




The effect of country image on foreign product purchase intention: The mediating role of product image, perceived prestige, perceived quality, and willingness to pay

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ABSTRACT

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South Korea's global reputation, characterized by technological innovation, high-quality standards, and a strong work ethic, has led to a high demand for products that embody these characteristics. The rise of technology and e-commerce has facilitated international trade, and South Korea's capacity to manufacture widely distributed goods has further enhanced its global standing. This study examines the correlation between customers' willingness to pay and their overall propensity to purchase foreign items, considering their perception of a country's image. It employs a quantitative explanatory approach, utilizing primary and secondary data collected through a Likert scale. Data analysis is conducted using SmartPLS to assess validity, reliability, and the influence between variables. The purpose of this research is to analyze willingness to pay (WTP) and individual perceptions of perceived quality concerning the purchase of environmentally friendly products in developing economies. The findings indicate that a country's image positively influences product image, perceived prestige, and willingness to pay. Specifically, a country's image significantly impacts the intention to purchase foreign products. Consumers' willingness to pay for environmentally friendly products is influenced by consumer characteristics, beliefs, behaviors, strategic messaging, and market dynamics. In developing economies, the benefits of environmentally friendly products are a crucial factor in determining willingness to pay. The results demonstrate that a country's image has a significant impact on product image, perceived prestige, perceived quality, and willingness to pay.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the mediating variables, namely the role of perceived prestige and product image, in the relationship between country image and foreign product purchase intention. The role of country image, through the mediation of prestige and product image, in this case Korean products, influences purchase intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

South Korea is recognized as a leading force in several global industries such as fashion, cosmetics, entertainment, and others. People from across continents have developed a strong admiration for South Korea. South Korea's reputation has grown specifically in entertainment fields, as a result of its transformation into a prosperous nation (Seo, Cruz, & Fifita, 2020). South Korea's reputation on the global stage, particularly in terms of technical innovation, high quality, and work ethic, has a significant correlation with South Korea's image. Products that are perceived to have these characteristics in the Korean market have generated significant demand among buyers (Lim, 2023).

There is a correlation between a country's image and consumers' perception of a brand, including their loyalty to the brand itself. Findings from another study reveal that consumers' evaluations of products from specific countries can be influenced by those countries' international reputations. A strong national reputation can enhance consumers' perceived quality and credibility of a brand, which can lead to higher levels of consumer loyalty towards the brand (Cruz, Seo, & Scaraboto, 2024). However, when a country has a negative image among consumers, it may damage a brand's reputation and discourage consumers from purchasing products linked to that country. It is necessary for firms aiming to expand their market scope and establish their brand identity to understand the importance of consumers' perception of a country, as it plays a significant role in affecting consumer behavior (Cruz et al., 2024).

The advancement of technology and the rise of e-commerce have led to the removal of trade barriers between nations. Individuals have the ability to buy goods online, not only domestically but also internationally (World Customs Organization (WCO), 2022). The ability to purchase international goods allows a large number of people to obtain products from other countries. The prevalence of e-commerce and offline businesses facilitates easy access to popular products from different nations, thereby increasing the opportunity to purchase international goods (Lee & Seo, 2024).

Across multiple countries, South Korea is renowned for its exceptional ability to manufacture widely distributed goods. The advancement of technology has led to increased complexity and the gradual elimination of boundaries between nations, resulting in simplified cross-border transactions for buying and selling. The world of fashion inherently entangles young individuals, especially in South Korea, a prominent fashion hub that consistently serves as a source of inspiration for many. They also include several other items in addition to shoes and purses (Kim, 1997).

The relationship between a country's reputation, perceived excellence, and the intention to purchase foreign products is significant. Through analyzing the influence of consumers' perceptions of a nation's prestige and quality on their willingness to pay for imported goods, businesses can customize their marketing campaigns accordingly. International marketing efforts should not disregard these essential elements that influence consumers' decisions to buy foreign items. There is a correlation between perceived quality of foreign products and customers' purchase intention, as well as their loyalty to those products. There is a connection between customers' willingness to pay for foreign products and their image of a country, which shapes the degree to which customers tend to purchase products from a particular nation based on their perception (Helly, Budhi, & Didik, 2022).

This study aims to investigate the correlation between consumers' willingness to pay and their general tendency to purchase foreign products, alongside their impression of a country image. The objective of this research is to identify the determinants that lead customers to choose foreign products over domestic products. By analyzing the influence of product image, product prestige, and quality on customer behavior, firms can effectively align their strategies with international customers (Zhang & Yu, 2020). This study explores the determinants that influence consumers' perception of foreign products, along with possible strategies to increase sales and expand international market share (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, & Oldenkotte, 2012). Country image research plays a very important role in international trade; consumers will see the country of origin of a product. Country image as the image of a nation is very important for countries and entrepreneurs who are interconnected. Country image research in the context of South Korea is *The Effect of Country Image on Foreign Product Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Product Image, Perceived Prestige, Perceived Quality, and Willingness to Pay*. A country with a very strong country image in this decade with cosmetic products, entertainment, technology, and others.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Country Image

Country image refers to impressions, perceptions, and reputation formed by individuals outside the country of origin. Consumers' impressions are likely being altered by various elements, for instance political stability, economic performance, cultural heritage, technical breakthroughs, and social programs. Generally speaking, nations that have

political situations that are stable and governance systems that are transparent tend to have a more favorable image (Kim, Kim, & Park, 2018; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). Strong economic performance, which is defined by high GDP, low unemployment rates, and sustained development, has a beneficial impact on the country's image (Dinnie, 2007). The attractiveness and prestige of a nation are both enhanced by the presence of a rich cultural heritage, which includes historical sites, traditions, and artistic expressions (Dinnie, 2022; Girma, 2016). Those nations that are at the forefront of technical advancements, research, and innovation frequently have a favorable reputation in the international community as progressive and forward-thinking nations (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

2.2. Product Image

The perception and depiction of a product are referred to as its product image. Product image has an impact on consumer behavior and brand identity (Usunier, 2011). It includes the visual components, the packaging, as well as the feelings and sensations that are associated with it (Pantin-Sohier, 2009). It is essential for successful marketing and product design to have a solid understanding of the product image (Kim & Ryu, 2021). Consumers' perceptions of a company are influenced by the product image as well as the packaging of the goods (Nugraha, Krista, & Huruta, 2024). The use of significant images in a product has the potential to awaken memories from the past and establish a powerful emotional connection with the target audience (Guo & Chen, 2012).

2.3. Perceived Prestige

It is the acknowledgment and respect that an individual or organization receives from other people, which is typically based on their achievements, status, or reputation. This is what is meant by the term "perceived prestige." Behavior, attitudes, and social dynamics can be influenced by various social and organizational environments, which serve as key factors (Carmeli, 2005). Employees' affective commitment is influenced by two aspects of perceived external prestige: social and economic prestige to the organization (Sharples & Thomas, 1969). The customer-oriented citizenship behaviors of service employees are positively influenced by the perceived external status of the service employees (Kang & Bartlett, 2013). There are three primary elements included in the position-reputation-information scale: position, reputation, and information, which function to assess an individual's prestige (Berl, Samarasinghe, Jordan, & Gavin, 2020).

2.4. Perceived Quality

Perceived quality refers to customers' evaluations of product or service quality. This perception is influenced by a number of elements, including the intrinsic characteristics of the product, the reputation of the brand, and the expectations of the individual (Aaker & Jacobson, 1994). Quality perceptions are formed by multiple factors of psychological foundations, including personal and situational influences (Steenkamp, 1990). Engineering point of view is a critical perspective for analyzing a certain number and its characteristics in order to develop a comprehensive framework for perceived quality (Stylidis, Wickman, & Söderberg, 2019). Assessing perceived quality often involves comparing the expected performance of products with their actual results. Stores with a high level of perceived quality are characterized by outstanding prestige and higher prices (Yang, Dang, & Wu, 2025).

2.5. Willingness to Pay (WTP)

In-depth analysis of environmentally friendly products, WTP is one of the most crucial aspects to consider for green products. Some of the aspects that influence WTP for environmentally friendly products are investigated in this research (Kirmani & Khan, 2018; Zaidi, Dixit, Maurya, & Dharwal, 2022). These aspects include consumer traits, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as the influence of strategic messaging and market conditions. Consumers' willingness to pay for green products is enhanced by their environmentally conscious decisions and behaviors. Campaigns and demonstrations play a significant role in increasing awareness and consumer concern (Pratiwi & Pratomo, 2018).

WTP can be influenced by how consumers perceive the functional attributes of environmentally friendly products. In developing economies, consumers' willingness to pay is based on a foundational element, which is the benefit derived from environmentally friendly products. Several elements can affect consumers' willingness to pay for such products, including customer attitudes, knowledge, awareness, strategic messaging, and concerns over social and environmental issues (Biswas, 2016; Oesman, 2021).

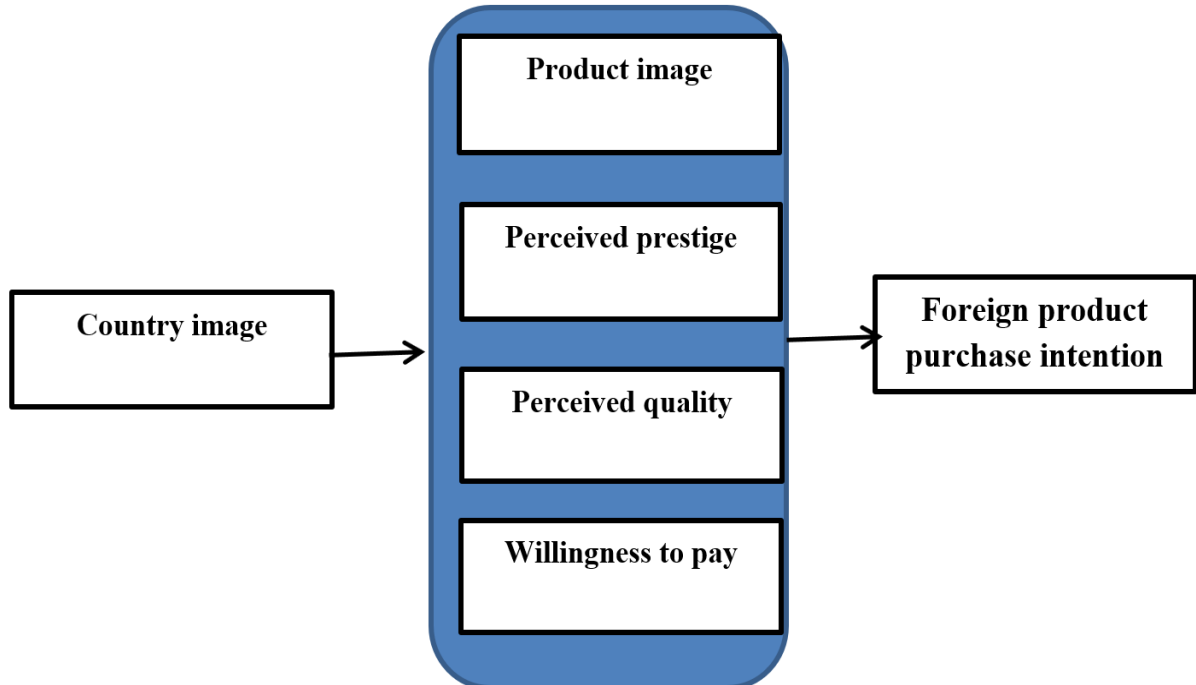


Figure 1. Research framework.

Figure 1 shows a conceptual research framework illustrating how country image increases willingness to pay for a product. In this study, Korean products are mediated by the variables of product image, perceived prestige, and perceived quality. These three variables mediate Korea's country image, thereby increasing people's willingness to pay for Korean products.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a quantitative methodology is utilized, and the data collection process is carried out through the use of an online questionnaire. This study aims to measure the impact of country image on purchasing decisions for South Korean products. The research was conducted using purposive sampling with the criteria of having purchased products from South Korea.

The total number of respondents in this research is approximately 210. Other criteria for participation include being at least 17 years old and having purchased products from South Korea within the last year. The study primarily targets foreigners who have made purchases of Korean products.

A five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, with one point indicating "strongly disagree" and five points indicating "strongly agree." To analyze the data collected from the questionnaire, SMART PLS software was employed to perform various tests, including assessments of validity, reliability, regression analysis between variables, and others. Additionally, demographic data such as age, gender, and income level were collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the participants.

Table 1. Demography.

| Gender | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Man | 71 (33.81%) |
| Woman | 139 (66.19%) |
| Age | |
| <18 | 50 (23.81%) |
| 18-29 | 72 (34.29%) |
| 30-39 | 69 (32.86%) |
| 40-49 | 19 (9.05%) |
| Married | |
| Yes | 30 (14%) |
| No | 180 (86%) |
| Frequently purchased products | |
| Clothing | 92 (43.81%) |
| Cosmetics | 131 (62.38%) |
| Electronics | 108 (51.45%) |
| Toys | 111 (52.86%) |
| Health food | 89 (42.38%) |
| Household goods | 75 (35.71%) |

Table 1 illustrates the demographics of respondents based on gender: there are 139 female respondents, accounting for approximately 66.19%, and 71 male respondents, representing 33.81%. Regarding age groups, 72 respondents are aged 18-29 years, constituting 34.29%, followed by 69 respondents aged 30-39 years, or 32.86%. Respondents under 18 years total 50, or 23.81%, while those aged 40-49 years number 19, or 9.05%. In terms of marital status, 180 respondents are unmarried, making up 86%, while 30 respondents are married, or 14%. Based on frequently purchased items, 131 respondents, or 62.38%, answered cosmetics; 111 respondents, or 52.86%, selected toys; and 108 respondents, or 51.45%, chose electronics. Clothing was selected by 92 respondents, or 43.81%; health food by 89 respondents, or 42.38%; and household goods by 75 respondents, or 35.71%.

4. RESULTS

The data in the table summarizes demographic information and purchasing habits. It includes details on gender, with 71 respondents (33.81%) being men and 139 respondents (66.19%) being women, indicating that the majority of the surveyed group are women. The age distribution shows that the largest group is aged 18-29. Regarding marital status, most respondents are unmarried. The table also highlights the frequency of product category purchases, with cosmetics being the most frequently purchased, followed by toys and electronics. This information provides insights into the demographics and purchasing preferences of the surveyed population, illustrating differences in product category preferences and demographic characteristics.

4.1. Description Analysis

The data description of the respondent's comments might enhance the conversation by providing insights into the condition of each variable indicator being researched. Respondents' response scores were categorized to facilitate the interpretation of the factors under study.

Table 2. Recapitulation results of average values per variable.

| Variables | Total score | Average |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Country image | 4233 | 3.36 |
| Product image | 3433 | 3.27 |
| Perceived prestige | 2744 | 3.27 |
| Perceived quality | 2899 | 3.45 |
| Willingness to pay | 2744 | 3.27 |
| Foreign product purchase intention | 2864 | 3.41 |

Table 2 shows the average of each respondent's answers tabulated and averaged. The average of each variable with perceived quality is the highest, with a value of 3.45. It is followed by foreign product purchase intention at 3.41, then country image at 3.36. Meanwhile, product image, perceived prestige, and willingness to pay all have the same average of 3.27.

Table 3. Convergent validity.

| Variables | Indicators | Loading factor > 0.7 | Result |
|------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|--------|
| Country image | CI1 | 0.811 | Valid |
| Country image | CI2 | 0.765 | Valid |
| Country image | CI3 | 0.717 | Valid |
| Country image | CI4 | 0.758 | Valid |
| Country image | CI5 | 0.880 | Valid |
| Foreign product purchase intention | FP1 | 0.757 | Valid |
| Foreign product purchase intention | FP2 | 0.845 | Valid |
| Foreign product purchase intention | FP3 | 0.868 | Valid |
| Foreign product purchase intention | FP4 | 0.800 | Valid |
| Foreign product purchase intention | FP5 | 0.849 | Valid |
| Product image | PI1 | 0.821 | Valid |
| Product image | PI2 | 0.811 | Valid |
| Product image | PI3 | 0.819 | Valid |
| Product image | PI4 | 0.793 | Valid |
| Product image | PI5 | 0.805 | Valid |
| Perceived prestige | PP1 | 0.842 | Valid |
| Perceived prestige | PP2 | 0.843 | Valid |
| Perceived prestige | PP3 | 0.824 | Valid |
| Perceived prestige | PP4 | 0.839 | Valid |
| Perceived quality | PQ1 | 0.782 | Valid |
| Perceived quality | PQ2 | 0.787 | Valid |
| Perceived quality | PQ3 | 0.802 | Valid |
| Perceived quality | PQ4 | 0.808 | Valid |
| Willingness to pay | WP1 | 0.846 | Valid |
| Willingness to pay | WP2 | 0.853 | Valid |
| Willingness to pay | WP3 | 0.873 | Valid |
| Willingness to pay | WP4 | 0.863 | Valid |

Table 3 reveals that the respondents' evaluations of the country image, perceived quality, and foreign country characteristics fall within the range of 3.40 - 4.20, indicating an above-average rating and placing them in the good/high group. The averages of the variables for product image, perceived prestige, and willingness to pay fall into the sufficient category, namely within the range of 2.60-3.40. The product image, perceived prestige, and willingness to pay variables had the lowest average value of 3.27, while the perceived quality variable received the highest response with an average value of 3.45.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

4.2.1. Convergent Validity

The connection between the item score and the construct score is used to evaluate the convergent validity of the measurement model that incorporates reflective indicators. If the loading factor exceeds 0.5, it indicates that all indicators are valid measurement tools for the variables they are intended to measure. This threshold confirms the validity of the indicators in representing the underlying constructs, ensuring the measurement model's reliability and accuracy in capturing the intended concepts.

Table 4. Cross-loading testing.

| Variables | Country image | Foreign product purchase intention | Perceived prestige | Perceived quality | Product image | Willingness to pay |
|-----------|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| CI1 | 0.811 | 0.284 | 0.279 | 0.279 | 0.287 | 0.340 |
| CI2 | 0.765 | 0.315 | 0.129 | 0.304 | 0.204 | 0.305 |
| CI3 | 0.717 | 0.245 | 0.135 | 0.216 | 0.256 | 0.313 |
| CI4 | 0.758 | 0.230 | 0.287 | 0.251 | 0.226 | 0.255 |
| CI5 | 0.680 | 0.201 | 0.147 | 0.240 | 0.162 | 0.230 |
| CI6 | 0.757 | 0.365 | 0.210 | 0.239 | 0.160 | 0.314 |
| FP1 | 0.358 | 0.845 | 0.293 | 0.308 | 0.367 | 0.194 |
| FP2 | 0.305 | 0.868 | 0.346 | 0.312 | 0.352 | 0.322 |
| FP3 | 0.231 | 0.800 | 0.249 | 0.256 | 0.332 | 0.206 |
| FP4 | 0.333 | 0.849 | 0.263 | 0.145 | 0.355 | 0.245 |
| PI1 | 0.237 | 0.326 | 0.241 | 0.293 | 0.821 | 0.317 |
| PI2 | 0.256 | 0.365 | 0.238 | 0.165 | 0.811 | 0.298 |
| PI3 | 0.255 | 0.370 | 0.229 | 0.265 | 0.819 | 0.259 |
| PI4 | 0.274 | 0.276 | 0.166 | 0.318 | 0.793 | 0.259 |
| PI5 | 0.157 | 0.348 | 0.236 | 0.172 | 0.805 | 0.226 |
| PP1 | 0.243 | 0.336 | 0.842 | 0.249 | 0.203 | 0.288 |
| PP2 | 0.235 | 0.300 | 0.843 | 0.281 | 0.259 | 0.313 |
| PP3 | 0.157 | 0.257 | 0.824 | 0.312 | 0.221 | 0.325 |
| PP4 | 0.256 | 0.252 | 0.839 | 0.333 | 0.240 | 0.458 |
| PQ1 | 0.272 | 0.283 | 0.251 | 0.782 | 0.296 | 0.316 |
| PQ2 | 0.247 | 0.207 | 0.264 | 0.787 | 0.250 | 0.328 |
| PQ3 | 0.308 | 0.205 | 0.327 | 0.802 | 0.216 | 0.339 |
| PQ4 | 0.256 | 0.279 | 0.263 | 0.808 | 0.186 | 0.317 |
| WP1 | 0.336 | 0.184 | 0.378 | 0.379 | 0.340 | 0.846 |
| WP2 | 0.290 | 0.266 | 0.362 | 0.268 | 0.255 | 0.853 |
| WP3 | 0.351 | 0.238 | 0.362 | 0.449 | 0.316 | 0.873 |
| WP4 | 0.367 | 0.297 | 0.317 | 0.309 | 0.252 | 0.863 |

The table labeled as Table 4 provides a summary of the results obtained from the measurement model test. Based on the factor loading results, country image, foreign product purchase intention, product image, perceived prestige, and willingness to pay all had factor loadings above 0.5. These results indicate that all indicators are valid in reflecting the latent variables.

4.2.2. Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity test is assessed by analyzing the cross-loading values, which require all indicators to have a higher correlation with their respective constructs than with other constructs. Thus, a cross-loading value can be considered valid if the indicator has a significant influence on the latent variable being assessed. The discriminant validity test can also be analyzed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Based on these criteria, a construct demonstrates a sufficient level of discriminant validity when the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds the correlation between other constructs. The results of the discriminant validity analysis for each variable are presented below.

According to the cross-loading test table provided, it is evident that each indicator exhibits a stronger association with the construct it is intended to assess, compared to other constructs (latent variables). Therefore, it can be inferred that all indicators within the study variables possess satisfactory discriminant validity. In addition to the cross-loading test, the discriminant validity can also be assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker criterion test.

| Variables | Country image | Foreign product purchase intention | Perceived prestige | Perceived quality | Product image | Willingness to pay |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Country image | 0.749 | | | | | |
| Foreign product purchase intention | 0.366 | 0.841 | | | | |
| Perceived prestige | 0.270 | 0.345 | 0.837 | | | |
| Perceived quality | 0.341 | 0.309 | 0.347 | 0.795 | | |
| Product image | 0.293 | 0.418 | 0.275 | 0.298 | 0.810 | |
| Willingness to pay | 0.393 | 0.290 | 0.411 | 0.408 | 0.336 | 0.859 |

According to the Fornell-Larcker test [Table 5](#) provided, it is evident that all constructs possess a larger AVE root value compared to the correlation between these constructs and other constructs. Therefore, it can be inferred that each construct demonstrates strong discriminant validity.

4.3. Reliability Tests

The construct reliability value is assessed using composite reliability and is enhanced by Cronbach's alpha. A construct is considered dependable if its composite reliability exceeds 0.7 and its Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.6. The results of the reliability test for each variable are presented using the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha tests.

Table 6. Reliabilities test.

| Variables | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability | Average variance extracted (AVE) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Country image | 0.843 | 0.884 | 0.561 |
| Foreign product purchase intention | 0.862 | 0.906 | 0.707 |
| Perceived prestige | 0.859 | 0.904 | 0.701 |
| Perceived quality | 0.806 | 0.873 | 0.632 |
| Product image | 0.869 | 0.905 | 0.656 |
| Willingness to pay | 0.882 | 0.918 | 0.738 |

Based on [Table 6](#), it can be seen that all variables have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above the established standard. The Cronbach's alpha value must be above 0.6, and all variables, namely country image, foreign product purchase intention, perceived prestige, perceived quality, product image, and willingness to pay, have values above 0.6. The composite reliability value of all variables is also above the standard, namely above 0.7. It is also the same that all variables are above the established standard, so it can be concluded that they are reliable.

4.4. R-Square

The R-squared (R^2) value quantifies the extent to which exogenous variables can account for the variability in endogenous variables. The following are the results of calculating the R-squared value for each endogenous variable.

Table 7. R-Square test results.

| Variables | R-squared | R-squared adjusted |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Foreign product purchase intention | 0.251 | 0.236 |
| Perceived prestige | 0.073 | 0.068 |
| Perceived quality | 0.116 | 0.112 |
| Product image | 0.086 | 0.081 |
| Willingness to pay | 0.155 | 0.151 |

According to the [Table 7](#) provided, the product image gain may be attributed to the country image by a percentage of 8.6%. The perceived prestige can be attributed to the country image, accounting for 7.3% of the

explanation. Country image accounts for 11.6% of the explanation for perceived quality and 15.5% of the explanation for willingness to pay. The simultaneous influence of product image, perceived prestige, perceived quality, and willingness to pay at 25.1% can explain foreign product purchase intention.

Table 8. Recapitulation results of direct hypothesis testing (Direct effect).

| Variables | Original sample (O) | Standard deviation (STDEV) | T statistics (O/STDEV) | P values |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Country image -> Perceived prestige | 0.270 | 0.061 | 4.401 | 0.000 |
| Country image -> Perceived quality | 0.341 | 0.059 | 5.827 | 0.000 |
| Country image -> Product image | 0.293 | 0.068 | 4.290 | 0.000 |
| Country image -> Willingness to pay | 0.393 | 0.062 | 6.340 | 0.000 |
| Perceived prestige -> Foreign product purchase intention | 0.194 | 0.066 | 2.930 | 0.004 |
| Perceived quality -> Foreign product purchase intention | 0.127 | 0.063 | 2.028 | 0.043 |
| Product image -> Foreign product purchase intention | 0.308 | 0.067 | 4.631 | 0.000 |
| Willingness to pay -> Foreign product purchase intention | 0.054 | 0.072 | 0.751 | 0.453 |

Based on the summary of the results presented in the Table 8, it is evident that the country's image has a favorable and statistically significant impact on the product's image, perceived prestige, perceived quality, and willingness to pay ($p < 0.05$). The variables of product image, perceived prestige, and perceived quality have a positive and substantial impact on the intention to purchase foreign products. However, willingness to pay does not have a significant influence on the intention to purchase foreign products ($p = 0.453 > 0.05$).

Table 9. Recapitulation results of indirect hypothesis testing (indirect effect).

| Variables | Original sample (O) | Standard deviation (STDEV) | T statistics (O/STDEV) | P values |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Country image -> Perceived prestige -> Foreign product purchase intention | 0.052 | 0.024 | 2.188 | 0.029 |
| Country image -> Perceived quality -> Foreign product purchase intention | 0.043 | 0.025 | 1.706 | 0.089 |
| Country image -> Product image -> Foreign product purchase intention | 0.090 | 0.030 | 2.995 | 0.003 |
| Country image -> Willingness to pay -> Foreign product purchase intention | 0.021 | 0.030 | 0.722 | 0.471 |

Based on Table 9, the results of the indirect effect test indicate that perceived prestige plays a positive and significant role in mediating the relationship between country image and foreign product purchase intention ($p = 0.029 < 0.05$). Similarly, product image also mediates the effect of country image on foreign product purchase intention, with a statistically significant result ($p = 0.003 < 0.05$). However, the variables perceived quality ($p = 0.089 > 0.05$) and willingness to pay ($p = 0.471 > 0.05$) do not show significant mediating effects. These findings suggest that perceived quality and willingness to pay do not significantly mediate the relationship between country image and foreign product purchase intention.

5. CONCLUSIONS

South Korea's entertainment sector is driven by its global reputation in the industry. South Korea's reputation on the global stage, particularly in terms of technical innovation, high quality, and work ethic, has a significant correlation with South Korea's image. These aspects lead consumers to have high demand for products that represent it. Consumers can purchase products from the international market or domestically more easily because technology and e-commerce have facilitated international trade. South Korea's ability in mass production and distribution has

played a significant part in enhancing its global image. There is a significant relationship between a country's image, perceived quality, and consumers' intention to purchase foreign products. Based on consumer behavior regarding their willingness to pay for foreign products, businesses can adjust their marketing strategies according to consumers' perceptions, including the country's prestige and excellence. This study aims to investigate the correlation between consumers' willingness to pay and their general tendency to purchase foreign products, alongside their impression of a country's image. By analyzing the influence of product image, product prestige, and quality on customer behavior, firms can effectively align their strategies with international customers.

Country image refers to impressions, perceptions, and reputation formed by individuals outside the country of origin. Consumers' impressions are likely to be altered by various elements; for instance, political stability, economic performance, cultural heritage, technological breakthroughs, and social programs can affect a country's image. On the other hand, marketing and product design are key elements in shaping product image, which includes visual components, packaging, and consumer sentiments. Perceived prestige refers to an individual's recognition by others due to their accomplishments, status, or public image. It can influence consumers' behaviors, attitudes, and social dynamics in multiple environments, including social and organizational settings. This study analyzes consumers' perceptions regarding perceived quality and willingness to pay (WTP) for environmentally friendly products in developing economies. Perceived quality refers to customers' evaluation of product or service quality; this perception is influenced by several elements, including the intrinsic characteristics of the product, the reputation of the brand, and individual expectations. Quality perceptions are formed by multiple psychological factors, including personal and situational influences. Stores with a high level of perceived quality are characterized by outstanding prestige and higher prices.

Consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) for environmentally friendly products is determined by consumer characteristics, beliefs, behaviors, strategic messaging, and market dynamics. In developing economies, consumers' willingness to pay is influenced by the benefits of environmentally friendly products as a crucial factor. Aspects that influence willingness to pay (WTP) include consumers' attitudes, knowledge, awareness, strategic messaging, and consideration of social and environmental consequences. The results of this study show that a country's image has a significant influence on product image, perceived prestige, perceived quality, and willingness to pay. Furthermore, product image, perceived prestige, and perceived quality have a positive and significant influence on consumers' intention to purchase foreign products. However, willingness to pay does not have a significant influence on the intention to purchase foreign products. The indirect effect test indicates that the perceived prestige of the product image plays a positive and substantial role in mediating the association between country image and foreign product purchase intention.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: The study involved minimal risk and adhered to ethical guidelines for social science fieldwork. Formal approval from an Institutional Review Board was not required under the policies of Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia. Informed verbal consent was obtained from all participants, and all data were anonymized to ensure participant confidentiality.

Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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