



THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND ETHNICITY ON PURCHASE INTENT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED QUALITY

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Abstract. This study examines how brand ethnicity directly and indirectly influences consumer purchase intentions through perceived quality as a mediating variable. Data were obtained from 265 local consumers who were familiar with domestic brands using a semantic differential scale questionnaire. The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with a *partial least squares* (PLS) approach. These findings show that brand ethnicity significantly and positively influences consumers' purchase intent towards local products. In addition, perceived quality mediates this relationship, suggesting that consumers' perceptions of brand quality act as a key psychological link between cultural identity and purchasing behavior.

Keywords; brand ethnicity, perceived quality, purchase intention.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, multinational companies have aggressively expanded into emerging markets to strengthen their global brand presence (Praveen et al. 2025). Consumers in emerging markets are gradually showing a preference for local brands that align with their cultural values and national identity. (Safeer et al. 2022). Based on the results of the Katadata Insight Center survey (2020) of Indonesian consumers' preferences for local brand products, as many as 87.2% stated that they preferred to buy domestic brands, while only 12.8% preferred foreign-branded products. In addition, in a global context such as in China the term "National Wave" has represented the resurgence of local trends, with an increase of 528% over the decade from 2011 to 2021. In 2020, nearly 80% of consumers are likely to choose China's national brands, making the "National Tide" an important phenomenon in consumer culture. (Zong, Liu, and Gao 2023). Therefore, research on brand ethnicity remains interesting in the context of understanding its influence on consumer behavior.

A recent study by Li, Cao, and Xu., (2025) explored the relationship between brand ethnicity and its five dimensions on purchase intent through the mediating role of brand attachment and brand trust. However, there are also other variables that can influence purchase intentions, namely perceived quality (Do et al. 2024), therefore, it is also necessary to examine as mediators in this relationship. In addition to mediators, the role of moderators is also needed in this study (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025). Consumer ethnocentrism is the most relevant mediator because, according to Gün and Söyük., (2025) it is able to influence the intention to consume local products.

Purchase intent, according to Salem et al., (2019) in the current era, involves online, where consumers can narrow down a large amount of information by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each product, gathering feedback, making comparisons, and reading reviews. Thus, brand ethnicity serves as a cultural association and the relationship that consumers feel with a brand, especially those related to a particular ethnic identity (Chatzopoulou and Navazhylava 2022).

This study aims to explore the relationship between brand ethnicity and purchase intention through perceived quality mediation variables, as well as consumer ethnocentrism moderation variables in this relationship.

2. Hypothesis Development

In the study of consumer behavior, brand ethnicity is understood as a cultural identity association attached to a brand and used by consumers as a basis for quality evaluation. Theory *cue utilization* and *signaling theory* explains that consumers use cultural cues and identity symbols (e.g. country of origin, local aesthetics, national values) to assess quality when product information is not fully available (Martins et al., 2023 & Li et al., 2025). Recent research has also shown that cultural elements within brands increase the perception of authenticity and emotional closeness, which in turn impacts quality assessments (Chatzopoulou & Navazhylava, 2022; Do et al., 2024). Thus, brand ethnicity is not only a symbolic attribute, but also a signal that shapes consumers' evaluation of product quality.

In a study by Martins et al. (2023) it was shown that previously perceived quality has mediated the relationship between the country of origin and consumer purchasing behavior, such as purchase decisions and post-purchase decisions. Therefore, it can be stated that the country of origin has an influence on perceived quality. Therefore, it can be said that the country of origin has an influence on perceived quality. Where in the study, it is explained that the country of origin is an image built by factors such as national characteristics, product representation, history, traditions, and the economic and political background of a country (Martins et al. 2023). Where in the study it is explained that the country of origin is an image built by factors such as national characteristics, product representation, history, traditions, and the economic and political background of a country explained by Li, Cao, and Xu (2025) regarding brand ethnicity, which is the association and identity formed by consumers between a brand and a certain ethnic group. Therefore, the country of origin has similarities with the brand's ethnicity; In other words, the ethnicity of the brand has an influence on perceived quality. Furthermore, Merabet (2020) explained that the country of origin or origin of the brand has a positive influence on perceived quality.

H1 = Brand Ethnicity has a positive effect on Perceived Quality.

Consumer purchase intent has been shown to be positively influenced by quality perceptions (Chen, Shen, and Wei 2023; El-Shihy 2024) shows that quality is a determining factor in reducing consumer uncertainty and increasing buying interest, especially in the digital environment. El-Shihy, 2024 report findings in the retail sector, where the perception of quality is a strong predictor of purchasing decisions. In line with Ardisa et al. (2022), the perception of quality has a significant influence on consumer purchase intentions in various product categories. In addition, Hossain et al. (2025) Proving that in the context of natural care products, perceived quality serves as a key variable that encourages consumers to proceed to the purchase stage. Thus, the relationship between quality perceptions and purchase intent is reinforced by a wealth of cross-contextual empirical evidence.

H2 = Perceived Quality has a positive effect on Purchase Intent.

In Ardisa et al. (2022) Consumer Ethnocentrism is said to significantly affect a person's perception of quality. The term country of origin is closely related to the ethnicity of a brand, where the country of origin is an image constructed in part by the factor of tradition (Martins et al. 2023). This tradition is closely related to aspects of cultural identity, which are the ethnic dimension of the brand (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025). Thus, the country of origin can be used as a term for brand ethnicity in relation to consumer ethnocentrism. Furthermore, Ardisa et al. (2022) show the relationship between the country of origin and purchase intention mediated by consumer ethnocentrism.

Research Adriana et al., (2023) suggests that consumer ethnocentrism plays a moderator in the relationship between the country of origin and purchase intent, meaning that consumers with high CE are more responsive to cultural attributes. Recent research Sabina et al., (2024) and Praveen et al., (2025) also affirms that CE increases sensitivity to local values and cultural symbols, thereby reinforcing the influence of ethnic attributes on quality assessment. Thus, logically consumers who have high ethnocentrism will pay more attention and give greater weight to the brand's ethnic elements.

H3: Consumer Ethnocentrism moderates the relationship between Brand Ethnicity and Perceived Quality.

3. Method

This study uses a survey method with a quantitative approach. According to Creswell (2018:147), surveys provide a quantitative picture of trends, attitudes, and opinions in a population or test the interactions between variables in a population through sample studies. The population studied consisted of local consumers in Indonesia. The sample was selected using purposive sampling with the criteria that respondents must be at least 18 years old and have previously seen or purchased local products with ethnic content. A representative sample size follows the recommendations of Sekaran & Bougie (2021), which is five to ten times the number of indicators. With an estimated minimum parameter of 53, the sample taken consisted of 265 respondents.

Variables are measured using the bipolar adjective scale, which is a development of the semantic differential scale. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire with alternative answer options (Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L., 2021), where respondents were rated on a scale from 1 to 10. An even scale is used to avoid neutral answers, with 1–5 indicating disagreement and 6–10 indicating agreement. The instrument is a Google Forms-based online questionnaire that consists of two parts: demographic data and research elements. The questionnaire link is disseminated through social media platforms that use many local products. The collected data was then analyzed using Covariance Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB SEM) to test and validate the theoretical model and analyze the relationships between variables (Kline, 2015). Statistical analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 27.0.1 and IBM SPSS AMOS 24. The conceptual model used is shown to clarify the relationship between variables in the study.

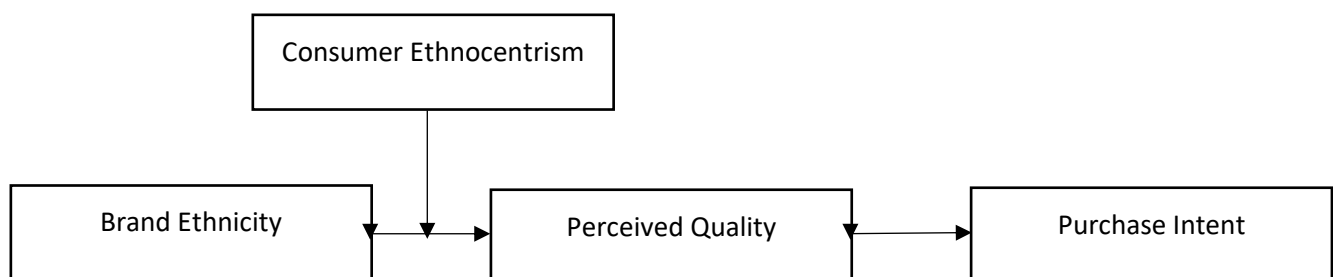


Fig 1. Research Model

Based on the structural model of the study, all measurement indicators were taken from the relevant literature. Below is the operational definition of the variables applied in the study.

Table 1. Variable Operationalization

Variabel	Indicator	Label
Brand Ethnicity (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025)	Trademark ownership and registration in the country of origin	BE1
Brand Ethnicity (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025)	Management control is held by local entities	BE2
Brand Ethnicity (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025)	This product reflects national pride	BE3
Brand Ethnicity (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025)	Participation in corporate social responsibility	BE4
Brand Ethnicity (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025)	Disaster relief or improvement of community welfare	BE5
Brand Ethnicity (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025)	The design or product reflects the symbols and aesthetics of the local culture	BE6
Brand Ethnicity (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025)	The core values of the brand are aligned with the national spirit	BE7
Brand Ethnicity (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025)	Brand promotion emphasizes national heritage and cultural pride	BE8
Perceived Quality (Do et al. 2024)	This product has distinctive characteristics	PQ1
Perceived Quality (Do et al. 2024)	This product is made to good quality standards	PQ2
Perceived Quality (Do et al. 2024)	The product or brand has a good reputation	PQ3
Perceived Quality (Do et al. 2024)	The product works well	PQ4
Perceived Quality (Do et al. 2024)	This product has convenient service	PQ5
Consumer Ethnocentrism (Sabina, Armas, and Guti 2024)	I would consider buying products from brands that come from this country	CE1
Consumer Ethnocentrism (Sabina, Armas, and Guti 2024)	The chances of me buying a product from a brand that comes from this country are quite high	CE2
Consumer Ethnocentrism (Sabina, Armas, and Guti 2024)	I prefer to buy products from brands from this country	CE3
Consumer Ethnocentrism (Sabina, Armas, and Guti 2024)	I would recommend others to buy products from brands that are native to this country	CE4
Consumer Ethnocentrism (Sabina, Armas, and Guti 2024)	Recommend the brand to others	CE5

Variabel	Indicator	Label
Consumer Ethnocentrism (Sabina, Armas, and Guti 2024)	Trademark ownership and registration in the country of origin	CE6
Purchase Intent (Blanco-encomienda and Chen 2025)	Management control is held by local entities	PI1
Purchase Intent (Blanco-encomienda and Chen 2025)	This product reflects national pride	PI2
Purchase Intent (Blanco-encomienda and Chen 2025)	Participation in corporate social responsibility	PI3
Purchase Intent (Blanco-encomienda and Chen 2025)	Disaster relief or improvement of community welfare	PI4
Purchase Intent (Blanco-encomienda and Chen 2025)	The design or product reflects the symbols and aesthetics of the local culture	PI5

4. Result

This study involved 265 respondents. Respondents' characteristics were classified into several categories: Gender, Age, Education, and Occupation. The detailed characteristics of the respondents involved in this study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristic Response

Characteristics	Attribute	Entire	%
Gender	Man	118	44.5
Gender	Woman	147	55.5
Age	<18 years old	4	1.5
Age	18–22 years old	158	59.6
Age	23–27 years old	78	29.4
Age	>35 years old	25	9.5
Education	Elementary School	2	0.8
Education	Middle High School	6	2.3
Education	Highschool	102	38.5
Education	University	155	58.5
Occupation	Students	139	52.5
Occupation	Employee	72	27.2
Occupation	Businessman	32	12.1

Occupation	Other	22	8.3
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Source: Research Results, 2025

Of the total 265 respondents studied, 44.5% were male and 55.5% were female, showing a relatively balanced distribution with a slight dominance of female respondents. Based on age group, the majority of respondents were in the 18-22 age range at 59.6%, followed by the 23-27 year group at 29.4%, while respondents over 35 years old only accounted for 9.5%. In terms of education, most of the respondents have a higher education background of 58.5%, followed by high school graduates at 38.5%. Regarding work, respondents were dominated by students by 52.5%, followed by employees by 27.2%. Overall, this profile shows that the respondents in this study are dominated by young age groups with higher education backgrounds who actively consume local products and have a strong potential to shape brand ethnic perceptions and purchase intentions.

In the initial stage of SEM analysis, a data normality test is carried out to ensure that the data used has a normal distribution (Hair et al., 2019). Based on the test results, a value of -593 was obtained, and there was no multivariate critical ratio that exceeded the limit of ± 2.58 . Thus, the data in this study can be considered normally distributed and suitable for the next analysis process.

Table 3. Measurement, Loading, CR, and VE

No	Questionnaire Statement	Build	Indicator	Loading Factor	CR	AND
1	Trademark ownership and registration in the country of origin	<i>Brand Ethnicity</i>	BE1	,91	0,973	0,819
2	Management control is held by local entities		BE2	,93		
3	This product reflects national pride		BE3	,88		
4	Participation in corporate social responsibility		BE4	,90		
5	Disaster relief or improvement of community welfare		BE5	,91		
6	The design or product reflects the symbols and aesthetics of the local culture		BE6	,90		
7	The core values of the brand are aligned with the national spirit		BE7	,91		
8	Brand promotion emphasizes national heritage and cultural pride		BE8	,90		
9	This product has distinctive characteristics	<i>Perceived Quality</i>	PQ1	,89	0,959	0,825
10	This product is made to good quality standards		PQ2	,92		
11	The product or brand has a good reputation		PQ3	,93		
12	The product works well		PQ4	,90		
13	This product has convenient service		PQ5	,90		
14	I would consider buying products from brands that come from this country	<i>Purchase Intent</i>	PI1	,91	0,961	0,832
15	The chances of me buying a product from a brand that comes from this country are quite high		PI2	,93		
16	I prefer to buy products from brands from this country		PI3	,90		

No	Questionnaire Statement	Build	Indicator	Loading Factor	CR	AND
17	I would recommend others to buy products from brands that are native to this country		PI4	,90		
18	Recommend the brand to others		PI5	,92		

Source: Research Results, 2025

After the SEM analysis stage, the next step is to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Validity testing aims to ascertain the extent to which an indicator can represent the concept being measured, while reliability assesses the level of consistency of the measurement tool. Based on the results in Table 3, all indicators have a factor loading value above 0.40, which means that each indicator has adequately represented its construction. In addition, the extracted variance (VE) value for each variable was above 0.50, and the construct reliability (CR) was at least 0.70, indicating that all variables in this study met the required criteria of validity and reliability

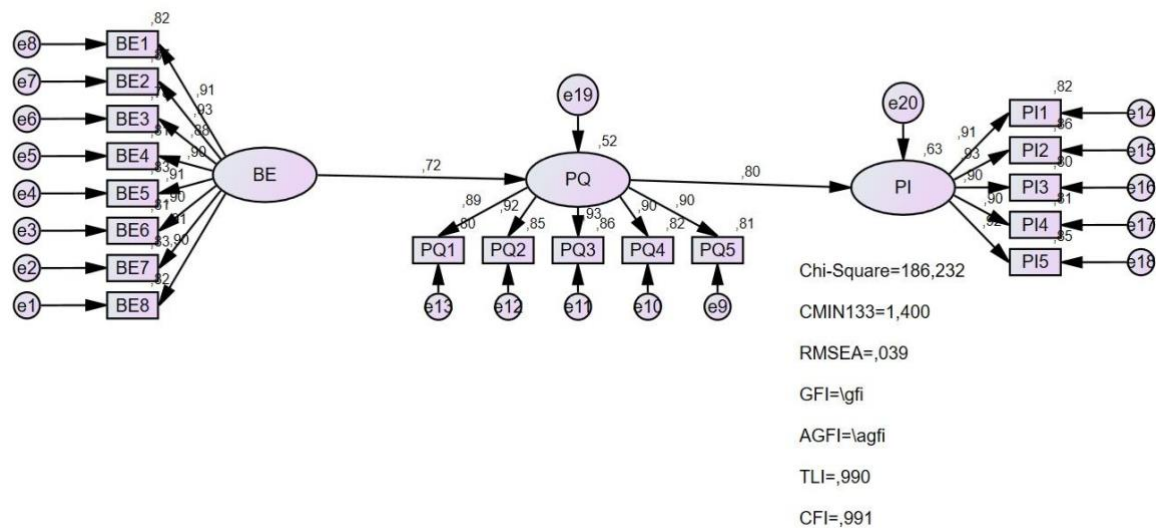


Fig 2. Model 1

Source: Research Results, 2025

The model in the image shows that all indicators in the constructs of Brand Ethnicity (BE), Perceived Quality (PQ), and Purchase Intention (PI) have a high *loading factor* (>0.80), so that each indicator is able to represent its construct well. Structurally, Brand Ethnicity is proven to have a positive influence on Perceived Quality (estimate = 0.72), and Perceived Quality also has a positive effect on Purchase Intention (estimate = 0.80). In addition, the model has an excellent level of *goodness of fit*, as shown by the values of RMSEA = 0.039, TLI = 0.990, and CFI = 0.991, so it can be concluded that the model used is appropriate and feasible to explain the relationship between variables in this study.

Tabel 4. Model Goodness of Fit (GoF) SEM-AMOS

<i>Pros of Fit</i>	<i>Analysis Results</i>	<i>Value Deduction</i>	<i>Model Evaluation</i>
<i>Chi-Square</i>	186,232	Expected small	Marjinal Fit
<i>CMIN/DF</i>	1,400	< 2,000	Appropriate
<i>TLI</i>	,990	> 0,95	Appropriate
<i>CFI</i>	,991	> 0.95	Appropriate
<i>RMSEA</i>	0,39	< 0.80	Appropriate

Source: Research Results 2025

The evaluation of the research model was carried out by examining the goodness-of-fit value presented in Table 4. The relatively low chi-squared value indicates that the SEM model has a good degree of compatibility with the data. This is further supported by the CMIN/DF value, which is below 2.00. In addition, TLI and CFI values exceeding 0.95 confirm that the model meets the recommended acceptance criteria. Meanwhile, an RMSEA value at or below 0.08 indicates that the model has a good match relative to the degree of freedom of the model. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the research model meets the feasibility criteria and can be used for further analysis.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in SEM analysis using AMOS 24 was carried out through path analysis by paying attention to the critical ratio (t-value) and p-value. The hypothesis is accepted if the p-value is less than 0.05, while the direction of the effect is determined based on the positive or negative sign of the t-value (Hair et al., 2019). This method helps determine the significance and direction of relationships between variables in the SEM model.

Table 5. Hypotension Testing

<i>Relationship</i>		<i>Guess</i>	<i>C.R.</i>	<i>P</i>
Perceived Quality	<--- Brand Ethnicity	,741	13,440	***
Purchase Intent	<--- Perceived Quality	,847	15,526	***

Source: Research Results 2025

Based on Table 5, the results of hypothesis testing showed that there was a significant relationship between brand ethnicity and perceived quality, with an approximate value of 0.741, a CR (Critical Ratio) value of 13.440, and a very significant p-value ($p < 0.001$). This shows that the stronger the perceived ethnicity of the brand, the higher the perceived quality of the product. In addition, the perceived quality also had a significant effect on purchase intention, with an estimated value of 0.847, a CR value of 15.526, and a p value of < 0.001 . In other words, the better the quality perceived by consumers, the greater their intention to make a purchase.

4.2 Discussion

The study shows that brand ethnicity plays an important role in shaping perceived quality, which ultimately drives consumer purchase intent. When a brand manages to present a strong cultural or national identity such as local values, distinctive aesthetics, and national pride, consumers tend to perceive the product as having higher quality and more trustworthiness.

These findings are in line with Kim et al. (2024) who stated that cultural identity within a brand reinforces perceived quality and increases purchase desire, and is supported by Su. (2023) which emphasizes that emotional attachment to culture increases perceived value and product quality. In addition, the positive relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention in this study is also in line with the findings of Jung and Seock (2016), who found that perceived quality is the main factor influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. Overall, the study confirms that the strength of cultural identity in a brand not only serves as a symbol of pride but also creates a high-quality perception that encourages consumers to feel more confident and willing to buy the product.

This research makes a significant theoretical contribution to the development of literature on brand ethnicity, perceived quality, and purchase intent. First, these findings reinforce the theory of signal utilization, which states that consumers use external cues such as a brand's cultural identity as a basis for evaluating product quality. This is in line with a study by Kim et al. (2024) that found that perceptions of brand origin and ethnicity serve as quality signals that influence product evaluation and consumer purchase intent. Second, the results are consistent with Su. (2023) shows that strong cultural associations within a brand can increase perceived value and strengthen consumers' emotional connection with the product, thus positively impacting purchase intent. In addition, these findings extend the application of Planned Behavior Theory (Ajzen, 1991) in the context of cross-cultural consumer behavior by emphasizing that trust in ethnic-based brand quality acts as a component of beliefs that significantly drives purchase intent. Thus, this study enriches the theoretical perspective by positioning brand ethnicity as a key factor that bridges cultural perception, perceived quality, and purchasing decisions, while opening up opportunities to develop models of consumer behavior that are more oriented to the global cultural context.

In addition, this study provides some important managerial implications for industry players, especially marketers and brand managers who are trying to build a strong image based on cultural values. First, brand managers are advised to emphasize authenticity and consistency in communicating the brand's cultural identity, as consumers tend to evaluate product quality through the alignment of cultural values embodied by the brand. Second, companies need to integrate digital marketing strategies based on cultural storytelling that can strengthen emotional connections and increase consumer purchase intent (Li, Cao, and Xu 2025). Third, it is crucial for marketers to maintain consistent product quality because perceived quality serves as the main bridge between brand ethnicity and purchase intent. By maintaining the synergy between cultural identity and superior quality, companies can build long-term trust that leads to increased consumer loyalty and brand competitiveness in the global marketplace.

5. Conclusion

This study confirms that the strength of cultural identity in a brand is not only a symbol of national pride, but also a source of trust and perceived quality that drives consumer purchasing decisions. When local values, distinctive aesthetics, and the cultural spirit of a nation are authentically integrated into a brand strategy, consumers view products not just as commodities, but as representations of their identities and emotional meanings that they are proud of. Thus, the higher the level of authenticity and ethnic consistency of the brand, the greater the perceived quality and purchase intent that appears in the minds of consumers. These findings convey the message that, in the era of globalization, a brand's strength lies in its ability to uphold cultural roots while delivering trusted quality and remaining relevant to the needs of the modern market.

5.1 Limitations & Future Research

This study has several limitations that must be considered when interpreting the results. First, this study only focused on the relationship between brand ethnicity, perceived quality, and purchase intent without considering other mediating or moderation variables such as brand trust or consumer ethnocentrism that can also affect the relationship between variables. In particular, the researcher mentioned Consumer Ethnocentrism as a moderator in the relationship between Brand Ethnicity and Perceived Quality. However, due to the limitations of the researcher, this variable was not included in the study. Second, the data for this study was collected through self-reported questionnaires, so the possibility of perception bias or social desire bias is inevitable. Third, this study uses the context of a brand within one country, so the generalization of results to cross-cultural contexts or international brands is still limited. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope by involving respondents from different countries or different cultural backgrounds to better understand the ethnic dynamics of brands in a global context. In addition, further studies can integrate qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions to explore consumers' emotional significance of brand cultural identity more comprehensively. A longitudinal approach is also recommended to observe changes in consumer perceptions of brand ethnicity and purchase intent over time, as well as the influence of external factors such as cultural trends, social media, and product innovation on this relationship.

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