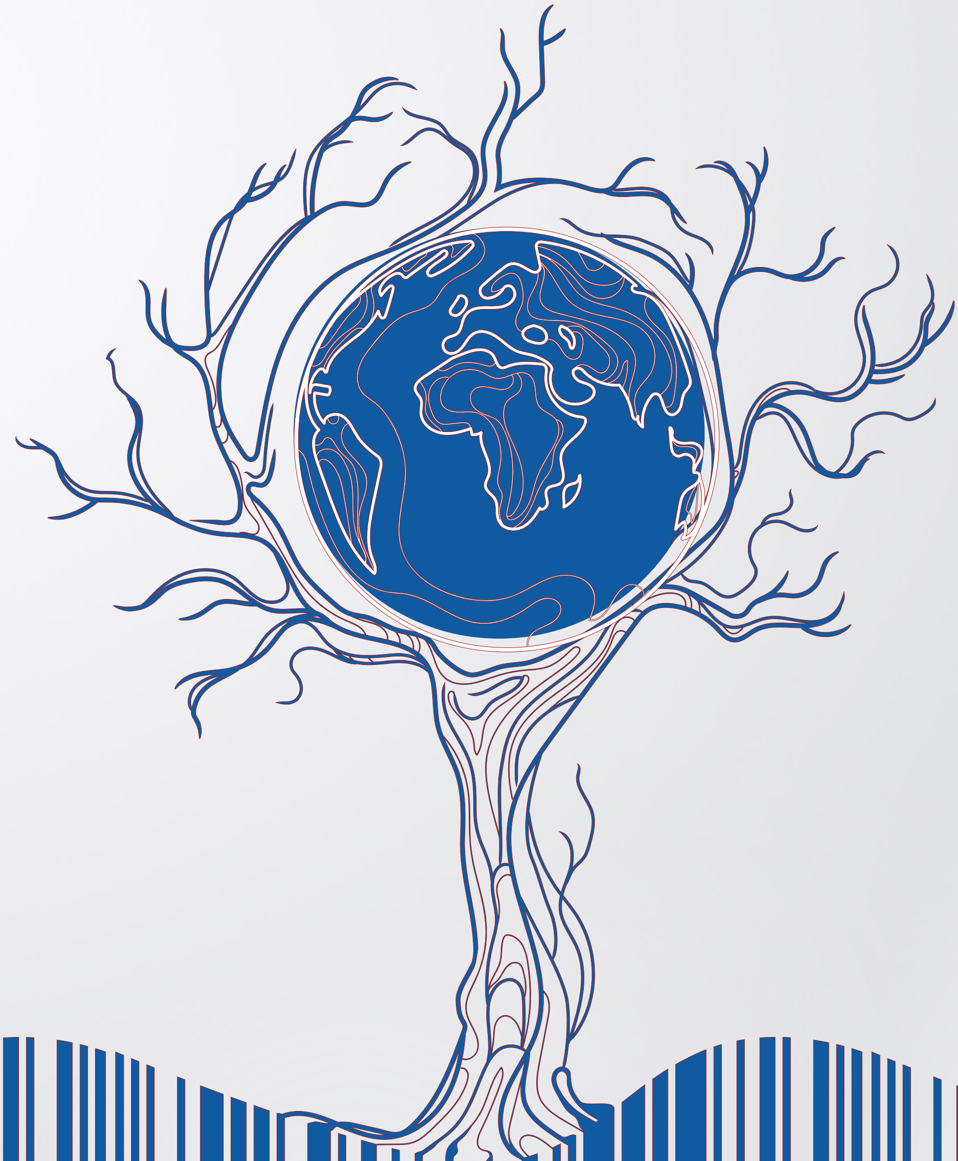
Country of Origin Effects

on Service Evaluation

Edited by
Khalid I. Al-Sulaiti
Ibrahim K. Al-Sulaiti



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دار نشر جامعة قطر
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دار نشر جامعة قطر: نحن دار نشر جامعية غير ربحية، تأسست عام 2018، تعمل على تعزيز ونشر الكتب والبحوث المحكَّمة في العديد من مجالات المعرفة. تسعى الدار إلى أن تصبح رائدة في نشر الكتب والمجلات العلمية، وتهدف إلى دعم رؤية جامعة قطر نحو التميّز في البحث والتعليم في دولة قطر وخارجها.

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Contents

Foreword

In the recent era, scholars have paid attention to examine the various issues that affect brands based on country-of-origin. This edited book describes the interplay between service evaluation and country-of-origin effect related to specific innovative services. The COE impact also refers to nationality bias or the 'Made-in' image, which explains the psychological influence that, describes how customers' perception, attitude or purchase decisions can be affected by innovative services labelled with country-of-origin effect. It shows the brand's origin, design, manufacturing or related shapes of service originated from a product value-creation associated with a specific country of origin effect. The scientific body of the COO effect literature indicates that consumers and stakeholders make inferences about service evaluation, and attributes of the brands offering innovative service quality. Service evaluation and COE cue stimulate global quality evaluation of services and products, their performance, and specific characteristics. Consumers consider innovative features based on service quality evaluation and the origin of the country manufacturing such brands. Thereby, service quality, brand attributes and the COO can influence consumers' attitudes, perceptions and purchase decisions beyond their conscious control.

Service evaluation is an important process in the service industry, especially when evaluating the effectiveness and impact of innovative services to meet customer satisfaction. With the ever-changing needs and expectations of the modern service industry, customers, travelers, and everyday businesses must strive to deliver unique and breakthrough services that persistently exceed customer expectations. However, in order to maintain customer loyalty, the influence of the country-of-origin (COO) effect must be addressed. The COO impact refers to the influence of the country-of-origin on consumers' cognition and service evaluation of a specific service. Consumers often associate certain countries with specific attributes, expertise and quality standards in the service industry, such as tourism and leisure sectors. These preconceived notions can significantly influence consumers' evaluation of innovative services. When consumers evaluate innovative services, their perception of the country-of-origin influence on service evaluations is critical, as it plays an important role in forming initial judgments about service outcomes. When service is associated with a country known for excellence in the tourism and leisure industry, consumers are likely to have positive perceptions and high expectations about service quality. For example, a luxury hotel brand from a country known for its hospitality and attention to detail might be perceived as offering exceptional quality of service. On the other hand, consumers may be skeptical or lower their expectations if the quality of service associated with origin needs a reputation for excellence in a particular area.

Hence, businesses in service industries such as leisure, travel and hospitality must adopt a strategic approach to navigate the COO effect and enhance the perception and evaluation of innovative offerings and quality service. First, firms can take advantage of the positive COO effect by emphasizing the country's reputation and expertise in service quality and marketing efforts. It can be achieved by emphasizing the traditions and excellence of advertising campaigns associated with the country-of-origin effect. Second, collaborations and partnerships with established local entities can also improve the perceived quality of innovative services. By collaborating with renowned experts or local industry leaders, businesses can take advantage of the positive COO effect and build trust and credibility among consumers through high-quality service. Additionally, managing customer expectations is critical to overcoming potential COO negativity. Transparent communication about the unique features, benefits and value proposition of innovative services helps to shift the focus from the country-of-origin to the value customers will receive. Regardless of the influence of the COO, service industry organizations must clearly communicate how their innovative services meet and exceed customer expectations.

This edited book has covered the various aspects that interplay between consumers' perceived services quality evaluation, trust, value and customers' intention to purchase decisions based on the country-of-origin effect that manufactures specific brand offer quality services. This work also portrays the research covering international aspects with the COO effect and service evaluation. For instance, Qatari consumers will prefer service quality with the country-of-origin, and Japanese customers' interests would remain on brands service quality with the image of Made-in-Japan. Similarly, American consumers will bring the attribute in their minds that come from the USA, and French brands will show the impression of France. The findings of this edited book show that the COO and producers perceived image significantly affect consumers' decision-making to purchase a specific service. This purchase decision influence is the effect of the COO associated with the brands service quality.

Hence, the positive image of COE increases consumers' purchase decisions related to specific services/ brands. The country-of-origin research focuses on different problems linking COE with various international marketing variables, such as consumers' demographics, nationality, service quality, performance evaluation, brand influence, price, brands quality attributes, technology sophistication, features of the brands, advertising image, consumers' attitudes, perceptions and their purchasing behavior. Therefore, this edited book is one of the few and rare books that discuss various challenges related to the country-of-origin effect and fills the identified literature gaps by providing scientific contributions to the literature related to service evaluation. Globally, well-known international authors have contributed their state-of-the-art book chapters that provide new knowledge on service evaluation and brands image from a country-of-origin perspective. The authors have vast research backgrounds and specializations in this field, enriched with diverse cultural backgrounds. This book offers a real addition to the scientific knowledge on service evaluation, and COO useful for decision-makers, and exhibits that international investigators' presented holistic and innovative models that investigated various variables' of international marketing and service evaluation based on country-of-origin effects. The generalizability of the research offers helpful insights and future research direction in different regions worldwide.

1

Chapter One

Effects of Country-of-origin on Consumer Responses to CSR by Multinational Enterprises in Asia

C. Min Han

Effects of Country-of-origin on Consumer Responses to CSR by Multinational Enterprises in Asia

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1. Introduction

In recent years, many academicians have investigated multinational enterprises (MNEs) with respect to their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in foreign countries including emerging markets (Hah & Freeman, 2014; Sharma, 2019; Han, et al., 2022). Existing literature suggests that CSR activities have beneficial effects on MNEs in their foreign operations (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Jamali & Karam, 2018). In particular, many studies have suggested that CSR activities are important to MNEs in order to achieve business legitimacy in such countries (Hah & Freeman, 2014; Han, et al., 2019; Jamali, 2010). The importance of obtaining local legitimacy, especially in developing countries, has also been stressed in the literature on international business.

International business literature indicates that an MNE has a liability of foreignness not shared by local firms (Hah & Freeman, 2014; Han, 2015). As a result, to be successful in foreign markets, it needs to secure legitimacy for its local operations — and particularly at a higher level in developing countries than domestic firms (Park, et al., 2014; Han, et al., 2019). Specifically, foreign multinationals need to overcome the dual liabilities of situational uncertainty and institutional differences (Tan & Wang, 2011; Han, et al., 2019). Furthermore, their operations are being scrutinized by many global stakeholders including many non-governmental organizations, environmentalists, international organizations, and global media agencies (Detomassi, 2007; Yunis, et al., 2018; Han et al., 2022).

Despite many studies conducted on the issue of CSR by MNEs, there have been limited efforts to investigate how CSR effects local consumers (Han, et al., 2022). A firm's need to obtain local legitimacy can differ among MNEs from different countries of origin. Magnusson et al. (2015) found that MNEs from developing countries obtained greater positive effects from CSR than MNEs from developed countries. Despite this possibility, we still have inadequate knowledge about the relationships between country of origin and CSR effects, particularly in emerging countries (Han et al., 2019). Thus, we need to review what has been studied on this issue, discuss what has been found, and suggest what needs to be explored in the future.

This chapter addresses how country of origin can affect consumer responses to CSR activities by MNEs and consumer evaluations of firms and brands in Asia ex-Japan. , which refers to countries based on economic reigns out of Japan. Firstly, we will first discuss why country of origin can affect consumer responses to CSR by MNEs, both in more developed areas in East Asia (Korea and China) and in less-developed areas in Southeast Asia, and then introduce empirical findings from relevant studies and their implications. Specifically, we will address the following relationships for MNEs:

1. Country of origin and consumer expectations of CSR from MNEs.
2. Country of origin and CSR effects on local consumers.
3. Country of origin and CSR effects in less-developed Asia.

Our reviews are expected to contribute to both CSR and country-of-origin literature. First, we can contribute to CSR literature by expanding its geographical horizon to the underdeveloped regions of Asia, investigating how consumers perceive and respond to CSR activities by MNEs in emerging countries in Asia. As Han et al. (2019) noted, literature is still not clear about CSR effects on consumers in emerging countries in Asia. In addition, we can contribute to international marketing literature by examining the role of country image in consumer responses to CSR by MNEs, thus validating country-of-origin effects on consumer evaluations of foreign objects, as suggested by prior studies (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2005; Han, 2020).

As for managerial implications, our investigation can shed light on the effectiveness of CSR activities for MNEs, especially, in Asia ex-Japan, in their attempt to obtain legitimacy for local operations and to build company and brand reputations. We can also suggest which MNEs are likely to benefit from CSR activities based on their country of origin.

2. Literature on CSR and MNES

CSR is a broad concept that can take many forms depending on the company and industry. Typically, it is defined in terms of a social obligation (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1979; Han, 2015). Bowen (1953) defined CSR as the obligation "*to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society* (p. 6)."

Carroll (1979) followed Bowen's view of CSR as a social obligation and proposed a hierarchical model, the "Pyramid of CSR," which defines four types of corporate responsibilities: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. Economic responsibilities are the fundamental responsibilities of firm to produce goods and services economically and to make a profit for its shareholders. Legal responsibilities include legal compliance and playing by the rules. Ethical responsibilities are activities that societal members expect of a business beyond its legal obligations. And, finally, philanthropic responsibilities encompass corporate actions promoting the well-being of individuals and societies.

CSR literature indicates that CSR is effective in eliciting positive consumer responses towards firms and their brands. CSR can have positive impacts on corporate image and reputation (Ko, et al., 2013; Han et al., 2019), and can lead consumers' favorable dispositions towards the firm and its brand (Ramesh, et al., 2019; Du, et al., 2010). Ultimately, an improved company image can lead to favorable consumer behavioral responses (Ramesh, et al., 2019; Han, et al., 2019). Similarly, literature suggests that these positive effects can occur to MNEs in developing countries for their CSR activities (Han et al., 2019).

As we discussed, MNEs can secure legitimacy for their businesses through CSR activities in foreign markets (Hah & Freeman, 2014; Han. et al., 2019; Yang & Rivers, 2009). International business theories indicate that when a firm goes abroad, in comparison to local firms, it incurs an additional liability due to its foreignness (Hah & Freeman, 2014; Han, 2015). Because of this disadvantage, the firm needs to secure legitimacy in these foreign markets. This issue can be explained with institutional theory and stakeholder theory.

Institutional theory suggests that a firm can secure legitimacy by achieving isomorphism with local customs and social norms (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Suchman (1995) argues that such legitimacy can function as "insurance" against possible anisomorphic corporate behavior in the future.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggests three types of corporate isomorphism: coercive isomorphism with written local laws and norms, mimetic isomorphism with exemplary local customs, and voluntary normative isomorphism with various local customs. Scholars have claimed that it is necessary for MNEs to perform CSR activities to achieve these types of isomorphism, and therefore to acquire legitimacy (Hah & Freeman, 2014).

As noted, research has suggested that foreign firms have a greater need for local legitimacy than their local equivalents, due to local country and institutional differences (Han, et al., 2019; Tan and Wang, 2011). In other words, one would expect a greater need for CSR efforts among foreign multinationals than domestic firms (Gifford et al., 2010; Park et al., 2014; Han, 2015). Foreign firms must achieve isomorphism to overcome institutional differences and the liability of foreignness (Yang & Rivers, 2009; Laudal, 2011; Salomon & Wu, 2012).

Stakeholder theory also emphasizes the need to obtain legitimacy with CSR initiatives. This theory suggests that a firm needs to build relationships and create value for its stakeholders (Sundaram and Inkpen, 2004). By doing so, firms can avoid penalties such as legal actions, consumer boycotts, and negative publicity from stakeholders (Cordeiro & Tewari, 2015). Other benefits of satisfactory stakeholder relationships include gains in corporate reputation, human talent, and revenue (Delma & Toffel, 2011).

MNEs are being scrutinized, especially for their operation in developing countries, by various international pressure groups and activists (Detomassi, 2007; Yunis, et al., 2018). For example, MNEs are criticized for exploiting weak regulatory frameworks in developing countries (Marsden, 2000; Yunis, et al., 2018). Furthermore, stakeholder theory indicates that consumers demand more CSR from firms which enjoy more influence and visibility, such as MNEs (Etzion, 2007; Darnall et al., 2010). Thus, MNEs are often required to engage in greater CSR activities than their domestic counterparts.

3. Country of Origin and Consumer Expectations of CSR from MNEs

As we discussed above, this paper addresses country-of-origin effects on how consumers perceive CSR by MNEs with a focus on Asian emerging markets. First, we discuss how country of origin can affect consumer expectations of CSR from MNEs

Marketing and customer satisfaction literature defines consumer expectations as desires or wants of consumers (Cadotte, et al., 1987; Parasuraman, et al., 1988). This expectation represents what firms "should" offer (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Han, 2015), serving as the benchmarks in performance evaluations of products and services (Cadotte, et al., 1987; Boulding, et al., 1993). Similarly, consumer expectation of CSR represents the level of responsibility a firm ought to carry out (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Han, 2015). This can serve as a benchmark point to consumers in evaluations of ethical and unethical corporate behaviors. Consumers would evaluate CSR activities and the firm positively when they observe CSR activities equal to, or above the expected level.

3.1. Domestic vs Foreign Firms in CSR expectations

First, consumer expectations for CSR can differ between domestic and foreign firms. With globalization, MNEs have expanded their range and influence on human lives, which has changed perceptions of MNEs by consumers, both positively and negatively. Positively, MNEs contribute to local economic development, job creation, and higher standards of living. Negatively, consumers can be wary of MNEs harming consumers, workers, and the environment for their profits and efforts at market dominance. CSR scholars argue that consumers throughout the world, and especially in developing countries, may have strong expectations for CSR from MNEs because of their possible harmful effects of environmental degradation and market domination (Holt et al., 2004; Kolk et al., 2008). In fact, consumers tend to expect greater CSR commitment from global firms than from domestic firms (Holt et al., 2004; Han, 2015). Studies also report that MNEs actually carry out a higher level of CSR activities than domestic firms. This tendency was reported by Chambers et al. (2003) in a seven-country study in Asia and by Kolk et al. (2010) in China. Kolk et al. (2010) also found that MNEs perform a similar level of CSR activities in China as the one that they do in their home countries.

3.1.1. Consumer expectations of CSR between domestic and foreign firms in Korea:

A study by Han (2015) focusing on Korean consumers shows a similar nature to CSR expectations. This study surveyed Korean consumers' expectations of CSR from Korean and European automobile firms. The study examined Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Volvo, and Peugeot for European firms and Hyundai and Kia for Korean firms. Consumer expectations of CSR were measured in the four CSR activities suggested by (Carroll, 1979). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Consumer expectations of CSR activities between foreign and domestic firms (Han, 2015)

CSR activities	Differences (t-values)	Expected levels of CSR	
		Local firms	Foreign firms
Economic CSR	**2.36***	**4.70**	**4.97**
1. Processing customer complaints	2.53*	4.49	4.85
2. Staying competitive	2.03*	4.79	5.06
3. Producing quality products	2.46*	4.71	5.02
4. Providing quality services	0.93	4.84	4.96
Legal CSR	**4.43***	**4.13**	**4.57**
1. Contract obligations	0.52	4.49	4.49
2. Labor standards	1.93*	4.26	4.50
3. Hiring and employment	0.98	4.39	4.53
4. Diversity	6.68*	3.78	4.65
5. Discrimination	6.69*	3.81	4.69
Ethical CSR	**4.48***	**4.31**	**4.75**
1. Having a code of conduct	1.84*	4.64	4.89
2. Recognized as a trustworthy company	3.19*	4.12	4.45
3. Providing full and accurate information	3.81*	4.09	4.56
4. Having fairness	6.02*	4.38	5.09

Philanthropic CSR	**-0.91**	**4.06**	**3.95**
1. Meeting societal expectation	0.36	3.99	4.03
2. Involvement by employees	-1.15	4.08	3.93
3. Charities	-1.70	4.12	3.89

Scale: 1 (low) – 7 (high), * $p < .05$

The t-test results shown in Table 1 indicate that CSR expectations from European firms were higher in most of the CSR activities examined than those from Korean firms. The differences between Korean and European firms were significant at the level of .05 in economic CSR (4.708 vs. 4.975), legal CSR (4.138 vs. 4.573), and ethical CSR (4.316 vs. 4.753). However, the study did not find a significant difference in philanthropic CSR from Korean and European firms. Overall, these results suggest that consumers in Korea expect greater CSR efforts from MNEs than from domestic firms.

3.2. CSR expectations for MNEs from Different Countries of Origin

Another matter of interest to academics and practitioners is the way in which CSR expectations can differ among MNEs depending on their countries of origin. Country-of-origin literature suggests that consumer perceptions of a country can influence the image of MNEs from that country (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2005; Han et al., 2019). In other words, consumer assessments of the local subsidiaries of MNEs may be influenced by their attitudes towards a particular MNE's country of origin. Specifically, consumers could develop a negative view of MNEs from countries with unfavorable images. In this case, consumers may expect that such firms need to compensate for their country's unfavorable image with high levels of CSR activities.

Literature on consumer preference suggests that people often engage in "compensatory" decision-making by weighing all attributes of the alternatives and allowing for positive attributes to compensate for the negatives (Dieckmann et al., 2009). Likewise, consumers may accept MNEs from unfavorable countries only with compensatory CSR activities.

3.2.1. Country image and consumer expectations of CSR by MNEs in Korea:

Han (2015) examined how country image affects the consumer expectations of CSR by European MNEs in Korea. The study found a significant inverse relationship between the favorableness of country image and CSR expectations with Korean consumers. The investigation attempted to measure ethnocentric expectations of CSR for MNEs by assessing the extent of additional CSR efforts expected of European firms compared to their domestic counterparts, and found that consumers tend to expect that the MNE with an unfavorable country image should engage in additional compensatory CSR activities. In this investigation, Han (2015) statistically controlled for the effect of consumers' personal values of self-transcendence, that is, values which transcend self-interests for others' well-being. Literature indicates that the value of self-transcendence is strongly correlated with consumer expectations of CSR (Torelli et al., 2012; Han, 2015). This finding, together with the finding that consumers have ethnocentric expectations of CSR from firms with a foreign origin, imply that country of origin can affect consumer expectations of CSR for MNEs.

4. Country of Origin and CSR Effects on Local Consumers

4.1. Domestic vs Foreign Firms in CSR Effects on Consumers

We discussed that a foreign firm could overcome the liability of foreignness by securing a higher level of legitimacy than local firms (Hah & Freeman, 2014; Han et al., 2019). We also discussed the tendency for consumers to show ethnocentric expectations of CSR by MNEs compared to expectations of CSR by domestic firms (Park et al., 2014; Han, 2015). Following these discussions, a question arises as to how effective CSR is in influencing consumer evaluations of MNEs compared to domestic firms.

4.1.1. Arguments for positive CSR effects for MNEs:

Literature suggests that CSR can have positive effects on consumer perceptions of firms and their products. Studies have found that CSR activities can have positive impacts on a firm's image and its reputation (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Ko, et al., 2013; Han, et al., 2019) and consumer goodwill towards the brand (Ramesh at al., 2019). Studies have also suggested that CSR can create favorable perceptions of a company including company loyalty (Du, et al., 2010), company trust (Butt, et al., 2019: Lin, et al., 2011), and consumer identification with the company and brand (Lichtenstein, et al., 2004; He & Li, 2010). These effects are expected for MNEs as well.

Also, past studies have consistently shown that CSR can affect brand purchases and repurchases. Specifically, studies have found that CSR positively affects consumers' purchase intentions (Aksak, et al., 2016; Berens, et al., 2005; Butt, et al., 2019), brand loyalty (Fatma & Rahman, 2016; Moon, et al., 2015), brand advocacy (Xie, et al., 2019), brand trust (Butt, et al., 2019), brand identification (Bhattacharya, et al., 2009; He & Li, 2010), and customer satisfaction (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). Similarly, CSR can have positive effects on consumer purchases for MNEs.

Another argument put forward for the positive effects of CSR on consumer perceptions of MNEs and their products concerns consumer expectation of CSR for MNEs. As we discussed, expectations of ethical behavior may be used by consumers as benchmarks in evaluations of a firm and its products (Parasuraman et al., 1988). If a firm has met their expectations of CSR activities, they will evaluate it positively. As such, CSR activities can also positively affect consumer perceptions of MNEs. In particular, CSR activities should help an MNE to obtain local legitimacy and either to garner the image of a domestic entity or, at least, to mitigate its foreign image. If the firm fails to meet the levels of CSR expected by local consumers, it may not succeed in gaining acceptance by local consumers and stakeholders.

4.1.2. Consumers' attribution bias against MNEs:

A counter argument can be advanced that CSR may not be equally effective for MNEs. Literature suggests that local consumers may exhibit ethnocentric dispositions towards CSR activities between domestic and foreign firms. In theory, they may show "intergroup attributional biases" in evaluating CSR activities by foreign firms (Crilly et al., 2016). Attribution theory describes how people derive causal explanations for events (Nisbett, 1971; Hewstone, 1990). Intergroup attribution refers to the way in which individuals explain the behavior of members of an in-group (with which they identify) and an out-group (with which they do not identify) (Nisbett, 1971; Pettigrew, 1979; Hewstone, 1990).

Attribution theory proposes that such causal explanations are often ethnocentric, i.e., people tend to view a positive activity by an out-group member as being the result of situational factors, as opposed to the same activity by an in-group member (Nisbett, 1971; Hewstone, 1990; Crilly et al., 2016). Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979) also suggests that people are motivated to look for negative aspects of an out-group in order to enhance their own self-concept. Social identity can affect individuals' intergroup behavior. As a result, local consumers can practice ethnocentric attribution, that is, they can undervalue positive behavior by foreign firms.

4.1.3. CSR effects for domestic vs. foreign firms in Korea:

Han et al. (2019) examined whether CSR activities would have different degree of effects on consumers between foreign and domestic firms. Han et al. (2019) empirically investigated Korean consumer responses towards corporate philanthropy, a major type of CSR, by European, Japanese, and domestic firms. Specifically, the study compared the effects of philanthropic activities between foreign and local firms in order to test for attributional biases that may occur between in-group and out-group firms. In addition, it compared the effects of philanthropic activities by Japanese (high animosity) and European (low animosity) firms. Evidence suggests that Koreans tend to show strong animosity towards Japan because of their historical and political conflicts (Han et al., 2019).

This study measured CSR effects with measurement items frequently utilized in past studies. It first assessed consumer evaluations of the firm's commitment to CSR activities (Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Turker, 2008). The study also measured consumers' image of the firm and intentions to purchase its brands. On-line surveys were carried out with Korean millennial consumers between 25 and 39 years old (N = 331). The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: CSR evaluations, company image, and purchase intent between foreign and domestic firms (Han et al., 2019)

	Japanese firms (J) (N=112)	European firms (E) (N=111)	Local firms (L) (N=108)	Mean differences		
				J – E	J – L	E – L
CSR evaluation	5.613 (0.104)	5.259 (0.104)	5.214 (0.106)	0.354* (0.147)	0.399** (0.148)	0.045 (0.148)
Company image	5.423 (0.071)	5.068 (0.071)	5.051 (0.072)	0.355** (0.100)	.372** (.101)	0.017 (0.101)
Purchase intent	5.285 (0.093)	4.828 (0.093)	4.908 (0.094)	0.457** (0.132)	0.377** (0.132)	-0.080 (0.133)

Scale: 1(low) – 7(high), $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$

The study compared CSR effects among the three countries of origin. For this purpose, it calculated marginal means for each country, adjusted for the gender and age factors. The results are presented in Table 2 with marginal means and their differences among the countries. The marginal means shown in Table 2 reveal that CSR activities had greater effects on consumers for Japanese firms than for local and European firms. The differences in marginal means on all three measures of CSR evaluation, company image, and purchase intentions were all significant between Japanese and local firms (J – L) and between Japanese and European firms (J – E). But, on the other hand, no significant differences in marginal means were found between European and local firms (E – L) for all three measures of CSR effects.

This study, first of all, did not find the existence of an ethnocentric attributional bias between domestic and foreign firms as to consumer evaluations of CSR activities. On the contrary, CSR effects were weaker for domestic firms than for Japanese firms. This finding suggests that CSR is equally effective on consumers between domestic and European firms (low animosity). In addition, CSR was found to be more effective for Japanese firms (high animosity). This result indicates that CSR can create more positive consumer effects on MNEs from a country with strong animosity. CSR showed greater effects for Japanese firms (high animosity) than for European firms (low animosity) on all three measures of CSR evaluation, company image, and purchase intentions. These findings imply that when a firm is originated from a country of strong animosity, CSR activities can help the firm achieve favorable consumer perceptions and obtain local legitimacy for their business.

4.2. CSR Effects on Company Animosity for MNEs

As we discussed, foreign MNEs are motivated to conduct CSR activities in foreign countries for the purpose of securing local legitimacy (Hah & Freeman 2014; Yang & Rivers, 2009; Han et al., 2019). Both stakeholder and institutional theorists concur on this contention. MNEs can secure the legitimacy of their foreign businesses by satisfying the demands and expectations of local stakeholders and achieving institutional isomorphism in a local society.

We discussed that local consumers show an ethnocentric tendency of expecting greater CSR from MNEs in comparison with local firms (Holt et al., 2004; Han, 2015). If they think such a firm meets their ethnocentric expectations of CSR activities, they will be positively disposed towards the firm. Thus, CSR activities should help the firm acquire local legitimacy and a positive image in the eyes of local consumers and stakeholders. This acceptance is expected to dilute animosity towards the foreign firm. Hence, CSR activities can also decrease company animosity. Conversely, a firm may fail to achieve local legitimacy if it cannot attenuate its country and company animosity.

4.2.1. CSR effects for Japanese firms in China:

Han et al. (2019) carried out a study to test if CSR can dilute consumer animosity towards Japanese multinationals in China. Literature suggests that Chinese consumers show strong hostility towards Japan and Japanese firms (Alden et al., 2013: Han, 2017). Specifically, the study tested whether local CSR efforts could change consumer perceptions of a Japanese firm in terms of its localness (i.e., non-Japaneseness) and whether these efforts could dilute consumer animosity towards the Japanese firms. On-line surveys were carried out in Shanghai, China with 467 individuals. The results on path analysis are shown in Figure 1.

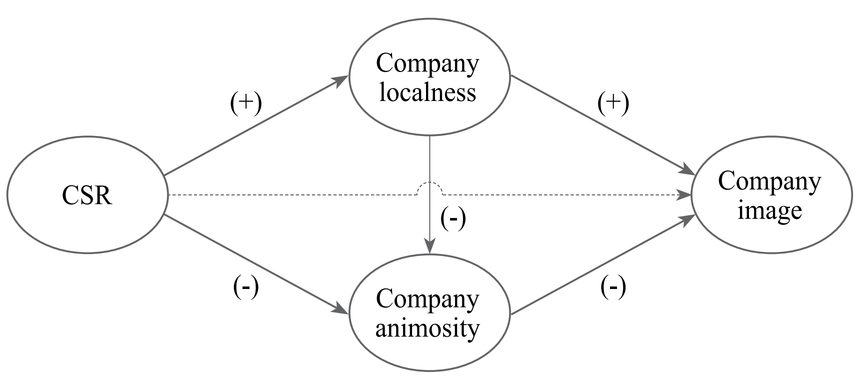


Fig. 1: CSR effects on company localness, animosity, and image for Japanese firms in China

Note: The directions of statistical relationships are shown in parentheses. The solid line indicates statistical significance, while the dotted line denotes insignificance.

The study assessed perceived company localness with a scale which measures the degree to which the firm is perceived as local. As for company animosity, the study employed items that were drawn from the measurement scale for consumer animosity towards Japan used in a seminal work by (Klein et al., 1998). As shown in Figure 1, the results of this study first suggest that attributional biases may exist with Chinese consumers in evaluations of CSR activities by Japanese firms. Rather, CSR activities seem to improve consumer perceptions of Japanese firms. In particular, CSR can improve consumer perceptions of a company with increased localness and reduced company animosity.

5. Country of Origin and CSR Effects for MNES in Less-developed Asia

In the previous sections, we discussed how country of origin affects consumer responses to CSR by MNEs in more-developed emerging Asia (Korea and China). In this section, we examine less-developed low-income countries in Asia, where CSR can have different characteristics and effects on consumers.

5.1. CSR in Less-developed Asian countries.

Several studies have noted that CSR activities in less-developed, low-income countries are less conspicuous and more philanthropic oriented than in high-income countries (Jamali & Neville, 2011; Khan et al., 2015; Jamali & Karam, 2018). In addition, past studies assert that CSR frameworks and experience in western regions may not be relevant and extendable to non-western regions (Jamali & Karam, 2018: Rodgers, Stokes at al., 2019). Further, CSR scholars have suggested that CSR activities in low-income countries are often designed as a means of resolving socioeconomic development issues (Haque & Azamt, 2015; Sharma, 2019; Aziz & Jeppesen, 2020).

In sum, past research has suggested that the nature and objective of CSR activities are different between less-developed emerging countries and developed regions. Jamali and Karam (2018) are of the view that past academic investigations "have focused on CSR in developed countries, with applicability to developing contexts still underexplored," despite the potential theoretical and policy implications of such differences. Similarly, Kolk et al. (2015) questions the extent to which the western-originated construct of CSR is or is not applicable to non-western contexts.

Past studies indicate that consumers in many developing countries are not very aware of and supportive of CSR initiatives (Arli and Lasmono, 2010; Nguyen and Truong, 2016: Han, et al., 2019). Studies focusing on Asia also suggest that CSR activities are not prevalent in developing countries in the region (Hasengawa & Witt, 2019); local consumers are not very keen to practice recycling (Le and Kieu, 2019), and they are reluctant to pay higher prices for "green" products and sustainable consumption (Kotabe & Helsen, 2020).

It appears that the main purpose of MNEs for their CSR activities in developing countries is to develop and maintain favorable relationships with global stakeholders. In particular, social agenda promoted by international agencies, environmentalists, and consumer activists residing in developed countries may carry great importance to MNEs (Yunis, et al., 2018: Richter & Dow, 2017). But it is not clear whether or not local consumers are a key target group to MNEs as to their CSR initiatives. We still have limited evidence as to the effects of CSR on local consumers. A few studies have been reported as to CSR effects on local consumers in China (cf. Han, et al., 2019; Kolk, et al., 2015); however, there is still limited data in developing countries outside China. Thus, it remains an unresolved issue whether or not CSR activities of foreign firms can have positive effects on consumer purchase in developing countries, particularly in less-developed countries.

5.1.1. Country of origin and CSR effects in Myanmar and Vietnam:

We conducted an empirical study to investigate two issues of CSR effects on consumers in low-income countries in Asia. First, the study examined CSR activities of Korean and Chinese firms in two less-developed countries and tested whether such CSR activities can have positive impacts on local consumers. Specifically, we examined the CSR effects on consumer perceptions of the firms and purchase intentions for their products in Myanmar and Vietnam.

Secondly, the study also investigated how CSR effects are moderated by the country of origin in these two Asian countries by comparing the effects between two countries of origin — China (unfavorable origin) and Korea (favorable origin). As we noted above, foreign multinationals need CSR activities to legitimize business activities in foreign markets (Jamali, 2010; Hah & Freeman, 2014; Han, et al., 2019). Their needs can vary, however, among firms from different countries of origin. A study by Magnusson et al. (2015) found greater CSR effects on MNEs from developing countries than from developed countries.

Our study conducted consumer surveys in two key fast-growing emerging markets in less-developed Asia: Myanmar and Vietnam. According to the World Bank data, their average annual GDP growth rate before the Covid-19 pandemic was 6.7% and 5.7% from 2016 to 2019, with populations of 54 and 96 million, respectively. In addition, they represent lesser-developed nations in emerging Asia, with less than annual per capita income of US$5,000. Compared with more-advanced Asian countries, such as China and Korea, these countries have not received adequate academic attention in previous CSR studies in emerging countries. The study used two products from China and Korea: notebook computers and smart phones.

The study operationalized CSR with corporate philanthropy (CP). As noted above, CP is used as a main type of CSR by MNEs in developing countries (Jamali & Karam, 2018; Han et al., 2019). The study exposed the subjects to a script describing two fictitious CP activities by Chinese and Korean MNEs. The script describes relief activities provided to those who were victimized by natural disasters and charity activities carried out for education of students from low-income families in Myanmar and Vietnam. These activities are widely used kinds of corporate philanthropy in developing countries (United Nations Development Program, 2015). An identical script was given for all MNEs in both countries.

Our study first assessed how consumers evaluate CSR activities by Chinese and Korean firms, and then measured how they perceive the firms and their brands. As to consumer evaluations of CSR, we measured consumer perceptions of the firm's commitment to CSR initiatives (Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Turker, 2008: Han, 2015). The results on descriptive statistics are shown in Table 3. The statistics presented in Table 3 indicate that the respondents evaluated CSR activities and the company more favorably for Korean MNEs than for Chinese MNEs in both Myanmar and Vietnam. In addition, they exhibited greater intentions of purchase and more favorable perceptions of quality for Korean brands in both countries.

Table 3: Consumer evaluations of Korean and Chinese firms and brands in Myanmar and Vietnam

Means and standard errors				
<Myanmar>	CSR evaluation	Company image	Purchase intent	Perceived quality
Korean firm (N=145)	6.097 (0.036)	4.244 (0.029)	5.754 (0.058)	4.403 (0.026)
Chinese firm (N=145)	5.659 (0.050)	3.937 (0.029)	5.023 (0.056)	4.099 (0.036)

<Vietnam>				
Korean firm (N=114)	4.740 (0.112)	5.074 (0.114)	3.909 (0.127)	4.786 (0.093)
Chinese firm (N=146)	4.296 (0.092)	4.436 (0.090)	3.605 (0.120)	4.396 (0.082)

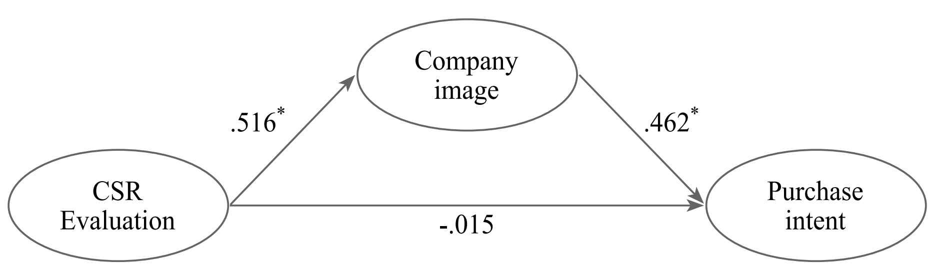
Scale: 1(low) – 7(high), $^{*}p < .01$; standard errors are in parentheses.

First, we examined the effects of CSR by Korean and Chinese MNEs affects local consumers' perceptions of the firms and purchase intentions for their products in two less-developed countries in Asia. For this examination, we carried out a path analysis on relationships among CSR evaluations, company image, and purchase intentions. The results are shown in Figure 2. As shown there, CSR positively affects company image, but it does not affect purchase intentions directly, but indirectly through company image.

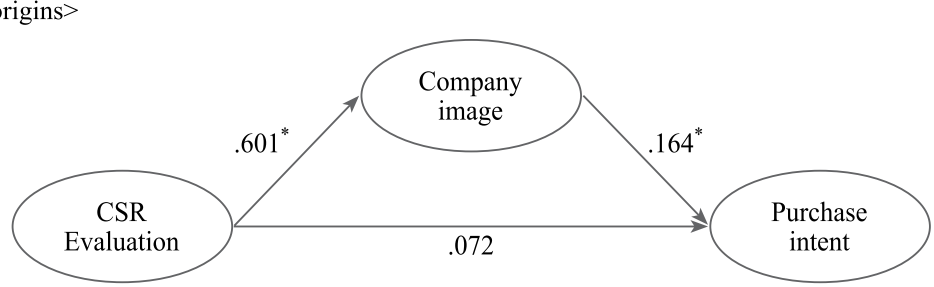
This finding suggests that CSR can be effective in low-income countries in Asia, at least in obtaining favorable company image, despite an argument by some past studies that consumers in developing countries are not very conscious and appreciative of CSR (Arli & Lasmono, 2010; Han et al., 2019). CSR can also be effective in producing favorable behavioral responses by improving a company, although its effects may not be immediate.

Second, the study also examined how the CSR effects the difference between two countries of origin — China (unfavorable origin) and Korea (favorable origin). The results on our path analysis by country of origin are shown in Figure 2. We expected greater effects for MNEs from unfavorable country of origin than for MNEs from a favorable country. Note that CSR did not affect purchase intentions directly, as we discussed above. Therefore, we estimated the indirect effects of CSR on purchase intentions through company image and then examined how these indirectly effect difference between Chinese and Korean origins.

<All origins>



<Korean origins>



<Chinese origins>

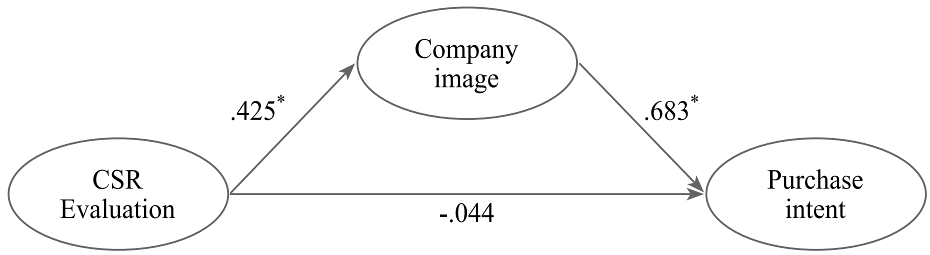


Fig. 2: CSR effects on company image and purchase intent for Korean and Chinese origins in Myanmar and Vietnam

Note: Figures denote path estimates; * significant at .05.

In assessing the indirect effects of CSR on purchase intentions mediated by company image, we carried out bootstrap analyses and then examined differences in the bootstrapping estimates between Chinese and Korean origins. Our test results indicate that the indirect effects of CSR on purchase intentions were significant only for Chinese origins with the coefficient of .290 (SE = .074, $p < .01$). The effects were not significant for Korean origins with the coefficient of .098 (SE = .104, $p > .10$). Similarly, for individual countries, the coefficients representing the indirect effects were all significant for Chinese origins in both countries with .303 (SE = .139, $p < .01$) and .305 (SE = .121, $p < .01$) for Myanmar and Vietnam, respectively. However, they are not significant for Korean origins with .134 (SE = .147, $p > .10$) and .058 (SE = .166, $p > .10$) for Myanmar and Vietnam, respectively. These findings imply that CSR effects on local consumers in developing countries are positive for firms and brands from an unfavorable country of origin, but CSR may have limited effects on firms and brands from a favorable country.

6. Discussion

This chapter examined how the country-of-origin can affect consumer perceptions of CSR activities by MNEs and consumer evaluations of firms and brands in Asia ex-Japan. We first discussed why country of origin can influence consumer responses to CSR activities by MNEs, and then introduced empirical findings from relevant studies and their implications. The key takeaways from the chapter can be summarized as follows:

The first issue we examined is how country of origin can affect consumer expectations of CSR for MNEs. Past studies and their empirical findings suggest that consumers are likely to expect greater CSR efforts from MNEs in Asia ex-Japan (Holt et al., 2004; Han, 2015). In addition, several empirical studies report that MNEs perform a higher level of social activities than local firms in Asia (Chambers et al., 2003; Kolk et al., 2010). These suggestions are in line with international business literature which posits that foreign MNEs attempt to obtain a higher level of legitimacy for their operations, in order to overcome the liability of foreignness as compared to local firms (Hah & Freeman, 2014; Tan & Wang, 2011).

In addition, past studies tend to suggest that country-of-origin image can affect consumer expectations of CSR from MNEs in Asia. Specifically, when an MNE is originated from an unfavorable country of origin, consumers tend to expect that the MNE should compensate for its unfavorable image with additional CSR activities (Han et al., 2015).

Secondly, we discussed how CSR effects on consumers differences between foreign and domestic firms, and among MNEs firms from different countries of origin. It appears that CSR is equally effective to consumers between domestic and foreign firms. A study by Han et al. (2019) in Korea reports that consumers do not show an ethnocentric attributional bias against foreign MNEs in evaluations of CSR activities. On the contrary, Han et al. (2019) reported that CSR effects were weaker for domestic Korean firms when compared with Japanese MNEs. In addition, the study found that CSR shows greater effects for Japanese firms (high animosity) than for European firms (low animosity). This result indicates that CSR can show greater positive effects on consumers for MNEs originated from a high animosity country than for those from a low animosity.

As to the effects of CSR for MNEs from a country with high animosity, we presented an argument that CSR activities can also have positive effects on company image by attenuating company animosity. Han et al. (2019) showed that CSR activities by Japanese MNEs in China can improve consumer perceptions of a company with increased localness and reduced company animosity.

Lastly, the chapter discussed how effective CSR is in eliciting favorable consumer responses for foreign brands in less-developed emerging Asia with inadequate institutional frameworks for corporate-led social activities (Marsden, 2000; Yunis et al., 2018). For this discussion, we carried out an empirical study in Myanmar and Vietnam and examined the effects of CSR activities by Korean and Chinese MNEs.

Our findings suggest that CSR can be effective, at least in obtaining a favorable corporate image, despite an argument made by some past studies that CSR has limited effects on consumers in those developing countries (Arli & Lasmono, 2010; Han et al., 2019; Hasengawa & Witt, 2019). CSR can also be effective in eliciting favorable behavioral responses by local consumers indirectly through improved company image, although perhaps its effects may not be instantaneous. As to the country-of-origin effects in obtaining favorable behavioral responses in developing countries, our study found that CSR effects are positive for firms and brands from an unfavorable country of origin, but CSR may have limited effects on firms and brands from a favorable country.

Overall, our discussion in this chapter suggests that country image can influence consumer responses to CSR by MNEs in Asia ex-Japan, thus validating country-of-origin effects on consumer evaluations of foreign objects, as suggested by prior studies (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2005; Han, 2020). Specifically, consumers tend to expect greater CSR efforts from MNEs, particularly MNEs from an unfavorable country of origin. In addition, CSR is effective in eliciting positive consumer responses toward MNEs and their brands in both more-developed and less-developed emerging Asia; and the effects are more positive for MNEs from an unfavorable country of origin.

6.1. Practical Implications

Our investigation in consumer responses to CSR in Asia ex-Japan has several practical implications. First, CSR can be effective in obtaining legitimacy for local operations and in building company and brand reputation. Nonetheless, the direct effects of CSR on brand purchases are not clear, especially in less-developed Asia. Thus, CSR programs in Asia are recommended to be designed to build reputational capital for MNEs rather than for promotion efforts aimed at increasing sales in the near term.

Second, we can also suggest that MNEs from an unfavorable country of origin are likely to benefit from CSR activities. Past studies suggest that consumer attitudes and animosity towards the country of origin can moderate the CSR effects. Greater CSR efforts are recommended for MNEs from such countries.

Third, extant literature tends to suggest that CSR may not be a powerful tool for MNEs with a favorable country of origin when attempting to elicit favorable consumer responses in less-developed areas in Asia

(Nguyen & Truong, 2016: Han et al., 2019; Hasengawa & Witt, 2019). Thus, such MNEs are recommended to focus on creating product benefits and delivering customer values rather than on building local legitimacy through CSR activities.

Finally, since CSR activities can help MNEs to achieve local legitimacy, CSR would perhaps be more effective if it addresses a local agenda including local philanthropic program and social and economic development rather than focusing on a global agenda such as global warming or human rights issues. It appears that many MNEs promote global agenda in their CSR activities in developing countries in order to develop and maintain favorable relationships with global stakeholders. In particular, social agenda promoted by international agencies, environmentalists, and consumer activists residing in developed countries often carry greater importance to MNEs (Yunis, et al., 2018: Richter & Dow, 2017).

6.2. Directions for Future Investigation

As we discussed, CSR literature has not paid adequate attention to the effectiveness of CSR by MNEs on local consumers in emerging countries and how country of origin affects consumer responses to CSR. We suggest that the following agenda be explored in future investigations:

- Can CSR directly elicit positive behavioral responses from local consumers for MNEs and their brands? It appears that CSR can have positive effects on company image, but it has indirect effects on purchase intentions through improved company image. However, its direct effects on purchase intentions are not clear for consumers in emerging countries in Asia.
- Is there an ethnocentric attributional bias against foreign MNEs in consumer evaluations of CSR activities? Our chapter concluded that CSR is still effective for foreign firms. However, some literature suggests the existence of ethnocentric bias against foreign MNEs (Crilly et al., 2016; Han et al., 2019). Clearly, this issue needs further empirical investigations.
- What characteristics of country image can affect consumer responses to CSR by MNEs? Country image may be operationalized with two dimensions of the stereotype content model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) —country warmth and competence as suggested by (Barbarossa et al., 2018; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017). It appears that the warmth dimensions such as country attitudes and animosity can affect consumer responses, as we discussed. However, we still need to investigate how and why the competence dimensions can be a factor in consumer evaluations and responses to CSR by MNEs.
- Can CSR by MNEs have positive impacts on improving home country image? We discussed here that country image can affect consumer responses to CSR, but a reciprocal relationship is also possible. Han (2016a; 2016b) found that CSR can promote the creation of reputation capital for the home country in addition to the firm. If it does, then CSR activities in low-income countries can be initiated by home governments as a public-private partnership project.

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2

Chapter Two

The Moderating Role of Country of Origin Effects between Consequences of Brand and Intention to Dine Out: The Case of Turkey

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The Moderating Role of Country of Origin Effects between Consequences of Brand and Intention to Dine Out: The Case of Turkey

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1. Introduction

Many factors that influence customer purchasing behavior have emerged as technology has advanced in the globalizing world market. The idea of country of origin is one of these factors. In international marketing, it is crucial to determine whether the origin of a product affects consumer preferences. Accordingly, the country of origin is regarded as extrinsic information that influences product evaluation, quality (Pappu, et al., 2005), and customers' willingness to pay (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). The concept of country of origin influences quality perceptions, product evaluations, and customer intentions, which is called as the country of origin effect (Montanari et al., 2018). As a result of this effect, many companies and products utilize the term "made in" to identify the source of the product and create associations in customers' minds (Schultz & Jain, 2015). When the country of origin effect is insufficient and uncertain in customer evaluations, scientists recommend changing the focus of their research from products to brands (Thakor & Lavack, 2003; Pharr, 2005; Josiassen and Harzing, 2008; Usunier, 2011). On the other hand, even if a brand's origin is incorrectly identified, customers are affected by the perceived associations that a brand has with a country (Andéhn et al., 2015). The power of the brand allows certain products to be sold in businesses without the need for any marketing methods to persuade buyers.

Numerous things are connected to the brand in marketing (Lee et al., 2014). A brand leaves a mark on the minds and hearts of consumers that creates a particular meaning. Thus, a brand is more than a logo, name, symbol, trademark, or label attached to a product (Wijaya, 2013). Therefore, concepts such as brand image, brand attitude, and trust play a vital part in the development and continuity of the brand that emerges as a result of branding. These variables then become 'guidelines' for the customer base to try and use a product or service, establishing a specific experience intent in customers. For instance, studies demonstrate that a positive attitude towards a particular brand promotes the intention to buy the brand or product and recommend it to others (Choe & Kim, 2018).

Additionally, according to tourism studies, consumers' brand attitudes influence their decision to select or revisit a particular location (Huang & Hsu, 2009; Lee et al., 2009). On the other hand, dining involvement is related to the individual's level of interest or perceived importance of food. Dining involvement can influence customer decision-making and individual behavior (Bardwell, et al., 2018). Dining involvement is crucial in the decision-making process and can affect customer behavior. Specifically, dining involvement increases customers' trust in the brand by positively affecting restaurant satisfaction and loyalty (Josiam et al., 2015).

This study presents information and findings from the literature about dining involvement, intention to dine out, and their relationship with brand attitude, trust, and image within the conceptual framework. The country of origin effect is also illustrated. Following the effects of dining involvement on brand trust, image, and attitude, the moderator role of the COO's effects on intention to dine out was investigated.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Dining Involvement

Involvement represents the power of motivation in forming personal interest (Yoo, 2012). In this way, it encourages the consumption of the product. The customer's interest in, focus on, and motivation towards the product increases with involvement. On the other side, dining involvement describes an individual's level of interest or perceived importance in food or eating (Bardwell et al., 2018). In this context, dining involvement has been thoroughly investigated in hospitality and tourism research, particularly in areas related to consumer behavior (Ha, 2018; Josiam et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2012; Levitt et al., 2019; Robinson & Getz, 2016).

Dining involvement influences individual behavior and plays a vital role in decision-making (Bardwell et al., 2018). Mainly, dining involvement positively affects restaurant satisfaction and loyalty in parallel with brand attitude (Josiam et al., 2015). In this context, attitude is a learned, consistent, positive, or negative tendency to behave towards any object or brand (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Brand attitude, on the other hand, is defined as "the customer's perceived value of the brand" (Çakır, 2006), "the customer's comprehensive evaluation of the product" (Kempf & Smith, 1998), and "the evaluation of a brand in parallel with the attitude components" (Uztuğ, 2003). It is described as very strong and one-dimensional general evaluations that can mobilize customers about the brand (Spears & Singh, 2004). Customers of restaurants make decisions in the dining involvement process by assessing restaurants based on brand attitude. The following hypothesis was developed in light of this information:

H_1: Dining involvement influences brand attitude

Brand trust is defined as "the willingness of the average customer to trust the brand's capacity to accomplish its stated role" (Ha & Perks, 2005). Customers who trust a brand will be willing to develop and maintain the emotional bond they have established with the brand; thus their trust in the brand will grow as the amount of trust grows (Chinomona, 2013). Wei et al. (2021) investigated the interaction between the perceived importance of COVID-19 prevention measures, dining involvement, brand trust, and customers' intent to eat at American-Chinese restaurants. The findings of Martin et al. (2011) and Rifon et al. (2005), which studied brand trust, are similar to those of Sanchez-Franco (2009). In this study, dining involvement positively increased brand trust. Based on this information, the following hypothesis was developed:

H_2: Dining involvement influences brand trust

As a concept, the brand image comprises the customer's associations and beliefs about the brand (Anselmsson et al., 2014). Customers' evaluations of the general quality of a restaurant are influenced by brand image. According to Goldsmith and Emmert (1991), involvement is crucial in customer behavior, and a positive or negative brand image influences the customer's dining involvement. Additionally, Bardwell, Stephan, Rahman, and Reynolds (2018) discovered that dining involvement impacts the brand image. Customers with a high-level dining involvement value brand image and rate restaurants based on service, menu, atmosphere, and meal quality. On the other hand, customers with low food dining involvement place less value on a brand image; they are more concerned with the quality of the meal and pay little attention to the service, menu, and atmosphere. Based on this information, the following hypothesis was developed:

H_3: Dining involvement influences brand image

2.2. Intention to Dine Out

The dining-out habits of individuals are considered to be related to the issue of out-of-home food and beverage consumption. In the commercial sense, eating out habits refer to individuals paying a fee to consume food and beverages prepared and served by a business outside the home (Özdemir, 2010). Customers are influenced by various factors in their daily life and display particular consumption behaviors. Various values and beliefs, such as attitudes and perceptions that affect customers before behavior, emerge as underlying factors of an individual's behavior (Doğdubay & Saatçi, 2016). Restaurants are currently attempting to establish their brands and increase customers' intention to dine out by doing brand attitude analyses (Mizik, 2014; Hwang & Ok, 2013). Some customers put more emphasis on brand than product quality. Customers do not only consider the characteristics of the restaurant when dining out. They select a restaurant based on their attitude towards a specific restaurant brand. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend how consumer attitudes toward a brand (i.e., a comprehensive evaluation of a brand) are developed. Hwang and Ok (2013) researched the effects of customer attitudes towards restaurant brands and concluded that customer attitudes towards restaurant brands increase brand preference. The following hypothesis was formed based on this information:

H_4: Brand attitude influences intention to dine out

Customers seek out dining experiences for a variety of reasons (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014). Given that dining conditions influence consumer behavior, it is reasonable to suppose that customers' restaurant selection is influenced by their dining out situation. Dining out affects customer choice in the restaurant selection process. A detailed examination of the relative importance of restaurant selection criteria among dining-out situations reveals that restaurant customers rate the importance of restaurant selection criteria differently depending on their dining-out situation. Among these, brand trust is an important criterion.

Furthermore, trust is the most popular measure of brand-customer relations (Alam & Yasin, 2010). Because most customers rely on a restaurant's reputation to understand meal quality, restaurants invest significantly in developing a trustworthy reputation (Fandos & Flavian, 2006; Herbig & Milewicz, 1995; Madanoglu, 2005; Rijswijk & Frewer, 2008). Customers also consider risk reduction when selecting service brands such as restaurants (Lacey et al., 2009). As COVID-19 continued to spread between countries, people found it difficult to fully enjoy their meals due to the risk of coronavirus infection. The pleasures of dining out can be gradually replaced by negative emotions such as stress or anxiety caused by infection fears. Perceived (physical/psychological) risks can reduce the pleasure of dining out and easily deter customers from their consumption. However, numerous studies have associated risks to trust concerns in consumer activities (Sullivan & Kim, 2018: Han, Yu & Kim, 2019). In this regard, the following hypothesis has been developed, assuming that customers' intention to dine out is influenced by their trust in the brand:

H_5: Brand trust influences intention to dine out

Consumers' perceptions of well-being are crucial factors in their decision-making process while selecting a restaurant. When customers think of a range of restaurants in their minds, they unconsciously think about which restaurants can positively impact their quality of life. Chang (2013) discovered in his research that brand image could be a vital factor for customers that place a high value on dining out. In another study, Han (2015) revealed that restaurateurs who accept that customers can rely on the image to understand restaurant quality tend to spend effort and use resources to develop a brand image. The following hypothesis has been created in this context based on the information gathered from the studies in the literature:

H_6: Brand image influences intention to dine out

2.3. Moderator Effect of Country of Origin

According to Pappu, Quester and Cooksey (2005), the country of origin (COO) is seen as an extrinsic factor that influences consumers' evaluations, the quality of a product and their willingness to pay (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). The country of origin is defined as the location where the product or brand is manufactured or the headquarters of the institutions or organizations that distribute that product to markets (Nart, 2008). Furthermore, it is the country of origin for companies to which a bond of belonging binds them. However, for global companies, "the country of origin to which they belong" may not be obvious (Samiee, 1994; Lee & Schaninger, 1996). In such circumstances, the place of manufacturing or installation is accepted as the country of origin (Nart, 2008). The country of origin influences quality perceptions, product evaluations, and consumer intents, and this effect is defined as the country of origin effect; it is utilized as the term "made in" for many brands and products to create associations in the minds of buyers (Schultz & Jain, 2015).

After World War I, the concept of country of origin emerged for the first time. To punish Germany's defeated industry and to warn European customers about German products, it was mandatory to write "Made in Germany" in English on all German-made products. However, this punishment soon became an advantage for German manufacturers; because of the high quality of German products, consumers have increased their demand for "Made in Germany" products on international markets. Other countries afterward began using the "Made in" phrase for their products (Han, 1989). The first study on the country origin of products belongs to (Nagashima, 1970). According to Nagashima (1970), country of origin image is a concept that includes the reputation, description, depiction, and attitude patterns that customers attribute to a particular country's products. This image is determined by typical products, national characteristics, economic and political environment, history, and traditions.

In product evaluations, the country of origin effect influences customers' perceptions, attitudes, and intentions to purchase a product (Munjal, 2014). It has been demonstrated in the past that people's prejudices and attitudes in a specific country influence customers' evaluations of products in that country (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2011). When choosing a product, customers prefer to decide on the COO. As a buying cue, a symbol and emotional connection with the customer, and a relationship with the customer's social and personal norms, the COO impacts customer opinions (Mathew & Paniker, 2022). Accordingly, Dosen, et al. (2007) proposed four main reasons for the country of origin effect. The first of these is that in recent years, as a result of globalization, customers have begun to perceive the country of origin and brand name as quality and acceptability criteria. Second, as product complexity and difficulties increase, enterprises standardize their offers and sales, which gains the importance of the brand name and the country of origin. Third, because of development, enterprises of developed countries have a competitive advantage when entering developing countries. The fourth factor is an increase in positive customer attitudes towards foreign products due to global mass media.

Customers associate country of origin information with quality and use this factor in purchasing. In their study, Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) revealed that while customers prefer Japanese televisions to German ones, they prefer British toys to French ones. They linked the reason for this preference with quality. The price that can be paid for any product or service increases in countries where the country's image has a positive impact (Kaynak & Herbig, 2014). Businesses may attempt to present their brands as the brands of another country to take advantage of this circumstance.

While brand attitude is relatively permanent once established, research has demonstrated that attitude can change over time due to marketing stimuli that refers to the marketing mix (product, price, promotion, and place). According to Keller and Lehmann, (2006) the attitude-behavior link is subject to numerous modifiers (Park & MacInnis, 2006). In predicting customer behavior, brand attitudes are useful. Customers' purchase intentions are significantly influenced by their attitude towards the brand (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Goldsmith et al., 2002; Gresham & Shimp, 1985). As a result, whereas attitudes are a summary of the evaluations of the attitude object (such as a person, event, or brand), intentions are the consciously stated motives that individuals attempt to transform into behavior. In this context, purchase intention can be summarized as individuals' conscious plans to buy a brand with effort (Spears & Singh, 2004). Depending on the attitude of the brand, consumer behavior varies. In this situation, the country of origin effect (made in label) is formed by the participants' knowledge and beliefs. Based on this information, the following hypothesis can be developed:

H_7: COO effect moderates the relationship between brand attitude and intention to dine out

The customer does not consider the "place of manufacture" as a single source of reference informations but perceives that the country of origin, in particular, has a significant influence. According to Hong and Wyer (1989), country of origin information influences a customer's assessment of the country's product quality. According to Lee (1999) and Tseng (2001), the country of origin brand influences product, service, and purchase intention. Therefore, when a customer makes a choice, their country of origin significantly impacts their level of preference, purchase intention, and information-seeking intention. When the product is complex, the country of origin effect has been proven to be more significant (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993). Customers tend to seek more information about complex products in order to decrease the risk of buying the product. Likewise, it is known that customers evaluate the products of industrialized countries more positively due to higher product reliability. In this context, customers who intend to dine out decrease their risk perceptions with their trust in the brand and can prevent confusion with the effect of the country of origin, and the following hypothesis has been developed with the idea that the country of origin effect may act as a moderator effect in the relationship between the variables:

H_8: COO effect moderates the relationship between brand trust and intention to dine out

It can be stated that the brand image of a product originating from a well-known and trustworthy country has a considerably more positive perception than the image of a product originating from an unknown and untrustworthy country (Koubaa, 2008), and it can be stated that it affects the brand image of the country of origin (Öztürk & Çakır, 2015). When the perception of the country of origin in customers' minds is evaluated in general, it is a concept that distinguishes the quality of products and services (Arı & Madran, 2011). According to Steenkamp et al. (2002), the information about the country of origin is a direct factor in the customers' evaluation process of the brand owned by the country (Steenkamp et al. 2002) , and customers consider the country of origin information in their product selection (Arı & Madran, 2011; Dichter, 1962; Han, 1989; Hong & Wyer Jr. 1989).

The customer's purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by brand image (O'Cass & Lim, 2002). Brands with a positive image about the country of origin are known as good, creating a positive purchase intention in the customer (Islam & Hussain, 2022). According to a study conducted in 2021 by Wei et al. (2021), customers in the USA did not prefer Chinese restaurants because of the coronavirus outbreak that had broken out in China. Customers believed that China had successfully handled this process as the number of cases in China gradually decreased while cases in the USA increased. Customers who associate China with a more positive image see the preventive measures of American Chinese restaurants more positively and as more reliable, resulting in a rise in customers' intention to dine out at these restaurants. Given that the country of origin effect may act as a moderator in determining brand image and intent to dine out, the following hypothesis was developed:

H_9: COO effect moderates the relationship between brand image and intention to dine out

3. Research Model

This research aims to investigate the effects of dining involvement on brand image, brand attitude, and brand trust in restaurant businesses. Additionally, to determine the effects of brand image, brand attitude, and brand trust on the intention to dine out and examine the COO's moderating role on these effects. The research model developed for these objectives is as follows (Figure 1):

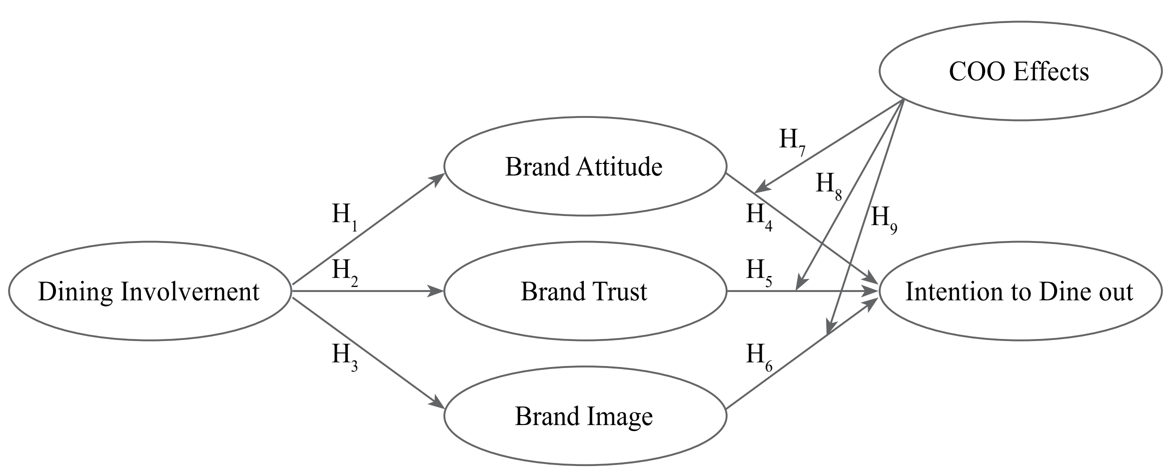

Fig. 1: Proposed Research Model

4. Methodology

This study's population comprises people over 18 who choose luxury restaurants in Turkey. The study used an online questionnaire as a data collection tool via Google forms. In this context, 413 online questionnaires were collected from those who voluntarily participated using the convenience sampling method between 05 August and 7 September 2022. Since 2 of 415 questionnaires were entered incorrectly or incompletely in the survey, they were not evaluated within the scope of the study, and the research was conducted using 413 questionnaire points. The sample size representing the universe at the 0.95 confidence interval was calculated to be 384 for the study (Yazıcıoğlu & Erdoğan, 2004). The 413 questionnaires collected can be used to represent the universe.

On the other hand, the online questionnaire form is divided into two parts. Six questions in the first section of the demographic factors (age, gender, marital status, education level, income level, and occupation) exist. The English-Turkish translations of the items were made with the opinion of two English experts. The scales used in the questionnaire were adapted from the study of (Chunhao (Victor) Wei, Chen & Lee, 2021). They measure dining involvement with 5 items, brand trust with 10 items, the COO effect with 8 items, and intention to dine out with 3 items. The studies of Quoquab, Basiruddin, and Abdul Rasid (2014) were used for the brand image scale comprising 5 items, and Holbrook and Batra (1987) for the brand attitude scale comprising 4 items. The Cronbach's alpha value (=0.919) for the scale items employed in the questionnaire was found to be quite reliable in the pilot study (n=50), and the study was then continued.

The data obtained were analyzed using SPSS PROCESS macro-Model 1. (Hayes, 2012). The frequency and percentage values for the demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in the tables. Significant relationships between the variables were investigated using correlation analyses, and the effects were then attempted to be explained using regression analyses. A moderator effect analysis was performed using PROCESS macro-Model 1 to examine the role of the moderator on the variables. The slope test was carried out for the graphics necessary to understand the moderator effects.

5. Findings

In this part of the research, the demographic distributions of the customers within the scope of the questionnaire, the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, correlation values of the scales, regression analysis, and analyses of the moderator role are included.

Table 1: Demographics Feature of Participants

	Visitors (n=413)	
	Frequency	**Percent**
Age		
18-30	159	38.5
31-45	154	37.3
46-60	75	18.2
61 and more	25	6.1
Gender		
Female	175	42.4
Male	238	57.6

Educational degree		
Primary school	24	5.8
High school	96	23.2
Undergraduate	237	57.4
Master's degree	51	12.3
Doctorate	5	1.2
Marital status		
Single	163	39.5
Married	250	60.5
Occupation		
Civil Servant	121	29.3
Private Sector Employee	167	40.4
Self-Employed Entrepreneur	77	18.6
Housewife	30	7.3
Retired	18	4.4
Level of Income		
0-Minumum Wage	23	5.6
₺5501-₺7500	34	8.2
₺7501- ₺9500	72	17.4
₺9501- ₺11500	116	28.1
₺11501 and more	168	40.7

The participant's demographic characteristics are shown in numerical form in Table 1. According to the table, most participants (57.6%) are male, and 60.5% are married. When the age ranges of the participants are analyzed, it is revealed that 38.5% are between the ages of 18 and 30, and 37.3% are between the ages of 31 and 45. In general, more than half of the participants are young; 40.4% of participants work in the private sector, and 57.4% have a university degree. When the participants' income levels are considered, 40.7% of them have incomes of ₺1151 or more.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Factors and Items (n=413)				
	Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
Dining Involvement (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91)	**4.18**	**0.85**		
I am interested in foods.	4.43	0.96	-1.81	1.59
I think that where to eat is very important.	4.07	1.02	-1.12	0.69
I am very interested in restaurants.	4.22	1.07	-1.32	0.80
I enjoyed eating out.	4.09	1.09	-1.29	1.05
Restaurants must show my personality.	4.11	1,14	-1.25	0.62

Brand Trust (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89)	**3.77**	**0.88**		
This restaurant seems to… have sound principles that guide its behavior.	3.69	1.30	-0.60	-0.85
Keep its commitments.	3.78	1.17	-0.80	-0.28
Very capable of serving its customers.	3.84	1.20	-0.77	-0.49
Have necessary knowledge and recourses to fulfill its customers' needs.	3.80	1.16	-0.79	-0.32
Confident about this restaurant skill to serve its customers.	3.70	1.15	-0.69	-0.40
Competent in preparing food.	3.77	1.12	-0.68	-0.43
Performs its role of cooking food very well.	3.85	1.20	-0.88	-0.19
Concerned about its customers' health and safety.	3.78	1.24	-0.79	-0.47
Would not do anything to hurt customers.	3.82	1.24	-0.87	-0.31
Interested in its customers' well-being not just its own profit.	3.71	1.21	-0.71	-0.45
COO Effect (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91)	**3.70**	**1.17**		
In your opinion. Turkey is/has…				
Affluent.	3.61	1.33	-0.72	-0.68
Economic well developed* – High living standards.	3.62	1.45	-0.66	-1.02
Good standard of life.	3.39	1.18	-0.86	-0.35
Peace loving.	3.79	1.46	-0.86	-0.76
Friendly toward us.	3.83	1.37	-0.96	-0.41
Cooperative with us.	3.76	1.41	-0.86	-0.66
Likable.	3.90	1.34	-1.05	-0.21
Intention to Dine out (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91)	**3.62**	**1.11**		
I would dine out at this restaurant in the future.	3.62	1.92	0.41	0.27
I would recommend this restaurant to my friends and others.	3.64	1.08	-0.77	-0.04
I would spread positive word-of-mouth about this restaurant.	3.63	1.18	-0.66	-0.46
Brand Image (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89)	**3.81**	**0.97**		
This brand has a positive image in the consumer mind.	3.72	1.25	-0.72	-0.58
This brand is a stable corporate brand.	3.72	1.11	-0.70	-0.23
This brand is innovative.	3.86	1.26	-0.90	-0.32
I believe this brand has a better image than its competitors.	3.86	1.19	-0.96	-0.00
This brand is making a social contribution to society.	3.92	1.27	-1.00	-0.21

Brand Attitude (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.89)	**3.71**	**0.92**		
I like this brand.	3.67	1.21	-0.64	-0.60
My feelings towards this brand are positive.	3.73	1.11	-0.75	-0.19
I think this brand is a good brand.	3.71	1.32	-0.66	-0.85
My reaction to this brand is positive.	3.77	1.14	-0.77	-0.19

The Cronbach's alpha values of the scales in Table 2 range between 0.80 and 1.00, indicating the scale's high reliability (Alpar, 2013). The skewness and kurtosis values of the variables used in the study are presented in the table. As a result, it is observed that the data have a normal distribution (Büyüköztürk, 2018). The term "Affluent" in the country of origin effect scale has the lowest mean (x=3.61). While the participants disagree that the country of origin (Turkey), which is generally regarded as a country of origin, is wealthy, they see it as a likable and pleasant country (x=3.90). Participants generally consist of people who are interested in food. According to their responses, the participants believe that the meals served by the restaurant they prefer are successful, and they state that they trust that brand in this regard. They also think that this restaurant creates an image that makes a social contribution to society. Based on all this, the participants' attitudes towards this restaurant are positive, and they declare that they will suggest it to their friends and acquaintances. Correlation analysis was performed to uncover the mutual relationships between the variables to be explored within the scope of the investigation. The results of the correlation test are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients

Variables	**Dining Involvement**	**Brand Trust**	**COO Effect**	**Intention To Dine Out**	**Brand Image**	**Brand Attitude**
Dining Involvement	1					
Brand Trust	0.71^{**}	1				
COO Effect	0.58^{**}	0.62^{**}	1			
Intention To Dine Out	0.53^{**}	0.63^{**}	0.59^{**}	1		
Brand Image	0.68^{**}	0.77^{**}	0.68^{**}	0.69^{**}	1	
Brand Attitude	0.66^{**}	0.74^{**}	0.63^{**}	0.64^{**}	0.81^{**}	1

The analyses revealed a strong, positive, and significant relationship between dining involvement and brand trust, COO effect, intention to dine out, brand image, and brand attitude. Since the correlation analyses were significant and positive and within the expected range (0.3 to 0.9), regression analyses were conducted. The tables below show regression analyses.

Table 4: The Effect of Dining Involvement on Brand Attitude, Brand Trust, and Brand Image

	β	**t**	**p**
Dining Involvement	0.67	18.17	$<0.000^{*}$
$^{*}p<0.01$ $R^2=0.44$ $F=330.43$ $p=0.000$			
Dependent Variable: Brand Attitude			

Dining Involvement	0.71	20.99	<0.000*
**p<0.01 R^2=0.51 F=440.85 p=0.000*			
Dependent Variable: Brand Trust			
Dining Involvement	0.68	18.98	<0.000*
**p<0.01 R^2=0.46 F=360.50 p=0.000*			
Dependent Variable: Brand Image			

According to the regression analysis results in Table 4, dining involvement significantly affects brand attitude (p=0.01, R2=0.44, F=330.43, p=0.000), brand trust (p=0.01, R2=0.51, F=440.85, p=0.000), and brand image (p=0.01, R2=0.46, F=360.50, p=0.000). Dining involvement explains 44.6% of brand attitude, 51.8% of brand trust, and 46.7% of brand image. In this context, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Table 5: The Effect of Brand Attitude, Brand Trust, Brand Image on Intention to Dine Out

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	Sig.	R^2	F	P
	B	Std. Error	Beta					
(Constant)	0.16	0.17		0.93	0.34	0.52	145.3	0.00
Brand Trust	0.25	0.07	0.20	3.53	0.00			
Brand Image	0.47	0.07	0.41	6.29	0.00			
Brand Attitude	0.18	0.07	0.15	2.48	0.01			
Dependent Variable: Intention to Dine Out								

Table 5 displays the regression analysis findings of the influence of brand attitude, image, and trust on the intention to dine out. As a result, brand attitude, image, and trust significantly and positively influence intention to dine out. In this case, H4, H5, and H6 are supported.

Table 6: The Moderator Effect of the Country of Origin on the Relationship between Brand Attitude and Intention to Dine Out

	β	LLCI/ULCI	t	p	R^2	F
ITDO>BA	0.79	0.57/1.01	7.06	**0.000***		
COO >BA	0.64	0.38/0.91	4.84	**0.000***	0.48	126.62*
ITDO *COO>BA	-0.09	-0.16/-0.02	-2.73	**0.006***		
ITDO *COO (2.53)	0.55	0.44/0.66	9.78	**0.000***		
ITDO *COO (3.70)	0.43	0.30/0.56	6.68	**0.000***		
ITDO *COO (4.88)	0.32	0.13/0.50	3.40	**0.001***		

ITDO= Intention to Dine out, BA=Brand Attitude. COO= Country of origin Effect
*p<0.05; LLCI (Lower-limit of confidence interval), ULCI (Upper-limit of confidence interval)

The model developed for the moderating effect of the country of origin effect on the relationship between the intention to dine out and brand attitude (F=126.62; p<0.05) is demonstrated. Intention to dine out (β=0.79) and country of origin (β=0.64) have a positive effect on brand attitude, while the interaction term (B=-0.098) has a negative effect (R2=48.2%; p<0.05). It is essential to examine Figure 2 to observe how the relationship between intention to dine out and brand attitude changes for different levels of country of origin effect (2.53; 3.70 and 4.88) with slope test.

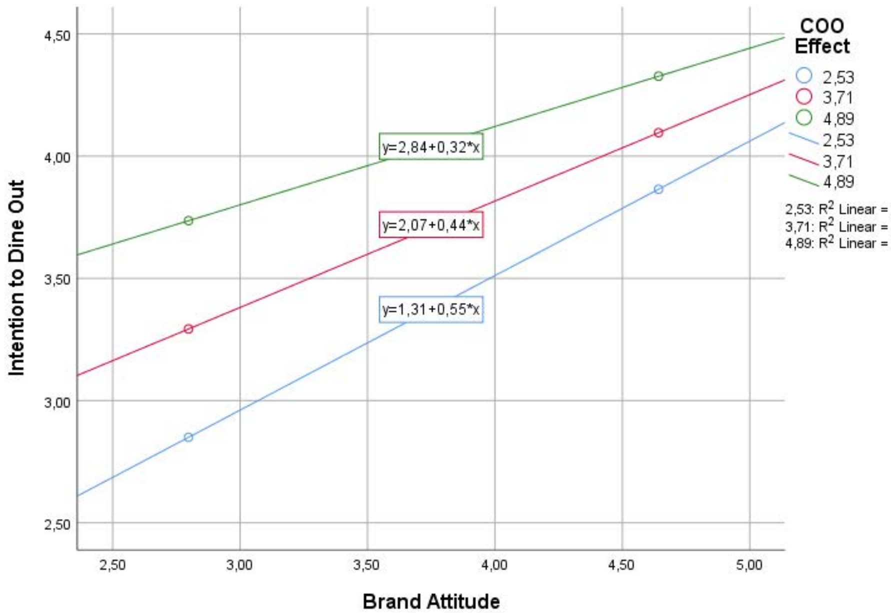

Fig. 2: Slope Test

The graph examines the relationship between intention to dine out and brand attitude according to three different levels of country of origin effect. Accordingly, although the intention to dine out increases in the same direction as the brand attitude is positive at all three different levels, this increase is observed more clearly when the effect level of the country of origin is low. Therefore, the country of origin effect has a negative effect on the interaction between the intention to dine out and brand attitude. As a result, it is seen that the customers with a high level of COO effects in restaurants have less intention to dine out when they have a high brand attitude than the tourists with a high perception of COO effects. In this case, the H7 hypothesis has been accepted. This finding suggests that when restaurant professionals use COO effects by considering their brand attitude, tourists' intentions to dine out may be reduced.

Table 7: The Moderator Effect of the Country of Origin on the Relationship between Brand Trust and Intention to Dine Out

	β	LLCI/ULCI	*t*	p	R^2	F
ITDO>BT	0.76	0.54/0.98	6.87	**0.000***		
COO >BT	0.62	0.33/0.91	4.23	**0.000***	0.48	125.65*
ITDO *COO >BT	-0.08	-0.16/-0.01	-2.25	**0.025***		
ITDO *COO (2.53)	0.54	0.43/0.66	9.48	**0.000***		
ITDO *COO (3.70)	0.44	0.30/0.59	6.06	**0.000***		
ITDO *COO (4.88)	0.34	0.13/0.55	3.22	**0.001***		

ITDO= Intention to Dine out, BT=Brand Trust, COO= Country of Origin
**p<0.05; LLCI (Lower-limit of confidence interval), ULCI (Upper-limit of confidence interval)*

It can be shown that the country of origin has a moderating effect on the relationship between brand trust and intention to dine out (F=125.65; p<0.05) in the model designed to measure this effect. While the variables of intention to dine out (β=0.76) and country of origin (β=0.62) have a positive effect on brand trust, the interaction term (β=-0.08) has a negative effect (R2=48.0%; p < 0.05). To evaluate how the relationship between intention to dine out and brand image varies for different levels of the country of origin effect (2.53; 3.70 and 4.88), it would be useful to examine Figure 3.

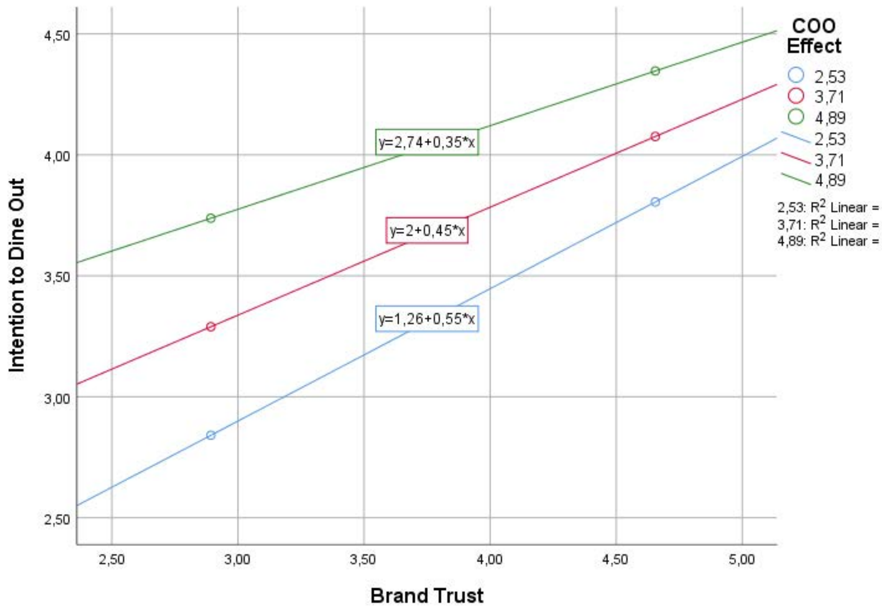

Fig. 3: Slope Test

According to three different levels of the country of origin effect, the graph investigates the relationship between the intention to eat dine out and brand trust. As a result, while brand trust is positive at all three levels, the intention to dine out increases in the same direction, but this increase is more evident when the country of origin's effect level is low. Therefore, the relationship between the intention to dine out and brand trust is negatively affected by the country of origin effect. In restaurants, customers with a high level of COO effects have a lower intention to dine out than tourists with a high perception of COO effects when they have high brand trust. The H8 hypothesis was accepted in this case. According to this result, it can be said that tourists can reduce the intention to dine out when restaurant professionals use COO effects, taking into account the brand trust characteristics.

Table 8: The Moderator Effect of the Country of Origin on the Relationship between Brand Image and Intention to Dine Out

	β	LLCI/ULCI	t	p	R^2	F
ITDO>BI	0.87	0.67/1.07	8.55	**0.000***		
COOL >BI	0.60	0.33/0.87	4.34	**0.000***	0.52	148.56*
ITDO *COO >BI	-0.10	-0.17/-0.03	-2.96	**0.003***		
ITDO *COO (2.53)	0.61	0.50/0.72	11.39	**0.000***		
ITDO *COO (3.70)	0.49	0.35/0.62	7.21	**0.000***		
ITDO *COO (4.88)	0.37	0.17/0.56	3.75	**0.000***		

ITDO= Intention to Dine out, BI=Brand Image, COO= Country of Origin
**p<0.05; LLCI (Lower-limit of confidence interval), ULCI (Upper-limit of confidence interval)*

It is seen that the model created for the moderator effect of the country of origin effect on the relationship between the intention to dine out and the brand image is significant (F=148.56; p<0.05). While the variables of intention to dine out (β=0.87) and country of origin (β=0.6) have a positive effect on brand image, the interaction term (β=-0.10) has a negative effect (R2=52.2%; p<0.05). For different levels of country of origin effect (2.53; 3.70 and 4.88), it would be useful to examine Figure 4 to see how the relationship between the intention to dine out and brand image changes.

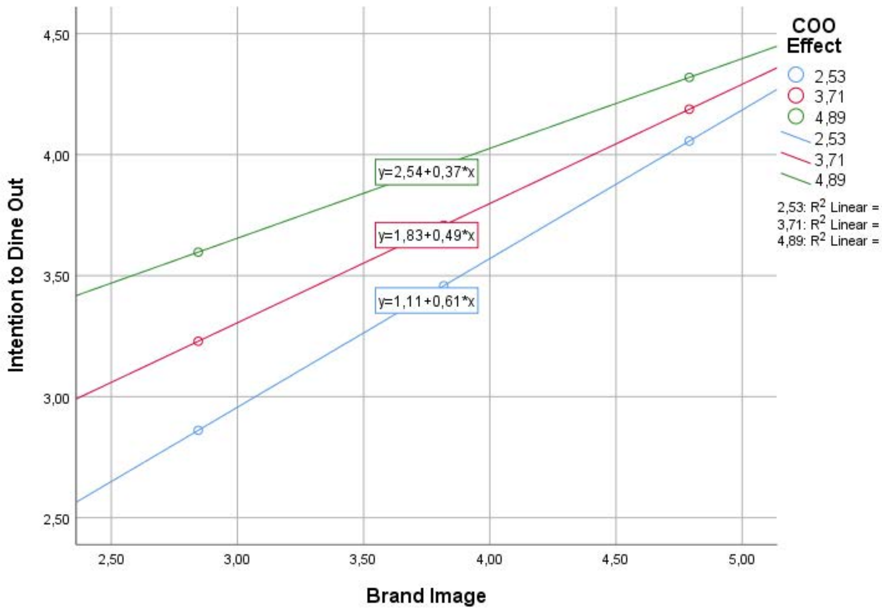

Fig. 4: Slope Test

The graph investigates the relationship between the intention to dine out and brand image at three different levels of the country of origin effect. In line with this, the intention to dine out increases in the same direction while the brand image is positive at all three levels, although this increase is more obvious when the effect level of the country of origin is low. As a result, the country of origin effect has a negative effect on the interaction between intention to dine out and brand image. In this context, it is seen that the customers with a high level of COO effects in restaurants have a lower intention to dine out when they have a high brand image than the tourists with a high perception of COO effects, and in this case, the H9 hypothesis has been accepted.

Table 9: Hypotheses Test Results

Results	Hypotheses	β	*t*	P Values
H_1 supported	Dining involvement -> Brand attitude	0.67	18.17	0.000
H_2 supported	Dining involvement -> Brand trust	0.71	20.99	0.000
H_3 supported	Dining involvement -> Brand image	0.68	18.98	0.000
H_4 supported	Brand attitude -> Intention to dine out	0.15	2.48	0.001
H_5 supported	Brand trust -> Intention to dine out	0.20	3.53	0.000
H_6 supported	Brand image -> Intention to dine out	0.41	6.29	0.000
H_7 supported	Brand attitude -> COO effect ->Intention to dine out	-0.09	-2.73	0,006
H_8 supported	Brand trust -> COO effect ->Intention to dine out	-0.08	-2.25	0.025
H_9 supported	Brand image -> COO effect ->Intention to dine out	-0.10	-2.96	0.003

Table 9 displays the rejection or acceptance status of the hypotheses developed within the scope of the study.

When the t values in the table are examined, the brand attitude of dining involvement, brand trust and brand image; brand attitude, trust and image with intention to dine out; it is seen that the t values of the effect of the country of origin effect on the brand attitude trust and image on the intention to dine out are greater than 2.56 and at the level of significance.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigates the effects of dining involvement on brand image, brand attitude, and brand trust in restaurant businesses, as well as the effects of brand image, brand attitude, and brand trust on intention to dine out, and the moderator effect of COO on these effects. It contributes to the literature in this context by creating a new conceptual model. It was discovered from the study's findings that brand image has an influence on a customer's intentions to dine out. Customers expect stability, innovation, social contribution to society, and a stronger image against competitors for strong brand, and within the scope of this study, customers have a positive image in their minds towards the restaurants they prefer. A positive brand image, in particular, is crucial in stimulating positive restaurant-related feelings in customers (Lee et al., 2009). With these feelings, the customer who has a positive image in his mind will increase his intention to dine out with the intention of visiting the restaurant he prefers again. Studies in the literature support these findings (Yi et al., 2018; Han & Hyun, 2017).

The study also found that brand trust influences consumers' intention to dine out. Customers' intention to dine out can increase with a strong brand trust. Restaurants must demonstrate their ability to serve their customers by providing quality food and good customer service in order to build brand trust. According to the study, customers generally trust the restaurants they prefer in terms of service, quality, food, service, health, and customer welfare, and it can be predicted that with these factors, there would be an increase in the intention to dine out. People are more reluctant to dine out as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak in recent years. The pleasures of dining out were gradually replaced by negative emotions such as stress or anxiety caused by fears of being infected. Customer's intention to dine out may decrease as a consequence of all of these factors. At this point, trust in the brand comes to the fore. The measures taken by trusted restaurants during pandemic conditions may have an impact on the consumers' intention to dine out. The study's findings are consistent with those of (Zhong et al., 2021).

This study's important finding is that brand attitude affects the intention to dine out. Within the scope of the study, customers' attitudes towards the restaurant brand they prefer are generally positive. They like this restaurant brand and think it is a good brand. The country of origin effect was used in the research; the role of moderator in the relationship between brand trust, brand image, brand attitude, and intention to dine out was investigated, and a negative significant result was obtained. According to this study, there is a moderator effect between the COO effect, brand attitude, and intention to dine out. According to the study, consumers regard the country of origin as wealthy, having a high standard of living, and being sympathetic. The positive brand image created by this country in the customer will influence the customer's attitude towards the brand originating from that country and increase their intention to dine out. In their studies on brand attitude, Foroudi et al. (2021), Ahn and Back (2018), and (Han & Ryu, 2009) support this study.

In the study, it was discovered that there is a negative and significant moderator relationship between the COO effect, brand trust, and intention to dine out. According to Jim'enez and San Martin (2010), the COO effect is positively associated with customers' trust in foreign brands, so customers can develop trust and perceive the reliability of a brand if it has a positive country image (Hamzaoui-Essoussi & Merunka, 2006; O'Cass & Grace, 2003) and Literature (Alden, 1993; Foroudi et al., 2019; Jim'enez & San Martin, 2010; Lin & Chen, 2006; Michaelis et al., 2008) supports a positive COO effect, which can increase customers' brand trust and purchase intention. Literature (Alden, 1993; Foroudi et al., 2019; Jim'enez & San Martin, 2010; Lin & Chen, 2006; Michaelis et al., 2008) supports a positive COO effect, which can increase customers' brand trust and purchase intention. In contrast to previous findings, it was found in this study that customers' intentions to dine out decreased when COO effects were used, taking into account the brand attitude.

Another study's finding is that there is a negative relationship between the COO effect on brand image and the intention to dine out. To evaluate the services or products offered, it is crucial to understand what a brand or product means to the customers in the country it represents or is produced in. When choosing services or products, customers intuitively associate the country of origin with specific product features, such as the product's quality and price. In this situation, the customer's purchase behavior may be influenced by how they perceive the brand's origin and image in their minds. According to the findings of this study, the effect of the country of origin brand image and the customer's dining out is contrary to the conclusions of studies by Montanari et al. (2018), Andéhn et al. (2015), and (Lin & Chen, 2006). It was discovered that it had a negative effect on intention.

On the other hand, dining involvement was found to affect brand image, brand trust, and brand attitude after investigating the hypotheses concerning dining involvement in this study. Dining involvement has a significant impact on brand image, brand trust, and brand attitude. Dining involvement reflects a customer's high level of involvement in food. It has a significant role in customers' decision-making process as well. In this context, brand perceptions shaped by the interaction of dining involvement, brand image, and cognitive, affective, and evaluation processes in the customer's mind can be associated as a whole and have an impact on the brand image (Lee et al., 2014). These results coincide with the study's finding that brand image is influenced by food dining involvement. As a result of this study, it was revealed that dining involvement had a significant effect on brand attitude. In his study, Keller (1993) suggested that brand attitude is vital because it often contributes to shaping customers' brand choices. He noticed that brand attitude is a function of characteristics and benefits that make the brand stand out. This result is consistent with the results of (Percy & Rossiter, 1992).

Another hypothesis regarding dining involvement is that it influences brand trust. The study confirmed this theory, which established that dining involvement impacted brand trust. It is acknowledged that these findings are consistent with those found in the literature (Wei et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2011; Rifon et al., 2005; Sanchez-Franco, 2009).

In light of these findings, it is suggested that restaurant owners/professionals strive to boost their customers' perceived brand attitude to benefit from various aspects of a restaurant brand. In restaurants, the brand attitude needs to be put into practice. With a brand attitude, restaurants may build customer loyalty and reliability. In this way, restaurants will be able to attract customers towards them with brand attitude.

The COO of a product can be a crucial clue for many customers when evaluating domestic and foreign products. Customers also rely on their perception of product quality in a particular country and use them to evaluate other products in the same country. Restaurants and brands should consider the COO effect in this situation. Since a positive or negative COO effect influences brand trust, image, and attitude, the COO effect should be regarded as an essential strategic element for restaurants.

This study has some limitations, as there are in every study. One significant limitation is that the study has a limited period, and only restaurant customers are included. Another significant limitation is to limit it to customers for Turkish restaurants. The study can be expanded with studies that include participants from more nationalities and ethnicities by employing different statistical techniques in future research.

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3

Chapter Three

Place-of-origin Effects on Brand Loyalty: American Fast-Food Restaurants Under Examination

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Place-of-origin Effects on Brand Loyalty: American Fast-Food Restaurants Under Examination

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1. Introduction

Global brands looking to maintain solid consumer-brand relationships in a global consumer culture aim to gain acceptance and recognition among their targets by emphasizing their place-of-origin (PoO), which is identified in international marketing studies as the country-of-origin effect. However, articulating the country-of-origin effect and the emotions and attitudes activated when foreign products are evaluated (i.e., animosity, ethnocentrism, and cultural intelligence) is complex and still interesting. First, ethnocentrism, animosity and cultural intelligence can be regarded as emotional-related variables that drive consumer brand evaluation. Consumer ethnocentrism reflects the negative attitude towards foreign products and brands since purchasing them could damage the home economy (Tang et al., 2022). General and international consumer animosity is "the antipathy towards a certain country" (Hoffmann et al., 2011). Moreover, metacognitive cultural intelligence implies that consumers reveal cultural awareness when interacting with elements from other cultures (Moyano et al., 2015).

Second, an inner self-expressive brand comprises consumers' perception that brands reflect one's inner self and shape their own identity playing a vital role in linking PoO-related emotions and consumer behavior (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006); at the time, the brand perceived quality is assessed. In this sense, the proposed model considers the three components mentioned by literature to conform to the consumer perceptions related to the product's country of origin (i.e., cognition, affection and conation) (Ahmed et al., 2013), or in other words, the path cognition-affection-behavior proposed by the cognitive appraisal theoretical approaches (Nyer, 1997).

At this point, the objective of this study is to ascertain the role of emotional-PoO-related variables as antecedents of quality perception and brand loyalty to build brand loyalty towards the United States of America fast-food brands (simplify American will refer to United States of America). Additionally, this study explores the mediating role of inner self-expressive brand. It is well-recognized that country-of-origin alters the evaluation of brands and purchases via persuading cognitive and affective elements (Maher & Carter, 2011).

The proposed model will be tested with a database of Spanish consumers referring to American fast-food restaurant brands because documenting the PoO impact in the service sector is less frequent in the marketing literature (Ahmed et al., 2013).

As contributions of this chapter, the following ones can be highlighted. Several studies have analyzed the influence of variables related to consumer emotions and personality in the scope of the PoO effect, such as animosity (Klein, 2002; Jiménez and San-Martín, 2010; Klein et al., 1998; Cheah et al., 2016) or ethnocentrism (Sharma et al., 1995; García-Gallego et al., 2015; Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Han and Guo, 2018; Bizumic, 2019; Casado-Aranda et al., 2020). As far as we can tell, few research papers have introduced the analysis of variables such as the cultural intelligence (Azab and Holmqvist, 2022) or the self-expressive brand (Aji and Muslichah, 2023) in the field of PoO effect in the service sector. Besides, this study analyses worldwide recognized American fast-food brands, such as McDonald's and KFC. Thus, the present chapter offers a contribution that lies in theory-driven testing of the interaction among country-of-origin-related elements and brand-related variables, which might provide fresh perspectives and adjust how we expect to build brand loyalty in the sector of fast-food restaurants.

2. Theoretical Framework

The social identity theory Tajfel and Turner (1986) is the most employed framework to understand the role that the country-of-origin related variables play in consumer behavior regarding foreign brands (Bourdin et al., 2021; DeQuero-Navarro et al., 2022; Sapic et al., 2019). Samiee and Chabowski (2021) affirm that the self-concept originates, albeit partially, from what an individual perceives as a member of a specific group. This theory proposes that consumers define and adjust their place in society through emotional and cognitive connections and those prescribe attitudes and behaviors (McGowan et al., 2017). As a case in point, marketing literature has posed the idea that in the consumer search for in-group identity, one crucial source could be the brands (Samiee and Chabowski, 2021; Kashif et al., 2015; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Thus, the preference for some brands could help consumers to achieve social belongingness because brands receive meaning from the social group individuals are connected to, which is transferred to the brands' users (Kashif et al., 2015; McGowan et al., 2017). Maybe, that is why international marketing makes calls for attributing greater relevance to linking brand-related variables and country-of-origin variables (Abdellah-Kilani and Zorai, 2019; Magnusson and Westjohn, 2011; Brodie & Benson-Rea, 2016). This specific area is where this study pays attention, since this chapter aims to help comprehend how concepts are linked from the PoO and brand literature in understanding consumer loyalty.

2.1. The Place-of-Origin Effect and Foreign Brand Evaluation and Purchase

The increasing globalization and greater access to international markets have made the origin of the product or brand an attractive attribute for brand differentiation. From a consumer behavioral perspective and following the social identity theory, buyers use well-known brands to obtain the social recognition and identity they seek, awarding the PoO an essential role in consumers' purchase decision process (Lin & Chen, 2006). Similarly, global companies promote the image of the PoO to sway consumers' brand-purchase decisions among consumers in the guest market, defined as the country-of-origin effect by Schooler (1965), which is considered the first study devoted to this research topic.

One of the most widely accepted definitions of the PoO effect was provided in 2003 by Papadopoulos and Heslop, which describes the concept as a collection of PoO-related strengths and weaknesses that increase or decrease the value that a product or service offers to the seller and/or its clients. To express it another way, one could say that this effect reflects how much a product's place of origin influences consumers during the purchase process. In the same vein, Wegapitiya and Dissanayake (2018) refer to the PoO effect as any positive or negative effect reflected in the place of manufacture of the product on consumer preferences and choices.

PoO-effect research is a mature field. In fact, marketing academics have been fascinated by studying customer behavior in relation to brands from other cultures for decades (Ahmed and d'Astous, 2008; Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2003; Al-Sulaiti and Baker, 1998; Claret et al., 2012; Lagerkvist et al., 2014).

Most published manuscripts on the PoO effect have focused on the national level, analyzing the influence of product country-of-origin on consumer behavior (e.g., Klein et al., 1998; Verlegh, 2007; Al-Sulaiti and Baker, 1998; Godey et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2013; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015; Kumar and Gautam, 2021; Qu et al., 2021). Sometimes the topic of discussion is whether consumers favor local products over non-local ones (e.g., Bigné and Sánchez, 2002; Watson and Wright, 2000; Font et al., 2011). In other instances, the discussion focuses on consumers' preferences for foreign goods when the examined country is not a manufacturer of the product category (e.g., Orth and Krškab, 2002; Bruwer and Buller, 2012; Balestrini and Gamble, 2006; Jiménez & San-Martín, 2012).

Recent studies state that PoO still captivates researchers (Abdelwahab et al., 2020; Li, 2022). In the core of the issues that PoO investigation ought to attend are the demand for greater comprehension of the different edges of the PoO effect (e.g., the country of the brand versus the country of manufacture) and their impact on buyer behavior or the suggestion to prioritize brand origin over country-of-origin (Samiee, 2011; Kim and Park, 2010; Usunier, 2011). It is precisely the brand origin area that this study focuses on.

Empirical evidence from prior literature explains that PoO is important for consumers in their brand choices and therefore plays a vital role in promoting the brand across national borders (Kashif et al., 2015). The product's PoO effect affects consumers' assessment and selection of brands by triggering cognitive and affective components in the purchase process (Maher and Carter, 2011; Kashif et al., 2015). While both elements have a dual influence on purchase behavior, the dominant role of consumer affection triggers a favourable or unfavourable disposition towards purchasing foreign brands (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Kashif et al., 2015).

In this line, some of the variables related to the affection have been analyzed, that have had a greater presence in the literature specialized in PoO, which are, among others, animosity towards a particular origin (e.g. Klein, 2002; Jiménez and San-Martín, 2010; Cheah et al., 2016) or the intensity of consumer ethnocentrism (e.g. Sharma et al., 1995; Shimp and Sharma 1987; Samiee et al., 2005; Jiménez and San-Martín, 2010; García-Gallego et al, 2015; Dmitrovic et al., 2009; Han and Guo, 2018; Bizumic, 2019; Casado-Aranda et al., 2020). As discussed above, shoppers pursue recognition and social identity through shopping for globally reputed brands (Lin and Chen, 2006). In this sense, the identification of the self with the brand may play a fundamental role in consumer purchase decision processes. This is the reason why another interesting variable to analyze in the context of the PoO effect and in the realm of affections is the inner self-expressive brand perception, which has already been studied in the field of consumer behavior (e.g., Wallace et al., 2021; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

Several elements have also come together in recent years, resulting in a marked rise in cross-cultural encounters (Lorenz et al., 2017). Some of these, such as increasing levels of globalization, easy access to global markets or increased labour mobility, require interaction between culturally different people (Wang et al., 2011; Lorenz et al. 2017). This, together with other country-specific aspects, exemplifies the diversification of consumers internationally (Chen et al., 2012; Lorenz et al., 2017). This situation presents new challenges for brands in multicultural scenarios where certain conflicts or misunderstandings may arise in the provision and consumption of products or services. In this sense, variables such as cultural intelligence could be key when analyzing the purchasing behavior of consumers within the scope of the analysis of the product's PoO effect. This variable has already been studied in the field of service provision (Lorenz et al., 2017; Azab & Holmqvist, 2022).

Despite previous and remarkable attempts (Magnusson and Westjohn, 2011; Brodie and Benson-Rea, 2016), there is still no common conceptual guidance in studying consumer behavior related to PoO effect, including brand-origin perceptions (Samiee and Chabowski, 2021; Bourdin et al., 2021). What is well accepted in the literature about country-of-origin is that if we want to understand how PoO-related variables affect brand evaluation and purchase, the theoretical model should consider the traditional approach of the three components (i.e., cognition, affection, and conation) (Mandler et al., 2017; Bourdin et al., 2021). Attending to the original model proposed by Papadopoulos et al. (1998), cognition denotes knowledge about services, products and brands; affection denotes the favourable or unfavourable attitudes and emotions regarding the country-of-origin, and conation denotes real purchasing patterns about products or services when the PoO is relevant. In other words, this approach is founded on the idea that the PoO effect on consumer behavior embraces symbolic and emotional components, along with cognitions.

Thus, attending to the holistic model of the country-of-origin-influence proposed by Pharr (2005), ethnocentrism and animosity could be classified as affective antecedents of consumers' evaluation of foreign brands. In addition to these two PoO-related concepts, cultural intelligence arises as a metacognitive element that reflects the consumers' consciousness and awareness of different cultures (Moyano et al., 2015), which ought to be considered when the PoO effect is researched.

The following section presents a structural model composed of the variables mentioned above, explaining each one, as well as the proposed relationships between them based on their possible influence on consumer behavior through variables such as perceptions of quality or brand loyalty.

2.2. Development of a hypothesis

Perceived quality and brand loyalty

When studying the PoO effect, this is usually analyzed on the basis of its influence on consumers' purchasing behavior. Variables such as perceptions of quality or reliability (e.g., Ahmed and d'Astous, 2001; Ahmed et al., 1994; Roth and Romeo, 1992; Watson and Wright, 2000; Veale and Quester, 2009; García-Gallego et al., 2015), preferences (e.g., García-Gallego and Chamorro, 2017; Van Ittersum et al., 2003), attitudes (e.g., Han, 1989; Moon and Jain, 2002; Verlegh et al., 2005), or purchase intentions (e.g., Roth and Romeo, 1992; Veale and Quester, 2009; García-Gallego et al., 2015, García-Gallego and Chamorro, 2018), among others, have been studied in the specialized literature.

Perceived quality is "the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority" (Zeithaml, 1988). Brand loyalty can be termed conative loyalty (Oliver, 1999; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), or the intensity to which a customer is determined to continue buying a certain brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). As was already established, there is empirical proof that the PoO effect affects how consumers see the quality and reliability of a product (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1999; Pharr, 2005). Moreover, it has been corroborated that the size of the PoO effect is larger when measured on quality perceptions and smaller for purchase intentions, with attitudes remaining at an intermediate level. That is, the effect diminishes as it moves to further stages of the buying decision process (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Agrawal and Kamakura, 1999; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995).

Concerning the relationship between different consumer behavioral variables, the specialized literature has amply demonstrated the positive relationship between quality perceptions and purchase preferences or intentions and even actual purchase behavior (García-Gallego and Chamorro, 2018; Van Ittersum et al., 2003; Lee and Lockshin, 2011; Kashif et al., 2015; Erickson et al., 1984; García-Gallego et al., 2015; González & Villanueva, 2000). This study assesses the effect of quality perceptions on brand loyalty. As mentioned above, brand loyalty may be considered as how devoted the consumer is to repurchasing the brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Therefore, it is expected that consumers who perceive brand quality will be more likely to buy the brand or, if they have consumed it before, to repurchase it and show loyalty towards it. Therefore, it is suggested that:

H_1: Perceived quality positively influences brand loyalty

Inner self-expressive brand

The PoO effect, as previously mentioned, affects consumers' appraisal and decision-making via altering affective and cognitive components of attitudes (Kashif et al., 2015; Maher and Carter, 2011). In this regard, the dominant role of consumer affective drivers over cognitive processes has been demonstrated, with emotions triggering a favourable or unfavourable disposition towards purchasing imported products (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Kashif et al., 2015).

In this context, the inner self-expressive brand is a personal-related variable that could influence consumers' purchasing behavior towards products and brands from different origins. Inner-self expressive brand is defined as "the extent to which consumers perceive that a brand reflects their inner self ('the kind of person I truly am inside')", according to (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Sometimes, consumers attempt to state who they would want to be rather than who they actually are (Wallace et al., 2021; Markus and Kunda, 1986) and, individuals use brands to express themselves (Aaker, 1999). Self-expressive branding is taken into account in existing literature when cultivating successful brand results (Wallace et al., 2021).

Self-expressive brands that show the capacity to mirror the self are those that consumers perceive to contribute to their image, display their self-concept, and communicate their identities (Ruane and Wallace, 2015; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). According to Wallace et al. (2021) and Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), social identity theory supports that customers who identify with a brand are driven by the need for self-definition. Thus, brands are used to achieve the personal expression of oneself (Morgan & Townsend, 2022).

Some studies have suggested that brand loyalty is impacted by self-expressive brand with the help of some mediator variables (Tsiotsou, 2010; Vania & Sudiono, 2020). In the same line as this study, other authors have demonstrated a positive and direct impact of self-expressive brand perception on brand loyalty (e.g., Ruane and Wallace, 2015; Lee and Workman, 2015; Ramadhina, 2017; Aji and Muslichah, 2023).

The following assertion is made in light of the aforementioned:

H_2: Inner self-expressive brand positively influences brand loyalty

Ethnocentrism and animosity

The PoO effect is induced by a series of affective constructs from fields such as psychology or sociology (Pharr, 2005). Among these variables is consumer ethnocentrism. It is a concept that emerges from the study of intergroup behavior and relations and, as mentioned above, has its roots in the discipline of sociology, a field in which one of the first definitions we can find is that of Sumner (1906), quoted in Sharma et al. (1995), who defines ethnocentrism as: "the view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. . . . Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself as superior, exalts its own divinities and looks with contempt on out-siders."

Shimp and Sharma (1987) modified the definition for use in the context of marketing, employing the variable consumer ethnocentrism to express customers' views on the morality or appropriateness of purchasing items from other countries. A high level of ethnocentrism implies a negative perception towards all foreign origins (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). That is, it is a negative bias towards everything that comes from abroad, without being explicit about a particular origin (Balabanis & Siamagka, 2017).

The literature specialized in the PoO effect has amply demonstrated the influence of ethnocentrism on consumer purchasing behavior (e.g., García-Gallego et al., 2015). Kashif et al. (2015) find preliminary evidence that PoO associations regarding the origin of brands and the affective variables triggered by the origin (e.g., ethnocentrism) determine consumers' service quality assessment and preference in foreign markets. Particularly, numerous studies have demonstrated that high levels of ethnocentrism favour quality perceptions and purchase intentions towards local products (Dmitrovic et al., 2009; Luque et al., 2004; Vadhanavisala, 2014; García-Gallego et al., 2015; Kashif et al., 2015; García-Gallego & Chamorro, 2017; 2018). Therefore, the subsequent affirmation is anticipated:

H_3: Ethnocentrism negatively influences perceived quality

Like ethnocentrism, animosity is an affective-based variable that comes from the field of psychology. Consumer animosity was introduced into the marketing literature by (Klein et al., 1998). According to these authors, the term animosity is meant to describe individuals' negative feelings towards a country that harmed their nation in past events. In other words, it is a form of consumer protest or vindication of the political and organizational behaviors of one country towards their nation or another by rejecting the former's products. Specifically, Klein et al. (1998) define animosity as "the remnants of antipathy towards a country related to previous or ongoing military, political or economic events, which will be reflected in the purchasing behavior of consumers in international markets."

The influence of animosity on consumers' purchasing behavior towards given origins has been demonstrated in the literature through the years (Klein et al., 1998; Nes et al., 2012; Hoffmann et al., 2011; Abdelwahab et al., 2022), also in restaurants service context (Kim, 2019). Expressly, Rice and Wongtada (2007) affirm that "consumers' attitudes and behavior regarding a brand might be a consequence of their feelings of animosity as well as feelings of affinity towards a country associated with the brand."

Adina et al. (2015) suggest that consumers use brands from specific origins in an act of self-expression if the origin is affine with them. The prior literature has circumscribed evidence, which shows that if consumers feel any kind of animosity or antipathy towards some specific brand origin, it could prompt that they do not match with the values and symbolism that a brand represents (Rice & Wongtada, 2007). Consequently, consumers might not use such brand to express themselves. Due to all the above, it would be logical to think that consumers with feelings of antipathy towards a given place would not feel represented by products and brands from that origin. According to this logic, one could think that this type of consumer would therefore not feel identified with the products and brands originating in the country towards which he or she shows animosity and would not want his or her values to be associated with those of his or herself.

Accordingly, the next hypothesis is proposed:

H_4: *Animosity negatively influences the inner self-expressive brand*

Animosity has also been analyzed as an antecedent of ethnocentrism because, according to some authors, these two variables could be related (Nijssen and Douglas, 2004; Shankarmahesh, 2006). Hence, animosity could be seen as an affective-based construct that triggers a protecting sense and enhances solidarity with the group, national defence behavior, or ethnocentrism (Jiménez & San-Martín, 2010). The seminal work of animosity (Klein et al., 1998) included ethnocentrism as part of the model to explain consumer purchasing behavior but this study does mention ethnocentrism as an antecedent of animosity, which was later proved by subsequent studies (Nijssen and Douglas, 2004; Jiménez and San-Martín, 2010; Hoffmann et al., 2011; De Nisco et al., 2016).

It is argued that the animosity of consumers towards a given country can cause a general feeling of distrust towards everything external and an attitude of protection of one's own, which would manifest in adopting ethnocentric postures (Nijssen & Douglas, 2004). In a similar vein, De Nisco et al. (2016) suggest that external economic animosity stimulates protective and solidarity instincts in consumers developing an ethnocentric reaction. The perception of external threats to the group causes the group to close in on itself, and ethnocentrism is reinforced as a warning or safeguard measure.

Consequently, animosity is a crucial factor to take into account when researching consumers' opinions of foreign goods, particularly if this factor can heighten consumers' level of ethnocentrism. Jiménez and San-Martín (2010) found a significant effect of animosity on the level of consumer ethnocentrism for products with high-implication (i.e., automobiles), but suggested to test this relationship for products with lower-implication (e.g., fast-food).

Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_5: *Animosity positively influences ethnocentrism*

Metacognitive cultural intelligence

As explained above, several factors have led to a significant increase in cultural interactions in recent years (Lorenz et al., 2017). The way business is done has changed as a result of globalization, as well as managers' perspectives on what way to cope with culturally varied contexts (Gooden et al., 2017). This is the reason why cultural intelligence emerges as an important variable in business-consumer relations, mainly in the field of services, where different values and cultural norms can incite misinterpretations between firms' employees and consumers (Bhawuk and Brislin, 2000 and Cushner and Brislin, 1996; in Lorenz et al. 2017) and adjustments in the service experience might be necessary.

Cultural intelligence describes the person's capacity to work effectively across cultures, including corporate, national, and ethnic aspects of cultures (Earley and Ang, 2003; Gooden et al., 2017). Cultural intelligence is "a specific form of intelligence focused on an individual's ability to grasp … in [purchases] situations of cultural diversity" (Erez et al., 2013). Ang and Dyne (2008) state that cultural intelligence, in its metacognitive dimension, is the degree to which a person will adapt to and employ techniques that are appropriate for the circumstance in which he or she is functioning. It describes a person's knowledge of culture when engaging in different cultural situations. Before and during encounters, people with high levels of metacognitive cultural intelligence are aware of the cultural contexts of others, and they are conscious of when and how to use their cultural knowledge (Ang et al., 2007).

There is a scarce investigation on cultural intelligence in the service sector, especially from the consumer point of view when foreign brands are assessed. One exception is the paper of Rahman et al. (2021) in the tourism sector, and another is the paper of Azab and Holmqvist (2022) in the retail service setting. Following the recommendation by Lorenz et al. (2017), in this paper, we will pay attention to the metacognitive dimension of cultural intelligence, as it is the main indicator of service providers' adaptation to different cultural contexts. As mentioned, its inclusion is proposed as a contribution to literature.

The literature has shown that the successful provision of a service may partially depend on the provider's ability to adapt to the consumer's cultural expectations (Zeithaml et al., 1993; Lorenz et al., 2017). Due to the cultural differences between the customer and the service provider, there is a chance for a negative service review (Lorenz et al., 2017; Sharma et al., 2012).

A pioneer relationship between cultural intelligence and consumer animosity could be postulated. It might be logical to think that individuals with diminished cultural intelligence have lower abilities to adapt to diverse cultural contexts and, therefore, might show higher animosity towards certain origins due to their lack of adaptation. For example, Nes et al. (2012) found that Norwegian consumers' dislike of America (USA) stemmed from their different cultures. Along the same line, Kalliny et al. (2016) find that managers that show higher levers of cultural intelligence understand and grasp cultural differences more accurately in case of facing high animosity feelings regarding a country. Analogous, we could guess that when consumers show a higher ability to comprehend situations of cultural diversity in a consumption context, this could mitigate the hostility towards a specific origin.

Because of the above, the following hypothesis is postulated:

H_6: Metacognitive cultural intelligence negatively influences animosity

Figure 1 shows the hypotheses postulated in the structural model to analyze the relationships proposed for the variables explained above.

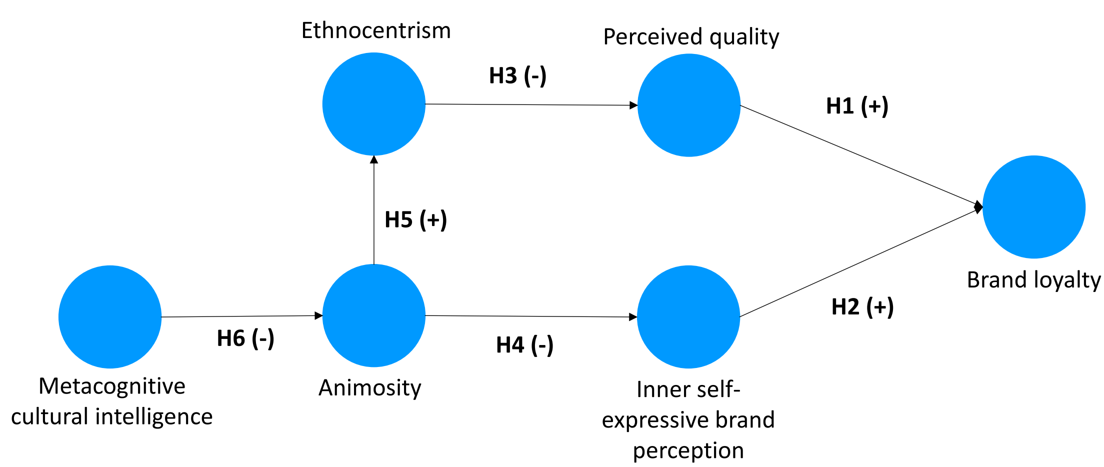

Fig. 1: Proposed structural model

3. Research Methodology

Concerning the product under analysis, the specialized literature displays reports on the PoO effect regarding industrial products (Edwards et al., 2007; Ahmed and d'Astous, 1995; Chen et al., 2011) and, above all, on consumer products (Baldauf et al., 2009; Chamorro et al., 2015; Font et al., 2011; Veale and Quester, 2009; Lee and Lockshin, 2011; Godey et al., 2012; Claret et al., 2012; Lagerkvist al., 2014; Kumar and Gautam, 2021). The service sector is also present in PoO research, albeit to a lesser extent. Some examples are the studies by Kraft and Chung (1992) regarding export advisory services, by Shaffer and O'Hara (1995) about the procurement of legal services, by Lascu and Giese (1995) relating to retail services, by Bruning (1997) on airline service, by Ahmed et al. (2002) on cruises, by Lin and Chen (2006) on insurance companies and catering services, or García-Gallego and Chamorro (2017), on financial institutions, as well as the catering service (i.e., restaurants) has also attracted the interest of scholars in PoO and brand research (Kashif et al., 2015), as is the case for this study.

Notably, this chapter evaluated the service category of fast-food restaurants. That symbolizes a very cutthroat market (Min and Min, 2013), with extensive-ranging substitutes that create intense competition between alternative fast-food brands from different origins (Kashif et al., 2015; Etemad-Sajadi & Rizzuto, 2013). Also, prior studies have found that the clue of origin and related constructs in this specific service category is essential for purchase decisions (Sapic et al., 2019). More than ever, American-brand fast-food restaurants are in the interest of research since American fast-food brands lead the market of fast-food restaurants worldwide. Spain is not the exception since some Spanish fast-food options are tough competitors (Statista, 2021; Lopez, 2021). In this sense, prior literature has well-recognized some fast-food-specific brands linked to American (i.e., USA) origin, such as McDonald's and KFC (Schröder and McEachern, 2005; Kashif et al., 2015). We pay attention to 'American brands' because the association of PoO and brand is recognized in literature as a more stable notion and require less effort from consumers to ascertain the origin (Usunier, 2011).

A questionnaire was designed to collect information employing items from prior literature and tailored to the studied context to preserve content validity. The scale employed to assess ethnocentrism was adjusted from Klein et al. (2006), which agreed with Tang et al. (2022) recommendations. The indicators of animosity follow the suggestions by Hoffmann et al. (2011) and Nes et al. (2012) to measure general animosity. The metacognitive cultural intelligence scale adapted from Moyano et al. (2015) helps us to assess consumers' cultural awareness from different cultures when evaluating service encounters (Lorenz et al., 2017). Carroll and Ahuvia's (2006) study was followed to decide on the items to measure the inner self-expressive brand and brand loyalty. Finally, the scale from Sweeney and Soutar (2001) and Kashif et al. (2015) measures the perceived quality of fast-food service. The variables were operationalized on Likert scales from 1 to 5, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agreed."

The survey was initially created in English and then translated into Spanish. We worked with two native English speakers and Spanish professors to ensure the questionnaire was accurate and clear. The translation/back-translation method was employed, paying attention to the suggestions of earlier researchers in the subject (e.g., Brislin, 1986; Behling & Law 2000). Furthermore, a questionnaire pre-test was carried out with six fast-food consumers to discard confusing and vague writing details and safeguard the readability and precision of the questionnaire.

The information obtained from 287 clients of American-brands fast-food restaurants was gathered using face-to-face questionaries. Following our purpose of identifying fast-food buyers, a targeted non-probability sampling technique was used based on quizzing people who patronize American-brands fast-food restaurants in Spain. Regarding our sample characteristics, the typical fast-food buyers in Spain are men (53.7%) and women (46.3%) younger than 44 years old (90.1%). They usually finished high school (53.7%) and earned a monthly net income lower than 1000€ (74.6%). There are similarities between the profile of our sample and the data reported in the scarce open studies about Spanish buyers of fast-food (INE, 2021), which are described as men (49.1%) and women (50.9%) younger than 44 years old (63.2%).

4. Analyses and Results

First, univariate and bivariate analyses with SPSS were developed to exclude data with major abnormalities. Then an exploratory factor analysis was developed to confirm the unidimensionality of the latent constructs.

Second, the partial least squares structural equation modelling method was implemented with SmartPLS 4.0 software package. This method was selected to analyze the research data since it is widely accepted in the international marketing research area (Donthu et al., 2021), especially in studies where reflective and formative constructs coexist (Hair et al., 2019; Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012).

The adequate fit of the model has supported (Henseler et al., 2016). The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the normed fit index (NFI) have the following values: 0.053 and 0.904, respectively. Also, it should be mentioned that through the screening procedure, two items from the ethnocentrism scale were eliminated, and 1 item from the loyalty scale too because they show low loadings. Likewise, 1 item from the metacognitive cultural intelligence scale was dropped since its weight was insignificant.

Subsequently, and attending Hair et al. (2019), the reliability of the measurement model was tested using Cronbach's alpha (α) and the composite reliability (CR) coefficients of each construct. The value of α-Cronbach was greater than the advised cut-off value of 0.7, and the CR exceeded 0.8, implying adequate internal consistency (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) from every variable with values over the cutoff of 0.5 (Hair et al. 2011; Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Hair et al. 2019), showing acceptable convergent validity. In the case of the formative construct (i.e., metacognitive cultural intelligence), the multicollinearity must be addressed (Diamantopolous & Winklhofer, 2001). The values of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and the tolerance allow us to discard any multicollinearity problem since the VIF and the tolerance values are, in all the cases, < 5 and > 0.1, respectively (see Table 1) (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 1: Scales and results of measurement

Variable	Item detail	Loadings	α-Cronbach	CR	AVE
Brand loyalty	This is the only brand of fast-food that I will buy.	0.830***	0.749	0.856	0.665
	When I go to fast-food restaurant, I don't even notice competing fast-food brands.	0.808***			
	If my fast-food restaurant is out of service, I will postpone buying fast-food or go look for other of its restaurants.	Deleted			
	I'll 'do without' rather than buy another fast-food brand.	0.809***			
Inner self-expressive brand	This fast-food brand symbolizes the kind of person I really am inside.	0.938***	0.949	0.963	0.868
	This fast-food brand reflects my personality	0.941***			
	This fast-food brand is an extension of my inner self.	0.931***			
	This fast-food brand mirrors the real me.	0.917***			

Perceived quality	This fast-food brand is of good quality.	0.941***	0.888	0.913	0.637
	This fast-food brand has consistent quality.	0.918***			
	This fast-food brand has an acceptable standard of quality.	0.952***			
	This fast-food brand is the best.	0.941***			
	This fast-food brand is better than others brands.	0.918***			
	I can trust about the high quality of this fast-food brand.	0.952***			
Ethnocentrism	A Spanish should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Spanish business and causes unemployment.	Deleted	0.801	0.869	0.624
	A real Spanish should always buy Spanish-made products.	0.763***			
	Only those products that are unavailable in Spain should be imported.	Deleted			
	Spanish products, first, last, and foremost.	0.750***			
	Spanish should not buy foreign products, because this hurts Spanish business and causes unemployment.	0.834***			
	Spanish consumers who purchase products made in other countries are responsible for putting their fellow Spanish out of work	0.810***			
Animosity	I dislike USA.	0.891***	0.882	0.927	0.808
	I feel anger towards USA.	0.927***			
	I do not like the mentality of people from USA.	0.880***			
		Weights	VIF	Tolerance	
Metacognitive cultural intelligence	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.	Deleted			
	I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from other cultures.	0.647***	1,693	0.591	
	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.	0.975***	2,261	0.442	
	I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.	0.834***	2,018	0.496	

Note: ***p<0.001

The square roots of the AVE values were bigger than the inter-construct correlations (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Richter et al., 2016), and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) displayed values smaller than 0.9, so confirming the discriminant validity of the scales (Henseler et al., 2015) (Table 2).

Table 2: Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio and correlation matrix

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Brand loyalty	**0.816**	0.651	0.310	0.254	0.066
(2) Inner self-expressive brand	0.553	**0.932**	0.343	0.106	0.133
(3) Perceived quality	0.276	0.330	**0.798**	0.138	0.118
(4) Ethnocentrism	0.204	0.099	0.125	**0.790**	0.279
(5) Animosity	0.006	-0.120	-0.101	0.240	**0.899**

Note: The square root of the AVE is shown on the diagonal (in bold). Under the diagonal are displayed the correlations between reflective constructs, and up the diagonal is the HTMT.

In addition, the literature suggests that it is vital to rule common method bias (CMB) out in behavioral research. Following Podsakoff et al. (2003), a statistical technique could identify the method bias. To check the CMB issue, we use the single-factor test of Harman (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Malhotra et al., 2006). Harman's test shows that CMB may be flawed if the first factor accounts for more than 50% of the variation (Fuller et al., 2016). A single unrotated factor accounted 25% of the data variation, according to the results of the exploratory factor analysis that loaded all items onto one factor. The aggregated variance of all factors explains 72.45% of the total variance. Hence, CMB problems were ruled out.

After checking the model's good measurement characteristics, we evaluated the proposed structured model and related hypotheses. The R-square value of the final dependent variable (brand loyalty) is 0.311 (Falk & Miller, 1992). Following the testing, Table 3 shows the results of the hypothesized relationships. The findings disclose a direct positive effect of perceived quality (β: 0.105; $p < 0.01$) and inner self-expressive brand (β: 0.518; $p < 0.001$) on brand loyalty. Nevertheless, the findings do not support the impact of ethnocentrism on perceived quality (β: 0.125; $p > 0.05$). Moreover, the analysis also confirmed the direct positive effect of animosity on ethnocentrism (β: 0.240; $p < 0.001$) and the inverse effect of animosity on inner self-expressive brand (β: -0.120; $p < 0.001$). Lastly, the findings reveal a negative impact of metacognitive cultural intelligence (β: -0.188; $p < 0.001$;) on animosity.

Table 3: Structural model estimation

Path	**β**
H1: Perceived quality → Brand loyalty	0.105**
H2: Inner self-expressive brand → Brand loyalty	0.518***
H3: Ethnocentrism → Perceived quality	$0.125^{n.s.}$
H4: Animosity → Inner self-expressive brand	-0.120 ***
H5: Animosity → Ethnocentrism	0.240***
H6: Metacognitive cultural intelligence → Animosity	-0.188***

Notes: ***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.01$; n.s.: non-significant

Additionally, the mediator role of inner self-expressive brand in the proposed model is explored with the help of SPSS PROCESS macro model 4 with 5,000 bootstrapping samples (Hayes, 2013). Results suggest a full mediator role of inner self-expressive brand in the direct impact of animosity on brand loyalty, since when we control the mediator, the effect of animosity on brand loyalty became non-significant (Coeff: 0.053; $p>0.05$; Confidence Interval: Upper limit of -0.029 and Lower limit of 0.136).

5. Conclusions

In recent literature, it is well recognized that PoO influences brand evaluation and purchases by persuading the cognitive and affective domains (Maher & Carter, 2011). In this context, the core purpose of this chapter was to ascertain the role of affective-based-PoO variables as antecedents of quality perception and brand loyalty towards American fast-food brands, and supplementary, to find out the mediating role of inner self-expressive brand between animosity and brand loyalty.

Regarding the main objective of our research and as other authors suggested (Van Ittersum et al., 2003; Erickson et al., 1984; Lee and Lockshin, 2011; González and Villanueva, 2000; Kashif et al., 2015; García-Gallego & Chamorro, 2018), there is a direct link between quality perceptions and purchase behavior and intentions.

Apart from quality perceptions (more objective path), inner self-expressive brand (more affective path) can lead to loyalty to the brand. Thus, our results align with other research such as Ruane and Wallace (2015), Lee and Workman (2015), and Aji and Muslichah (2023), although none of these studies tests this relation in the case of fast-food brands.

Furthermore, animosity plays a negative role to gain loyalty as it reduces the inner self-expressive brand perception and the implicit affective brand-consumer bonding, which in turn would reduce brand loyalty, giving empirical support to previous theoretical allusions (Rice & Wongtada, 2007). In this way and according to the supplementary purpose of our study, the inner self-expressive brand plays a key full mediating role in our cognitive-affection-behavior path underlying in the proposed model.

Moreover, the antipathy towards a country reflected in animosity also reinforces the protection of the group the consumer belongs to (ethnocentrism), which will involve buying products from the country where the consumer lives and not foreign products from the country towards which the consumer exhibits negative feelings and emotions. A similar result was found for other sectors by Jiménez and San-Martín (2010) and (De Nisco et al., 2016).

Contrary to expected, ethnocentrism does not affect perceived quality in the case of American fast-food brands. Maybe ethnocentrism can influence more on the evaluation of product quality for domestic brands than for foreign brands, as suggests the study done by (Supphellen & Rittenburg, 2001). Another possible explanation of this non-significant relation can be related to the fact that fast-food brands are clearly and firmly positioned in Spain (Statista, 2021; Lopez, 2021) and might already surpass the initial rejection barrier. Anyway, future research should analyze how the testing sector affects the ethnocentrism-perceived quality relation.

Finally, and taking into account that international marketing literature suggests that culture is important during service provision (Lorenz et al., 2017), our results show the importance of metacognitive cultural intelligence to reduce feelings of animosity, as other authors suggested from managerial perspective (Kalliny et al., 2016). To the extent of our knowledge, this link has been almost unexplored in fast-food literature and consumer perspective.

Apart from offering valuable insight into academic literature, this study allows us to outline interesting managerial implications. Firstly, this study shows the importance of knowing the target, especially for new brands launched to the market, precisely if some sort of animosity is detected. If this is the case, our results reveal a protective factor, which is metacognitive cultural intelligence, which can reduce or mitigate animosity and, in this way, to enhance emotional bonding and, finally, brand loyalty. The literature has shown that the successful provision of a service may partially depend on the provider's ability to adapt to the cultural expectations of the consumer (Zeithaml et al., 1993; Lorenz et al., 2017). In this sense, it seems key to knowing the cultural values of the market to avoid the generation or increase of animosity and promote a short brand launch adoption and diffusion (to shorten the first stages of the product-life cycle) (Flight et al., 2011). Prior literature suggested that cultural intelligence has been critical to successful business interactions in international markets (Gooden et al., 2017). Thus, managers of firms must be aware of the implications of cultural intelligence for organizational performance if they hope to function effectively in global marketplaces.

This research can help not only new brands, but also positioned brands to reinforce brand loyalty. Existing literature considers self-expressive branding to nurture positive brand results (Wallace et al., 2021). In this sense, we must remember that relational marketing strategies can be applied to brands to transmit personal values and enhance and strengthen an emotional consumer-brand bond through inner self-expressive brand. Advertising and communication campaigns should focus on cultural and emotional values that can favour inner self-expressive brand and, in the end, brand loyalty.

Taking the previous discussion into account, this chapter contributes to academic literature as few studies (i.e., Azab and Holmqvist, 2022; Rice and Wongtada, 2007) have introduced the analysis of variables such as cultural intelligence or the self-expressive brand in the field of PoO in service sector. In addition, this piece of research focuses on how foreign fast-food brands can get brand loyalty in the service sector, which is an under-researched field of a topic in PoO literature to the extent of our knowledge.

Despite the current academic and substantial practical implications, some limitations should be noted for potential future study topics that need more investigation. First, this research examines just one country (Spanish consumers evaluating American brands) and one sector, fast-food restaurant brands, which restricted the generalization of results. Hence, a larger sample size would be strongly advised for future research with the goal of generalization. Second, although this study contributes to the literature on country-of-origin, it only used cross-sectional data collection to investigate variables intervening in a cognition-affection-behavior path. Accordingly, further studies –in particular, longitudinal ones- are highly advised to capture the changes that may occur over time. Finally, this study focuses on relevant brand-related and one affective-based PoO variable, but further research could enhance the current understanding of country-of-origin effect by examining more factors that this study did not take into consideration (i.e., brand globalness or localness) (Bourdin et al., 2021).

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4

Chapter four

Country of Origin Effects on Service Evaluation: The Case of Domestic and Ethnic Restaurants

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Country of Origin Effects on Service Evaluation: The Case of Domestic and Ethnic Restaurants

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1. Introduction

Like spoken language, the food system contains and conveys the culture of its practitioner; it is the repository of traditions and of collective identity. It is therefore an extraordinary vehicle of self-representation and of cultural exchange—a means of establishing identity, to be sure, but also the first way of entering into contact with a different culture (Montanari, 2006).

The range of cuisines experienced by consumers in their own countries and abroad has increased exponentially in recent decades. Driven by globalization and higher rates of migration and general human mobility combined with changes in lifestyle and a greatly diversified gastronomy sector, media exposure (Clemes et al., 2013), this proliferation is reflected in the growth and value of the global ethnic food market, reported to be worth some 39.5 billion USD in 2021 and expected to expand at an annual rate of 8.7 percent to reach 70.8 billion USD by 2028 (Grand View Research, 2022). At the same time, with the increase in mediatization, (the influence and interaction of mass media with society's other sectors. How media spreads to, becomes intertwined with and influences other fields or social institutions, such as politics, war, and religion.), the increasing influence and importance of external audiences have made the images that countries project ever more important (Buhmann and Ingenhoff, 2015). Culinary and restaurant image studies, which combine the countries' tangible and intangible cultural heritage with their current capabilities, have been added to the areas associated with the country's image. In this context there is a growing interest among scholars in the complex interrelationship between 'cuisine image' and country image.

Proceeding from a recognition of the "potential of everything related to a country to affect the image of that country positively or negatively" (Aydin et al., 2021), country-of-origin studies have expanded in scope to explore how country image affects consumers' attitudes, intentions and actions towards restaurants and how experiences and perceptions of national cuisines affect country image. Research in this stream has established that country image has a significant influence on consumers' perceptions of national cuisines and their willingness to patronize ethnic restaurants (Martinelli and De Canio, 2015, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2020; Philips et al., 2013; Yoo, 2018). This overall finding reflects the extent to which the production, service and supply of food are associated with national traditions, histories and cultures, with certain foods often being "*the most dominant thing known about cultures*" (Metro-Roland, 2013). Indeed, recent studies have revealed that even the brand image of famous chefs can affect not only consumers' images of a particular restaurant but a country's culinary image as a whole, further influencing their travel intentions to certain destinations (Taspinar, 2020). The impact of a country's image on consumer perceptions towards the food and restaurants of that nation, including negative perceptions, is starkly evident in the 20 percent decrease seen in the revenues of Chinese restaurants in New York in the first months after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Lalley, 2020), with a similar decline reported in their share of "connections" (i.e. phone calls, reservations, deliveries, etc.) as compared to Italian and American restaurants (Dixon, 2020). Notwithstanding such evidence, only limited and scattered research has yet been conducted into the specific interrelationship between country image and cuisine image (Martinelli & De Canio, 2015).

This chapter provides a state-of-the-art review of relevant research on the relationship between country image and consumers' experience of restaurants, including key findings from the literature on country-of-origin effects and studies in the fields of hospitality and tourism. Mapping the role of restaurants in the construction of country images is more essential than ever at a time of growing interest in gastrodiplomacy and when restaurants worldwide are fiercely competing to develop 'authentic' service elements, world cuisines are being increasingly synthesized, restaurant offers are becoming more diverse, and more and more cooking schools are opening to train quality chefs. At a time when country images become more important with globalization and medialization (Buhmann and Ingenhoff, 2015) by summarizing current understanding and indicating directions for future research on this topic, this chapter not only contributes conceptually to the literature but also aims to inform the actions of stakeholders on the ground, including the international and cultural relations, strategies of policymakers and restaurant managers.

The following section provides a concise overview of relevant literature on the relationship between restaurants and country image, with a particular focus on three seminal research streams. The second section introduces a distinction between 'domestic' restaurants located inside their countries of origin and 'ethnic' restaurants outside their countries of origin and reviews the main effects of these two types of restaurants in relation to country image. The third section reviews the salient factors for understanding the interrelationship of restaurants and country image, including prior knowledge and familiarity, as well as the specific role of restaurant service elements such as food, employees and atmosphere. In the final section, the findings of current research on the relationship between restaurants, country-of-origin image and consumer behavior are related to relevant theories to identify avenues for future research and to provide practical recommendations for restaurateurs, policymakers and other stakeholders.

2. Three Seminal Lines of Research on Restaurants and Country Image

Research on the constitution and effects of country image has been conducted across several major social scientific research domains (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015). Most notably, the scholarship on country-of-origin effects has recently expanded to include the role of restaurants, while relevant research has also been undertaken in the fields of gastrodiplomacy and tourism and hospitality studies.

2.1. Country of Origin Studies: Expanding in Scope from Products to Service and Restaurants

Scholarship on the constitution and effects of country of origin image conceptualizes country images as multi-faceted constructs that evolve over time and which both influence and are influenced by prevailing stereotypical portrayals and perceptions of products from specific countries (Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994). The effects of country of origin image on consumers' evaluations of products were first empirically documented by Schooler (1965) in an experiment that revealed 'product bias' by recording variations in the study, where participants' assessments of fruit-juice products remain identical in every respect except for the names of the countries on their 'Made in' labels. Since then, scholars have generally treated country-of-origin image as an attitudinal construct and analyzed this phenomenon through the lens of attitude theory. Over the years, many additional dimensions affecting country-of-origin image have been incorporated in analysis, including political, economic and technological dimensions (Martin & Eroglu, 1993), as well as the role of factors such as education-level and 'work ethic' in people's beliefs and attitudes towards the products of different countries (Heslop et al., 2004). Research into the multi-dimensional effects of country-of-origin image, including cognitive and affective factors, has shown that the willingness of consumers to purchase products from a certain country increases if they perceive that country as being economically 'developed' and 'free' (Wang & Lamb, 1983) and its people as 'competent' (Chattalas et al., 2008; Maher & Carter, 2011). Studies have repeatedly confirmed that consumers' perceptions of the quality and value of products and brands vary not only according to the perceived level of development of these products' country of origin (Guo, 2013; Zhou and Hui, 2003) but also the global, ethnocentric orientation of consumers (Guo, 2013) and the particular type of product in question (Laroche et al., 2002). In a cross-cultural study of the effects of subcultural differences on country and product evaluations, for example, Kotler and Gertner (2002) found that factors such as history, geography, art, music, and famous citizens all affect these evaluations.

Scholars have also explored these dimensions and factors of country-of-origin image in relation to services. Unlike perceptions of tangible products, evaluations of services are based on performance and experience, with the value and quality elements of services being individually relativistic, heterogeneous, not 'stocked' and intangible (Bruning, 2007). Studies have established that the perceived quality of services is affected by perceptions of the country-of-origin of these services and that consumers also rank countries based on their perceptions of the services these countries provide (Berentzen et al., 2008; Thelen et al., 2007). The scholarship on country-of-origin image effects on quality perceptions of various types of services has thus extended in scope to explore the elements of service in various settings in relation to country-of-origin image, including the services offered by restaurants. As compared to other types of services, restaurants are exceptional in their capacity to convey a rich assortment of cultural elements and cues about their countries of origin (Montanari, 2006). Moreover, the willingness of consumers to experiment and accept new culinary and cultural experiences in restaurants is likely to be greater than for other services insofar as the risk factors involved are likely to be assessed as much lower than in the case of services such as banking and transport (Bruning, 2007). This combination of low perceived risk and richness of cultural aspects makes restaurants a topic of particular relevance for scholars and policymakers alike, hence the growing interest in country-of-origin affects in gastrodiplomacy, tourism and hospitality studies.

2.2. The Perspective of Gastrodiplomacy

Defined summarily as the use of food for the purpose of national branding (Wilson, 2011), gastrodiplomacy has been described as a strategy of "winning hearts and minds through the stomach" (Rockower, 2012), with the primary aim being to benefit from the establishment of "tangible and emotional transnational connections" through national cuisines (Lee & Kim, 2021). As such, the use of national cuisines and foods in building a national brand is also an attempt to manage country-of-origin effects. In some cases, notably Thailand and Singapore, systematic efforts have been undertaken to gain global attention and promote country image through cuisine (Lee & Kim, 2021). By forging a direct link between cuisine and country (Aykan, 2016), these gastrodiplomatic efforts are aimed at harnessing positive country-of-origin effects to build, manage and convey a positive country image for their foreign publics. The role of restaurants in this national branding process includes their combination of service elements such as quality and authenticity in food and décor with the cuisines of their countries and regions of origin and their framing of these elements as part of the 'unique' cultural heritage of their respective countries of origin.

Gastrodiplomatic initiatives include the ever-increasing number of applications by countries for their cuisines to be recognized and protected by UNESCO, e.g., as 'traditional French cuisine' or 'traditional Mexican cuisine.' By having their cuisines included on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage, nations hope to contribute to and promote their country images by linking food and gastronomic values with their history, identity, and other symbolic values (Wilson, 2011).

2.3. Research in Hospitality and Tourism Studies

Experiencing countries and their cultures in restaurants abroad is widely recognized to be an integral part of tourism, since restaurant settings are where the host-guest relationship is perhaps most intensely experienced, especially through encounters with elements of restaurant service. This is because restaurant settings are almost unequaled in their abundance of cultural cues related to their countries of origin. These cues are present not only in the dishes that restaurants serve but in the behavior and perceived competence of their employees and their atmosphere, including their specific location, interior décor and interaction design. Such cues can further be picked up from observations of and contacts with fellow customers, especially if the apparent ethnicity of the clientele matches the restaurant's country of origin. Importantly, these cues are present not only in experiences of 'domestic' restaurants abroad but also in ethnic restaurants at home insofar as the services and other key elements of these restaurants are perceived as country-specific.

The most important service element or 'promise' of almost any restaurant, as numerous studies have confirmed, is the taste and quality of its food, especially for 'gastronomy tourists' (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Given that taste is such a critical quality element in service evaluation, and since many foods have a uniqueness of flavor originating from their use of country-of-origin products and culinary techniques, the food offered by ethnic restaurants comes with the promise of country-specific qualities that contribute both to consumers' 'service image' of ethnic restaurants – and by extension to their general country-of-origin image. While food quality in general directly impacts customer satisfaction in restaurants (Chi et al., 2013; Ha and Jang, 2010b), some customers are especially interested in experiencing fresh and quality ingredients from specific countries, often demanding country-of-origin labeling (Nam and Hong, 2015) and rejecting certain food products from non-preferred origins (Jin et al., 2010).

3. Country Image Effects in Relation to Different Types of Restaurants

3.1. Towards a Classification of Restaurants

Restaurants are classified in various ways in marketing and research, though primarily in relation to different customer segments such as "family diners, romantics and entertainers" (Swinyard and Struman, 1986), or more specifically according to the main criteria that different consumers apply in evaluating restaurants and the particular benefits they seek in terms of service, including gourmet values, atmosphere, healthy food, and adventurous culinary experiences (Bahn & Granzin, 1985; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2002). For the present purpose of reviewing research on the relationship between country-of-origin image and restaurants in an interdisciplinary context, however, it is helpful to apply a different classification that distinguishes between 'domestic restaurants' located inside their countries of origin (Okumus and Cetin, 2018) and 'ethnic restaurants' outside their countries of origin. This distinction is relevant because experiences of both types of restaurants have proliferated in recent decades due to increased migration and travel (Mark & Surina, 2005). Furthermore, a restaurant's location within or outside the borders of the country of origin strongly influences many physical and environmental aspects that also play a crucial role in consumers' overall assessments of restaurants. As mentioned, these assessments have been shown to include the ethnic appearance of restaurant personnel (Wang and Mattila, 2015), hence it matters that domestic restaurants located within their countries of origin are far more likely to have employees of that nationality than ethnic restaurants abroad. Moreover, the perceived authenticity of dishes and atmosphere of restaurants are very likely to differ depending on its location. Location also matters with regard to the specific regions in which customers experience a restaurant, since regional characteristics also affect customer satisfaction (Zhang & Law, 2013).

3.2. Country Image Effects and Domestic Restaurants

Worldwide, countries are increasingly competing for unique ways to attract international consumers to their food and restaurants. In this context, countries' gastrodiplomats, national and regional marketing agencies, tourism boards and other actors have increasingly come to realize the strategic importance of using popular images of food and gastronomy to increase their destination appeal. The relationship between product image and destination image in general has long been established and documented in the country-of-origin literature (Elliot et al., 2011), and recent years have seen a growing interest among scholars in the relationship between popular perceptions of a country's cuisine and restaurants and its 'destination image', including the impact of these perceptions on tourists' intentions to visit and revisit (Aydin et al., 2021; Chatterjee and Suklabaidya, 2020; Karim and Chi, 2010; Karim et al., 2010; Lertputtarak, 2012). The significance of food and cuisine to tourism stems not least from the fact that eating in local restaurants abroad is widely experienced as an opportunity for tourists to explore cultural elements well beyond merely satisfying their physical needs (Okumus & Cetin, 2018).

In assessing the impact of perceptions of restaurants on country-of-origin image, researchers have focused primarily on consumer evaluations of restaurant food, atmosphere, and employees. Taste, quality, health, emotional appeal and prestige all affect tourists' attitudes towards local foods (Choe and Kim, 2018). Here 'food' includes elements such as variety, nutrition, taste, authenticity and hygiene, while 'employees' includes the presentation, communication and behavior of staff, and 'atmosphere includes decoration and interaction design.' Such research has provided valuable insights into the effects of restaurants on country-of-origin image, 'food image', and intentions to visit or revisit a country. For example, a study of tourists visiting Malaysia conducted by Chi et al. (2013) found that food image directly affects food satisfaction and perceptions of culinary quality, while behavioral intentions towards the country of origin such as intentions to revisit and willingness to purchase are indirectly affected by food image.

Culinary or gastronomic tourism offers the promise of more unique experiences than general tourism promises of 'sea, sun, and sand.' A strong food image thus has considerable potential to attract tourists. This is clear in the case of Italy, for example, which has one of the strongest food images and is one of the countries most likely to be visited for its food (Karim & Chi, 2010). Promoting a country's local cuisine and food image can thus positively influence consumers' intentions to visit a country (Aydin et al., 2021). For tourists who have already visited a country, moreover, a positive food image of the destination further increases their intention to revisit (Eren, 2019; Lertputtarak, 2012). In addition, restaurant-specific factors such as service quality, cooking methods, and benefit/value performance all affect destination image (Lertputtarak, 2012). Culinary destinations coin different ‘promises’ that will in turn effect domestic restaurants, for example: while “Delhi promises a unique cultural experience” and “Delhi offers delicious food”, “New York; promises quality and hygienic food” (Chatterjee and Suklabaidya, 2020).

3.3. Country Image Effects and Ethnic Restaurants

Consumers at ethnic restaurants outside of their country of origin include local customers, foreign residents, tourists, immigrants, and people with international mobility. Preferring restaurants belonging to different national cultures is a form of hedonic consumption that differs from consumption aimed simply at meeting nutritional needs (Berentzen et al., 2008; McDougall & Levesque, 2000).

The relationship between consumers’ perceptions and evaluations of ethnic restaurants and country-of-origin image is affected by a wide range of variables. For example, some studies on ethnic restaurants and intentions to undertake culinary tourism have shown that a positive image of ethnic restaurants positively affects consumers’ intentions to visit the countries of origin of such restaurants (Jang, 2017; Karimand Chi, 2010; Philips et al., 2013; Taspinar, 2020). As shown in Table 1 below, an innovative study by Jung (2021) used text mining and “sentimental analysis” of messages on Twitter to identify US consumers’ perceptions of ethnic restaurants, food, and country of origin and how these ranked the countries according to the perception of food, restaurants, and country-of-origin.

Table 1: Ranking of countries by image type order of sentiment by ethnic restaurants (Jung, 2021)

No.	FOOD	RESTAURANTS	COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN
1	Mexican	Chinese	Middle Eastern
2	Chinese	Mexican	Korean
3	Thai	Korean	Mexican
4	Middle Eastern	Vietnamese	French
5	Japanese	French	Indian
6	Korean	Japanese	Chinese
7	Indian	Greek	Vietnamese
8	French	Indian	Italian
9	Italian	Italian	Greek
10	Vietnamese	Middle Eastern	Japanese
11	Greek	Thai	Thai

3.3.1. Country Image Effects on Ethnic Restaurants:

The extent to which people’s image of a country can influence their intention to choose ethnic restaurants has been evidenced in several studies. Research by Philips et al. (2013), for example, has shown that positive country images of Korea among Americans in the Upper Midwest positively affected their attitudes to eating

Korean cuisine. Similarly, a study by Martinelli and De Canio (2019) has investigated the influence of country image on consumers' willingness to patronize an ethnic restaurant. Findings show that consumers' evaluations of the core offer of the service in terms of variety, use of raw materials and caring in preparing and serving food increase the intention to patronize the ethnic restaurant. Indeed, the more positive consumers' perceptions of a country's ability to perform a particular service, the greater the intention to patronize the country's ethnic restaurants.

The overall image of a country can have both positive and negative effects on people's intentions to patronize ethnic restaurants. In a study that measured not only the effects of country image and cuisine image but also the effects of cuisine factors and evaluator institutions such as Michelin, Yoo (2018) identified a positive relationship between people's images of France, Italy, Korea, and China and their perceptions of these countries' respective national cuisines and ethnic restaurants. The same study further showed that when a country has a negative image, culinary and institutional factors may have a moderating or "softening" effect, meaning organizations related to food and cuisine can ameliorate the impacts of negative country-of-origin image on customer perceptions (Yoo, 2018). Notably, country-of-origin effects also played a significant role in people's perceptions of the strength and appropriateness of preventative health and safety measures taken by ethnic Chinese restaurants in the United States in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Wei et al., 2021).

3.3.2. Ethnic Restaurant's Effects on Country Image:

Ethnic restaurants can be seen as "ambassadors" of countries (Martinelli and De Canio, 2015). Given the role of service and atmosphere, restaurant settings include many cues about country of origin beyond the food they serve. Consumers' images of a country may be formed, changed or further stabilized through experiences in ethnic restaurants. In a recent survey of consumers of Turkish restaurants in London conducted by Aydin et al. (2021), for example, overall country image was found to be positively affected by cuisine image, while a study by Philips et al. (2013) of US consumers showed that attitudes towards consuming Korean food were indirectly affected by their cognitive country images of Korea but directly affected by their emotional images of that country. In a study that took account of variables such as menu richness, the worldwide reputation of country chefs, and whether the restaurant is under the management of the chef, Yoo (2018) found that these culinary elements of ethnic restaurants appear to play a moderating and sometimes a mediating role in consumers' perceptions of the country. Table 2 summarizes the aims and findings of the most relevant studies focused on the relationship between ethnic restaurant services and country image.

Table 2: Studies on the relationship between ethnic restaurant services and country image

Author	Related Aim	Consumers	Ethnic Restaurant	Related Results
Martinelli & De Canio, 2015	İnvestigated the effect of country image on consumers' intentions to patronize ethnic restaurants	İtalian n=300)	France	Country image has positive effect and t intention patronize ethnic restaurants-INTP Country familiarity/knowledge positive effects INTP Ethnocentrism negatively effects INTP

Nguyen et al., 2020	Explored the impact of country-of-origin image on behavioural intentions to experience ethnic cuisine restaurants	Vietnamese (n=560)	Thailand Korean	Cognitive Country Origin Image positive effect on Cuisine Image Affective country origin image/ positive effect on cuisine image. Cuisine image positively effects behavioural intention-BI (intention to experience ethnic restaurants) Country knowledge positively effects BI Food and environment authenticity positively affect BI
Martinelli & De Canio, 2019	Explored the role of Product Country Image (PCI) in shaping customers' attitudes to dining services	Danish (n= 216)	Italian	The perceived value (i.e., evaluation of the money paid to the restaurant and what is received in return) of Italian restaurants positively influences attitudes towards dining at an Italian restaurant. Product country image positively influences attitudes towards dining at Italian restaurants
Ha, 2019	İnvestigated the factors in people's choice to eat in ethnic Korean restaurants	USA (n=584)	Korean	Consumers' affective country image were not a significant factor influencing attitudes to dining at Korean restaurants Cuisine familiarity positively affects preference attitude
Yoo, 2018	Exploring the impact of country-of-origin effects on country cuisines, the interactions of cuisine factors and evaluator organizations	Korean (n=247)	Korea China Japan France/Italy	Country-of-origin image is positively related to diners' perceptions of a specific cuisine Culinary factors moderate the influence of country-of-origin on diners' perceptions of a particular cuisine Institutional factors moderate the influence of country-of-origin effects on diners' perceptions of a specific cuisine
Philips et al., 2013	Explored the impact of country image on attitudes towards Korean restaurants	USA (n=378)	Korean	Attitudes towards consuming Korean food are positive indirectly affected by the cognitive image and directly affected by the emotional image of Korea

Aydin et al., 2021	Investigated the role of country image in the relationship between cuisine images and intention to visit a country.	UK (n= 400)	Turkish	Cuisine image has a positive effect on the general country image General country image has a positive effect on the cuisine image
Khai & Hang, 2019	İnvestigated the influence of Korean popular culture products on consumers' preferences for Korean restaurants through the country's image	Vietnamese (n=310)	Korean	Country image has a significant positive influence on consumers' Korean restaurant preferences Korean celebrities, drama and music indirectly positively affect the preference for eating at Korean restaurants through their country image of Korea

4. The Main Factors Influencing a Restaurant's Country of origin Image

4.1. Prior Knowledge/Familiarity

In an early study assessing the impacts of country of origin on product evaluations, Johansson et al. (1985) confirmed that product familiarity and information about a country affect consumers' evaluations of products from that country and their satisfaction with those products. Choo et al. (2004) have since shown how product familiarity and knowledge influence purchasing behavior, with familiarity found to be mostly an antecedent to positive attitudes (Ha, 2019; Philips et al., 2013). For the purposes of the present review, 'familiarity' here refers to consumers' pre-existing knowledge and experiences of a restaurant service (Bruning, 2007). Such familiarity can arise from geographical and cultural proximity to the country of origin of a restaurant, and this can be a critical determinant of consumers' perceptions and evaluations of ethnic restaurants outside of the country of origin, with greater geographical proximity and cultural similarity tending to correlate with more positive evaluations of a nation's cuisine. Familiarity with restaurants of foreign origin does not only come directly from restaurant experiences, moreover, since hearing about a country's famous food in the media can also provide familiarity with a country's cuisine and culture. In general, if consumers have a more positive image of a country and more knowledge about its national cuisine and an overall more positive attitude, their intention both to try ethnic foods and to visit that country increases (Philips et al., 2013). For example, Ha (2019) found that familiarity with Korean restaurants positively affects attitudes towards restaurants.

Becoming more familiar with a country through media depictions of its culture, including lifestyles, customs and cuisine, has been shown to increase the likelihood of consumers opting to eat in ethnic restaurants of that country of origin. For example, a study by Khai and Hang (2019) has shown how greater familiarity with Korean lifestyles among young consumers in Vietnam gained through media depictions, such as popular music, TV dramas and movies, made them more likely to choose Korean food. In addition, greater cuisine knowledge about an ethnic restaurant positively affects perceived authenticity and willingness to purchase (Song et al., 2019). This has been confirmed in a study by Nguyen et al. (2020) showing that greater knowledge about Korean cuisine than Thai cuisine can lead to increased preference for Korean food.

In sum, familiarity affects consumers' perceived values, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions towards ethnic restaurants (Ha & Jang, 2010a). 'Perceived value' is subjective and can be defined as the benefits perceived by customers from comparing all the prices they pay with the response they receive (Martinelli & De Canio, 2019; McDougall & Levesque, 2000). Cultural familiarity with a country can thus act as a driving force for trying out that country's ethnic restaurants and cuisine. For example, Liu et al. (2018) have shown that people with higher levels of cultural familiarity with Italy and Italian food and motivation tend to have higher evaluations of the authenticity and value of Italian restaurants. Cultural experience also influences domestic and ethnic restaurant evaluations: Consumers with higher experience liked and had positive attitudes towards domestic (named authentic in the study) restaurants more than ethnic restaurants (Ebster & Guist, 2005).

4.2. Service Quality

What is served and how it is served in restaurants affects perceived service quality (McDougall & Levesque, 2000). The essential elements of the perceived service quality of restaurants are food quality, the service quality of employees, and atmosphere (Ha and Jang, 2010b; Kim and Baker, 2017; Martinelli and De Canio, 2019; Susskind and Chan, 2000; Tsai & Lu, 2012). Service quality significantly affects consumers' perceptions of restaurants and related behavioral intentions (Clemes et al., 2013). To the extent that restaurants' food, atmosphere and employee elements are associated with their country-of-origin and targeted at foreign consumers, analyzing these concepts from a perceived service quality perspective can help to understand the country-of-origin effect. A comprehensive study by Yoo (2018) of how perceptions of the service quality elements of restaurants differ according to consumers' country-of-origin image has shown that positive country images have a softening effect on perceptions of culinary factors related to service quality.

4.3. Perceived Authenticity

'Authenticity' in ethnic restaurants is a sub-dimension of perceived quality, and while food authenticity and atmosphere – or 'environment authenticity' – are separate aspects of service (Liu et al., 2018), both impact people's intentions to patronize ethnic restaurants (Nguyen et al., 2020). Research shows that when the "ethnic appearance/ background" of service providers and other customers in the location on the one hand and the ethnic appearance of the restaurant on the other are evaluated as more authentic, this positively effects purchase intention (Song et al., 2019; C. Wang & Mattila, 2015). Experiences of dining in ethnic restaurants adjudged to be 'authentic' have also been shown to influence customer repurchasing intentions (Tsai & Lu, 2012). Indeed, some studies suggest that the authenticity of food has a more substantial effect on behavioral intentions vis-à-vis ethnic restaurants than the authenticity of places (Liu et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020).

4.4. Atmosphere

Environmental stimuli such as atmosphere induce an emotional response that drives consumers' stimulus-organism-based behavioral responses (Jang & Namkung, 2009). A number of studies have shown that the physical environment and atmosphere in retail settings affect the amount of time spent in the store and the amount of spending (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982, 1994). Similarly, research has confirmed that the perceived atmosphere of restaurants moderates customers' decision-making processes (Ha and Jang, 2010b), with studies indicating that the quality of the physical environment is one of the most critical determinants of the perceived service quality of restaurants (Chow et al., 2007). Ebster and Guist (2005) asked Austrians to watch videos of domestic and ethnic Italian restaurants and evaluate them. As a result, they found that the design elements of domestic restaurants were more appreciated and the stereotypical atmosphere of ethnic restaurants is less appreciated. Further, when reviewing photos of restaurants on Tripadvisor, data show that ethnic restaurants frequently use clichéd design elements, whereas local restaurants (domestic restaurants) contain more standard, universal and modern design elements; and this effects consumer perceptions (Wood & Muñoz, 2007).

4.5. Employees

Studies have confirmed that consumers' perceptions of restaurant employees are an essential factor in the selection of restaurants, with helpfulness, courteousness and 'smiling' frequently cited as important aspects of service (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2002). Given that the focus of country-of-origin studies is generally on international/foreign consumers, the ability of restaurant service staff to communicate with customers from different cultures is a key (cultural) competence (Hu, 2010). Indeed, the ability to communicate with foreign cultures may be the most crucial feature expected of employees of restaurants of foreign origin. Limited yet relevant research has been undertaken into how restaurant employees' communication skills and ethnic origins can affect consumers. These studies have found that the ethnic appearance of employees cannot only lead customers to perceive the staff and the restaurant as more culturally 'authentic' but also the food they are served, with such 'employee authenticity' being positively associated with customers' willingness to pay more and to revisit the restaurant (Kim and Baker, 2017).

Studies further show that when consumers perceive the people of a country as 'warm', their admiration for that country and their desire to buy products from that country increase (Maher and Carter, 2011). Likewise, when a restaurant's employees are perceived as both warm and competent, consumers' image of the country of origin and its products and services tend to be more positive, increasing their willingness to pay. Since the relationship between restaurant employees and customers may differ between each employee and customer, it can also be said to be one of the most variable elements of restaurant service (Iglesias & Guillen, 2004). The competencies of restaurant service employees may vary according to countries' human development levels and vocational training skills. Countries like Italy and France that have a well-developed restaurant sector with a long tradition of hospitality also tend to have superior employee training and skills. As a consequence, while restaurant service workers in countries that are viewed as 'friendly' and 'pleasant' may be perceived as helpful, European restaurants may be seen to have highly trained and professional staff. For example, whereas companies of US origin such as Domino's Pizza manage their employees on the basis of performance and reward-based principles, Japanese companies tend to manage according to the principles of seniority and lifetime employment (Ma & Trigo, 2012). Human resources management systems, which tend to differ according to a restaurant's country of origin, may thus be an important factor that determines the attitudes and behaviors of employees in restaurant services.

5. Key Theories and Concepts for Understanding Restaurant's Country-of-origin Effects

5.1. The Theory of Planned Behavior

Planned behavior, defined as a purposeful action at a particular time and context, corresponds to behavioral intentions in marketing research (Ajzen et al., 2005). This means, for example, that a positive country-of-origin image may correspond to an intention to eat at a restaurant of that country, hence causality is investigated based on behavioral intention theory. Behavioral intention is a dependent variable that can be influenced by both cognitive, affective and practical reasons for undertaking certain behaviors. The theory of planned behavior states that behavioral intentions significantly affect the decision-making process (Taspinar, 2020) and this theory has been usefully applied in analyzing the constitution and effects of country images (Buhmann, 2016a; Buhmann and Ingenhoff, 2015; Elliot et al., 2011; Elliot and Papadopoulos, 2016). Behavioral intentions relevant to restaurants and country image include the intention of eating at an ethnic/domestic restaurant, visiting and revisiting the country of origin of that restaurant, and recommending the restaurant to others (Aydin et al., 2021; Aydin et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2020).

5.2. Country Image Components

While the emotional dimension of a country image includes general positive and negative feelings towards countries (Verlegh, 2001), the cognitive dimension of this construct includes beliefs regarding countries' quality of life, health and education levels (Orbaiz and Papadopoulos, 2003), reliability and work ethic (Laroche et al., 2005), and their political role in the world, including in fulfilling their responsibilities to protecting the environment (Buhmann, 2016b). According to Lai et al. (2019, p. 245), some studies examining the relationship between destination image and food and cuisine image mistakenly label the affective qualities they capture as cognitive. One reason for this may be the reduction of these image constructs into only affective and cognitive components. For this reason it has been argued that more comprehensive and precise measurements of this relationship may be yielded by analyzing country and restaurant images according to a broader set of functional, normative, aesthetic and emotional dimensions (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015).

Only a few studies have explored how people's image of restaurants is affected by both the cognitive and emotional components of their images of the country of origin. One such study explored preferences for Thai or Korean cuisine among consumers in Vietnam, showing that while both cognitive and emotional country image dimensions affect the culinary image, the emotional image was more dominant (Nguyen et al., 2020). According to Philips et al. (2013), the cognitive and emotional dimensions of people's country images indirectly affect their attitudes towards consuming Korean food.

In the literature on country image, this construct has generally been examined cognitively and emotionally (Martínez & Alvarez, 2010; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). However, some scholars in this stream have argued that the emotional dimension of a country image can develop independently of the aesthetic dimension and that these should thus be analyzed as separate dimensions (Buhmann, 2016a).

5.3. Identity

Ethnic cuisines and foods are part of a country's national identity and strongly associated with historical and symbolic cultural values (Wilson, 2011). For this reason, efforts to create a tourism destination brand identity by promoting food and gastrodiplomacy can be thought of as efforts to create and manage country-of-origin effects (Lee and Kim, 2021; Lin et al., 2011). While, these effects are generally dependent on a consumer's image and perceptions arising from multiple random or planned inputs, these effects can also be consciously created to influence the relationship between destination branding and food. Restaurants represent countries through their dynamic corporate identity and culture, which are shaped by combining country identity and culture with non-homogeneous elements specific to the service sector. In showcasing their country's historical food heritage, restaurants, and especially ethnic restaurants, can thus promote the cultural values of their country and shape people's country image. On the other hand, consumer's own identities also affect their evaluations of the country of origin of the restaurant. For example, a sentiment analysis of restaurant reviews on Tripadvisor written by American and British tourists before, during and after visiting Italy found differences in the tendencies of consumers from the UK and USA to criticize or praise ethnic Italian restaurants when they returned (Chatzopoulou & Travers, 2021).

5.4. Culture

The effect of the culture of consumers on their decision-making processed is often studied in consumer behavior literature. The attitudes of societies towards the products and services of other societies vary from culture to culture (Cateora, 1987). While consumers experience and evaluate restaurants from their respective cultural perspectives, restaurants reflect cultural cues in their service, atmosphere and other elements (Erol & Hassan, 2013). The effects of restaurants from different countries on consumer behavior is a relatively new area of research, though it is clear that restaurants have a special role in the service sector as settings potentially rich in cultural characteristics and codes of their countries of origin. These cultural codes are reflected in a restaurant's service elements, meaning that consumers visiting restaurants of foreign origin are very likely to come into contact with the cultural background of the restaurant's country of origin. Consumers in turn perceive restaurants according to what they see through their 'cultural lenses'. For example, a study by Choe and Kim (2018) has shown that the "cultural background of tourists "partially moderates" their attitudes towards local food.

Customers' expectations of service in restaurants also differ according to their cultural backgrounds. According to a comparative study of casual, full service restaurants in the USA and Hong Kong, for example, consumers in Hong Kong attach more importance to professionalism in service and have a lower tolerance for possible interruptions from the server at the table (Becker et al., 1999). Relatedly, national cuisine enriched by a cultural heritage can offer unique product promises, including through the creativity of chefs and even through synthesizing the cuisines of other cultures; and these unique features, in turn, can enable the branding of cuisines and countries (Yoo, 2018).

5.5. Consumer Disposition

The concept of 'consumer tendency' in the international marketing literature encompasses cultural consumer trends (Nijssen and Douglas, 2011), buyer and consumer behavior patterns (Rawwas et al., 1996), and personal characteristics (Jang & Kim, 2015). These are expressed in consumer disposition (Papadopoulos et al., 2018), and can influence individuals' preferences and evaluations of a foreign country's restaurants. For instance, consumers with a higher level of 'worldmindedness' (Papadopoulos et al., 2018) or cosmopolitanism have a higher intention to patronize and pay for food at ethnic restaurants (Wang and Mattila, 2015) whereas ethnocentrism and nationalism have a significant negative on product and service choices (Bruning, 2007). The ethnic cuisine is usually preferred by customers whose ethnicity is the same as the country of origin of the restaurant (Palat, 2015; Tat Shum, 2020). This is because individuals first experience food in the kitchen of their own home and only later extend this experience to restaurants in their proximity, while subsequent experiences of world cuisine vary according to people's circumstances and their openness to new experiences (Choo et al., 2004).

5.6. Stereotypes

Stereotypes are prejudiced views resistant to change that impact the image of a country and its people (Shaughnessy & Shaughnessy, 2000). Stereotypes regarding a country's perceived level of competence and (emotional) likability affect people's attitude towards that country's products (Chattalas et al., 2008). Given that negative stereotypes are widely related to products from developing countries (Bruning, 2007), the same negative effect may come into play in the restaurant experience of developing countries. By contrast, Michelin-starred restaurants and world-renowned chefs associated with stereotypical images of French and Italian restaurants can have positive effects. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988) “perceived service quality is a global judgment or attitude relating to the superiority of service.” According to this definition perceived service quality of restaurants in Italy indicates a positive effect on consumers’ attitude towards their restaurants (Martinelli & De Canio, 2019). Similarly, both France and Italy’s assessments of food/ cuisine and restaurant’s image create positive effect to some intentions towards countries (Karim et al., 2010). Negative stereotypes about countries can significantly impact their cuisines and restaurants. For example, rumors that COVID-19 could be traced to the eating of bats in China has caused fears about the food and cuisine of that country (King, 2020). On the other hand, stereotypes may vary over time. For example, researchers in western countries seeking a more sustainable source of protein than conventional meat are now making efforts to overturn negative stereotypes about the eating of insects, previously mostly confined to non-western countries, especially in light of increasing evidence about the nutritional value of edible insects (Chen et al., 2009; Hartmann et al., 2015).

Even positive stereotypes about a country’s cuisine can be reductive. For example, at first glance the stereotypical associations of Japan with sushi (Czarniecka-Skubina and Nowak, 2014) or of Italy with pizza as the ‘signature products’ of these countries and their cuisines are mostly favorable and thus seemingly unproblematic. However, a country’s culinary culture can still negatively affect its image through exaggerated associations that reveal only a single aspect of its vast cultural heritage. From this perspective, (over-) associations of Italy with pizza or Turkey with kebabs in ethnic restaurants abroad may lead to misrepresentations of these countries. For example, although Turkey has a rich national Mediterranean and Aegean cuisine consisting of a wide variety of foods, this variety is not reflected in popular images but reduced to a limited amount of dishes, indicating that the promotion and success of one type of food can be reductive, coming at the cost of showcasing diversity. Research has shown that visiting a country can counter such food stereotypes, including over-generalizations about that nation’s cuisine and restaurants. For example, a study by Chatzopoulou and Travers (2021) on the comments of Tripadvisor users found that the words ‘pizza’ and ‘pasta’ were used most frequently before travelling to Italy, while the frequency of these words decreased in the comments of users after having visited the country.

Ethnic restaurants, especially ‘themed restaurants’ can also perpetuate historical stereotypes. For example, photos of ethnic restaurants on Tripadvisor frequently display common stereotypes about their countries of origin. In a qualitative study into the role of an Australian-origin restaurant chain called Outback Steakhouse in representing Australian culture in the United States, findings revealed that US subjects were more accepting of the restaurant environment where it matched the images of Australia perpetuated by the media. By contrast, Australian subjects indicated that the image this restaurant provides is largely stereotypical (Wood & Muñoz, 2007).

6. Conclusion

6.1. Theoretical İmplications

Service evaluations can be made to capture prevailing perceptions of foreign consumers of domestic restaurants so that the restaurant service profiles, professionalism levels, and hierarchies of countries may be revealed. When conducting studies of the relationship between domestic restaurants and country image, it is important but methodologically challenging to distinguish between the effects of restaurants and the effects of tourism in general. Although the country image of a consumer who eats at an ethnic or domestic restaurant may change after the restaurant experience, separating this effect from the travel experience is difficult when the consumer is a tourist. In such cases, conducting in-depth consumer interviews may be a suitable method to capture different effects. This challenge is compounded by the fact that restaurant satisfaction is also affected by regional factors, i.e., by the specific geographical contexts in which customers experience a restaurant and its regional characteristics (Zhang & Law, 2013). This specificity increases the probability that studies of the same country's cuisine and restaurants will yield inconsistent results.

Assessments of the effects of country-of-origin image should include items for measuring general country characteristics, general product characteristics, and specific product characteristics (Pereira et al., 2005). In examining the effects of country of origin image on perceptions of restaurants and vice versa, therefore, measurement scales should take into account evaluations of the country's cuisine as general product characteristics and restaurants from that country of origin as specific products.

Prior research on the effects of emotional aspects of the country image construct on attitudes to restaurants have yielded inconsistent results. Whereas Ha's (2019) study of the "moderating role of atmospherics" in ethnic restaurants found that consumers' emotional country image does not significantly affect their attitudes towards Korean restaurants, for example, research by Nguyen et al. (2020, p. 130) notes "the significant role of affective country-of-origin image in the relationship with cuisine image and then behavioral intention". While 'attitude' may differ from 'behavioral intention', of course, these contradictory findings may be attributable to the assessment of country image effects according to only two dimensions. To address this shortcoming, future research on restaurants and country image should include aesthetic and normative dimensions as well as cognitive and emotional aspects (Martinelli and De Canio, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2020; Philips et al., 2013). While consumer value measurement items such as 'feeling comfortable, happy and good in a Korean restaurant' may capture people's evaluations of the quality of food, staff and environment, these items only measure an outcome without providing insights into why consumers feel happy or unhappy, comfortable or uncomfortable in that restaurant, i.e., the reasons behind their attitudes. Moreover, attitudes towards a restaurant's country of origin may influence or mediate consumer evaluations more than the dimensions typically applied in extant research. To assess the extent to which the perceived national identity of a foreign restaurant's country of origin influences consumers' attitudes, intentions, actions, and subsequent evaluations may thus require the adoption of innovative interdisciplinary research methods. Designing studies to answer such broad questions is vital to advance our understanding of restaurant services in international consumer behavior.

Studies in this area should continue exploring interrelationships and combinations between restaurant service elements (food, staff and atmosphere) and country image. Specifically, it will be interesting to look at the relationship between country image and service elements with comparative research designs of domestic and ethnic restaurants. The potential for each element to affect perceptions of a country's image may differ. In future research, schema and relational network theory can be applied to help explain the highly interactive process of country-image formation. Relational network theory, meanwhile, explains memory as a structure that works with interconnected associative processes reaching judgments (Gotsi et al., 2011). Since country image is a construct that can be transferred and grouped, restaurants can affect the overall country image.

The ways in which consumers perceive restaurant products and services are thus influenced by the complex interrelationship of many factors, including the country's cultural heritage, the vision of the producer or operator, and institutional factors (Yoo, 2018). Variables such as cultural familiarity and culinary knowledge could therefore usefully be included in a four-dimensional scale for assessing the effects of the country image. Consumer trends could also be included in such assessment, since the impact of product knowledge and cultural familiarity on perception and consumption can be influenced by high and low innovativeness and personnel character traits (Choo et al., 2004). 'Atmosphere analysis' is another potentially interesting line of research in this context. For example, the argument that ethnic restaurants outside the country of origin have more stereotypical atmosphere than domestic restaurants could be further explored by visual text analysis.

Ethnic restaurants employing staff and even managers belonging to the ethnic origin of the country in which they are located can be defined as hybrid cooperation. Hybrid collaborations are also currently one of the ‘white spots’ on the research map to explore. For while the food and atmosphere offered by ethnic restaurants may be based on the ethnic identity of their country of origin, the staff and managers may be professional managers of the country in which these restaurants are located. For example, all of the operators and servicepersons of the Chinese Express outlet in the Turkish resort of Bodrum are Turkish, with only one Chinese chef in the kitchen. Investigating the effects of such hybrid collaborations on country image could be a promising new line of research.

While the literature to date has generally focused on the effects of country image on people’s attitudes, intentions, orientations and evaluations regarding restaurants, few studies have explored the ways in which restaurants can affect country images. Future scholarship should seek to address this research gap by further exploring and elaborating the relationship between restaurants and country-of-origin image and the implications of this relationship for different countries and types of restaurants. Extant research is still limited in geographical scope, moreover, with the majority of relevant country image studies relating to Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Thai restaurants and cuisines. Including other national cuisines and restaurants in future research would help enhance our understanding of contextual factors.

6.2. Practical Implications

Restaurants targeting international consumers are able to integrate natural and cultural resources from their countries of origin into their service elements by drawing on narratives about products grown in their country in addition to emphasizing the flavor element that is the essential ‘quality promise’ of restaurants. Policymakers and others concerned with strategically promoting and differentiating the image of their country should further consider establishing institutions to support and engage with restaurants operating abroad. Organizations working for the global competition of country cuisines such as Gourmet Taiwan International Action Program, Thailand’s Global Kitchen Project, and the Malaysia Kitchen program (Jang, 2017) in addition to its marketing efforts, may pioneer cooperative standard-setting and be involved in developing supervisory institutions in local and ethnic restaurants representing the cuisines of the country. Such institutions could be a standard-setting mark, which cooperates with ethnic restaurants abroad on image and identity studies. This is important since at present, for example, the crucial element of ‘authenticity’ is determined solely by the personal visions of restaurant managers and/or investors unless they happen to cooperate with supervisory institutions set up to help cultivate the image of their countries (especially in case of large chain restaurants).

Given that product information affects brand image (Bian and Moutinho, 2011) and that familiarity is a crucial factor in consumers’ preferences for ethnic restaurants (Ha, 2019), the organized production and promotion of planned information by countries about their cuisines and restaurants can play a major role in supporting branding efforts. Managers of both ethnic and local restaurants should run their businesses mindful of the fact that they are “cultural ambassadors” of the country of the cuisine they serve (Wood & Muñoz, 2007). Ethnic and domestic restaurants with tourist customers can increase their attractiveness by providing unique benefits for customers in terms of atmosphere, employees and food (Kim & Baker, 2017; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2002). Since research indicates that opening culinary schools and training reputable chefs can soften the impact of negative country images (Yoo, 2018), countries should also prioritize the development of professional skills in ethnic and domestic restaurants.

To reflect the vital role played by national and regional cuisines and ethnic and domestic restaurants in constructs of country image, official promotional materials for tourist destinations should highlight culinary elements as star attractions rather than matters of secondary importance (Okumus & Cetin, 2018). Countries promoting the gastronomic appeal of their tourists' destinations should specifically include restaurants in their promotional materials in addition to promoting authentic food and beverages. For example, all state tourism websites should include an option to search for restaurants according to the preferences of tourists (Okumus & Cetin, 2018). At the same time, both domestic and ethnic restaurants should continue striving to enhance their quality of management and service, including through creativity, aesthetics and innovations in technology and cuisine (Hu, 2010).

7. References

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5

Chapter five

Country-of-origin Effect in Professional Services: An Empirical Study Based on Legal Services

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Country-of-origin Effect in Professional Services: An Empirical Study Based on Legal Services

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1. Introduction

The modern world has become globalized increasingly. National borders, trade barriers, cultural diversity, and mental differences are becoming fewer or vanishing. Every area of daily life is widely perceived as intensely internationalized. Globalization is particularly extensive in Europe, due to the European Union (Steger, 2017; Risse et al., 2018). However, despite the phenomena of globalization, we still experience the dichotomy: us versus them, ours versus yours, corporate versus external, or national versus foreign (Risse, 2018). The place of an individual's origin, production site, cultural affiliation, tradition, or place of service still plays an important role in political, economic, cultural, or social decision-making. The effect of country-of-origin (COO) is particularly apparent in economic relations, where the selection of a manufacturer or service provider still often depends on its origin (Kaynak & Hassan, 2013). Notwithstanding many political, social, and economic efforts, COO continues to have a significant impact, including in marketing and professional services provision.

The concept of the country-of-origin effect has been broadly analyzed in the marketing literature, yet research on the country-of-service origin is scarce. This phenomenon is even less frequently analyzed in the case of professional services. Professional services have become one of the fastest growing sectors (Bello et al., 2016) , and professionals are becoming increasingly important. Given the critical nature of the COO and Professional Service Firm (PSF), this topic deserves further investigation. Filling this gap and using legal services as the context, this chapter provides an overview of the effect of the country of origin in the context of professional services. The study is divided into three parts. First, we briefly discuss the theoretical background and develop a conceptual framework. In this part, we not only define professional services and the country-of-origin effect, but also highlight the differences between COO for services in general, in professional and legal services. Next, we present the main objective, which is empirical analysis, whether COO occurs within legal services and to what extent? In this part, we strive to learn whether the selected factors, such as the place of birth of the lawyer, the his/her education, the headquarters of the law firm, the area of the lawyer's activity, and the different culture of the lawyer (inherited or acquired), influence both the relationship building stage between lawyers and customers, and their further cooperation (service provision stage). Finally, the chapter study concludes the findings with a discussion of the key findings supporting the relevance of COO effects on legal services and provides useful implications for ways to use COO effects in international professional services marketing.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Professional Services

The aim of this part, is to develop theoretical propositions that can help further understand the complex phenomenon of professional services. Globally, professional service firms are a rapidly growing service industry (Smedlund, 2008), as the term has been applied to organizations operating in more than 30 distinct knowledge-based sectors (von Nordenflycht, 2010). Thus, the marketing of professional services is a growing area of interest in both academic and professional studies (Jones, 1997; Lapierre, 1997; Thakor and Kumar, 2000; Hausman, 2003; Reid, 2008).

Legal services fit the criteria set by Gummesson (1978) that distinguish professional services, including the following:

1. The service should be provided by qualified people,
2. be advisory,
3. focus on problem solving,
4. the service should be an assignment from the buyer to the seller,
5. the professional should be independent of suppliers of others' goods and services.

These criteria were then complemented by low capital intensity, customization, governance, and identity to the core (Somaya & Mawdsley, 2015).

The professions are often distinguished in terms of possessing systematic theory and professional authority, being sanctioned by the community, being governed by an ethical code, and exhibiting a professional culture (Greenwood, 1957; Thakor & Kumar, 2000). In addition, professions offer services that are highly complex, intangible, highly customized, and are created and delivered by highly qualified personnel, over a continuous stream of transactions or service encounters (Jones, 1997; Thakor & Kumar, 2000). In fact, owing to its high degree of customer contact, as well as the level of individual judgment required by the professional, this form of service is considered the most intangible (Jaakkola & Halinen 2006). Knowledge intensiveness is another distinguishing characteristic of this business, where knowledge has a role both as a resource and a service sold to clients (Smedlund, 2008). Professionals offer their clients sophisticated knowledge-based expertise (Maister, 2003), and the relationships these professionals create with their clients are the medium through which they impart this expertise to solve the problems of their clients (Reihlen, Altinay, & Alexandra Apel, 2007; Walsh & Gordon, 2010). In professional services, as in most services in general, the reason for the highlighted role of the client is related to the fact that the client provides significant input into the production process, making the success of the service heavily dependent on client input (Sampson & Froehle, 2006). Ultimately, another characteristic of professionals is that in the past, many of them did not have to perceive themselves to be sales or market-orientated but that increasing competition has meant that professionals need to compete aggressively for business (Lapierre, 1997).

2.2. Country-of-origin Effect (COO)

COO is one of the most researched topics in international marketing literature; more than 1,000 studies have been published including at least 400 issues in academic journals (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). These streams of literature support the notion that country (that is, the location where the firm operates) plays a significant role in determining of their outcomes. In this competitive global market, the accessibility to foreign products and services is improved. In this situation, the role of the country of origin is more significant than before, in which only domestic goods were available.

The COO effect refers to the tendency among individuals to infer the quality of a product and services from its country of manufacture or supply. Many researchers have built upon the definition for the country-of-origin effect offered by Nagashima in 1970. He described the COO as the picture, the representation, the stereotype that businessmen and consumers attach to products from a specific country; This image is created by variables such as representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history, and tradition (Nagashima, 1970, 68).

Therefore, COO is the general perception of products from a particular country based on their prior perceptions of the country's production and marketing strength (Roth & Romeo, 1992). For example, products or services from countries with a positive image tend to receive favorable evaluations, which may lead to purchase (Han & Terpstra, 1988). Simultaneously, the effects of the country of origin are intangible barriers to entering new markets in the form of negative consumer bias towards imported products (Wang & Lamb, 1983).

The literature regarding country of origin suggests a general home-country selection bias (Bannister & Saunders, 1978). The effect of COO has been associated with certain conditions, including the buyer's ethnocentric attitude towards COO attributes and his underlying cultural values (Han & Terpstra, 1988). By transferring country-related images to products or services, the use of COO effects seems especially useful when other quality cues are missing and/or the brand is not well known.

2.3. Country of (professional) Service Origin and Country of (Professional) Service Origin Effect

Relatively little empirical research has been done on the COO effect on services (Javalgi, Cutler & Winans, 2001), and only some scholars focus on the sub-branch of COO study which is of Country of Service Origin (COSO). The reason is that differences in the country of the company and the country of the person providing the service are difficult to hide due to the service characteristics such as intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity, and inseparability (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1985). Regarding the use of country-of-origin effects, special service characteristics create even more challenges for professional service companies. Especially factors influencing the crucial customer-provider relationship such as language or cultural aspects are considered more critical at services than at products (Capar & Kotabe, 2003).

Service delivery inherently includes customer contact and interaction with employees, so that stereotypes pertaining to service personnel's national origin may exert a greater overall influence on consumer evaluations of services than on their evaluations of tangible goods (Mattila, 1999). Furthermore, an empirical study by (Harrison-Walker, 1995) found that selection of a service provider is dependent on the interaction between service provider nationality and consumer nationality, with consumers generally favoring same-nationality service providers. This might be even clearer in the context of professional services.

Country of service origin (COSO), a natural progression to the country of origin literature, can be used as a cue by consumers who engage in stereotyping rather than objective evaluation of a service (Thelen, Honeycutt & Murphy, 2010). It refers to the perceived image derived from the level of service related to one country or the ability of companies in that country to provide a satisfying service experience, therefore it affects the evaluation of the service (Hui, Tao & Zhipeng, 2013). COSO may affect the evaluation largely compared to that on goods. The following definition is offered for COSO:

The opinion held by domestic consumers of the general service level associated with a country and the ability of service providers from that country to provide a quality service experience (Thelen, Honeycutt & Murphy, 2010).

Most studies in this area are in the fields of cross-country marketing and culture studies. The COO is an essential carrier of information for consumers (Ahmed et al., 2002), which affects their assessment of purchase risk (Michaelis et al., 2008) and purchase intentions (Harrison-Walker, 1995; Morrish & Lee, 2011) . Moreover, it serves as a cue from which consumers make inferences about the product and attributes such as evaluation of quality or performance evaluation. Consumers infer attributes to the product based on country stereotypes and experiences with products from that country.

2.4. Country of origin Effect in Legal Services

The existence of a country of origin effect in professional services is described through the example of legal services. By legal services we understand services that are provided by a person licensed, admitted, or otherwise qualified to practice law in the jurisdiction where the service is provided. Research shows that the country of origin effect is strongest on customers who do not know much about the service, and weakest on consumers who are well informed or more familiar with the service (Schweiger et al., 1997). It is crucial in terms of legal services, because of discrepancy in knowledge between service provider and customer.

Based on the review of the literature and our previous research, we distinguished five areas in which COO may be particularly visible in legal services provision. These are the following factors:

1. The lawyer's place of birth,
2. the lawyer's place of education,
3. the place of the lawyer's headquarters,
4. the place of the lawyer's other professional seats (area of work),
5. the lawyer's native or secondary (acquired) culture, especially under the form of: native language, taught languages, professional skills, professional knowledge and intercultural experience.

We study the above factors in relation to:

1. The relationship building stage between an individual or business client and a lawyer, and between lawyers in a partnership,
2. the process of cooperation between the client and the lawyer (service provision) and the course of the lawyers' partnership.

Below, in the empirical section of this chapter we outline and explain these characteristics. The study was conducted on the example of legal services provided in Poland. Poland is an interesting example of legal services market and is particularly suitable for the focus of the study. First, it is a specific and rapidly developing market. The legal services sector in Poland has experienced a steady and continuous growth in the past two decades mainly due to the development of the country's economy, growth in international trade, and the emergence of new fields of practice, in particular in the area of business law. This has enabled significant internationalization of legal services in the country. Second, thanks to membership in the European Union, both the provision of legal services by foreign lawyers in Poland and services provided by Polish lawyers in other countries, the phenomena described on the Polish market example, can be of representation to other European countries.

3. Methodology

The main research hypothesis was: the different place of birth of the lawyer (education, headquarters, area of activity) and the different culture of the lawyer (inherited or acquired) from the place (...), the culture (...)

of the client (potential client) and other lawyers' cause:

1. That no relationships between clients and lawyers are being built,
2. that relationships are built only under specific and necessary conditions,
3. the development of a potential client-lawyer relationship is problematic and turbulent; the parties do not understand each other and do not want to cooperate,
4. limited cooperation between lawyers of different cultures,
5. the development of a very small but highly specialized group of lawyers serving only clients from a particular cultural background or lawyers working exclusively with lawyers with 'foreign characteristics.'

Our study is of qualitative nature. In order to investigate the problem, we conducted an empirical survey using the semi-structured interview (SSI) method. The aim behind using the second research method was:

1. To establish links between previously conducted COO studies and legal services in Europe,
2. to determine the incidence, scale of occurrence, and principles of COO within legal services in Europe,
3. to establish contributions to the characterization of COO for legal services in Europe,
4. to develop practical recommendations for further research on COO in legal services.

The empirical study was conducted between 7 June 2020 and 15 December 2021. Interviews were conducted in person and/or on the Internet. They lasted between 40 and 180 minutes. An interview script was prepared prior to the survey. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The recordings were manually transcribed. Based on the transcription, the interviews were coded and categorized using Atlas.ti software ('ATLAS.ti' 2021). Coding was performed in a mixed in vivo / in vitro manner with meaning orientated. The coding system was pre-conceptualized, but new codes were created in the course of the coding. Coding was performed by one person (based on Kvale, 2012; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The empirical study is part of a larger research project on the provision of international services in Europe. A detailed methodological note can be found in the main research report (Lipiec, 2022).

The philosophical and theoretical assumptions for the empirical study are found in the legal realism, the socio-economic-legal analysis, and especially Scandinavian legal realism. Researchers are primarily interested in the law in action and how the actual provision of legal services depends on the country of origin of the lawyer and the client, the place of professional practice, the place of education, and the place of provision of the legal service, and the national (domestic) culture of the provider (lawyer) and the recipient (client). The essence is action and empiricism, rather than national and international law postulating rules of recognition, treatment, and non-discrimination based on country-of-origin characteristics. Therefore, the research conducted is in line with the philosophy pioneered by Roscoe Pound and Axel Hägerström (Pound, 1910; Bjarup, 2005; Strang, 2009; Perry-Kessaris, 2015). At the same time, the research method borrows from the grounded-theory school of Bernard Glaser and Anselm Strauss, as interpreted by Kathy Charmaz (Charmaz, 2014).

The empirical study research sample consisted of 40 lawyers (regulated professions as advocates and legal advisers alias attorneys at law) working in European countries but with current or past affiliations with Poland. The sample was selected in an expert way according to public declarations of lawyers about practicing in several countries or involvement in cross-border cases. Lawyers with international experience were considered to be fully and accurately approximating the elements of the COO. The sampling was nonprobabilistic and the study is strictly qualitative. The full characteristics of the research sample can be found in the materials prepared for the main survey. The table 1 below provides a summary of the research sample.

Table 1: Basic characteristics of the empirical study sample

Sample size	40 persons
Education	40 persons have Master's degrees, of which 6 persons possess doctoral degrees
Sex	26 male, 14 female
Age	25-30 years: 2 persons; 31-35 years: 6 persons; 36-40 years: 9 persons; 41-45 years: 12 persons; 46-50 years: 5 persons; 51-55 years: 2 persons; 56-60 years: 2 persons 60+ years: 2 persons.
Country of birth	Australia: 1 person; Austria: 1 person; Israel: 1 person; Mexico: 1 person; Germany: 3 persons; Poland: 28 persons; Ukraine: 1 person; USA: 1 person; United Kingdom: 2 persons; Italy: 1 person.
Country of head office (registration)	Belgium: 1 person; Spain: 1 person; Germany: 4 persons; Poland: 30 persons; Switzerland: 1 person; United Kingdom: 1 person; Italy: 2 persons.

The interview recordings, coding keys, coding tools, and interview transcripts have been archived for further use or control of the research findings.

4. Results and Discussion

Below are the results of the conducted research, which are divided into three parts: concerning general relevance of COO in legal services, the relationship building stage between lawyers and customers, and their further cooperation (service provision stage).

4.1. The applicability of COO in legal services

As explained above, the effect of the country of origin (COO) is strongly correlated with the provision of legal services and the practice of legal professionals. The significant impact of COO is the result of the strong association of jurists with only one or a small number of countries, or more precisely, legal national jurisdictions. A Polish lawyer (legal adviser) from Wroclaw remarks that:

> Lawyers are strongly associated with their country of residence. The legal professions are strongly territorial [...]. Where a lawyer is educated, where he is based, he works there. It is difficult for him to work abroad [in another country]. The most important thing is the language and knowledge of local law. Without perfect language skills, a lawyer is a nobody. He cannot handle in court; he hardly communicates with his clients. I see it here from Ukrainians. They are reluctant to talk to us [Polish lawyers] because they prefer to work with their fellow whom they already know. It is the same as with the Germans... But for me, the most important is the language and knowledge of court and official customs. If you are not your own, you will not make it; maybe you will, but it will never be a good [legal] service. Still these issues of registration [licence] as a lawyer in another country... It is already very difficult.

The effect is immanent to the practice of law. Essentially, it relates to the provision of legal services across borders (cross-border), a situation in which: the lawyer is professionally established (practicing law) in one country, while the client is located and/or has a case in another country, or the foreign lawyer works in the courts and administrative authorities of another country. Nevertheless, COO refers to the situation of providing domestic services but with a foreign element: the local client comes from abroad, has a cultural background from a different country, lawyers belonging to other cultures work together in one country, or domestic courts apply foreign country law. The effect is also noticeable in typical international services provision: beyond countries, beyond cultures, and beyond jurisdictions, for example, when the clients are states or transnational companies. However, this effect is less noticeable because of the small number of legal professionals working in this sector.

COO refers to the market activity of lawyers: in the client relationship (individual or organizational) versus the lawyer-provider relationship (as an individual or law firm) and the lawyer-to-lawyer relationship when one professional is a subcontractor, consultant or partner of another. At the same time, this effect applies to legal activity within the justice system, i.e. the lawyer-court relationship (defined also as a judge or court official) or a public organization. Similarly, this effect also applies to the relationship between a lawyer and an international law entity (e.g., an international tribunal) or international organization officials.

The effect of the country of origin is evident in the work of lawyers around the world. However, it is reduced, even obliterated, in areas where cultural differences, borders, and different legal systems (jurisdictions) are blurred. In the European area, COO is less visible due to the strong unification of European countries. Despite the differences, the culture of European countries is founded on similar principles. European languages are more or less similar to each other and the law has a Greco-Roman basis.

The additional element is the very strong integration of European countries, citizens, and lawyers within the Council of Europe and the European Union. The general principle of non-discrimination based on any attribute, especially national characteristics, and the paramount principle of recognition by one country of anything originating in another are instead at the core of EU and Council of Europe law. Blurring the differences underlying the idea of COO is even a policy goal of the EU and the Council of Europe. However, despite the great collective effort of Europeans, the country-of-origin effect is still visible both in economic relations in the EU internal market and in other elements of intercultural relations. The EU is doing much through EU law and political actions to ensure that lawyers across Europe can provide their services wherever they want without the country-of-origin effect. Legal regulations on the legal services providing freedom in the EU or the recognition of lawyers' professional qualifications are being developed for this purpose. Relevant international agreements in this area are also concluded with partner countries outside the EU. However, Europe is certainly a specific area where COO is less visible and less relevant than in other parts of the world.

4.2. The relationship building stage between lawyers and customers

The country-of-origin effect is strongly evident in the lawyer-client relationship as a market activity of the provider and the recipient. Based on the results of the study, two elements of the market relationship strongly affected by the COO effect should be distinguished. The first is to establish a relationship between the client and the attorney (matching). A lawyer providing legal services in Poland, Austria, Switzerland and Luxembourg outlines the matching situation with the client as follows:

> I mainly provide my services in Switzerland and Austria, Luxembourg also happens. In Poland, this is currently rare due to my background [...]. I want to offer these countries because I know them best and know how to talk to people. I always have my website translated into German and French, because people there do not always understand English well. However, clients find me by recommendation. Especially in Austria, it is important to be a 'local'. They are reluctant to take on people from Germany. They consider me their own, because I have been practising there for 20 years, mainly in Innsbruck. Swiss are more willing to look for a lawyer from a different cultural background, but language is still important. I also don't like working in Luxembourg and Poland because I don't know the local customs that well, I only do it when I have to.

Relationships between clients and lawyers are usually established by recommendation. The relationship between a legal tutor and a client is recognized in this way in up to 68% of cases. Here, the issue of being 'local', in other words is having a strong association with a particular cultural area, and an important element. Based on this relationship, it is noticeable that the association with an area has two levels: general, that is, association with a German cultural area, and specific, that is, association with a country or even a region (here, Innsbruck, Austria). The client is more likely to choose a lawyer in the neighborhood, far from his own country. Only when he or she cannot find such a lawyer does he or she look for a lawyer from further locations, but he or she is always careful to ensure that the lawyer originates from a particular cultural background. For the client, it is essential to have good communication in the native language, confident knowledge of the relevant country's law, and an understanding of certain elusive cultural codes. Therefore, the COO effect is apparent in the establishment of the client-lawyer relationship.

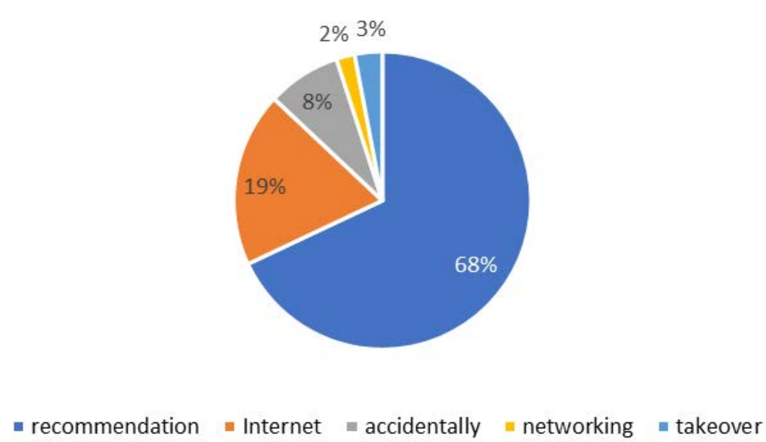

Fig. 1: Lawyer's method of client selection, empirical data.

However, not only is the client looking for his lawyer, but the provider also does. He or she is specialized in a particular cultural area, the law of a particular country and understands the cultural codes and customs of only certain countries and regions. Importantly, the lawyer can independently decide to 'retrain' in a different cultural area and can enter a new area, but after a longer practice. Only then can he or she be appreciated as 'local'. Representatives of 19% of clients also search for their lawyers via the Internet. Therefore, the lawyer also directs his offer through the Internet. It is also personalized in terms of culture and a narrow circle of target countries, which is particularly obvious here, the translation as well as the updating of the website.

The country-of-origin effect is strongly visible during the personal choices of the lawyer and the potential client, mainly by the individual client or the small business client. Both parties generally choose only their own locals and without any insight into the matching channel (Internet, recommendation). The essential thing here is primarily a common language and sharing the same culture and customs. Furthermore, the client (mainly an individual) seems to feel safer when his or her case is handled by a local or a person with a strong knowledge of his or her country. The lawyer quoted is a specialist in individual and small business cases; hence, his account is mainly about the situation of direct contact between client and lawyer. In addition, he personally runs a small law firm with fewer than five people working next to him. Thus, the relationship between small law firms and individual or small business clients is strongly determined by the COO effect.

However, the choice of a lawyer by a large business client, mainly chain companies, occurs on a slightly different basis. An Australian lawyer (a team leader with 30 years of experience) working for a large law corporation notes:

> Neither the team members nor I have any influence on what kind of client we will work with. However, we have usually worked with them for years. They are always big companies, countries, big organizations. I do not pay attention to what country the client is from; they are always different people who represent the client... from all over the world, I don't care where. We all speak English here, the client's lawyers also. I have worked in 10 countries and never learnt the local languages and customs. Maybe a bit more now in Poland, because I have a wife here [...]. Clients choose us in some competitions, [public procurement] procedures, also on the recommendation of other clients. We are open to everyone, but it is not my business. That is what other departments deal with.

The effect of COO is less evident in the service of large entities by international consulting and law firms. The case and efficiency are what really matters, not the cooperation only with locals. The globalization in legal corporations most often does not tolerate a significant impact of the COO effect on client and lawyer selection. There are, however, minor exceptions here, which are mainly, noticed at the level of marketing and business strategy of some large law corporations:

> Our firm specialises in Spanish-speaking clients and countries from South America and Spain. Everyone speaks Spanish here, and we want to work mainly with South America and on Hispanic matters. However, we have clients from other countries. However, if a company from Argentina or Chile wants to enter the European market, it usually comes to us. We are the largest Spanish-speaking law firm in the world, so everyone knows that they will feel most comfortable with us.

Some international law firms specialize in international clients (mainly large business clients) from a particular cultural area. In addition, for potential clients, it is an important value to have legal services performed by people who know the reality, the language, the culture and their area of origin. In addition to the Spanish speaking area, a similar effect was observed for those coming from Italy, France, Russia, the former Soviet Union and China. Individual, but also corporate clients prefer to be served by their own in foreign countries. Hence, they are more likely to establish relationships with their law firms abroad than with foreign firms. In addition, corporate law firms prepare their business and marketing strategy precisely for people coming from their countries. The COO effect is therefore very visible.

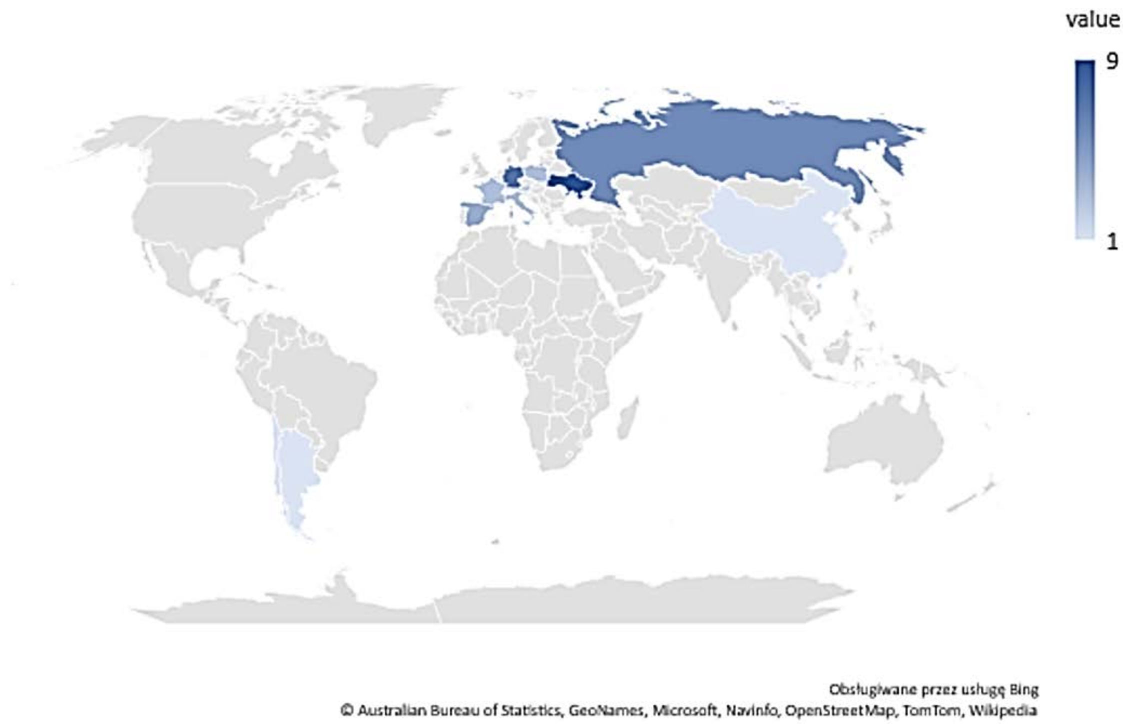

Fig. 2: COO effect distribution areas, empirical data, of interviewed indications.

Conclusions are difficult to obtain from the limited information available, but it seems that Anglo-Saxon lawyers are less culturally sensitive in their choice of lawyers and more flexible when choosing a client. On the contrary, companies of certain cultural backgrounds are more inclined to choose locals. Probably, a sense of significant cultural distinctiveness in other countries, a certain alienation, or even fear of working with representatives of other cultures is at the essence of the problem. The openness to lawyers and clients from other cultures increases with the complexity of the case, its transnational nature, specialization, or corporate structure development. Nevertheless, for individuals and small firms, where the lawyer-client relationship is individualized, the choice of their own local lawyer and the lawyers' plays a key role.

4.3. Cooperation Stage between Lawyers and Customers

The second component of the client-lawyer relationship is the cooperation process, that is, the situation after the client has been 'caught' and a contractual relationship has been established. During the course of the cooperation, the country-of-origin effect is also present. Based on reports from the lawyers participating in the study, we observe three main types of relationship course in the context of the COO effect. The first type is when the lawyer and the client share the same cultural code, e.g., they are from the same country, cultural area; the second type is when the lawyer and the client are culturally strangers, and the third type (the rarest) is when the cultural differences become blurred.

When the client and the lawyer are from the same cultural background, their cooperation proceeds without any cultural disturbance. While in the choice of lawyer and client, the COO effect was then of significant importance (the client or lawyer only chose their locals), during the cooperation this effect is irrelevant. A Polish-German lawyer who has been practicing in Hamburg for 25 years characterizes the cooperation as follows:

> I work both with Poles, mainly here in Opole, and with Germans. However, I must say that I work best with Germans. I have lived in Hamburg for 25 years and I understand them better. I have lost that Polish flexibility. The Germans, when they say something, are straightforward and precise. With the Poles, there is always something wrong, you always have to explain something, and you always have to try to figure things out. I do not understand it any more. I understand German very well and do not want to move my business to Poland. I work here when something really important or family related and matches my interests [... I studied in Berlin and know the German law, language, and customs in the courts very well]. For the client, it is most important to simply understand each other, to be part of their family. I don't feel that way in Poland and I don't think clients feel that way about me.

A client who has recognized "his own" local in a lawyer no longer pays attention to the fact that the lawyer may actually come from somewhere else. The country-of-origin effect no longer plays an important role in the 'own-to-own' relationship, even when the lawyer or client is not entirely his own, for example due to place of birth, background, education, etc. One-time appreciation as one's own at the initial stage of the relationship means that the further relationship is already based on the principles of full understanding. The effect of the country of origin is most often no longer present, although it may have been present at an earlier stage of the relationship.

The situation is different when the client and the lawyer do not have the same cultural background and have not appreciated the local 'own to own" at the relationship building stage. Most often, especially in the case of individual clients or small business clients, the establishment of a market relationship does not occur. However, when for some reason the lawyer and the client enter into a relationship; such cooperation is often turbulent and brings many difficulties. Many Polish lawyers working with Ukrainians in Poland notice this problem, including a Jaslo jurist:

> Here, near the border with Ukraine, I have many clients, sometimes also from Russia. I also get many ex-officio cases with Ukrainians in criminal cases. I find it very difficult to work with them. They always want to mess things up or preferably return to Ukraine. I understand them because they usually come here for a while to earn something. However, they have a different mentality than us... It is very difficult. For them, it is always easier to solve everything by giving a bribe and running away from Poland, and it is not possible here. They also do not speak Polish or use broken Polish. Ukrainians especially do not want to speak Russian. It is very difficult to get on with them and to draw any conclusions. I only deal with them when I have to, mostly ex-officio cases, border cases, etc.

The testimony of the Polish lawyer indicates that in the event of a bad match between the lawyer and the client, this cooperation does not go well. The effect of the country of origin is to freeze their relationship. Even in the compulsory association of a client and a lawyer from different cultural backgrounds (emergency, ex-officio cases), such cooperation does not proceed well. Therefore, the service is provided incorrectly. Cultural differences dominate the need. The COO effect is demonstrated here by the cultural differences that dominate the reasonable grounds for cooperation.

Occasionally, some bogus relationships also occur in legal practice. A Polish lawyer working in Poznan and Berlin observed this type of relationship when working with German and Polish clients:

> I provide services to Germans in Poland and Poles in Germany. In general, Poles prefer to work with me than with Germans. The language and cultural barrier for Poles is difficult to overcome. Germans, however, declare that they are indifferent to who they work with, as long as they are an effective lawyer. I guess this is not always the case, because I have already had several situations where a

> German told me that he was wrong to start working with me. Apparently, I am a good lawyer, but he does not really want to work with Poles. I was recommended and it was appropriate for him to start working with me, but he doesn't like it at all. Apparently, there is nothing wrong, but he would prefer his own German. I think it is the same with Poles in Germany, they think it is OK to work with Germans, but they prefer their own nationals. In Germany... They are afraid of being accused of discrimination...

The country-of-origin effect can therefore appear in a latent form. For legal, decency, or historical reasons, clients or lawyers may declare that their decisions are not influenced by their place of origin or their different culture. However, the COO effect plays an important role, mainly in the course of specific cooperation. Cooperation does not work properly because of cultural differences or historical backgrounds. Sometimes, also the hidden COO effect can be the reason for the termination of a client-lawyer relationship. Implicit COO effects seem to occur most frequently with individual clients who may not be motivated by their cultural biases when working with a lawyer. However, also between a business client and a lawyer a latent COO effect can arise, especially when the company proclaims non-discrimination principles, but in reality, the situation is slightly different.

However, the situation of malpractice due to an inappropriate match of client and lawyer does not always arise. Some situations exist where the client and lawyer not being their own locals are able to work together without any hindrance. Typically, these situations involving legal services for an international business. Here, the client and the lawyer usually create a third shared cultural space for productive cooperation. The Italian lawyer working for a large international law firm observes this issue as follows:

> Working with lawyers from Italy, Poland, England, or the United States is the same way for us. We work mainly on the common law system and use the English language. For us, it does not matter where the client or their lawyers come from. The most important thing is that they know our corporate policy. We are an international [law] firm. We are not interested in national matters, local laws, or customs. If we need a local business, we hire local lawyers. However, I do not engage with them. When we represent a client and there is a dispute with another client served by another [law] corporation, none of us thinks about any courts, prosecutors, national cases. Everyone knows that the dispute is resolved in international arbitration. That is simply the way we work. Lawyers in corporations even drink coffee or go on vacation together in the same way!

The cultural differences between the countries of origin disappear at the level of cooperation in international cases and law firms. Probably intentionally, the COO effect is minimized here in favor of work that is more efficient. Clients and lawyers work in an international space based on transnational corporate principles and the common law legal system. When entering this system, the differences in customs, law and culture are blurred. Everyone becomes his own residents' devoid of cultural diversity. A third, common unified, corporate cultural space insensitive to the COO effect is born. It is a space alienated from local national structures. The COO effect is here replaced by a dichotomy effect: corporate or non-corporate. Therefore, one might say that this is an ideal world without discrimination based on the area of origin. However, it is a world separated from reality, and, in practice, that concerns only a small minority of clients and lawyers and the legal services market as a whole.

The COO effect is particularly noticeable in client relationships with lawyers. It mainly affects people from different cultural backgrounds. We observe it even in European countries where cultural differences are limited. Individual clients and individual lawyers or small companies are mainly affected. In large chain companies, the COO effect is reduced by introducing a separate and artificial platform for contact based on common corporate rules. Among individuals, the COO effect is mainly related to cultural differences through different common language skills. Alongside this, there are differences due to historical background, regions of origin, or local law, as well as internalization of customs and values from other cultures. The COO effect thus has many facets, related not so much to the country of origins as to the transferred culture. However, harmonization of rules across EU countries and across Europe promotes a reduction of the COO effect on the provision of legal services.

5. Conclusion

The main aim of the study was to outline and explain the impact of selected factors related to COO effect in professional services on building relationships between lawyers and their clients. Therefore, the study is mainly descriptive and explanatory.

The country of origin (COO) effect accompanies almost every aspect of social, cultural, political, and economic life. However, various types of initiative are regularly undertaken to reduce this effect. Particularly international economic and political initiatives, such as the European Union, are among those. The EU's important task is to create a single internal market where the country-of-origin effect ideally does not exist. Every product, service, person, capital, or idea created in one EU country should be recognized as equal in any other community country. Therefore, the origin of a particular good should not matter in any relationship, especially economic. Other globalization phenomena that occur around the world also encourage the blurring of the influence of the country of origin on economic, political, or social choices. As a result of intense integration, the erosion of the influence of the COO on various areas of social life is noticeable and actual in Europe; in other parts of the world, the situation is sometimes different.

Regrettably, even within Europe, the European Union, and between member states, for example, in Poland, the disappearance of the country-of-origin effect is not complete. There are some areas in which, both when initiating any form of relationship and in the implementation thereof, the place of origin of a specific person, product, or service plays an important role. We can clearly perceive this on the European market for professional services, especially legal services. Clients, when choosing a lawyer, usually choose only their own professional, that is, a person who shares with them a similar cultural code, traditions and experience. Generally, a client or potential client from Poland chooses a Polish lawyer, not a German or French professional. The differentiation does not depend on the lawyer's objective professional characteristics, e.g., competence, insurance, or education, but only on the lawyer's country of origin. It is especially important for clients that the lawyer shares identical cultural patterns, especially perfect communication in the native language, but also shares a common tradition. Clients are only inclined to choose a lawyer from another country of origin in cases of compulsion, for example, because of a criminal offence, ex-officio legal aid, or recognition of a lawyer from another country as their own. The latter situation only occurs if the lawyer has worked for a long time in a particular cultural environment and has been re-educated in a new culture. For clients, choosing their own is always of paramount importance. The COO effect is thus evident when a potential client chooses a legal service provider.

Service providers (lawyers) also prefer to establish service relationships with people of their own cultural background. Admittedly, they are willing to provide legal services to dissenters, but reluctantly and only as a last resort, when the benefits definitely exceed the losses. Lawyers therefore target their service offer mainly to individuals and entities from their countries of origin or possibly smaller cultural spheres, such as German-speaking, Nordic, or Spanish-speaking cultures. Lawyers believe that the quality and efficiency of the service can only be ensured to people of a similar culture.

However, there are situations where the COO effect is less relevant. Particularly in business relations, international cases, and supranational corporations, the choice of lawyer and client is not determined by their background and the place where the legal service is provided. The efficiency and competence of the provider, rather than the place of origin of the lawyer, are paramount in the group of highly professional business cases. Nevertheless, it appears that even in this type of relationship, the impact of the COO effect on the lawyer-client matching is sometimes strongly determined by the culture of the country of origin. In certain cultural circles such as the Netherlands, Belgium, England, USA, the COO effect is less pronounced, clients and lawyers being more open to difference, while in other cultural settings for example, Italy, Spain, Austria, Poland, clients and lawyers are inclined to choose only their own.

The preliminary hypothesis was fully confirmed during the study. The place of practice, birth, education and, especially, internalized culture have a significant impact on both the establishment of a potential client-lawyer relationship and its realization. Throughout the course of a relationship between individual lawyers or small law firms and individual clients or small firms, the COO effect even prevents most services or effective cooperation. Clients and lawyers choose only their compatriots, possibly those who have appreciated another culture as their own, operating in a broader cultural sphere (regional) or by necessity (ex-officio cases, crimes). The effect of the country of origin is only marginalized in the relationship between large legal consultancy firms and large clients, such as states, large companies, although it is periodically visible. However, when a lawyer and a client from different cultural backgrounds nevertheless enter into a relationship, it is usually complicated, ineffective, and often abruptly broken. However, the study did not discover whether specific components of the own-foreign distinction such as location, registration, and education would have a specific impact on the COO effect. Instead, service providers and their clients approach selection and cooperation holistically without specificity. On the contrary, specificity differences create a bigger picture of the lawyer and the client as their own or foreign.

From a practical point of view, it is significant that there are actually no lawyers who provide professional services separate from the impact of the COO effect. Indeed, there are providers who work internationally (a small number) or regionally between several culturally related countries, but there are no lawyers who are completely international and who are not affected by the COO effect. Significantly, the group of lawyers providing cross-border services between countries of one cultural background is very small and not increasing. The situation is similar for large firms providing services internationally.

The globalization phenomena and European integration are reducing the impact of the COO effect on the potential clients' choice of lawyer and the provision of legal services. However, the minimization of this effect has been slower than it might appear, including in the European Union and Poland. Undoubtedly, EU legislative and policy initiatives are conducive to the disappearance of the COO effect. The EU internal market enforces the disappearance of country-of-origin selection. However, prejudice still remains and is related to cultural factors. The topic of the COO effect still requires research and, most importantly, constant monitoring. Nevertheless, we should believe that with further globalization processes, the selection of lawyers and clients will finally not depend on the country of origin.

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6

Chapter Six

The Impact of Consumer Boycotts on Services in the Context of State Formation: A Case Study of South Tyrol

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The Impact of Consumer Boycotts on Services in the Context of State Formation: A Case Study of South Tyrol

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1. Boycotts are Ubiquitous

The concept of a boycott, or the intentional withholding of support or participation in a particular activity or organization, has a long and rich history. The term itself was coined in the late 19th century, when Irish nationalists called for a non-violent form of resistance against British rule in the fight for land reform. As a result of this call to action, Charles Cunningham Boycott, an English land agent living in Ireland, found himself ostracized by his community and unable to find tenants for his property. It was this situation that gave rise to the term 'boycott,' which is now used to describe the act of exclusion from political, economic, or social relationships. In recent years, the number of organized boycotts has been steadily increasing (Etterson & Klein, 2005), as more and more people around the world seek to use this tactic as a means of effecting change.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in calls for consumers to boycott certain ingredients, materials, products, product categories, services, brands, companies, regions, or countries. These calls often come from individuals, organizations, or governments, and are organized through websites like www.unionlabel.org or through apps like Buycott. Boycott movements can be triggered by a variety of factors, including the misconduct of companies [such as the Volkswagen emissions scandal (Li et al., 2019; Aichner et al., 2021a), or the fire and explosion risk of the Samsung Galaxy Note 7 (Cleeren et al., 2017)], religious views [such as the Coca-Cola boycott in Tunisia (Dekhil et al., 2017), or the Walt Disney boycott by the evangelical Southern Baptist Convention (Sabate et al., 2017)], new or existing laws [such as the anti-immigration law in Arizona (Hoekstra & Orozco-Aleman, 2017), or the boycott of the 1983 and 1987 censuses in West Germany (Hannah, 2009)], or crises in international relations between countries [such as the Libya-Switzerland crisis (Pargeter, 2010), or Cuba crisis (Schwartzman, 2008)]. In the broadest sense, boycott movements are a way for consumers to use their purchasing power to effect change and hold companies and governments accountable for their actions.

One specific type of boycott that has been widely used throughout history is the decision by consumers to refrain from purchasing goods and services from a particular country or region due to political factors. There are many examples of this type of boycott from around the world, some of which have been connected to independence movements. For instance, during the Salt March in 1930, Mahatma Gandhi called on his fellow Indians to boycott British salt and linen as a form of non-violent resistance against British rule (Klein et al., 2004). Another example is the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, when all 22-member states of the League of Arab States initiated a boycott of Israeli products and services in protest. A Central Boycott Bureau was established to oversee and enforce the boycott (Weiss, 2007). These examples illustrate how boycotts can be used as a means of exerting pressure on governments and corporations to effect change or promote specific political causes.

Another example of a country-specific boycott occurred in 1972, when Angolan coffee was boycotted in Holland in an effort to harm the colonial power of Portugal and support Angola's push for independence (Hofstede, 1980). Similarly, the adoption of autonomous status by Spanish Catalonia in 2005 was viewed by some as a step towards independence, prompting calls for a general boycott of Catalan services in Spain. However, the boycott was ultimately limited mainly to the sparkling wine Cava due to media attention (Cuadras-Morató & Raya, 2015).

To summarize, these examples illustrate that boycotts can be motivated by a range of factors, including political or territorial disputes. It is also worth noting that boycotts can be initiated by consumers, as well as officially proclaimed and institutionalized by governments or other official representatives such as heads of state or members of parliament. These boycotts can occur both within a country and internationally, and can be organized to support independence movements as well as to serve as a retaliatory measure or expression of rejection.

2. How Boycotts affect Services

The country of origin (COO) of a service can be a significant factor in the evaluation and purchasing decisions of customers. Al-Sulaiti and Baker (1998) Research has shown that consumers often associate certain countries or regions with specific characteristics or attributes, such as quality, value, or innovation (Aichner et al., 2021b). These associations can shape the way that consumers perceive and evaluate services from those countries or regions, and can influence their decision to purchase those services. Understanding these associations and how they influence consumer behavior is important for businesses that offer services in different countries or regions, as it can help them tailor their marketing and branding strategies to better meet the needs and preferences of their target customers.

Consumer boycotts can have a significant impact on service evaluation and sales. (Grace & O'Cass, 2005). When consumers choose to boycott a particular product or service, it can result in a decline in demand, which can have serious consequences for the company that markets it. This can lead to financial losses, as well as damage to the company's reputation and brand image. Boycotts of services can have significant consequences, particularly if they are targeted at industries that are vital to a region or country's economy. For example, a boycott of tourism services in a particular destination could lead to a decline in visitor numbers and a loss of revenue for the local economy.

One way in which boycotts can affect services is by leading to a reduction in demand for those services, such as when a group of consumers decides to boycott a particular hotel chain due to concerns about the company's environmental practices, which could result in a decline in bookings and a decrease in revenue for the hotel. This could have a ripple effect on other businesses in the area, such as restaurants and tourist attractions, as well as the local economy as a whole.

Boycotts can also affect services by damaging the reputation of the company or industry being targeted (Koku, 2012). For example, if a boycott of a particular airline gains widespread media attention, it could lead to negative perceptions of the company among the public. This could make it more difficult for the airline to attract new customers, even after the boycott has ended. Similarly, a boycott of a particular type of service, such as ride sharing, could lead to a decline in overall demand for that type of service, which could have long-term consequences for the industry as a whole. In both cases, boycotts can have significant implications for the businesses and industries being targeted, as well as for the consumers who rely on those services.

From a COO perspective, one way in which boycotts can have a disproportionate impact on services from specific regions or countries is by reducing the demand for those services in other parts of the world – or a particular group of customers in the region itself. For example, if a group of consumers in a particular country decides to boycott goods or services from a region that seeks independence, it could lead to a decline in exports and a reduction in revenue for businesses in that region. This could have serious consequences for the local economy, especially if the region relies heavily on exports to sustain its economy.

Another way in which boycotts can affect services from specific geographic areas is by making it more difficult for those businesses to access international markets. For example, if a boycott of a particular country's services gains widespread media attention, it could lead to negative perceptions of the country and its businesses among consumers in other parts of the world. This could make it more difficult for businesses from that country to compete in global markets.

3. Possible Procedure and Effects of a Boycott

State formation is a complex process that begins before a region or country declares independence and involves a series of activities that are designed to establish the foundations of a new state. These activities can include efforts to gain international recognition from other states or to become members of international organizations, such as the United Nations or the World Trade Organization. Each of these steps often attracts media attention and can bring scrutiny and criticism from opponents and critics of the independence movement (Andrews & Caren, 2010). This can lead to the emergence of new boycotts or the continuation of existing boycotts, which can have significant implications for the economy and society of the region or country in question. For this reason, it is important to consider the impact of boycotts during different phases of state formation. This chapter will focus on three key phases:

- The period leading up to and including the founding of the national state ("years 2 to 0").
- The immediate aftermath of independence (years 0 to 3).
- The long-term effects of boycotts on the economy and society (years 3 to 10).

By examining these different phases, we can gain a better understanding of the dynamics of boycotts during state formation and identify strategies for mitigating their effects on the economy and society.

The internet has emerged as a fast, affordable and effective way to organize (Sen et al., 2001) boycotts, and it is likely that calls for boycotts will be coordinated through social media and specialized websites and apps in the event of concrete steps towards South Tyrol's independence. The independence referendum in Catalonia in October 2017 provides a useful example of how such boycotts can be organized and promoted online. Under the hashtag #BoicotProductosCatalanes (which translates to "boycott Catalan products" in Spanish), calls for a boycott were widely shared on Twitter, particularly in the 15 days leading up to and the 30 days following the referendum. Although the use of the hashtag eventually declined, it was still being used almost daily over five years later in January 2023. The calls for boycotts were also accompanied by media coverage in Spain and other European countries, which helped to increase their reach and impact.

In addition to being used as a response to independence efforts, boycotts have also been used as a means of accelerating independence in the past. For example, in 2006, the Kosovar youth organization "Lëvizja Vetëvendosje!" (Movement Self-Determination!) called for a boycott of Serbian products and services in

Kosovo as a way of harming Serbia and strengthening the independence movement in Kosovo. In the case of South Tyrol, it is possible that calls for boycotts could emerge both in Italy and in South Tyrol in the early stages of the independence process. It is also likely that the Italian-speaking population of South Tyrol would show some level of solidarity with Italy, either by supporting boycotts of South Tyrolean services in Italy or by ignoring calls for boycotts of Italian services in South Tyrol. This is consistent with the behavior of the Serbian minority in Kosovo, which boycotted elections and public institutions in Kosovo from the beginning.

Even ten years after the founding of the state, in the north of Kosovo, which is inhabited by Serbian Kosovars, only Serbian products could be found in supermarkets and payment is made in Serbian dinars (Groß, 2015). Serbia has also institutionalized the boycott by blocking the import of Kosovar products and services since the establishment of the state of Kosovo. This behavior has not changed significantly in the decade since Kosovo declared independence, as Serbia exported goods worth 425 million euros to Kosovo in 2017, but imported goods worth only 25 million euros from Kosovo (BalkanInsight, 2017), which, according to the Association of Kosovo Producers, was mainly due to political factors (RTK, 2017).

Italy is the most important trading partner for South Tyrolean companies, with 62% of exports (totaling 7.3 billion euros annually) going to other Italian provinces (ASTAT, 2019). In the event of an official ban on imports of South Tyrolean products and services to Italy, this would not only have negative effects on all companies that currently export services to Italy, but also significantly impact the overall economic performance of South Tyrol, whose export rate is around 35%. On the other hand, consumer-initiated boycotts are generally limited to offers that can be clearly identified with a specific COO due to their brand or COO labeling, such as those labeled with “Made in South Tyrol” or “South Tyrolean bacon” (Aichner, 2014). As a result, these boycotts would affect far fewer companies and a much smaller export volume in comparison to a general import ban. In contrast, a general import ban would affect all South Tyrolean products and services, regardless of their branding or labeling.

Experience has shown that consumer boycotts are most effective when the independence movement receives significant media attention. This is likely to occur during the period leading up to and immediately following the foundation of the state. In addition, appeals to Italians to stop spending their holidays in South Tyrol could heavily affect the tourism sector, which is closely tied to the region (Haigner & Jenewein, 2018). It is important to note that voluntary boycotts initiated by consumers or organizations are more likely to occur than official bans. South Tyrolean companies not only export to Italy, but also import raw materials, goods and services worth 7.3 billion euros from other Italian regions (ASTAT, 2019). If South Tyrol were to respond to potential import bans by Italy with an official boycott of Italian services, this would have negative economic consequences for both sides. As a result, the next two sections will focus on voluntary, non-institutionalized boycotts.

4. Counteracting Boycotts of Services with a Specific Country of Origin

Consumer boycotts can particularly impact those companies that advertise the origin of their services (e.g. using the official umbrella brand “Südtirol”, the quality label “Qualität Südtirol”, or the location label “Ein Unternehmen aus Südtirol”), or those, that are associated with their COO due to their brand name. This is especially the case if the designation of origin is included in the company’s name, such as “Südtirol Fenster” or “Laaser Marmor”. Companies that prominently display their connection to South Tyrol are more likely to be targeted by consumer boycotts because of political or territorial disputes.

The use of other elements typical of South Tyrol, such as the South Tyrolean coat of arms or images of the famous rose garden mountain, can also have a similar impact on companies that are associated with the region. In order to counter this, companies have a couple of simple strategies at their disposal, but each carries its own risks.

One option is to completely renounce all labels of origin that are not required by law, which means avoiding any reference to South Tyrol in advertising, packaging, websites, and social media. However, the effectiveness of this strategy depends on how important the reference to South Tyrol is for the company. If a company decides to stop using the indication of origin, it runs the risk of losing customers who look for or prefer South Tyrolean products and services. One way to mitigate this risk is to use South Tyrol labels only in certain target markets, which could potentially make use of positive COO effects while avoiding negative effects such as boycotts. However, this strategy also comes with additional costs for the company, and consumers may be confused when they see services in different countries alternating between having and not having a South Tyrolean reference. In the digital age of global interconnectedness, this strategy also carries the risk of being easily exposed, which in turn could lead to negative publicity and negative word-of-mouth.

The second strategy is rebranding, i.e. choosing a new company name and/or redesigning the corporate identity (Juntunen, 2015). This can help to erase historically grown connections between the brand and COO from the minds of customers. South Tyrolean companies could decide to use a new brand name for the Italian market exclusively, which would be harder for consumers to realize as compared to the abandonment of designations of origin mentioned in the previous paragraph. Under certain circumstances, even an Italian brand name could be chosen to fool the consumer into thinking it is an Italian brand or service (Aichner et al., 2017). In fact, many global companies use different brands and designations to sell the same service and products in different markets such as the identical Opel Meriva and Chevrolet Meriva. However, this strategy comes with the risk of losing positive COO effects and requires significant time and financial investment (Cloosterman & Hoekstra, 2019) to successfully implement and establish the new brand in the target market. Rebranding is not a simple or quick process, and companies must carefully consider the potential benefits and drawbacks before embarking on this strategy.

5. Conclusion

If South Tyrol were to take concrete steps towards the founding of a state, it is likely that there would be calls for boycotts in Italy, concentrated in the period of about two to three years after the founding of the state and decreasing over time. German-speaking South Tyroleans have stronger ties to Austria in terms of language and culture than Italian-speaking South Tyroleans, who identify more strongly with their motherland Italy (Aichner et al., 2016). It is therefore likely that these calls for boycotts are to be made primarily by Italian-speaking South Tyroleans, who may wish to express their rejection of the independence movement through their consumption choices.

It is also possible that calls could be made in South Tyrol or other countries to avoid Italian products and services if Italy were to oppose the independence efforts and insist on national unity. Such appeals could be accompanied by increased consumption of South Tyrol products and services as a show of solidarity, both in South Tyrol and abroad. The likelihood of this is particularly high in states whose populations feel ethnically and culturally connected to South Tyrol, such as Austria and Germany. Past experiences suggest that this is a realistic possibility. Solidarity purchases, additionally driven by increased media attention on South Tyrol, could potentially compensate for the negative effects of boycotts or, in an optimistic scenario, even lead to higher overall sales figures and positive economic effects for South Tyrol.

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7

Chapter Seven

Tourists' Online Information Influences their Dine-out Behaviour: Country-of-origin Effects as a Moderator

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Tourists' Online Information Influences their Dine-out Behaviour: Country-of-origin Effects as a Moderator

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1. Introduction

The quality of restaurants and local food is vital in attracting tourists and increasing visitor satisfaction (Hussain et al., 2017; Tiganis et al., 2023; Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2021). Displaying artefacts in a restaurant's atmosphere and health tourism help promote geographically distant destinations (Abbas et al., 2022; Abbas et al., 2023; Global Burden of Disease Health Financing Collaborator 2023; Kala 2020). Hence, tourism companies and planners to remain competitive and meet tourists' needs, providing a satisfying and authentic experience constitutes a new level of experience for them (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998; Kim et al., 2020). Country of origin effects, food security, labelling, and availability are necessary and standard tourist behaviour (Al-Sulaiti, 2022; Al-Sulaiti et al., 2006). Previous studies evidenced that customers pay attention to the country of origin preferences while deciding on local or foreign products they want to buy (Abaalzamat et al., 2021; Al-Sulaiti & Fontenot, 2004; Al-Sulaiti et al., 2021; Al-Sulaiti & Almwajeh, 2007). Arab consumers have shown their behaviour with their preferences based on the origin of their culture and origin (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1997).

Besides filling their stomachs, it opens new windows into the local culture and enhances tourists' overall enjoyment (Zafar et al., 2022; Zhuang et al., 2022). It has been widely documented that the culinary identity of a destination plays a vital role in overall satisfaction and a unique visitor experience (Kim et al., 2020), especially where the role of the country of origin (COO) is undeniable (Abbas et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). This is especially true in tourism and hospitality, where the COO significantly influences food choices. Interestingly, Arabian food choices are adamant about ethnic cuisine served in Qatari restaurants (Halimic et al., 2018). Foreign foods are enjoyed by many nationals exposed abroad (Khayyam et al., 2021), as can be seen even in the expansion of menus in Arabian restaurants (Waqas et al., 2018). Previously, it was depicted that the customers' food purchase decisions are steered by their perceptual mapping of a particular country's image. Therefore, the trust of customers can be raised through increasing the COO of customers, thereby supporting the decision to dine at that restaurant.

Tourists planning a destination often gather information beforehand to avoid unavoidable situations (Kim et al., 2020). Accordingly, tourists interact with other travelers who have already been to these destinations or have extensive travel experience (Wang et al., 2023). This includes physical meetings with potential resources, an online gathering of information about dynamics, life, attractions, commuting and communication methods, and most importantly, food choices (Tsaur et al., 2010). Independent travelers explore and increasingly rely on readily available online information such as social media, search engines, and online travel agencies. These resources greatly and adequately help tourists make travel decisions (Tan & Chen, 2012). The collection of tourism information is an essential milestone for tourists. Many past studies have thoroughly investigated the importance of the online sources of information tourists use for travel planning (Abbas et al., 2023). Past literature, for instance, evidenced that tourists use different offline and online search mediums to search for travelling information (Sun et al., 2022). It was observed that the international travelling agencies were the most widely used channel, followed by search engines and social media sources for destination selection and other relevant travel information (Abbas et al., 2023).

In contrast, for dine-in behavior, tourists may dine out to enrich their experience at the destination (Khayyam et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2010; Tan & Chen, 2012; Waqas et al., 2018). In a past study, tourists' dine-out behavior was recognized for socializing with friends and watching sports events on a projector (Okumus et al., 2021). The tourism and hospitality literature claims that tourists who are highly involved in food and dining places value the dine-out experience and use their cognitive effort to assess restaurant health, menu options, food quality, and ambience (Balsalobre-Lorente et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022). Despite these considerations, restaurants with dining options are top choices for tourists (Abbas et al., 2023). Presumably, restaurant customers perceived as more engaged are more likely to dine-out because it enhances tourism firms' performance to attain their loyal customers effectively (Iorember et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2021). This is not the least because tourists, who are more inclined to absorb more of the experience of the local community, are already looking for dining-out options when planning their trip. It affects tourism companies' performance and environmental protection at destination. With the recent COVID-19 pandemic safety measures restricting people's social activities, tourists are more willing than ever to visit some places and stay outside as much as possible (Abbas et al., 2023). Therefore, dine-out (tourists' dine-out behavior) has become a priority for tourism companies (Abbas et al., 2022).

In this case, another factor that tourists may keep in mind is their level of trust in the restaurant brand they will choose. Brand trust generally refers to customers' reliance on and perceived value of a brand (Dam, 2020; Huo et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2021; Rather et al., 2019). As a result, customers will choose restaurants that address their safety and health reliability concerns. Additionally, restaurants that fully implement adequate safety and precautions demonstrate the brand trust they have built over time. This brand trust is often reflected in positive reviews on social media, attracting more attention in the search behavior of tourists. The importance of restaurants place/location on preventive measures plays a vital role in dine-out decisions through brand trust. At the same time, focusing on and providing a safe environment for dine-out may build and strengthen brand trust (Kim et al., 2020). As a tourist's online profile can be influenced by the trust customers demonstrate in their travel blogs and social media, this trust indicates a restaurant's credibility in providing a safe environment for dine-out (Ryu et al., 2023).

This study focuses on Arabic and Non-Arabic restaurants because many restaurants in the big cities worldwide have embraced Arabic tastes and cater to Arab and foreign customers while being looked after by hotel management. However, customers still associate these restaurants with their impressions of Arab countries. Therefore, we study how the COO effect induced by Arab countries mediates tourists' online information, dining out behavior, and brand trust. This study identifies literary gaps (Sun et al., 2022; Wei et al., 2021) and designs a research framework to test hypotheses; where tourists search online has been investigated in the past, but how tourists base their search behavior was neglected. Consequently, this study investigates the effect of online tourism information on ethnic cuisine dine-out behavior. More specifically, the study focuses on exploring the interplay between tourism planning by searching for online information, dining behavior, and brand trust in Arab and non-Arab restaurants while visiting a destination (Halimic et al., 2018; Khayyam et al., 2021; Tan & Chen, 2012; Teng et al., 2022; Waqas et al., 2018). In addition, this study examined the moderating role of COO effects on the association between tourists' online information, dine-out behavior, and brand trust for restaurants in Qatar.

2. Literature Review

Recent literature on 'Internet user trust' utilizes source credibility theory (SCT), which helps understand what websites and proxies are trustworthy (Denton et al., 2020; Yadav & Baranwal, 2022). The SCT is widely used and established theory that explains how persuasive communication determines source trustworthiness and has been widely applied in online settings (Cohen et al., 2022; Hsieh & Li, 2020; Lowry et al., 2014). This study also seeks the support of source credibility theory to build trust in restaurants located at destinations using online information to make dining decisions (Yuen et al., 2023). When they find online information from reliable sources, they tend to stick with it and make decisions based on it (Ayeh, 2015; Yuen et al., 2023).

2.1. Tourist Online Information and Dine-out Behaviour

Tourists who travel independently tend to spend enough time searching for destinations online, the highlights of which include food, travel methods, costs, and places to live (Tan & Chen, 2012). Tourists typically gather the information they believe to be credible and match their travel motivations. Another emerging source of online information cited in the literature is blogs. Tourists seek certain benefits from travel blogging, such as (Willment, 2020). According to (Sigala, 2009), this helps tourists make quick, reliable, and easier purchasing decisions. Food and meal choices also matter in these decisions. It is depicted that tourists prefer to eat out, besides many other options such as home delivery or takeaway, as diners are at high risk of contracting the virus post-COVID-19 (Okumus et al., 2021). The dine-out is a source of social interaction for people to hang out with friends and distant family members. However, when tourists eat out in a destination, it helps them explore the culture and better understand the local environment (Wei et al., 2021). This increases their self-expression and exposure through social engagement with the local community (Willment, 2020). Such blogs help new visitors gather information online to help them decide on food choices and their availability.

Food constitutes an essential travelling behavior and forms a significant portion of overall travelling expenses (Kala, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial that in this post-Covid-19 situation where the whole world has experienced social distancing (Wei et al., 2021), tourists travelling to new places usually follow precautionary measures of not dining in. In this tech era, tourists mostly gather information through online sources, which plays a role in dine-out decisions. Previous studies have shown that people's opinions on what kinds of precautions will keep them safe during a pandemic vary widely (Godycki-Cwirko et al., 2017). Few studies have investigated the customer's perceptions and preferences regarding dining behaviors and foods in the restaurant industry (Greenhalgh et al., 2020). However, a thorough investigation from a tourism perspective is still missing. Since destination follows specific protocols according to their local requirements, tourists' preferences change accordingly. Therefore, to investigate whether the tourists who gather destination information through online sources have a higher level of dining out behavior or not.

Food constitutes the actual act of travelling and a significant part of overall travel expenses. Therefore, health experts advised to follow safety measures for some time in a post-COVID-19 situation where the world is experiencing social distancing (Kala, 2020; Wei et al., 2021). Visitors to new places often take the precaution of not dining in-house. In this age of technology, tourists mostly gather information through online sources, which plays a role in their dining-out decision. However, past research has shown that individuals have different perceptions of pandemic preparedness safety measures (Godycki-Cwirko et al., 2017). Few studies have investigated customer perceptions and preferences regarding dining behavior and food in the restaurant industry (Greenhalgh et al., 2020). However, thorough surveys from a tourism perspective are still lacking. Visitor preferences will vary as destinations follow specific protocols based on local requirements. Therefore, to investigate whether tourists who collect destination information through online sources have enhanced dine-out behavior, following are the formulated hypotheses:

H_1: Tourists' online information influences the dine-out behaviour at restaurants in Qatar

2.2. Tourists' Online Information and Brand Trust

Brand trust is a customer's reliance and confidence in an entity or business process based on integrity and reliability (Wei et al., 2021). Furthermore, it has been claimed that brand trust is an essential component of business linkages; equivalent to feelings attached to brand and perceived value of customers (Syed & Shanmugam, 2021). Experts agree that a strong brand reputation can increase consumer desire to purchase (Dam, 2020; Husain et al., 2022; Rather et al., 2019). Furthermore, the customers' trust is pivotal in the hospitality industry and is observed as an essential source of safety, health, and enjoyment (Liu et al., 2020). The travel and hospitality sector is in turmoil because of the pandemic. Tourist brand trust in a particular destination is also essential to decision-making (Xu et al., 2020). Scholars used satisfaction to indicate brand trust (Rather et al., 2019), which combines emotion, behavior, and cognition. Especially in the travel and hospitality industry, health and safety are now significant factors influencing visitor behavior decisions. In this case, tourists make choices based on risk reduction, for which they spend much time searching online (Sun et al., 2022).

Considering the role of information available online and brand trust, few studies have been conducted in the same way in other industries. For example, a study was conducted to investigate the tendency of online social media and advertising regarding influence on a hospital's brand perception and build trust before utilizing a hospital's medical services (Cham et al., 2022). This study considers the perceived role of medical tourists based on service quality, behavioral intention, and satisfaction before consuming services. Another study observed the connection between tourists' perceived value concerning specific destinations and brand trust (Li, 2021). Past research has also claimed that the perceived quality of a brand positively affects user trust. In the case of the service industry, the information availability is crucial for the perceived quality of purchased services. Henceforth, the information tourists gather before heading to their destination should play a significant role in building trust in a particular restaurant's brand. Therefore, literary syntheses on tourists' online information and brand trust paved the way for the following proposed hypotheses:

H_2: Tourists' online information influences brand trust to their dine-out behaviour

2.3. Brand Trust as a Mediator

In the hospitality industry, customers' confidence that a restaurant treats them responsibly and in their best interests is brand trust. According to (Wei et al., 2021), trust is crucial when customers deal with significant uncertainty and risk perception. Especially tourists, when they gather positive feedback about a particular brand of food, they feel more secure about choosing a particular brand of food, thus encouraging a higher level of brand trust (Mak et al., 2017). Increasing tourists' trust in a brand may increase their dine-out inclination for a particular restaurant. Therefore, the brand trust may mediate the relationship between tourists' online information and dining out behavior. Therefore, restaurants that receive positive reviews on social media reflect positively on food and service performance, reliability, and quality (Kala, 2020). This study measures tourists' online information and its impact on dine-out restaurant brand trust. A recent study found that having good information about a restaurant on social media, especially post-COVID-19, increases customer trust (Kim et al., 2020). This higher brand trust mediates in the connection between tourists' online information and their willingness to dine-out.

Previous studies have also used brand trust as an intermediary. For example, brand trust has been utilized as a preventive measure, dining engagement as an independent and dining out intention as a dependent variable (Cham et al., 2022). It has been depicted that brand trust has a vital connection with the customers' purchase intention (Dam, 2020). On the other hand, brand trust is depicted to play no role in luxury consumption, while brand resonance as well as brand experience significantly predict luxury consumption (Husain et al., 2022). Another study examined the brand trust as a mediator between tourists' perceived value and the causality of brand loyalty. Regarding the service industry, medical tourists' brand trust in a particular hospital plays the mediating role for the link of satisfaction and perceived service quality (Li, 2021). Therefore, the above statement about the mediating effect of brand trust directs towards the following hypothesis:

H_3: Brand trust mediates the relationship between tourists' online information and the dine-out behaviour at restaurants in Qatar

2.4. Country of Origin (COO) as Moderator

The country of origin (COO) is where a good or service first appeared (Madan et al., 2022; Williamson et al., 2016). It is depicted by various studies that people's perception of their COO particularly impacts their purchasing behavior. This specific bias in customer purchase intentions due to the COO is known as the COO effect (Ahmed & d'Astous, 2007). For example, the reputation of Japanese home appliances influences the purchasing behavior of customers based on their COO (Wei et al., 2021). Furthermore, it was presented in a study that the COO positively impacts the customers' trust in imported products (Jiménez & San Martín, 2010). In other words, if a country has a positive reputation, customers' tendency to trust and perceive it as reliable is raised, so the country has a positive COO effect. Conversely, if the country has a bad reputation, customers may show lower trust in the country's products and services (Wei et al., 2021). Thus, encouraging COO effects enhances customers' trust in products and services, thereby increasing their chances of purchasing (Hoang et al., 2022; Jiménez & San Martín, 2010; Wei et al., 2021). This study aimed to explore the image of Arabian food and COO effects based on Arabian and non-Arab restaurants, as Arabian food is a famous cuisine in the Gulf and Asia (Mwafi et al., 2021). Consequently, customers who associate Arabian food with a positive image will be more cautious towards Arabian-non-Arabian restaurants because their performance is reliable and up to standard. These customers would be more willing to dine at those Arabian restaurants. Therefore, this positive COO effect of Arabian food may moderate the relationship between tourists' online information and the brand trust of these Arabian restaurants. Similarly, this COO effect can also moderate the relationship between tourists' online information and tourists' dine-out behavior. Consequently, based on the above arguments, we have formulated these hypotheses:

H_4: Country-of-origin (COO) moderates the relationship between tourists' online information and brand trust in the restaurant

H_5: COO moderates the association between tourists' online information and the dine-out behaviour in Qatari restaurants

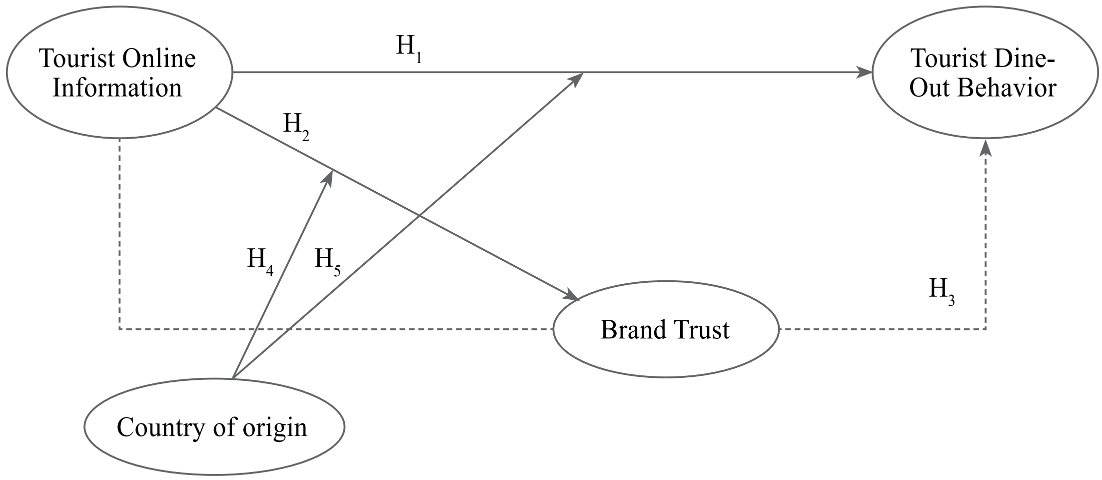

Fig. 1: Framework of the study

Figure 1 shows the following framework, designed based on the previous section's literature review.

3. Methodology

This study followed the quantitative approach for analysis. The survey technique was deployed to collect responses. The study population comprised tourists and residents' visiting Arabian restaurants in the capital city of Doha, Qatar. The questionnaire was adapted and compiled considering the previous studies that used the same variables in their studies. Later, the questionnaire was discussed with the professors doing their research in the hospitality sector. Suggestions that were considered to fit in were made in the final questionnaire. Researchers distributed around 500 questionnaires among the visitors of Arabian restaurants in Doha, Qatar. They were asked about their willingness to be part of the study. The questionnaire was explained to the willing respondents, who were given time to complete it. Those who had any query about the clarity or understanding of language were assisted on the spot. The questionnaires were then got back after their said time. A cover letter stating the purpose and aim of the study was mentioned while ensuring the anonymity of the respondents. The usable questionnaires received were 358, complete in all manner.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections addressing the demography of respondents and the questions about variables accordingly. The questions on variables were about online tourist information, brand trust, dine-out behavior, and country of origin (Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011; Wei et al., 2021). The demographic profile included age, gender, nationality, and income. The sampling technique was convenient since the respondents were approached according to the researcher's convenience.

3.1. Measurement of the Instruments

This survey used the measurement scale from past studies. These scales have been adapted broadly and dully validated by the researchers. However, these scales were validated for the present study to confirm the valid and reliable instruments usage.

Tourist Online Information: This scale is used to measure the study's independent variable (tourist online information), which was previously used by literature to understand how tourists plan their tours using the online information available regarding travelling. It consisted of five items adapted from (Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011). The researchers modified the scale according to the need of the study in the Qatari context.

Dine-out behavior: A scale of three items measures the study's dependent variable (dine-out behavior). The items were adapted (Wei et al., 2021). The sample item included "I would recommend this restaurant to my friends and others."

Brand Trust: Brand trust measures customers' credibility about a particular restaurant. This variable was used as a mediating variable to check the effect between online tourist information and dine-out behavior. It contained ten items and investigators adapted it from Wei et al., (2021) as given in the literature (Wei et al., 2021).

Country of Origin Effect (COO): The current research measured COO as a moderator with the help of a scale consisting of seven items. It is adapted from past research (Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011).

Results

Results for the respondents' demographic profiles are given in Table 1. The respondents precisely belonged to the city of Doha (the capital of Qatar), residents or tourists. Refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	189	52.79%
Female	169	47.20%
Age (years)		
18 – 30	108	30.16%
31 – 40	128	35.75%
41 – 50	65	18.15%
Above 50	46	12.84%
Income		
Less than $20,000	73	31.45%
$20,000 to $39,999	110	23.73%
$40,000 to $59,999	85	23.74%
$60,000 to $79,999	37	10.33%
$80,000 to $99,999	15	4.18%
More than $100,000	38	10.61%
Origin of Tourist		
National	281	78.49%
International	77	21.50%
Visiting Companionship		
With Friends	109	30.44%
With Family	106	30.26%
With Touring Organization	142	39.66%

The demographic profiles reveal that most of the respondents belonged to Doha, Qatar, visiting from various cities, including domestic citizens. In contrast, 21.50% were international visitors. The low visit rate for international tourists is due to the current pandemic. However, most visitors are between the ages of 31 and 40. Most respondents had incomes between $20,000 and $39,999 per annum.

3.2. Measures, Items, Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities

Table 2 shows the items' mean score, kurtosis, and skewness results. The study's sample size relied on the number of free parameters used in the questionnaire. In the present study, there are 25 free parameters. The sample size should range between 1:5 and 1:10 (Bentler & Chou, 1987). Considering this formula, the sample size should be around 250. However, the study has used an adequate sample size of 358 to avoid any issues regarding the sample. Measurement items for each framework variable are shown with their respective means, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. The questionnaires received from the respondents were screened for normality using these statistics. The study used Smart PLS 3 for the statistical analysis. Most studies recently imply SEM analysis for testing the hypotheses (Bawack et al., 2021). Table 2 shows descriptive statistics.

Table 2: Measurement, Items, and Descriptive Statistics

Measurement	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Tourist Online Information (Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011)	I get information from national tourist office website	3.983	1.014	1.068	-1.178
	I get information from friends and relatives	3.858	1.051	0.71	-1.03
	I get information from the internet	3.961	1.021	1.038	-1.169
	I get information from online magazines, articles and newspaper	3.891	1.004	0.587	-0.945
	I get information from the online travel blogs	3.969	0.964	1.748	-1.329
Dine-out Behavior (Wei et al., 2021)	I would dine-out at this restaurant in the future	3.765	1.033	-0.543	-0.54
	I would recommend this restaurant to my friends and others	3.908	0.969	0.402	-0.907
	I would spread positive word-of-mouth about this restaurant	3.682	1.136	-0.457	-0.616
Country of Origin (Yasin et al., 2007)	Arabian food originates from a country that is innovative in foods & cooking	3.933	1.047	0.7	-1.127
	Arabian food originates from a country that has high level of technological advancement in cooking support	3.852	1.108	-0.163	-0.782
	Arabian food originates from a country that is good in presenting food	3.774	1.066	-0.1	-0.734
	Arabian food originates from a country that is creative in its workmanship	3.813	1.047	0.047	-0.793
	Arabian food originates from a country that has high quality in its workmanship	3.726	1.223	0.153	-1.021

Measurement	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Arabian food originates from a country that is prestigious	3.746	1.242	-0.099	-0.941
	Arabian food originates from a country that has an image of advanced country	3.698	1.221	-0.324	-0.786
Brand Trust (Wei et al., 2021)	This restaurant seems to…				
	have sound principles that guide its behavior,	3.796	0.995	0.226	-0.745
	keep its commitments,	3.98	1.142	0.434	-1.092
	very capable of serving its customers,	3.785	0.984	0.075	-0.689
	have necessary knowledge and recourses to fulfil its customers' needs,	3.992	0.959	1.418	-1.168
	confident about this restaurant skill to serve its customers,	3.869	1.001	-0.367	-0.623
	competent in preparing food,	3.737	1.016	0.176	-0.757
	performs its role of cooking food very well,	3.877	1.004	0.492	-0.933
	concerned about its customers' health and safety,	3.905	1.042	0.681	-1.043
	would not do anything to hurt customers,	3.885	1.117	0.627	-1.09
	interested in its customers' wellbeing, not just its own profit.	3.832	0.997	0.348	-0.83

N=358

4. Measurement Model

This study checks the quality and merit of measurement through the goodness of fit. The study outcome further ensured by the reliability and validity results of the analytical procedure through PLS structural equation modelling that is consistent with guidelines given in the literature. The present research measures the reliability (composite and Cronbach alpha), discriminant validity, and concurrent validity of the variables before testing hypotheses (Kono & Sato, 2022; Legate et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2021).:As a part of confirmatory factor analysis, the present study considers 0.4 as the lowest threshold for factor loadings (Bentler & Chou, 1987). The results obtained for this study showed the values above the set threshold. The lowest factor loading obtained for this study is 0.532 for item COO7.

As a criterion for model fit, the predictive-relevance of the present framework Q-square and the statistic value of more than zero for the selected variables confirm the model predictive-relevance (Benitez et al., 2020). Results show adequate statistics for Q-square for dependent variables brand trust (Q-square = 0.307) and dine-out behavior (Q-square = 0.299). These results are satisfactory and significant. Similarly, the effect size of the model is indicated by the f-square (Selya et al., 2012). The connection of tourists' online information and brand trust showed a significant effect size of f-square = 1.614.

In contrast, a medium effect size was observed between tourists' online information and dine-out behavior f-square = 0.117 and brand trust f-square = 0.095. R-square measures the variance explained by endogenous variables. R-square for variable brand trust is observed as 0.617, while dine-out behavior explained 49.6% variance.

4.1. Reliability and Validity

Researchers investigated the data for further screening to obtain effective results. For this purpose, the reliability and validity of data were checked through different statistical tests. For example, the study measured average variance extracted, HTMT ratio, Fornell and Larcker Criteria, and factor loadings. Further, the reliability of the data was measured through composite reliability and Cronbach alpha. For these statistics, the lowest acceptable statistic is 0.7 (Hallak et al., 2012). In the present study, all the values are above 0.7, showing internal consistency.

Further, the average variance extracted shows that the percent variance explained is more than the error. The minimum threshold for AVE is 0.5. The present study meets this criterion, thus, showing acceptable variance extracted for each variable. Moreover, the variance inflation factor (VIF) values should be lower than 5 to accept the item (Craney & Surles, 2002). The statistics obtained for VIF in the present study do not indicate any multi-collinearity issue. Hence, all the criteria set for the reliability and validity of the study were acceptable. Table 3 shows the results for factor loadings, VIF, AVE, Cronbach, and Composite Reliability.

Table 3: Factor loadings, VIF, AVE, Cronbach, and Composite Reliability (N=358)

	BT	COO	DOB	TOI	VIF
BT1	0.752				2.733
BT10	0.819				3.602
BT2	0.688				2.295
BT3	0.705				2.328
BT4	0.540				1.601
BT5	0.723				2.257
BT6	0.767				2.501
BT7	0.797				2.795
BT8	0.810				2.989
BT9	0.776				2.192
COO1		0.715			1.814
COO2		0.838			4.604
COO3		0.800			2.788
COO4		0.823			3.336
COO5		0.547			4.267
COO6		0.587			3.686
COO7		0.532			4.701
IDO1			0.852		1.774
IDO2			0.822		1.672
IDO3			0.734		1.234
TOI1				0.911	3.804
TOI2				0.885	3.072

TOI3				0.893	3.278
TOI4				0.879	2.860
TOI5				0.886	3.086
Cronbach Alpha Reliability	**0.908**	**0.826**	**0.724**	**0.935**	
Composite Reliability	**0.924**	**0.869**	**0.846**	**0.951**	
AVE	**0.550**	**0.500**	**0.647**	**0.794**	

The study has checked the HTMT ratio to monitor the discriminant validity of the variables. According to Franke and Sarstedt (2019), statistics for the HTMT ratio are acceptable as long as they are lower than 0.9. The table 4 displays the outcome for the HTMT ratio, and all values reported are under the acceptable range.

Table 4: HTMT Ratio

	BT	COO	DOB	TOI
BT				
COO	0.747			
DOB	0.789	0.847		
TOI	0.824	0.647	0.812	

N=358

The other measure of discriminant validity is Fornell and Larcker criteria (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For the results to be valid for this test, the topmost value of each column should be the highest than the rest of the following values. In this study, this criterion is met significantly. Table 5 presents results for Fornell and Larcker criteria.

Table 5: Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	BT	COO	DOB	TOI
BT	**0.782**			
COO	0.675	**0.703**		
DOB	0.656	0.653	**0.804**	
TOI	0.740	0.612	0.669	**0.891**

N=358

4.2. Path Coefficients and t-statistics

PLS-SEM is broadly used to measure the hypotheses using beta coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values (Hair et al., 2011). One unit change of the independent variable will likely result in the beta value change in the dependent variable. Paths with higher values show a considerably significant variation in the endogenous variables. The researchers widely use t-statistics to measure the path coefficients and significance level through p-value. The level of significance used in this study is 95%. For acceptance, the value of t-statistics should be more than 1.96 (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 6 shows the results of the hypotheses tested for this study.

Table 6: Hypotheses Testing

Paths	H	O	M	SD	t-statistic	P-value	Results
TOI -> DOB	H_1	0.391	0.393	0.072	5.438	**0.000***	***Accepted***
TOI -> BT	H_2	0.641	0.637	0.052	12.339	**0.000***	***Accepted***
TOI -> BT -> DOB	H_3	0.104	0.102	0.041	2.548	**0.011***	***Accepted***
COO*TOI -> BT	H_4	0.056	0.052	0.032	1.749	0.081	Rejected
COO*TOI -> DOB	H_5	0.065	0.067	0.030	2.152	**0.032***	***Accepted***

N=358, p <0.05, TOI = Tourists' online information, DOB = Dine-out Behavior, BT = Brand Trust, COO = Country of origin*

Table 6 shows the paths hypothesized to reveal the connection of tourists' online information with brand trust and dine-out behaviour. The first hypothesis indicates *H_1: Tourists' online information affects their dine-out behaviour,* which is accepted (β = 39.1%, t-statistic = 5.43 and p< 0.05). The findings display a significant positive impact on environmental sustainability by cultural tourism. The H1 was approved by the findings. The second path indicates that the outcome for the second hypothesis (*H_2: Tourists' online information affects brand trust)* are validated. The results show a 64.1% change in dine-out behavior due to their brand trust in the restaurants. The second hypothesis results (β = 64.1%, t-statistic = 12.339, and p< 0.05) are validated by the results. Similarly, the third hypothesis indicates brand trust as mediator between tourists' online information and dine-out behaviour (H3: Brand trust mediates the relationship between *tourists' online information and their dine-out behavior).* Results obtained confirm the brand trust as mediator between the tourists' online information and dine-out behaviour. Findings of Table 6 for H3 (β = 10.4%, t-statistic = 2.548 and p< 0.05). Furthermore, the fourth hypothesis was addressed as *H_4: COO moderates the relationship between tourists' online information and their dine-out behaviour.* Results for the fourth hypothesis do not validate that COO moderates the relationship between tourists' online information and brand trust. The last hypothesis of the study is formulated as *H_5: COO moderates the relationship between TOI and their dine-out behaviour.* Study findings confirm the hypothesis with supporting statistics (β = 6.7%, t-statistic = 2.15 and p< 0.05) that country of origin moderates the relationship between tourist online information and their dine-out behavior.

5. Discussion

This study investigates the connection of tourists' online information, brand trust, and tourist dine-out behavior at Arabian restaurants in Doha, Qatar (Chiang et al., 2022). This research study checks how brand trust mediates the relationship between tourists' online information and dine-out behavior (Kuff et al., 2023; Ogden & Mazzucato 2021). Another perspective of COO is the influential factor. This study has added to the framework to examine its moderating role (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Trinh et al., 2019). The study also checked the COO as moderator for the linkage between tourists' online information and brand trust (Ayeh, 2015; Yuen et al., 2023). It further checked if any moderation of COO exists in the relationship between tourists' online information and tourists' dine-out behavior (Teng et al., 2022). The present study has shown a great inclination of tourists towards Arabian foods. Results further show that tourists' search behavior and brand trust significantly and positively influence tourists' dine-out behavior (β = 39.1%, t-statistic = 5.43, and p< 0.05). There is rich literature about tourists' search behavior and decision-making in the hospitality sector. The present study proves that tourists' online information is essential in their decision to dine-out in the destination restaurant (Abbas et al., 2023; Shah et al., 2023). These findings are synced with the previous study by (Maclaurin, 2004), who indicated that relatives, friends, magazines, and other information obtained play a significant role in making tourists' food decisions. This finding is valid because the world has shrunk into a global village where information regarding anything is available with a click on the internet (Nyambane, 2021). This makes access to information easier in any context. Tourists, in particular, tend to gather their information through several sources, while recently, they mostly plan their tours based on the information gathered online (Tan & Chen, 2012). The ongoing pandemic has developed several economic, social and environmental challenges that caused numerous problems for tourists and service firms (Maqsood et al., 2021; Yao et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2021).

The present study also found a significant impact of TOI on brand trust ($\beta = 64.1\%$, t-statistic = 12.339, and $p < 0.05$). Past studies also revealed a significant role of brand trust in the type of information source sought (Lee et al., 2011). Additionally, these results are supported by past service industry studies (Cham et al., 2022). This study revealed that advertisements and all other modes of communication on social media positively affect the perception of medical tourists about the hospital brand, thus shaping their brand trust in the organization. Another study showed that tourists tend to stay easy and comfortable in their dining habits during their tour, hence, mostly dining out. This is because when tourists are inclined to a particular brand, they are more willing to search for that restaurant (Godycki-Cwirko et al., 2017).

Similarly, the present study shows brand trust as a significant mediator in explaining the linkage between tourists' online information and dine-out behavior ($\beta = 10.4\%$, t-statistic = 2.548 and $p < 0.05$). These study results are supported by a past study where the trust of tourists in hospitals successfully mediated the linkage between service quality and tourists' satisfaction (Cham et al., 2022). Another study found that brand trust mediates between brand awareness and brand engagement in a significant manner (Xu et al., 2020). It was also revealed that tourists' perceived value effected the brand trust along brand trust as a crucial mediator between tourists' perceived value and brand loyalty (Li, 2021). Similar results were also found, where brand trust fully mediated the linkage of dine-out behavior and preventive measures (Wei et al., 2021). In another study, brand trust was found to affect the restaurant decisions of tourists (Hwang & Ok, 2013). Therefore, when tourists have gathered the information for their trip, they decide to dine-out, directed by the brand trust that the information search behavior inculcates in them.

In the present study, the COO has moderated the influence of TOI on the dine-out behavior of tourists ($\beta = 6.7\%$, t-statistic = 2.15 and $p < 0.05$) in a way that the relationship of TOI and dine-out behavior strengthens in the presence of COO effect. When the COO effect is present, there is an affirmative perception of Arabian food among the tourists than those with a negative perception. The possible reason is that the tourists or customers of Arabian and non-Arab restaurants who positively perceive Gulf countries were inclined towards Arabian and non-Arab restaurants. This outcome is also attributed to the brand trust in restaurants, food, quality, and services (Durco et al., 2021; Heine et al., 2021; Pilelienė & Šontaitė-Petkevičienė, 2014). These findings are aligned with previous studies that found a positive role of COO effect on the customer's trust in foreign products (Wei et al., 2021). Similarly, another study also supports these findings, in which the COO effect was found to moderate the role of consumer ethnocentrism on the inclination of customers to buy foreign/imported products (Hoang et al., 2022).

6. Implications of the Study

Even though this study has a few similarities with past studies, theoretically, it meaningfully adds value to the body of knowledge on the tourism and hospitality sector (Wei et al., 2021). Hence, it is vital to comprehend the distinction of the present study. First, the present study suggested a comprehensive model that offers a broader understanding of the impact of tourists' online information on their dine-out behavior. Secondly, the importance of tourist planning for their trips through online search behavior is highlighted in the context of brand trust regarding restaurants and dining behaviors. Thirdly, it is also imperative to mention the moderating effect of the COO checked in this study on the dine-out behavior of tourists.

Practically, this study offers specific managerial implications for the food industry, tourist operators, tourists, and people looking to visit some tourist spots. The study reveals that TOI and brand trust significantly predict tourist dine-out behaviors. Hence, restaurant owners in foreign country foods should focus on tourist search behaviors and build brand trust among customers. Restaurants should work on their food quality and service to gain good reviews from customers on their social handles. Therefore, these good reviews for their food appear in search engines, attracting more potential future customers,. good customer feedback contributes to developing and strengthening the brand trust of customers, so they recommend it to others through either their social media or word of mouth. Hence, this can be achieved by providing customers with an extraordinary taste, fresh and safe ingredients, and outstanding service quality. Another study about dine-out behavior also opens avenues for restaurant owners to ponder. Restaurants should also manage an outdoor sitting area with an attractive ambience on lawns or rooftops. This also allows entrepreneurs to attract customers and build customer trust.

7. Conclusion

Tourism is adventurous, and food makes an essential part of it. Attributes of the food that tourist experiences not only affect them psychologically but also act as a satisfaction booster to provide more opportunities to investigate the local social and cultural aspects. The present study has also demonstrated in detail that the restaurants serving ethnic cuisine situated in the destinations should focus on the authenticity, service of the restaurants, ambience and quality and taste of food served. In this era of social media, it plays a significant role in building brand trust among potential tourists based on their online search information. Reviews on social media have the power to make or break the trust and image of a restaurant, and this study has revealed that information available online about restaurants plays a significant and positive role in brand trust of restaurants and their decisions to dine-out.

Furthermore, the study focused on Qatari restaurants serving Arabian foods. The COO was observed to be a significant moderator in the association of TOI with brand trust and the dine-out behavior of tourists. Hence, this can be helpful for the stakeholders of the tourism industry in addressing their online image and dine-out area since it plays a significant effect on tourists' behavior. There are also some limitations in the present study. It offers directions to the investigators for future research. Primarily, the study is confined to tourists consuming Arabian and non-Arabian foods. Hence, it addresses such restaurants only. The span of study should be expanded in the future by incorporating other mostly consumed foods in the world like Chinese is gaining much acceptance and appreciation even in America and Europe (Wei et al., 2021). Hence, it will indicate exciting patterns of tourist food consumption and how these affect the overall dine-out behavior. Secondly, a comparative moderating effect of country of origin (considering different origins like Chinese, American, Asian, and European), the future study can incorporate a multi-group analysis technique to compare their results. In addition, future studies can explore other variables' integration into new models to check variations in the results based on self-efficacy, self-esteem, restaurant ambience, and food quality factors affecting tourists' decision to dine out in their preferred destinations.

8. References

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8

Chapter Eight

The Country-of-origin Effect in Services: The Case for e-commerce

Saeed Samiee

The Country-of-origin Effect in Services: The Case for e-commerce

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1. Introduction

The intangible nature of services makes them more fluid and less susceptible to typical effects that impact customers' evaluation of tangible products. Buyers frequently infer quality based on physical features, appearance, and/or touch and feel of products and judge an item's workmanship and performance before purchase. In contrast, most services are best judged during and after purchase and, hence, are associated with the term "experience quality." In contrast to tangible products, service quality cannot be judged until after consumption/purchase. It thus follows that variability in performing services affects their quality and customer experience. For example, a return trip to a favorite restaurant may be less satisfying or even disappointing because of the many sources that can cause variability in performing the same service.[1] It is also widely acknowledged that the quality of some services, such as healthcare and tax preparation, are difficult to assess even after they are rendered. In such cases, customers typically lack sufficient knowledge and familiarity to judge the quality of such work; in fact, often, this is the main reason for opting to hire someone to perform the service. In a similar vein, the potential effect of country-of-origin (CO) of services is more of a stealth concept than attributes generally associated with tangible products. In addition, for many types of services, origin is often not a readily available information to access for customer (i.e., no readily available label to examine), even when it might be a salient dimension during the purchase process.[2] As distribution channels for services tend to be short and direct, assuming CO is a salient consideration, customers may infer CO on the basis of the person or team designated to perform the service. For example, a homeowner may judge the CO of service on the appearance or language peculiarities of the service personnel, rather than the origins or ownership profile of the firm performing the service.

Not surprisingly, this is an important area, which has attracted services-related to CO scholarly works by researchers across multiple disciplines. Given the avalanche of studies at the intersection of CO and services, the main goal of this chapter is to offer a macro view of the field with an eye on identifying, discussing, and guiding future research paths in critical under-researched areas. In the sections that follow, international trade in services and its CO connection is first examined. We will then broadly examine current concerns regarding the CO literature and its relationship to services and services trade. We shall then consider the

1 Sources of service quality variability vary across services and providers. For example, variability in service delivery at a familiar restaurant may stem from the composition, training, and experience of the kitchen crew vis-à-vis a client's prior experience(s), new supply chain arrangements (e.g., ingredients), available number of servers, having a different server, service training protocols and modules, number of clients being served during a given visit, etc.

2 As with products, origin is embedded in some categories of services. For example, in the case of international transportation, which constitute one of the largest international service trade categories, origin is very often embedded in the brand (e.g., Air France, Singapore Airlines). Also, movies, along with famous actors and actresses whose origins are also embedded with their names and public persona, are widely recognized by origin.

volume and depth of CO research focusing on services. Next, we examine neglected areas of services-related to CO research and explore CO within the context of digital marketing. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for future research are offered.

2. CO and International Trade in Services

In general, services are critical to the economies of all nations. Various services collectively account for over 60% of GDPs of nations; over 70% in the case of advanced economies. Although one would expect a correspondingly large international trade of services, such exchanges were strictly limited prior to and immediately following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations. In this regard, the United States deserves much credit for pushing back against the many protectionist nations and adversaries of free trade in services that fought its addition to the agenda for negotiations in 1986. At the time, the U.S. insisted that, unless services trade was on the agenda of the 1986 GATT negotiations, it would not participate in the Uruguay Round. Given the importance and weight of the U.S. in global trade and commerce, key trading partners eventually agreed to add services trade to the agenda prior to the start of the Uruguay Round in 1987. When negotiations were completed 6 years later in December of 1993, only a handful of advanced economies (about 10% of GATT members at the time) initially had agreed to a limited loosening of services trade among themselves. These nations pledged to apply the basic GATT framework to services trade, including the Most Favored Nation (MFN) principle. The successor to GATT, the World Trade Organization, eventually achieved a more comprehensive services trade framework, that is, General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). In addition, members agreed to special provisions for air transport, labor movement, financial services, and telecommunications along with an agreement to further negotiate the latter two sectors. Importantly, the U.S leadership in opening up services trade culminated in a pledge by 88 member nations (of the 1993 total membership of 117 countries; currently 164) to liberalize trade in a wide range of services.

Not surprisingly, the U.S. is a leader in services trade.[3] According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. entities and individuals exported $876 billion in services in 2019, and affiliates of U.S. MNEs supplied another $1.765 trillion in services (BEA, 2022). Travel is by far the single largest international services sector, which is closely followed by miscellaneous business services. Among the remaining noteworthy sectors are financial services and royalties generated from intellectual properties. Other travel, telecommunications, information technology (including computer and software), insurance, and construction categories follow. Other key business services include licensing (including patents), leasing, service contracts (factories, aircraft, etc.), and business, engineering, and technological consulting. Thus, business-to-business services constitutes a lion's share of international trade in services. However, the U.S. is also a leader in such consumer services as entertainment, music, movies and television production, travel, and lodging.

Given this backdrop, one would expect the volume of international trade in services to exceed that of trade in goods. However, nearly three decades following the conclusion of Uruguay Round, trade in pure services remains less robust than one might expect. Therefore, international trade in pure services (e.g., entertainment, consulting) is smaller than manufactured goods, which totaled up to $22,328,088 million in 2021 (WTO, 2021). However, WTO estimates that, in terms of value added in manufacturing, services account for about

3 Some key internationally oriented consumer categories include retail trade (e.g., Zara), hospitality (e.g., Novotel, Marriott), entertainment (e.g., Disney World), education, online services (e.g., search, dating, social media, etc.), and increasingly healthcare (e.g., Mayo Clinic). Representative of key business services include accounting and tax services (e.g., PWC), IT services (e.g., IBM), banking (e.g., Deutsche Bank), consulting (e.g., Accenture, McKinsey), advertising (e.g., Publicis Groupe, Dentsu), wholesaling and retailing (e.g., McKesson, Home Depot), and market research (e.g., Nielsen, Kantar).

50% of world trade (WTO, 2021). In other words, all trade involves some service component, which is difficult to decouple from products for measurement purposes. In addition, new technologies have made it easier for many firms and individuals to engage in providing services across national boundaries (e.g., gig workers, software development, call centers), thus making services an engine of growth for world trade. It is also anticipated that as nations' economies advance, demand for services and, correspondingly, trade in services will grow at a more rapid rate than for products) (Javalgi et al., 2001). Therefore, although collectively international trade in services is both substantial, growing, and worthy of close attention by researchers, it is also a challenging research area. For example, there is no way to operationalize CO labeling for services and customers have no way of knowing anything about the origin of the 50% service component of a product they purchase.

The international trade flows of services highlight the critical importance of this very broad business sector. Correspondingly, it should follow that international marketing (IM) scholars would commonly incorporate service-related CO topics in their research. However, several CO review studies demonstrate that this has not been a trend with respect to services-related CO investigations (e.g., Durand, 2016).

3. CO Research

The first hint regarding the presence of CO bias was noted by Dichter (1962) with Schooler (1965) following with the first formal CO publication. Since then, hundreds of CO publications have appeared in academic journals and, accordingly, one can claim that the CO literature has significantly advanced and, in relative terms, is now mature. Along the way, scholars have examined the influences of numerous antecedents, mediators, moderators, and control measures using an array of theories borrowed from other disciplines (notably psychology) or proposed conceptual models, contexts, and research designs. Furthermore, more refined aspects of CO have been introduced, including country image (Leonidou et al., 2022) and brand origin (Samiee et al., 2005). Periodically, review articles, meta-analyses, bibliometric studies, and books and monographs have complemented the CO body of knowledge (e.g., Al Sulaiti and Baker, 1998; Leonidou et al., 2022; Peterson and Jolibert, 1995; Samiee, 1994; Samiee and Chabowski, 2021; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). The volume of CO research, which exceeds 1,000 works, is a testament to the topic's popularity among IM scholars, with many claims of practical utility of reported findings for guiding IM managers (e.g., Laroche et al., 2005). Paradoxically, at least four major criticisms of CO research are: (1) the heavy-handed manner in which CO is introduced or shown to respondents in most origin-related studies, especially those involving experiments (Samiee et al., 2005), (2) CO is often examined in isolation with the assumption that it is the only factor driving consumer choice in international markets (e.g., Özsomer & Cavusgil, 1991), (3) a narrow view of IM strategy of firms that may be simultaneously engaged in marketing the same product in dozens of nations with differing CO reactions (e.g., Samiee, 1994), and (4) a complete oversight of the firm's most important metrics, that is, its overall brand and financial performance measures (e.g., Samiee, 1994; Samiee & Chabowski, 2021). In contrast to these important firm-level dimensions, the CO literature has maintained a near exclusive focus on CO's effect on consumer psyche and corresponding choice intent or behavior, even though the saliency of CO as a triggering mechanism is by no means certain.

4. CO Research in Services

A significant proportion of CO studies have used experiments and surveys that involve descriptions of widely known and commonly used tangible products, which are easier to describe to informants. Respondents often possess some knowledge of or are familiar with targeted products and may also be screened to have had personal experience with them. This condition is considerably more challenging to imagine or simulate for services in research settings. Setting up experiments involving a vast range of intangible services would be much more challenging and, hence, IM scholars have rarely focused on CO studies involving service offerings. When they have, often it has been in the form of a product attribute, such as product warranty or return privileges. In addition, researchers' interest and foci are on CO effects, given a particular context or setting rather than choice of experimental stimulus. That is, there is likely a tacit assumption that CO findings based on tangible products equally apply to services. However, the CO literature has not been explored as to whether reported findings specifically derived from testing tangible products apply to services as well. Although few service-based CO investigations have been conducted within the IM discipline, researchers in some service-related fields, for example, hotel and hospitality schools or healthcare administration, have undertaken a great deal of research dealing with the influence of CO on services related to their areas of specialty.[4]

Concurrently, CO literature has spawned two subsidiary concepts that are relevant to CO services. The first is country image (CI) (e.g., Laroche et al., 2005; Leonidou et al., 2022). Although CI is generally used to examine product country images, it independently reflects one's attitude towards the country and what it stands for, including its services (e.g., Martin & Eroglu, 1993). The second concept is place or country branding in which accumulated knowledge from product country image studies are used to construct an image for the country as a brand (e.g., Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2002) or simply develop, map, or describe a targeted group's image of or believed country equity of nations (e.g. Shimp et al., 1993). In both cases, the concepts are extensions of traditional CO findings that are decoupled from studies' original tangible product stimuli to offer country brand images as a means of undertaking country-based, in contrast to product-based, marketing (e.g., Fetscherin, 2010). Developing and nurturing a country's brand is believed to be critical in promoting exports, tourism, foreign investment, and/or immigration (ISPOS, 2020). Research findings related to a country's brand can presumably be extended to both products, services, ideas, etc.

Literature reviews that classify CO studies by stimulus type (product or service) are rare. One exception is a study by Javalgi et al. (2001) who reviewed 25 academic journals covering the 20-year period preceding their study. The authors identified 19 CO articles that investigated aspects of such topics as medical and travel services, services as components of tangible products such as warranties, or comparisons of services across nations, notwithstanding that several of the 19 studies were product-centered with service serving as a mediator. In a more comprehensive bibliometric review of 355 published works, Durand (2016) identified only 8 service-related CO contributions. This is only a marginally larger number than the 7 studies uncovered by Al Sulaiti and Baker's (1998) review that was published some 18 years earlier. Finally, in a recent overview of 504 CO publications since 1965, Samiee et al. (forthcoming) demonstrated that only 1.4% of the CO studies (7 articles) examined considered some aspect of services or warranty as antecedents, with the heaviest focus occurring during the 1980s (5.4% of the studies during that decade). The authors further demonstrated that interest in using any aspect of service declined in the following decades with none having been identified during the 2010s (Samiee et al., 2023). Taken together, it is evident that scholars have not enthusiastically embraced CO investigations that center on services.

The paucity of service-related CO studies makes the literature review on the topic by Javalgi et al. (2001) of particular interest. The authors' systematic examination of the literature uncovered 19 contributions from

4 It is worth noting that academic publications in services often appear in discipline-based outlets (e.g., *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*), which tend to be infrequently referenced by IM scholars.

among hundreds published. Among service-based studies identified, the authors identify three main areas of focus: (a) core services such as travel and medical-related, (b) supplementary services included as value enhancement features with tangible products, and (c) comparative cross-national studies of services. From the customer's viewpoint, it is the quality of pure services that is difficult to judge which, in turn, makes the buyer's ability to infer quality based on CO important. As noted earlier, the CO of most consumer services tend to be very difficult to ascertain; for example, few people actually think of Burger King as a foreign or Canadian brand, in fact, most consumers likely associate the brand with its original U.S. origin. An avalanche of research involving tangible goods tells us the CO matters and implicitly assumes consumers can invariably identify COs by examining labels. Intuitively, this finding should be extendable to intangible services, however, with the exception of well-known brands like Marriott Hotels or most airlines, consumers are less likely to know or be able to easily identify origins of services they use. Not surprising, Pecotich, Pressley, and Roth (1996), Bruning (1997), and Berentzen et al. (2008) report that consumers' airline choice is influenced by CO. This situation presents a paradox or frictions in terms of what one might expect in the relationship between the CO effect and service consumption.

In the same vein as CO studies involving products, origin in service-related studies is often artificially introduced. As noted above, since consumers can often determine CO of products by examining product labels, such heavy-handed introduction of COs may be acceptable. However, since customers often do not have easy access to origins of services, the utility of reported results should be concerning. The reported results from such studies often reflect customers' knowledge and association with tangible products' sources from these nations. For example, in a study of hypothetical German and Mexican retail brands, consumers expected the German retailer to offer better products, services, and advertising while the Mexican retailer was associated with lower price and discount (Lascu & Giese, 1996). In the case of transportation (airlines), Berentzen et al. (2008) found that CO played a critical role in consumers' assessment of airline services, but also assert that CO effect may vary by service type. In fact, earlier research Pecotich et al. (1996) demonstrated that CO and ethnocentrism impact banking and airline service purchase intentions. Similarly, Bruning (1997) reported that while price was the key driver of consumers' airline choice, CO was the second most influential determinant. The lower importance of CO vis-à-vis price is consistent with prior research indicating that CO impact diminishes with variations in price (Schooler, 1968). In addition, the perception of homogeneity in airline service offerings adds credence and veracity to Bruning's finding regarding the greater importance of price in airline choice.

In terms of entertainment in an Indian context, Bose and Ponnam (2011) report that CO influences entertainment choice with consumers who are more likely to choose movies and music from countries that have been historically more connected to India, that is, U.K. and Russia. Although the Unites States is the preeminent global provider of popular movies and television shows, and accordingly a key source of programing in India, the U.S., along with Brazil were shown to be less popular. For medical services, Harrison-Walker (1995) identified physicians by surnames originating from four countries and reported that associated nationalities do play a bias in provider choice, especially when the origin matches the consumer's own origin (e.g., when both the physician and consumer are from the same country).

Unlike consumers, business buyers are generally better informed in terms of products and services. The decision-making process is often well organized, policy-driven, and includes exact specifications that providers must meet. Since businesses are frequent purchasers of products and services, they also gain experience with respect to various dimensions of offerings available in the market. Thus, any bias regarding COs would be moderated, at least to some degree, with their past experiences. For example, in a business-related service study, the authors found that Korean importers consider Japanese export service providers as superior to Americans for the most part based on reputation, their customer orientation, and cultural sensitivity (Kraft & Chung, 1992). They further reported U.S. service provider to be viewed as superior in communications and better in exporting finished products than intermediate goods.

Overall, several prior studies have been consistent in highlighting the scarcity of service-based CO studies. Low research activity in the area is due to several factors. First, as noted, service offerings are more difficult to convey to respondents using traditional consumer research designs. Second, the tacit belief that product-based CO findings are readily extendable to any consumer product or service. Third, whereas consumers can assess quality of products based on color, style, size, feel, and/or fit prior to making a purchase decision, they cannot do the same with services. For most consumers, quality of services is determined by experiencing the service during which service attributes, for example, appearance, ambiance, taste, satisfaction, and/or pleasure in the case of restaurants, are assessed only during purchase and consumption of the service. In fact, customers are at times unable to assess service quality even after consumption, i.e., credence qualities. For example, a customer unfamiliar with tax codes, accounting, tax liability minimization strategies, and reporting requirements cannot be certain of the quality of the output delivered or whether it has minimized its legal tax liability. Likewise, a customer outsourcing software codes for a business function to India, Russia, or China cannot truly grasp the quality of the delivered service or its potential cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Finally, as noted earlier, collectively services constitute a huge part of national economies and are made of many variants and sub-variants. All multinational enterprises add some services to their products (e.g., car warranties) and/or sell services. For a long time, IBM has been managing NHS England's Health Systems Support Framework (HSSF). Although IBM's U.S. origin may have positively affected the outcome, the same cannot necessarily be true if the firm were of Brazilian, Chinese, or Mexican origin. At the least in the case of less common or less familiar origins, or prior experiences with an entity, origin may play a role in evaluation and choice behavior as a surrogate for service quality.

5. CO in the Digital Marketing Era

The introduction of the Internet and rapid growth of online markets have substantially eroded time, cost, and space barriers, making it for product and service providers and customers around the world providers to reconfigure how and when they do business (Zhao, et al., 2019). However, the reduction or removal of such barriers has apparently not reduced location (dis)advantages associated with platforms' home countries (Blum and Goldfarb, 2006; Hortaçsu et al., 2009; Lin & Viswanathan, 2016). In fact, consumers in the European Union (EU) have a strong preference to buy online in their countries than in other EU member countries, and that engaging in cross-national purchases, they are more likely to do business with online platforms in EU-member countries than with those situated in other nations (Cowgill et al., 2013). In other words, the CO effect continues to be an important phenomenon in online environments.

Online retailing has supplemented brick-and-mortar stores for virtually all traditional retailers (e.g., Macys.com and Walmart.com), while new 'online only' specialty and general merchandise retailers (e.g., iGourmet.com and Amazon.com) are now competing with each other. Nowadays, nearly all firms have an online presence and the vast majority offer some form of consumer online engagement and sales. Not surprisingly, the global ecommerce market size is very large and growing. In fact, global online sales is expected to reach $6.3 trillion in 2023 (Chevalier, 2022).[5] Therefore, eCommerce has become an important facet of doing business within and across countries around the world, albeit eCommerce share of nations with infrastructures conducive to online sales (high-speed Internet access; wifi; online payment systems; delivery and return infrastructures; consumer protection regulations, etc.) is disproportionately larger.[6] It follows that much of the online exchange involves non-local products, which makes CO an important consideration in choice behavior.

Today, Amazon has properties with localized offerings, in addition to warehouses and company-owned and/or contract delivery services in multiple markets around the world (e.g., Amazon.cn, Amazon.in). Likewise, eBay is the premiere auction and sales channel across key markets around the world. Alibaba.com has an online presence in markets around the world. At least in the case of the largest online operators, buyers are often aware of origins of these online retailers. Given that an increasing volume of consumer purchases, especially for the younger generations, have moved to eCommerce sites, the relative paucity of CO research incorporating various online contexts is surprising. In fact, only a handful of relatively recent studies have examined whether and the extent to which CO may impact consumers' willingness to do business on particular platforms.

Larger eCommerce platforms consist of marketplaces where providers offer product and services. Alibaba, Amazon, MercadoLibre, and Taobao listings are from a wide range of merchants and individuals competing for consumers. Concurrently, CO of a provider using Amazon, for example, or its listed products are generally not known to buyers (unless included in their descriptions). In e-commerce settings, visitors often have access only to limited information which consists of the listings of products offered, thus making product evaluations more challenging (Ba & Pavlou, 2002). It has been commonplace for such sites to carry consumer evaluation of sellers and their products. These ratings provide additional information for potential customers to access and infer from other's experiences regarding the quality products and merchants (cf. Bao et al., 2021). These ratings help build a form of pseudo trust and, thus, mitigate information asymmetry to some degree. Such sites as Amazon Turk services can help recruit workers that complete online tasks, for example, respond to a research questionnaire. Unless the researcher specifies nationality or region, respondents from any origin meeting the stated criteria can participate and serve as a service provider to the researcher. In contrast, individuals and businesses can recruit contractor workers to develop websites or write software codes; key criteria for vendor selection will be meeting the required specifications and testing. Whether nationality of the provider influences the purchaser's choice is not known to any extent.

As with services in general, studies at the intersection of eCommerce and CO are rare. In a pioneering study by Ulgado (2002), he examined country-of-brand, country-of-manufacture, and country-of-e-commerce effects for business and consumer purchasing situations. This is very likely the first study exploring the impact of eCommerce COs on purchase decisions. Ulgado's lead did not motivate other researchers to pursue further research in the area.

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5 Total global eCommerce business is difficult to estimate; however, all sources indicate that it is very large and growing. One estimate expects total online retail value to reach $8.15 trillion by 2026, as compared to a projected $6.3 trillion in 2023 (Chevalier, 2022). Overall, global online sales (i.e., consumer, business, and government) was estimated at $25 trillion in 2018 (Growglobal, 2021). Alibaba, the Chinese retail site, with $700 billion in sales for 2022, is the largest eCommerce platform in the world. Amazon, however, is expected to surpass Alibaba by 2027.

6 In terms of percentage of online sales, China ranks number 1 in eCommece business, followed by the UK, South Korea, and Denmark (Chevalier, 2022).

More recently, however, a few studies have explored CO influences of online providers. Brand and Baier (2022) explored whether CO is actually present in online environments using a Chinese context. The authors, while controlling brand attitude and COI, demonstrated that, whereas brands matter to online customers, CO does not. This is an important contribution in that it highlights an important consideration stressed by some earlier works stressing that either CO's effect has been inflated in research findings or its impact has eroded in an era of global brands (Pharr, 2005; Samiee et al., 2005; Samiee, 2010, 2011).

Bao, Cheng and Zarifis (2021) report that positive associations (e.g., brand image, quality) will enhance purchase intentions for online purchasing of Chinese products. They further find that for high involvement products, marketing communications should stress CO product image. The authors also highlight the fact the consumers get cues and information from more than just online products and that platform operators should be aware of consumers' information sources and plan accordingly.

CO influences on consumers' price evaluations in ecommerce settings were examined by (Moriuchi, 2021). The author reported a parallel finding to typical CO studies, i.e., that positive CO impacts attitudes and purchase intentions. The study finds that consumers like to buy products that possess a positive CO when aligned with a negative CO seller but are unwilling to pay a higher price for a product that has a positive CO when simultaneously facing alternative with a negative CO in an eCommerce setting. Specifically, for sellers with a positive CO, eCommerce buyers perceive a higher equity, if price is not a factor. However, given a lower price, buyers are more likely to move the seller with negative CO. The author also concludes that third-party sellers selling online to American consumers should use Western names that carries a positive equity for the specific product they carry.

Bhattacharya and Sharma (2022) examined the influences of privacy and trust on consumer's online purchase intentions using eCommerce sites of Indian and foreign origins. The authors reported significant CO influences for all three measures (i.e., privacy, trust, and online purchase intentions); and stress the critical importance of ensuring privacy protection on ecommerce retail sites as a trust-building mechanism for long-term consumer engagement and encourage public policy measures through governments for strengthening privacy protection for online retail sites.

Another recent work addresses online purchasing behavior during the pandemic in terms of consumer ethnocentrism and CO (Camacho et al., 2021). The authors adopt a sustainability posture, arguing that online purchases meet most of the imperatives stressed in the sustainability literature while maintaining economic development. As would be expected, consumer ethnocentrism influences CO beliefs, however, neither ethnocentrism nor CO affect consumers' online purchase behavior during the global health crises. In effect, the health crisis did not sway consumers to be more ethnocentric. As with all research results, it is the totality of the body of knowledge that ensure a seasoned result. For example, Camacho et al. (2021) rightfully point out that their results are based on their Colombian consumer data and that a German study (i.e., Yaghoubi and Bahmani, 2010) found a positive relationship between ethnocentrism and online use of banking services. Thus, one may ascertain that a country's higher level of development ensures higher quality and more trusting delivery of services, which leads to consumers being more ethnocentric in their online use of services (banking in the case of Germany). Overall, the CO-related finding by Camacho et al. (2021) converges with those of Brand and Baier (2022) who reported null results for the impact of CO on online shopping behavior.

6. Conclusion

At the outset, attention to four imperatives is in order. First, the sheer volume of world trade in services, as well as service contents of tangible products, speaks to their importance in IM research, including the impact of service CO. Given its importance to the economies of nations, it is all the more surprising that IM scholars have paid insufficient attention to service sectors. Second, international trade in pure services, while rapidly growing, remains much smaller than trade in tangible products. However, since the establishment of GATS by WTO, a gradual removal of barriers to trade in services will continue. Third, CO research related to services, and especially pure services, remains a largely virgin area within IM. However, researchers in service-based fields of study, such as hospitality and sports management, have incorporated CO in their respective fields. Interestingly, CO research by non-marketing scholars is not commonly cited as foundational information for service-based CO projects within marketing, perhaps due to marketers' proclivity to work with tangible products. Fourth, for reasons articulated earlier, CO research involving services is methodologically challenging. This may explain why IM scholars have infrequently embraced pure service-based CO projects. When used, it is often a component of a tangible product offering, e.g., warranty (e.g., Thorelli, Lim, & Ye, 1989).

In a similar fashion, CO research incorporating eCommerce has been a relatively new phenomenon. Given the significant accumulated business volume over the Internet and eCommerce since the early 1990s, the paucity of IM research in the area is surprising. In fact, CO publications within IM accelerated during the 1990s when ecommerce was also rapidly growing.[7] Yet, IM researchers did not design CO studies that incorporate online trade. Today, eCommerce is a very large business, and multiple international platforms offer products in wide-ranging countries.[8] The combination of product origin and brand origin on these platforms, along with eCommerce itself as a service (i.e., virtual retailer), offer tremendous CO research opportunities going forward.

Two broad findings seem apparent from the handful of CO studies at the intersection of services and eCommerce. First, a nil CO effect was reported in some service-based studies (e.g., Brand & Baier, 2022; Camacho et al., 2021). Such findings imply eCommerce has introduced an unexpected dimension in CO research and, accordingly, should receive appropriate research attention within IM. It may be the case that an eCommerce platform's image and popularity (e.g., Amazon, Alibaba) mitigates product-or service-related CO bias for customers.

Second, studies incorporating traditional CO research designs and eCommerce appear to stress that CO impacts customer choice in eCommerce. Such findings are not necessarily contradictory when considering research settings, designs, and project objectives. In the case of brick-and-mortar retailers too, research has demonstrated that the retailer's image mitigates CO's influence. For example, Thorelli et al. (1989) demonstrated that excellent warranty terms combined with store image has a greater impact on consumers' quality perception and overall attitude towards the product than the CO cue. However, this finding is relative because CO remained an important facet. In essence, taking into consideration the eCommerce facet and its associated customer-friendly policies (e.g., easy returns and refunds), this is an unresolved area in need of exploration.

7 The number of CO publications in the 1990s jumped to 90 as compared to only 39 in the previous decade. CO research accelerated in the 2000s to 122 studies and in the 2010s, it more than doubled to 253 publications (Samiee et al., forthcoming).

8 In the U.S. alone, eCommerce volume is expected to quadruple, from US$459B in 2017 to US$1.7T in 2027 (Statistica, 2023).

6.1. General Recommendations

Two major overarching concerns related to past CO research should be front and center in designing future CO research. First, CO investigations have evolved in relative isolation from other critical marketing strategy components. Although such studies are instrumental to initially gain the necessary knowledge for designing projects that increasingly involve more components of IM strategy, the CO literature has largely fallen short on formulating holistic projects that depict how firms, especially firms that market their products and services in dozens of countries, plan and implement IM strategies.

Second, firm-level performance in general, and financial performance in particular, is the output of ultimate importance to IM managers and international firms. This important metric has been invariably overlooked. Future CO studies, whether service-based or tangible product-centered, should strive to develop designs that accommodate multiple units of analysis, including consumer/customer-level, firm-level, and country-level. This is possible by envisioning more complex multilevel models and corresponding research designs.

6.2. Future CO Research in an Ecommerce Context

Concurrent substantial growth of international trade in services and eCommerce, considering an avalanche of empirical studies indicating that CO matters, makes it timely to investigate whether and the extent to which CO influences online purchase behavior for services. Foreign-based products and brands, as well as online shopping, are nowadays ubiquitous in most markets around the world. So, regardless of whether an online eCommerce platform caters mostly to domestic markets or is internationally oriented (i.e., cross-national), CO studies can be designed to examine whether and how online retailers and/or online services offered might be impacted by products' or platform's COs. Numerous international providers of online services are geared to cater to businesses, and this offers an excellent basis for investigating whether and ways in which businesses might be impacted by the CO phenomenon in a services context.

Some online platforms are conduits for on-demand crowdsourcing for service businesses. These providers are frequently individuals situated around the world that provide on-demand services and are paid accordingly (i.e., per assigned task) (e.g., Amazon Mechanical Turk). Online services can be specialized in providing such services as data collection or serving as a qualified respondent in a research project, editing, programming, or data analysis among others (e.g., Prolific, Qualtrics, Amazon Mechanical Turk). As origins of service providers will vary, the process offers fertile grounds for examining CO's role, if any, for service purchases within the context of eCommerce.

Although internationally oriented remote service providers cannot offer typical services that consumers need (e.g., repairs, cleaning, yard work, etc.), an array technology-based online consumer services might be examined for CO effect as well (e.g., social media, music or video streaming, news, communications). Local consumers' use of such services as data collection or editing is unusual, but also possible. In addition, future CO studies can also examine whether international online platforms/retailers are impacted by their COs. As online retailers are essentially service providers, such a project will further expand the boundaries of CO knowledge. Amazon is quintessentially an American enterprise with local platforms in an increasing number of markets (e.g., Amazon.fr; Amazon.co.jp; Amazon.co.uk). For example, does Amazon's "American-ness" (i.e., CO) affect local consumers' choice of online platform?

In addition, products' COs may also be incorporated in future service-based CO projects. For example, is a Malaysian consumer more (less) likely to buy an (un)known brand sourced from an (un)familiar country? In addition, local service brands, whether known or unknown, can be paired with non-local ones in comparative studies. As online providers may or may not reveal COs of their listings, the success of projects is dependent on creative research designs as well as secondary data sources revealing COs of brands listed. As with off-line CO projects, developing an appropriate project design is a bumpy road. For example, known/global brands may be produced locally or in several third countries. Nevertheless, creative research designs can avoid these challenges.

eCommerce offers several advantages vis-à-vis traditional methods of data collection for CO studies. First, online data are real. Researchers are not bound to using such surrogate measures as "intentions to buy," because actual online purchase data can be accessed. Second, new surrogate forms of purchase, such as "preference" or "intentions to buy" are also more readily available by examining whether an eCommerce site's visitors placed items in their shopping carts (but not necessarily purchased) or added something to a wish/future purchase list.

eCommerce and Internet technologies in general have removed many barriers for consumers and businesses alike by reducing communication and search costs, while intensifying competition across providers. Interestingly, although the Internet has helped removed many barriers to trade and intensify competition both within and across nations, several studies confirm that CO still matters in an international online context (e.g., Blum and Goldfarb, 2006; Hortaçsu et al.m 2009; Lin & Viswanathan, 2016). Some of the findings emulate what is typically expected in international business, for example, that the physical (as opposed to psychic) distance between sellers and buyers negatively affects online transactions, albeit to a lesser extent than the bias shown in brick-and-mortar exchanges (Hortaçsu et al., 2009). Among other marketing strategy implications, such revelations suggest that online retailers can adjust prices based on visitors' IP addresses, with a higher price premium associated with those situated more closely (e.g., Valentino-DeVries et al., 2012). Research also provides support for the existence of CO effect for purchases of foreign brands in online exchanges and confirms that sellers' geographic locations may serve as surrogate for their reputation eCommerce settings (Moriuchi & Chung, 2019). It is evident that online location-related findings should favor platforms that have truly internationalized by securing local operations in markets in which they operate (e.g., Amazon).

eCommerce-related CO research offers the possibility of access to merchants' archival (server) data that are real and, therefore, have external validity. Unlike experiments that can be extended to cover eCommerce influences, online-generated data have the added advantage of fine grain purchase information about products and services purchased, time-related measures, distance (customer versus merchant's origin/location), and basket size-related measures that were rarely available or collected. For example, how does the buyer's shopping speed influence purchases of local versus non-local products or brands? Does this vary by shopping time or purchase cycle? Importantly, as brand, total sales, and other firm-level performance measures are now more accessible, CO can be more directly linked to performance. Performance outcomes are the ultimate measures that IM managers and businesses care about. It is likely that, by developing a mutually beneficial working relationship with online platforms, access to such data is made possible, and CO researchers will finally begin to explore and answer questions of ultimate importance to IM managers: does CO have any impact on brand and firm performance and, if so, what is the best way to leverage positive bias or mitigate negative sentiments!

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9

Chapter Nine

Country-of-origin Effects on Service Evaluation: A Literature Review on the Turkish Tourism Industry

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Country-of-origin Effects on Service Evaluation: A Literature Review on the Turkish Tourism Industry

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1. Introduction

Labelling and marketing products according to their place of manufacture is a topic of discussion from early periods of humanity. According to Wengrow (2008) labelling, sealing and branding products by their origin of place has been in practice for the last 4000 years. Examples of early product labelling have been documented in several ancient cultures from Egypt to China and several parts of the Mediterranean basin.

Typically CO effects are observed in consumers. In fact, knowing the country of origin of a product is important because geography and product associations can give clues about quality of products. Another aspect of learning country of origin is the identification of the nation or people behind the production. There are people who are ready to pay more price for grapes produced in a certain city than grapes from other cities. Several agricultural products, food and drinks are now labeled to certify their original place of production. This process is good for local producers as they valorize their products in a competitive business world. Manufactured products (cars, durable goods, clothes etc.) are also subject to the country of origin effect. Similar products are priced differently despite identical materials and techniques used during production. Some countries, cities, and places can be better in the production of certain products; that can depend on geographical factors (soil, climate, rain…), human capacity, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and innovative technology.

Literature shows that studies on CO increased after the 1960s. This is quite meaningful because the globalization of trade and international mobility of humans and products have sharply risen from those days. Globalization has created multinational companies and local firms and products confronted fierce competition since then. To protect local producers new legislation is needed. Not only producers but also consumers are under great disinformation regarding product quality and consumer rights.

2. Tourism-related Country-of-origin Terminology

“Country of origin” is told to be first mentioned by Scholer in 1965 as a concept in marketing and shortly described as “Made-in…” (Dinnie, 2004; Pereira et al, 2005; Andehn and L’Espoir Decosta, 2016; Frazer, 2016). As the country of origin as a term is dependent on subjective perceptions, studies exist to make it a more objective measurement factor. Andehn and L’Espoir Decosta (2016) for instance, tried to support this view with their study emphasizing AS (Association Strenght) which fortify CO as a factor supporting consumer behavior.

"Country-of-origin (CO) image" is another term related to the concerned conceptual framework of marketing. CO image is defined as the impression that comes to the mind of entrepreneurs and consumers that is formed by the products, and historical, traditional economic and political background that represent the country (Nagashima, 1970). The exact opposite is called "the inverse CO effect" which is described as the impact of brand image on the country's image (White, 2012).

PCI (Product-country Image) and TDI (Tourism Destination Image) are two related terms in this respect that nourish one another. TDI affects the buying decision of consumers while PCI can go beyond as support by defining the investment decisions of the organizations. Further, PCI represents rather tangible properties of the product while TDI focuses on personal experiences of the destination. Both PCI and TDI agree on the effect of images on attitudes and evaluation of the consumer decision processes on the destination and touristic perspective (Nadeau, et al., 2008).

The benefit of country-of-origin studies that illuminate the match of product-country and vice versa can be felt not only in the marketing practices but also in the governmental decisions and measures taken by the state authorities on the management of a country's image. Additionally, among other benefits of the country of origin is helping the purchasing decisions, behaviors and attitudes of consumers by affecting their perception of quality (Tigli et al., 2010).

CO effects on the destination is an area of study that requires a multifaceted and multidisciplinary perspective. If the perception of CO effects on destinations is subjective, it is essential to define and set a framework for multicultural interactions as the background for this subjectivity is created by many different reasons. When trying to set this framework, many determinants enact such as the culture of the origin country and destination country, the sub-cultures, stereotypes, ethnocentrism, animosity, familiarity, country versus people perceptions, destination beliefs, cognitive, affective and conative country images (Papadopoulos & Butt, 2007). Figure 1 also shows an integrated model of product, country and destination image inter-relationship.

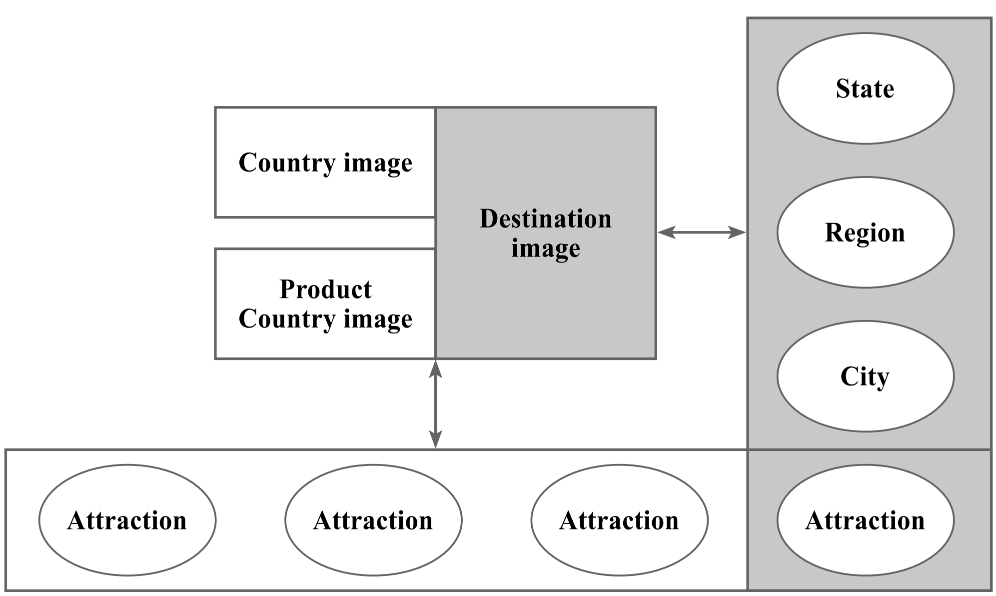

Fig. 1: An Integrated Destination, Country, and Product Image Model (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005: 500)

In tourism studies, the purpose of the CO and its usage in consumer preferences differs according to various destinations. Table 1 gives an idea of CO as a determinant factor of tourism marketing preferences in literature.

Table 1: Literature on CO and Tourism Destination Choice Relationship

Destination	**Market Segment or Sample**	**Tourism Type/ Destination**	**CO and related factors**
Germany (Schmerler, 2019)	Domestic (Germany) and International (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, India, South Korea)	Medical tourism in Germany	CO and personal networks
Italy (De Nisco et al., 2016)	European (UK, Germany, France, Spain), Non-European (U.S., Japan, China)	Destination Italy	Country image (CI), destination belief, familiarity with destination, product belief, considerable perception of product CO, the intention to re-visit
Spain (Gómez&Molina, 2012)	Wineries' of Spanish DOs (Rioja, Ribera del Duero, Navarra and Rueda)	Wine Tourism	Destination image, DO (Denominations of Origin, BI (Brand Image), BE (Brand Equity)
Canada, Australia, US, Japan (Papadopoulos & Butt, 2007)	South Korean views	The listed 4 Destinations	Cognitive and affective CI, Product and Destination beliefs, Receptivity [pride in product ownership, willingness to travel]
US (Papadopoulos & Butt, 2007)	South Korea and Canada	US as destination and producer	In addition to the above factors, Conative CI
Türkiye (Ayyıldız et al., 2013)	Swedish and Dutch people	Perception of Turkey and its products	PCI (Product Country Image)

3. Structure of Turkish Tourism from an International Tourism Perspective

Turkey (Türkiye) is a destination with a multitude of facilities and differentiated tourism products with an advantageous geographical location. As the father of history Herodotus whose birthplace was in Anatolia stated: "The most beautiful location on earth under the most beautiful sky where sun joined to the sea and history joined to the nature".

Tourism sector is one of the main revenue providers in Turkish economy. Tourism revenue contributes to 4.6% of GDP (TÜRSAB, 2019). The main motivations of foreign origin international tourists visiting Türkiye are sightseeing, leisure, and entertainment, sportive and cultural activities contributing to 75% of motivations (TÜİK, 2022).

The leading authorities of Turkish Tourism are, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, TÜRSAB (The Association of Travel Agencies), TUROFED (Turkish Hoteliers Federation), TUREB (Association of Tour Guides).

Despite the sharp competitive conditions that it faces in the international tourism arena, Türkiye had a lower rate of decrease following the COVID-19 period in 2020 in tourism revenues compared to other regions of the World. The average RevPAR for Europe decreased by -66.1% while the decrease in Türkiye's RevPAR amounted to -57,5 (EY, 2020). As Ernst and Young report highlights, many successful international hotel chains such as Accor, Best Western, Radisson, Hyatt, Intercontinental, Marriot, and Wyndham have establishments of their various brands in different cities of Türkiye. Additionally, even in the crisis period of COVID-19, international investments among these chains in the hospitality industry in Türkiye especially in İstanbul augmented. This proves once more the popularity of Türkiye as a tourist destination in the World.

The fluctuations in demand for tourism in Türkiye depend on a complex mixture of internal and external factors. According to certain academic research results, Türkiye's international and diplomatic relationships, economic stability and exchange rates, relative prices, consumer price index, per capita income in the origin and destination countries, violence, terrorism or other diplomatic crises increase tourism. Similarly, the distance between the sending and receiving country, household debt level are among the factors affecting demand for Turkish tourism (Uysal & Crompton, 1984; Abdelataş & Toprak, 2015; Uslu & Akay, 2019; Ulucak et al., 2020).

According to the tourism statistics of the Ministry of Culture of Tourism from January to December 2022, the total number of visitors to Türkiye has crossed 51.39 with an increase of 71.07%. The tourism revenue amounted to $ 46.3 billion. Foreign origin visitors with the number of 44.564.395 increased by 80.33 %. In the first three, the origin of foreign tourists from 1 to 3 were from Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

According to a study of demand analysis concerning the effect of the macroeconomic variables on demand in the main five origin countries sending tourists to Türkiye between the years 2010 and 2020, it is found out that, the dependence on five origin markets increases the risk in tourism. Therefore, investment in market differentiation is suggested as an alternative balancing constituent. However, the dependency on tourism in Türkiye is also questioned and criticized in the study (Kaymaz, 2022).

Domestic tourism is another competence area that is trying to be empowered in Türkiye which is counted as a challenging factor to overcome and to increase the international demand as well (Esen & Uyar, 2012). Early booking has been applied for this reason as a measure to increase domestic demand for a decade now.

4. CO Effects on Turkish Tourism

Turkiye has detected importance of Country-of-origin Image (COI) and branding as she faced competition that is more international. It is possible to date this challenge as far as mid 1980s since Turkish economy has been open to international markets with new macroeconomic decisions. Those times, Turkish firms had witnessed strong influx of international brands in several sectors to Turkiye. These brands were known by a small amount of Turkish consumers that had international travel experience. Many Turkish firms could not compete with these strong international brands. Tourism sector was not immune to this change. The process followed first with a shock for Turkish firms since they were introvert until the arrival of international brands. Then, some firms gained expertise exhanges with international groups. Joint ventures, management contracts, franchising and some other forms of investments and partnerships prepared Turkish firms to international business atmosphere. While some companies made partnerships with international brands to import their products as dealers, some others just became sub-contractors to produce internationally accepted products for well-known brands. Long-time Turkish business people complained about this situation. Despite their expertise of quality production processes (skillful employees, high quality raw materials etc.) Turkish firms were suffering from no-name products since they had not invested for global branding. Importing international brands has been the easy model for many entrpreneurs. Some firms brought high-tech or heavy industry investments that accelerated Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that governments supported in particular. Some other firms just produced for international brands and contented themselves with gains from production. It was common to see textile products produced in Turkey but sold under global brand names. This process developed the expertise in Turkish textile industry. Textile and tourism were two pioneer industries supported by governments since they were creating currencies the governments needed. Turkiye had high quality input for textile industry thanks to her rich animal husbandry and agriculture background. Turkiye tried to benefit from tourism industry since she witnessed the success of Spain and Greece in tourism during post 2nd World War era. Tourism could easily bring foreign currencies with relatively less investment costs. Foreing trade, export, international tourism are keywords for Turkish Country of Origin development. The more firms opened themselves to international markets, the more they learned current global business practices. Speaking foreign languages has become important. Study of management and marketing discplines together with foreign languages has become common interest for new generations. Gradually this process has resulted in global Turkish brands. Some Turkish brands decided to launch themselves and went global especially in textile industry. The collapse of Soviet Union in 1990s coincidentally helped Turkish companies to export their products to these new poor and hungry regions for consumers. Tourism and trade went together during this export process. Many travelers from newly independent Soviet bloc countries visited Turkiye to shop quality textile products and transport them in their suitcases for reselling in their countries. During 1990s, Turkish textile industry leaders moved to a new phase from contracted manufacturers to branded producers. Some firms just decided to buy international brands with financial difficulties especially in aging Europe. After the success of Turkish textile industry in foreign trade, gradually members of other industries dared to develop interest in export. Meanwhile tourism industry boomed and developed rapidly. Number of international visitors soared. First Western European visitors dominated Turkish tourism arrivals, and then old Soviet bloc countries and Russians discovered Turkish tourism destinations. Therefore, tourism assisted to the country of origin effect of Turkiye. Without tourism industry, Turkiye would not develop international brands as quickly as she realized.

On the other hand, existence of an international diaspora has become an asset for Turkiye especially in Europe. Having a global expat community and immigrant workers also support internationalization of a country. In order to develop COI and benefit from “Made-in” effect Turkiye needed to find international buyers for its products. The real fierce competition about Country of Origin effects seems to be on final consumer products. When Turkiye started to export her branded products to Europe, she found generations of immigrants ready to consume Turkish products. Tourists and international diaspora supported this branding process of Turkish products. Tourists learned Turkish brands and products during their visits and shopping experiences. Diaspora living abroad knew country by their homeland visits and by their close-knit society membership in the country, they work.

Global reputation gained thanks to sports, music, cinema, media and other cultural industries also help develop CO effect. Turkiye has benefited from this with successes of Galatasaray football team in Europe, and national football team in 2002 World Cup. Singer Tarkan and Sertab Erener (Eurovision song contest winner) have supported the international image of the country with their global audience. Turkish soap operas and series also supported the CO effect. It is somehow like the relationship between Hollywood movies and American brands that people associate for their consumption processes. Global consumer culture (jeans, motorcycles, cornfkales, fastfood…) and Hollywood movies are interlinked. Turkish soap operas softened the image of Turkiye in neigbouring countries and many other countries as far as South American ones reached Turkish culture, lifestyle and brands thanks to soap operas.

Organizing mega-events is another facet of CO effect. Formula 1 Racing organized in Istanbul has been one of these. There are other global summits like those of G20, European Union leaders, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and several other fairs and exhibitions, which brought the media spotlight on Turkiye.

According to a study Ayyildiz et al. (2013), the perception of Swedish and Dutch people of Turkey and its products are researched and it is found that they perceive Turkey as a friendly country and its economy is perceived as developing. Additionally, Swedish and Dutch people are sure about the quality of Turkish food, especially Turkish kebap.

Koksal and Gjana (2015) studied the effect of Turkish soap operas on Albanian consumers' perception of Turkish products and found that more than fifty percent of the correspondents have changed their tendency to buy Turkish goods positively thanks to Turkish soap operas. Given similar examples of the popularity of Turkish soap operas in the Balkans and the Middle East, it is also admitted that if the level of development of the countries is similar, the probability of economic exchange among these countries augments.

In a study by Zhumabaeva et al. (2019), country of origin perceptions of Turkish tourism by main target markets is compiled from market studies of other resources. Accordingly, Russian tourists with positive perceptions think that Türkiye is the best holiday destination for them; the ones with negative perceptions explain their unfavorable opinions by the political disability between the countries. The UK and Japanese perception of Türkiye highlight its warm climate and rich history and cultural heritage. American tourists find advantageous their purchasing power in case they visit Türkiye. French people who never visited Türkiye before possessed a prejudiced perception that Türkiye is an Arabic country, as they had not had good relations with Arabs in history.

In a study related to the perception of the country image of Türkiye, the analysis of the pictures shared on social media by influencers differed from the images used in the Turkish official marketing scheme. In fact, a positive perception of place rather than the country image is emphasized through the perception of the pictures shared on blogs, which develops into a halo effect, resulting in a biased perceived image of the country (Bical & Öztürk, 2021).

5. Discussion

In this study, to analyze the CO effects on Turkish tourism, UNWTO regional commissions are desired to be taken as a basis for evaluation: *Africa, the Americas, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia* (unwto.org). However, such an embracive study would have been only possible if existing academic and sectoral literature were supportive enough. Nevertheless, the CO effects on Turkish tourism are elaborated thoroughly in order to enlighten further studies.

It is a fact that Türkiye is a destination in an embracing location, and additionally, that is full of instabilities as well. It is a developing country that manages to combine people from many local origins and many different religions and beliefs together proudly with peace at its centennial since the foundation of the Republic in 1923. The inclusive inheritance has survived in this geography from the Anatolian empires that lived through its history from the Luwians, Hittites, Seljouks, Romans, Ottomans and many others that are not counted here. With its flora richness of 12000 plants, 3000 endemic to Türkiye, with the intersection of three phytogeographical regions, namely, Mediterranean, Euro-Siberian and Irano-Turanian; Türkiye carries the characteristics of a continent. Pamukkale is home to the world's unique travertins as well as still actively used unique Roman pool with thermal springs. The thermal springs from West to East differ in mineral qualities and therapeutic facilities, curing many different diseases. The embracing of cultural and natural heritage makes this destination attractive to discover internationally. The further the experiences are shared via the new digital technology, the more it reaches people in the international tourism arena and the more people desire to discover all.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

If a positive country-of-origin effect is desired to be created for Turkish tourism, it is important to first have a positive impression of own self. A study on Turkish consumer perception of products from a different country of origin varying from western developed countries to eastern developing countries (Koç, et al., 2017) portrays the fact that a low perception of its own country's products matches the country automatically with other similar countries with a socio-economic level in the economic arena. Hence, Türkiye should first overcome its own degraded self-impression and clear away prejudices, which are its greatest entanglements.

Thereafter, measures should be taken for creating strong marketing of the CO image as a destination. The demand side marketing studies is neglected and needs an analysis for developing Turkish tourism. Marketing studies based on country of origin are needed in order for Turkish tourism authorities to understand the perception of the image of Türkiye by different nationalities and produce tourism products accordingly. The literature analysis in this study provides an idea of how to apply the country of origin effects on destination marketing research.

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10

Chapter Ten

Country-of-origin Issues in Building Thailand's Regional Education Hub

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Country-of-origin Issues in Building Thailand's Regional Education Hub

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1. Introduction

This chapter examines Thailand's efforts to develop into a regional higher education hub for Southeast Asia and southern China. International programs are not new; (e.g., Pinkaeo and Speece, 2001), and the educational hub idea has even been around for several decades (e.g., Chang, 2004). In the earlier days, however, it was somewhat on a smaller scale, and more at the level of individual universities, which wanted an international component for some reason. National efforts to implement it were somewhat haphazard. Nowadays, universities themselves are probably still the more prominent drivers of internationalization (Jampaklay et al., 2022; Lertpusit, 2022), but official government policy plays a bigger role (QAA [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education], 2019). Possibly, success in a few other high-level services has demonstrated Thailand's competitiveness in areas usually perceived as dominated by the West. (For example, Thailand is now well established as a leading international center for high quality medical services; Virani et al., 2020). Lertpusit (2022) worries that Thailand is not as proactive as Malaysia in developing international education, but some international observers are beginning to pay attention. *Times Higher Education*, for example, includes Thailand as a 'T' in TACTICS – its set of seven developing countries rapidly moving to the forefront of global higher education (Bothwell, 2016).

We should also point out that Thailand has long had K-12 international schools. These often catered to expats who wanted their children educated in their home country language and/or curriculum. However, Thailand seems to have recognized the benefits of building a bigger cadre of globally aware citizens early on, and opened up international school education to local students well before many Southeast Asian countries (MacDonald, 2006; Machin, 2017). Some of these schools, especially ones in English language with an American, British, or Australian-oriented curriculum, have long attracted a substantial number of Thai students whose parents wanted to prepare them for studying abroad (Fahey et al., 2021; Monthienvichienchai, et al., 2002). These are an important component of Thailand's total educational system, and they do channel Thai students into international university programs, but they are not really a key element in the push to become a regional higher education hub. Thus, this chapter does need to mention relevant K-12 issues occasionally, but the focus is mostly on university education.

Simple description, however, is not the main goal here. There are already several current discussions of internationalization efforts, especially oriented towards policy issues (e.g., Buasuwan, 2018; Jampaklay et al., 2022; Lertpusit, 2022), as well as Thailand's tertiary education overall (UNESCO National Commission, 2022). Rather, here we use Thailand as a good case study for discussing how Country-of-origin (COO) is a critical issue in building a strong competitive image for tertiary education. Becoming a regional center for higher education requires internationalizing in a number of important aspects to meet expectations of foreign students who might come to these programs. Jampaklay et al. (2022) points out that policy is only one side of the things. Students (and their parents; e.g. Pimpa, 2003a; Plungpongpan et al., 2016) make decisions about where to attend university, in accordance with their perceptions of relative benefits among alternatives.

To attract foreign students, managers must focus on implementing internationalization at both school and educational system levels, so that these benefits are clear as potential students examine the options. From the student perspective, it has long been known that COO can have an impact on their expectations (Pinkaeo & Speece, 2001). Here, our focus is on the student side to see how COO considerations play an important role in their decisions. We do briefly note some of the managerial implications of these COO issues. However, the policy side has been covered in more depth recently, both at the government level (e.g., Buasuwan, 2018) and university level (e.g., Lertpusit, 2022). Of course, there has also been work on student perceptions, but perhaps not as much focus on the image aspects of COO as needed. Mostly, we look at COO in students' decision process, but also note their actual experience once they have attended a Thai international program. Post-experience image adapts to that experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), and the word-of-mouth from graduates plays a role in image formation of a new set of prospective students.

University education, of course, is a high-involvement service, and students (and parents) clearly do not make decisions based purely on image; they will usually think carefully before making a choice. However, there are a great many universities, far too many to carefully examine all of them. In such cases, consumers "adopt a two-stage screening process leading to choice, that is, consideration set formation followed by brand evaluation from the consideration set leading to choice" (Ballantyne et al., 2006).

> "Most customers use brand image to help in the initial stages of their search. Several universities may have good brand images, which, even though somewhat different, are equally attractive. Some may have brand images, which make them seem not appropriate for the consumer. In general, there is little point in spending the time and effort to find information about universities that are not appropriate" (Plungpongpan et al., 2016).

In other words, "brand image is information that helps a university gain inclusion in the brand consideration set" (Plungpongpan et al., 2016). The first stage of deciding on a university is not based on the careful thinking characteristic of high-involvement products/services. Initial screening is much more superficial. Possibly acceptable brands go into the brand consideration set for further examination, and then the much more detailed assessment is carried out on a smaller set of appropriate universities (Plungpongpan et al., 2016). This critical role for brand image, almost by definition, includes COO issues for students and parents thinking about university education in another country. Pimpa (2003a), for example, already noted long ago that choice of country is the first of several critical choices about studying abroad. Country image plays a big role, as students form a very general sense of what kind of education may be available. Even as a few countries may be considered appropriate, initial assessment of potential universities still focuses on building the consideration set, as students form expectations based on general knowledge (Pinkaeo & Speece, 2001), which can include word-of-mouth from friends and relatives who actually have some experience with the university (Pimpa, 2003a; Sairattanain & Wilang, 2020); or maybe not – sometimes the word-of-mouth itself is based on image.

Least anyone can mistake such image building as simply a marketing communications problem, it is important to keep in mind that perceptions of service quality in higher education are determined to a great extent by confirmation vs. disconfirmation of expectations (e.g., Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006; Sultan & Yin Wong, 2010). How well expectations are met is a critical factor in, for example, Vietnamese students' assessment of their experience with international study, and in their word-of-mouth (Lai et al., 2019; Pham & Lai, 2016). In the Gulf, Bhuian (2016) found that student expectations were frequently not confirmed, and this is having a negative impact on efforts to build education hubs there, which rely on foreign universities. Many students interested in international education want, among other things, to increase their cross-cultural knowledge. Even expectations of contact and interaction with others from a different culture can shape decisions, and satisfaction after gaining experience (Rosenblatt et al., 2013). In other words, image counts for a lot in initial considerations – poor image is unlikely even to be considered; but then, students need to see that expectations are delivered. When they look more carefully at universities in the consideration set, they should find that the university does what it says, and when they get to the university they have chosen, they need to experience what they were led to believe they would get. This is the brand experience, which is service operations, represented by the managerial side of the simple framework in Figure 1 below.

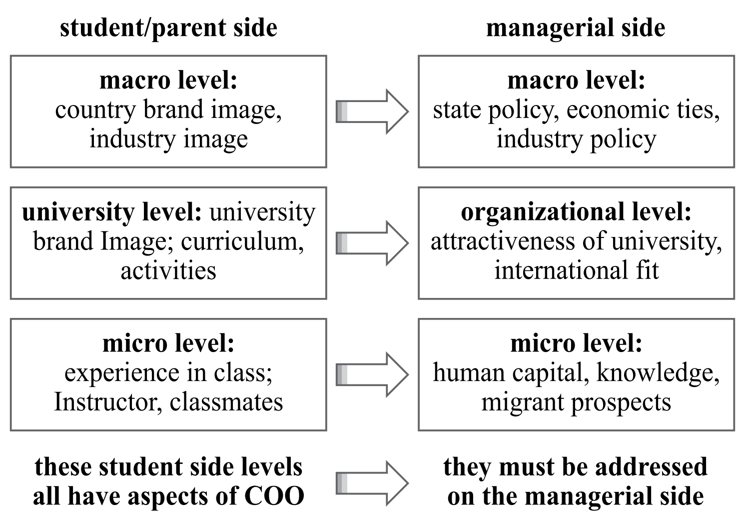

Fig. 1: Levels of COO consideration

Source: authors; managerial side adapted from Lertpusit (2022)

The later, more careful assessment of universities that make it into the consideration set continues to include many COO elements, as potential students evaluate how well the universities perform on a number of key characteristics. International education, again almost by definition, requires that these characteristics actually be international, not purely local. Thus, COO considerations do not dissipate after the initial impressions from country and brand image. Rather, COO becomes even more important as students drill down to learn more about the universities they are considering. In general, then, COO discussion must account for how the concepts apply at these different levels; Suter et al. (2020), for example, discuss country, industry, and firm level COO issues.

This chapter mostly examines these issues using the simple framework summarized in Figure 1 above. The managerial side of this framework is a slight adaptation from a figure in Lertpusit (2022), while the student/parent side incorporates categories discussed in Pinkaeo and Speece (2001), structured to fit into the managerial side. Mostly, we more-or-less follow the progression of thinking on the student-side, starting at the macro-level. Initially, the discussion looks at overall country image to see how COO plays a role and can somewhat condition expectations of what might be found with more detailed examination. At the university level, university brand image comes in, and students start looking at the broad characteristics such as curriculum. Eventually, they may consider what they will get in the classroom during individual classes. All of these have COO implications, and all of these COO issues must be considered by managers who aim to implement international education at any level, in the classroom, in the university's overall program offerings, and in the national educational system. The macro-level, of course, is beyond what individual universities can implement, but coalitions of universities can have some influence; or, as seen below, in the absence of much overt government action, the cumulative individual efforts of many universities start to build an image for the national university sector.

2. Country Image Impact on Country Choice

Most COO research stresses the importance of not confusing the image of a country with the image of products from that country. The several fairly closely related streams of nation branding research more-or-less all focus on some aspect of perceptions about a country, filtered through the lens of what purpose people have in considering this. They might be interested in political or cultural issues, for example, or they might want to consider whether products or services from the country are likely to be good, before they bother to evaluate any specific product or service (Hao et al., 2021; He et al., 2021). This second motivation for considering country image is sometimes called product country image (PCI), which Hao et al. (2021) consider a sub-set of the country image. Suter et al. (2020) might call this the industry level. Sometimes there are strong industry-level trade organizations that work to build this PCI, but sometimes, explicit efforts to promote the industry are undertaken by government organizations. Both of these are noted, e.g., in Brodie and Benson-Rea (2016) and (Suter et al., 2020). PCI might usefully be considered sort of a transition between country image and individual brand image. How close to either level depends somewhat on whether government has helped to promote the industry, or left image building to companies themselves.

Slight adaptations of COO conceptualization may be needed for some services, especially where customers must go to the country to consume them rather than buying imports, but the basic concepts are not too different. Tourism, for example, started applying country COO concepts long ago (often called destination image; e.g., Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005; Wang, 2021). A hierarchy effect is evident, with countries ordered by perceptions of more or less attractive than others on whatever aspects are important to consumers. There are also the occasional discrepancies by service category. A country might be regarded as very interesting, for example, but unlikely to have high quality services to support tourists. This might make it an attractive destination for more adventurous individual travelers, but not for segments that like well-organized tours (e.g., Huang et al., 2014). Mak (2017) even examines the correspondence between tourist perceptions evident in their online discussions vs. the image-building efforts by Taiwan's national tourism organization.

For university education, a similar example might be differences between a student determined to become a country or regional expert (such as Thailand, Southeast Asia), vs. one who wants an internationally competitive degree in an area of high job demand (e.g., business, engineering). These issues need to addressed by managers involved in building images.

Why are such country level issues so critical here? We return to the brief discussion above about the low-involvement nature of initial screening for high-involvement services, before a university enters the brand consideration set. "This topic is particularly relevant for the internationalization of higher education services, given that country image has more influence when a consumer must evaluate an unfamiliar brand" (Herrero-Crespo et al., 2016). Thailand has had substantial success at building an internationally recognized country image in several areas that may help here. The tourism example just above is useful because Thailand was one of the early countries to explicitly build a strong country image for tourism, and has long been among the top tourist destinations (Chubchuwong & Speece, 2016; Henkel et al., 2006; Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005; Rittichainuwat et al., 2020; UNWTO, 2020). Regarding the agricultural/agribusiness sector, Solleh (2015) cites Thailand as a very successful example of incorporating its food culture as a prominent element of the Thai nation brand. Buasuwan (2018), considers Thai food "Thailand 1.0" in the progression of image building efforts strongly supported by the government. The Thai food image, of course, has substantial synergy with the tourism country image (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019). As already noted in the introduction, Thailand's country image for medical services is also very strong (Pocock & Phua, 2011; Veerasoontorn et al., 2011; Virani et al., 2020).

Such country image (or, more strictly, PCI) successes undoubtedly have some positive impact on external perceptions of university education in Thailand. As students form initial images about study in Thailand, at least they know there is good food if they live there for university, the people are friendly and there are interesting places to see in spare time, and any medical issues that might come up are covered. It must be said, however, that there has not been promotional effort at the government level to explicitly do anything similar for education (e.g., Lertpusit, 2022). Government policy documents specifically about international education often contain some promising narrative, but in more general policy discussion about the education sector, the international side barely appears. The UNESCO National Commission (2022), for example, mentions the need for education to "to re-adjust, re-position, and re-invent itself to keep pace with national and global contexts," but international education gets no direct mention at all. The document does note that the government is moving strongly to bring the educational system into alignment with supporting key economic sectors where Thailand is particularly strong. Three of the four sectors specifically mentioned are agriculture and agribusiness, medical services, and tourism and hospitality, which, as just noted, have gotten strong country image attention from the government.

Higher education has not received this sort of intensive attention from the government. Nor is the country image for higher education at the same level of "world class" that Thailand has achieved in agribusiness, tourism, or medical services. QS (2023) rankings place ten Thai universities in the top 1400, with two (Chulalongkorn and Mahidol) in the 200s. Times Higher Education (2023) places ten in the top 1500, but none above 800. Shanghai (2022), the third major rankings system, and perhaps more consulted in Thailand's target market in China, puts four in the top 1000. The Global Competitiveness Index (WEF, 2019) ranked Thailand 40/141 in overall competitiveness worldwide, but 79/141 on the specific indicator "Skillset of graduates" (from university). These are all respectable figures for a middle-income developing country, but it is clear that foreign students are not coming to Thailand because education is challenging Oxford-Cambridge, or Harvard-Stanford in the developed Western countries. Thus, what makes Thailand prominent enough to be among the developing "TACTICS" countries noted earlier, those moving rapidly in global higher education (Bothwell, 2016)? What is encouraging students to come?

3. COO, PCI, and University Brand Image

Largely, the answer to this needs to look at the transition between country level and individual brand COO. Sangpikul (2009), for example, explicitly notes, "while the internationalization of higher education is part of educational reforms, each educational institution has to decide its own way of appropriate adoption depending on university policies, objectives, and availability of resources." The Thai Government has not been especially active in directly building the country's industry-wide image for tertiary education. Universities themselves are developing their own brand images, and this has a cumulative impact in the international market. University efforts can be helped by the very nature of "international" programs, which implies there are foreigners involved. This brings the COO country hierarchy into play.

It has long been known that there is usually a hierarchy of people's perceptions about the quality of products/services various countries are capable of providing, often somewhat related to the country's level of economic development. Further, whatever a country's level in the hierarchy, the country might be perceived as being particularly good or poor at providing some specific product or service (e.g., Manrai et al., 1998; Thøgersen et al., 2021). Thus, via general perceptions of products from a country, there is a relationship between the broad country image and the brand image of specific products. However, it is not always straightforward in terms of yielding consistently similar impacts from country image → PCI → specific brand image. For PCI and individual brand image, Magnusson et al. (2011) demonstrate that what really counts is where consumers perceive the product is from, even if they are sometimes wrong. Educating consumers, of course, can correct mistakes, although some brands may find misperceptions about their COO advantageous. Discussing nation branding, Fan (2006), for example, notes, "Giordano, a Hong Kong fashion retailer, benefits greatly from its Italian name without having any connection with the country."

Thailand's air conditioner brand Saijo Denki is analogous. The company started decades ago as an OEM supplier to Japanese companies. The market has always been dominated by foreign brands, which have controlled about 70 percent share in recent years. However, whatever the brand, about 90 percent of the air cons sold in Thailand are actually manufactured in Thailand. Saijo Denki eventually focused on its own brand, but adopted a Japanese name (Kyozuka, 2014; Pongjit & Chiaravutthi, 2018). They apparently decided not to fight the general perceptions that Japanese quality is better. Market share is small compared to several major Japanese and Korean brands (CLASP, 2019), but margins in recent years have been about 24 percent higher than for OEM manufacturers (Rattanakhamfu & Tangkitvanich, 2018). In higher education, foreign curriculum alignment and foreign instructors can play this role, giving the perception that international education is somewhere else in the hierarchy than where people might place Thailand as a middle-income developing country (Speece & Pinkaeo, 2001, 2002). Saijo Denki's margins are also instructive for possibly gaining some insight into why Thai policy implicitly mostly prefers focus on local universities to internationalize education, rather than on an influx of foreign branch campuses.

While the Government is not doing much directly to build the sector's international image, they practice fair activism behind the scenes to ensure that when universities engage internationally, they spread the image of reasonable quality. Government has worked at creating beneficial underlying conditions, setting standards, and clearing away barriers so that universities themselves could decide how to achieve this better quality. For several decades, policy has encouraged development of a strong private higher education (PHE) sector. Partly, this policy helped relieve enrollment pressure on the under-funded public sector, although the PHE sector is still somewhat small compared to the state sector. Partly, however, the policy aimed to "put pressure on public higher education to achieve more efficient management and keep up with domestic competition" (Pimpa, 2011).

Making sure the private sector meets reasonable standards was a critical component of this. Government enforcement of quality standards in PHE is substantially stronger than in most Asian countries (ADB, 2012; Praphamontripong, 2011). The Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) developed outcomes assessment competencies widely recognized as addressing critical elements needed for the country's development, defining them in a set of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) metrics. The Government regularly monitors both private and public universities on these IQA as part of national university accreditation (OHEC, 2017; ONESQA, 2014). These metrics fit in well with the above-noted need of higher education "to re-adjust, re-position, and re-invent itself to keep pace with national and global contexts" (UNESCO National Commission, 2022). Although locally developed, they are similar to that elsewhere, notably in OECD countries (Lertdechapat & Pimthong, 2021). All academic programs, both Thai and English, employ these IQA in assessing students' academic performance.

Of course, the public universities needed sufficient flexibility to be able to compete with rising private institutions, and the rigid civil service system inhibited their ability to adjust. The Government offered substantial autonomy, but with lower state support. Many public universities took autonomy, and upgraded educational standards and operational efficiency. Nowadays the quality of education differs little between most private and public universities (Lao, 2015; Pimpa, 2011), except perhaps compared to a handful of public institutions designated as top research universities.

Our own recent data from five universities (n=308, mostly juniors and seniors) indicate strong positive student perceptions about how well they have developed these IQA competencies in BBA international programs (Tiangsoongnern & Speece, 2023). There is little difference between public and private schools in our sample. About thirty-five percent of respondents were from ASEAN and China, Thailand's hub targets, and another five percent were from other regions. Here, there was a difference between Thai and foreign students in perceptions of the education they were receiving. Thai students felt they were gaining the competencies pretty well, but foreign students were even more convinced of this, except on knowledge of course content, where they were roughly equal (Table 1). Most of this gap is likely to be due to the foreign students' comparison of their Thai education with what they might have expected based on knowledge of education at home, rather than from any real differences in how well Thai vs. foreign students are educated in the same classes. Generally, positive disconfirmation yields even higher satisfaction than simply meeting expectations (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006).

Table 1: Foreign students perceive more strongly that they are gaining competency skills

Four sets of competencies (composite means)	**Thai**		**foreign**		
Thai n=183; foreign n=120	**mean**	**std dev**	**mean**	**std dev**	**sig (t)**
Ethics and morality (3 items)	3.83	0.732	4.18	0.654	**0.000**
Knowledge (course content; 3 items)	3.87	0.693	4.00	0.616	0.089
Interpersonal skills and responsibility (3 items)	3.82	0.704	4.03	0.486	**0.005**
Numerical, analytical, communication, information technology (4 items)	3.52	0.709	3.83	0.506	**0.000**

Source: unreported data in Tiangsoongnern and Speece (2023);

Scale: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree

In addition to international colleges aiming to attract foreign students (as well as Thai who want some international education without the expense of going abroad), some universities explicitly align some programs with one of the country image success stories noted above. Dhurakij Pundit University's College of Innovative Business and Accountancy (CIBA), for example, has an English language BBA in Tourism Management. It is structured both to attract international students, and to support one of the key economic sectors identified in the Thai Government's higher education planning (Sangpikul, 2009). The Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality has a more extensive range of programs in Thai, but even there, students need international knowledge to support this prominent sector. Thailand's very strong country image as a tourist destination helps these programs, and there is a certain amount of image transfer to other programs.

4. This is a Mid-Market Value Strategy, Based on Developing Local Suppliers

One might think of Thailand's overall strategy as industrial targeting for a few key industries where the country has particularly strong potential to move to the forefront (such as agribusiness, tourism, medical services). However, policy-makers seem to feel it is unrealistic at present to compete directly with top-end countries in most sectors, for example, the USA or UK in the high-end markets for university education. Nevertheless, Thailand has gained a prominent position in the mid-market, largely in the same way as it has done in many other industries. Policies encouraged more competition, established minimum standards to prevent less ethical competitors from seriously damaging Thailand's reputation, and streamlined the system to make it easier for companies to operate. Notably, Thailand relies mainly on local universities to build international higher education. This is somewhat different from several other countries, such as Malaysia or UAE, in which a major component is small branch campuses of foreign universities, often located together in literal education hubs (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016, 2017; Lane, 2011; Wilkins & Huisman, 2015).

The Thai policy has worked well in other industries. For example, Thai consumer electronics have a strong mid-market image in much of the world. (Light industry was Thailand 2.0, the second stage of development after agribusiness, according to (Buasuwan, 2018)). Thai products are rarely considered as good as those from Japan or major Western companies, but consumers feel they are of reasonable quality. For that reasonable quality, they are quite cheap. This is not the very low prices of low-end products, which most middle class consumers do not want, but a strong value proposition, which is attractive to mid-market consumers (Zeithaml, 1988), notably in East and Southeast Asia (Speece, 1998).

Already two decades ago, for example, Thai consumer electronics products in Finland were beginning to gain quality perceptions similar to Korean and Taiwanese products (Speece, 2000). Perceptions were not, however, as high as for European or Japanese products, and quality perceptions were also stronger for "Made-in-Thailand" by a European or Japanese brand than for a "Thai brand," but overall, Thailand as a COO was grouped with Korea and Taiwan, which were already gaining mid-market strength at the time, and "Thai" was not associated with low-end products, (China was used as one low-end example in that old research – undoubtedly quality perceptions have changed for many product categories now). People did perceive that Thai products might be a little cheaper than Korean or Taiwanese, which made them good value (Speece, 2000). This mid-market strength in PCI was built by Thai companies, not by government, although the government worked behind the scenes to facilitate favorable conditions for doing it.

This example included an early look at partitioned COO, where the brand impact can often be larger than the "Made-in" effect (De Nisco & Oduro, 2022). When evaluating a physical product such a calculator or

TV, one needs to look carefully at the label, or do some research, to move from general brand perceptions to considering where the brand's products are manufactured. This is not likely in initial screening for the brand consideration set, although consumers may put more effort into finding such information later in the decision process. In international education, however, COO is often front-and-center, even if the brand is Thai. Word-of-mouth from friends and relatives (Pimpa, 2003a, 2003b) ensures that many students have some idea about what kind of curriculum is used and what nationalities are teaching in the classroom, even if they do not yet have personal experience. For universities that make it into the brand consideration set, prospective students are then likely to follow up with more detailed research on this.

Pinkaeo and Speece (2001) surveyed students from five international secondary schools which were major sources for university international programs (n=240, roughly equally from the five schools). The survey was about COO impacts on expectations, i.e., initial perceptions for the brand consideration set in the language used here. The country hierarchy was strongly apparent for brand, curriculum, and nationality of instructors. UK and USA ranked highest on a range of expected quality indicators; followed by other developed countries (both Western and Japan), then the four Newly Industrializing Economies at the time (Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea), but also including Thailand in this group. Other developing countries ranked much lower. Similar orderings are evident in other services (e.g., Pinkaeo & Speece, 2000; Thelen et al., 2010). On price, however, expectations for a Thai university brand were much lower than Thailand otherwise appeared in the hierarchy (Pinkaeo & Speece, 2001). In other words, price was much lower than the mid-level quality would usually require, and this gave the Thai brand a very strong value perception (Speece & Pinkaeo, 2002). We already saw this perception just above for Thai consumer electronics in Finland.

Price is an important consideration, although there is a frequent misperception that because people consider it, they must be strongly price oriented. That is clearly not the case – the whole concept of value orientation is the trade-off common among mid-market consumers. For Thai students going abroad, Pimpa (2003a) showed that finances were a key consideration from family, and played an especially strong role early in the decision process, when country is considered. Few students or parents would just focus on lowest price if the quality of education is poor. Since these early studies, Thailand's strong value image has remained consistent. Sairattanain and Wilang (2020), for example, found that ASEAN students from less developed countries generally felt that Thai university education was higher quality than at home. Jampaklay et al. (2022) also report research (largely among Chinese) indicating, "international students in Thailand perceived a higher overall quality of Thailand's universities and realized the study and living costs are relatively low."

Our informal discussions (i.e., not a formal research project) with Chinese international students also indicate that they often view Thai education as better than where they might be able to gain admission in China. Of course, China has several world-class universities now, but admission is very tough, and otherwise, the university system overall is not yet up to those standards. In addition, even at middle to lower level universities, there is not enough capacity to meet demand, so students look abroad. There are countries with better universities than Thailand, but they are largely in the West, which has always been much more expensive, and is now becoming fairly unfriendly towards Chinese students. Thailand has reasonable quality, educational costs are mostly lower than in Chinese PHE (and much lower than in the West), and the cost of living is cheaper than almost anywhere else with comparable relatively good living standards (e.g., Jampaklay et al., 2022; also the authors' own informal discussions with Chinese students). This is a strong mid-market value proposition.

5. On Campus, in the Program, and in the Classroom

The image issues discussed here are very important in getting into the brand consideration set, and then in gaining actual choice, but the mid-market strategy will not work if students encounter major discrepancies between what they were led to expect and what they actually experience. Motta-Filho (2021) distinguishes “brand identity” from “brand image”; identity is essentially what the company intends the brand to be, but image is in the customer’s mind. There can be major problems for the brand if the two are not consistent – disconfirmation of expectations in the language above (Zha et al., 2020). Brand image is not static; everything in the customer’s interaction with the brand, pre-, during, and post-purchase feeds back into updating brand image (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In addition, this updated post-experience image becomes word-of-mouth for other prospective students. Potential students still in the process of deciding might be able to sense how accurately the image represents reality during information search and evaluation, especially if they receive experience-based word-of-mouth from their social network. Once students are actually on campus, however, major discrepancies become glaringly obvious. Student experience is very much shaped by the managerial side of Figure 1, which must actually deliver what the image has promised.

Many of these things have been examined in some detail. We include brief summary of a few here, but mostly also note a few issues that usually get less attention. Sangpikul (2009), for example, discusses a number of the technical details about faculty recruitment and development in a Thai international tourism program. Clearly, credible programs should have a high ratio of foreign to local instructors to be consistent with the “international” image. There should not, however, generally be over-representation of any one foreign nationality. (Secondary level international schools may be an exception if their promise is, for example, “American” or “British” education). Just as clearly, whether foreign or local, faculty need to be graduates of good quality schools to support the quality image. Faculty exchanges with a network of foreign universities also both contributes consistency with the image, and keeps faculty current with trends in education outside Thailand. International conferences and collaborative research should be encouraged.

International student numbers should be large enough to make them highly visible in the program, even if much demand is among Thai who want an international education. Foreign students should similarly be from a range of countries – the targeting of ASEAN and China is fine, that is the main market, but some students should be from other countries. One benefit of international education is learning to interact with people from multiple cultures. The students need to be integrated into student activities (Sangpikul, 2009). Generally, in the case of Thailand, students from countries somewhat less developed than Thailand usually feel that the atmosphere is inclusive in class and elsewhere inside the university, even if not always quite as much outside in society in general (Sairattanain & Wilang, 2020).

We should also note, however, a few more intangible issues. Many international program students are Thai, so that a certain number of Thai faculty (with substantial foreign experience) are needed. As discussed, we noted that the country hierarchy generally held for perceptions of faculty quality among prospective Thai applicants to international programs. On “reliability”, however, expectations about Thai instructors in Pinkaeo and Speece (2001) were rated much higher than the students who perceived Thailand to be in the hierarchy, just below UK and USA. Possibly this relates to a feeling that there should be some (not all) instructors around who are culturally similar, to help bridge cultural gaps.

This applies equally to ASEAN and Chinese students who are the main targets of Thailand’s higher education hub strategy. Even if they are generally satisfied with their situation in Thailand, foreign students can sometimes feel somewhat lost (Sairattanain & Wilang, 2020). Many Thai international programs have a few scattered faculty members from various ASEAN nations or China (of course, in the Chinese international programs in Thailand, there are many Chinese instructors.) Without doubt, these other-ASEAN or Chinese instructors must have strong educational background and fluent English, but they can also function as this sort of cultural bridge for ASEAN and Chinese students from their countries. In general, cross-cultural competency has often been shown to be important, even at the secondary school level (e.g., Monthienvichienchai et al., 2002). Various cross-cultural skills have consistently remained among the most critical characteristics expected of foreign teachers (e.g., Fahey et al., 2021).

It goes even beyond just cross-cultural skill, however. To a certain extent, Thai culture is quite good at interpersonal interaction and making people feel welcome. The medical tourism example cited above is instructive – customers/patients regularly report on the interpersonal skills and empathy of both doctors and nurses, which makes a much bigger impression on them than technical details about credentials and actual quality of medical care (these are a given, discovered in making the decision to come).

> "I really trusted them because I have a personal feeling that they are sincere and willing to help. They never acted as if they are in an authoritative position, but they treated me with genuine respect. That made me feel free to ask questions, give an opinion, and bring up anything that I think is very important for treatment. I can feel that there is an 'emotional connect' between me and the doctors" (quote from in-depth interview reported in Veerasoontorn et al., 2011).

More broadly, Thai people in general are perceived as quite friendly, a prominent part of the strong country image in tourism. The people are an important component of destination attachment for repeat tourists (Chubchuwong & Speece, 2016).

Finally, we note nature of instructional methods, which, for example, Sangpikul (2009) barely mentions in otherwise discussing quite a lot of detail about specific aspects of internationalization. One key reason students may feel university education is better than at home is because it often involves more attention to active learning, and gets away from the lecture/rote learning common in very traditional educational systems. In general, although traditional lecture has its uses for some specific things (Farashahi and Tajeddin, 2018; Martin et al., 2014), it is widely recognized that active learning methods are more effective for a wide range of learning objectives (Burch et al., 2019; Whalley, 2019). Adapting active learning to Asian contexts requires some cross-cultural competence, but it has been recognized for some time that it can work well with Asian students (e.g., Speece, 2002, 2003). A very recent meta-analysis suggests that it may even be somewhat more effective in Asia than in the West (Ting et al., 2022).

The Thai IQA are strongly oriented towards active learning, and actually include assessment of instructional methods. Tiangsoongnern and Speece (2023) reworded several items on this competency dimension, from simply asking if they were used, to asking students how effective they feel the methods are. Both Thai and foreign students in the BBA international programs believe that active learning is more useful than lecture. However, the gap is much larger for foreign students. They think lecture is less valuable than Thai students do, but they prefer most active learning methods even more strongly than Thai (Table 2). For most students, such learning methods are an important part of the positive experience they receive on campus, which feeds back into word-of-mouth when they discuss their education in Thailand.

Table 2: Foreign students have stronger positive response to active learning

Experience-based perception of learning method	**Thai**		**foreign**		
Thai n=183; foreign n=120	**mean**	**std dev**	**mean**	**std dev**	**sig (t)**
I think teaching by lecture-based method is perfect for students	3.40	.851	3.17	.929	**.026**
I think learning by doing such as workshops and simulation helped me understand how to apply the knowledge into practice	3.93	.843	4.24	.686	**.001**
I think learning by integrating lecture-based and learning-by-doing methods e.g. case study discussion makes me understand more about how to apply the knowledge	3.73	.872	4.13	.740	**.000**
I think joining outside classroom activities e.g. fieldtrips teaches me skills to deal with real situations outside the university	3.92	.946	4.24	.810	**.003**
I think having guest speakers from industry helps me to envisage how knowledge is really applied in real businesses	3.87	.867	4.03	.814	.117

Source: unreported data in Tiangsoongnern and Speece (2023)

Scale: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree

Finally, it should be mentioned that employment opportunities in Thailand are attractive to some students from the targeted countries (Jampaklay et al., 2022; Lertpusit, 2022). Jampaklay et al. (2022) note that Thailand compares favorably as many traditional Western study destinations (notably, USA, UK, Australia) have become more hostile to foreign students. Culturally, Thailand is fairly open. Notably, for the China part of Thailand's higher education hub targeting, Thai-Chinese are much better integrated into Thai society than in many Southeast Asian countries (e.g., Speece & Igel, 2000; Wongsurawat, 2016).

This is similar to motivations to study in several other East and Southeast Asian countries. For example, some students from lesser-developed countries feel they can find jobs in China (Singh, 2022), where the economy is stronger than at home. Others view deep knowledge of China as useful for employment at home, as China expands its FDI in their countries. Many want to learn how China has been so successful at developing rapidly. Malaysia is similar (e.g., Singh & Jack, 2018). Unlike Thailand, however, Chinese culture is not a major pull factor for most students in China, nor is Malaysian culture for most Chinese, although it is popular with Muslim Chinese.

Universities, of course, cannot make immigration policy for long-term employment, but they can keep international students informed about policies, and about opportunities that are consistent with the policies. Many universities have placement offices for students. It is relatively simple to make sure that domestic companies with operations in target countries are included in the pool of companies the placement office interacts with; often, such companies find it useful to hire a few students who are from target countries, but who also have experience and education in Thailand. Pencarelli et al. (2013), for example, show that helping students develop their early careers can be an important university service, which brings competitive advantage. This topic, however, gets relatively little attention in academic research. Within the somewhat scanty literature, even when occasionally applied to international programs, discussion is more oriented towards how to place domestic students to gain international experience. International students need to be included in placement services.

6. Conclusion

Thai educators have been working on building competitive international higher education for several decades now. It is useful to quote some of their discussion to summarize the issues we explored in this chapter. "The key success factors of internationalization in higher education consist of the international environment within the institution, the institution's reputation for quality and cost of education, and the institution's capabilities to service and support international students" (Jampaklay et al., 2022). In our language here, "international" is about multiple COO issues at each level and on both the student/parent and managerial sides of Figure 1. Reputation is the COO image on the student side, which supports inclusion in the brand consideration set and then continues to be critical as students uncover more information about potentially suitable universities. Capabilities is the managerial side, where universities must deliver on COO expectations.

Thus, the discussion here demonstrates that COO issues are deeply embedded in the whole concept of international programs. Students cannot assess countries or universities within a country without reference to COO, and managers cannot build international programs without consideration to how those COO issues must be incorporated into operations. The Thai example is also instructive in demonstrating that a country does not necessarily need to be at the top-end of quality university education. Even in UK, most students do not go to Oxford-Cambridge, or in the USA, most do not go to Harvard-Stanford. For mid-market customers, mid-market good value is the best choice. Thailand is positioned well in this mid-level international university education market. COO issues are a fundamental aspect of that favorable positioning.

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11

Chapter Eleven

Resetting the Hospitality Redux through Country-of-origin Effects: Role of Tourism, Culture, Transportation and Restaurants Selection in Arab Countries

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Resetting the Hospitality Redux through Country-of-origin Effects: Role of Tourism, Culture, Transportation and Restaurants Selection in Arab Countries

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1. Introduction

Tourism scholars have recently paid attention to carbon emissions and environmental quality due to tourism activities at various destinations (Abbas et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022). However, hotels and food options given by restaurants play an essential role in attracting local and global tourists, as visitors' attention and satisfaction are crucial (Balsalobre-Lorente et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Exhibiting artifacts in the ambience of a restaurant helps promote tourism development geographically, as it increases new openings at a distant destination (Kala, 2019; Shah et al., 2023). Thus, providing a satisfying and authentic service constitutes a new level of experience for travel companies and planners in order for them to become competitive in meeting tourists' needs (Philip & Iorember, 2017; Usman et al., 2019; Usman et al., 2020). However, tourism activities also cause environmental, health concerns and safety issues at destinations in some cases (Balsalobre-Lorente et al., 2023; Hafeez et al., 2023; Iorember et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2020; Micah et al., 2023; Shah et al., 2023). Past studies have shown tourists' behavior, and findings showed that food labels, availability of quality food and country of origin are crucial for restaurant and food selection (Al-Sulaiti, 2022; Al-Sulaiti et al., 2006; Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998; Iorember et al., 2022; Zafar et al., 2022; Zhuang et al., 2022).

Destination community has shown concerns on environmental safety at tourism place. Thus, CSR, sustainability and green technology is useful for tourism (Awan et al., 2020; Awan et al., 2022; Bhutto et al., 2021; Cheng et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2019). Past literature has shown that international and domestic travelers/tourists are keen on their country-of-origin preferences (Abbas et al., 2023). Thus, COO effect is essential and influences tourists purchasing decisions about the availability of local as well as foreign products they need to purchase (Abaalzamat et al., 2021; Al-Sulaiti et al., 2021; Al-Sulaiti et al., 2005; Al-

Sulaiti & Baker, 1998). Similarly, tourists from Arab countries have shown their preferred behaviors, as they like the products related to their origin of culture (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1997). The COO's influence is crucial. It helps reset the hospitality sector redux with innovative products and services, as tourism, local culture, restaurant quality, and transport facilities at the destination help increase tourism development (Al-Sulaiti et al., 2022; Aldereai et al., 2022; Araslı & Baradarani, 2014; Gao et al., 2022; Hussain, 2023). Amid the challenging situation of COVID-19, there has been a severe issue of health safety for tourists to save them from anxiety, stress and mental health problems. Hence, it was the most challenging task for the business firms of service and hospitality firms worldwide (Li et al., 2021; Maqsood et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Yao et al., 2022).

Several recent publications have questioned the relevance of the COO influence relative to other potential indicators of knowledge (Chattalas et al., 2008). This criticism has many reasons, but the most important is that the country of origin is overrated because it seems like a core concept and is directly monitored (Al-Sulaiti and Baker, 1998). Thus, to account for the influence of emotional and nonverbal cues, it is best to assess the COO effect indirectly (Godey et al., 2012). When comparing the COO using a variety of signals, the effect magnitude is mitigated but more representative of reality. The strength of the COO effect diminishes when buyers depend solely on the extrinsic cue of price (Kuff et al., 2023). In this instance, it is crucial to update several cue settings. Previous studies of the COO effect primarily used offline shopping simulations as their data collection (Ramkumar & Ellie Jin, 2019) and analysis tool (or did not include an online context). Nowadays, many people choose to research and purchase online (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). In the interim, research has shown that "Made in" claims, which were traditionally believed to be equal to "the" COO and, as a result, should be operational-zed differently, are no longer a single-dimensional construct in a world of globalized value chains (Barrett et al., 2022). The COO effect has even been called the "country-of-association effect" by authors focused on the COO as one connection associated with brands (Andéhn & Decosta, 2016). It is because the COO framework has become more complicated, with brands having a significant influence (Abou-Shouk & Soliman, 2021). Several recent studies show that country-of-origin effects are moderated when other essential information signals, such as sustainability variables, are considered. (Garrett et al., 2017).

Climate change is a primary environmental concern due to tourism activities' profound and costly impacts on ecosystems, human health and the global economy. Greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide contribute to global warming and climate change. About 80% of all greenhouse gas emissions are carbon dioxide (Lashof & Ahuja, 1990). Carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions were the single largest source of climate change between 1750 and 2005 (Jones et al., 2007). The Kyoto Protocol was ratified on December 11, 1997, and became legally binding in 2005 to reduce global warming. By 2012, the 37 industrialized countries that signed the protocol had committed to reducing their annual emissions of six greenhouse gases by 5.2% below 1990 levels. The target date range for implementing Protocol obligations is 2008-2012. Rising disposable income levels, greater interest in international travel, cheaper international flight prices, and the removal of some travel restrictions are just a few reasons for more opportunities for people to connect through travel. Tourism drives economic progress in rich and less developed countries (Tang & Abosedra, 2014). Economic output, incomes, employment and tax revenues all increase due to tourism. Tourism may also generate foreign exchange earnings (Palmer & Riera, 2003).

Although tourism has many positive effects, it also caused climate change by contributing 5.2%–12.5% to global warming in 2005 (Scott et al., 2010). Tourism-related CO2 emissions are expected to increase by 130% between 2005 and 2035. Many environmental issues can be affected by tourism in many ways (Gössling et al., 2002). The development of tourist amenities like hotels, public transit, and even golf courses can substantially influence the surrounding environment. According to the IPCC, environmental change releases greenhouse gases (Belloc & Molina, 2023; Joos et al., 2001). Second, the increase in foreign travel results in higher energy consumption for transport-related activities. Thirdly, tourists collect, trample, and buy plants and animals, contributing to biodiversity extinction. The fourth reason is that the transmission of diseases is facilitated by international travel.

Although cultural elements play a variety of functions in this regard, little is known about whether and how culture affects measurements of climate change. This study aims to determine whether a nation's degree of culture is related to the intensity of corporate greenhouse gas emissions. Societal norms and values, ingrained in a nation's culture and critical in influencing corporate environmental behavior, are likely to be used by nations to emancipate or restrain firms in their response to various environmental crises (Schultz et al., 2014). According to a World Bank survey of 15 countries, these standards and people's attitudes to climate change, especially their willingness to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, vary from country to country. However, research on how culture affects the environment and climate challenges is limited. This study attempts to fill this gap by examining how ethnic culture affects GHG emission intensity. Rapid urbanization has increased the number of cars, especially private cars, which has led to environmental problems such as smog and carbon emissions.

The restaurant business increases both its direct and indirect contributions to global warming (Abbas et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Automated food preparation, water heating, restaurant fuel use, and refrigerant gases are directed causing carbon emissions. Fuel for production and delivery of services; steam for cooking and cooling; staff and customer transportation; procurement and distribution of fresh ingredients such as fruits, vegetables, oils, spices, cereals, meats, and seafood; and waste management are all examples (Readhead et al., 2018). For the food service business, only four greenhouse gases are significant. As an example, carbon dioxide (CO_2) is emitted during the transportation and construction industries, methane (CH_4) is emitted during agricultural production, nitrous oxide (N_2O) is emitted during refrigeration, and hydrofluorocarbons (HCFCs) (Dorling et al., 2017).

However, it is crucial to highlight the current research's contribution to the literature through a complete discussion of tourism, transport, culture, restaurants and food. It is the first study to consider the most critical aspects of environmental sustainability. With so many essential factors affecting environmental quality, we must better understand tourism's role in ensuring our planet's ecosystems remain healthy for future generations. Other factors may also affect environmental quality and emissions. Based on these findings, future research can devise key strategies to prevent environmental degradation by combining elements of culture, restaurants, food and transportation and those already considered in this study. This study uses basic econometric methods to address cross-sectional dependencies and heterogeneity slopes. This study uses CADF and CIPS for unit root tests.

This study applied the Westerlund cointegration test to explore whether or not a link between variables has been stable over time. The Common Correlated Effect Mean Group (CCE-MG) and the Augmented Mean Groups (AMG) are used to examine the effects of explanatory factors across time. The findings may point towards recommending environment friendly strategies to ensure the planet's long-term viability. The current research uses the panel Quintile regression to get trustworthy findings and then double-checks those findings using the AMG and CCE-MG estimators. The flow of the study is as follows– The study starts with the introduction, literature review, description information about methods and results. The next phase covers the results, findings and debate. The last section of this study provides conclusion and its ramifications.

2. Literature Review

Tourism demand for green environment, utilities consumption at destinations, investment in a green environment and better health system help promote economic opportunities (Aman et al., 2022). Electricity consumption at tourism destinations, green technological innovation, investment in green environment and health provision increase tourism inflow (Abbas et al., 2023; Local Burden of Disease, 2021; Mamirkulova et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022). Past literature has shown and widely evidenced that cuisine at tourist destinations plays a vital role in tourists' satisfaction with an exclusive experience (Kim et al., 2010; Li et al., 2022). It is important when the country of origin (COO) is not ignorable (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998). It is valid in the travel and hospitality industries, where the COO influences food choices largely. Stimulatingly, the Arabic food option sticks to the ethnic cookery served in various hotels and restaurants in Qatar (Halimic et al., 2018). International food options abroad for foreign travelers are crucial as they serve a larger proportion of global tourists (Khayyam et al., 2021). Arabian restaurants provide expansion of menus for tourists (Waqas et al., 2018). Past research documented that country of origin image affects consumers' food purchase decision-making. Accordingly, a positive approach to the country of origin effects influences tourists' trust in dining at a specific hotel or restaurant.

Some scholars consider country-of-origin (COO) as a general impression of a country regardless of the product mentioned (Wall & Heslop, 1986). However, there is a piece of evidence that the COO is line-dependent (Han & Terpstra, 1988). It indicates that specific product categories correlate with certain aspects of a country's image (Roth & Romeo, 1992). Past research found that product familiarity, brand awareness, and product information can moderate the effect of COO (Nurhayati & Hendar, 2020). The majority of COO studies are static and uni-variate. Some studies are more recently related to the COO, and some tend to be multivariate and look forward to how the COO affects consumer perception concerning other marketing variables, such as pricing and promotion. The dynamic process of COO fluctuation over time needs more better studies, which is a significant drawback (Gössling, 2000).

As tourism has grown in popularity since the 1980s, there has been growing concern about the industry's social, cultural and environmental impacts. Many authors, including (Lukashina et al., 1996), claim that the overall impact of tourism on the environment is considerable. Many past studies have looked at how tourism contributes to rising emission levels (Sun et al., 2022). Determining the extent of damage caused by tourists to the natural world is an important area of research. Land use, energy use, biotic interactions and loss of wildlife, exchange and spread of diseases, and shifts in people's perception and understanding of the environment all pose environmental risks to tourism on a global scale. As tourism accounts for 5-150% of official national emissions in different economies, studying these emissions is becoming increasingly important (Ahmad et al., 2022; Hącia et al., 2022).

A past study analyzed the impact of aviation emissions on 11 different economies between 1995 and 2010, using information from global tourism markets (Gössling et al., 2015). According to the authors' findings, there was a 30-fold difference in emissions intensity between markets (127–3930 kg CO_2/visitor) when comparing markets across all location ranges. However, when comparing different locations, the average emission intensity can vary by a factor of five (370-1830 kg CO_2/visitor). Total energy costs for locals and tourists in New Zealand are broken down based on the choices visitors make throughout their journey, including how they travel, where they stay, and what they see (Becken et al., 2003). More than 73% of the total cost of domestic tourists and more than 65% of the cost of overseas tourists are transportation costs. It has been examined what can be done to reduce the carbon footprint of tourism and what impact mitigation strategies might have on global transport by 2050. It has been determined that changing the frequency of travel would be beneficial. If all sectors of the economy, including tourism and transport, were required to reduce emissions by a certain percentage, it might help to achieve this goal. Some argue that the exponential growth of pollution, global warming and waste affect the tourism industry as much as the global economic crisis.

Numerous studies have investigated the influence of individual behavior on current and future energy consumption and examined estimation in response to tourism activities. The most salient features of alternative energy sources in India, for example, include biofuels and how households utilize energy according to their well-being and lifestyle can characterize the country's energy system and consumption from a household perspective. A study was conducted on energy use, financial expenditure, and carbon dioxide emissions of Chinese houses with different living habits (Feng et al., 2011). They found that urban households use direct energy differently than rural households (Zhou et al., 2023). Direct energy use and CO_2 emissions in cities are growing faster than in rural areas. Tourism activities need energy consumption, and environmental safety is challenging at tourist places as local people emphasize environmental quality (Raihan & Tuspekova, 2022).

The indirect energy consumption and emissions of urban households significantly affect their direct use. In some places, cultural factors make it more likely that people will not adjust their energy consumption habits in response to climate change, and tourism (Al-Sulaiti et al., 2022; Aldereai et al., 2022), while in others, the opposite may be the case. Understanding the impact of the environment on humans requires consideration of cultural norms (Onel & Mukherjee, 2013). Institutional factors, such as the reliability of contract and regulation enforcement and the security of property rights, can stabilize the EKC of CO_2 emissions. A study (Bin & Dowlatabadi, 2005) used information gathered from consumer behavior studies to examine how human activities affect energy use and emissions. Their analysis found that commercial buildings account for 80% of total CO_2 emissions and energy use. Thus, indirect consumer energy use amplifies the impact of direct consumer energy use on energy consumption and CO_2 emissions.

Global household sustainable energy use was analyzed using input-output tables (Wiedmann et al., 2007). The results of this study disprove the Kuznets curve and demonstrate cultural and ethnic differences in energy demand. These studies investigated the consequences of residential energy consumption (Shimoda et al., 2007). Several factors besides income and location affect the amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2), and energy released into the atmosphere (Reinders et al., 2003). An earlier study examined data on the lifestyles of rural and urban residents in China from 1999-2002, to determine how they affect energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions (Wei & Yu, 2007). Researchers focus on how lifestyles are affected by energy use and carbon dioxide emissions (Bin & Dowlatabadi, 2005). They point out that consumers use energy directly and indirectly to meet their needs for food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and residential areas for cooling, heating, lighting, and cooking. Due to the high-energy demand for production, the customer's direct and indirect energy use affects CO_2 emissions.

As a second area, the transportation sector has been the focus of numerous efforts to find ways to reduce the country's emissions. LMDI, which evaluates the relative importance of each contributing element, was utilized to calculate Tunisia's transportation sector's energy use (Achour & Belloumi, 2016). The key takeaways from the study were as follows: The impact of economic production, the intensity of transportation, the number of people, and the design of transportation were the main drivers of the increase in carbon emissions. Emissions were reduced significantly, however, due to the impact of energy intensity. According to previous studies, the transportation sector in Malaysia is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions (Asadi et al., 2022; Azlina et al., 2014). The transportation sector produces more significant amounts of Malaysia's greenhouse gas emissions (Ong et al., 2012); freight transportation's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions was analyzed, along with the factors that influence this contribution (Steenhof et al., 2006).

Separation analyses were used throughout this piece of work. Between 1990 and 2006, the LMDI method was used to examine the factors that affected the overall energy consumption of road-based modes of transportation. It is consistent with the previous research (Mraihi et al., 2013). Only carbon dioxide emissions are a source of pollution (Mohmand et al., 2021). The term “pollution emissions” is commonly used to refer to CO_2 emissions in various studies. Several empirical studies in Turkey have examined the connections between economic growth and pollution in the natural environment (Tiba & Omri, 2017).

Hospitality businesses, such as hotels and restaurants, often earn the third-highest revenue from tourists after the transportation and lodging industries (Wang et al., 2013). UNWTO estimation reported that global tourists arrivals to 1.4 billion in 2018 that indicated a 6% increase, apparently above the growth of 3.7% registered in the global economy. In relative terms, Africa reported over 7%, the Middle East more than 10%, the Pacific and Europe along with Asia collectively more than 6% increased travelers led growth in 2018. Thus, approximately 1.4 billion people travel to various parts of the world in 2018 (Jefferies et al., 2018). That is almost 4 billion meals, the vast bulk of which are provided in restaurants, given that most tourists need three meals a day. Since global warming is associated with expanding population and increased travel, meeting the increased demand in the food service business would require more energy and land. The tourism industry must adapt to climate change to limit destructive impacts and enhance long-term economic, societal, and environmental benefits. However, a recent study of 18 of the world’s most important tourist sites discovered that most still needed a complete analysis of their tourism industry’s vulnerabilities and adaptation techniques (Mathe & Scott-Halsell, 2012). In addition, there is a dearth of studies examining how restaurant management contributes to global warming (Gössling et al., 2020). CF analyses of the hospitality sector are scarce, and CF calculations for businesses in the tourism and hospitality industries are extremely rare. While conducting our study, we sought out studies that deeply analyzed the restaurant industry’s CF. Unfortunately; more investigation revealed that only a few eateries make CF forecasts. One such thesis proposes a greenhouse gas (GHG) guideline for the restaurant industry, with a focus on GHG accounting protocols tailored to the restaurant-centric supply chain, GHG accounting protocols for equipment used in restaurants, GHG accounting protocols for food ingredients based on metadata analysis of LCA studies, and GHG accounting protocols for waste streams.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data sources

This study reports data from 2005 to 2020 to demonstrate long-term relationships among chosen variables in selected Arab economies. Thus, the study analysis reports on the data received from Qatar, Bahrain, Comoros Island, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates. Hence, tourism, culture, transportation, catering and food are the core determinants of environmental pollution (CO_2 emissions). This study selected and incorporated data for selected variables from different sources, such as Knoema and World Bank. In addition, Table 1 shows data information on units, sources and symbols used for this research paper. This study measures carbon emissions for clarity in Kt, derived from the World Development Indicators (WDI). Likewise, this study measures tourism flows through number of arrivals collected from WDI. In addition, Culture (CL), Transportation System (TP), Restaurant (RS) and Food (FD) represent number of tourist arrivals. The study measured arrivals against the number of users, derived and collected from Knoema. Table 1 exhibits description of the selected data for this study. Table 1 below explains the description of data sources related to this study.

Table 1: Data descriptions

Variables	Definition	Sources
CO2	Carbon emission (kt)	WDI
TR	Tourism (number of arrivals)	WDI
CL	Culture (total actual users)	Knoema
TP	Transport (users of transport)	Knoema
RS	Restaurant (individual users)	Knoema
FD	Food (food used by individuals)	Knoema

Source: Table 1 has given sources of the data used for analysis

3.2. Model construction

It is crucial to explain the selected model of the study before moving forwards to empirical analysis, including explained and explanatory variables. In the basic model, this study uses carbon emissions (CO_2 emissions) as explanatory variables. On the other hand, this study incorporates tourism, culture; transportation system, restaurants, and food supply as the explanatory variables. However, the given function below shows the selected variables:

"CO2i,t = f(TRβ1, CL2β2, TPβ3, RSβ4, FDβ6)i,t" (1)

The given function refers to CO_2, TR, CL, TP, RS and FD refers to carbon emission, tourism, culture, transport, restaurant and food. At the same time, *"i"* reflects the frequency of cross sections' occurrence, and *"t"* shows the time-period. By taking natural-log on both sides, this study transforms the given function into a log-log model:

"$LCO2_{i,t} = \beta 0 + \beta 1\ LTR_{i,t} + \beta 2\ LCL_{i,t} + \beta 3\ LTP_{i,t} + \beta 4\ LRS_{i,t}, + \beta 5\ LFD_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t}$" (2)

LCO2, LTR, LCL, LTP, LRS, and LFD represent the natural logarithms of carbon emissions, tourism, culture, transportation systems, restaurants, and food supply. Again, "*i*" reflects the frequency of the cross-sections, and "t" describes the "year". Likewise, tourist activity is a significant cause of human and economic activity and energy use.

Therefore, tourism activities may cause an increase in environmental pollution, and hence environmental degradation (β1 > 0). Correspondingly, human and economic activities indicate a direct relation to culture in terms of products and heritage. Accordingly, tourists are mainly attracted to these heritage sites, and this study predicts that culture may lead to reductions in emissions (β2 < 0). Likewise, the transport sector is a dominant factor in tourism activities. This study predicts that the tourism coefficient will be positive and lead to increased emissions (β3 > 0). However, in the given equation, RS is a restaurant that is expected to increase emissions. Hence, the coefficient of RS will be greater than zero (β4 > 0). Finally, food coefficient will be negative (β5 < 0).

However, the moderate role of tourism on culture, transport, restaurant and food and their impact on carbon emission is another leading objective according to the study's consideration. Similarly, the moderate effect equations are given in equations 3, 4, 5 and 6.

In equation 3, other variables remain constant in moderate terms of TR * CL has an impact on carbon emission:

"LCO2i,t = β0 + β1 LTRi,t + β2 LCLi,t + β3 LTPi,t + β4 LRSi,t, + β5 LFDi,t + β6 LTR*CL + Ɛi,t" (3)

In equation 4, other variables remain constant in moderate terms of TR * TP impacts carbon emission:

“$LCO2_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LTR_{i,t} + \beta_2 LCL_{i,t} + \beta_3 LTP_{i,t} + \beta_4 LRS_{i,t}, + \beta_5 LFD_{i,t} + \beta_6 LTR * TP + \varepsilon_{i,t}$” (4)

In equation 5, other variables remain constant in moderate terms of TR * RS affects carbon emission:

“$LCO2_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LTR_{i,t} + \beta_2 LCL_{i,t} + \beta_3 LTP_{i,t} + \beta_4 LRS_{i,t}, + \beta_5 LFD_{i,t} + \beta_6 LTR * RS + \varepsilon_{i,t}$” (5)

In equation 6, other variables remain constant in moderate terms of TR * FD influences carbon emission:

“$LCO2_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LTR_{i,t} + \beta_2 LCL_{i,t} + \beta_3 LTP_{i,t} + \beta_4 LRS_{i,t}, + \beta_5 LFD_{i,t} + \beta_6 LTR * FD + \varepsilon_{i,t}$” (6)

The subscript i indicates cross sections, t represents the year, and “*εi,t”* refers error term that reflects normal distribution with 0 mean and constant variance. However, Figure 1 shows the box plots of study variables, selected in this model. Figure 1 describes the selected variables below.

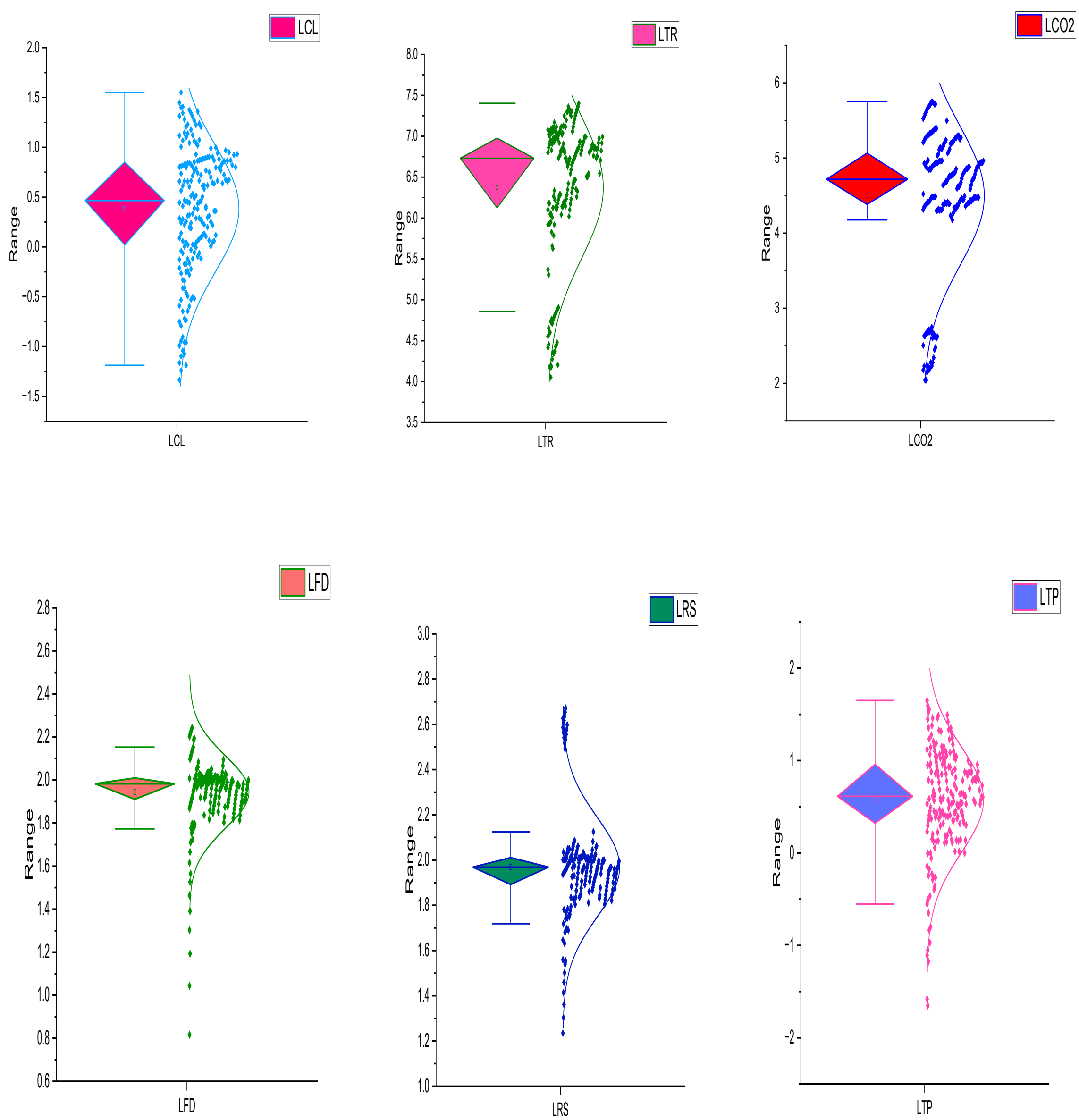

Fig. 1: Box Plots of the selected variables

3.3. Estimation strategy

The cross-sectional dependence (C.S.D.) between the panel data must be examined. Due to globalization, panel data may face severe challenges. Therefore, ignoring the cross-sectional dependence may lead to biasness:

$$\text{CSD}\sqrt{\frac{2T}{N(N-1)}}\sum_{i=1}^{N}\varphi\text{i}\sum_{m=i+1}^{N}\partial\text{im} \tag{7}$$

This study employs an advanced series of unit root tests to perform CADF & CIPS techniques. These tests help discover and remove incorrect regression analysis results and address C.S.D.-related concerns. Additionally, the researchers could evaluate the series variance's accuracy and robustness using both stationarity tests. The mathematical expression of the CADF test is described as follows by Equation (5).

$$\Delta xi,t = \alpha it + \beta it - 1 + \delta it + \sum_{j=1}^{N} \Upsilon\text{i,t}\,\Delta xit - j\ +\ \mu it \tag{8}$$

Hence, x depicts study's factors' investigated, indicating the factors' change and white-error term.

$$\text{CIPS} = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}\varphi\text{i (N,T)} \tag{9}$$

In the presence of CSD, this study employs the error correction-based cointegration technique suggested by (Westerlund, 2007)—however, the general form of cointegration is given below:

$$y_{i,t} = \delta_i^{\prime} d_t + \alpha_i(y_{i,t-1} - \beta_i^{\prime} X_{i,t-1}) + \sum_{j=1}^{Pi}\alpha_{ij}\,y_{it-j} + \sum_{j=-qi}^{pi}\gamma_{ij}\,X_{i,t-j} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \tag{10}$$

Similarly, this study uses an advanced series of econometric techniques to handle the problems of panel data. Therefore, this study first adopts the Common Correlated Effect Mean Group (CCE-MG). This method can deal with heterogeneity and is most reliable under cross-sections (Pesaran 2006). However, the general equation of the CCE-MG is given below:

$$Z_{it} = \tau_i^1\bar{Y}_{,it} + \tau_i^2\bar{X}1_{it} + \tau_i^3\bar{Y}2_{it} + \tau_i^4\bar{Y}3_{it} + \tau_i^5\bar{Y}4_{it} + \tau_i^5\bar{Y}5_{it} \tag{11}$$

Later on, the augmented mean group (AMG) estimator was developed by past studies, which is similar to the prior estimator (Destek & Sarkodie, 2019; Eberhardt & Teal, 2011; Sadorsky, 2014). Therefore, this technique is most significant due to its ability to cover unobserved factors in the panel data. Similarly, the general form of the AMG estimator is given below:

$$\Delta Y_{it} = \phi_0 + \phi_1\Delta X1_{it} + \phi_2\Delta X2_{it} + \phi_3\Delta X3_{it} + \phi_4\Delta X4_{it} + \phi_4\Delta X5_{it} + \sum_{t=2}^{T} p_t\,(AD_t) + \mu_{it} \tag{12}$$

$$\Delta Y_{it} = \phi_0 + \phi_1\Delta X1_{it} + \phi_2\Delta X2_{it} + \phi_3\Delta X3_{it} + \phi_4\Delta X4_{it} + \phi_4\Delta X5_{it} + d_1(\lambda_t) + \mu_{it} \tag{13}$$

$$\Delta Y_{it} - \lambda_t = \Delta Y_{it} = \phi_0 + \phi_1\Delta X1_{it} + \phi_2\Delta X2_{it} + \phi_3\Delta X3_{it} + \phi_4\Delta X4_{it} + \phi_4\Delta X5_{it} + \mu_{it} \tag{14}$$

However, the current study also utilizes the panel quantile regression by (Koenker, 2004) for validation by CCE-MG and AMG estimators. Likewise, the estimation strategy in a single Figure 2 describes the estimation strategy of this study. See Figure 2 here that explains estimation strategy of this research study.

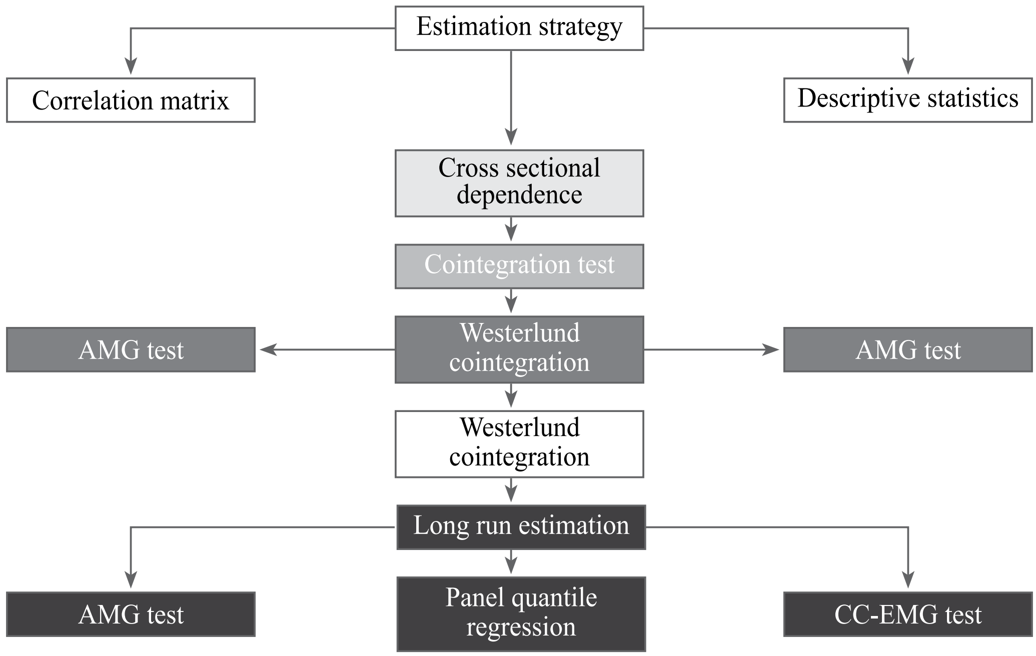

Fig. 2: Estimation strategy

4. Results and Discussion

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for the selected variables. According to the data, the average value of cultural activities is the lowest, while the average value of tourism activities is the highest. In addition, there is no apparent difference between the mean and median values. See table 2 below that describes descriptive statistics of the study's variables.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables

	LCO2	LTR	LCL	LTP	LRS	LFD
Mean	4.4970	6.3687	0.3871	0.5768	1.9689	1.9440
Median	4.7139	6.7292	0.4664	0.6123	1.9687	1.9831
Maximum	5.7521	7.4028	1.5514	1.6494	2.6713	2.2435
Minimum	2.0413	4.0530	-1.3344	-1.6520	1.2342	0.8169
Std. Dev.	0.9238	0.8695	0.6330	0.5732	0.2199	0.1683
Skewness	-1.3513	-1.2556	-0.6434	-1.0583	0.7999	-3.1799
Kurtosis	3.9975	3.4770	2.8558	4.9247	6.7080	18.306
Jarque-Bera	72.272	56.899	14.602	71.277	142.02	2392.52
Probability	0.00	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000000

Source: Authors performed descriptive statistics analysis. See Table 1 for data source derived from WDI and Knoema.

Table 3 shows the relationship between the study's variables. According to the results, tourism & CL are positively associated with carbon emissions, while others are negatively associated. The given outcomes validate no chance for multi-collinearity in the selected data. See Table 3 below, which shows correlational matrix.

Table 3. Correlation matrix

Variables						
CO2	1					
TR	0.8430*	1				
CL	0.1764*	0.0655	1			
TP	-0.1553**	-0.1530**	0.1605**	1		
RS	-0.5288*	-0.5253*	-0.3981*	0.1466**	1	
FD	-0.4042*	-0.4038*	-0.2499*	0.0382	0.7949*	1

Note: * and ** show the level of significance at 1% and 5%, respectively

Similarly, Table 4 shows the results of CSDs and validates the prior expectations. However, Table 4 shows the estimated results below. See Table 4 below that shows CSDs test of this study.

Table 4: CSDs test

Variables	Pesaran's test	Frees' test	Friedman's test
LCO2	27.557(0.000)	9.307(0.000)	143.691(0.000)
LTR	10.540(0.000)	4.284(0.000)	63.710(0.000)
LCL	0.605(0.007)	2.654(0.000)	12.393(0.000)
LTP	6.699(0.000)	1.777(0.000)	59.021(0.000)
LRS	23.082(0.000)	9.972(0.000)	138.021(0.000)
LFD	24.622(0.000)	11.704(0.000)	137.213(0.000)

Source: Authors performed CSDs Test analysis. See Table 1 for data source

Table 5 presents the data stationary for the selected variables. According to the results, carbon emissions, culture, and transport system are stationary at level. Furthermore, transport, restaurants, and food are integrated at first difference. In addition, the results of CIPS stayed consistent with the results of CADF. See Table 5 below on data stationary for the selected variables.

Table 5: Data stationary for the selected variables

Variable	CADF unit root		CIPS unit root	
	Level	1st difference	Level	1st difference
LCO2	-2.247**	-2.442	-2.247**	-2.498
LTR	-1.875	-5.442*	-1.888	-4.553*
LCL	-2.474**	-2.758	-2.474**	-2.853
LTP	-2.448**	-3.416	-2.489**	-3.887
LRS	-1.421	-4.225*	-1.421	-4.523
LFD	-1.121	-3.386	-1.121	-3.186

Source: Authors calculated this analysis. See Table 1 for data source

Table six shows the co-integration results and found the long-run association among the selected variables of the study. See Table 6 here that shows Westerlund Cointegration analysis.

Table 6. Westerlund Cointegration

Statistics	Value	Z-value	P-value	Robust P-value
Gt	-3.728	-2.900	0.002	0.000
Ga	-0.383	7.668	1.000	0.000
Pt	-3.853	6.597	1.000	0.000
Pa	-0.195	6.423	1.000	0.000

Source: Authors performed the Westerlund Cointegration analysis.

Long-run Results of CC-EMG Estimator

Table 7 demonstrates the long-run outcomes investigated by the CCE-MG estimator. However, tourism is positively associated with carbon emissions. Simply put, a 1% rise in this factor would cause to increase in CO_2 emissions by 0.0168%, 0.0765%, 0.2520%, 1.1468%, and 7.8714%, respectively. Due to a significant rise in public awareness and financial activities, rational consumers demand tourist activities and causes of environmental damage. In transport activities, the transport industry uses mostly traditional energies (Lee & Brahmasrene, 2013). Therefore, the tourism industry has become an energy-intensive sector, and alternative energy sources are needed to run this. Besides, there has been a variety of environmental deterioration in tourism activities, but CO_2 emission is prominent (Hall et al., 2015). In addition, it will be meaningful if we claim that tourism activities increase emissions directly and indirectly. Direct way refers to the massive energy use in tourism activities such as travelling, food supply, and entertainment. Similarly, the indirect way refers to emissions from intermediate goods utilized in tourism (Lenzen et al., 2018). Although it is challenging to count down the emissions created by different sectors; however, as researchers blame the energy sector, there is a need to reshape energy policies to become efficient and eco-friendly. This finding is also in line with studies by (Razzaq et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2022)

Similarly, culture reduces carbon emissions by 0.0521%, 1.1021%, 0.0558%, 0.0115%, and 0.0498%. The culture coefficient in this model is noticeably negative and has various other indicators, indicating a cultural communication masking effect. Additionally, the carbon-trading regime encourages a green culture, which lowers net carbon emissions. Culture has a detrimental impact on greenhouse gas emissions in certain countries, as shown by further sorting the sample based on national cultural norms. There has to be less of a “green hierarchy” in society before cultural activities can help the environment. On the other hand, in a hierarchical society, green power distance protects the environment. These findings contradict with the literature that found that upper and lower quantiles of environmental degradation responded differently to the various social factors studied (Landrigan & Fuller, 2015; Saeed Meo & Karim, 2022). High-quality human resources in low power distance cultures are more likely to be included in decision-making and knowledge-sharing at all organizational levels. These talented individuals inform cutting-edge procedures and bring novel approaches to tackle current difficulties like climate change. However, the sound effects of education need to nullify in societies with a hierarchical structure (high power distance) that prevents the free flow of information to the public. These results support our theory that cultural factors contribute to the link between pollution and the environment. This finding is in line with the outcomes of (Valls Martínez et al., 2022).

According to the findings, increasing transportation by 1% raises carbon emissions by 0.0116%, 0.0057%, 1.0881%, 0.0055%, and 0.0049%, respectively. Co-integration findings point to a persistent connection between the relevant variables. In the end, this result displays the cumulative data. According to the results, the coefficient of total transport is positively elastic and relatively high close to the sample center. The conclusion falls short of our expectations, and the transportation sector's high-energy consumption harms the nation's environmental quality. The outcome is consistent with (Shahbaz et al., 2015), who also draw the same conclusion. Additionally, (Saboori et al., 2014) obtained comparable findings for their single-country analysis of 27 OECD nations. An identical outcome was predicted for Saudi Arabia (Alshehry and Belloumi 2017). Compared to other studies, ours has findings that are more interesting because we focused on transportation-related CO_2 emissions as a proxy for air sustainability. The expansion in vehicle demand, which leads to energy consumption, is a tenable explanation. Rapidly expanding modes of transportation and a lack of high-quality fuels have led to problems with air pollution and halted climate change, respectively. Fossil fuels power a greater majority of cars in selected economies. Reducing fossil fuel use for transportation is the fastest approach to cutting CO_2 emissions. Road infrastructure, the number of moving cars and energy use in transportation are interconnected. For instance, selected economies pursuit of rapid economic expansion jeopardizes environmental sustainability, which seriously threatens the country's citizens' social, economic, and health conditions. This finding is in same vein as of (Jing et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022).

Restaurants increase carbon emissions by 0.8385%, 5.8504%, 0.4843%, 1.3832%, and 1.2333%. Since the combustion of fossil fuels is what is causing rising GHG levels, climate change is frequently mentioned in energy use. As part of the global food chain, restaurants rely heavily on electricity to produce, process, store, transport, cook, serve and deliver food. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is released during restaurant operations and transportation, methane (CH_4) is released during waste treatment, nitrous oxide (N_2O) is released from agricultural products, and hydrofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are released from refrigeration equipment. Due to its operating energy usage, the case restaurant chain's CF was computed in this study, and the number of trees required to balance it was shown. The end objective was to raise the company's understanding of CF and broaden its coverage to encompass suppliers, staff, and clients. This outcome is in line with the study of (Madanaguli et al., 2022).

The findings indicate that eating with negative behavior affects carbon emissions. By increasing this factor by 1%, carbon emissions would fall by -2.8072%, -3.7818%, -1.3471%, -1.2040%, and -14.4788%. Despite the out-of-the-ordinary occurrence, decreasing energy use is the primary factor in the food industry's declining CO_2 emissions. Government attention must be given to the industry's declining energy intensity to reduce CO_2 emissions. Energy efficiency and energy substitution for other input elements are the key factors that affect energy intensity. Maintaining a steady and ongoing R&D investment in equipment and technology updates is essential for increasing energy efficiency. Supporting basic technology research, concentrating on technology promotion, and quickening new technology manufacturing are all crucial. In China's food industry, small and medium-sized businesses dominate. Also, this finding is in line with that of (Li et al., 2022).

In addition to the primary influence, it is essential to look into how tourism moderately affects culture, transportation, food, and restaurants and how it affects carbon emissions. However, the limited roles played by LTR * CL, LTR * RS, and LTR * LFD demonstrate the beneficial effect on carbon emission (CO_2). The outcome indicates that, in this model, carbon emission decreases by -0.1197%, -0.1167%, -0.22611%, and -3.9620% over the long run for 1% increase in moderate effect. See Table 7 below that shows CC-EMG results.

Table 7: CC-EMG results

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
LTR	0.0168(0.020)	0.0765(0.003)	0.2520(0.041)	1.1468(0.019)	7.8714(0.005)
LCL	-0.0521(0.029)	-1.1021(0.006)	-0.0558(0.002)	-0.0115(0.003)	-0.0498(0.005)
LTP	0.0116(0.007)	0.0057(0.000)	1.0881(0.009)	0.0055(0.023)	0.0049(0.008)
LRS	0.8385(0.003)	-5.8504(0.015)	0.4843(0.038)	1.3832(0.032)	1.2333(0.028)
LFD	-2.8072(0.008)	3.7818(0.026)	-1.3471(0.000)	-1.2040(0.547)	-14.4788(0.005)
LTR * CL	-	0.1947(0.027)	-	-	-
LTR * TP	-	-	0.1167(0.006)	-	-
LTR * RS	-	-	-	0.2961(0.004)	-
LTR * FD	-	-	-	-	-3.9620(0.004)

Source: authors driven CC-EMG analysis. See Table 1 for data source

4.1. Robust Check for Augmented Mean Group

The present paper has examined estimated findings rigorously, and the enhanced mean group test results exhibited that tourism cuts carbon emissions. According to the results, as tourism levels rise, carbon emissions increase by 0.0562%, 0.3707%, 0.0802%, 2.3830%, and 5.9055%, respectively. Similar to how culture harms carbon emissions by the stated values of -0.0281%, -1.6707%, -0.0122%, -0.0986%, and -0.0932%, correspondingly. In this scenario, transportation has a similar beneficial effect on carbon emissions. The findings indicate that when transportation intensity increases, carbon emissions rise by 0.0079%, 0.0257%, 0.0939%, 0.0080%, and 0.0305%. Restaurants have a beneficial impact on carbon emissions, as evidenced by the results below, which are 0.8351%, 0.6765%, 0.2150%, 8.3286%, and 0.2005%. The results show that food harms carbon emissions by -0.4092%, -4.8194%, -6.1724%, -2.2174%, and 9.5661%. The study's results of 0.3511%, 0.0529%, 1.1782%, and -2.8446% demonstrate that the moderate effect positively affects carbon emission. See Table 8 below that explains AMG results.

Table 8: AMG results

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
LTR	0.0562(0.005)	0.3707(0.023)	0.0802(0.022)	2.3830(0.007)	5.9055(0.037)
LCL	-0.0281(0.003)	-1.6707(0.007)	-0.0122(0.044)	-0.0986(0.018	-0.0932(0.043)
LTP	0.0079(0.029)	0.0257(0.004)	0.0939(0.043)	0.0080(0.003)	0.0305(0.003)
LRS	0.8351(0.015)	0.6765(0.347)	0.2150(0.030)	8.3286(0.003)	0.2005(0.001)
LFD	-0.4092(0.031)	-4.8194(0.030)	-6.1724(0.002)	-2.2174(0.031)	9.5661(0.030)
LTR * CL	-	0.3511(0.034)	-	-	-
LTR * TP	-	-	0.0529(0.053)	-	-
LTR * RS	-	-	-	1.1782(0.008)	-
LTR * FD	-	-	-	-	-2.8446(0.038)

Source: authors driven AMG analysis. See Table 1 for data source.

4.2. Robust Check for Quantile Regression for Panel Data

This current study aimed at validating the prior results using analysis of panel quantile regression. However, with the different quantiles like 25, 50, and 75, the present study shows reliable outcomes and validates the prior investigation. However, the investigated results show the positive impact of tourism, transport and restaurants on emissions. In addition, they found a negative connection between food and culture with carbon emissions. However, the moderate role of tourism on culture, transport sector, and restaurants significantly contributes to environmental damage, while vice versa for tourism on food supply on carbon emissions. However, Table 9 shows the study outcomes on quantile regression for panel data derived from the analysis. Figure 3 shows summarization of all mentioned outcomes.

Table 9: Quantile regression for panel data

	Model 1		
Variables	**Quantile 25**	**Quantile 50**	**Quantile 75**
LTR	0.8137 (0.000)	1.0191 (0.000)	0.7452 (0.000)
LCL	-0.0552 (0.254)	-0.0185 (0.005)	- 0.0172 (0.005)
LTP	0.0367 (0.506)	0.1314 (0.000)	0.0306 (0.001)
LRS	1.3665 (0.002)	0.0277 (0.021)	1.6577 (0.000)
LFD	-1.1593 (0.079)	-0.5306 (0.000)	-0.9852 (0.000)
	Model 2		
LTR	0.8983 (0.000)	1.0518 (0.000)	0.8344 (0.000)
LCL	-0.1902 (0.000)	- 0.0587 (0.359)	-1.4811 (0.000)
LTP	0.0008 (0.966)	0.1236 (0.000)	0.1329 (0.297)
LRS	0.0479 (0.796)	0.1362 (0.005)	0.4209(0.587)
LFD	0.4332 (0.004)	0.0339 (0.369)	0.4097 (0.211)
LTR * CL	-0.0203 (0.002)	-0.0007 (0.952)	-0.2166 (0.000)
	Model 3		
LTR	0.8140 (0.000)	0.8199 (0.000)	0.4361 (0.000)
LCL	- 0.0164 (0.027)	-0.2099 (0.011)	-0.0227 (0.056)
LTP	0.0738 (0.030)	0.3720 (0.345)	2.0265 (0.000)
LRS	0.1989 (0.000)	0.3365 (0.470)	1.5116 (0.000)
LFD	-0.3727 (0.000)	- 0.5281 (0.431)	-1.0627 (0.000)
LTR * TP	0.0122 (0.001)	0.0669 (0.020)	0.3190 (0.000)
	Model 4		
LTR	0.0233 (0.981)	0.4044 (0.000)	0.7150 (0.000)

LCL	-0 .1219 (0.079)	-0.0016 (0.005)	-0.0817 (0.000)
LTP	0.0149 (0.050)	0.0733 (0.000)	0.0786 (0.000)
LRS	2.8995 (0.014)	1.4179 (0.000)	5.1722 (0.000)
LFD	-0.0018 (0.008)	-0.6587 (0.000)	-0.3310 (0.000)
LTR * RS	0.3978 (0.004)	0.3041 (0.000)	0.6815 (0.000)
	Model 5		
LTR	1.3029 (0.000)	0.6739 (0.043)	2.2015 (0.000)
LCL	-0.1860 (0.000)	-0.0610 (0.012)	-0.1560 (0.000)
LTP	0.0285 (0.000)	0.0451 (0.114)	0.0577 (0.000)
LRS	0.9889 (0.000)	0.4529 (0.053)	0.7812 (0.000)
LFD	-8.5167 (0.000)	-6.2353 (0.000)	-9.4290 (0.000)
LTR * FD	-1.0831 (0.000)	-0.8078 (0.000)	-1.4531 (0.000)

Source: authors performed Quantile regression for panel data analysis. See Table 1 for data source.

Figure 3 describes the "Summarisation of all mentioned results of this study

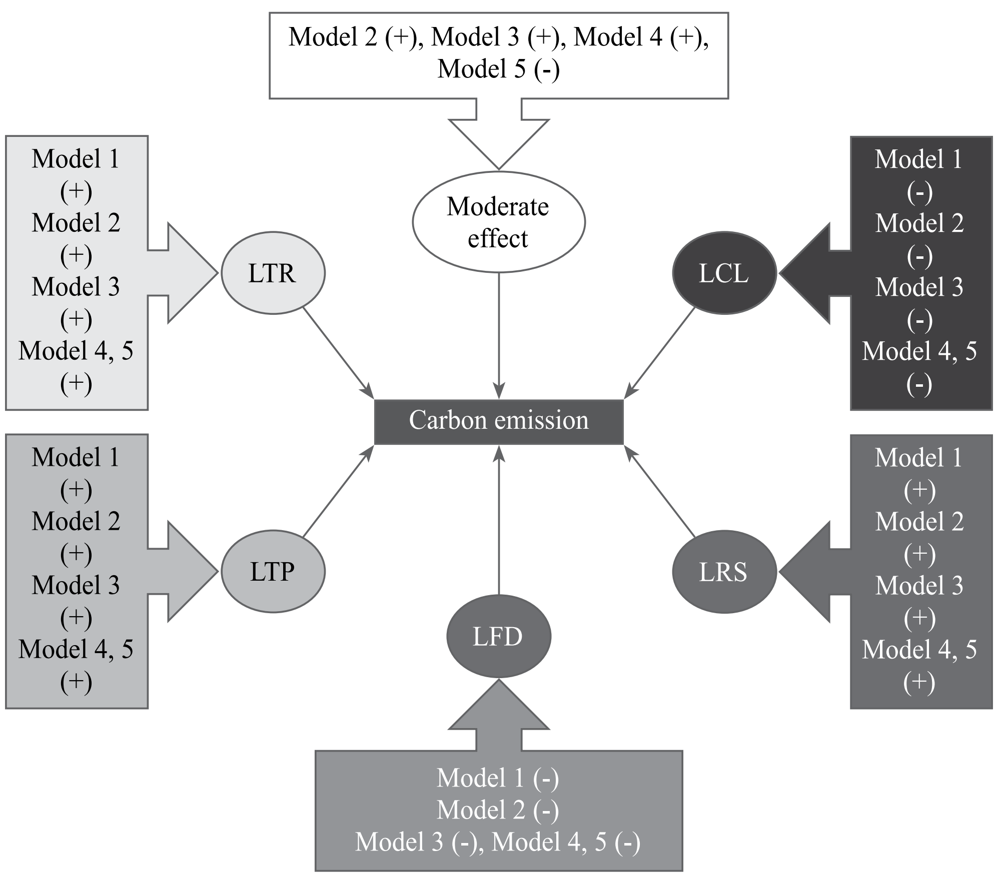

Fig. 3: Summarization of all mentioned outcomes

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This study investigates how tourism, culture, transport and food industries in Arab countries affect carbon emissions. Long-term behavioral tests of explanatory variables included CADF and CIPS unit root tests, Westerlund cointegration tests, and CC-EMG and AMG tests, have all been used in this study. Atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels have increased due to various factors, including travel, restaurant consumption, and tourism. However, the release of greenhouse gases is inversely proportional to people's lifestyle decisions. Because of these constraints, other countries have begun to reduce carbon emissions.

This study aims to educate managers about the complexities of sustainable tourism from a carbon emissions perspective so that they can make informed decisions about whether or not to implement it as a strategic intervention. With the results of our research in hand, managers and politicians can see sustainable tourism as a strategic maneuver for their organizations rather than just an excellent idea. Managers can use this research to find more resources that provide helpful insights into this concept. The authors' concurrence analysis also identified many additional significant terms, such as "low-carbon tourism," "emissions trading," and "sustainable tourist behavior." The tourism industry may be influenced by these concepts, which also affects the direction of future research. In doing so, the tourism industry may lessen its contribution to global warming. Low-carbon tourism hopes to improve society, the economy, and the environment while providing more excellent value and travel experiences to travelers. Since ecotourism's impact on greenhouse gas emissions is just starting, researchers should focus on its economic and cost-benefit assessments since many countries worldwide have built and efficiently implemented emission-trading programmes in tourism. Promoting green values and establishing a green culture at the grassroots level substantially affect achieving carbon neutrality. This is why it is suggested that a decentralized green communication infrastructure be developed to disseminate these concepts. Creating green hotspots can also achieve low-carbon environmental preservation and increased public understanding of green development. From the perspective of overall cultural production, Arab countries should also actively support green cultural initiatives and green cultural businesses. An argument must be made for expanding access to environmentally conscious service options. Green-themed museums and libraries should be constructed, for instance. A green industrial system would promote the growth of indigenous arts and crafts, sustainable gastronomy, eco-friendly travel, environmentally responsible entertainment, and green media.

Transport and environmental degradation Buses and trucks used for public transport are the dominant vehicles on the road and account for most fossil fuel use in Arab economies. Fossil fuels negatively influence the quality of the environment. The high consumption of fossil fuels in critical industries such as transport reduces the quality of the environment. Policymakers advise higher authorities to reduce the number of cars because it jeopardizes environmental sustainability. In big cities, public transportation should transform into green transportation. This study shows that external parties can positively influence the amount of energy used in road transport. The main reasons for lower long-term profitability, increased operating costs, investment, system divergence and governance issues can be attributed to the poor performance of the railways. As previously described, road transport and energy use could be more efficient and environment friendly. The government should focus on rail transit development to reduce the pressure and dependence on road traffic. On the face of it, reducing fossil fuel consumption can be achieved by strengthening transportation infrastructure. Public transport can be more convenient, luxurious, and attractive to all user categories, such as driving a private car powered by fossil fuels.

When planning the menu, low-carb options should be considered. Low carbon emission food can be advertised. With the help of social media tools like live streaming, similar meetings with clients can be scheduled. Staff can access an online training program emphasizing energy conservation principles in all operational tasks. The company should use solar energy for lighting and locate its restaurants in Energy ID-certified buildings equipped with eco-friendly appliances. Websites and social media accounts should promote all menu items and the restaurant's vibe. Customers, employees and suppliers may help reforestation planners, such as those used to offset carbon emissions. Carbon labels could be considered on menus, and customer perceptions of this could be researched.

However, there are some caveats to making definitive statements based on this data. The first issue is that the study may have had a sampling flaw because it used data from multiple sources. Second, alternative non-linear structured panel data techniques may yield results that differ from many of the limited-assumption estimation methods employed in empirical strategies. Furthermore, the ecological footprint used to measure environmental degradation in this study may respond differently to the studied variables than other environmental indicators such as environmental performance or sustainability indices. Therefore, further studies will explore to verify the accuracy of the conclusions drawn in this study and to show how environmental degradation responds to or improves upon different determinants by looking at different data over time or using recently developed estimation techniques.

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تأثيرات بلد المنشأ على تقييم الخدمات

تحرير

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أظهرت الأدبيات الحديثة عناية العديد من الدراسات السابقة بدراسة آثار جودة الخدمة، وصورة العلامة التجارية، وميزات المنتج، وعلاقتها بتأثيرات بلد المنشأ؛ حيث يولي العملاء اهتمامًا ببلد منشأ سلعةٍ أو منتجٍ ما؛ لتقييم خدمة معينة. هذا الكتاب عمل فريدٌ في بابه، يستكشف تأثيرات بلد المنشأ على تقييم الخدمات، وقد شارك فيه باحثون دوليون مشهورون من خلفيات ثقافية متنوعة؛ حيث أنتجت قرائحهم فصول هذا الكتاب؛ بغية تحديد طبيعة العلاقة بين جودة الخدمة وصورة العلامة التجارية، وتقييم الخدمة، فيما يتعلق بتأثيرات بلد المنشأ لمعالجة رضا العملاء. كما يُحيل تأثير بلد المنشأ إلى التحيز لجنسية معينة، بما يشير إلى الحالة النفسية لدى المستهلك والقيمة المتصورة التي تؤثر على قراره، بناءً على الخدمة المبتكرة؛ حيث إن العملاء غالبًا ما يتأثرون في هذا الجانب ببلد المنشأ وتقييم الخدمة المرتبطة بخدمة أو سلعة معينة. يسهم هذا الكتاب المحرر في بناء ركيزة معرفية لدى القراء والمعنيين حول التسويق الدولي الذي يركز على مسألة بلد المنشأ؛ حتى يؤثر على قرارات المستهلكين بشأن جودة الخدمة.

يتكشّف من خلال دراسة تأثير بلد المنشأ كون المستهلكين يقررون جودة الخدمة وميزات العلامة التجارية؛ فتقييم الخدمة وتأثير بلد المنشأ لهما دور جليّ في تحفيز جودة الخدمة والأداء. ووفقًا لذلك، تعمل ميزات العلامة التجارية وجودة الخدمة وتأثير بلد المنشأ على تعزيز تصورات المستهلكين واتخاذ قراراتهم خارج نطاق إرادتهم. كما يتضح أن النماذج المبتكرة تدرس عوامل مختلفة لتقييم الخدمة. ويدعم نشر هذا العمل وتعميم نتائجه صقل نظرة ثاقبة لاتجاهات البحث المستقبلية في هذا الميدان لمختلف المناطق في شتى بقاع العالم.

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Recent literature has shown that numerous past studies have examined the effects of service quality, brand image and product features with country-of-origin (COO) effects as customers pay attention to specific service evaluation. This book is a rare work exploring service evaluation with country-of-origin effects. Well-known international researchers with cultural diversities have written various chapters that define the relationship between service quality, brand image, and service evaluation concerning country-of-origin effects to address customer satisfaction. The COO effect also describes bias of a specific nationality, which refers to consumers' psychology and the perceived value that influences the decision based on innovative service. Customers consider the impact of COO and service evaluation associated with a specific service. This work contributes to scientific knowledge on international marketing that describes country-of-origin, which influences consumers' decisions on service quality. The COO effect shows that end consumers decide on service quality and brand features. Service evaluation and the COO effect stimulate service quality and performance. Accordingly, brand features, service quality, and the COO effect promote consumers' perceptions and decision-making beyond their conscious control. The innovative models examine different factors of service evaluation. The work's generalizability supports insight into future research directions for various regions worldwide.

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