixue products compared to other brands or products they don't trust.
6. Brand image influences purchasing decisions through trust. A good brand image in terms of quality products, offering a variety of menus with delicious ice cream base ingredients and affordable prices will form a plus in the minds of consumers. What's more, Mixue, which entered Indonesia, has convinced consumers of the halalness of its products. Consumers will increasingly want to make purchases on Mixue products.

7. Country of origin influences purchasing decisions through trust. With a developed country of origin, China, the company tries to convince consumers by using quality raw materials and of course halal so that it can be consumed by a wide range of Muslims. With the image of a country that is capable of producing quality but inexpensive products, it will make consumers interested in buying Mixue products.

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