

## **Marketing Strategy for Korean Consumer Goods among Young Consumers in Ho Chi Minh City – Identifying Determinants of Purchase Decision**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Vietnam has become positioned as a magnet for foreign brands in the midst of rising income in the young middle class along with socio-economic advances. As consumers are more confident in consuming domestic goods, the dominance of foreign products has become a controversial theme. Exploring the antecedents of purchase decisions among young Vietnamese consumers can help international marketers address this challenge. This study found various determinants of purchase decisions among young people aged 18–35, thereby enabling the formation of marketing strategies designed to further the success of business operations. Korean consumer goods and Ho Chi Minh City were the primary subjects of this study. We drew upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in order to determine the relationships between different driver factors (e.g., Hallyu, social media, country of origin, product involvement, perceived quality, trust, social norms, perceived usefulness, attitudes, and purchase intention) and purchase decisions. A quantitative approach was adopted through mass surveys. We found that the country of origin is a strong driver of purchase decisions. Moreover, Hallyu, social media, and other factors positively affected product decisions at different levels of significance. From the Vietnamese market experience, this study provides practical suggestions for foreign businesses and is a good reference for further research.

Keywords: Hallyu, social media, country of origin, Korean consumer goods.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The expansion of the Hallyu wave has propelled consumers' positive attitudes toward Korean goods as well as the intentions to purchase them (Lkhaasuren et al., 2018). Seeing its triumphs in Vietnam, imported Korean consumer goods have been on the rise in consumer preferences such as textiles and clothing, footwear, electrical machinery, equipment, etc (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2020). Ho Chi Minh City is the rising star of direct foreign investment destinations in diverse areas. The rationale for this viewpoint comes from the increased purchasing power of young dwellers and the coordinated digitalization process in recent years (Source of Asia, 2022). However, what

challenges foreign stakeholders to start their operations primarily derive from the changes in young consumers' buying habits. They are now convenience-seeking and confident in the quality of domestic goods. This urges foreign businesses to highlight their core competencies over local rivals to raise consumer intention. There is a significant discrepancy between consumer intention and final decisions, though (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021; Young et al., 2009). For this reason, the feasible approach to identifying consumer behavior toward Korean goods in Ho Chi Minh City is adopted in the research to propose marketing strategies to secure consumer trust and accelerate actual purchases.

The present study revolves around the sequencing relationships between different factors (social media, Hallyu wave, country of origin, social norms, perceived usefulness, product involvement, perceived quality, trust, and purchase intention) and purchase decisions of Korean consumer products among young consumers in Ho Chi Minh City. With the application of the aforementioned TRA, TPB, and TAM, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of marketing literature on purchase behavior in the consumer goods market and create a guide for the development of marketing strategies. In line with the prescribed objectives, the study intends to provide answers to the following questions:

- How do Hallyu, social media, country of origin, and their related elements influence Ho Chi Minh youngsters' purchase decisions of Korean consumer goods?
- How can international marketers promote purchase decisions of Korean consumer goods among Vietnamese young people?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 The characteristics of consumer goods**

Consumer goods are final products consumed by end users for their specific needs (Jun & Park, 2016). Through the lens of marketing theory, consumer goods are divided into four categories: convenience, shopping, unsought, and specialty goods (Bucklin, 1963). Convenience goods reflect a high frequency of purchases and a wide availability with minimum effort for end customers (i.e., toothpaste, milk, soft drinks). Conversely, shopping products tend to be meticulously selected in terms of suitability, quality, style, and price, among other reasons. Unsought goods refer to products of which customers are first unaware of their necessity, such as different forms of insurance. Specialty goods underline unique features and brand awareness among specific groups of individuals who are certain to indulge in massive purchases of these goods, such as luxury accessories and high-fashion clothing. The classification of consumer goods contributes to creating effective marketing strategies—especially in the retail industry. Regarding this division of consumer goods, firms can predict consumer purchasing habits and their channel preferences for different product types.

### **2.2 Factors affecting purchase decision.**

#### **2.2.1 Country of origin and related variables**

Country of origin (COO) sticks to different so-called names such as “country of manufacture or assembly” (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998; Bilkey & Nes, 1982), “country of parts”, and “country of design” (Pharr, 2005). The COO serves as an informational cue for marketing practitioners to advance consumer choices for their products. In the case of limited product knowledge, consumers consider the COO as a key factor in their evaluation (Dobrucalı, 2019). Starting from the COO effect, different levels of product

involvement have been discussed in the strands of articles. Prior to glimpsing this relationship, product involvement can be either high or low (Zaichkowsky & Sood, 1989). High-involved consumers are conscious of quality and service, while their low-involved counterparts search for competitive prices and convenience (Zaichkowsky & Sood, 1989). Depending on market scope, the level of product involvement can vary from nation to nation. There is an opposing viewpoint of which the COO information is much more applicable to low-involvement products (Maheswaran, 1994; Xuan Truong Nguyen, 2019). Conversely, Lin and Chen (2006) proposed that high product involvement can propel consumers to conduct information searches, make quality comparisons, and have greater purchase intentions for products with a favorable COO image.

Understanding product involvement caused by the COO information is the premise of knowing the impact of perceived quality on consumers' purchase decisions. Perceived quality is different from actual quality in terms of subjective criterion (Evgeniy et al., 2019). According to Das (2015), perceived quality is a strategic tool to drive customer willingness to perform a purchasing behavior in the retail industry, especially for female groups who are more conscious of quality-driven factors than their male counterparts.

### **2.2.2 Hallyu and attitudes**

Hallyu wave (also known as the Korean wave) reflects the growing global popularity of Korean cultures, such as K-pop, K-movies, K-dramas, and K-entertainment (Jin & Yoon, 2016). Korean firms have capitalized on the essence of the Hallyu wave to attract foreign consumers and leave a good impression of product excellence. Aware of the Hallyu presence, consumers have been displaying more favorable attitudes toward Korean-made products (D. Kim et al., 2013). There is a stream of research on the importance of the Hallyu wave on positive consumer attitudes toward different specific groups of Korean goods and determined their relationship to consumer purchase intentions (Choi et al., 2022; Truong, 2018) in China (Sun & Jun, 2022), Thailand (Son & Kijboonchoo, 2016), and Mongolia (Lkhaasuren et al., 2018). In Vietnam, several efforts have been made regarding tourism (Pham, 2022), food consumption (Choi et al., 2022), and cosmetics purchases (Nhat, 2016).

### **2.2.3 Social media and related variables**

Social media allows online users to become receivers, generators, and distributors of information (Stewart & Pavlou, 2002). On the business side, social media disseminates different branded content to the world's consumers in various forms, such as audio, text, video, and community forums (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). User-generated content (e.g., an online review) is a special form of social media whereby information is initiated, circulated, and consumed by other online users (Daugherty et al., 2008; A. J. Kim & Johnson, 2016). When consumers are satisfied with product information received from social media networks, their trust is enhanced. Referrals and online recommendations are crucial sources of trust for consumers' purchase decisions (Navitha Sulthana & Vasantha, 2021). Subsequently, purchase intention is the product of a high level of trust (Lu et al., 2010). Interactions among social media users increase trust, which then translated into consumer intention to buy (Hajli, 2014; Han & Windsor, 2011). However, trust among social media is declining due to the spread of false information (Sterrett et al., 2019).

Aside from trust, the influence of friends, relatives, and important parties in social media may accelerate social norms (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015). In online social networks, social or group norms have been said to bridge the gap between intention and behavior (Hynes & Wilson, 2016). Perceived usefulness is also an outcome of social media use. The perceived usefulness of social media communications can be used to predict

consumer attitudes toward product consumption (Elkaseh et al., 2016). According to Purnawirawan et al.'s (2012) empirical study, online reviews in social media facilitate consumers' perceived usefulness regarding the purchase of products recommended by other users. Moreover, Renny et al. (2013) studied the influence of the perceived usefulness of social media use to determine consumer attitudes toward online shopping. Their results were consistent with past research in that perceived usefulness was found to enhance the positive attitudes of consumers with respect to time-saving and cost-effectiveness. Moreover, Vazquez (2021) argued that social media usage has a spillover effect on consumer perceptions of product quality in retail environments.

#### **2.2.4 Attitudes and purchase decisions**

Attitudes have been well understood in different fields of research. Attitude is a key precursor of purchase intention before reaching a decision. A stream of research has investigated the relationship between attitudes and behavioral intention. Yadav and Pathak (2017) found evidence to support the notion that consumer purchase intention in developing markets is strongly determined by positive or negative attitudes. Consistent with a positive relation between attitudes and behavioral intention, Belleau et al. (2007) confirmed that more favorable consumer attitudes translated into a higher likelihood of consumers intending to purchase fashion items for their first trials, especially if having promotional gifts for first consumers. Within the social sciences, purchase intention has been found to highly correlate with the actual purchase behavior of final buyers (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Therefore, understanding the intention–purchase relationship can lead to the success of any goods in the markets. This construct appears to occur in the pre-purchasing stage and subsequently drives consumer behaviors (Conner & Armitage, 1998; Peña-García et al., 2020). In practice, the relationship between purchase intention and purchase behavior has been studied in a range of marketing fields, such as sustainable fashion products (Dewanto & Belgiawan, 2020) and consumer goods (Sun & Jun, 2022). To a certain extent, consumer intention can encourage people to finalize their purchase decisions (Amri & Prihandono, 2019).

### **2.3 Theoretical support and previous findings**

#### **2.3.1 Theory of Reasoned Action**

The TRA was first introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and used to predict the behavior of an individual. The theory proposes that a person's behavior is governed by their intention under volitional controls (Ajzen, 1985). Attitudes and subjective social norms are antecedents of an individual's intention to perform a given behavior. The more positive these determinants, the more favorable a person's ability to perform a given behavior. Therefore, this theory has provided a solid understanding from which to explore issues in human behavior. In practice, the TRA has been widely applied in a variety of situations and populations to predict a person's actual behavior and intentions to engage in a particular action, such as education (Becker & Gibson, 1998), ethical business practices (Chang, 1998), online grocery purchase intention (Hansen et al., 2004), and food consumption (Hussain et al., 2016; Shepherd et al., 1991).

#### **2.3.2 Theory of Planned Behavior**

The TPB is a development of the TRA and has been used to explore underlying issues by adding perceived behavioral control in the paradigm as a predictor of both behavioral intention and behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). Ajzen and Madden (1986) argued that individuals tend to have poor intentions for fulfilling an activity due to their perceived inability to control external constraints, despite positive attitudes and accepted norms.

The success of performing some action depends on a person's ability to control personal and external obstacles with a low degree of effort. When it comes to other behaviors with minimal control, high effort is required. The theoretical model of the TPB continued to evolve and underwent many extensions with additional factors in many situations. Prior studies have incorporated other variables in addition to attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to support and stretch the applicability of the TPB. Such factors as moral norms, self-identity, self-efficacy, past behavior, belief salience, and perceived value have been incorporated into the comprehensive body of research applying TPB (e.g., Conner & Armitage, 1998; Yadav & Pathak, 2017; Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015; Yuzhanin & Fisher, 2016). Primary examples for the TPB use are witnessed in organic food consumption (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015), green products (Yadav & Pathak, 2017), fashion (Jain et al., 2017), and household appliances (Tan et al., 2017).

### **2.3.3 Technology Acceptance Model**

The TAM was first introduced by Davis (1985) and could be said to be an extension of the TRA and TPB. This theory has successfully inherited the advantages of previous theories, and identified further potential factors such as perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PE) to solve the research gap of other previous studies. In the first version of the TAM, Davis (1985) proposed that PU, PE, and attitudes could establish individuals' behavioral intentions which then foster actual behavioral usage of the information system (Cho & Lai, 2021). Subsequent changes were made to the paradigm of the TAM, notably the addition of new variables, such as perceived quality (Wei et al., 2018), trust (Pavlou, 2003), social influence, and individual differences (Vahdat et al., 2021). Mobile app usage (Vahdat et al., 2021), e-commerce adoption (Pavlou, 2003), online financial services (McKechnie et al., 2006), apparel product shopping (Ma et al., 2017), online learning (Scherer et al., 2019) and fintech service acceptance (Singh et al., 2020) have increasingly been positioned as the main research scopes of the TAM applications.

## **2.4 Research hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Country of origin has a significantly positive impact on product involvement.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Product involvement has a significantly positive impact on perceived quality.

**Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Perceived quality has a significantly positive impact on purchase decisions.

**Hypothesis 4 (H4):** Social media has a significantly positive impact on perceived quality.

**Hypothesis 5 (H5):** Social media has a significantly positive impact on trust.

**Hypothesis 6 (H6):** Trust has a significantly positive impact on purchase intention.

**Hypothesis 7 (H7):** Social media has a significantly positive impact on social norms.

**Hypothesis 8 (H8):** Social norms have a significantly positive impact on purchase intention.

**Hypothesis 9 (H9):** Social media has a significantly positive impact on perceived usefulness.

**Hypothesis 10 (H10):** Perceived usefulness has a significantly positive impact on attitude.

**Hypothesis 11 (H11):** Hallyu has a significantly positive impact on attitude.

**Hypothesis 12 (H12):** Attitudes have a significantly positive impact on purchase intention.

**Hypothesis 13 (H13):** Purchase intention has a significantly positive impact on purchase decision

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Sampling selection and sample size

This study was restricted to respondents from Ho Chi Minh City aged between 18–35 who had been exposed to Hallyu cultures, as well as being willing and open to shop for Korean goods. In the PLS-SEM applications, the “10-times rule” is the most widely accepted method for determining minimum sample size (Hair et al., 2011). The “10-times rule” refers to the requirement that sample size should be 10-times higher than the largest number of structural paths pointing at a particular latent variable in the conceptual framework (Hair et al., 2011). In the structural model, the maximum number of structural paths directed to the latent construct of the purchase decision was 13. Accordingly, as per the aforementioned rule, the minimum sample size was over 130. Consequently, a final sample of over 130 responses needed to be obtained to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

#### 3.2 Data collection

We designed online surveys on Google forms, accessible via a link. Prior to the survey distribution, the questionnaires were scanned and revised by a supervisor and other colleagues to ensure that the information was clear and transparent, and free from any ambiguities or typographical errors. Over a two-week period, these questionnaires were then sent to target respondents via two roads: online social networks and face-to-face discussions in university classes. Ultimately, we collected a total of 159 responses, which exceeded the minimum sample size for this study. We had a higher percentage of female respondents, and the majority of the participants were aged between 18–24. By discovering consumer channel preferences, online distribution channels obtained the most favorite in consumption habits, compared to traditional methods. Table 1 provides the profiles of the respondents.

**Table 1: Respondents’ demographics**

Demographics	Categories	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24	155	97.48
	25-30	2	1.26
	31-35	2	1.26
Gender	Male	33	20.75
	Female	126	79.25
Occupation	Students	147	92.45
	Teachers, lecturers, officers	9	5.66
	Others	3	1.89
Education	Graduate	6	3.78
	Undergraduate	138	86.79
	Others	15	9.43
Monthly Income	Below 3 million VND	67	42.14
	3-6 million VND	56	35.22

	6-10 million VND	21	13.21
	10-15 million VND	8	5.03
	Above 15 million VND	7	4.40
Purchase channels on Korean consumer goods	Offline/Traditional (supermarket, shop)	48	29.75
	Online (social media, e-commerce)	111	70.25
Monthly expense on Korean consumer goods	Below 500.000 VND	80	50.31
	500.000 VND - 1.000.000 VND	68	42.77
	Above 1.000.000 VND	11	6.92
Which channel on social media has been used mostly to seek information and purchase Korean consumer goods?	Facebook	52	33.33
	Instagram	33	21.15
	TikTok	25	16.03
	YouTube	35	22.44
	Others	14	7.05
Total		159	100.00

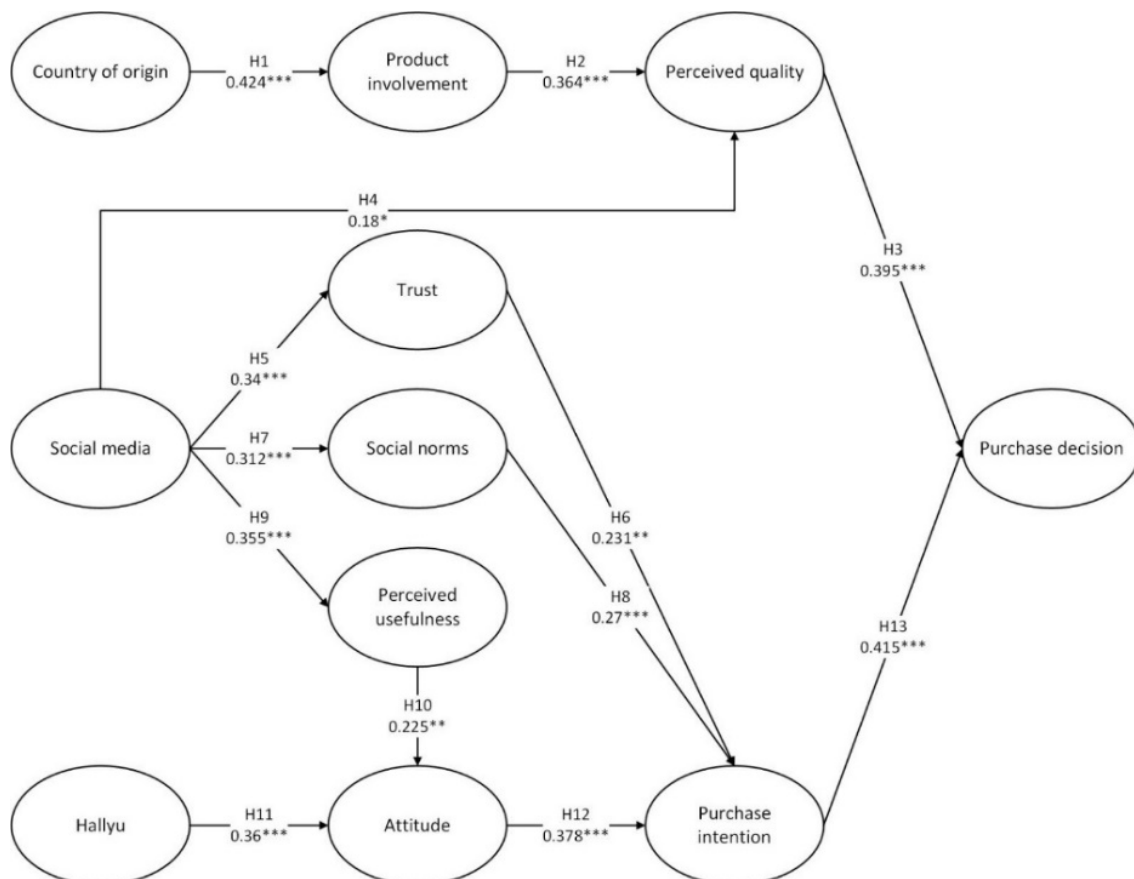
## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results

For this study, we examined reliability and validity by using Cronbach's Alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), rho-A, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014; Hair Jr et al., 2014; Nu Ngoc Ton et al., 2021). Table 2 shows that the CR values of all constructs were greater than the standard value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2014; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). Moreover, the table also presents that the CA values of all items—excluding product involvement—exceeded the cut-off value of 0.60 proposed by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Although the CA value of product involvement violated the general rule of internal consistency reliability, product involvement was kept as the CR value was in the acceptable range. We deemed this decision appropriate due to the suitability of composite reliability over CA (Hair Jr et al., 2014). Table 2 also indicates that all latent constructs were valid due to the compatibility of their outer loadings (i.e., above 0.70) and the AVE values with the testing mechanism of the validity (namely, greater than 0.50) (Hair Jr et al., 2014). The Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 3) and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Table 4) were applied in order to purposefully assess the discriminant validity (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Nu Ngoc Ton et al., 2021). As presented in Table 3, the outcomes showed that all latent constructs had discriminant validity because the square root of the AVE for each construct was higher than the square correlations of others (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair Jr et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2017). Table 4 represents the results of discriminant validity testing with the HTMT ratio values, which ranged from 0.261 to 0.885, all less than the cut-off value of 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015). In sum, all of the measurements exhibited the sufficiency of discriminant validity.

We employed a bootstrapping method for analyzing the hypotheses. Bootstrapping can handle the issues related to the assumptions of traditional methods, especially in the case of small samples (Dogan, 2007). The assessment of the hypothesized relationships were

taken into consideration in two forms: path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and effect size ( $f^2$ ) (Hair Jr et al., 2014). Estimates denoted the values of path coefficients, which ranged from -1 to +1. The complete results in Figure 1 show that all of the hypotheses were supported by positive relationships between the latent constructs. Indeed, COO ( $\beta=0.424$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) positively influenced product involvement, meaning that H1 was supported. Product involvement ( $\beta=0.364$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) positively impacted perceived quality, thus confirming H2. Regarding H3, perceived quality ( $\beta=0.395$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) positively affected purchase decisions. Social media exerted positive influences on perceived quality, trust, social norms, and perceived usefulness ( $\beta=0.18$ ,  $\beta=0.34$ ,  $\beta=0.312$ , and  $\beta=0.355$ , respectively), meaning that H4, H5, H7, and H9 were supported. Trust ( $\beta=0.231$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ), social norms ( $\beta=0.27$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ), and attitudes ( $\beta=0.378$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) had significantly positive influences on consumer purchase intention for Korean consumer goods, thus supporting H6, H8, and H12. For H10 and H11, attitudes were positively affected by perceived usefulness ( $\beta=0.225$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ) and the Hallyu wave ( $\beta=0.36$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ). In terms of H13, purchase intention ( $\beta=0.415$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) showed a positive relationship with consumer purchase decisions for Korean consumer goods. Effect size ( $f^2$ ) reflected the changes in  $R^2$  as a construct that was excluded in the path model (Hair Jr et al., 2014). The results in Figure 1 revealed that H1, H3, H11, H12, and H13 fell in the range of medium effects, while the remainder had small effects.



**Figure 1: Theoretical estimation.**

Notes: \*\*\* p-value  $\leq 0.001$ ; \*\* p-value  $\leq 0.01$ ; \* p-value  $\leq 0.05$ .



**Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity of latent constructs**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Factor loadings</b>	<b>VIF</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>rho_A</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>R-Squared</b>
<b>Thresholds</b>				<b>≥ 0.708</b>	<b>≤ 3.3</b>			<b>[0.7;0.95]</b>	<b>≥ 0.5</b>	
Country of origin (Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994) (Lee et al., 2020)	CO5	3.874	0.852	0.839	1.986	0.789	0.807	0.862	0.611	
	CO6	3.572	0.914	0.814	1.920					
	CO7	3.767	0.863	0.761	1.502					
	CO8	4.283	0.794	0.707	1.518					
Product involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1985)	PIM1	3.667	0.929	0.664	1.196	0.546	0.547	0.764	0.519	0.180
	PIM2	3.61	1.027	0.746	1.288					
	PIM3	3.459	1.137	0.748	1.103					
Perceived quality (Shirin & Kambiz, 2011) (Satriawan, 2020)	PQ1	3.717	0.762	0.851	1.970	0.837	0.837	0.902	0.755	0.226
	PQ2	3.692	0.76	0.908	2.565					
	PQ3	3.566	0.851	0.846	1.833					
Social media (Pucci et al., 2019)	SM1	3.516	1.154	0.761	1.562	0.839	0.868	0.892	0.675	
	SM2	3.83	1.071	0.899	2.461					
	SM3	4.157	0.942	0.801	1.946					
	SM4	3.792	1.122	0.820	1.819					
Trust (Akdeniz Ar & Kara, 2014)	TR1	3.572	0.797	0.869	2.006	0.808	0.811	0.887	0.724	0.116
	TR2	3.616	0.815	0.882	2.087					
	TR3	3.874	0.783	0.798	1.508					
Social norms (George, 2004), cited by (Akar & Dalgic, 2018)	SN1	3.252	0.911	0.826	1.608	0.820	0.823	0.893	0.736	0.097
	SN2	3.692	0.904	0.858	2.001					

	SN3	3.679	0.878	0.888	2.122					
Perceived usefulness (Davis et al., 1989), cited by (Harrigan et al., 2021)						0.803	0.831	0.882	0.714	0.126
	PU1	3.748	0.876	0.825	1.824					
	PU2	3.818	0.853	0.880	1.768					
	PU3	3.723	0.846	0.830	1.632					
Hallyu (Sun & Jun, 2022) (김순홍 & Yoo, 2017)						0.770	0.786	0.852	0.591	
	HA1	3.937	1.062	0.705	1.613					
	HA2	3.535	1.354	0.836	1.787					
	HA3	3.39	1.213	0.796	1.587					
	HA4	3.189	1.134	0.730	1.375					
Attitudes (Ajzen, 1991; Sun & Jun, 2022)						0.838	0.838	0.925	0.860	0.215
	AT1	3.654	0.869	0.930	2.080					
	AT2	3.585	0.795	0.925	2.080					
Purchase intention (Prasad et al., 2019)						0.714	0.723	0.874	0.777	0.571
	PI1	3.604	0.824	0.898	1.445					
	PI2	3.101	0.926	0.864	1.445					
Purchase decision (Hanaysha, 2018)						0.739	0.742	0.884	0.793	0.540
	PD1	3.157	0.922	0.881	1.523					
	PD2	3.686	0.802	0.900	1.523					

Notes: CR = Composite reliability, AVE = Average variance extracted.  
Source: The authors.

**Table 3: Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)**

Constructs	Fornell-Larcker Criterion											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1 Attitudes	0.928											
2 Country of origin	0.529	0.782										
3 Hallyu	0.409	0.396	0.769									
4 Purchase decision	0.659	0.553	0.497	0.890								
5 Purchase intention	0.685	0.548	0.470	0.670	0.881							
6 Product involvement	0.452	0.424	0.512	0.551	0.452	0.721						
7 Perceived quality	0.741	0.674	0.348	0.663	0.647	0.448	0.869					
8 Perceived usefulness	0.303	0.221	0.215	0.375	0.233	0.319	0.295	0.845				
9 Social media	0.297	0.361	0.364	0.403	0.358	0.464	0.350	0.355	0.822			
10 Social norms	0.540	0.482	0.256	0.565	0.603	0.399	0.547	0.237	0.312	0.858		
11 Trust	0.696	0.595	0.340	0.659	0.646	0.479	0.723	0.304	0.340	0.560	0.851	

Source: The authors.

**Table 4: Discriminant validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio)**

Construct	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1 Attitudes	Criteria $\leq 0.9$											
2 Country of origin	0.639											
3 Hallyu	0.495	0.521										
4 Purchase decision	0.834	0.720	0.656									
5 Purchase intention	0.876	0.715	0.616	0.925								
6 Product involvement	0.643	0.612	0.771	0.821	0.684							
7 Perceived quality	0.885	0.812	0.431	0.840	0.832	0.648						
8 Perceived usefulness	0.347	0.278	0.261	0.477	0.293	0.486	0.347					
9 Social media	0.344	0.441	0.456	0.509	0.452	0.676	0.406	0.425				
10 Social norms	0.651	0.606	0.312	0.730	0.787	0.566	0.659	0.300	0.369			
11 Trust	0.847	0.730	0.421	0.851	0.844	0.703	0.878	0.369	0.406	0.684		

Source: The authors.

## 4.2 Discussion

There were certain findings associated with sequencing linkages among different constructs. Our results aligned with previous findings in the context of purchase behavior for Korean goods among young people in general (e.g., Huh & Wu, 2017; Truong, 2018; Xuan Truong Nguyen, 2019). First, we observed the existence of a positive relationship between COO and product involvement—a finding in line with previous studies (e.g., Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Yim Wong et al., 2008). The involvement in information search and product evaluation for imported Korean consumer goods was positively correlated with a

favorable COO image. The positive effects of product involvement on purchase decisions were found to be carried by perceived quality, as consistent with past research (Charters & Pettigrew, 2006; Quester & Smart, 1996). Moreover, our findings aligned with previous studies in that perceived quality was a stimulant, but at a lower extent in the relationship between social media and purchase decisions (Asshidin et al., 2016; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Rawwas et al., 1996; Vazquez, 2021; Voramontri & Klieb, 2019). Accordingly, the perceived quality of consumers could significantly enhance confidence in product effectiveness and drive actual purchase behaviors. Trust, as created by social media, could generate consumer intention to purchase Korean consumer goods, which follows the outcomes of past research (M. N. Hajli, 2014; N. Hajli et al., 2017; Han & Windsor, 2011; Navitha Sulthana & Vasantha, 2021). However, the strength of trust in purchase intention was small due to concerns over the quality of information published in digital media environments. In comparison with trust, social norms (facilitated by social media) had a greater impact on consumer purchase intention—a finding again in line with previous studies (e.g., Cheung & Lee, 2010; Dewanto & Belgiawan, 2020; Hynes & Wilson, 2016). Social media-generated perceived usefulness facilitated positive consumer attitudes toward the purchases of Korean consumer goods and subsequent purchase intention, as supported by prior research (Purnawirawan et al., 2012; Renny et al., 2013; Xuan Truong Nguyen, 2019). In line with past studies (Choi et al., 2022; Truong, 2018), consumer attitudes positively impacted the relationship between the Hallyu wave and purchase intention at a medium level. This finding seems to suggest that the Hallyu wave facilitated the consumption of Korean cultural goods since consumers were drawn to products integrated with Korean-related music, movies, or variety shows. Furthermore, and as supported by previous research, we found purchase intention to significantly influence purchase decisions (Jain et al., 2017; Sun & Jun, 2022; Xuan Truong Nguyen, 2019).

Due to ever-growing competition, a better understanding of the driving factors in consumer purchase behavior is immensely important for business purposes. The present study offers a more comprehensive picture of recommendations on marketing tactics and potential areas for future research. First, Korean practitioners should exploit the power of their country's image in young consumer perceptions to enhance the chance of operational success. Using South Korea's favorable image would be advantageous in this regard due to the country's association with economic prosperity, high living standards, a resourceful labor force, and product advancements. Second, it would be useful to attach the features of the Hallyu wave to Korean consumer goods to initiate positive attitudes toward the consumption of said goods among younger populations. Relevant marketers would have various options at their disposal, such as executing word-of-mouth recommendations, choosing highly interactive communication channels, optimizing online and offline transactions, attaching global trends, and using Hallyu-related features. Despite an early acceptance of Hallyu-related products, it is necessary to understand that young consumers are still in command of their shopping decisions through careful consideration of other alternatives. Third, while social media strengths are well understood in a range of marketing communications, the knowledge of others is more limited. Referring to the importance of trust in social media, we would suggest that Korean firms take control of information quality and quantity on social-owned channels and online communities to enhance consumer trust. They can employ talented content

writers to build trust and integrate community values with personal interest during the purchasing journey. Concurrently, information sources on social platforms and communities should be checked carefully. Additionally, customer testimonials should be widely used, where possible. Along with trust, social norms could be exercised by supporting user-generated reviews on preferred online channels, thereby driving consumers to produce real opinions with hashtags. To increase perceived usefulness, the major focus of marketers should be the optimization of consumers' purchasing roads in relation to time-saving and cost-effectiveness. They should collaborate fruitfully with social media operators to convert consumer attention from public media to self-owned platforms through the integration of limited editions, promotional codes, the provision of "lucky money" for new accounts, and interconnectivity activities (workshops, forums, exhibitions, etc.). To accelerate high product involvement, Korean firms are advised to embed emotional and functional values into their products through the deliverables of interconnected messages so that consumers feel engaged and motivated. Hence, the process of producing content is of paramount importance. Finally, efforts to translate consumer intention to subsequent purchase decisions are on the rise. Marketers can overcome the intention-behavior gap by strengthening the compatibility between consumption habits and the necessary level of goods ownership, as well as by reducing uncertainty levels within purchases. More specifically, the benefits of goods should be engrained in consumer perceptions through repetitive messages with an impressive icon on self-owned social channels and positive reviews of opinion leaders specialized in a particular subject of discussion. In so doing, the urge to buy these products could dramatically increase (Amelia & Ronald, 2021). When relying on different product categories, flexibility in deploying marketing strategies could increase the accuracy of predicting consumer purchase behaviors and boost the conversion rate for Korean consumer goods.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the field by incorporating key antecedents of purchase decisions for Korean consumer goods among young people in Ho Chi Minh City through the application of three theoretical backgrounds (the TRA, TPB, and TAM), and provides a new direction for the establishment of marketing strategies. The study focused on exploring how Hallyu, social media, COO, and their sequencing relationships with several mediating factors can predict consumer purchase decisions. In total, 159 respondents completed the quantitative survey, which was analyzed through PLS-SEM. Our findings support previous studies on the positive links between TRA, TPB, and TAM variables, and their influence on purchase choices.

The target population in this study was limited to Ho Chi Minh City, meaning that its findings may not be generalizable. Hence, future research could adopt mixed methods and geographic differences to obtain more generalized findings of consumer purchase behavior for Korean goods. Further investigations using longitudinal approaches could be conducted so as to determine whether there would be any adjustments in the strength of sequencing linkages among variables.

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