

## REVIEWING THE IMPACT OF COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION : THE ROLE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT IN EXISTING LITERATURE



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### ABSTRACT

*This paper explores the effect of country of origin on consumer purchase and repeat purchase intention. The moderating impact of celebrity endorsement will also be explored. This research took on a theoretical approach using over twenty-five (25) articles covering country of origin, purchase intention, and celebrity endorsement. Country-of-origin (COO) effects, namely cognitive, affective, and normative, alongside culture and consumer ethnocentrism, impact a consumer's purchase intention. Consumers consider the specific effects of a product's country of origin before purchasing a product, and international marketers must understand these. Research on repeat purchase intention shows no relationship with the country of origin as consumers are historically and sometimes emotionally tied to a product; therefore, they automatically purchase it without giving much thought to its country of origin. This study contributes to the existing literature while adding celebrity endorsement as an external variable. Thus, another important finding is how the theoretical theories of celebrity endorsement, namely, the source credibility model, the source attractiveness model, the match-up hypothesis, and the meaning transfer model, moderate the relationship between the COO effect and purchase and repeat purchase intention.*

**Keywords:** Country-of-Origin; Consumer Purchase Intention; Repeat Purchase Intention; Celebrity Endorsement

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## INTRODUCTION

In contemporary marketing, consumers are presented with a wide range of product information through packaging, branding, traditional and digital advertisements, and sometimes word-of-mouth (Lim et al., 2015). This information helps consumers form preconceived notions about the product, leading to purchasing decisions, but it also stimulates their fantasies, feelings, imagery, and emotions (Verlegh and Steenkamp 2012). The Country-of-Origin (COO) effect was first introduced in 1962 by Ditcher, who argued that a product's country of origin may significantly impact its success and acceptance by potential consumers (Pecotich & Rosenthal, 2002).

Borrowing loosely from Ditcher (1965), Schooler performed the first empirical test, which found significant differences in evaluating identical products, including their COO's. Further studies revealed that the COO strongly influences product evaluation, but the effects must be better understood and generalized (Verlegh and Steenkamp 2012). COO refers to marketers' and consumers' association of brands and products with countries, allowing this association to influence their purchasing decisions based on the product's COO (Andéhn et al., 2016).

Consumers often assume that a country's characteristics can directly transfer onto a product or at least affect the product somehow. COO attracts substantial practical relevance in international marketing as it can be used as an early quality indicator as product differentiation is exponentially difficult (Dobrucal, 2018). Contrary to this way of thinking, in the late 1900s, scholars such as Papadopoulos and Heslop criticized COO, claiming it to be too narrow since it assumed that a product only has one place of origin. Following this claim, COO was further developed through the decades and broken down into three subcomponents: the country of design, the country of assembly, and the country of parts. It refers to the country that manufactures, designs, or assembles a product with which it is associated (Josiassen et al., 2013).

Most marketers are concerned with the country of origin because of its impact on consumer purchase intention (Rezvani et al., 2012). A consumer's purchase intention refers to their willingness to spend on a specific product by engaging in a transaction with a brand (Yunus & Rashid, 2016). Another researcher described it as the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a product given specific information and their intention to engage in repeat purchasing (Rahman, 2012). The relationship between country of origin and purchase intention dates back decades and is one of the main issues considered in purchasing behavior and international marketing literature (Yunus & Rashid, 2015).

Consumers consider many factors, such as personal preference, brand, design, and color. However, studies have shown that marketers must address factors such as country of origin (Rezvani et al., 2012). Customers have much easier access to foreign products since companies can participate in internationalization in this competitive market. In this case, the role of the COO is even more significant than in previous times, as the options are far greater than domestic products. The first objective of this paper is to explore the impact of a product's country of origin on consumers' purchase and re-purchase intentions. Following this investigation, the implications to companies and international marketers will be discussed, and how to respond to this impact while still meeting the needs of consumers will be discussed.

The arrival of global brands in developing countries is exposing consumers to more and more foreign products. Now, more than ever, consumers are not only faced with the cues of country of origin, but celebrity endorsement of a brand heavily influences their purchase intention. A celebrity endorser is "any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing

with it in an advertisement” (McCracken, 1989, p. 310). On the other hand, this definition is outdated in today’s technological advertising age, as celebrities can now include a brand’s name, logo, or picture on social media platforms. It is also important to note that for this form of endorsement to occur, some agreement between the brand and the celebrity must permit the use of their name or physical features in some way (Lars & Zhou, 2016).

Researchers have analyzed the market-related effects of celebrity endorsement for over fifty (50) years and have deemed it one of the most predominant types of marketing for its time. Celebrities can significantly impact brands, especially in the social media age, gaining influence through movies, music, and social platforms. Thus, further research is evident, given the prevalence of celebrity endorsements and the billions of dollars spent on advertisement campaigns each year (Lu & Seah, 2018).

As mentioned, marketers and consumers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century face a local vs. global brand battle, and effective promotion is of utmost importance to brands. Current research has shown that celebrity endorsement is a pivotal advertising technique despite price and quality, as consumers usually want to feel connected to their favorite movie, artist, or TikTok star. Once this desire to connect is formed, purchase intention is impacted. In the overall promotional process, the involvement of celebrities in influencing customer purchase and repurchase intention is remarkable. (McCormick 2016).

This modern advertising informs consumers about the brand, persuading them psychologically through their favorite celebrity to want to use it or continue it. The presence of celebrities in advertisements has a significant effect on customer purchase intention. One study noted that celebrity endorsement increased sales by 4% and caused a 0.25% rise in the value of stocks when consumers got a glimpse into the daily lives of celebrities using the brand (Bergkvist et al., 2015).

Consumer purchase intention can be impacted if celebrity endorsement is used as an advertising technique despite the brands’ country of origin. Research shows that marketers should pay particular attention to how pivotal a celebrity endorsing their product can be regardless of its origin. This paper explores whether celebrity endorsement moderates the relationship between country of origin, consumer purchase, and re-purchase intention. The importance of brands investing in this new advertising technique will be discussed alongside why brands can and should use celebrities.

The final objective of this paper will be a discussion on the practical and theoretical implications of both COO and celebrity endorsement in international marketing, as well as avenues for future research. To address this study’s objections, a systematic review will be conducted to develop the literature further and help guide propositions for future testing.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Country of Origin Effect**

The conceptualization of the country-of-origin (COO) effect varies. However, it has been found to strongly affect how a product is evaluated (Boonpattarakon, 2012). Consumers face numerous decision challenges when buying products, including those relating to the product's characteristics and intended use. They are often unable to distinguish between products because they are bombarded with those that appear to be identical (Rezvani, 2012). In this case, marketers utilize various strategies, branding being the most effective, to differentiate their products from competitors (Chen, 2012). Consumers may need clarification when confronted with many unfamiliar brands; as a result, the product's

country of origin is one of the external cues on which they can rely. They recognize country of origin as indicating where a product is made since there can be considerable biases toward foreign products (Brodie & Benson-Rea, 2016).

International marketers have faced the COO effect emerging from a logical and intuitive space and transferred to a consumer's views on a brand based on its originating country since the 1960s (Josiassen et al., 2013). Potential consumers value the country where products come from and have been known to consider this factor when assessing the product's quality (Parkvithee & Miranda, 2012). The "Made in" label is said to have originated after the First World War in Europe with hopes that consumers would judge German-made products differently than those made in other European countries.

On the contrary, the label instead became one to measure quality, and it was quickly adopted internationally by many brands (Saydan, 2013). Many authors criticized the COO effect as it mainly focused on the product's country of manufacturing (COM). However, it should be a multidimensional construct. Further empirical research aided this criticism, and the COO effect now considers additional dimensions such as country of design (COD), country of assembly (COA), and country to parts (COP) (Hilman et al., 2013).

In 2015, Chailan and Ille indicated that although Apple is an American brand, many of their products are assembled in China, and therefore, the packaging is labeled "Assembled in China." On the other hand, their packaging will read "Made in the U.S.A " for the products manufactured in the United States. In today's business environment, which is characterized by fierce competition and an ever-increasing number of brands, the image of the country of origin has become an essential criterion for choosing one brand over another (Saydan, 2013). When consumers have limited information about a product's quality, they tend to lean into its country of origin for this information. Traditionally, products from developed countries are perceived to be of higher quality than those from developing countries (Rezwani, 2012). According to Al-Aali et al. (2015), a country's innovation, design, and reputation inspire its image to potential consumers. Superior and state-of-the-art technology, style, and exclusive manufacturers are considered when evaluating a country.

Many studies have alluded that the COO effect functions as a cognitive and quality cue for consumers, and countries sometimes hold symbolic and emotional significance (Magnusson & Westjohn, 2012). Moreover, the authors argued that COO relationships can result in intense product-country relationships that form emotional attachments with brands. Consumers have a more favorable attitude towards a product when its country of origin is viewed as superior to similar products (Brodowsky et al., 2004). According to Boonpattarakan (2012), the international marketing strategy manages the brand's image because, given the effects of the COO on consumers, this is tremendously important for performance.

The first attempt at conceptualizing the COO effect resulted in a three-dimensional theoretical framework encompassing cognitive, affective, and normative components (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013). The cognitive dimension uses COO for a product's quality, and the normative dimension utilizes COO to relate to personal standards (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013). Conversely, the affective dimension uses country of origin to link consumer emotions to their social status (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013). More specifically, a significant finding on this dimension of country of origin is considered a measure of consumer persona, which links products to status and national pride (Zolfagharian et al., 2020). The normative dimension exemplifies the constant battle with choosing between domestic and foreign products as

consumers closely consider their social and personal norms related to each country (Meshreki et al., 2018).

Cognitive, affective, and normative processes interact as they are not mutually exclusive determinants of consumer preferences and behaviors (Vukasović, 2015). When consumers respond to affective COO effects, it can encourage or discourage them from considering alternative options and influence the retrieval and evaluation of cognitive beliefs about that country. Consequently, what beliefs are formed, how they are arbitrated, and how much of a role they play in establishing preferences are all influenced by effect (Saydan, 2013). Both affective and cognitive responses make normative decisions about what country a consumer should purchase products from (Vukasović, 2015). According to the authors, the effect of norms on consumer behavior and intent to purchase is significant because breaking norms causes consumers to feel guilty and complete lack of self, whereas complying triggers confidence and increased self-esteem.

Furthermore, the Expectancy Value Theory was developed, which suggested that marketing incentives influence product behaviors by forming and evaluating fundamental beliefs (Wigfield, 1994). According to this viewpoint, when consumers evaluate a product, they do so based on the descriptive, inferential, and information cues related to the product, which may be intrinsic or extrinsic, like country of origin. Consumers base their product assessment on their perception of the country of origin, leaving room for stereotyping (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013). Alongside stereotyping, literature has also identified consumers' other ideas and how the country of origin helps them visualize the brand (Josiasen et al., 2013). One such COO effect, known as the 'halo' effect, comes into play when a potential consumer is unfamiliar with the product and uses its COO to evaluate it (Lee & Lockshin, 2011). This effect is criticized as other important product characteristics are missing from the evaluation (Lee & Lockshin, 2011).

Moreover, the product-attribute effect was introduced into the international marketing literature to help mitigate the negatives of the 'halo' effect (Sharma, 2014). This effect is linked to the cognitive dimension previously mentioned, as it states that a product's country of origin encourages potential consumers to consider other characteristics to evaluate its quality better. Additionally, the summary construct effect describes how consumers form conclusions about a product based on all the other brands originating from the same country (Sharma, 2014; Murtaza, 2016). This effect directly affects the country's image and can in still bias in decisions (Murtaza, 2016). In response to these criticisms, research lends the default heuristic effect, which encompasses and expands both the 'halo' and summary construct effects. The default heuristic effect indicates that the product evaluation will be collaborative and unified if the COO cue and all the other product information are considered (Chang, 2004). Therefore, all product and country information is examined in one setting, and the consumer can make an informed decision (Khaniwale, 2015).

Competition among brands has increased in global marketing primarily because of globalization. Brands can now enter foreign markets more; consumers can access various purchasing options (Holt et al., 2004). This has increased the need for international marketers to consider the importance of the role of COO since, before this increase, consumers only had to evaluate the domestic products available (Lim et al., 2015). When foreign products from developed countries enter developing countries, marketers must consider how consumers will evaluate the product's country of origin (Fong et al., 2014). Thus, the importance of the COO effect as a cue in consumer product evaluation and purchase intention has received significant attention. Research as early as the 1980s eludes that country of origin influences consumers' purchase intention,

emphasizing how a consumer evaluates a product based on its country of origin (Bahng & Kincade, 2014).

### **COO Effect on Purchase Intention**

International trade has increased significantly, as has the global market's growth (Holt et al., 2004). As a result of multinational corporations competing domestically, companies and foreign marketers are looking for new opportunities in the global market. Many factors, including brand name and country perception, impact consumer product and service evaluation (Holt et al., 2004). Country of origin is among the most critical factors influencing the competitive market (Magnusson & Westjohn, 2012). Thus, it concerns international marketers regarding its effect on consumer purchase intention (Goh et al., 2016). COO is an intriguing phenomenon for marketing experts, and studies on its impact on consumer purchase intention date back decades (Pecotich & Rosenthal, 2001). International marketing literature tags the country of origin as a high-risk extrinsic cue for international trade because of its intense reflection on consumer purchase intention (Anwar et al., 2013).

Potential consumers with different cultures and histories have different perceptions of products, which can lead to different assessments when it comes time to decide (Boonpattarakan, 2012). Many factors influence this issue, including the country of origin, which plays a significant role in competitive markets and consumer purchase intention. Moreover, consumers' preferences and stereotypes in the country impact the intention (Parkvithee & Miranda, 2012). The different facets of the country of origin, the country of manufacturing, design, and assembly, all have the power to influence a consumer based on their awareness and beliefs. COO as an antecedent for consumer purchase intention has led to numerous studies that solidify that because of globalization, the impact is certainly more complex (Goh et al., 2016).

One significant finding in international marketing is that consumers evaluate products from developing and developed countries differently, which introduces the concept of foreign and local country bias (Sookhai, 2023). Brands from developing countries have to deal with competitors and the negative and unfair product evaluation of their product by the COO cue (Parkvithee & Miranda, 2012). Consumers use COO as an additional attribute when evaluating a product for purchase among the other, more prominent, intrinsic cues (Sookhai, 2023). Another viewpoint is that consumers use the "halo effect," which plays a significant role in product selection and ultimately leads to a consumer's purchase intention (Lee & Lockshin, 2011). Studies indicate that every consumer is different and has a unique attitude toward what factors they use to evaluate domestic and foreign products (Sookhai, 2023). The findings show that the country of origin still manages to affect their purchase intention even with consumers living in the same country with similar or the same beliefs (Lew & Sulaiman, 2013).

Studies have also demonstrated a particular facet of a product's country of origin, that is, the country's image and how it impacts the purchase intention of consumers (C. et al. et al., 2012). Marketers consider a country image to be one of the most significant features for consumers when using the COO cue for product evaluation (Rambocas & Ramsuhag, 2018). Some studies even state that a country's image directly results from the 'halo effect' since consumers rely on this to fill the information gaps in a product. On the contrary, some argue that a country's image helps create an overall review when consumers are familiar with it from previous experience (Lee & Lcokshin, 2011; Anwar et al., 2013). As a result, marketers pay attention to a country's image, indicating product quality to potential consumers (Anwar et al., 2013).

The cognitive country image is the country's technical and economic level, which can influence the product image associated with its craftsmanship and design (Vukasović, 2015). Researchers allude to a link between the cognitive effect of country image and purchase intention (Vukasović, 2015). On the other hand, some researchers believe that a country's image has an indirect influence on purchase intent (Pecotich & Rosenthal, 2001). People are more likely to use the country of origin as a criterion for purchasing intention when they are familiar with a product. (Chen, et al., 2011).

In 2013, Josiassen et al. conducted a study on the COO effect, concluding that a product's country of origin relates to the consumer's knowledge. Thus, consumers with less knowledge of a product heavily rely on its country of origin as an evaluation criterion for purchasing intention. Moreover, another direct effect of COO is a consumer ethnocentric attitude. This occurs when consumers want to patronize a foreign brand but feel allegiance to the brands originating in their home country (Rambocas & Mahabir, 2021). Consumers with a high level of ethnocentrism prefer to concentrate on the positive aspects of domestic products while ignoring the negative aspects of foreign brands, and they prefer to purchase locally produced goods (Sookhai, 2023). According to the literature, ethnocentrism impacts customer perceptions of foreign product quality and purchase intention (Tsai et al., 2013). Patriotic consumers are more likely to favor domestic goods over foreign ones. When consumers believe foreign competitors threaten the local economy, they may adopt patriotic consumption patterns (Sookhai, 2023).

While there is a myriad of research on the COO effect and a consumer's purchase intention, it is also significant to consider the phenomenon's impact on repeat purchase intention (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2016), a consumer purchases repeatedly when satisfied with the brand product. Moreover, when a consumer has a historical and emotional connection to products, repeat purchase intention happens unconsciously (Hui & Zhou, 2002). This happens when the product has been a part of the consumer's entire life, and the brand may sometimes be the only one with whom they are familiar and comfortable purchasing (Hui & Zhou, 2002). In cases like this, other factors, like price and COO of the product, play little to no role in the consumer's purchasing decision.

International marketers are increasingly focused on retaining customers' repeat purchases because it will provide a long-term competitive advantage and help increase profitability in fierce competition while lowering new costs associated with attracting new customers (Kuo et al., 2013). Based on the literature available, researchers found that the country of origin is not an antecedent for repeat purchase intention (Anwar et al., (2013). Consumers who engage in the re-purchase of products view this as an automatic decision rather than one that needs any form of evaluation (Anwar et al., 2013). Unlike the rigorous evaluation process consumers go through when choosing between products, there is no decision to be made when re-purchasing a product.

The COO effect is a critical factor in international marketing literature and practice (Pecotich & Rosenthal, 2001). However, empirical evidence shows that other variables can moderate its effects on consumer purchase intention. One such variable supported by research is celebrity endorsement. This is particularly interesting in the current social media era when consumers value their social identity and often associate celebrities with their purchasing intention (Vyas, 2012).

### **Celebrity Endorsement**

Celebrity Endorsement is one of the most used forms of advertising in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Vyas, 2012). Celebrities gain status through television movies and series, sports, and

social media, intensely impacting a consumer's brand perception (Charles & Nardi, 2015; Lu & Seah, 2018). Consumers with a higher need to be socially accepted tend to gravitate toward a product endorsed by a celebrity as a level of trust is formed between the two (Charles & Nardi, 2015). While the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement did not affect the product's price, it did influence the potential quality based on the endorser (Knoll & Matthes, 2017). Celebrity endorsement has been studied for over fifty (50) years, specifically emphasizing what traits a celebrity should possess for endorsement to be an effective form of marketing, especially in the case of foreign products (Lu & Seah, 2018). The four main celebrity endorsement hypotheses proposed in international marketing literature are the source reputation model, the source attractiveness model, the match-up theory, and the meaning transfer model (Knoll & Matthes, 2017).

The source credibility model is the first theoretical framework comprising expertise and trustworthiness developed to demonstrate celebrity endorsement's effectiveness (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Consumers are more likely to receive a message about a product if the endorser's credibility is high (Lu & Seah, 2018). Additionally, a celebrity's knowledge of a product is an essential factor based on their experience and the level of honesty displayed (Pornpitakpan, 2004). For a celebrity to be deemed a credible source, a relevant and perhaps crucial factor is how the consumer perceives them (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Expertise and trustworthiness contribute significantly to how credible a celebrity is and how well they can impact a consumer's purchasing intention (Lu & Seah, 2018; Pornpitakpan, 2004).

Alongside this model, the source attractiveness model was developed simultaneously, leading to the intense impact of the actual physical attractiveness of the endorser on its effectiveness. They are evaluated by the consumer more favorably, positively impacting perception and purchase intention (Knoll & Matthes, 2017). According to the source attractiveness model, marketers benefit from the endorser's celebrity status and physical attractiveness when using particularly attractive endorsers (Knoll & Matthes, 2017). In contrast, the attractiveness construct of a message sender in the literature to date is not limited to physical attractiveness; it also includes similarity, familiarity, and liking. (Fleck et al. 2012).

According to research on source credibility and source attractiveness models, any trustworthy or attractive celebrity will effectively endorse any product or brand (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Several writers have questioned this assumption, claiming that it fails to explain why some celebrities who are highly credible or attractive endorse successfully for specific brands but not for others (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). In response to this legitimate criticism, the matchup hypothesis study aims to develop a model that explains how endorser effectiveness varies by product category (Lu & Seah, 2018). According to the matchup principle, an endorser is most effective when perceived congruence exists between the endorser, the brand, and the target audience (Lu & Seah, 2018). There is considerable research on this model's effectiveness, but scholars have since identified a gap in the role that image plays to give a more complete view.

The first three theoretical frameworks of celebrity endorsement should have considered cultural ties between a celebrity and the product they are endorsing (Lu & Seah, 2018). Celebrity endorsements are ultimately successful because of their inherent cultural meanings (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Celebrities are effective communicators not only because of their physical attractiveness but also because they embody meanings that consumers find compelling and valuable (Lu & Seah, 2018). Social standing, personality, and lifestyle are all celebrity cultural traits that hold meaning to consumers. The most successful endorsements transfer the meaning and purpose of the product

(Fleck et al., 2012). All four theories hold value in examining and explaining the effectiveness of some celebrity endorsements on products. However, each one is a temporary fix for what is missing in the other, thus raising the proposal to have one distinct theoretical celebrity endorsement framework encompassing all theories and their linkages. The four grand endorsement theories represent changes in advertising practice, and it is reasonable to think that when combined, they will provide a prescriptive framework for explaining today's endorsement campaigns and recommending marketing strategies (Bergkvist et al., 2016).

Another imperative theory that attempts to explain celebrity endorsement is the social influence theory (SIT) (Purohit et al., 2022). According to social influence theory, people in a social network are influenced by others to exhibit specific behavioral patterns (Li, 2013). Social influence is the perceived pressure to follow certain behaviors due to messages and signals that aid in forming these perceptions (Purohit et al., 2022). There are two kinds of social influence: informational and normative (Ilicic & Webster, 2015). People are persuaded to accept information from other sources as evidence of reality through informational social influence (Li, 2013). Normative social influences informative social influence refers to group members' influence aspirations (Ilicic & Webster, 2015). As a result, celebrity endorsement sends genuine and reliable messages or information about brands, which may influence an individual's perception of the brand due to social identification. This means that when evaluating publicly available information, source reliability, attractiveness, trustworthiness, familiarity, and objectivity are critical (Munnukka et al., 2016; Samu & Wymer, 2014). Celebrities' role as brand endorsers is impressive and noteworthy in generating positive consumer purchase intent for the advertised brand.

### **Celebrity Endorsement moderating the COO Effect and Purchase Intention**

As depicted by the previous review in the literature, COO impacts consumer purchase intention but is not likely to impact their repeat purchase intention. Celebrity endorsement (CE) has since been introduced as another variable known for influencing consumer purchase intention and can do this despite any influence from the product's origin (Jamil & Hassan, 2014). Celebrities' presence in advertisements significantly affects consumer attitudes (Munnukka et al., 2016). The entry of more and more foreign products due to globalization has left consumers with not only COO cues but also celebrity endorsement cues to evaluate products and make decisions (Holt et al., 2004). In some cases, literature presents findings on whether a celebrity endorser will have a more favorable impact on consumer purchase intention regardless of their country of origin (Roy & Bagdare, 2015).

Celebrity endorsement literature provides significant evidence that indicates how the correct use of celebrity endorsers can be operative in gaining the correct responses from consumers when they promote a product (Daswani, & Sudha, 2011; Gammoh, & Koh, 2012). The source credibility studies, one of the streams of celebrity endorsement research, indicates that a celebrity endorser's efficacy stems from the endorser's perceived credibility (Pornpitakpan, 2004).. The three dimensions of source credibility defined by researchers in the context of celebrity endorsements are trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness (Lu & Seah, 2018). According to arguments and evidence presented in the literature, consumer attitudes are positively influenced by trustworthiness, knowledge, and attractiveness (Roy & Bagdare, 2015).

Celebrities are among the most well-loved personalities, and their role in local and global brands is remarkably effective in impacting a consumer's purchase and re-

purchase intention (McCormick, 2016). While a large body of research exclusively lends to COO and celebrity endorsement, in 2016, Tzoumaka et al. sought to discuss how congruency between both concepts is linked to consumer purchase intention. In psychology, congruency is defined as an underlying similarity between two facets. Based on this definition, marketers have adopted congruency as the possible fit between two things with similar characteristics (Tzoumaka et al., 2016). Congruence theory has been used to examine celebrities (Wei et al., 2013). It found that the perceived congruence between the brand and its celebrity endorser is more favorable for consumer purchase intention than an incongruent relationship (Wei et al., 2013).

Furthermore, other psychology theories may be used to explain celebrity endorsers' COO effects. The human associative memory (HAM) model, which is based on the theories of associative network theory, could be used to support the COO effects of endorsers (Teichert & Schontag, 2010). The HAM model describes human memory as a complex network of individually unique but interconnected points that can be activated in the right circumstances (Teichert & Schontag, 2010). Regarding branding, HAM refers to the points on a consumer's mind that store fragments of information about a brand (Gammoh & Koh, 2012).

As a result, brand associations are informative pockets in a customer's memory that come together to form the brand meaning that the customer perceives. Using a combination of congruence theory and HAM, researchers argue that due to COO congruence, a celebrity endorsing a brand from the same country will have more common connections in their associative networks than a celebrity endorsing a brand from a different country, resulting in incongruency (Munnukka et al., 2016).

A few empirical studies have shown how celebrity endorsement can affect the relationship between country of origin and consumer purchase intention (Teichert & Schontag, 2010; Roy & Bagdare, 2015). One such research indicated that the COO's 'halo' effect is sometimes weakened when a celebrity endorses the brand (Lee & Locksin, 2011). Typically, when consumers know little about the brand, they rely on the country's information to make an informed decision (Rambocas & Ramsbhag, 2018). However, if a celebrity endorses that same product, the consumer may not pay much attention to the originating country if congruency is evident and the meaning behind the endorsement is effectively transferred (Desmarais, 2014).

Research provides minimal but conclusive results regarding the type of product and celebrity endorsement. When an ethnocentric consumer is presented with two products from their home and a foreign country, based on their connection to their home country, the apparent choice is loyalty (Sookhai, 2023). However, when a consumer is faced with the same choice but with the addition of a celebrity endorsing the product from a foreign country, the consumer purchase intention is swayed toward the foreign product (Munnukka et al., 2016). This can directly result from the consumer wishing to maintain a certain social status and be seen in the same light as the endorser and other members of that particular social group (Munnukka et al., 2016). Additionally, there is a great deal of research on the positive influence of celebrity endorsement on hedonic products. Since these products are more exciting and laid back, consumer purchase intention is heavily influenced by celebrities (Roy & Bagdare, 2015).

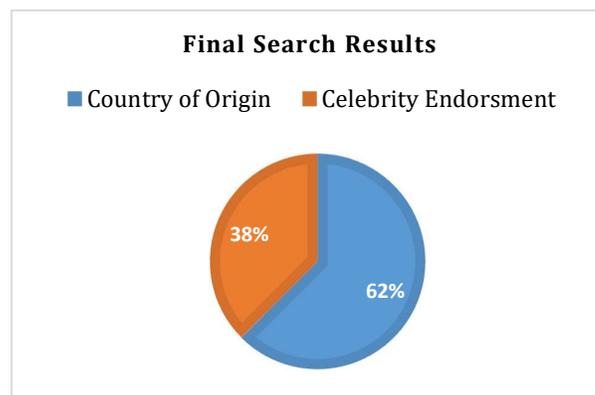
Moreover, country of origin has little to no effect on a consumer's repeat purchase intention; however, research shows this is no longer the case when celebrity endorsement is introduced (Charles & Nardi, 2015). Previously, because consumers were historically or emotionally tied to the product, the competition or substitutes, even foreign ones, did not matter (Sookhai, 2023). The consumer still opted to automatically

purchase the same product (Knoll & Matthes, 2017). According to research, celebrity endorsement causes consumers to re-think their re-purchasing decisions when endorsing new foreign products (Rambocas & Ramsuhag, 2018; Hui & Zhou, 2002). In this case, consumers are intrigued by the idea of using the same product as a celebrity and forgo their connection to the other, thus choosing the product endorsed by the celebrity regardless of its country of origin. Brands are highly successful at ensuring their celebrity endorser's lifestyle portrays exciting and fulfilling attributes while using the product, thus changing the consumer's mind (Pradhan et al., 2016).

## METHOD

### Article Selection

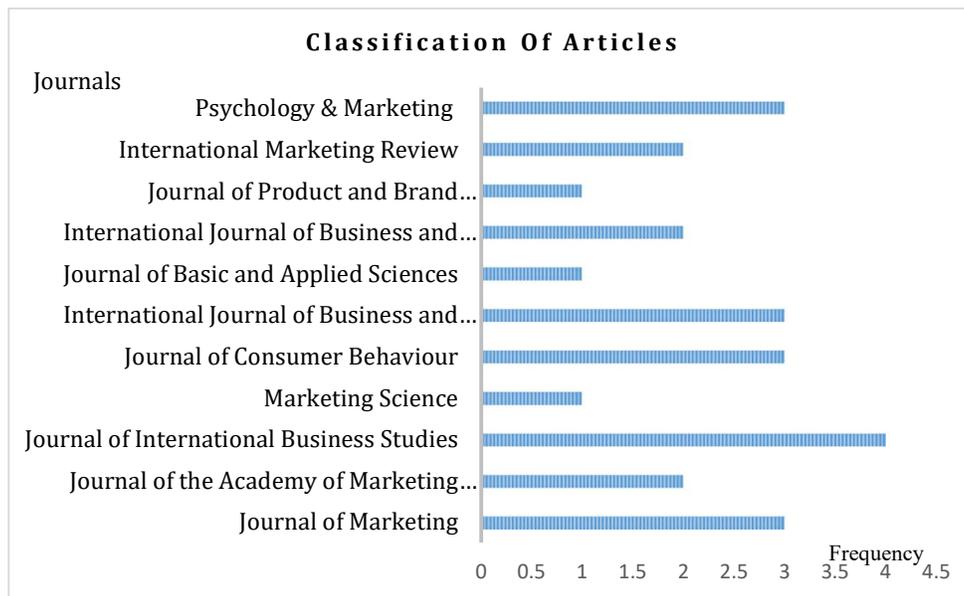
This study employed a systematic review, following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, to select articles (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021). This review examines the literature published between 2011 and 2020 on the COO effect, celebrity endorsement, and its impact on consumer purchase intention, all sourced online. Alongside these, early literature dating back to the 1900s was also used to capture the true essence of the concepts. A thorough search for the highest-ranking articles was conducted through UWilinc in online databases such as Emerald and ProQuest. Additionally, Semantic Scholar and Google Scholar were also used with the search terms "country of origin effect," "consumer purchase intention," "consumer repeat purchase intention," and "celebrity endorsement." This broad search bore over 1,200 articles; therefore, a more refined search was initiated. The interaction between variables was searched, significantly reducing the search results. COO and its impact on consumer and repeat purchase intentions resulted in approximately 25 scholarly articles within the timeframe, while celebrity endorsement resulted in 15 (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1**  
**Distribution of Articles**

This search did not consider non-English articles, online blog posts, or non-peer-reviewed journals. The articles were published across various disciplines: fashion, sports, food and beverage, and general literature. Many of the studies included were published in moderately high-ranking marketing journals such as the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Marketing*

*Science, Journal of Consumer Behaviour, International Journal of Business and Social Science, Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, International Journal of Business and Management, Journal of Product and Brand Management, International Marketing Review, and Psychology & Marketing* (see Figure 2). These were all a part of studies in the United States, Europe, and Asia over the last 10 years. In addition to these articles, the 2016 Edition of Principles of Marketing by Kotler and Armstrong was used to gain a better understanding of the broad topic areas. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, two researchers independently participated in the data extraction and analysis processes. The analysis followed a narrative synthesis, which each researcher reviewed and one external reviewer. A standardized extraction form was also employed to ensure the data aligned closely with the study's objectives.



**Figure 2**  
**Journals Used For The Study**

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A product's country of origin is essential in the evaluation process, especially when introducing foreign products. International marketers face this phenomenon when entering foreign markets, and consumers face it when choosing between products. Firstly, the research revealed how important the "Made in," "Assembled in," and "Manufactured in" labels are to consumers (Brodie & Benson-Rea, 2016). These initial confessions give the consumer a sense of where the product comes from, as in most cases, it is more than one country. Consumers rely on COO information when they know little about a product, for instance, when purchasing it for the first time. In this case, the country will indicate the product's quality based on its image.

Studies also showed that consumers use cognitive and affective processes to make normative decisions when evaluating a product and its country of origin (Josiassen et al., 2013). A significant impact of using COO as a cue for purchasing intention is the stereotype and bias between the home and foreign country, especially when consumers are unfamiliar with the foreign market. Researchers called this the "halo" effect, where the country of origin acts as the only information about a product available to the consumer (Vukasović, 2015).

The cognitive effect speaks to a consumer's perception of a product's quality and value based on its country of origin. This perception is largely shaped by how a consumer views the country, its people, and its culture, which can lead to bias. Many times, because consumers only have this information to go on, their decision is clouded, and scholars have denoted how significant a consumer's impression of a product's country of origin is to their purchase intention (Murtaza, 2016). Consumers are said to be more comfortable purchasing a car from Germany because they perceive the country to be equipped with specialized engineers and advanced technology than the United States or France. Here, the product's country of origin is directly and positively related to the consumer's purchase intention (Sharma, 2014).

On the other hand, research showed little to no effect on consumers regarding repeat purchase intention and the cognitive effect of COO. When a consumer is historically or emotionally connected to a product, it is almost an automatic re-purchase that does not involve any product or country evaluation. Research shows this occurs when consumers have a nostalgic connection with the same product since childhood. As an adult, a consumer does not consider other factors such as country of origin or price but automatically purchases it. Studies also articulate that these products are a comfort for consumers (Sharma, 2014).

One such product mentioned in research is cellular smartphones. These phones have existed for over a decade, with the major brands being Apple and Samsung. Adult consumers are most comfortable with these brands, have a historical connection to them, and have continued to purchase them as new versions are released. Consumers rarely switch their phones to a completely different brand simply because of their country of origin. In most cases, phones are manufactured and assembled in different countries; however, research shows that this is not a concern for consumers as it relates to their repeat purchase intention. Hence, no relationship exists between the country of origin and repeat purchase intention (Goh et al., 2016).

The affective effect of COO is closely linked to the cognitive effect as it suggests consumers may form strong emotional bonds with the country. This bond directly results from experiences the consumer might have had during a vacation or an encounter with an individual from that country. These impressions can lead to both negative and positive connotations of the product based on its country of origin. Research refers to European versus American products and the different perceptions consumers can form. In the case of European products, many consumers associate more hedonic and romantic products as being of higher quality than those made in America (Goh et al., 2016). This is because of culture and what a consumer experiences when visiting European countries.

Another study points to consumers' perception of Indian skin care products as opposed to those made in other countries. Skincare is a personal and emotional subject for most consumers, and the country of origin is often used to indicate how well the products work, especially in India, where natural remedies are known to be successful. These studies further confirmed how the affective COO effect positively relates to a consumer's purchase intention (Anwar et al., 2013).

When consumers spend their money and support a country's economy, the product's country of origin must support their beliefs and morals. A country's policies and government practices are all factors that consumers take into consideration when evaluating a product's country of origin before deciding to purchase. There is significant research on this effect, with studies showing that consumers with Jewish backgrounds refuse to purchase products made in Germany because of the Holocaust. Another study showed Australian consumers boycotting products made in France because of the

nuclear tests that took place in the Pacific. These are all logical reasons why the normative effect of country of origin can impact consumer purchase intention (Kuo et al., 2013).

Alongside this form of normative thinking, another theory put forth by researchers is the impact of consumer ethnocentrism and country of origin. Consumers prefer domestic products over foreign ones because they feel obligated to their country. The product's country of origin plays the most significant role here and, in this case, is the only factor consumers consider. There is a substantial impact on consumer purchase intention based on country of origin and an ethnocentric consumer. The above arguments addressed the first aim of this paper, which is to investigate the impact that a product's country of origin has on consumer purchase and re-purchase intention.

Research has alluded to other factors that can affect the COO effect on consumer purchase and repeat purchase intention. Celebrity Endorsement is one such factor. Celebrity Endorsement is when a brand chooses a beloved public figure to recommend their products because of their social status and popularity. The four main theories are credibility, attractiveness, match-up, and meaning transfer (Lu & Seah, 2018). This helps examine whether CE moderates the relationship between COO and consumer purchase and repeat purchase intention.

The credibility and attractiveness of a celebrity when endorsing a product are essential to consumers. Studies have shown that if a consumer is faced with purchasing a product endorsed by a celebrity, a sense of trustworthiness and expertise in the product must exist (Knoll & Matthes, 2017). Ashton Kutcher, actor and tech venture capitalist expert, signed a deal with Lenovo to be a spokesperson for their brand. Kutcher is famous for over twenty-nine (29) television series and movies. However, because of his expertise and experience in technology, he brings a level of trust that other celebrities would not. According to research, Lenovo products are primarily manufactured in China, which is famous among consumers, who regard products from the country as inferior or low quality. Traditionally, consumers trusted laptop brands from more technologically advanced countries. However, with the introduction of celebrities endorsing Lenovo, consumers lifted this stereotype and chose to purchase regardless of the country of origin. CE allows consumers to feel superior and is a part of the endorser's life. This solidifies this paper's hypothesis that celebrity endorsement moderates the relationship between country of origin and consumer purchase intention.

Moreover, in keeping with the credibility and attractiveness models, research also lends evidence to its impact on a consumer's repeat purchase intention. Consumers are more likely to forgo their traditions and cognitive and affective emotional connections to products to purchase those endorsed by celebrities. When consumers automatically purchase products, the COO effect is proven to have no impact. However, when confronted with a brand that functions the same except for it being endorsed by a celebrity, consumers re-think their decision (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018).

In keeping with consumer preference for Apple products over Samsung simply because it has been the leading smartphone provider for decades, international marketers have emphasized celebrity endorsement of Samsung products. This is a direct stab at reducing consumer's repeat purchasing intention for Apple products. Samsung has since recruited a famous actor, Millie Bobby Brown, to show consumers that a credible, well-loved public figure enjoys their product. Regardless of the product's country of origin, consumers choose to purchase this product because of the credibility of the celebrity endorser.

The final models of celebrity that interact with the relationship between COO and consumer purchase intention are the match-up and meaning transfer models. In

these models, the congruence and ability to transfer the endorsed message are imperative. As discussed, the ability of a product's country of origin to satisfy consumers' cognitive, attractive, and normative views drives their purchase intention. In addition, if a celebrity endorser and a product's country of origin are congruent, the likelihood of a consumer purchasing the product is increased. These findings were significant as celebrity endorsement does moderate the relationship between COO and consumer purchase and repeat purchase intention (Bergkvist et al., 2016).

### **Practical and Theoretical Implications**

COO is an essential concept in international marketing, and many scholars are alluding to how consumers use it as a cue for product evaluation. Consumers not only hold a product's quality in high regard but often view the country as an indicator of this perceived quality. International marketers must consider extrinsic cues such as country of origin to understand better what their consumers look for when evaluating domestic and foreign products. This research first revealed that while consumers look at the features of a product, its functions, and price, its quality is held in the highest regard. When marketers decide whether to take their products internationally, conducting relevant market research on consumers' perceptions of their product's origin is essential. Furthermore, companies can recruit subject matter experts familiar with the consumers in the host country or even investigate sending an experienced marketer to conduct field research.

In these cases, where consumers rely heavily on a product's country of origin for information on its quality, companies can consider how this is communicated. As the research suggested, in some cases, consumers use COO as a "halo" because they do not have access to any other product information (Lee & Lockshin, 2011). As such, companies must ensure that all information related to the manufacturing and assembly of products is fully disclosed, allowing complete transparency. When market research is conducted, if there is any indication of skepticism by consumers on the product's origin, marketers can go before the launch in the host country and relieve the doubts about the country of origin. However, Verlegh et al. (2005) also highlighted that while providing details about the country of origin can assist in educating consumers about the product, this can also lead to issues. For example, if the country of origin is known for poor quality, marketers may want to deemphasize the country of origin within their campaign (Verlegh et al., 2005).

Furthermore, alongside using a product's country of origin to measure quality, the research indicated how a consumer's emotional connection to a country could also impact their purchase intention (Rambocas & Mahabir, 2021). Regarding consumer emotions, a few authors alluded to this COO effect leading to product stereotypes (Hui & Zhou, 2002; Pecotich & Rosenthal, 2001). Additionally, when it comes to a country's government policies or past actions, consumers neglect to notice the other qualities of a product and only focus on the originating country that opposes their personal beliefs (Sookhai, 2023). In this case, international marketers must know their targeted audience and consider personal attributes such as culture. To reduce stereotyping of a product, with this research, marketers are now equipped with the knowledge to investigate how the COO effect impacts consumers not only at face value but on a more personal level (Hui & Zhou, 2002). This can save a company millions of dollars in lost revenue when market surveys and research are conducted promptly and effectively. Gill and Lei's (2018) study found that market research was crucial in proposing counter-stereotyping strategies.

After understanding consumers' views, marketers can develop product and advertising strategies to promote their products.

Moreover, to alleviate the normative COO effect, companies can use this research as a stepping stone to develop policies and improve their corporate social responsibility. As seen in research, consumers hold the practices of certain countries in high regard when confronted with a product that originated from there. For international marketers to still penetrate those countries and have their products be successful, they can reassure consumers that they do not support the behavior or acts of that country. This can be an excellent way for marketers to educate consumers about why that particular country was chosen instead of another and indicate how it benefited the product's quality in some way. This can also be done by including COO information in packaging, press releases, and fine print in television advertisements. This was explored in the study by Hinkes et al. (2018), which presented that consumers preferred some countries with known certification and product standards. Therefore, countries that lack these standards can reduce the awareness of the COO of their products and focus more on the quality of the product.

This research revealed an interesting external variable that can assist marketers in altering a consumer's reaction to a product's country of origin: celebrity endorsement. Several authors indicated how relevant celebrities can be when marketers realize their product's country of origin is of significant concern to their consumers ((Purohit & Arora, 2022 ; Brodowsky et al., 2004). Celebrity endorsement has been an integral marketing strategy for decades; however, this research suggests how it can alter the relationship between a product's country of origin and consumer purchase intention.

Several authors have indicated the success rate of using celebrities, but few have shown how it can change a consumer's opinion about a product (Purohit & Arora, 2022 ; Brodowsky et al., 2004). When consumers are faced with a product and are uncomfortable with its origin, a celebrity endorser can be used by international marketers. Here, as research suggests, once the celebrity has a certain level of trustworthiness and expertise and has some congruency, consumer purchase intention is altered despite the product's country of origin (Lu & Seah, 2018; Pornpitakpan, 2004).. Consumers place trust in celebrities, and further studies have shown that consumers gravitate toward purchasing the product when there is a desire to be a part of that social group (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Following market research on the impact of COO effects on consumer purchase intention, international marketers can investigate how celebrity endorsement can be used with the product (Jamil & Hassan, 14). This research is beneficial when considering internationalization, but a pause is placed when marketers discover the COO effect.

Additionally, while the research showed no relationship between the COO effect and consumer repeat purchase intention, it also showed how celebrity endorsement can help marketers address this. Companies can now use this research to find celebrities who can alter a consumer's decision regarding products they have a history with. The importance of social acceptance has once again proven useful and can be discovered in the market research phase of the international marketing strategy.

This research has revealed the importance of the (COO) effect on consumers' purchase and repeat intention. It also reveals how companies and international marketers can use this information to prepare themselves better to meet consumers' needs. Additionally, celebrity endorsement is a crucial external variable that can help marketers alleviate the effects on the country of origin.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The COO effect is seen throughout this paper as an imperative phenomenon in international marketing and should not be taken lightly by companies or marketers. This extrinsic cue is one of the most used by consumers in product evaluation of foreign products against domestic ones. This research revealed how seriously a consumer considers a product's country of origin before patronizing the brand. Many factors are involved in this evaluation process, such as the country's image, reputation, the consumer's emotional and historical connection, and their commitment to domestic products. Several authors have identified these factors as the reason behind the impact of COO effects on consumer purchase intention. When consumers use COO and an evaluation factor, it interacts with their decision-making process.

On the other hand, because consumers sometimes re-purchase the same habitual product, research shows that the COO effects do not impact repeat purchase intention. Research also explains that external variables can moderate the relationship between the country of origin and consumer purchase intention. This paper used celebrity endorsement to demonstrate how relevant this concept is in the 21st-century social media era. Celebrity endorsement has been a helpful advertising tool for decades; however, this paper presented its particular importance in moderating the COO effects on consumer purchase intention. The research showed that celebrity endorsement affects purchase and repeat purchase intention through attractiveness, credibility, match-up, meaning transfer model, and other psychological concepts (Bergkvist et al., 2016 ; Sharma, 2014). In this case, international marketers should pay close attention to COO and celebrity endorsement to better understand consumers' intention to purchase their foreign product.

## Limitations and Future Research

The first range of limitations was derived from the researcher when conducting this research. While there was not necessarily limited access to research, the issue arose with the number of available articles when the key terms were searched. The researcher took up to two (2) weeks to filter through the articles found by reading and narrowing down to the ones that would prove most helpful for this paper. Given the time constraint and other academic commitments, the researcher refined the primary data before formulating the research objectives.

The method of data collection, which in this case was the use of only secondary data, presented this research's second limitation. Secondary research involves using existing data from high-quality and peer-reviewed journals. While this is an excellent way to conduct research, it cannot test, prove, or disprove the hypotheses put forth. The relationship between variables is confirmed through the secondary data, but the hypotheses created will not be tested.

The concept of COO, the independent variable, will be tested to determine its impact on a consumer's purchase intention, the dependent variable. The variables are described this way because the research is intended to test how much a consumer's purchase intention depends on the product's country of origin. Consumer purchase intention is split into their purchase intention of new products and their repeat purchase intention, which can be looked at separately for more generalizable and thorough research. Following this, celebrity endorsement can be introduced as a moderating variable showing how it weakens or strengthens the relationship between country of origin and consumer purchase intention.

In addition, future research can be done on how the congruency between a celebrity and the product's country of origin can impact consumer purchase intention. In this case, the intended relationship that will be tested is whether the celebrity a company chooses must correspond with the product, country, and consumer preferences. International marketers can use this research to understand better what impacts consumer purchase intention. This will inevitably lead to a satisfied consumer and increased sales and revenue for the company.

In this contemporary age, social media marketing has become the preferred approach for many companies, replacing traditional marketing strategies. International marketers have examined how social media can help the products reach a broader audience through Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok. Many companies have switched to this form of marketing since research shows how successful it can be. However, a significant gap in this area is whether the product's country of origin affects their purchase intention. It is essential to research how profound COO effects will interact with digitization and whether there is a relationship. It can be substantial to test whether social media influencers, the 21st-century term for celebrities, can start eliminating the COO effect on consumers' purchase intention.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 virus has changed many lives from December 2019 to date and has impacted how companies have digitized their marketing strategies to adhere to rigorous restrictions. International marketers can benefit from researching whether the COVID-19 pandemic has added to or intensified the (COO) effect on products manufactured in the countries most affected. This paper adds value to the current research on international marketing ; however, there is significant room for future research based on the current market and digitization.

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