
FACTORS INFLUENCING PURCHASE INTENTION OF IMPORTED FOOD IN BATAM CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the factors influencing consumers' purchase intention toward imported food products in Batam City, with a particular focus on the role of trust. The background of this research is the increasing circulation of imported food products in Batam as a free trade zone, which intensifies competition with local products and raises concerns related to consumer trust. This study addresses the problem of how attitude, brand image, country of origin, price, and product quality influence trust and how trust affects purchase intention. A quantitative research approach was employed by distributing structured questionnaires to 363 respondents who had purchased imported food products in Batam City. The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0. The results indicate that attitude, brand image, country of origin, price, and product quality have a positive and significant effect on trust. Among these factors, brand image is identified as the most influential in building consumer trust. Furthermore, trust has a strong and significant effect on purchase intention toward imported food products. These findings emphasize the importance of trust in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions and provide practical insights for businesses in strengthening trust to enhance purchase intention in the imported food market.

Keywords: Brand Image, Country of Origin, Imported Food, Purchase Intention, Trust

INTRODUCTION

The development of globalization and the rise of international trade have significantly influenced consumer behavior patterns, particularly in selecting food products, including imported goods. This aligns with Edi et al., (2024), who underscored that globalization fosters diversification methods within business groupings, illustrating the impact of international expansion on corporate practices and customer behavior. This phenomenon is especially intriguing to analyze due to the complexity of various factors that affect consumer purchase intention. According to Septianto et al., (2020), where a product comes from really influences whether people trust it. Usually, if the exporting country has a good reputation, folks tend to believe the product will be high quality. The actual quality of the product is pretty important because it helps explain the link between how people see the country's image and whether they trust imported foods. Basically, quality acts as a bridge between a country's image and consumer confidence. Price remains a crucial factor, as identified by (J. Wang et al., 2020) noting that price sensitivity influences both trust and purchase intention, particularly in developing markets. Additionally, Dhir et al., (2020) emphasize the importance of brand image in building consumer trust, which indirectly affects the intention to purchase imported food products. Consumer attitudes, which are influenced by various social factors and personal experiences, also play a significant role in building trust and shaping purchase intentions (Liu et al., 2020). These findings indicate that trust is a crucial element that connects various influencing factors with consumers' intentions to purchase imported food products (Bukhari et al., 2023). Similarly, Itan et al., (2024), highlighted that trust is also a fundamental issue in the corporate governance context, where transparency and accountability significantly influence stakeholder confidence. This reinforces the importance of trust not only in consumer behavior but also in broader organizational practices.

Purchase intention reflects the consumer's tendency to buy a product or take actions related to the purchase. This measure is based on the likelihood that a consumer will proceed with a purchase (Shahzad et al., 2020). Within the decision making framework, purchase intention is considered the final step before an actual transaction occurs, making it a critical indicator for assessing potential consumer behavior toward a specific product (Ahmad et al., 2020). Amid increasingly competitive business environments, consumer purchase intention becomes a crucial factor, as it can help companies design more effective marketing strategies and ultimately boost sales volumes. Numerous factors can influence consumer purchase intention, with trust playing a particularly essential role. Trust itself is shaped by several key factors, one of which is the country of origin, which can influence consumers' perceptions of a product's quality and reliability (Xu et al., 2020). Furthermore, product quality is a primary determinant in how consumers evaluate the value offered. Price also acts as an indicator of both value and quality, shaping consumer perceptions (Haque et al., 2020). Meanwhile, brand image represents a collection of cognitive and emotional perceptions formed by associations in the consumer's memory regarding a brand (Kesumahati & Novianti, 2021). Attitude, shaped by experience and information received, also influences the level of consumer trust in a product or brand. These five factors simultaneously contribute to the formation of consumer trust, which ultimately impacts their purchase intention (J. Wang et al., 2022).

Globalization has made it much easier for food from overseas to enter Indonesia. For example, we now see chocolates, snacks from Korea and Japan, and drinks from Europe.

Plus, there are cheeses, processed meats, and frozen foods coming in from Australia and the US. This is especially clear in Batam City, which, because it's close to Malaysia and Singapore, has quick and wide access to imported products. Being a free trade zone makes it easier for these imported goods to come in, whether through official channels or unofficial ones, often costing less. Because of this, Batam is packed with foreign food items, which changes what people buy and also creates competition with local products. Many people tend to trust imported foods more, thinking they are safer, better quality, and more prestigious. This challenges local producers to earn back trust. Overall, Batam is a great place to study how things like trust and buying habits are affected by the availability of imported foods.

The concept of purchase intention has been widely discussed in the context of imported food products. Recent studies suggest that the element of novelty plays a critical role in shaping consumer attitudes and decisions to purchase such products (K. L. Wang et al., 2021). When people see imported products as new, special, or different from what they're used to, it makes them more likely to want to buy. If someone thinks imported food is exciting and new, they're more eager to try it because they like discovering new things, trying different flavors, and enjoying the fun experience. Knowing how the feeling of novelty influences buying choices can help sellers and government groups come up with better ways to encourage more people to try and accept foreign foods.

Looking at the research model, we can use a few different theories to really understand how everything fits together. Signaling Theory plays an important role in explaining how variables such as country of origin, product quality, and brand image function as signals of quality communicated to consumers, ultimately influencing the formation of trust. On the other hand, Legitimacy Theory can help explain how country of origin provides legitimacy for a product in the eyes of consumers, and how brand image and product quality contribute to building that legitimacy, ultimately affecting consumer trust. Meanwhile, Stakeholder Theory offers a broader perspective on how various stakeholders especially consumers interact with these variables in the model. This theory also helps explain the process by which trust between companies and consumers is formed.

This study offers several innovations compared to previous research. First, the developed model integrates five major factors country of origin, product quality, price, brand image, and attitude to explain the formation of trust and its influence on consumer purchase intention toward imported food products. Such a model remains rare in previous literature, which often only covers a portion of the variables or their direct relationships with purchase intention. Second, the focus on imported food products serves as a distinctive feature, considering that this category is highly sensitive due to consumer perceptions of quality, safety, and the exporting country's reputation. Unlike previous studies that have focused mostly on electronics, fashion, or cosmetics, imported food products provide a more challenging and relevant context in terms of consumer trust. Third, the geographic focus on Batam City offers a unique strength. As a border area and free trade zone with high access to foreign goods, Batam is a highly strategic location for examining consumer behavior toward imported products. To date, only limited research has specifically addressed consumer behavior related to imported food in Batam.

The conceptual model of this research explains that country of origin, product quality, price, brand image, and attitude are the key factors that shape consumer trust in imported food products. That trust then forms the foundation that strengthens purchase intention.

Therefore, the relationship between consumer perceptions of product characteristics and their intention to buy occurs through trust as the main influencing path in the decision-making process.

This research contributes to the development of consumer behavior theory by demonstrating that trust plays a crucial role in linking the five antecedent variables with purchase intention, especially in the context of imported food products. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for import food industry players to build consumer trust through strategic management of product quality, pricing, and brand image. Additionally, this study provides contextual contributions by selecting Batam City as the research location, reflecting an open-market dynamic with high exposure to foreign products and enriching the understanding of competition between local and imported products within a border region context.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Lo Choi Tung (Nugraha et al., 2021) attitude refers to an individual's evaluation process regarding the outcomes of an intended action, whether it is perceived as beneficial or not. Attitude is a major factor in human behavior that determines or reflects one's stance toward a product (Pangestoe & Purwianti, 2022). Brand image is defined as a set of cognitive and emotional perceptions of a brand, reflected through associations stored in consumers' memory (Kesumahati & Novianti, 2021). It represents consumer perception and preference, shaped by a wide range of brand associations. Brand image helps consumers evaluate product quality before making a purchase decision (Pangestoe & Purwianti, 2022). Country of origin refers to the nation where a product is manufactured. According to Sofa & Parmariza (2023), the country-of-origin forms part of a national brand in the minds of consumers. The character and personality of a country influence perceptions of all products originating from it, and this significantly affects purchasing decisions. The better the perceived product quality of a country, the more favorably its products are viewed (Agustina, 2024). Price is one of the key factors in consumer purchasing decisions, as consumers expect the value of what they receive to match what they pay (Sakinah & Firmansyah, 2021). Price can be broadly defined as the amount of value exchanged by consumers for the benefits of owning and using a product or service, enabling companies to earn a reasonable profit through the value they create (Gunarsih et al., 2021). Product quality refers to the product's ability to perform its intended function, including durability, reliability, performance, ease of packaging and repair, and other features (Winarta et al., 2021). Consumers play a crucial role in evaluating product quality, as they are the final recipients of the product (Hatane & Purnomo, 2020). Trust is the confidence consumers have in a product they intend to purchase. It reflects the perceived quality and reliability of the product as provided by the seller (Fitri & Isa, 2024). Trust is a powerful force that influences consumers' belief in a brand or company, demonstrated through the company's ability to fulfill promises and meet expectations consistently. Purchase intention refers to an individual's preference or intention to buy a product or service. It is often preceded by a series of psychological evaluations (Jasin et al., 2021). Purchase intention drives consumer behavior, acting as a motivational force behind the buying process (Fitri & Isa, 2024)

Previous studies explain that attitude reflects consumers' overall evaluation toward a product, which is closely related to their interest and likelihood of making a purchase. A more

positive attitude increases consumers' tendency to purchase the product (Lady et al., 2024). A positive perception of a product or service can strengthen consumer trust. When a product is viewed favorably, consumers are more inclined to feel assured and confident in making a purchase (Hermanus & Indradewa, 2022). When customers are satisfied with a product's quality, their intention to purchase tends to grow. Positive attitudes toward the brand also help build trust and reinforce that intention (Tan et al., 2022).

H1: Attitude has a significant positive effect on Trust.

A strong brand image plays a crucial role in building consumer trust. When a brand is perceived as reliable, innovative, and committed to quality, consumers are more inclined to place their confidence in it (Bagus et al., 2019). This positive perception not only enhances their sense of assurance but also increases the likelihood of repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth (Aditya et al., 2020). If trust in a brand increases, consumers become more loyal and are less hesitant to make repeat purchases or recommend the brand to others (Marliawati & Cahyaningdyah, 2020). People are more likely to buy something if they have a positive view of a brand's image. This is because they trust the brand more (Rahman et al., 2020).

H2: Brand Image has a significant positive effect on Trust.

Country of Origin has a positive and significant influence on consumer trust. People tend to trust products more when they see where they're from. This study shows that having a label for the country of origin can really boost customer confidence. Many folks believe that products from developed countries like the U.S. or the U.K. are made to high standards and have gone through thorough research processes (Kim et al., 2024). Basically, when a country's reputation looks good, people tend to trust products made there more. This study also shows us that where a product comes from matters a lot when it comes to building good relationships between foreign businesses and their customers. Especially in emerging markets, the influence of country of origin can be even more significant compared to more developed markets (Abou Ali et al., 2021). Moreover, country of origin can function as a trust-building cue, especially in contexts where consumers are concerned about ethical standards or the safety of their personal data (Bhattacharya et al., 2023).

H3: Country of Origin has a significant positive effect on Trust.

There is a clear positive relationship between price perception and consumer trust. When consumers perceive the offered price as fair and consistent with the product's value, they are more likely to trust the quality and reliability of the store (Lutfie & Marcelino, 2020). This study also highlights a significant link between price perception and brand trust. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis reveals a positive path coefficient, with the T-value indicating the strength of this relationship. These findings suggest that favorable price perceptions can enhance brand trust, which represents a key insight of this research (Benhardy et al., 2020). Similarly, other studies show that when customers believe they are paying a fair price, their trust in the business strengthens. This supports the social exchange theory, which posits that trust develops when consumers feel their economic interests are adequately protected (Benhardy et al., 2020).

H4: Price has a significant positive effect on Trust.

This study demonstrates that product quality exerts a strong positive effect on consumer trust. As the perceived quality of a product improves, consumers are more likely to place greater trust in the brand, which subsequently enhances their purchase intention and

loyalty (Kesumahati & Marbun, 2021). Evidence also shows that high-quality products significantly strengthen consumer trust, as shoppers tend to favor retailers known for delivering superior quality (Religia et al., 2024). Furthermore, products from reputable brands often maintain consistent demand, as their perceived quality reinforces both brand trust and awareness. These findings highlight the critical role of product quality in cultivating consumer trust and fostering stronger brand relationships (Le, 2024).

H5: Product Quality has a significant positive effect on Trust.

The analysis shows that the higher the users' trust in a product, the greater their intention to purchase it (Budi et al., 2023). This study found that trust acts as an initial step influencing purchase intention, although its effect is relatively small (DAM, 2020). This trust has a fairly strong positive impact on consumers' purchase intention, meaning that the higher their level of trust, the more likely they are to make a purchase. In addition, the author highlights that trust in specific objects—such as trust in the seller has a greater influence compared to other aspects of trust (J. Wang et al., 2022). Brand trust itself emerges from prior experiences and interactions between consumers and the brand, which then shape their perceptions over time (Bukhari et al., 2023). Trust can reduce the uncertainty associated with shopping, thereby increasing the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase (Qalati et al., 2021).

H6: Trust has a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention.

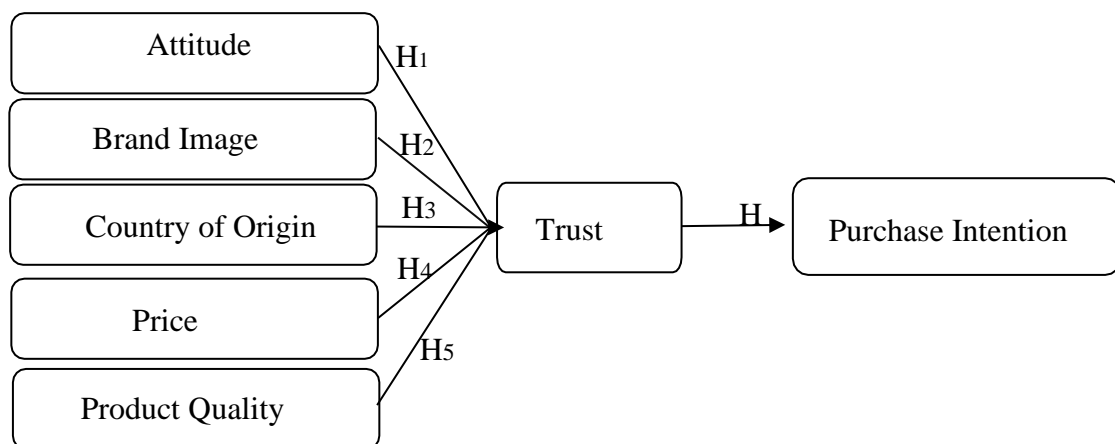


Figure 1.
Research Model

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design to analyze the influence of attitude, brand image, country of origin, price, and product quality on trust, as well as to examine how trust affects purchase intention toward imported food products in Batam City. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to consumers in Batam City who met the predetermined criteria. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables objective and statistically measurable evaluation of relationships among variables. The population consisted of all consumers who had previously purchased imported food products in Batam City. The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, a non-probability method where respondents were selected based on specific characteristics

relevant to the research objectives, including: (1) aged 17–55 years, (2) residing in Batam City, and (3) having purchased imported food products at least once in the past month. A total of 363 valid responses were obtained, satisfying the minimum sample size requirement based on the 10-times rule (Hair Jr et al., 2021), which stipulates at least ten times the number of indicators used.

The research instrument was a structured, closed-ended questionnaire employing a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). It comprised 30 items measuring seven constructs: country of origin, product quality, price, brand image, attitude, trust, and purchase intention, all adapted from prior validated studies. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0. Prior to hypothesis testing, the measurement model was evaluated for construct validity and reliability through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), outer loadings, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), Cronbach’s Alpha, and Composite Reliability. Common Method Bias was tested using SPSS to confirm data independence from common method variance. Model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Goodness of Fit (GoF) indices to ensure model adequacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were collected from 363 respondents consisting of Generation Z and Millennials, with the majority falling within the age ranges of 17–26 years (47.4%) and 27–36 years (37.7%). The majority of respondents were female (60.9%) and had completed high school/vocational school (40.8%), followed by those holding a bachelor’s degree (29.2%). In terms of occupation, most respondents were private sector employees (33.1%), followed by students (30.4%) and entrepreneurs (26.0%). Regarding monthly income, the majority earned between Rp 5,000,000 and Rp 10,000,000 (58.1%), while 29.5% earned less than Rp 5,000,000. Analysis of imported food product consumption patterns showed that dairy products were the most frequently purchased category (40.2%), followed by snacks (29.2%) and meat/seafood (25.9%). The most common purchase frequency of imported food products was once a month (41.6%), followed by once every two months (36.9%) and once every three months (21.5%).

Table 1.
Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Indicator	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	142	39.1%
	Female	221	60.9%
	Total	363	100%
Age	< 17 Years	6	1.7%
	17–26 Years	172	47.4%
	27–36 Years	137	37.7%
	37–46 Years	43	11.8%
	> 46 Years	5	1.4%
	Total	363	100%
Education Level	Senior High School/Vocational	148	40.8%
	Diploma	81	22.3%

Occupation	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	106	29.2%	
	Master's Degree (S2)	28	7.7%	
	Total	363	100%	
	Student	110	30.4%	
	Private Employee	120	33.1%	
	Entrepreneur	94	26.0%	
	Self-employed	1	0.3%	
	Government Employee	36	9.9%	
	Housewife	1	0.3%	
	Total	363	100%	
Monthly Income	< Rp 5,000,000	107	29.5%	
	Rp 5,000,000 – 10,000,000	211	58.1%	
	> Rp 10,000,000	32	8.8%	
	> Rp 15,000,000	13	3.6%	
	Total	363	100%	
	Type of Imported Food Products Purchased	Dairy Products	146	40.2%
Snacks		106	29.2%	
Meat and Seafood		94	25.9%	
Fruits		16	4.4%	
Fruits		16	4.4%	
Beverages		1	0.3%	
Total		363	100%	
Frequency of Purchasing Imported Food Products		Once a month	151	41.6%
		Once every 2 months	134	36.9%
		Once every 3 months	78	21.5%
	Total	363	100%	

Source: Processed Data, 2025

Based on the results of validity and reliability testing, all constructs in this study showed outer loading values above 0.7 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.5, indicating that the indicators used met the criteria for convergent validity. The composite reliability (CR) values for each construct were also above 0.7, demonstrating good internal reliability. However, in the Product Quality variable, one indicator (PQ4) had an outer loading value below 0.7, failing to meet the validity criteria and was therefore removed from the model. Thus, all constructs used in the model are considered valid and reliable for further analysis.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Measurement

Variable	Indicator	OuterLoading	CompositeReliability	AVE
<i>Attitude</i>	A1	0.845	0.881	0.711
	A2	0.827		
	A03	0.857		
<i>Brand Image</i>	BI1	0.754	0.873	0.580
	BI2	0.765		
	BI3	0.734		
	BI4	0.760		
	BI5	0.793		
<i>Country of Origin</i>	COO1	0.828	0.912	0.674
	COO2	0.803		
	COO3	0.840		
	COO4	0.828		
	COO5	0.805		
<i>Price</i>	P1	0.844	0.914	0.727
	P2	0.860		
	P3	0.852		
	P4	0.855		
<i>Purchase Intention</i>	PI1	0.764	0.867	0.621
	PI2	0.800		
	PI3	0.807		
	PI4	0.779		
	PQ1	0.846		
	PQ2	0.815		
<i>Product Quality</i>	PQ3	0.815	0.889	0.691
	PQ5	0.848		
	T1	0.772		
	T2	0.758		
	T3	0.794		
<i>Trust</i>	T4	0.772	0.884	0.604
	T5	0.788		

Source: Processed Data, 2025

Based on the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker criterion in Table 3, the square root of the AVE (shown by the bold diagonal values) for each construct is higher than the correlations with other constructs in the same row and column. For example, the diagonal values for Attitude (0.843), Brand Image (0.761), Country of Origin (0.821), Price (0.853), Product Quality (0.831), Purchase Intention (0.788), and Trust (0.777) are all greater than the correlations between other constructs. This indicates that each construct has a good level of discriminant validity, allowing us to conclude that all constructs in the model exhibit adequate discriminant validity and can clearly distinguish one from another.

Table 3. Fornell Larcker Discriminant Validity

	A	BI	COO	P	PQ	PI	T
A	0.843						
BI	0.664	0.761					
COO	0.596	0.667	0.821				
P	0.562	0.669	0.524	0.853			
PQ	0.612	0.644	0.633	0.593	0.831		
PI	0.644	0.718	0.705	0.595	0.637	0.788	
T	0.652	0.711	0.636	0.644	0.642	0.676	0.777

Source: Processed Data, 2025

All constructs in this model show VIF values ranging from 1.000 to 2.764 (below the acceptable threshold of $VIF < 5$), indicating no serious multicollinearity issues. This means the independent variables can be interpreted independently without interfering with the estimation of structural parameters (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 4. VIF Values in Structural Model

	A	BI	COO	P	PQ	PI	T
A							2.097
BI							2.764
COO							2.136
P							2.007
PQ							2.194
PI							
T						1.000	

Source: Processed Data, 2025

The Adjusted R^2 value is 0.620 for Trust and 0.455 for Purchase Intention, indicating both constructs have a reasonably good explanatory ability. According to recent PLS-SEM guidelines, these values fall under the moderate category, acceptable for social research contexts.

Table 5. R-Square

	<i>R-Square Adjusted</i>
Purchase Intention	0.455
Trust	0.620

Source: Processed Data, 2025

Based on the path analysis in Table 6, all hypotheses in the model are accepted, as indicated by t-statistics > 1.96 and p-values < 0.05. The variable Brand Image has the strongest influence on Trust ($\beta = 0.254$; $p = 0.000$), followed by Price, Attitude, Country of Origin, and Product Quality, all of which are significant. Furthermore, Trust significantly affects Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.676$; $p = 0.000$), indicating that the higher the consumer trust, the stronger their intention to purchase imported food products.

Table 6. Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Tstastistic	Pvalue	Result
A->T (H1)	0.188	3.251	0.001	H1Significant
BI->T (H2)	0.254	3.989	0.000	H2Significant
COO->T (H3)	0.157	4.235	0.023	H3Significant
P->T (H4)	0.200	2.273	0.000	H4Significant
PQ->T (H5)	0.144	2.128	0.033	H5Significant
T->PI (H6)	0.676	20.540	0.000	H6Significant

Source: Processed Data, 2025

Hypothesis 1 indicates that attitude has a significant positive effect on trust ($\beta = 0.188$; $p = 0.001$). This means that consumers who hold a favorable attitude toward a product are more likely to develop trust in it. A positive attitude shapes the way consumers evaluate the reliability and credibility of a product or service, which in turn fosters confidence in the brand. This finding is consistent with (Tan et al., 2022), who argue that a favorable attitude toward a brand increases both trust and purchase intention. Hermanus & Indradewa, (2022) also emphasize that positive consumer evaluations directly contribute to stronger trust. Overall, these results demonstrate that attitude is not merely an emotional response but a key predictor of consumer trust. Consequently, the more positive a consumer’s attitude toward a brand, the greater the likelihood of establishing and maintaining that trust.

Hypothesis 2 shows that a strong brand image significantly enhances consumer trust ($\beta = 0.254$; $p = 0.000$), establishing it as the most influential factor in this study. A favorable brand image conveys quality, reliability, and a positive reputation, thereby reducing uncertainty and fostering greater consumer confidence. This finding corroborates the work of Bagus et al., (2019) who emphasize the pivotal role of brand image in cultivating trust. Similarly, Aditya et al., (2020) highlight that a positive brand image not only builds trust but also increases consumers’ willingness to purchase. Marliawati & Cahyaningdyah, (2020) further suggest that a strong brand image drives loyalty by strengthening consumers’ confidence in the brand, while Rahman et al., (2020) demonstrate that favorable perceptions of brand image positively influence purchase interest. Collectively, these findings confirm that brand image is not merely a symbolic representation but a strategic factor shaping consumer behavior. Therefore, maintaining a strong brand image serves as a valuable asset for building and sustaining long-term trust

Hypothesis 3 shows that the country of origin plays an important role in building consumer trust ($\beta = 0.157$; $p = 0.023$). Consumers often perceive a product’s country of origin as a signal of its quality and reliability. This aligns with the finding (Kim et al., 2024), who report that products from developed countries are viewed as more trustworthy due to higher quality standards. Similarly, (Abou Ali et al., 2021) highlight that the reputation of the

producing country enhances consumer confidence, particularly in emerging markets. Furthermore, (Bhattacharya et al., 2023) note that country of origin reflects not only product quality but also ethical practices and data protection. Together, these findings suggest that a positive country reputation can provide brands with a competitive edge in the global market, especially when direct product information is limited.

Hypothesis 4 suggests that price plays a significant role in building trust—specifically, that fair and reasonable pricing leads to greater consumer trust ($\beta = 0.200$; $p = 0.023$). The findings indicate that when customers perceive prices as fair and aligned with the value of the product, they are more likely to trust the brand. This aligns with Lutfie & Marcelino, (2020), who note that fair pricing strengthens consumer trust. Similarly, Benhardy et al., (2020) found that reasonable pricing directly enhances trust and fosters stronger brand loyalty. Furthermore, social exchange theory supports this perspective by suggesting that trust develops when both parties perceive the exchange as fair and mutually beneficial (Benhardy et al., 2020). Overall, these results demonstrate that price is not solely about profit—it also serves as a signal of fairness and ethical business practices. Thus, transparent and fair pricing becomes a key strategy for building and sustaining consumer trust.

Hypothesis 5 demonstrates that product quality has a significant positive effect on trust ($\beta = 0.144$; $p = 0.033$). Consumers tend to trust brands that consistently deliver high-quality products. This result is consistent with (Kesumahati & Marbun, 2021), who show that quality directly enhances both trust and loyalty. (Religia et al., 2024) also report that good product quality reinforces trust and purchase intention. Similarly, (Le, 2024) highlights that well-established brands associated with superior quality strengthen brand trust and awareness. These findings suggest that product quality is not only linked to immediate consumer satisfaction but also establishes the foundation for long-term trust. Therefore, maintaining consistent quality remains crucial for sustaining consumer trust and competitive advantage.

Hypothesis 6 substantiates that trust exerts a significant positive influence on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.676$; $p = 0.000$). People who trust a brand are surer of their buying choices because trust makes risks and uncertainties seem less real. This conclusion aligns with (Budi et al., 2023), which illustrates that trust substantially enhances buy intention in online transactions. According to DAM (2020) brand trust is another important aspect that affects what people like. Wang et al. (2022) further emphasize that trust is one of the strongest predictors in digital commerce. Bukhari et al. (2023) add that trust in imported products affects consumer behavior in emerging markets. Similarly, (Qalati et al., 2021) contend that trust alleviates ambiguity in shopping, thereby increasing the probability of purchase. These findings bolster the perspective that trust is a pivotal characteristic connecting marketing elements to purchase intention. In other words, the more people trust a brand, the more likely they are to turn evaluations into actual purchase decisions.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the influence of country of origin, product quality, price, brand image, and consumer attitude on the purchase intention of imported food products in Batam, with trust treated as an independent variable. The PLS-SEM analysis reveals that all five factors exert a positive and significant effect on trust. Among these, brand image emerges as the most influential determinant, indicating that a strong and reputable brand perception plays a pivotal role in fostering consumer trust. Price, product quality, country of origin, and

attitude also contribute meaningfully to building trust, highlighting the combined importance of intrinsic product attributes and external perceptions in shaping consumer confidence. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that trust has a strong and direct impact on purchase intention. Consumers who place their trust in a brand or product are more inclined to develop favorable purchasing intentions. These results emphasize the strategic importance of cultivating trust to drive consumer decision-making, particularly in Batam, a geographically unique market with high exposure to imported products due to its status as a free trade and port city. Overall, the study affirms that trust is not merely an outcome of consumer evaluations, but a central driver that connects product perceptions to actual purchasing behavior.

For businesses and marketers of imported food products, efforts to strengthen consumer trust should be prioritized. This can be achieved through maintaining a strong brand image, offering consistent product quality, and applying reasonable and transparent pricing strategies. Future research is encouraged to explore additional variables such as perceived risk, brand familiarity, or online reviews, and to apply longitudinal methods to observe changes in consumer trust and purchase behavior over time.

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