Country of Origin, Brand Image, and Attitude Toward the Brand on Wuling EV Purchase Intention

Roni Irawan[1], Maria Apsri Sugiat[2], Dedi Iskamto[3*]
[1,2,3] Department of Management PJJ, Bandung, Indonesia
roniirawan@student.telkomuniversity.ac.id; mariasugiat@telkomuniversity.ac.id; deditaba@telkomuniversity.ac.id

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine the influence of country of origin on purchase intention of Wuling electric vehicles in Indonesia, with brand image and attitude toward the brand as mediating variables. **Methodology/Approach** – A quantitative survey design was employed using a structured questionnaire to collect data from respondents who own Wuling electric vehicles. The purposive sampling technique was applied with an inclusion criterion of age between 21 and 55 years. A total of 419 respondents were successfully collected and included in the analysis. The analysis used SEM-PLS to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships between variables. **Findings** – The results revealed that country of origin does not exert a direct impact on the intention to purchase but significantly influences attitude toward the brand and brand image. Both mediators, attitude toward the brand and brand image, exert a significant impact on the intention to purchase and serve as effective pathways in strengthening the indirect influence of country of origin. **Novelty/Value** – This study highlights the strategic importance of brand image and consumer attitudes in shaping purchase intentions, particularly for Chinese automotive brands entering competitive markets. It also provides practical insights for Wuling and theoretical guidance for future research on international brands and consumer behavior in emerging markets.

Keywords: Attitude toward the brand, Brand image, Country of origin, Electric vehicles, Purchase intention *This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, electric vehicles (EVs) have emerged as a strategic solution to address the global dependence on fossil fuels and to combat climate change through the promotion of cleaner energy. According to Trends in Electric Cars Global EV Outlook 2024 Analysis (IEA, 2024) global EV sales reached nearly 14 million units in 2023, an increase of 3.5 million from the previous year, bringing the global stock to around 40 million EVs. China continues to lead the global EV market, accounting for approximately 60% of new EV registrations. Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, has also shown promising growth, with EV sales doubling in the first quarter of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023 (Hidayat, 2024).

Indonesia, as the fourth most populous country, offers considerable market potential for EV adoption. To capitalize on this potential, the Indonesian government has introduced various supportive policies, such as the Ministry of Industry Regulation No. 27/2020, which aims to achieve a 20% share of low-carbon vehicles, including EVs, in total vehicle sales by 2025. Additionally, tax incentives, such as a reduced VAT rate of 1%, have spurred EV growth. As a result, EV wholesale sales from January to August 2024 reached 23,045 units, marking a 177.32% increase compared to the same period in 2023 (Gaikindo, 2024). However, this figure still falls short of the 10% target needed to meet the 2025 projection of 1.1 million total vehicle sales.

Among EV manufacturers, Wuling, a Chinese automotive brand, has established a strong presence in Indonesia for over seven years. Despite leading EV sales in the Indonesian market, Wuling's retail sales only reached 74% of management's sales targets in the January-August 2024 period. Furthermore, data on vehicle purchase orders (SPK) revealed a downward trend in consumer interest. This decline persists despite Wuling's inclusion of cutting-edge technologies such as the Wuling Indonesian Command (WIND), Internet of Vehicle (IoV), Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS), and Over-The-Air (OTA) updates. Wuling also offers a lifetime warranty for its core EV components, having passed 41 safety and durability tests, including immersion, vibration, and fire testing, to assure battery reliability.

Nonetheless, negative perceptions of Chinese automotive brands still exist, particularly concerning resale value and product reliability. Compared to Japanese and Korean brands, Chinese vehicles, including Wuling models, often suffer from lower resale values, as observed on platforms like (Olx, 2025). For instance, Wuling Almaz's resale value declines by over 30% within the first year, significantly more than competing models such as Honda CR-V or Hyundai Ioniq. Consumer skepticism is further fueled by negative online reviews and complaints, including unsatisfactory after-sales service, spare part availability, and poor app performance on My Wuling Plus, which received a low rating of 2.9/5 on the Google Play Store. This skepticism is reflected in social media interactions, where users frequently express dissatisfaction with Wuling's services and products, potentially affecting consumer attitudes toward the brand. Negative user experiences, both firsthand and through others, contribute to shaping attitude towards the brand and brand image, which are known significantly affect purchasing intentions.

An expanding corpus of scholarly research has investigated the impact of a product's country of origin (COO) on consumers' intention to purchase, with several studies highlighting its role in shaping brand perceptions and consumer attitudes. For instance, Blanco-Encomienda et al. (2024) explored the impact of the country of origin on consumer purchase intentions within the framework of Chinese smartphones and discovered that perceptions regarding the country significantly influence the decision-making processes of consumers. However, their study, like many others, did not examine the indirect influences of the country of origin through attitude towards the brand and brand image, factors that can profoundly mediate consumer behavior, especially in the highinvolvement context of electric vehicle (EV) purchases.

Despite the growing body of literature on country of origin effects, several critical gaps remain unaddressed in the context of Chinese electric vehicles in emerging markets. First, while previous studies have examined the direct influence of country of origin on purchase intention (Blanco-Encomienda et al., 2024; Oduro et al., 2024), limited research has investigated the indirect mechanisms through which COO operates, particularly through the sequential mediation of brand image and attitude toward the brand. Second, the majority of COO research focuses on established product categories, while electric vehicles represent a unique high-involvement, technologically advanced product category. Third, Chinese brands' position in the automotive sector remains under-researched in Southeast Asian emerging markets like Indonesia. Fourth, existing research has not adequately examined how negative perceptions of Chinese automotive brands can be overcome through brand building strategies.

The primary theoretical problem addressed in this study is the incomplete understanding of the mechanism through which country of origin influences purchase intention in the context of electric vehicles. The literature lacks clarity on whether country of origin effects are primarily direct or mediated through brand-related constructs, and how brand image and attitude toward the brand function as sequential mediators. From a managerial perspective, this study addresses critical practical challenges faced by Wuling in Indonesia. Despite market leadership, Wuling achieved only 74% of its sales targets for January-August 2024. Vehicle purchase orders reveal declining consumer interest despite significant product advantages. Negative perceptions persist regarding resale value, with Wuling Almaz declining over 30% within the first year. These challenges affect both company performance and Indonesia's EV market development.

This study makes several novel contributions. First, it tests a comprehensive model with both brand image and attitude as sequential mediators. Second, it employs SEM-PLS to test serial mediation pathways.Third, it focuses on high-involvement EVs rather than consumer electronics. Fourth, it provides actionable insights for emerging economy brands entering skeptical markets.

There have been limited studies that investigate these indirect pathways, particularly in the context of Chinese EV brands in emerging markets such as Indonesia, where historical brand stigma, resale value concerns, and technological perceptions still affect consumer confidence. Moreover, little is known about how these mediating variables influence Indonesian consumers' purchase decisions specifically toward Wuling EVs, despite the brand's increasing market presence and technological advancements.

Consequently, this study aims to address this deficiency by examining the direct and indirect influences of country of origin on consumer purchase intention, with mediation effects from brand image and consumer attitudes towards the brand.

The objectives of this research are to:

1. To determine the degree to which country of origin (COO) influences purchase intention (PI).
2. To determine the degree to which COO affects brand image (BI).
3. To determine the degree to which COO affects attitude towards the brand (ATT).
4. To determine the degree to which brand image (BI) influences purchase intention (PI).
5. To determine the degree to which brand image (BI) affects attitude towards the brand (ATT).
6. To determine the degree to which attitude towards the brand (ATT) influences purchase intention (PI).
7. To determine the degree to which COO influences purchase intention (PI) through brand image (BI).
8. To determine the degree to which COO affects purchase intention (PI) through attitude towards the brand (ATT).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Country of Origin

According to Rabelo-Neto et al. (2018), COO refers to the country where a product or brand is perceived to originate, regardless of its place of manufacture or assembly. COO as the country with which a company is affiliated and which provides national identity to the product. COO reflects how consumer perceptions of a product are influenced by its country of origin, whether in terms of production, development, or the source of its components. The theory of COO began with research by Schooler (1965), who demonstrated that consumers have emotional biases based on a product's country of origin. This means that consumer perceptions of a product are often shaped by stereotypes they associate with that country, a phenomenon known as the country of origin effect.

The country of origin effect pertains to the impact that a nation's reputation exerts on consumers' assessments of products and brands that are from that country (Bartosik-Purgat, 2018). Studies conducted by Drumwright (1994) and Bartosik-Purgat (2018) showed that country-of-origin image plays a role in creating perceptions of product quality. COO helps shape expectations regarding certain product attributes, such as quality or aesthetic appeal. Research shows that products from countries with negative images, such as "Made in China," often face challenges due to consumer assumptions about lower quality (Jo et al., 2003; Oumlil, 2020). This negative perception can create barriers to market entry and require significant brand-building efforts to overcome consumer skepticism.

With the development of globalization and supply chains, the meaning of COO has expanded significantly. COO now not only refers to the manufacturing location but also encompasses the origin of product components, the place of design, and the location of final assembly (Thakor & Lavack, 2003). For example, in the automotive industry, a company may design a product in one country, use components from another, and assemble it in a different location. This demonstrates the significance of COO as a factor influencing consumer decision-making(Ciravegna et al., 2014; Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2010). In the context of electric vehicles, understanding COO becomes particularly important as these products involve advanced technology and represent significant consumer investments, making the country's technological reputation a critical consideration in purchase decisions.

Brand Image

Brand image is the consumer's overall perception and view of a brand, which significantly influences purchasing behavior (Fan & Chen, 2002). This concept is closely related to brand personality, which describes human personality traits associated with a brand (Chen et al., 2006). Brand image emphasizes how consumers interpret a brand and the associations that arise in their minds (Tahir et al., 2024), serving as an external indicator that consumers use to evaluate products (Liang et al., 2024). Keller (1993) conceptualized brand image as the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory, which can influence consumer attitudes and behaviors toward the brand.

These perceptions may include emotional responses, thoughts, or experiential associations toward the brand (GarcíaSalirrosas et al., 2024). Desmaryani et al. (2024) and Jiang et al. (2021) also emphasized that brand image is shaped through messages, experiences, and interactions with the brand over time. Virto et al. (2024) described brand image as part of brand personality that encompasses emotional, cognitive, and functional dimensions. The emotional dimension relates to how consumers feel about the brand, the cognitive dimension involves beliefs about brand attributes, and the functional dimension concerns the perceived utility and performance of the brand. In the automotive industry, particularly for electric vehicles, brand image is influenced by factors such as technological innovation, environmental sustainability, reliability, and after-sales service quality.

Brand image plays a critical role in consumer decision-making, especially for high-involvement products like electric vehicles. Research by Hoo et al. (2024) demonstrated that brand image significantly affects purchase intention in the hospitality industry, suggesting its universal importance across product categories. For automotive brands, particularly those from emerging economies like China, building a positive brand image becomes essential to overcome negative country-of-origin perceptions. Strong brand image can serve as a buffer against COO biases, helping consumers focus on actual product attributes rather than stereotypes associated with the country of origin (Jo et al., 2003).

Attitude Toward the Brand

Attitude toward the brand refers to consumers' overall, long-term evaluation that can influence their purchase intention. Ahn & Back (2018) and Keller (1993) emphasized that this attitude is formed through consumers' beliefs and feelings about a brand's attributes and benefits. Bergkvist et al. (2016) and Foroudi et al. (2021) described attitude toward the brand as the consumer's overall evaluative representation, formed by both real and perceived experiences, reflecting the brand's meaning in the consumer's view. This attitude represents a predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to the brand, which then influences behavioral intentions and actual purchase behavior.

This attitude can be influenced by various factors, including advertising experiences, personal interactions with the brand, word-of-mouth communications, and direct product experiences (Kaushal & Kumar, 2016; Mohan, 2014). Quezado et al (2022) showed that a positive brand attitude encourages consumers to recommend and repurchase the brand, demonstrating its importance in building customer loyalty. In the context of electric vehicles, consumer attitudes are particularly important because these products represent significant financial commitments and involve technological considerations that may be unfamiliar to many consumers. Positive attitudes can help overcome concerns about new technology adoption and support long-term brand relationships.

For Chinese automotive brands in emerging markets like Indonesia, building positive brand attitudes is essential for market success. Consumer attitudes are influenced not only by direct brand experiences but also by perceptions of the country of origin and brand image. When consumers hold positive attitudes toward a brand, they are more likely to consider it in their purchase decisions, recommend it to others, and remain loyal over time. This makes attitude toward the brand a crucial mediating variable in understanding how country-of-origin perceptions translate into actual purchase intentions through brand-building efforts.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness or tendency to buy a product in the future. Kudeshia & Kumar (2017) described it as an implicit promise to repurchase, while Vijaranakorn & Shannon (2017) viewed it as the result of perceived product benefits. Shareef et al. (2018) emphasized that purchase intention is a reliable predictor of future purchase decisions, making it a critical variable in understanding consumer behavior. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, purchase intention is determined by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Petkowicz et al. (2024) and Yan et al. (2024) noted that purchase intention is influenced by subjective norms, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and perceived value. Tufail et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2024) added that factors such as brand reputation, perceived quality, and marketing strategies are crucial determinants in shaping purchase intention. García-Salirrosas et al. (2024) further supported that purchase intention reflects consumers' trust and satisfaction with a particular product or service. In the electric vehicle market, purchase intention is particularly influenced by factors such as environmental consciousness, technological innovation, government incentives, charging infrastructure availability, and total cost of ownership considerations.

For Chinese electric vehicles in Indonesia, purchase intention is influenced by a complex interplay of factors including country-of-origin perceptions, brand image, attitude toward the brand, product attributes, and market conditions. Understanding the mechanisms through which these factors influence purchase intention is essential for developing effective marketing strategies. Research by Jiang et al. (2021) on Chinese electric vehicle start-ups found that brand identity, brand image, and perceived risk significantly affect purchase intention, highlighting the importance of brand-building efforts in overcoming potential barriers to adoption.

Research Framework

Based on the reviewed literature and hypothesis development, this study proposes a comprehensive research framework that examines both direct and indirect effects., the research framework model of this study is illustrated in the following framework (Figure 1):
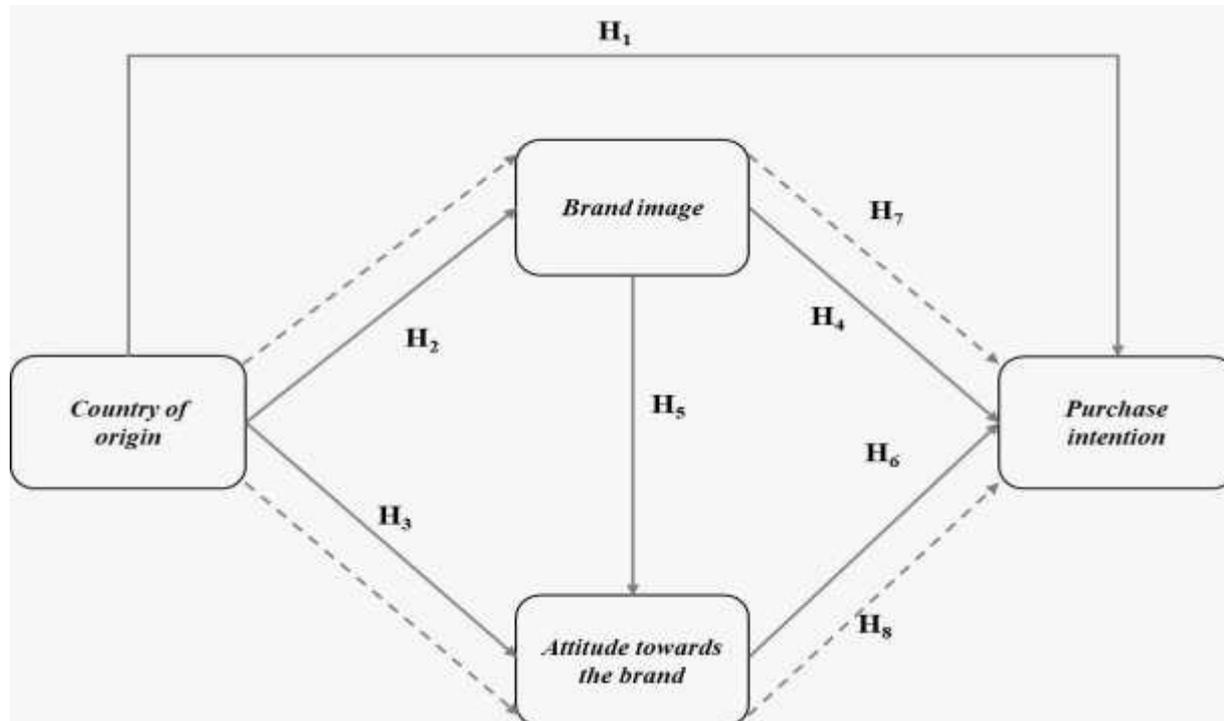

Figure 1. Research Framework

This study proposes a research framework that examines the influence of COO on Purchase Intention (PI), both directly and indirectly through Attitude Towards the Brand (ATT) and Brand Image (BI). The model includes six direct relationships and two indirect effects.

Hypothesis

Based on the literature review, this study proposes nine hypotheses:

Direct Effects:

H1: Country of origin has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
H2: Country of origin has a positive and significant effect on brand image.
H3: Country of origin has a positive and significant effect on attitude toward the brand.
H4: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
H5: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on attitude toward the brand.
H6: Attitude toward the brand has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

Indirect Effects:

H7: Country of origin has a significant indirect effect on purchase intention through brand image.
H8: Country of origin has a significant indirect effect on purchase intention through attitude toward the brand.

METHOD

This research is characterized by a causal, deductive approach, using quantitative methods, and adopting a survey strategy. The study was conducted using a non-interventional approach, in a natural setting, and employed a cross-sectional time-series design, meaning data collection occurred at a single point in time. The purpose of this study was to examine the causal relationship between the main variables: COO, BI, ATT, and PI.

The population in this study was Wuling electric vehicle customers in Indonesia. This study used a purposive sampling technique based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The sample was derived from individuals who have or are currently using Wuling electric vehicles, with ages ranging from 21 to 55 years. A total of 419 respondents were successfully collected and eligible for analysis. The data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed by Wuling dealers to customers during vehicle servicing and via WhatsApp broadcast messages sent to Wuling consumers. The questionnaire contained statements related to the research variables, which were evaluated utilizing a seven-point Likert scale (7 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree). The measurement instruments in this study were adapted from various reliable sources and underwent a previous validation process.

The research model consisted of four main constructs: country of origin (COO), BI, ATT, and PI. COO was measured through perceptions of product quality based on the country of origin, country reputation, and trust in products from that country. Brand image was assessed through brand attributes, brand strength, associations, and differentiation. Attitude toward the brand was evaluated through general positive tendencies and willingness to recommend the brand. Purchase intention encompassed the likelihood of making a purchase, future intentions, and brand preference.

The amassed data were subjected to analysis utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) facilitated by the SmartPLS software application. The analysis involved two main stages: evaluating the measurement model and evaluating the structural model. The validity and reliability of the measurement model were assessed through outer loading values (>0.70), composite reliability (CR > 0.70) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.50) were assessed to ensure measurement validity. The evaluation of discriminant validity was conducted utilizing the Fornell-Larcker criterion alongside the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), adhering to a threshold of <0.90. In the context of the structural model, the significance of the path coefficients was examined via a bootstrapping methodology, with a defined significance level established at 5% ($p < 0.05$). In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) and effect size (f^2) were examined to assess the explanatory power of the model. Finally, a mediation analysis was

conducted to evaluate the indirect effect of COO on purchase intention through brand image and attitude toward the brand.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Outer model testing is conducted through reliability tests, discriminant validity, and convergent validity. Convergent validity assesses how well an item or series of items within a variable truly represents the construct it is intended to measure (Indrawati, 2015; 149). Convergent validity can be measured using loading factors (LF) and average variance extracted (AVE) (Indrawati, 2015).

Table 1. Loading Factor, AVE, Cronbach's Alpha dan Composite Reliability Results

	ATT	BI	COO	PI
ATT1	0.885			
ATT2	0.909			
ATT3	0.918			
ATT4	0.92			
BI1		0.829		
BI2		0.843		
BI3		0.878		
BI4		0.901		
BI5		0.787		
COO1			0.884	
COO2			0.875	
COO3			0.735	
COO4			0.773	
COO5			0.755	
COO6			0.886	
PI1				0.757
PI2				0.952
PI3				0.948
PI4				0.928
AVE	0.825	0.720	0.673	0.809
Cronbach's Alpha	0.929	0.902	0.902	0.919
Composite Reliability	0.930	0.905	0.914	0.937

A loading factor value is considered good if it exceeds 0.7. Based on Table 1, the loading factor value for each item in the COO, BI, ATT, and PI variables is greater than 0.7. Therefore, it can be inferred that the questionnaire used in this investigation satisfies the standards for convergent validity. The AVE value is said to be good if it is more than 0.5. According to Table 1, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) metric for each variable, COO, BI, ATT, and PI is more than 0.5. Thus, it can be inferred that the questionnaire used in this investigation satisfies the standards for convergent validity.

The function of discriminant validity is to evaluate the extent to which an item measures a particular variable and has a difference from other variables (Hair et al., 2022). To determine discriminant validity, heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), Fornell-Larcker, and cross-loading, tests can be carried out.

Table 2. Cross Loading Results

	ATT	BI	COO	PI
ATT1	0.885	0.764	0.715	0.68
ATT2	0.909	0.719	0.669	0.633

	ATT	BI	COO	PI
ATT3	0.918	0.732	0.736	0.746
ATT4	0.92	0.711	0.709	0.646
BI1	0.676	0.829	0.615	0.603
BI2	0.704	0.843	0.634	0.593
BI3	0.732	0.878	0.741	0.691
BI4	0.648	0.901	0.687	0.603
BI5	0.655	0.787	0.609	0.572
COO1	0.692	0.709	0.884	0.642
COO2	0.636	0.697	0.875	0.596
COO3	0.508	0.526	0.735	0.422
COO4	0.596	0.538	0.773	0.423
COO5	0.625	0.596	0.755	0.474
COO6	0.753	0.722	0.886	0.636
PI1	0.519	0.518	0.451	0.757
PI2	0.728	0.695	0.624	0.952
PI3	0.702	0.676	0.618	0.948
PI4	0.713	0.697	0.657	0.928

The cross-loading value as a requirement for good discriminant validity is that the cross-loading value of each construct is higher than the value of each other variable. Based on Table 2, it is known that each item of a variable has a higher value than the other variables, so it can be inferred that the questionnaire used in this investigation satisfies the standards for good discriminant validity.

Table 3. Fornell Larcker Results

	ATT	BI	COO	PI
Attitude towards the brand (ATT)	0.908			
Brand Image (BI)	0.806	0.849		
Country of Origin (COO)	0.780	0.777	0.821	
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.747	0.724	0.659	0.900

The Fornell-Larcker test was used to determine the magnitude of the AVE root value for each variable compared to the correlation value between other variables. Based on Table 3, it is wellestablished that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) root value exceeds the correlation observed among other variables, so it can be inferred that the questionnaire used in this investigation satisfies the standards for good discriminant validity.

Table 4. HTMT-Results

	ATT	BI	COO	PI
Attitude towards the brand (ATT)				
Brand Image (BI)	0.879			
Country of Origin (COO)	0.846	0.853		
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.801	0.790	0.709	

The HTMT test is currently widely used because it is considered more accurate and complements the Cross Loading and Fornell-Larcker tests. A good HTMT value is less than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2022). Table 4 shows that the HTMT value is lower than 0.9, indicating that the questionnaire in this study meets good discriminant validity.

Reliability testing is used to determine the extent to which measurement results are reliable (Indrawati, 2015). In this study, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to measure reliability. An instrument is considered reliable if its value is greater than 0.7. Table 1 shows that all variables in this study have CA and CR values greater than 0.7, thus meeting the reliability criteria.

Structural testing (inner model) is the second stage of testing using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). This testing is used to understand the interactions between latent variables. The following is a sample of structural model testing using SmartPLS 4.
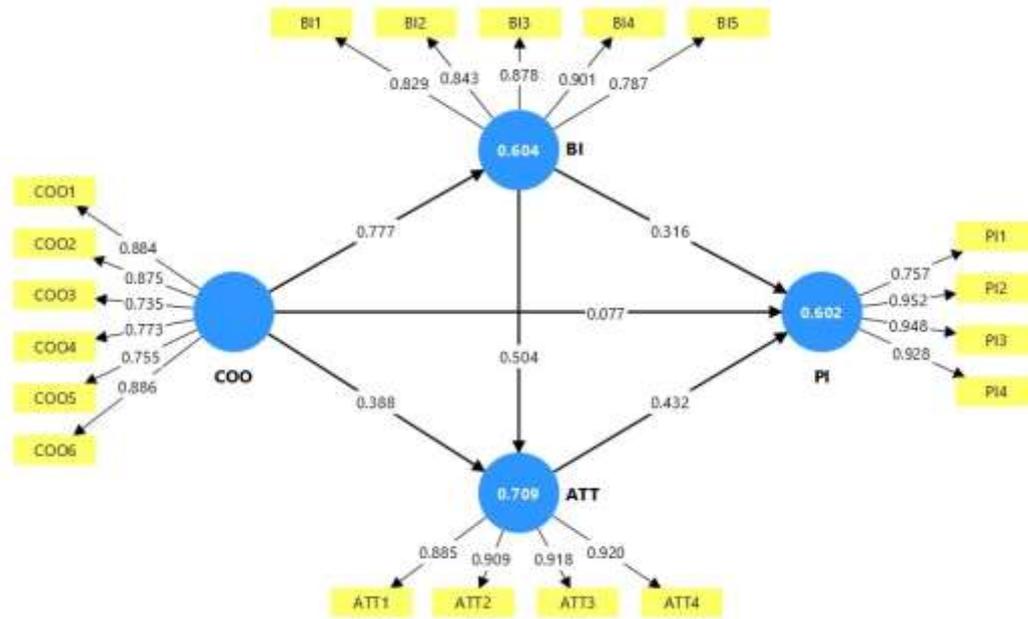

Figure 2. Structural Model Testing Results

Path coefficient is the value of the path coefficient used to indicate the direction and magnitude of the influence of the variables being analyzed. The range of path coefficient values is -1 to 1. If the path coefficient value is positive, the relationship between variables is in the same direction, and vice versa. A path coefficient value closer to zero indicates a weaker relationship between variables. The path coefficient value is obtained through the bootstrapping process using SmartPLS 4. The Table 5 following are the path coefficient values in this study.

Table 5. Path Coefficient Values, t-value, and p-value (Direct Effect)

Path Diagram	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
COO → PI	0.077	0.904	0.366	H_1 rejected
COO → BI	0.777	25.711	0.000	H_2 accepted
COO → ATT	0.388	5.773	0.000	H_3 accepted
BI → PI	0.316	3.543	0.000	H_4 accepted
BI → ATT	0.504	7.859	0.000	H_5 accepted
ATT → PI	0.432	5.723	0.000	H_6 accepted

Based on the direct path coefficient value in Table 5, it can be observed that:

1. The path coefficient between ATT and PI is 0.432, indicating a statistically significant and positive influence. This finding suggests that an increasingly favorable consumer's attitude towards the brand is associated with a higher level of purchase intention.
2. The association between BI and consumer ATT is reflected by a path coefficient of 0.504, demonstrating a strong positive effect. This implies that an enhanced brand image significantly contributes to the development of a positive consumer attitude toward the brand.
3. The path coefficient linking BI to PI is 0.316, indicating a positive and meaningful relationship. A favorable brand image can thus be considered an important driver of consumers' intention to purchase.
4. The association between COO and ATT is positive, with a path coefficient of 0.388. This result highlights the role of COO in shaping consumer ATT, where a more favorable perception of the product's origin leads to improved brand evaluation.

5. The path coefficient from COO to BI is 0.777, representing a strong and statistically significant relationship. This suggests that COO serves as a crucial extrinsic cue that significantly enhances the BI in the minds of consumers.
6. Although the path coefficient between COO and PI is positive (0.077), the effect is weak and statistically insignificant. This indicates that while COO may contribute to purchase intention, its influence is likely mediated through other factors such as brand image and attitude toward the brand.

Table 6. Path Coefficient Value, t-value, and p-value (Direct Effect)

Path Diagram	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Results
CO → ATT → PI	0.168	4.393	0.000	H_8 accepted
COO → BI → PI	0.246	3.505	0.000	H_7 accepted

Based on the indirect path coefficient value in Table 6, it is evident that:

1. The indirect effect of COO on PI, mediated by ATT, yields a path coefficient of 0.168. This finding signifies a positive and statistically significant correlation, implying that a favorable evaluation of the product's origin enhances consumers' attitudes towards the brand, thereby augmenting their intention to engage in purchasing intention.
2. The mediation analysis also reveals that COO has a positive indirect effect on PI through BI, with a path coefficient of 0.246. This finding implies that a strong and favorable country image contributes to a more positive brand image, thereby fostering higher purchase intention among consumers.

R-square is used to evaluate the extent to which the variation in the dependent variable can be elucidated by the independent variables. An R-square value of 0.67 is considered substantial, 0.33 is moderate, and 0.19 is weak.

Table 7. R-Square (R^2) Results

	R square	Category
Attitude towards the brand (ATT)	0.709	Substantial
Brand Image (BI)	0.604	Moderate
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.602	Moderate

Based on Table 7, the attitude towards the brand (ATT) variable has an R² value of 0.709, indicating that COO and brand image (BI) explain 70.9% of the variance in ATT. This suggests a substantial level of explanatory power, while the remaining 29.1% is attributed to other factors not included in this model. The BI variable shows an R² value of 0.604, meaning that COO explains 60.4% of the variance in BI, which is considered moderate. Meanwhile, the purchase intention (PI) variable has an R² value of 0.602, indicating that COO, BI, and ATT collectively explain 60.2% of the variance in PI, also reflecting a moderate explanatory level.

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using statistical analysis with a significance level of 0.05 and a critical t-value of 1.65. The decision rule used to evaluate each hypothesis is based on the comparison between the t-statistic and the critical value, as well as the p-value. A hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic exceeds 1.65 and the p-value is below 0.05, indicating that the relationship between variables is statistically significant. Conversely, if the t-statistic is less than 1.65 and the p-value exceeds 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that the relationship is not statistically significant. This approach allows for a systematic assessment of whether each proposed path in the research model has empirical support.

According to the findings of the direct effect hypothesis test in Table 5, the analysis indicates that the correlation between the COO and PI yields a t-value of 0.904, which is notably less than the threshold of 1.65. Then, the p-value obtained is 0.366, exceeding the significance level of 0.05. Based on these results, H_1 is rejected, thereby leading to the conclusion that the COO exerts a positive yet statistically insignificant influence on purchase intention.

The findings of the analysis indicate that the correlation between the COO and BI yields a tvalue of 25.711, which exceeds of 1.65. Subsequently, the p-value derived from this analysis is 0.000, a figure that is notably less than 0.05. In light of these findings, H_2 is accepted, thereby leading to the conclusion that the COO exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on BI.

The findings of the analysis indicate that the correlation between COO and ATT exhibits a tvalue of 5.773, which exceeds of 1.65. Furthermore, the computed p-value is 0.000, a figure that is less than the significance level of 0.05. In light of these findings, Hypothesis 3 is accepted, leading to the conclusion that the COO exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on consumer ATT.

The findings of the analysis indicate that the correlation between BI and PI possesses a t-value of 3.543, which exceeds of 1.65. Subsequently, the p-value derived is 0.000, a figure that is inferior to 0.05. In light of these findings, H_4 is accepted, thereby allowing for the conclusion that BI exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on purchase intention.

The findings of the analysis indicate that the correlation between BI and consumer attitude towards the brand has a t-value of 7.859, which exceeds of 1.65. Furthermore, the derived p-value is 0.000, a figure that is less than the significance level of 0.05. In light of these findings, Hypothesis 5 (H_5) is accepted, thereby allowing for the conclusion that brand image exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on consumer attitude towards the brand.

The findings of the analysis indicate that the correlation between consumer ATT and their purchase intention yields a t-value of 5.723, which exceeds of 1.65. Furthermore, the p-value derived from this analysis is 0.000, a figure that is considerably lower than the significance level of 0.05. In light of these findings, H_6 is accepted, leading to the conclusion that consumer ATT exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on purchase intention.

The findings derived from the empirical examination of the indirect effect hypothesis, as presented in Table 6, elucidate that the analytical results indicate a statistically significant association between COO and PI, with Brand Image (BI) serving as a mediating variable, evidenced by a tvalue of 3.505, which surpasses the critical threshold of 1.65. Additionally, the observed p-value is 0.000, thus falling below the conventional alpha level of 0.05. In light of these findings, Hypothesis 7 (H_7) is accepted, affirming that COO exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on PI through the mediating effect of BI.

The analysis shows that the relationship between purchase intention and COO, as mediated by the consumer's ATT, yields a t-value of 4.393, which exceeds of 1.65. Additionally, the p-value is determined to be 0.000, which is notably lower than the significance level of 0.05. Based on these results, H_8 is accepted, so it can be concluded that the COO has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention through brand image.

The findings of this study reveal that the direct effect of country of origin (COO) on purchase intention is not statistically significant, although the relationship remains positive. This result aligns with previous research indicating that COO is not always a dominant determinant of consumer purchase intention, especially in the context of high-tech products such as smartphones (BlancoEncomienda et al., 2024; Darmawan et al., 2021; Hien et al., 2020). However, COO has a significant positive influence on both brand image and attitude toward the brand. This indicates that consumers' perceptions of a product's origin can shape a stronger brand image and a more favorable attitude toward the brand, as supported by studies by Karagiannis et al. (2022), Oduro et al. (2024) and Schill et al. (2021).

Furthermore, brand image significantly and positively affects purchase intention, reaffirming the strategic importance of brand perception in influencing consumer decision-making. This finding aligns with earlier research emphasizing BI as a critical factor in driving consumer purchase decisions (Chandra & Indrawati, 2023; Putri & Hidayah, 2023). In addition, brand image also significantly influences consumers' attitudes toward the brand, reinforcing the notion that a

favorable brand image contributes to a more positive brand attitude (Ramesh et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2024). Likewise, attitude toward the brand has a significant positive effect on purchase intention, supporting the

theory that consumer attitudes are strong predictors of buying intention, particularly in the context of electric vehicles (Pramono et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2020).

This investigation indirectly illustrates that Country of Origin (COO) exerts a notable impact on PI via the intermediary functions of BI and consumer ATT. While the direct relationship between COO and PI appears to be relatively weak, the aggregate effect becomes considerable when accounting for these mediating factors. These results corroborate prior research that underscores the essential role of brand-related perceptions in mediating the effects of COO on consumer PI (Muhaqi & Nurbasari, 2024; Seo et al., 2015). Therefore, marketing strategies for foreign products, such as Chinese electric vehicles, should focus on enhancing brand image and fostering positive consumer ATT to maximize PI in the Indonesian market.

CONCLUSION

This research examined the impact of COO on the PI regarding Wuling electric vehicles in Indonesia, considering BI and consumer ATT as mediating factors. The results indicate that COO does not exert a statistically significant direct effect on PI, implying that merely possessing favorable perceptions of the COO of a product is inadequate to enhance consumer PI. Nevertheless, COO demonstrates a substantial and positive effect on both BI and consumer ATT, underscoring its critical importance in cultivating advantageous brand perceptions and consumer attitudes.

Furthermore, BI and ATT significantly influence PI, highlighting their critical roles in the consumer decision-making process. The study also confirms the significant mediating roles of BI and ATT in the relationship between COO and PI. These results underscore the importance of strengthening brand image and fostering positive consumer attitudes to effectively translate favorable COO perceptions into PI. Future research is recommended to include additional relevant variables, explore cross-country comparisons of COO effects, and examine differences across specific consumer segments to gain a deeper understanding of PI in the electric vehicle market.

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