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Exploring Consumer Behavior in Cross-Border E-Commerce in Vietnam: The Role of Psychosocial Factors, Platform Quality, Perceived Benefits, and Distribution Strategy in International Trade

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores the factors influencing the cross-border purchasing behavior of Vietnamese consumers, particularly for products from the United States and China, in the context of cross-border e-commerce, focusing on distribution channels and international trade dynamics. **Research design, data and methodology:** The research is based on social identity theory, realistic group conflict theory, cognitive dissonance theory, the SOR model, and the Information Systems Success (ISS) model. From December 2023 to August 2024, a survey was conducted using a seven-point Likert scale, gathering responses from 1,000 consumers in each of the two studies (Study 1 for a U.S. product and Study 2 for a Chinese product). Data was analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.1.0 software. **Results:** Key factors such as consumer affinity, ethnocentrism, e-service quality, system quality, and information quality influence consumer trust and product judgments. Product uniqueness and price competitiveness were also significant drivers of positive product assessments. **Conclusions:** This study clarifies how consumer trust and product evaluations influence cross-border purchasing behavior, yielding valuable insights for distribution, logistics, and marketing in international trade. The findings offer actionable guidance for businesses targeting Vietnamese cross-border e-commerce, especially in optimizing distribution channels and improving logistics efficiency.

Keywords: Psychosocial; Quality; Benefits; CBEC; Distribution Strategy; Vietnam.

JEL Classification Code: D12, M10, M19, M30.

1. Introduction

Cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) has emerged as a key driver in the global retail industry, enabling transactions between consumers and businesses across different countries. CBEC refers to the online exchange of goods and services between individuals, businesses, or organizations from various nations via e-commerce platforms (Cheng et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2019). This business model has revolutionized how consumers access international products, providing not only convenience and cost-saving benefits but also expanding opportunities for global trade (Hoque & Bashaw, 2020). As a result, CBEC plays a crucial role in fostering economic development and opening up new

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markets for both developed and developing countries (Mou et al., 2020). The rapid growth of CBEC is particularly evident in countries like Vietnam, where increased internet access and the rise of international shopping platforms have transformed consumer behavior and facilitated cross-border trade (Cui et al., 2019).

Vietnam, in particular, has seen significant growth in CBEC, fueled by strengthened trade relations with key partners such as China and the United States. China, with its vast manufacturing base and wide range of affordable consumer goods, has become a major source of products for Vietnamese consumers, while the U.S. is known for offering high-quality goods with superior durability and aesthetics. E-commerce platforms such as Tmall, Alibaba, and Taobao from China, alongside eBay, Amazon, and Walmart from the U.S., have become central to the cross-border shopping experience for Vietnamese consumers. As the digital economy continues to evolve, these platforms provide easy access to international products, contributing to the growth of cross-border purchases (Lan & Trung, 2024).

However, despite the rapid expansion of CBEC in Vietnam, several factors influencing consumer behavior in cross-border shopping have yet to be fully explored. Most previous research on CBEC has focused on traditional e-commerce models or consumer behavior in local markets (Zhu et al., 2019; Dirgantari et al., 2020), neglecting the distinct dynamics of cross-border transactions. The Information Systems Success (ISS) model, commonly applied to domestic e-commerce, does not fully capture the complexities of CBEC, which arise from differences in business models and cultural nuances between consumer markets (Han et al., 2023; Hazarika & Mousavi, 2021). This study aims to address this gap by exploring the psychosocial factors, platform quality, and perceived benefits that influence the cross-border shopping behavior of Vietnamese consumers, especially concerning products from China and the U.S.

From a business and logistics perspective, the success of CBEC depends not only on effective consumer engagement but also on robust distribution networks that facilitate smooth international product movement, particularly through third-party forwarding logistics (3PFL) services (Ren et al., 2020). The logistics involved in CBEC such as warehousing, inventory management, customs clearance, shipping, and last-mile delivery are crucial to ensuring timely and cost-effective product delivery. However, international trade's complexities, including fluctuating tariffs, tax policies, customs regulations, shipping laws, and supply chain disruptions, pose significant challenges for businesses operating in the CBEC space (Chen et al., 2022). These challenges, though demanding, also present opportunities for innovation in logistics and distribution strategies. Understanding how these factors influence consumer purchasing decisions and satisfaction is critical for businesses aiming to optimize their cross-border distribution networks and improve the overall consumer experience.

This research aims to offer valuable insights into the factors driving consumer purchasing decisions in CBEC, thereby enhancing understanding of cross-border shopping behavior. Additionally, it will examine the critical role logistics and distribution play in shaping consumer perceptions of service quality and reliability. By comparing these findings with existing research, the study will highlight similarities or differences in consumer behavior patterns, ultimately helping businesses optimize international e-commerce strategies. The research will also provide recommendations for businesses looking to refine their logistics strategies, streamline distribution channels, and excel in the global e-commerce arena. By exploring the interplay between consumer psychology, platform quality, perceived benefits, and distribution management, this study will shed light on the evolving landscape of CBEC in Vietnam and provide actionable insights to improve competitiveness and optimize distribution strategies in the global marketplace.

This study is grounded in three key theoretical frameworks: Social Identity Theory, the Information Systems Success (ISS) model, and Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory. The Social Identity Theory, which focuses on social categorization, cognitive and motivational factors, and intergroup relations (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011), helps explain the psychosocial factors influencing consumers, including consumer ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism. The ISS model, applied to CBEC, clarifies the factors related to platform quality (information quality, system quality, e-service quality) and their impact on purchasing behavior (Han et al., 2023). Lastly, the SOR theory explores how stimuli (platform quality, perceived benefits) interact with the organism (trust, product judgment), leading to a response (purchase behavior). By integrating these three theoretical perspectives, this study provides a comprehensive explanation of the relationships proposed in the research model.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Theoretical Background

Social Identity Theory, derived from research on social categorization, cognitive and motivational factors, and intergroup relations, helps explain the causes of consumer ethnocentrism. According to this theory, individuals tend to build a positive identity through identifying with social

groups, leading to in-group favoritism and discrimination against out-groups (Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011) argue that consumers may consider a foreign country as part of their in-group if they have positive feelings towards that country, thus increasing the likelihood of purchasing products from that country.

Information Systems Success (ISS) model, introduced by DeLone and McLean in 1992, evaluates the success of information systems through system quality, information quality, and service quality. The ISS model has been improved and widely applied across various fields, including online shopping, e-banking, and cross-border shopping, with studies demonstrating that the quality of information systems positively impacts user satisfaction and behavior (Aparicio et al., 2019; Han et al., 2023). In cross-border e-commerce, factors such as system and service quality affect consumer perceptions and purchase behavior (Cui et al., 2019). Han et al. (2023) also applied the ISS model to analyze consumer behavior in Africa in this context. The author's research will also use the ISS model to test the impact of platform quality factors on trust and product evaluations of foreign goods among Vietnamese consumers.

SOR theory (Stimulus-Organism-Response) is a psychological model that studies behavior through the impact of the environment on individual psychology, which then leads to behavioral responses. This model consists of three elements: Stimulus, Organism, and Response. Stimuli from the environment influence an individual's perceptions and emotions, leading to intentional behavioral responses (Parboteeah et al., 2009). Moon et al. (2018) suggest that the SOR theory helps examine the psychological and social emotional impacts on behavior. This model has been applied to explain cross-border online shopping behavior, where stimulus factors such as information quality, system quality, service quality, pricing, and product uniqueness affect consumer trust and evaluations, thereby influencing purchase behavior.

2.2. Research Model and Hypotheses

2.2.1. Consumer Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitan consumers, due to their open-mindedness and exposure to global products, tend to trust foreign goods more, perceiving them as high-quality, innovative, and culturally enriching (Riefler et al., 2012; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015). Research in Vietnam supports this, showing that cosmopolitanism positively influences trust in foreign products (Lan & Trung, 2024). Cosmopolitan consumers evaluate foreign products more favorably, appreciating their quality, design, and innovation, irrespective of their national origin (Riefler et al., 2012). This positive assessment contrasts with the biases of ethnocentric consumers who judge foreign products negatively (Prince et al., 2019). In Vietnam, research by Trung and Long (2025), indicates that cosmopolitanism leads to more favorable product judgments. Cosmopolitan consumers, familiar with and appreciative of global products, are more likely to engage in cross-border e-commerce (CBEC), seeking unique or high-quality items not available domestically. Research in Indonesia (Jin et al., 2024), India (Srivastava et al., 2023), Vietnam (Trung & Long, 2025) suggests that cosmopolitanism positively influences the intention to purchase foreign products through CBEC platforms.

H1: Consumer Cosmopolitanism has a positive (+) relationship with Consumer Trust (H1a); Product Judgments (H1b); Consumer Behavior in CBEC (H1c).

2.2.2. Consumer Ethnocentrism

Consumer ethnocentrism refers to the belief that consuming foreign products is morally or rationally inappropriate, fostering a bias towards domestic products (Yadav & Kishor, 2024). This bias leads to distrust in foreign goods, with ethnocentric consumers often perceiving them as inferior or morally questionable, driven by a belief in the superiority of domestic products (Abosag & Farah, 2014; Maksan et al., 2019; Wijayanti & Elicia, 2024). Ethnocentric attitudes also impact consumer trust and perceptions of foreign products (Guo et al., 2018). Ethnocentric consumers tend to favor domestic products, evaluating foreign goods negatively (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2021; Halim & Zulkarnain, 2017). This preference stems from a belief that domestic products align better with their values and standards, resulting in negative judgments of foreign products. In cross-border e-commerce (CBEC), ethnocentrism also affects consumers' willingness to engage in international purchases. Ethnocentric consumers avoid foreign products online, prioritizing domestic goods in both traditional and digital markets (Abosag & Farah, 2014; Maksan et al., 2019). This reluctance to engage in CBEC is due to the perceived risks and distrust of foreign sellers and products.

H2: Consumer Ethnocentrism has a negative (-) relationship with Consumer Trust (H1a); Product Judgments (H1b); Consumer Behavior in CBEC (H2c).

2.2.3. Information Quality

Information quality plays a key role in fostering consumer trust in CBEC platforms. High-quality information, defined by accuracy, usefulness, completeness, and trustworthiness, allows consumers to make informed decisions and strengthens their confidence in the platform (Kim et al., 2008; McKnight et al., 2017). Accurate, relevant, and well-presented information enhances the platform's perceived reliability and transparency, increasing trust. Conversely, poor information quality can undermine trust,

leading to skepticism (Everard & Galletta, 2005; Moody et al., 2017). In CBEC, where consumers rely on platform information for international transactions, the relationship between information quality and consumer trust is positive (Huang & Chang, 2019). Additionally, high-quality information influences consumer judgments about products. Accurate details and specifications reduce the effort needed to understand products, lowering perceived costs and boosting confidence in product evaluations (Kim et al., 2013). Han et al. (2023) also found that information quality positively affects product value perceptions, which in turn influence product judgments.

H3: Information Quality has a positive (+) relationship with Consumer Trust (H3a); Product Judgments (H3b).

2.2.4. System Quality

System quality refers to the technical performance of an information system, including usability, reliability, adaptability, and response time (Saha et al., 2012). High system quality ensures a seamless, reliable, and responsive user experience, increasing consumer trust (McKnight et al., 2017). In contrast, poor system quality, such as slow response times or instability, can decrease trust and raise doubts about the platform's reliability (Moody et al., 2017). Quality-assured systems, such as clear return policies, further build trust (Chang et al., 2013). In cross-border e-commerce, system quality is even more crucial due to unfamiliar transactions (Huang & Chang, 2019).

System quality also directly influences consumer product judgments. A well-designed platform enhances the shopping experience by facilitating easy navigation and quick decision-making (Park & Kim, 2003). High system quality leads to favorable product judgments by ensuring reliable and efficient access to product information. Conversely, system instability or slow response times can negatively affect product evaluations (Zhou, 2013). In cross-border e-commerce, where concerns about platform reliability are heightened, system quality is even more important (Han et al., 2023).

H4: System Quality has a positive (+) relationship with Consumer Trust (H4a); Product Judgments (H4b).

2.2.5. E-Service Quality

E-service quality refers to the evaluation of online services, including the seller's ability to efficiently meet purchasing needs, deliver products quickly, and provide quality services (Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020). High e-service quality, encompassing reliability, responsiveness, and a positive service environment, increases consumer trust in the platform, especially in cross-border transactions where consumers may be wary of unfamiliar suppliers (Zeithaml et al., 2018; McKnight et al., 2017). A reliable service system fosters confidence and trust in both the platform and its offerings. Han et al. (2023) highlight that good service quality and product assurance can lead to positive emotions, increasing perceived value and trust.

E-service quality also directly influences product judgments. Reliable services, responsive environments, and timely support improve the overall shopping experience, leading to positive product evaluations (Lin & Wang, 2012). In cross-border e-commerce, where service quality is particularly important due to the complexities of international transactions, high e-service quality positively impacts product value perceptions (Han et al., 2023).

H5: E-service Quality has a positive (+) relationship with Consumer Trust (H5a); Product Judgments (H5b).

2.2.6. Price Competitiveness

Price competitiveness plays a key role in shaping consumer judgments, especially in cross-border e-commerce (CBEC). It refers to a product's ability to offer lower, comparable, or better prices than competitors (Camacho et al., 2020). In CBEC, the total cost, including customs duties, taxes, and shipping, can be more affordable on foreign websites, enhancing the perceived value of products and making them more attractive to consumers. This leads to more favorable product judgments when consumers perceive good value for money (Huang & Chang, 2019). Price competitiveness also significantly influences consumer behavior in CBEC. Consumers are often motivated by lower prices, particularly when the total cost is more affordable than domestic alternatives (Huang & Chang, 2019). Competitive pricing can encourage cross-border shopping by making foreign products more appealing. Research by Trung and Long (2025) shows that price competitiveness increases consumers' perception of the value of foreign platforms, influencing their decision to purchase.

H6: Price Competitiveness has a positive (+) relationship with Product Judgments (H6a); Consumer Behavior in CBEC (H6b).

2.2.7. Product Uniqueness

Product uniqueness refers to the degree of differentiation a product holds compared to others in the market, making it stand out in design, features, or appeal (Van-Everdingen et al., 2011). Unique products often evoke positive consumer evaluations due to their distinctiveness and ability to meet specific needs not addressed by conventional alternatives. In cross-border e-commerce (CBEC), consumers are often drawn to distinctive products that are unavailable locally, making product uniqueness a key factor in product judgments (Huang & Chang, 2019). In CBEC, product uniqueness also influences consumer behavior by motivating purchases of rare or distinctive items not available locally. Consumers are more likely to engage in

CBEC to acquire unique products, enhancing their perceived value and driving their decision to purchase (Huang & Chang, 2019). Research by Dey et al. (2020) in India and Han et al. (2018) in Korea shows that the need for uniqueness significantly motivates cross-border purchasing.

H7: Product Uniqueness has a positive (+) relationship with Product Judgments (H7a); Consumer Behavior in CBEC (H7b).

2.2.8. Product Judgments

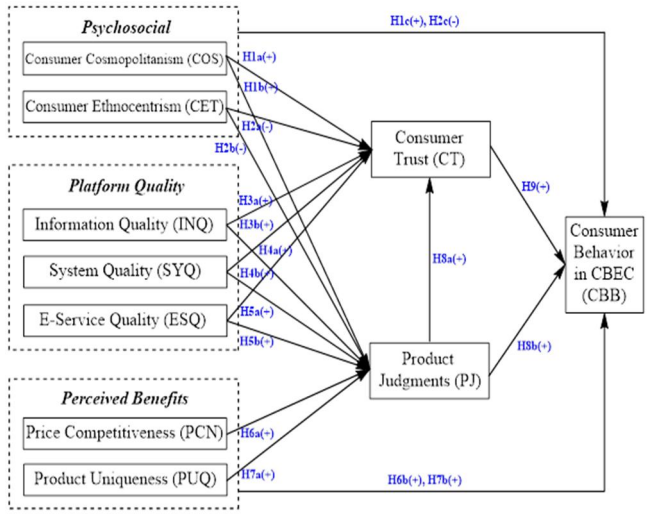
Product judgments refer to consumers' overall evaluations of a product, including factors like quality, design, price, and durability (Camacho et al., 2020). In cross-border e-commerce (CBEC), where consumers cannot physically examine products, their trust is based on the perceived value of the product. When consumers perceive high value in a product, they are more likely to trust both the product and the platform offering it (Han & Kim, 2021; Rizwan et al., 2013). Product judgments also influence consumer behavior in CBEC by shaping purchase intentions. Positive evaluations of a product's quality, design, and price increase the likelihood of consumers making a purchase. In CBEC, where concerns about product authenticity and transaction security exist, favorable product judgments help alleviate these concerns and motivate purchases (Gan & Wang, 2017; Wu & Chang, 2016). Han et al. (2023) found that product value, as judged by consumers, significantly influences cross-border shopping behavior.

H8: Product Judgments have a positive (+) relationship with Consumer Trust (H8a); Consumer Behavior in CBEC (H8b).

2.2.9. Consumer Trust

Consumer trust is crucial in driving purchase intentions and reducing uncertainty in transactions, particularly in cross-border e-commerce (CBEC). Trust helps alleviate concerns about security, reliability, and product quality (Octavia et al., 2024). In CBEC, where consumers may face challenges like unfamiliarity with foreign sellers and shipping processes, trust in the platform and products increases the likelihood of purchases (Yang, 2020). High trust levels reduce hesitation, making consumers more confident in completing purchases (Han & Kim, 2021; Zhu et al., 2019). Studies by Cui et al. (2020) and Gui et al. (2022) show that trust positively influences cross-border purchase intentions, especially when product information is reliable. Han et al. (2023) also confirm that trust drives cross-border shopping behavior.

H9: Consumer Trust has a positive (+) relationship with Consumer Behavior in CBEC.



Source: Authors' Development, 2023

Figure 1: Research Model

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Measurement Scales

A mixed-method approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods was employed in two separate phases for this study. Initially, a focus group discussion was conducted to evaluate the conceptual model, clarify the wording, assess the content of the questions, and gauge participants' comprehension. Additionally, the research team examined the suitability of the scales within the Vietnamese context. Feedback from this focus group discussion played a pivotal role in refining the measurement scales.

All the scales used in this study were adopted and adapted from previously validated instruments. The Consumer Cosmopolitanism (COS) scale was adapted from Prince et al. (2019) and comprises 7 observed variables. The Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET) scale was adapted from the original work by Ramadania et al. (2023), consisting of 8 observed variables. The Price Competitiveness (PCN) and Product Uniqueness (PUQ) scales were adapted from Huang and Chang (2019), each containing 3 observed variables. The Product Judgments (PJ) scale, with 6 observed variables, was adapted from Chaudhry et al. (2021). Finally, the Information Quality (INQ) scale (4 observed variables), the System Quality (SYQ) scale (5 observed variables), the E-Service Quality (ESQ) scale (5 observed variables), the Consumer Trust (CT) scale (3 observed variables), and the Consumer Behavior in CBEC (CBB) scale (4 observed variables) were all adapted from Han et al. (2023).

3.2. Sample Size and Data Processing Procedure

Determining an appropriate sample size is critical for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hair et al. (2017) further provided power tables to assist researchers in selecting an appropriate sample size based on various measurement conditions and model characteristics. These tables help determine the necessary sample size to achieve adequate statistical power, which is essential for obtaining reliable results from PLS-SEM analysis. Additionally, Barclay et al. (1995) suggested that the minimum sample size for PLS-SEM should be equal to or greater than ten times the greatest number of paths leading to a specific construct in the model. In this case, the author chose a sample size large enough to meet these requirements, with a minimum of 90 samples (given that the maximum number of paths leading to a construct in the model was 9).

Beyond these general guidelines, Cohen (2016) recommended that for PLS-SEM analysis with 80% statistical power, the sample size should be large enough to detect an R^2 of at least 0.10 for any endogenous construct in the model at a 5% significance level. Referring to Cohen's recommended tables, the minimum sample size required is 156. This guideline is in line with Hair et al.'s (2016) recommendations in various research scenarios. This threshold is crucial for ensuring that the analysis is sensitive enough to detect meaningful relationships between variables in the model. For large populations (e.g., national studies like one in Vietnam), Cochran's (1977) formula, $N = [c^2.f(1-f)] / \varepsilon^2$, is typically used to determine sample size. According to this formula, a sample size of 384 is often recommended for large populations. In practice, the author used a sample size of 1,000 for both studies, which satisfied all of the conditions mentioned above. This ensured that the research had adequate statistical power and met the necessary criteria for robust PLS-SEM analysis.

In the present study, a seven-point Likert scale was used to measure seven latent constructs. An online survey was developed to collect data, and the conceptual model was analyzed using PLS-SEM suitable method for examining both direct and interaction effects, extending beyond standard multivariate regression techniques (Hair et al., 2019). The analysis followed a two-stage approach: measurement model evaluation (reliability was assessed via Cronbach's alpha, and validity was examined using factor analysis), and structural model assessment (examining VIF values, R^2, the statistical significance of path coefficients, and comparing alternative SEM models to ensure robustness).

3.3. Research Data Collection

The study began with a convenience sampling technique, which was chosen by the research team. However, to reach a larger number of consumers, the team sent online questionnaires to individuals familiar with CBEC via email and social media. They then asked participants to forward the questionnaire to other consumers, helping to quickly disseminate the survey to various provinces and cities across Vietnam. The combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling allowed the research team to easily reach 2,000 consumers in Vietnam. However, this approach still has several limitations, such as difficulties in ensuring representativeness. The lack of randomness means that combining both methods may result in a sample that is not representative of the entire target population, especially if participants within the network tend to be similar. Additionally, snowball sampling often leads to a homogenous network, which may not fully reflect the diversity of consumer behavior.

The research team designed the questionnaire using Google Forms and distributed it to Vietnamese consumers starting in December 2023. After approximately ten months of data collection (ending in August 2024), 1,000 valid responses were retained for Study 1 (focusing on goods from the U.S) and another independent set of 1,000 valid responses was compiled for Study 2 (focusing on goods from China). Following a thorough screening process, these datasets met all quality requirements for further analysis. A summary of the participants' demographic characteristics can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Demographics	Category	Study 1: U.S Product		Study 2: Chinese Product	
		N	Frequency	N	Frequency
Gender	Male	462	46.2	465	46.5
	Female	538	53.8	535	53.5
Education	Undergraduate	305	30.5	127	12.7
	University	491	49.1	768	76.8
	Postgraduate	204	20.4	105	10.5
Experience in CBEC	Less than 6 month	475	47.5	329	32.9
	6-12 months	292	29.2	327	32.7
	More than 1 year	233	23.3	344	34.4

Source: Authors' Own Calculations, 2025

4. Results

4.1. Results of the Measurement Model Assessment

4.1.1. Evaluation of Cronbach's Alpha Reliability, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted

Table 2 presents the results of the internal consistency reliability tests and composite reliability coefficients. All scales have Cronbach's alpha (CA) values and composite

reliability (CR) indices exceeding 0.708, which, according to Hair et al. (2019), indicates that they meet the reliability requirement. Likewise, following Sarstedt et al. (2021), the scales demonstrate acceptable Cronbach's alpha values and composite reliability, all surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.70.

However, three items CET2, CET6, and COS5 (in Study 1, with products from the U.S), show outer loadings below 0.708 (Hair et al., 2019). Because these items do not achieve convergent validity, the author removed them and conducted a second convergent validity assessment. In this subsequent analysis (for Study 1), all observed variables show factor loadings above 0.708, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.5, fulfilling Hair et al. (2019)'s criteria for convergent validity.

Discriminant validity, defined by Henseler et al. (2015) as the extent to which a latent construct is truly distinct from other latent constructs, is also confirmed. In Table 2, the square roots of the AVEs (on the main diagonal) are higher than the correlation coefficients among the constructs, indicating discriminant validity for both studies. In addition, the squared AVE values for each construct in the research model exceed their respective correlations with other variables, further supporting discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Demonstrating that the constructs are unique and do not overlap is essential to establishing robust content validity.

Table 2: Correlation and Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Study 1: United States Product												
Constructs	CA	CR	AVE	Correlation and the square root of AVE								
				CBB	CET	COS	CT	ESQ	INQ	PCN	PJ	PUQ	SYQ
CBB	0.850	0.899	0.690	**0.830**									
CET	0.926	0.942	0.730	-0.500	**0.854**								
COS	0.924	0.941	0.727	0.406	-0.314	**0.852**							
CT	0.748	0.856	0.665	0.671	-0.579	0.618	**0.815**						
ESQ	0.886	0.916	0.686	0.203	-0.125	0.306	0.342	**0.828**					
INQ	0.868	0.910	0.717	0.466	-0.511	0.396	0.606	0.223	**0.847**				
PCN	0.801	0.870	0.627	0.589	-0.462	0.416	0.570	0.143	0.466	**0.792**			
PJ	0.866	0.899	0.598	0.672	-0.621	0.515	0.704	0.238	0.634	0.693	**0.774**		
PUQ	0.730	0.848	0.650	0.479	-0.481	0.343	0.454	0.209	0.429	0.453	0.656	**0.806**	
SYQ	0.829	0.879	0.594	0.320	-0.227	0.296	0.433	0.134	0.377	0.294	0.354	0.182	**0.770**
Study 2: Chinese Product													
Constructs	CA	CR	AVE	Correlation and the square root of AVE									
				CBB	CET	COS	CT	ESQ	INQ	PCN	PJ	PUQ	SYQ
CBB	0.862	0.906	0.707	**0.841**									
CET	0.931	0.943	0.676	-0.366	**0.822**								
COS	0.900	0.921	0.625	0.372	-0.119	**0.791**							
CT	0.764	0.864	0.680	0.667	-0.384	0.586	**0.824**						
ESQ	0.895	0.922	0.704	0.236	-0.040	0.336	0.372	**0.839**					
INQ	0.872	0.913	0.724	0.508	-0.283	0.386	0.557	0.249	**0.851**				
PCN	0.819	0.880	0.648	0.540	-0.321	0.376	0.593	0.195	0.493	**0.805**			
PJ	0.880	0.909	0.625	0.670	-0.440	0.484	0.697	0.358	0.581	0.708	**0.791**		
PUQ	0.807	0.886	0.722	0.464	-0.299	0.224	0.420	0.248	0.375	0.455	0.643	**0.850**	
SYQ	0.887	0.917	0.689	0.365	-0.079	0.164	0.463	0.105	0.332	0.401	0.319	0.177	**0.830**

Source: Authors' Own Calculations, 2025

Henseler et al. (2015) propose the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations as another way to confirm discriminant validity. HTMT is calculated as the ratio of correlations between different constructs to correlations within the same construct. When constructs share similar content, Henseler et al. (2015) suggest a threshold of 0.9. For both Study 1 and Study 2, the HTMT values meet the required standards, underscoring that the constructs remain sufficiently distinct.

4.2. Results of Structural Model Assessment

4.2.1. Evaluation of the Coefficient of Determination R^2

The analysis results (Table 3) show that the model provides a good explanation for the dependent variable, with high R^2 and adjusted R^2 values (55.2% in Study 1 and 53.6% in Study 2). These values exceed the 50% threshold suggested by Henseler et al. (2015). At the same time, the

presence of multicollinearity can inflate bootstrap standard errors, and thus the variance inflation factor (VIF) must be below the tolerance level of 5.00 (Vuong & Giao, 2024). In this study, the Durbin-Watson statistic (d) is close to 1, and the maximum internal VIF for the constructs is 2.84 (Hair et al., 2016), confirming the absence of autocorrelation and multicollinearity, thereby ensuring the reliability of the results.

Table 3: The Results of R-Square and Bayesian Information Criterion

Constructs	Study 1: U.S. Products			Study 2: Chinese Products		
	R^2	R^2 adjusted	BIC	R^2	R^2 adjusted	BIC
CBB	0.552	0.550	-757.205	0.536	0.533	-720.153
CT	0.667	0.665	-1054.029	0.666	0.664	-1048.986
PJ	0.733	0.731	-1268.039	0.732	0.730	-1263.903

Source: Authors' Own Calculations, 2025

The Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), developed based on Bayesian statistics, is used when selecting among multiple models. Those models with lower BIC values are usually preferred (Neath & Cavanaugh, 2012). Table 3 shows that the Bayesian statistic has a relatively low BIC value, thus the theoretical model is prioritized for use.

4.2.2. Evaluating the f^2 Effect Size

The f^2 value indicates the impact level of a construct when it is removed from the model. According to Hair et al. (2016), the change in R^2 values is determined by estimating the PLS path model twice: first with the independent variable included (producing an R^2 value), and then again with the independent variable excluded. The difference between these two estimations provides the f^2 value. According to Cohen (2013), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 correspond to small, medium, and large effects, respectively. In this study, the factors' f^2 values range from 0.02 to 0.20, indicating a fairly moderate level of impact on the dependent variable.

4.2.3. Evaluating the PLS-SEM Path Model

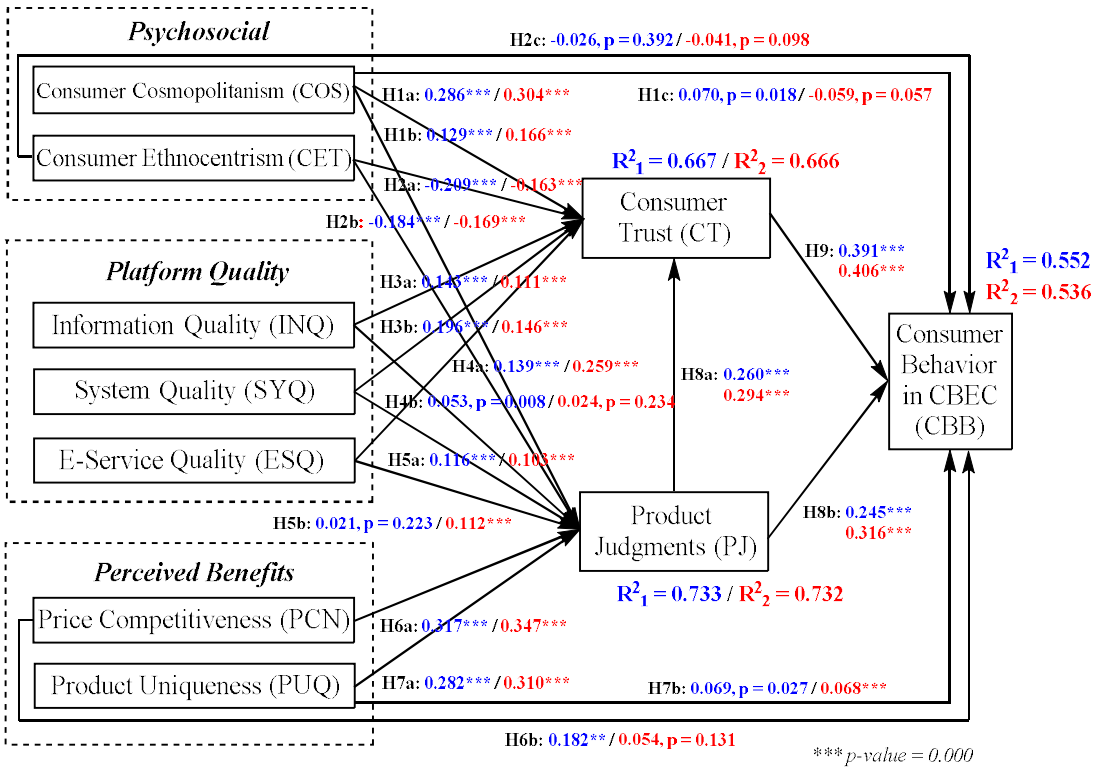
This study applied a partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach to assess the structural model, using the PLS algorithm available in SmartPLS 4.1.0 (Ringle et al., 2022). The significance of the model parameters was evaluated through the PLS bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Study 1: U.S. Products				Study 2: Chinese Products			
		Original sample	STDEV	*P* Value	Result	Original sample	STDEV	*P* Value	Result
H1a(+)	COS → CT	0.286	0.026	0.000	Supported	0.304	0.026	0.000	Supported
H1b(+)	COS → PJ	0.129	0.021	0.000	Supported	0.166	0.020	0.000	Supported
H1c(+)	COS → CBB	0.070	0.030	0.018	Supported	-0.059	0.031	0.057	Rejected
H2a(-)	CET → CT	-0.209	0.023	0.000	Supported	-0.163	0.021	0.000	Supported
H2b(-)	CET → PJ	-0.184	0.023	0.000	Supported	-0.169	0.019	0.000	Supported
H2c(-)	CET → CBB	-0.026	0.031	0.392	Rejected	-0.041	0.025	0.098	Rejected
H3a(+)	INQ → CT	0.143	0.030	0.000	Supported	0.111	0.027	0.000	Supported
H3b(+)	INQ → PJ	0.196	0.025	0.000	Supported	0.146	0.022	0.000	Supported
H4a(+)	SYQ → CT	0.139	0.023	0.000	Supported	0.259	0.021	0.000	Supported
H4b(+)	SYQ → PJ	0.053	0.020	0.008	Supported	0.024	0.020	0.234	Rejected
H5a(+)	ESQ → CT	0.116	0.022	0.000	Supported	0.103	0.023	0.000	Supported
H5b(+)	ESQ → PJ	0.021	0.017	0.223	Rejected	0.112	0.017	0.000	Supported
H6a(+)	PCN → PJ	0.317	0.027	0.000	Supported	0.347	0.027	0.000	Supported
H6b(+)	PCN → CBB	0.182	0.035	0.000	Supported	0.054	0.036	0.131	Rejected
H7a(+)	PUQ → PJ	0.282	0.024	0.000	Supported	0.310	0.025	0.000	Supported
H7b(+)	PUQ → CBB	0.069	0.031	0.027	Supported	0.068	0.029	0.000	Supported
H8a(+)	PJ → CT	0.260	0.033	0.000	Supported	0.294	0.030	0.000	Supported
H8b(+)	PJ → CBB	0.245	0.046	0.000	Supported	0.316	0.046	0.000	Supported
H9(+)	CT → CBB	0.391	0.037	0.000	Supported	0.406	0.041	0.000	Supported

Source: Authors' Own Calculations, 2025

Table 4 provides detailed information on the path coefficients and p-values. The normalized path coefficients are specifically illustrated in Figure 2, with additional details of the results available in Table 4. In Figure 2, the results of Study 1 (U.S.) are presented in blue, while the results of Study 2 (Chinese) are shown in red. It displays the p-values along with their corresponding regression coefficients.



Source: Authors' Interpretation Based On Data Analysis Results, 2025

Figure 2: Results of The Model Test for Both Study 1 and Study 2.

5. Discussions and Conclusions

5.1. Discussions and Implications

From a distribution strategy perspective in international trade, this study reveals that consumer ethnocentrism negatively influences both trust and product evaluations for goods from the U.S. and China. The negative λ coefficients indicate that when ethnocentrism is high, consumers are prone to view imported products unfavorably (Abosag & Farah, 2014), primarily due to fears of economic harm to domestic industries and a sense of patriotism (Yadav & Kishor, 2024). Given this negative impact of ethnocentrism, foreign enterprises should adopt communication and distribution strategies that mitigate consumer bias and underscore the distinctiveness and high quality of their products (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). Such an approach can help smooth market entry and reduce resistance within international supply chains.

The findings further suggest that Vietnamese consumer cosmopolitanism positively influences trust and product judgments for products from both China and the U.S. (H1a, H1b). However, it only has a positive impact on purchase behavior in CBEC (H1c) in Study 1, which focuses on U.S. products (λ = 0.07, p = 0.018), but does not show a significant effect in Study 2 for Chinese products (λ = -0.059, p = 0.057, rejected). This can be explained by the fact that Vietnamese consumers' cosmopolitanism tends to favor products from developed countries like the U.S. (Study 1), Japan, or South Korea, as these products are generally perceived to offer higher quality and have stronger brand credibility. In contrast, products from China do not enjoy the same positive perception due to factors such as inconsistent quality and associations with low-quality, counterfeit, or imitative products. Additionally, psychological and historical factors, along with competition from other international products, make Vietnamese consumers less inclined to favor Chinese goods, despite their competitive pricing.

Information quality also plays an essential role in shaping trust in cross-border purchases. Consistent with McKnight et al. (2017), the study shows that accurate, timely, and comprehensive product information positively influences consumer trust in goods from the U.S. and China. Interestingly, Vietnamese consumers regard information quality for Chinese products as superior to that for U.S. products, highlighting the importance of detailed online descriptions and clear communication in cross-border distribution strategies (Huang & Chang, 2019). By addressing information gaps and ensuring transparency,

firms can strengthen their international logistics processes and reduce uncertainty for overseas buyers.

Regarding system quality, the results indicate a positive effect on trust in products from both the U.S. ($\lambda = 0.139$) and China ($\lambda = 0.259$). However, the effect of system quality on product evaluations is partially confirmed: it is significant for U.S. products ($\lambda = 0.053$; $p = 0.02$) but not for Chinese products ($p = 0.234$). This divergence may stem from differences in supplier reputation and user experiences (Han et al., 2023). In international distribution, ensuring robust and user-friendly e-commerce platforms can mitigate risks associated with overseas transactions and enhance consumer confidence in the ordering process.

Moreover, online service quality positively influences trust in both U.S. ($\lambda = 0.116$) and Chinese products ($\lambda = 0.103$), in line with Purnamasari and Suryandari (2023), Giao et al. (2020), Rita et al. (2019), etc. Yet only in the case of Chinese products ($\lambda = 0.112$; $p = 0.000$) is this relationship strong enough to significantly affect product evaluations; for U.S. products ($p = 0.223$), it is not confirmed. One plausible explanation is that Vietnamese consumers often purchase U.S. goods via personal import channels ("hand-carried" items), making online service elements less critical. In contrast, Chinese cross-border sellers frequently rely on integrated e-commerce platforms and logistics solutions, where the quality of shipping, return policies, and customer service carries greater weight. Consequently, distributors and platform operators should provide transparent shipping rates, warranties, and up-to-date information on delivery tracking vital components for successful international distribution.

Competitive pricing significantly affects product evaluations ($\lambda = 0.317$ for U.S. products; 0.347 for Chinese products), corroborating Kuncoro and Suriani (2018) and Huang and Chang (2019). Lower prices, shipping fees, or taxes make international shopping more attractive to cost-conscious consumers. China, in particular, benefits from diverse manufacturing capabilities and cost advantages, although Vietnamese producers can still compete by elevating product quality and building strong local brands. As pricing strategy is integral to international distribution, businesses must balance competitive pricing with logistics and operational costs to create a compelling value proposition.

Additionally, product uniqueness shows a robust effect on product evaluations ($\lambda = 0.282$ for U.S. products; $\lambda = 0.31$ for Chinese products), echoing Van Everdingen et al. (2011). Consumers often look for differentiated items not readily available in their home market (Huang & Chang, 2019; Wagner et al., 2016). Chinese products, in particular, are perceived as highly unique due to their vast variety on online platforms. Distributors can leverage this demand for unique merchandise by curating specialized product lines, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of cross-border offerings.

The study also confirms that product evaluations have a positive effect on trust ($\lambda = 0.26$ for U.S. products; $\lambda = 0.294$ for Chinese products) and on purchase behaviors ($\lambda = 0.245$ for U.S. products; $\lambda = 0.316$ for Chinese products). Trust itself is a key driver of cross-border purchasing, aligning with previous research (Baek et al., 2020; Cui et al., 2020; Han & Kim, 2021). To enhance these evaluations and build consumer confidence, managers should integrate online platforms, personal import channels ("hand-carried goods"), and consumer protection systems. In international trade, assurances of product authenticity and a reliable distribution network are crucial, especially as Vietnamese consumers value both brand credibility and the overall convenience of the purchasing channel.

From the vantage point of distribution economics and supply chain management (SCM), these findings underscore that logistics, cost-competitiveness, and channel coordination are critical in cross-border e-commerce. In an era where consumers prioritize delivery speed and convenience, businesses must optimize their distribution networks both wholesaling and retailing—through digital technologies and innovative shipping methods. Such enhancements reduce costs and uncertainties across global supply chains, while also refining customer experience and bolstering CRM (customer relationship management). Close collaboration with logistics partners is essential to developing fast, flexible, and reliable shipping and fulfillment operations, particularly when navigating geographical, legal, and cultural barriers in international markets.

Overall, this study clarifies the complex interplay between consumer attitudes, platform attributes, and cross-border buying behaviors, offering crucial insights for distribution strategy in international trade. By considering factors such as ethnocentrism, cosmopolitanism, information quality, pricing, and product uniqueness, managers and policymakers can design sustainable distribution strategies that leverage modern digitalization trends, optimize international logistics, and ensure competitiveness in today's global environment.

5.2. Conclusion, Limitation and Future Research

5.2.1. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing cross-border purchasing behavior among Vietnamese consumers, with a focus on products from the United States and China. It highlights the significant roles of consumer psychosocial factors, platform quality, perceived benefits, consumer trust, product evaluations, and overall purchase behavior within the context of cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) in Vietnam. The research emphasizes that consumer trust and product evaluations are critical drivers shaping cross-border purchasing decisions.

These findings lay the foundation for developing effective marketing strategies to improve the competitiveness of domestic Vietnamese businesses, particularly when competing with products from China and the U.S. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of well-designed distribution strategies and efficient logistics in enhancing the consumer experience and optimizing international trade operations. The results offer actionable insights for businesses engaged in cross-border e-commerce. By improving product competitiveness, platform quality, and logistical efficiency, businesses can increase customer satisfaction and drive higher sales in the Vietnamese market. Effective logistics, distribution strategies, and streamlined supply chains will be key to enhancing competitiveness in the cross-border e-commerce space. Additionally, adopting efficient international trade practices will help businesses navigate the complexities of cross-border transactions, ensuring success in the dynamic global e-commerce landscape. In conclusion, this study provides valuable guidance for businesses aiming to meet the evolving needs of Vietnamese consumers in global e-commerce. By tailoring strategies that focus on product competitiveness, platform quality, and logistics, businesses can thrive in this competitive and ever-changing market.

5.2.2. Limitation and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that suggest potential areas for future research. *First,* the relatively small sample size and sampling methods may not fully capture the diversity of Vietnamese cross-border purchasing behaviors. Future studies could utilize different sampling techniques and larger, more diverse samples, potentially including consumers from various countries and cultures, to provide deeper insights into distribution channel management and logistics strategies. *Second,* this study focuses solely on fully manufactured and assembled products from developed countries. Future research could compare products from both developed and developing nations, examining how different logistics frameworks, trade regulations, and retail practices influence consumer preferences. *Third,* this research examines only consumer goods. Exploring other product categories, such as medical or high-tech items, could reveal different dynamics in distribution innovations and trade regulations, as well as more complex supply chain solutions that impact consumer purchasing decisions. *Fourth,* in the context of research in Vietnam, cultural factors significantly influence consumer behavior. However, this article does not provide sufficient information on how cultural differences were addressed in data collection or questionnaire design. Including this information would increase the reliability and applicability of the research findings.

Furthermore, future studies could explore how social media, influencer marketing, and advanced technologies (such as blockchain) shape international purchasing behaviors and consumer confidence, particularly in omnichannel strategies and e-service quality. By examining these broader factors, from multi-market logistics to digital information systems, researchers could strengthen theoretical and empirical frameworks for wholesaling, retailing, and supply chain management, ultimately contributing to the development of more sustainable, innovative and competitive distribution models. Additionally, future research could consider the application of qualitative methods to better understand consumer sentiment or compare markets beyond China and the United States.

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