

# THE IMPACT OF COUNTRY IMAGE AND CELEBRITY ENDORSER STRATEGY ON PURCHASE INTENTION

Laras Antania Hanjani<sup>1\*</sup>, Daniel Tumpal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia

**Abstract.** The global market competition is getting intense, as well as the automotive industry in Indonesia, that has been predicted will grow positively in 2019. Today, Chinese car manufacturers flock to market their products in Indonesia. Previously, consumer's perception about Chinese automotive products were considered as low quality inexpensive products, but now the trend is shifting. Country image become one of the important things for consumer to evaluate the quality of products. In the middle of 2018 DFSK (DongFengSokon), one of Chinese car manufacturer launched their SUV product, DFSK Glory 580. In conjunction with the launch of their new product, DFSK also took Agnez Monica as the celebrity endorser to promote their products. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of country image (cognitive and affective) toward product image and purchase intention. And also investigate the success driver of marketing strategy by using celebrity endorser on purchase intention of DFSK Glory 580. There are 211 respondents lived in Jakarta and surround areas that participated in this survey. The data processed with Structural Equation Modeling through AMOS 22 software. The study shows both two components of country image; cognitive and affective has significant impact to product image, and also product image to purchase intention. And there are three out of four endorser's success driver that has significant impact to purchase intention of DFSK Glory 580, they are; attitude toward brand, familiarity of the brand, and brand fit of the endorser and the brand.

**Keywords:** Country image, cognitive country image, affective country image, celebrity endorser, purchase intention

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Country image or country of origin effect become one of the important thing that marketers should aware, especially when the business is trying to penetrate the global market. It usually reffered to a general definition of country image, which focuses on economical, technological, social, and political variables of a country (Martin & Eroglu, 1993). But some studies preffered to determine the product image of a country with the product attributes. (Roth & Romeo, 1992). And others have initiate the phrase of product-country image is the combination of country of design and country of assembly (Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994).

This study focuses on country image as the mental representation of a country and its people, including cognitive believes of the country's economic and technological development stages, and the affective evaluations of its social and political systems or point of view. Related to destination and location image, country image consists of two components, there are cognitive and affective components (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997) (Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006) (Lin, Morales, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007). Cognitive country image refers to counsumers' belief of a country, integrating levels of economic development, standard of living, industrializations, and sophistication level of technology. And affective country image refers to consumer affective evaluations toward a specific

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\* Corresponding Author, Email: [larasantania1912@gmail.com](mailto:larasantania1912@gmail.com)

country and its people (i.e., like or dislike, be positive or negative) (Wang, Dongjin, Barnes, & Ahn, 2012).

People often have stereotypical beliefs for particular attributes that associate with the product image from a specific countries. For example, products that made from Japan is consider to be durable, made in Germany often associate with precision or workmanship (Wang, et al., 2012). Associations that made from a specific country can be initiated when consumers aware of the country where the product was made (Hamzaoui & Merunka, 2006).

The impact of globalization is also driving multinational corporations to produce their products in low cost countries, this may or may not impact the perceptions of consumers towards the values of product (Hui & Zhou, 2003). For example, China is well-known as a manufacturing country, and there has been an increasing demand for Chinese products in several countries where the consumers are value conscious (Sharma, 2011). The increasing number of Chinese products has expanded into several types of products such as household utensils, electronic goods, and also motor vehicle.

Until today, the automotive industry is still dominated by Japanese car manufacturers and followed by European and American car manufacturers. Based on data from the Indonesian Automotive Industry Association (Gaikindo), in 2018 the number of national car sales reached 1,151,291 units. In Indonesia, Toyota still leads in the first position with the number of car sales 352,161 units, followed by Daihatsu in second place with sales of 202,738 units. And in the third position was followed by Honda with sales of 162,170 units. This indicate that Japanese car manufacturer still dominate Indonesian automotive market.

In a past few years, the quality of Chinese automotive products were considered as low quality inexpensive products, but now the trend has changed. Chinese automotive products are estimated to dominate the automotive market in Indonesia. The reason is because Chinese car manufacturers can market their products at low prices, and provide the equal technology and features as Japanese cars. In addition, the appearance of Chinese car products always following the trend, so they can compete with the design of European and Japanese cars.

In the middle of 2018, DFSK (DongFeng Sokon) became one of the Chinese car manufacturers who became newcomers to the Indonesian automotive industry. They introduce “Glory 580” as a 7-seater SUV that offers the modern design on the exterior and interior, and the most comprehensive feature and technology in automotive industry. DFSK collaborate with Agnez Monica as the brand ambassador of Glory 580 products, Agnez was selected because she reflects the personality of the product, that energetic and challenging, and also the product is expects to go international like Agnez Monica.

Firms believe that the affiliation of the brand with famous spokesperson will improve consumer’s perceptions and sales of their products (Till, Stanley, & Priluck, 2008). By using celebrity endorser or brand ambassador as a type of brand communication channel, celebrity acts as the brand’s spokesperson and certifies the brand’s claim and position by extending her personality, popularity, and status in the society. A celebrity endorser also using their field expertise to persuade their target audience. (Ogunsiji, 2012)

Customers may perceive the brand as having superior quality than others just because it has been endorsed by their favorite personality, and from that moment customers start to think that endorsement is one of the indicator of superior quality for another brand. Sometimes when the endorser get too popular, it may create negative perceptions to the brand. And the celebrity that

involve in multiple brand endorsement will create huge confusion in consumers' perception. (Goutam, 2013)

From the previous explanation, this study aims to intensify our understanding about the difference between country image and product image, as well as cognitive country image and affective country image. And it examines the different impacts of cognitive country image and affective country image on product image and purchase intention. Moreover, this study also analyze the drivers of success using celebrity endorser, such as; attitude toward the celebrity, attitude toward the brand, familiarity of the brand, and brand fit of the endorser and the brand.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Cognitive country image and product image***

The impact of country image on intention to purchase however is channeled through consumers' perceptions of the attributes of a particular product. Thus, there is a relationship between cognitive country image, product image. In particular, cognitive country image (the economic level and technological level of a country) is perceived to influence product image from specific country (Wang, Dongjin, Barnes, & Ahn, 2012).

H<sub>1</sub> : Cognitive country image influences product image of a country.

### ***2.2 Affective country image and product image***

Affection plays a crucial role in determining which beliefs are formed, how they are evaluated and how strongly they are weighted in the formation of preferences (Hoffman, 1986). When cognitive country image and affective country image are consistent, consumer affection may enhance information processing. When cognitive country image and affective country image are inconsistent, consumer affection may block out information processing (Schwarz & Clore, 1983).

H<sub>2</sub> : Affective country image influences product image of a country.

### ***2.3 Affective country image and purchase intention***

Based on previous research models (Wyer, Clore, Isbell, 1999) explain that a consumer can take action based on liking or affection (affection), and consumers can also do nothing based on components afeksi. This can occur based on the trust that consumers believe based on previous judgment or experience. This makes it very possible if consumers can make judgments based on the assessment of their feelings or based on attitudes toward the object being assessed. Then the components of affection are valued to play an important role in shaping consumer trust, how consumers evaluate, and provide ratings based on their preferences.

H<sub>3</sub> : Affective country image influences purchase intention.

### ***2.4 Product image and purchase intention***

When consumers have little knowledge about a country's product, they will depend more on their stereotypical beliefs about a country, or their cognitive country image, as a surrogate to infer product quality. And this condition will lead to purchase intention as a product image (Wang, et al., 2012).

H<sub>4</sub> : Product image influences purchase intention

### ***2.5 Attitude toward celebrity and purchase intention***

Pairing a well-liked celebrity with a brand can enhance brand attitudes through classical conditioning. Therefore, pairing the celebrity with the brand, through an endorsement, should cause consumers' feelings or assessments of the celebrity to transfer to the focal brand as a conditioned response (Till & Shimp, 1998) . This model proposes that if a celebrity is wellknown and recognizable and embodies symbolic properties, he or she adds meaning to the brand because consumers strive to integrate meanings from a celebrity to a brand.

H<sub>5</sub> : Attitude toward the celebrity influences purchase intention

### ***2.6 Attitude toward brand and purchase intention***

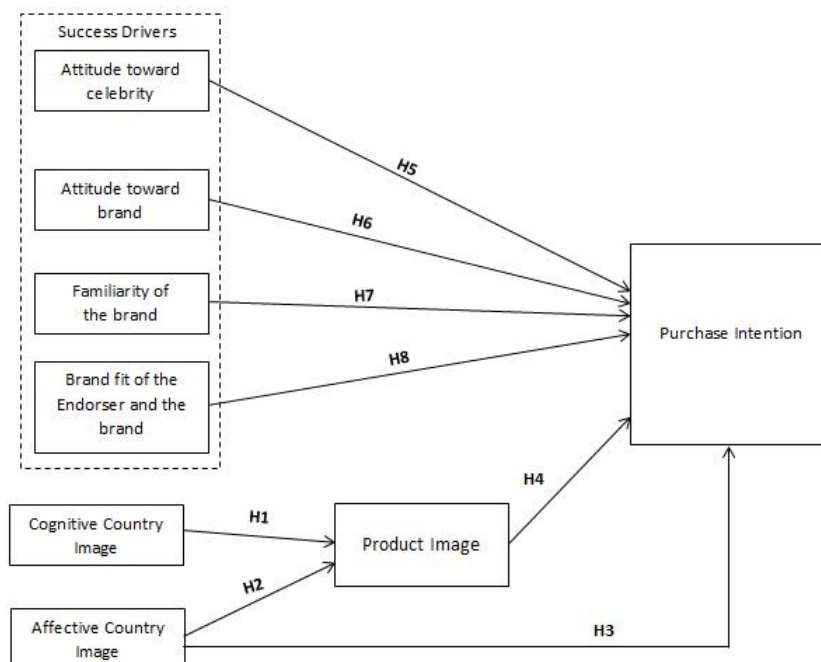
Customers can consider form reactions, or can also determine this reaction, depending on beliefs about the country needed by consumers. Affection components play an important role in building consumer trust, how brands evaluate consumers, and how consumers build preferences for products (Hoffman, 1986) .

H<sub>6</sub> : Attitude toward the brand has positive impact to purchase intention of products.

### ***2.7 Familiarity of brand and purchase intention***

Brand familiarity reflects the level of direct and indirect experiences with a brand that consumers have accumulated (Kent & Allen, 1994). Familiar brands can signal trust and tend to be favored by consumers for making brand judgments. Most consumers have easily accessible associative networks of familiar brands. (Holden & Vanhuele, 1999)

H<sub>7</sub> : Familiarity of the brand has positive impact to purchase intention of products.



***Figure 1: Research Framework***

### ***2.8 Brand fit of endorser and the brand, and purchase intention***

Previous research has identified a high level of brand fit as a driver of the success of brand alliances (Lafferty, Hult, & Goldsmith, 2004). A poor fit between the brand may trigger a causal or attributional search (Folkes, 1988). This poor fit also could evoke undesirable beliefs, judgments, or confusion (Simonin & Ruth, 1998)

H<sub>8</sub> : Brand fit of celebrity endorser and the brand has positive impact to purchase intention of products.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### ***3.1 Sampling and Data Collection***

Data were collected in Jakarta and area nearby, it is the country's Capital city of Indonesia. This city represent region with different level of modernization, westernization, and economic development. The research was undertaken with online survey via Qualtrics.com. In total 211 out of 265 questionnaires were completed, and those data were used for the final analysis. A profile of sample of respondents is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample profile**

|                           |         | N (%) |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|
| <b>Gender</b>             |         |       |
| Male                      | 129     | (61%) |
| Female                    | 82      | (39%) |
| <b>Age</b>                |         |       |
| Less than 25 years old    | 68      | (32%) |
| 25 – 34 years old         | 89      | (43%) |
| 35 – 44 years old         | 28      | (14%) |
| 45 – 54 years old         | 14 (6%) |       |
| More than 55 years old    | 12 (5%) |       |
| <b>Occupation</b>         |         |       |
| Scholar / College student | 32      | (16%) |
| Professionals             | 19      | (10%) |
| Private employees         | 86      | (42%) |
| Government employees      | 18 (5%) |       |
| Entrepreneur              | 31(15%) |       |
| Others                    | 25      | (12%) |
| <b>Outcome</b>            |         |       |
| < 2.000.000               | 25      | (11%) |

|                       |         |        |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|
| 2.000.001 – 4.000.000 | 72      | (34%)  |
| 4.000.001 – 6.000.000 | 63      | (31%)  |
| > 6.000.000           | 51(24%) |        |
| Having cars           |         |        |
| Do not have any cars  | 92      | (43%)  |
| Have 1 car            | 88      | (41%)  |
| Have 2 cars           | 22      | (11%)  |
| 3 cars or more        |         | 9 (5%) |

### 3.2 Measures

The research instrument was worded in Indonesian. To verify its reliability and validity status, this research was pre-tested with a group of graduate students at University of Indonesia in Jakarta.

Appropriate scales for the focal constructs were identified based on the literature, which in previous research have been generally found to be reliable and valid (Martin & Eroglu, 1993) (Nagashima, 1970) (Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994). A 5-item scale (“strongly disagree = 1” to “strongly agree = 5”) were used to measure the variable items. The questionnaire items for cognitive country image, affective country image, product image, and purchase intention was adopted from (Wang, Dongjin, Barnes, & Ahn, 2012), and items for attitude toward brand and celebrity, familiarity of the brand, and brand fit endorser and brand was adopted from (Erfgen, Sattler, & Villeda, 2016). The result from pre-test identified five questionnaire items have validity under 0,5. And, they were removed from the main test questionnaire with expectation the validity score will passed 0,5 with larger sample. The questionnaire consists of thirty eight items.

## 4. RESULTS

The two stages of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was applied o validate the research model and examine the research’s hypotheses. The data analysis performed using AMOS 22. As seen on Table 2, the model fit test showed the measurement of Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) = 0,751 ; Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index (AGFI) = 0,701 ; Comparative-Fit Index (CFI) = 0,815 ; Normed-Fit Index (NFI) = 0,703 ; CMIN/df = 2,105 ; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0,075.

**Table 2. Result of Measurement Model**

| Fit Indicators | Acceptance Level | Initial Measurement Model | Result       |
|----------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| GFI            | ≥ 0,9            | 0,804                     | Marginal Fit |
| CFI            | ≥ 0,9            | 0,879                     | Marginal Fit |
| CMIN/df        | > 3              | 1,703                     | Good Fit     |
| RMSEA          | ≤ 0,08           | 0,058                     | Good Fit     |

Therefore, the model should have factor loading  $\geq 0,5$ , as seen in Table 3, CI\_2, CI\_3, IMG\_2 and FAM\_4 has been removed because the estimate value should be at least 0,5.

**Table 3: Standardized Regression Weights**

| Measurement |          |            | Measurement |           |          |
|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Construct   | Items    | Estimate   | Construct   | Items     | Estimate |
| CI          | CI_1     | 0,571      | AttDFSK     | AttDFSK_1 | 0,719    |
|             | CI_4     | 0,560      |             | AttDFSK_2 | 0,676    |
|             | CI_5     | 0,582      |             | AttDFSK_3 | 0,646    |
| AI          | AI_1     | 0,506      |             | AttDFSK_4 | 0,582    |
|             | AI_2     | 0,775      | FIT         | FIT_1     | 0,914    |
|             | AI_3     | 0,732      |             | FIT_2     | 0,804    |
|             | AI_4     | 0,581      |             | FIT_3     | 0,575    |
| IMG         | IMG_1    | 0,787      |             | FIT_4     | 0,504    |
|             | IMG_3    | 0,727      | PI          | PI_1      | 0,725    |
|             | IMG_4    | 0,825      |             | PI_2      | 0,527    |
|             | IMG_5    | 0,515      |             | PI_3      | 0,885    |
|             | AttCeleb | AttCeleb_1 |             | 0,721     | PI_4     |
| AttCeleb_2  |          | 0,790      |             | PIC_1     | 0,831    |
| AttCeleb_3  |          | 0,661      | PIC_2       | 0,591     |          |
| AttCeleb_4  |          | 0,666      | PIC_3       | 0,838     |          |
|             |          |            | PIC_4       | 0,658     |          |
| FAM         | FAM_1    | 0,736      |             |           |          |
|             | FAM_2    | 0,697      |             |           |          |
|             | FAM_3    | 0,628      |             |           |          |

The results in Table 4 conducted the results of reliability, validity, and discriminant validity. Composite Reliability (CR) in this study ranged from 0,592 to 0,835. Average variance extracted (AVE), should be greater than 0,5 (Fornell & Larcker F, 1981), which is AVE in this research have one variable need to revisited, CI (AVE = 0,469). Therefore, one of the variables still not passed the convergent validity.

**Table 4. Analysis of CR, AVE, and discriminant validity**

|       | CR    | AVE   | MSV   | MaxR(H) | PIC   | CI    | AI    | FAM   | DFSK  | FIT   | CELEB | IMG   | PI    |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| PIC   | 0,824 | 0,544 | 0,504 | 0,855   | 0,737 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| CI    | 0,592 | 0,469 | 0,629 | 0,592   | 0,609 | 0,571 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| AI    | 0,748 | 0,521 | 0,445 | 0,778   | 0,526 | 0,667 | 0,658 |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| FAM   | 0,729 | 0,527 | 0,102 | 0,735   | 0,320 | 0,234 | 0,103 | 0,788 |       |       |       |       |       |
| DFSK  | 0,752 | 0,502 | 0,342 | 0,758   | 0,520 | 0,498 | 0,400 | 0,248 | 0,658 |       |       |       |       |
| FIT   | 0,802 | 0,517 | 0,278 | 0,886   | 0,179 | 0,225 | 0,272 | 0,050 | 0,527 | 0,719 |       |       |       |
| CELEB | 0,803 | 0,506 | 0,138 | 0,812   | 0,043 | 0,231 | 0,219 | 0,062 | 0,272 | 0,371 | 0,711 |       |       |
| IMG   | 0,810 | 0,523 | 0,430 | 0,789   | 0,710 | 0,793 | 0,572 | 0,118 | 0,497 | 0,160 | 0,033 | 0,796 |       |
| PI    | 0,835 | 0,566 | 0,342 | 0,878   | 0,449 | 0,472 | 0,289 | 0,255 | 0,585 | 0,397 | 0,232 | 0,249 | 0,753 |

The results of the structural model and hypotheses tested are shown in Table 5. There are six hypotheses : H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>4</sub>, H<sub>6</sub>, H<sub>7</sub> and H<sub>8</sub> were supported. And others two hypotheses were not supported : H<sub>3</sub>, and H<sub>5</sub>. The affective country image does not have significant impact to purchase

intention, because it supposed to mediated by product image. Attitude toward celebrity also does not have significant impact to purchase intention, so that H<sub>5</sub> is not supported. The detailed relationship between variables are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of Standardized Estimates of Structural Model

| Hypotheses     | Hypothesized Path | Standardized Estimate | P-Value | Result        |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| H <sub>1</sub> | CI □ IMG          | 0,986                 | ***     | Supported     |
| H <sub>2</sub> | AI □ IMG          | 0,522                 | ***     | Supported     |
| H <sub>3</sub> | AI □ PI           | 0,126                 | 0,134   | Not supported |
| H <sub>4</sub> | IMG □ PI          | 0,182                 | 0,001   | Supported     |
| H <sub>5</sub> | AttCeleb □ PI     | 0,049                 | 0,432   | Not supported |
| H <sub>6</sub> | AttDFSK □ PI      | 0,367                 | ***     | Supported     |
| H <sub>7</sub> | FAM □ PI          | 0,232                 | 0,001   | Supported     |
| H <sub>8</sub> | FIT □ PI          | 0,147                 | 0,046   | Supported     |

Notes : one-tailed significant testing, \*\*\* : P ≤ 0,01

CI : cognitive country image, AI : affective country image, IMG : product image, AttCeleb : attitude toward celebrity, AttDFSK : attitude toward brand DFSK Glory 580, FAM : familiarity of the brand, FIT : brand fit the celebrity and the brand itself, PI : purchase intention.

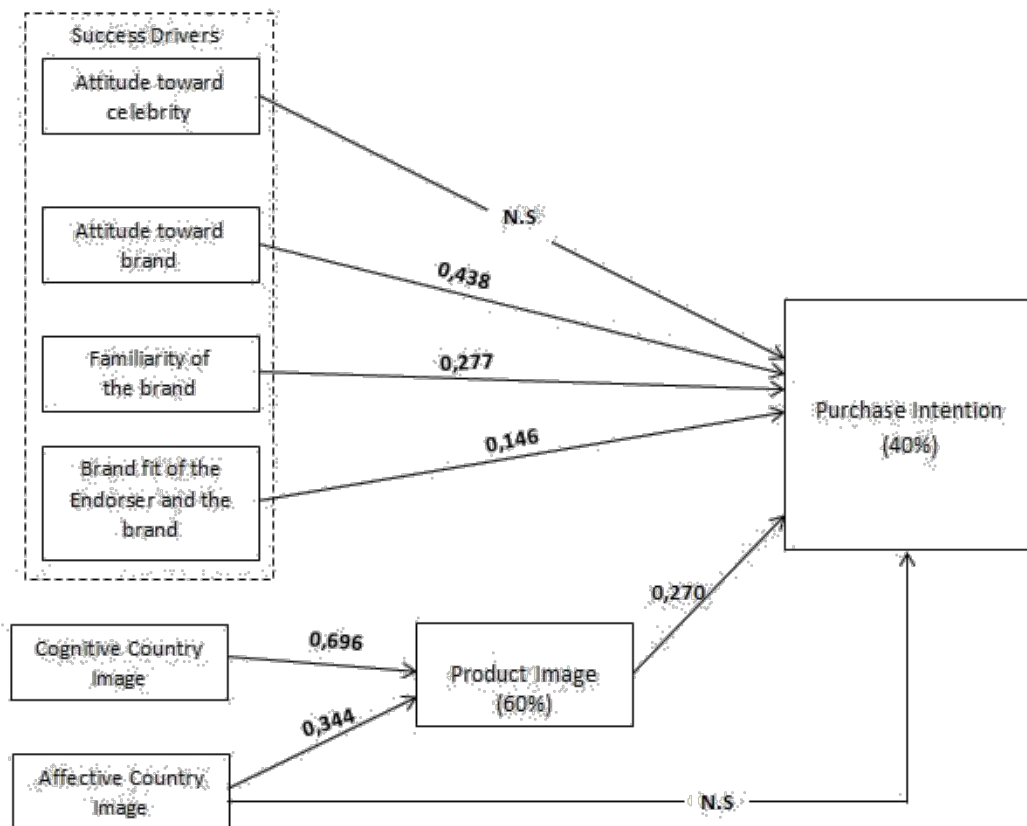


Figure 2: Analysis results



## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research investigate the effect of the success driver of the brand that use celebrity endorser strategy, cognitive and affective country image of China on purchase intention of DFSK Glory 580 product in Indonesia, especially Jakarta greater area. The results from this study shown that 6 out of 8 hypotheses are accepted. The explanations are as follows :

The cognitive country image of China such as technological and economical conditions of the country have significant relation with their product image (H1). In line with previous explanation, the affective country image of China does have significant relation with their product image (H2). But, this study shows that consumer's affection of a country, especially China does not affected directly to purchase intention of the product (H3). But maybe in a future research, when it comes to the level of technology updated and the economical conditions, related to cognitive country image will have direct impact to purchase intention. This study reveal the similar results between this study and the previous one from (Schwarz & Clore, 1983), that consumers affection may block the information of the products. Therefore, the product image of the country have significant effect to consumers purchase intention, it indicates that consumers still consider the product country origin when before they purchase something, especially vehicles (H4).

From the success driver of celebrity endorser strategy used by DFSK, this study shows that the attitude of consumers toward the celebrity does not have significant impact towards the intention to purchase the vehicles (H5). But, the attitude of consumers toward the brand itself, DFSK Glory 580 have significant impact to consumers intention to buy vehicles (H6). Brand familiarity from consumers also has significant impact related to the purchase intention to the product itself (H7). And, the brand fit of the brand and the celebrity does have significant impact to consumers purchase intention to vehicle product (H8). This results indicates that the use of celebrity endorser on a vehicle product might be an effective strategy to increase the number of sales. But the attitude of consumers toward the celebrity itself does not have significant impact to purchase intention.

From the discussions above, this study concludes that the celebrity endorser strategy that used by DFSK does have significant impact to the intentions of purchasing the vehicle from consumers. The purchase intention of the product will affected by consumers attitude toward brand, consumers familiarity of the brand, and also the brand fit of the endorser and the brand itself. This study also concludes that both of two types of country image, the cognitive and affective country image does have significant effect to the product image and purchase intention, but the affective country image does not have direct impact to purchase intention. At the end, the company especially car manufacturers should focus on creating consumers knowledge and interest toward their products, and also educating the consumers about the competitive advantage of the products, so that they would change their point of view towards Chinese car manufacturers.

## 6. LIMITATIION

This research explores factors which influence consumers intention to purchase an automotive product, DFSK Glory 580. The proposed hypotheses help to understand the impact of country image, product image, attitude consumer toward the brand, attitude consumer toward the celebrity endorser, familiarity of the brand, and the brand fit of brand and the celeb on intention to purchase a car. The results confirmed that intention to purchase mediated by the product image. The research can be used to help understanding what important factors should be considered when creating strategy to increase the number of sales of the vehicles, especially in Indonesia.

This study has several limitations. First, considering the respondents' demographic distribution, they may not represent all potential customers in Indonesia, because their participation was

voluntary and time limitation to collecting data. Second, this research studied the purchase intention of a vehicle, for the specific brand DFSK model Glory 580, so the perception of the vehicle can be widely different among the respondents. And also the object of the study was Agnez Monica, as the celebrity endorser for DFSK Glory 580 product. Third, the future research can add or using different variety of factors or theory which influencing the intention of purchasing a automotive product, especially vehicle. And last, using the same research method may shows different result of hypotheses in different country, because the matter of cultural differences, trends, or social economics status.

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