

Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behavior for Foreign Products

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the factors that influence consumer buying behavior for foreign products among Malaysian university students. Therefore, a survey of 134 Malaysian university students in Selangor Malaysia was conducted to determine the factors that influence consumer buying behavior. Correlation analysis is used to analyze the data to identify the relationship between the variables. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis is applied to determine the significant factors that affect consumer buying behavior for foreign products among Malaysian university students. The results of the survey suggest that product price, product quality and country of origin are significant factors in explaining consumer buying behavior. This study offers renewed empirical insights that contribute to a new way of thinking about the factors driving consumer buying behavior for foreign products specifically in Malaysia.

Keywords: *Consumer Buying Behavior, Product Price, Product Quality, Country of Origin*

1. Introduction and Background

The global marketplace is characterized by a sustained proliferation of foreign products, which fundamentally recalibrates consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors. As international trade continues to expand, discerning the multifaceted drivers of consumer choice ranging from economic factors to psychological predispositions has become a strategic imperative for businesses aiming to maintain relevance and competitive advantage in increasingly saturated markets (Danylenko et al., 2025). Against this backdrop, the Malaysian context provides a fertile ground for analysis; university students represent a particularly pivotal demographic whose distinct consumer styles and decision-making patterns have been the subject of recent academic inquiry (Haron & Chinedu, 2017).

This study aims to identify the key factors that influence consumer buying behavior for foreign products among Malaysian university students. By examining variables such as product price, product quality, and country of origin, this research seeks to provide empirical insights into the decision-making processes of this specific consumer segment. However, it must be acknowledged that consumer decision-making is not always purely rational or predictable; subjective factors, such as emotional responses, brand loyalty, and impulsive behavior, can often override objective assessments of price and quality (Margalit, 2020). Thus, while this research focuses on quantifiable drivers, it recognizes the inherent limitations in predicting behavior solely through traditional analytical frameworks. The findings are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding consumer behavior, offering a new perspective on the drivers of consumer buying behavior for foreign products in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

Consumer buying behavior: Consumer buying behavior encompasses the intricate psychological, social, and economic processes individuals undergo when selecting, purchasing, and utilizing products to satisfy their needs (Feyerlein, 2017). A deep understanding of these behaviors is critical for businesses operating in globalized markets, as it provides the analytical foundation necessary to align product offerings with specific consumer preferences such as price sensitivity, quality perceptions, and attitudes toward the country of origin, thereby enabling firms to effectively navigate the complexities of foreign product integration and secure a competitive edge (Danylenko et al., 2025). However, it is important to acknowledge that consumer decision-making is not always purely rational or predictable, subjective emotional responses, brand loyalty, and

impulsive behavior can often override objective assessments of price and quality, thereby limiting the predictive power of traditional analytical models.

Product price: Product price is a critical determinant in consumer decision-making, particularly regarding foreign products. Price sensitivity frequently dictates purchase intentions, as consumers assess the affordability and perceived value of international goods against local alternatives (Danylenko et al., 2025). While price is often viewed through a rational lens, it is important to acknowledge that subjective perceptions and emotional factors can influence how consumers weigh price against other attributes, such as quality (Feyerlein, 2017). However, product price is not always the paramount factor; many consumers prioritize quality or brand reputation over affordability to mitigate purchase risk (Zeeshan, 2013). In certain market segments, higher prices may even be perceived as an indicator of superior quality, effectively neutralizing price sensitivity as the primary driver of purchase intention. Indeed, price remains an important extrinsic cue, its trade-offs with global and local product attributes can influence consumers' willingness to pay and purchasing preferences (Davvetas et al., 2022). Despite these complexities, product price remains a fundamental metric for establishing competitive positioning for global brands.

H1: Product price has a significant relationship with consumer buying behavior.

Product quality: Product quality constitutes a pivotal factor in assessing purchase intentions for foreign goods (Haque et al., 2015). Consumers often prioritize high-quality offerings over price considerations as a strategy to fulfill their requirements while simultaneously mitigating the risks associated with international products. Empirical evidence supports this, as quality serves as a critical mechanism for establishing competitive advantage (Azzahra & Kusumawati, 2023). Moreover, studies have shown that perceived quality acts as a central mediator, bridging the gap between a brand's country of origin and the consumer's ultimate decision to purchase (Prahiawan et al., 2021). Indeed, research indicates that consumer purchasing intentions are fundamentally dependent upon product quality (Haque et al., 2015). However, product quality is not always the principal factor, in certain market segments, consumers may prioritize affordability or brand reputation over quality to mitigate purchase risk. In some instances, price-sensitive consumers may perceive lower prices as sufficient to meet their needs, thereby reducing the influence of superior quality on purchase intention.

H2: Product quality has a significant relationship with consumer buying behavior.

Country of origin: Country of origin serves as a significant heuristic cue that influences consumer perception and purchase intention for foreign products (Prahiawan et al., 2021). Consumers often utilize a product's origin to infer quality and reliability, particularly when direct product experience is limited (Caruana, 1996). While a favorable country image can bolster brand equity and drive consumer preference, negative perceptions or localized ethnocentrism can create significant barriers to market entry (Haque et al., 2015). However, it is essential to recognize that the influence of country of origin is not absolute; consumers frequently weigh origin against other critical variables, such as price sensitivity and perceived product quality, in a complex decision-making process (Davvetas et al., 2022). Conversely, some suggest that the reliance on country of origin as a primary cue is becoming less absolute, particularly in globalized markets where strong global branding and specific product performance can influence perceptions (Aboagye & Haozhen, 2024). In such segments, consumers may prioritize brand reputation or intrinsic functional attributes over the country of origin, potentially reducing its predictive power regarding purchase intent.

H3: Country of origin has a significant relationship with consumer buying behavior.

3. Methodology

A survey was conducted amongst Malaysian university students residing in Selangor Malaysia. Using a quantitative study, a questionnaire was used to determine the factors that influence consumer buying behavior. Therefore, a quantitative approach was used to conduct the study. Overall, 200 questionnaires were disseminated and 134 questionnaires were meaningful for analysis purposes. A total of 134 respondents is sufficient to conduct analysis (Faul et al., 2009). The questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire covered five sections. The first section was intended to gather the demographic profile of the respondents. The second section assessed the product price. Next, the third section assessed product quality. The fourth section measured country of origin. Finally, the fifth section assessed consumer buying behavior items. A five-point Likert scale, where 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was used to measure

the questionnaire items. Correlation coefficients were used to recognize the relationship between the dependent variables and independent variables. Furthermore, multiple regression was applied to determine the significant factors that affect consumer buying behavior.

4. Results

Reliability Analysis: Table 1 presents the reliability analysis for both independent variables and dependent variables. The variables are product price, product quality and country of origin, as well as consumer buying behavior.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013)
Consumer buying behavior	.658	Moderate
Product price	.650	Moderate
Product quality	.895	Good
Country of origin	.674	Moderate

The Cronbach's Alpha value for consumer behavior is 0.658, signifying a moderate and reliable result. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha for product price is 0.650, suggesting a moderately reliable outcome that remains within the satisfactory range. The value of Cronbach's Alpha for product quality is 0.895, indicating a good and reliable result. Lastly, the value of Cronbach's Alpha for country of origin is 0.674, showcasing a moderate and reliable outcome.

Correlation Analysis: Table 2 shows the correlation analysis to prove the strength of a linear association between variables. The coefficient of correlation is applied to measure the strength of the correlation between variables.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable		
	Product Price	Product Quality	Country of Origin
Consumer buying behavior	.623**	0.599**	.580**

(**p<0.01)

The correlation analysis interpretation was based on Guilford's Rule of Thumb (Guilford, 1973). The result found a moderate relationship between consumer buying behavior and product price ($r = 0.623$, $p < 0.01$). There was a moderate relationship between consumer buying behavior and product quality ($r = 0.599$, $p < 0.01$). Finally, there was a moderate relationship between consumer behavior and country of origin ($r = 0.580$, $p < 0.01$).

Regression Analysis: Multiple regression analysis was conducted to further investigate the significant relationship between the dependent variables and independent variables. Table 3 shows the results of multiple regression.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Consumer buying behavior
Product price	.224*
Product quality	.323*
Country of origin	.246*
R ²	.466
F	37.875*

(*p<0.05)

From multiple regression analysis, product price was identified as a significant factor determining consumer buying behavior ($B = 0.224$, $p < 0.05$), thus H1 is supported. Next, product quality was recognized as a significant factor determining consumer buying behavior ($B = 0.323$, $p < 0.05$), therefore H2 is supported. Finally, country of origin was identified as a significant factor determining consumer buying behavior, hence H3 is supported. Next, from multiple regression procedures, the model consisting of consumer buying behavior, product price, product quality and country of origin was found to be significant ($F = 37.875$, $p < 0.05$) and the $R^2 = 0.466$ explaining 46.6% of the variance in consumer buying behavior.

Discussion: This research aims to gain a better understanding of the relationship between factors namely product price, product quality, country of origin and consumer buying behavior for foreign products. The results of this research were obtained through various statistical analyses, correlation analysis, Cronbach's Alpha, and regression analysis. The empirical results of this study substantiate the proposed hypotheses, confirming that product price, product quality, and country of origin serve as significant determinants of consumer buying behavior among university students in Selangor, Malaysia. The regression analysis further highlighted the relative importance of these factors, with all hypotheses being supported. Notably, product quality emerged as the strongest predictor of buying behavior consistent with findings regarding the importance of quality in consumer decisions (Zeeshan, 2013). This aligns with previous research that identified a positive association between quality and purchasing intentions (Tariq et al., 2013). While product price and country of origin were also statistically significant, the study model indicates that these factors account for 46.6% of the variance in consumer buying behavior. This suggests that while these variables are influential, the complexity of consumer decision-making is likely to involve additional factors, warranting further exploration in future studies.

Managerial Implications and Recommendations: The empirical findings offer actionable insights for marketers and business strategists targeting the student demographic in Malaysia. Primarily, since product quality emerged as the most influential factor, management must prioritize consistent quality control and transparent communication of product features to reduce consumer uncertainty and perceived risk (Lee et al., 2019). Marketing campaigns should highlight these quality attributes as a primary competitive advantage to drive purchase intentions (Tabish et al., 2025). Although price and country of origin are significant, they function as supporting decision criteria. Therefore, instead of competing exclusively on price, firms should employ value-based pricing strategies that reflect the quality of their offerings. Additionally, businesses should capitalize on positive country of origin associations where applicable. If the country of origin is not a primary strength, companies should focus on building strong brand equity and signaling quality to transcend geographic origin limitations (Magnusson et al., 2008). However, it is essential to note that for highly price-sensitive segments, an exclusive focus on quality might be limiting, in contexts where economic constraints dictate purchasing power, aggressive pricing and promotional strategies may temporarily outweigh qualitative attributes in the decision-making process. Overall, a balanced strategy that prioritizes quality while maintaining competitive pricing and strategic brand positioning is recommended to effectively capture the target market.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research confirms that product price, product quality, and country of origin are significant determinants of consumer buying behavior among university students in Selangor, Malaysia. The results substantiate the study's hypotheses, revealing that while price and country of origin contribute to consumer decision-making, product quality serves as the most potent predictor of purchasing intentions (Lee et al., 2019; Tariq et al., 2013; Zeeshan, 2013). Consequently, marketers targeting this demographic should prioritize high-quality standards and transparent product communication over aggressive, price-focused competition. An effective market strategy requires integrating quality signaling with value-based pricing and strategic branding to navigate the complexities of consumer behavior and address potential geographic limitations (Magnusson et al., 2008). Moving forward, businesses that adopt this holistic approach are better positioned to foster long-term customer loyalty and achieve a competitive advantage in the student market.

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