

Buying Indonesian: How identity, trust, and perception shape support for local brands

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Abstract: In Indonesia's rapidly expanding cosmetic market, local brands face the dual challenge of competing with global beauty giants while appealing to increasingly identity-conscious consumers. This study investigates the drivers of purchase intention toward local cosmetic brands by integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Social Identity Theory (SIT), and Categorical Cognition Theory (CCT). Using data from 250 young Indonesian consumers and structural equation modeling, the study examines how Home Country Image (HCI) and Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) influence purchase intention through Brand Image (BI), Product Belief (PB), and Attitude (ATT). Results reveal that HCI and CE significantly shape BI, PB, and ATT, but their influence on purchase intention is only realized when consumers hold strong beliefs in product quality. Surprisingly, brand image does not directly affect intention, challenging conventional wisdom in cosmetic marketing. This study contributes a novel multidimensional framework for understanding local brand loyalty in emerging markets and offers actionable insights for enhancing trust, cultural relevance, and competitiveness in the Indonesian beauty industry.

Keywords: *Cosmetics, Local brands, Consumer ethnocentrism, Home country image, Purchase intention.*

1. Introduction

The intention to purchase local brands is a crucial determinant of consumer support for domestic products and plays a significant role in strengthening national economic resilience [1]. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia has intensified efforts to promote locally made goods, especially in consumer sectors such as cosmetics, where global competition is intense and brand image is highly influential. Despite these initiatives, many local cosmetic brands still face substantial challenges in competing with international counterparts, particularly in an industry where perceived quality, brand prestige, and global trends significantly shape consumer choices. Purchase intention, defined as an individual's willingness and motivation to buy a product, is influenced by a complex interplay of psychological and cultural factors [2]. While the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) [3] has been widely used to predict such behavior, its traditional emphasis on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control may fall short in capturing deeper sociocultural dynamics such as national identity and mental shortcuts that influence consumer preferences, especially in image-driven sectors like cosmetics.

Recent studies underscore the importance of consumer ethnocentrism (CE) and home country image (HCI) in shaping attitudes and perceptions toward domestically produced goods [4, 5]. CE refers to the psychological predisposition to prefer local products over foreign alternatives, often rooted in national pride and economic patriotism [6, 7]. HCI, meanwhile, reflects the collective perception of a nation's ability to produce high-quality products [8]. While these constructs have been recognized as influential in consumer decision-making, prior research has yielded mixed findings: some highlight their positive

influence on local brand preference, while others suggest that perceived product quality and brand reputation may override national loyalty particularly in sectors like cosmetics, where aesthetic performance and innovation drive purchasing decisions [9].

These inconsistencies signal the need for a more integrative framework that accounts for both rational and identity-driven factors in shaping consumer behavior in developing economies like Indonesia. To address this gap, this study integrates the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) with Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Categorical Cognition Theory (CCT) to examine how HCI and CE influence purchase intention through mediating variables such as brand image (BI), product belief (PB), and attitude (AT). SIT explains how consumers derive self-concept from group identity and national affiliation, while CCT reveals how cognitive shortcuts and categorization processes shape brand evaluations. This integrated framework provides a more nuanced view of how cultural identity, mental heuristics, and planned behavioral reasoning converge to influence the intention to support local brands, especially within the cosmetic industry, where trust, perception, and symbolic value are central.

A distinctive feature of this research is its focus on Indonesian youth, a fast-growing consumer segment that is highly exposed to both global and local cosmetic brands. While existing literature on CE and HCI tends to focus on general consumer populations, there is limited understanding of how younger Indonesians, who are more digitally engaged and globally influenced, evaluate local cosmetic products through the lens of national identity and product belief. This study explores whether youth exhibit similar ethnocentric tendencies as older generations or whether their purchasing decisions are more strongly shaped by perceived quality, performance, and brand trust.

By situating the study within Indonesia's dynamic cosmetics market, an emerging industry at the intersection of cultural identity and global consumer trends, this research offers timely insights into the psychological and cultural drivers of local brand preference. The findings are expected to deepen theoretical understanding of consumer behavior in emerging markets and provide strategic guidance for local cosmetic brands and policymakers seeking to enhance domestic brand competitiveness.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts an integrated theoretical framework that combines the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Social Identity Theory (SIT), and Categorical Cognition Theory (CCT) to explain the psychological and sociocultural mechanisms influencing consumers' purchase intention toward local cosmetic brands in Indonesia. This multi-theory approach reflects the complexity of consumer behavior in emerging markets, where rational evaluations, cultural identity, and cognitive shortcuts collectively shape decision-making, particularly in image-sensitive industries like cosmetics.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen [3] provides the foundational lens for understanding behavioral intention through three key components: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of cosmetics, attitude reflects how favorably consumers evaluate local beauty products based on expectations of safety, effectiveness, or ingredient transparency. Subjective norms include peer approval and social influence, which are critical in a category often driven by social trends and beauty ideals. Perceived behavioral control refers to consumers' sense of accessibility and affordability of local cosmetic products. Although TPB has been widely applied in consumer behavior research [7, 10] it tends to emphasize rational decision-making and may not fully capture symbolic motivations, such as national pride or cultural alignment, that are increasingly relevant in cosmetic brand preferences.

To address these limitations, the framework incorporates Social Identity Theory (SIT), which explains how individuals derive part of their self-concept from social and cultural group affiliations [11]. In Indonesia, where collectivist values and national pride remain influential, consumers who strongly identify with their national identity may express that connection by supporting local cosmetic brands. Ethnocentric consumers may view these products as reflections of national heritage, ethical

standards (e.g., halal certification), and cultural relevance. This symbolic value often extends beyond product utility, reinforcing loyalty and positive brand attitudes based on in-group affiliation [7, 10].

Complementing TPB and SIT, Categorical Cognition Theory (CCT) introduces a cognitive perspective by highlighting how consumers rely on mental shortcuts or heuristics in brand evaluation [12]. CCT is especially relevant in the crowded cosmetic market, where consumers are unlikely to evaluate every ingredient or formulation in detail. Instead, they use origin-based cues such as “locally made,” “natural,” or “halal-certified” to categorize products. These associations are often shaped by home country image (HCI), which acts as a filter for perceived trustworthiness and quality. In Indonesia, local brands may be automatically linked to authenticity, community values, and suitability for local skin types, while foreign brands may be associated with innovation but also cultural detachment [13, 14]. Such categorizations streamline decision-making and influence purchase intention by reinforcing existing cognitive biases.

By integrating TPB, SIT, and CCT, this study offers a multidimensional lens that captures the rational, emotional, and heuristic dimensions of consumer behavior in the local cosmetic market. TPB explains intention through attitudes and behavioral control, SIT contextualizes the role of cultural identity and ethnocentrism, and CCT clarifies how cognitive categorization based on brand origin shapes trust and preference. This integration enables a more holistic understanding of how Indonesian youth, torn between global beauty trends and national identity, form their intention to support local cosmetic brands.

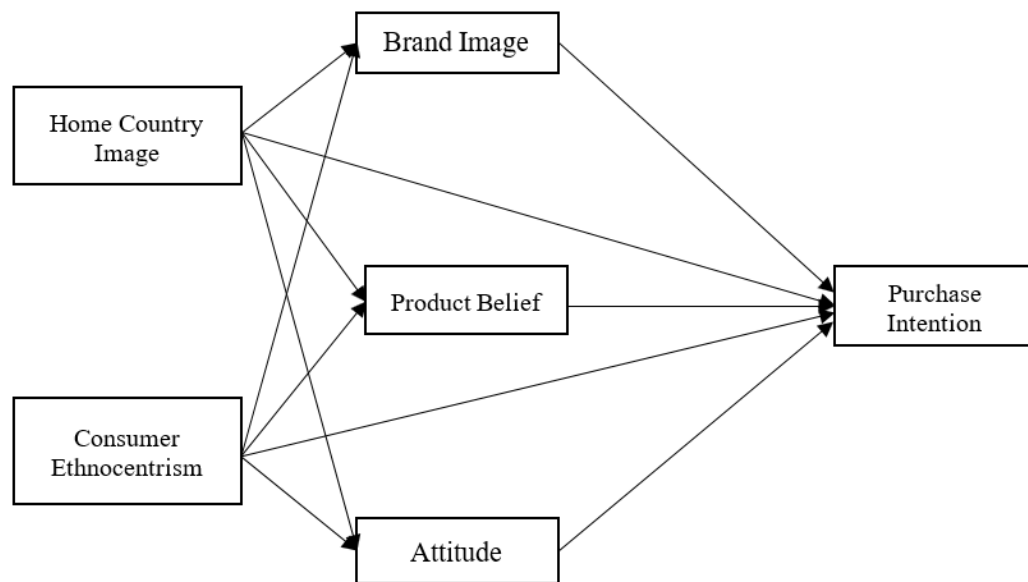


Figure 1.
Theoretical framework.

2.2. Home Country Image and Consumer Perception

Home Country Image (HCI) refers to consumers' collective perception of their nation's ability to produce high-quality goods and services [15]. It reflects not only economic capability but also the symbolic and emotional value consumers associate with their domestic industries. A favorable HCI enhances national pride, strengthens trust in domestic products, and serves as a cognitive shortcut in brand evaluation, allowing consumers to rely on general country-level impressions rather than detailed product assessments [16].

In the context of local branding, a strong HCI plays a critical role in shaping brand image, as consumers are more likely to perceive domestic brands as credible, authentic, and professionally

managed [10]. Similarly, HCI positively influences product belief, as the perception of national competence often extends to judgments about product quality, safety, and reliability. Beyond cognitive evaluation, HCI also shapes attitude by instilling affective loyalty and cultural affinity toward local brands [17]. This emotional attachment, rooted in national pride, often translates into stronger purchase intention, particularly when consumers perceive buying local as both a personal benefit and a patriotic act.

However, the influence of HCI may vary across product categories. In highly competitive and globalized markets such as cosmetics or fashion, HCI must often be supported by strong product differentiation and branding to sustain consumer preference [18]. Despite this, the overarching literature suggests that HCI remains a powerful antecedent in shaping both cognitive and affective components of consumer decision-making in emerging markets like Indonesia.

Given the critical role of HCI in shaping consumer perception and behavior, this study hypothesizes the following relationships:

- H₁: Home country image has a positive impact on the brand image of local brands.*
- H₂: Home country image has a positive impact on the product belief of local brands.*
- H₃: Home country image has a positive impact on the attitude toward local brands.*
- H₄: Home country image has a positive impact on the purchase intention of local brands.*

2.3. Consumer Ethnocentrism and Brand Perception

Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) refers to an individual's culturally and psychologically driven preference for domestic products over foreign alternatives, grounded in national loyalty, economic patriotism, and cultural pride [19]. Ethnocentric consumers perceive the act of purchasing local brands not merely as a market choice, but as a moral responsibility—one that supports national development, preserves local jobs, and reinforces a shared economic identity [20]. This orientation is especially relevant in emerging markets like Indonesia, where domestic consumption is closely linked to narratives of self-reliance and cultural preservation.

CE significantly enhances brand image, as consumers with strong ethnocentric values are predisposed to view local brands as trustworthy, culturally aligned, and socially responsible [7]. These perceptions are often shaped more by ideological affinity than by tangible brand attributes, distinguishing ethnocentric consumers from those who prioritize prestige or innovation. In this way, brand image becomes an extension of national identity.

Likewise, CE influences product belief, leading consumers to evaluate local products positively based on perceived national competence rather than empirical comparisons [10]. This heuristic reinforces confidence in local brand reliability, even when competing alternatives may offer objectively superior features. As such, CE fosters a cognitive bias that favors domestic products and elevates consumer trust.

On an affective level, CE fosters positive attitudes toward local brands by connecting them to national pride, cultural continuity, and economic solidarity [16]. Ethnocentric consumers often perceive buying local as a form of civic engagement, reinforcing a collective responsibility to support national industries. This psychological connection promotes stronger emotional loyalty and a predisposition to support domestic firms.

These factors ultimately translate into higher purchase intention. Consumers with strong CE are more likely to choose local brands, even in the face of price differentials or aggressive global branding, because their consumption is tied to values of identity and contribution to national welfare [21]. However, this effect is not uniform. Generational, socio-economic, and product-category differences moderate the strength of ethnocentrism. Younger, globally influenced consumers may prioritize trendiness and perceived modernity over patriotic consumption [22] while older or rural consumers may display stronger ethnocentric loyalty [23].

Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H₅: Consumer ethnocentrism has a positive impact on the brand image of local brands.*

H₆: Consumer ethnocentrism has a positive impact on the product belief of local brands.

H₇: Consumer ethnocentrism has a positive impact on attitudes toward local brands.

H₈: Consumer ethnocentrism has a positive impact on purchase intention for local brands.

2.4. Brand Image, Product Belief, and Purchase Intention

Brand image, product belief, and attitude are critical antecedents of purchase intention in consumer behavior research. Brand image refers to the mental associations and emotional impressions consumers hold about a brand. A strong brand image can enhance consumer trust, perceived quality, and emotional attachment, all of which contribute to greater purchase likelihood [10]. In the context of local brands, a positive brand image helps reduce perceived risk and positions the product as credible and culturally aligned.

Product belief, on the other hand, represents the consumer's cognitive evaluation of a product's reliability, quality, and performance. Consumers who believe that a local product meets or exceeds their expectations are more inclined to purchase it [24, 25]. Unlike brand image, which operates at a symbolic and affective level, product belief is grounded in rational appraisal and personal experience.

Additionally, attitude, as proposed in the Theory of Planned Behavior [3] is a key predictor of behavioral intention. A favorable attitude toward local brands reflects both emotional affinity and positive product evaluation, making consumers more likely to follow through with actual purchases. When consumers develop favorable affective and cognitive responses, their intention to support domestic brands increases.

Thus, we hypothesize:

H₉: Brand image of local brands has a positive impact on purchase intention for local brands.

H₁₀: Product belief of local brands has a positive impact on purchase intention for local brands.

H₁₁: Attitude toward local brands has a positive impact on purchase intention for local brands.

2.5. Mediating Role of Product Belief

Product belief serves as a crucial cognitive mechanism that translates favorable external perceptions such as national image or ethnocentric sentiment into actual consumer behavior. While constructs like Home Country Image (HCI) and Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) can elicit emotional and symbolic loyalty to local brands, these factors alone may not suffice to drive purchase intention. Consumers must also possess a firm belief in the functional value of the product, its quality, reliability, and performance—before committing to a purchase [16]. Without this belief, even highly patriotic consumers may hesitate to choose local brands, particularly when global alternatives are perceived as more advanced or trustworthy.

Empirical studies emphasize the mediating role of product belief in reinforcing consumer confidence and reducing perceived risk [10, 26]. Consumers who trust that local products meet their expectations are more likely to act on their positive perceptions and attitudes, bridging the gap between psychological predisposition and purchase behavior. This positions product belief not merely as a supplementary factor but as a psychological filter—one that determines whether symbolic drivers like national pride can result in real market outcomes.

Moreover, product belief plays a risk-reduction role in contexts where brand equity is still developing. While HCI and CE generate strong cultural and emotional connections to local brands, consumers ultimately assess whether these brands deliver functional value [27]. If doubts persist about quality standards, innovation, or consistency, even ethnocentric consumers may defer to foreign brands [28]. This underscores the need to align symbolic branding with product credibility, ensuring that national identity is reinforced through tangible quality assurances.

Based on this, we propose:

H₁₂: Product belief mediates the relationship between home country image and purchase intention.

H₁₃: Product belief mediates the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and purchase intention.

3. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to explore how home country image and consumer ethnocentrism influence purchase intention toward local brands in Indonesia, with brand image, product belief, and attitude serving as mediating variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 was employed due to its suitability for complex models with multiple latent constructs and mediation analysis.

The research targeted Indonesian consumers aged between 18 and 45 years, a group considered to be economically active and relevant in both traditional and digital consumption landscapes. Data was gathered through a self-administered online questionnaire, which was distributed via social media platforms and university and community networks. A total of 250 valid responses were collected using purposive sampling during the period of June to August 2024.

Respondent demographics revealed diverse educational backgrounds: 129 individuals had completed senior high school, 18 held diplomas, 92 had bachelor's degrees, and 11 had completed master's degrees. In terms of monthly income, 108 respondents reported earning less than 2 million IDR, 60 earned between 2–3 million IDR, 57 earned between 3–4 million IDR, 15 earned between 4–5 million IDR, and 10 respondents earned more than 5 million IDR. This variation represents a broad socioeconomic cross-section of Indonesia's consumer base.

The questionnaire used in this study was originally developed in English and then translated into Bahasa Indonesia. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot test involving 30 participants, including both youth and expert reviewers, was conducted to assess clarity, relevance, and cultural alignment. Minor revisions were made based on the pilot feedback to ensure content validity and ease of understanding.

A total of 23 items were used to measure six key constructs: Home Country Image (HCI), Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE), Brand Image (BI), Product Belief (PB), Attitude (AT), and Purchase Intention (PI). All items were adapted from prior validated studies and were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measurement items and their sources are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Item Construct.

Construct	Indicator	Code	Source
Home Country Image (HCI)	The society is creative	HCI1	Jamaluddin [15]; Sulhaini [29] and Xin and Seo [30]
	Technological advancement	HCI2	
	The society is innovative	HCI3	
Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE)	Choosing local brands is the best action	CE1	Alam [31]; Sulhaini [29] and Vo, et al. [32]
	Supporting the growth of Indonesian SMEs	CE2	
	Prioritized because of halal assurance	CE3	
	Proud of local brands	CE4	
	Always chooses local brands	CE5	
Brand Image (BI)	Able to express personality	BI1	Lopez-Lomeli, et al. [33]; Chaudhry, et al. [17] and Vo, et al. [32]
	Meets the skincare needs of Indonesians	BI2	
	High quality	BI3	
	Widely recognized by the public	BI4	
Product Belief (PB)	Confident that quality matches the price	PB1	Hatidja, et al. [34] and Sulhaini [29]
	Confident in the product's reliability	PB2	
	Confident that the product is well-processed	PB3	
Attitude (AT)	Feels happy when buying	AT1	Aminullah and Wusko [35] and Xin and Seo [30]
	Enjoys the act of purchasing	AT2	
	Interested in buying	AT3	
Purchase Intention (PI)	Intends to purchase soon	PI1	Dash, et al. [36]; Hien, et al. [10] and Maksan, et al. [37]
	Wants to own the product	PI2	
	Needs to purchase the product	PI3	
	Has the financial ability to purchase	PI4	
	Plans to purchase the product	PI5	

The collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0. Descriptive statistics were first conducted to profile the sample. To address potential Common Method Variance (CMV), Harman's single-factor test was performed. Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), while convergent validity was measured using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was verified through the HTMT ratios.

To evaluate the structural model, bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples was conducted to assess the significance of path coefficients. R^2 values were examined to determine the model's explanatory power, and the Goodness of Fit (GoF) was calculated to evaluate the overall model adequacy.

This study complied with ethical research standards. All participants received a clear informed consent statement, which explained the study's objective, ensured voluntary participation, and confirmed the anonymity and confidentiality of all responses. No identifying information was collected, and respondents were informed they could withdraw at any time.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for each construct, showing generally positive perceptions across all variables, with mean scores ranging from 4.180 to 4.259 on a 5-point Likert scale. Home Country Image had the highest mean, while Purchase Intention had the lowest, indicating moderate support for local brands. Median values centered around 4.00, and all constructs had a response range of 1.0 to 5.0, suggesting a favorable response tendency.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics.

Construct	Items	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Std. Dev.	Kurtosis	Skewness
Home Country Image	3	4.259	4.00	2.0	5.0	0.612	-0.447	-0.231
Consumer Ethnocentrism	5	4.227	4.00	1.0	5.0	0.745	0.522	-0.789
Brand Image	4	4.212	4.25	1.0	5.0	0.779	0.143	-0.756
Product Belief	3	4.236	4.00	1.0	5.0	0.719	0.158	-0.640
Attitude	3	4.200	4.00	1.0	5.0	0.728	1.247	-0.802
Purchase Intention	5	4.180	4.00	1.0	5.0	0.719	-0.176	-0.446

Standard deviations ranged from 0.612 to 0.779, reflecting moderate variability. Skewness values were negative across constructs, showing a tendency toward higher agreement. Attitude was the most left-skewed and showed the highest kurtosis (1.247), indicating a concentration of responses around the mean. Overall, the data distribution was near normal, with slight variations in consistency and intensity of agreement among constructs.

4.2. Common Method Variance (CMV) Testing

To address potential Common Method Variance (CMV), Harman's Single-Factor Test was conducted using all 23 indicators, showing the first factor accounted for 34.2% of the total variance well below the 50% threshold [38] indicating minimal CMV bias.

A full collinearity Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis was also performed, with the highest VIF value being 2.85, below the critical value of 3.3 [38]. These results confirm that multicollinearity and CMV issues are minimal, ensuring that relationships between constructs, such as home country image, consumer ethnocentrism, and purchase intention, are genuine and not artifacts of method bias.

4.3. Measurement Model

Table 2 presents the measurement model results, including outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. All outer loadings range from 0.669 to 0.906, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.60 [38]. Two lower-loading

items (CE1 and CE4) were retained due to their acceptable contribution to content coverage and model reliability.

Table 2.
Loading Factor and Reliability Testing.

Item Code	Loading	Cron. Alpha	CR	AVE
ATT1	0.905	0.864	0.917	0.786
ATT2	0.903			
ATT3	0.851			
BI1	0.793	0.829	0.886	0.660
BI2	0.837			
BI3	0.780			
BI4	0.838			
CE1	0.688	0.816	0.872	0.579
CE2	0.790			
CE3	0.852			
CE4	0.669			
CE5	0.789			
HCI1	0.786	0.767	0.866	0.683
HCI2	0.868			
HCI3	0.823			
PB1	0.836	0.835	0.901	0.752
PB2	0.877			
PB3	0.888			
PI1	0.727	0.888	0.919	0.695
PI2	0.797			
PI3	0.906			
PI4	0.822			
PI5	0.903			

Internal consistency was confirmed with all Cronbach's alpha and CR values exceeding 0.70, indicating strong reliability. The Attitude construct showed the highest internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.864$, CR = 0.917), with other constructs also performing well. Convergent validity was supported by AVE values above 0.50 for all constructs. Attitude had the highest AVE (0.786), while Consumer Ethnocentrism showed the lowest (0.579), yet still acceptable.

Overall, the model demonstrates adequate reliability and validity, confirming the robustness of the measurement framework for further structural analysis.

Table 3.
Discriminant Validity (HTMT).

	ATT	BI	CE	HCI	PB	PI
ATT						
BI	0.661					
CE	0.783	0.632				
HCI	0.634	0.838	0.571			
PB	0.724	0.884	0.748	0.761		
PI	0.711	0.617	0.691	0.567	0.772	

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values used to evaluate discriminant validity. All HTMT values are below the 0.90 threshold, indicating that each construct is conceptually distinct [39]. The highest HTMT value was between Brand Image and Product Belief (0.884), which remains within acceptable limits. Other notable relationships, such as Home Country Image and Brand Image (0.838) and Consumer Ethnocentrism and Product Belief (0.748), show moderate associations without redundancy.

Lower HTMT values like HCI and Purchase Intention (0.567) and HCI and CE (0.571)—suggest clearer conceptual separations. The Attitude construct also demonstrated acceptable HTMT values across all pairings, confirming its distinct mediating role.

Overall, the HTMT results support the discriminant validity of all constructs, reinforcing the soundness of the measurement model and the theoretical distinctiveness of each variable in the framework.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing and Structural Model

Table 4 presents the model fit indices for both the saturated and estimated models. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) for the estimated model is 0.082, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.10 (and ideally under 0.08), indicating an acceptable fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data.

The d_ULS (Unweighted Least Squares discrepancy) and d_G (Geodesic discrepancy) values for the estimated model are 1.836 and 0.719, respectively. These values, while not interpreted based on strict cutoffs, are used to compare relative fit; lower values indicate a better fit. Both remain close to those of the saturated model, suggesting the model fits reasonably well.

The Chi-square value of 932.595 for the estimated model is slightly higher than the saturated model, which is expected due to model constraints. However, in PLS-SEM, Chi-square is not commonly relied upon for evaluation due to its sensitivity to sample size.

Finally, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) for the estimated model is 0.758, which is just below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.80, suggesting moderate model fit. While this value could be improved, it does not indicate poor fit.

Table 4.
Model Fit Indices.

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.069	0.082
d_ULS	1.329	1.836
d_G	0.638	0.719
Chi-Square	874.564	932.595
NFI	0.773	0.758

Table 5 and Figure 2 presents the results of the structural model analysis, showing the estimated path coefficients, significance levels, and explanatory power of the hypothesized relationships.

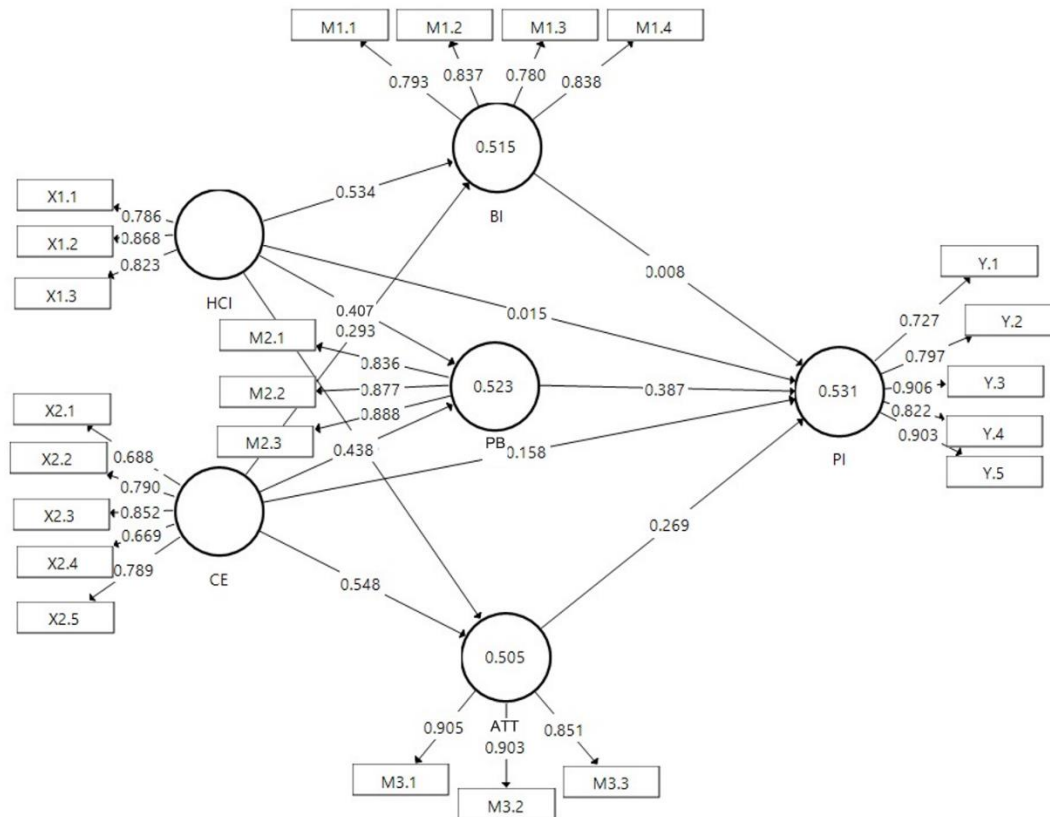


Figure 2.
Path Correlation.

The results confirm that Home Country Image (HCI) has a significant and positive effect on Brand Image ($\beta = 0.534$, $p < 0.001$), Product Belief ($\beta = 0.407$, $p < 0.001$), and Attitude ($\beta = 0.265$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that a favorable perception of the home country contributes positively to how consumers evaluate brand characteristics and form attitudes toward local brands. However, the direct effect of HCI on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.015$, $p = 0.406$) was not statistically significant, suggesting that HCI may influence purchase decisions only indirectly through other variables.

Similarly, Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) positively affects Brand Image ($\beta = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$), Product Belief ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.001$), and Attitude ($\beta = 0.548$, $p < 0.001$). These significant relationships highlight that ethnocentric tendencies reinforce positive consumer evaluations of domestic brands. The direct path from CE to Purchase Intention was also significant, though weaker ($\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.022$), indicating a modest but direct influence of national loyalty on the intention to purchase local brands.

Among the mediating constructs, Product Belief (PB) showed a strong and significant influence on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.387$, $p < 0.001$), supporting its role as a key determinant of consumer behavior. Attitude (ATT) also significantly affected Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.269$, $p = 0.005$), indicating that favorable feelings toward local brands are likely to translate into buying intentions. However, Brand Image (BI) did not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.008$, $p = 0.465$), suggesting that brand image alone may not be a decisive factor in the consumer's final decision to purchase.

Table 5.
Direct Effect.

Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean	STDEV	T Statistic	P Value
HCI → BI	0.534	0.535	0.050	10.771	0.000
HCI → PB	0.407	0.412	0.055	7.452	0.000
HCI → ATT	0.265	0.263	0.061	4.339	0.000
HCI → PI	0.015	0.017	0.062	0.239	0.406
CE → BI	0.293	0.296	0.069	4.221	0.000
CE → PB	0.438	0.437	0.066	6.606	0.000
CE → ATT	0.548	0.551	0.058	9.530	0.000
CE → PI	0.158	0.170	0.078	2.027	0.022
BI → PI	0.008	0.008	0.095	0.087	0.465
PB → PI	0.387	0.367	0.108	3.591	0.000
ATT → PI	0.269	0.276	0.103	2.615	0.005

The R^2 values in the model illustrate the explanatory power of the independent variables on each endogenous construct (see figure 2). The model explains 51.5% of the variance in Brand Image (BI), 52.3% in Product Belief (PB), and 50.5% in Attitude (ATT), all of which indicate moderate predictive accuracy based on the threshold suggested by Hair, et al. [38]. These values suggest that Home Country Image (HCI) and Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) are jointly effective in shaping consumers' perceptions and beliefs about local brands. Furthermore, the model accounts for 53.1% of the variance in Purchase Intention (PI), which is also considered a moderate level of explanatory power. Although some direct paths to PI are not statistically significant, the overall R^2 value indicates that the combination of BI, PB, ATT, HCI, and CE collectively provides a meaningful prediction of consumers' intention to purchase local brands in Indonesia.

4.5. Mediation Analysis

Table 6 presents the results of the mediation analysis to evaluate whether Product Belief (PB) mediates the relationship between Home Country Image (HCI) and Purchase Intention (PI) as well as between Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) and Purchase Intention (PI).

Table 6. Mediating Effect.

Hypothesis	Path	Coef.	Mean	T-Stat.	P-Value
H ₁₂	HCI → PB → PI	0.004	0.005	0.085	0.466
H ₁₃	CE → PB → PI	0.170	0.044	3.842	0.000

For Hypothesis H₁₂ (HCI → PB → PI), the indirect effect was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.004$, $t = 0.085$, $p = 0.466$). This indicates that although Home Country Image positively influences Product Belief, this belief does not mediate the relationship between HCI and Purchase Intention. In other words, HCI may shape consumer perceptions, but those perceptions alone do not significantly carry over into the intention to purchase via the product belief pathway.

In contrast, Hypothesis H₁₃ (CE → PB → PI) showed a significant and positive mediating effect ($\beta = 0.170$, $t = 3.842$, $p < 0.001$). This result confirms that Product Belief plays a key mediating role in linking Consumer Ethnocentrism to Purchase Intention. Consumers with stronger ethnocentric tendencies are more likely to believe in the quality and reliability of local products, which in turn enhances their intention to buy.

In summary, the mediation analysis provides partial support for the proposed framework. While Product Belief significantly mediates the effect of Consumer Ethnocentrism, it does not mediate the effect of Home Country Image on purchase intention. This suggests that emotional or symbolic perceptions of the country may not be strong enough to influence behavior unless accompanied by credible beliefs about product attributes.

4.5. Discussion

This study enhances the understanding of purchase intention (PI) toward local cosmetic brands in Indonesia by empirically testing a multidimensional model integrating Home Country Image (HCI), Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE), Brand Image (BI), Product Belief (PB), and Attitude (ATT). The findings offer both confirmatory and novel insights into how national identity, cognitive trust, and emotional attachment interact to shape consumer behavior, particularly among young Indonesian consumers, who play a critical role in the rapidly evolving cosmetics market.

Consistent with Klein, et al. [40] the results confirm that a favorable Home Country Image significantly influences BI, PB, and ATT. While Klein emphasized brand–country image congruence (BICI) in symbolic product categories, our findings extend this logic by showing that in the cosmetics sector—where concerns around safety, effectiveness, and skin compatibility are prominent—national image still plays a substantial role in shaping trust. Similar to the halo effect Yuli [41] this study finds that perceptions of Indonesia as a capable and innovative nation positively bias evaluations of domestic cosmetic brands. This underscores how country image acts as a psychological shortcut in assessing product credibility, even in everyday beauty purchases.

The influence of Consumer Ethnocentrism on BI, PB, and ATT further reinforces findings from Nguyen, et al. [42] who examined local brand loyalty in Vietnam. While prior research often positions CE as a moderating factor, our study highlights its direct influence on how consumers form favorable views of local cosmetic brands. In contrast to studies from developed markets [43] where CE has less impact, our findings suggest that in Indonesia, ethnocentrism remains a strong driver of consumer support—likely due to cultural alignment, religious trust (e.g., halal certification), and economic patriotism associated with local cosmetic products.

A key theoretical contribution lies in the mediating role of Product Belief. Echoing Blanco-Encomienda, et al. [16] this study confirms that perceived product quality specifically in terms of trust, effectiveness, and safety serves as a cognitive filter that enables emotional loyalty to translate into purchase action. Neither HCI nor CE directly drives PI without the validation that the product performs well. This supports Lee and Robb [44] finding that symbolic values must be reinforced by rational assurance, especially in categories like cosmetics where personal risk (e.g., skin irritation or product ineffectiveness) is more salient.

Interestingly, Brand Image did not show a significant direct effect on purchase intention, deviating from findings in global branding contexts [43]. This may reflect the developmental stage of local cosmetic brands in Indonesia, which often lack the international recognition or aspirational appeal that heavily influences behavior in this sector. This aligns with Tsabitah and Anggraeni [45] who found that Indonesian fashion brands also struggle to convert brand image into behavior without the support of trust and emotional connection. In cosmetics, this is even more critical, as consumers are less likely to rely on image alone without confidence in product safety and results.

The mediating role of PB also mirrors the findings of Shen, et al. [46] who examined trust as a buffer in risk-related decisions during the pandemic. Similarly, in cosmetics, PB acts as a cognitive safety net, allowing ethnocentric consumers to rationalize their emotional preference by believing that local products can truly meet their needs. This is especially relevant in Indonesia, where local cosmetic brands are gaining traction but still compete with the perception of superior quality associated with imported products.

Another distinctive contribution is the study's focus on young Indonesian consumers, a demographic that simultaneously engages with global beauty trends and local cultural values. While research like Trivedi, et al. [47] often generalizes consumer behavior across age groups, our findings show that Indonesian youth are still inclined to support local brands, if those brands can align national identity with product performance and modern relevance. This contrasts with findings in markets like Bangladesh [1], where younger consumers favored global brands primarily due to perceived prestige.

In conclusion, this study offers a nuanced understanding of how HCI and CE shape purchase intention in the cosmetic industry through layered pathways involving product belief and consumer

attitude. Support for local brands is not purely driven by pride or emotional loyalty; rather, it is the convergence of identity, cognitive validation, and emotional resonance that drives behavior. These insights provide both theoretical contribution and strategic direction for Indonesian cosmetic brands seeking to resonate with an identity-conscious yet quality-driven youth market.

5. Implications

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study offers several important theoretical contributions to the literature on consumer behavior, brand perception, and national identity in emerging markets. First, by integrating Home Country Image (HCI) and Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) into a structural model alongside Brand Image (BI), Product Belief (PB), and Attitude (ATT), the study extends the application of Social Identity Theory and Cognitive-Affective Models in the context of local brand purchase intentions. It demonstrates that national image and ethnocentric values are not merely symbolic factors but function as significant antecedents to cognitive and affective evaluations in shaping purchase decisions.

Second, the findings reinforce and expand Social Identity Theory by confirming that CE not only influences emotional attachment (attitude) but also strengthens cognitive evaluations (product belief) of local brands. This dual influence underscores the importance of viewing ethnocentrism not just as a socio-political construct but as a strategic consumer orientation that affects how brands are cognitively and emotionally processed.

Third, the study highlights the mediating role of Product Belief, offering a new perspective within the Means-End Chain Theory and Attitude-Behavior Models. Unlike many prior studies that emphasize direct relationships between country image or brand image and purchase intention, this research shows that cognitive validation through product quality beliefs is essential for converting national sentiment into behavioral intention. This suggests that cognitive mediation serves as a critical link in the decision-making process, particularly for consumers navigating both patriotic values and market rationality.

Fourth, this research contributes to the emerging market branding literature by challenging the assumed universal effectiveness of Brand Image in influencing Purchase Intention. The insignificant direct relationship between BI and PI in this context highlights the need for localized theoretical models that consider brand equity development stages and cultural buying norms. It suggests that in countries like Indonesia, brand image alone may be insufficient unless supported by product credibility and aligned with national identity narratives.

Finally, the study introduces age-specific dynamics into the theoretical discussion. By focusing on young consumers, it uncovers how generational factors interact with cultural values and brand perception. This provides a foundation for future studies to examine the generational variance in ethnocentric behavior, national identity influence, and purchase behavior, thus enriching existing frameworks that often treat consumer populations as homogeneous.

In summary, this study advances theoretical understanding by bridging identity-based constructs with cognitive and affective mediators, highlighting the multi-step mechanism through which national pride and ethnocentrism influence actual purchase behavior. It calls for more contextualized and multidimensional models when examining local brand consumption in developing economies.

5.2. Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several strategic implications for cosmetic brand managers, marketers, policymakers, and entrepreneurs in Indonesia seeking to enhance consumer support for local cosmetic products.

First, the strong influence of Home Country Image (HCI) and Consumer Ethnocentrism (CE) on Brand Image, Product Belief, and Attitude highlights the need to integrate national identity and cultural pride into cosmetic branding strategies. Indonesian cosmetic brands should not only promote product features (e.g., skin safety, natural ingredients) but also emphasize their role in representing local beauty standards, halal integrity, and economic contribution. Campaigns that align with initiatives like “*Bangga*

Buatan Indonesia” can tap into ethnocentric sentiment and position local brands as both culturally relevant and nationally supportive.

Second, the study reveals that Product Belief is the most critical mediator between HCI/CE and Purchase Intention. This underscores that emotional or patriotic appeal alone is insufficient. Consumers, especially younger ones, need strong cognitive reassurance regarding product quality. Local cosmetic brands should invest in product innovation, certifications (e.g., BPOM, halal, SNI), and transparent ingredient communication to build trust and overcome skepticism toward local formulations.

Third, the insignificant direct effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intention suggests that visual branding or prestige appeal, often effective in global cosmetic marketing, is not enough in the Indonesian context. Instead of emulating multinational aesthetics, local brands should prioritize consistency, word-of-mouth, community engagement, and personalized service to build enduring consumer trust. This experience-driven approach can be more persuasive than superficial brand imagery.

Fourth, for government and policy actors, these findings emphasize that promoting local cosmetics requires more than nationalism. Public programs should include technical assistance, formulation safety standards, export readiness training, and digital marketing workshops for MSMEs. Enhancing production quality alongside national campaigns will better activate both emotional and rational consumer responses.

Finally, the study’s focus on young Indonesian consumers (ages 18–45) offers targeted insights. This demographic is immersed in global beauty trends yet remains responsive to social responsibility, natural heritage, and economic nationalism. Marketers should leverage digital storytelling, skincare education, influencer marketing, and local beauty ambassador campaigns that connect product quality with cultural authenticity and social impact.

In sum, this study provides a roadmap for Indonesian cosmetic brands to bridge national pride with credible product performance. By grounding brand narratives in cultural identity and quality assurance, local players can build deeper consumer loyalty and stand resilient amid global competition in the beauty industry.

6. Limitation and Suggestions

While this study offers valuable insights into the drivers of local brand purchase intention in Indonesia, several limitations should be noted. First, its cross-sectional design limits understanding of changes over time; future studies could use longitudinal approaches. Second, the focus on young consumers (18–45) restricts generalizability to older or rural populations, suggesting a need for broader demographic comparisons. Third, other influencing factors such as perceived value, brand familiarity, or social influence were not included and warrant future exploration. Fourth, reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias; future research should consider mixed methods or behavioral tracking. Lastly, as the study is limited to the Indonesian context, comparative studies across countries could offer a deeper understanding of cultural differences in ethnocentrism and home country image. Overall, future research should expand temporal scope, respondent diversity, and cross-cultural analysis to build on these findings.

7. Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive examination of the psychological and sociocultural factors influencing purchase intention toward local cosmetic brands in Indonesia. By integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Social Identity Theory (SIT), and Categorical Cognition Theory (CCT), the research demonstrates how national pride (home country image), ethnocentric values, cognitive trust (product belief), and emotional evaluations (attitude) interact to shape consumer behavior. The findings reveal that while Home Country Image and Consumer Ethnocentrism positively influence brand image, product belief, and attitude, their effects on purchase intention are mediated by strong belief in product quality and reliability. Notably, brand image alone does not directly lead to purchase behavior,

underscoring the importance of tangible performance over symbolic appeal in the cosmetics sector. This study contributes theoretically by clarifying the layered pathways from national identity to consumer action and offers practical guidance for local cosmetic brands to align cultural narratives with product credibility. In an increasingly competitive and globalized beauty market, the key to driving local brand loyalty lies not only in invoking pride but also in delivering trusted, high-quality products that resonate with Indonesia's youth.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Authors' Contributions:

ES was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, research design, and manuscript drafting. NNKY contributed to the literature review development, theoretical framework, and data interpretation. NWE assisted with data collection, statistical analysis, and result validation. IPGS supervised the overall research process, provided critical revisions, and ensured academic rigor throughout the manuscript preparation. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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