Advances in Consumer Research
https://acr-journal.com/

Volume-2 | Issue-5 | November 2025

Original Researcher Article

A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Indian, Sri Lankan, and American Consumers' Perceptions of Global Brands

Dr Ashish Thatte[1], Dr R. K. Srivastava[2], Dr Sandeep Bhanot[3] and Prof. Ravi Dissanayake[4]

[1]Associate Professor of Operations and Supply Chain Management, School of Business Administration, Gonzaga University Spokane, WA 99258, USA
E-mail: thatte@gonzaga.edu
[2]Professor Emeritus and Head Research, NL Dalmia Institute of Management and studies University of Mumbai-160 years of standing
E-mail: rks_pmc@yahoo.com
[3]Director, SIESCOMS
E-mail: bhanot.sandeep@gmail.com
[4]Professor, Department of Marketing Management Faculty of Commerce & Management Studies University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka Chief editor of Sri Lankan Marketing journal
E-mail: ravi@kln.ac.lk

Received: **01/09/2025**
Revised: **09/10/2025**
Accepted: **25/10/2025**
Published: **10/11/2025**

ABSTRACT

Purpose: While country-of-origin (COO) effects are extensively documented, the role of country of manufacturing (COM) in shaping consumer perceptions, especially when decoupled from brand origin, remains underexplored. This study investigates how COM personality interacts with brand personality to influence purchase intentions across culturally diverse markets. ***Design/methodology/approach:*** Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Emotional-Rational-Risk Model, and COM personality congruence, this study develops a multidimensional framework to examine consumer decision-making. A cross-national survey (N = 755) was conducted across India, Sri Lanka, and the United States, focusing on global mobile phone brands Apple and Samsung. The study measured consumer evaluations of brand efficacy, enjoyment, and utility. ***Findings:*** Results indicate that Indian and American consumers are influenced by both hedonic and utilitarian brand attributes, largely independent of country of manufacturing cues. Conversely, Sri Lankan consumers exhibit reduced sensitivity to country of manufacturing suggesting culturally contingent processing of manufacturing country signals. The congruence between country of manufacturing and brand personality emerged as a significant predictor of purchase intent, but with varying strength across markets. ***Originality/value:*** This study repositions country of manufacturing as a symbolic and psychological cue, rather than merely a functional attribute. It offers a refined COO–COM distinction and highlights the importance of cultural context in interpreting brand and manufacturing country signals. Implications are provided for global marketers seeking to strategically align country of manufacturing cues with brand narratives to enhance cross-cultural brand resonance.

Keywords: Country of Manufacturing; Cross-Cultural Comparison; Brand Personality; Purchase Intentions; Country Image; Country Personality.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers in emerging economies frequently exhibit a preference for products manufactured in developed countries, often associating them with superior quality, technological advancement, and status (Bartikowski et al., 2019). Yet, the strategic globalization of manufacturing has led multinational brands such as Apple and Samsung to increasingly produce in emerging markets like India, China, and Vietnam to leverage cost efficiencies and skilled labor. This shift introduces complexity into consumer evaluations, as products branded with "Made in India" or "Made in China" labels coexist with long-standing brand associations linked to countries like the United States or South Korea. While the country-of-origin (COO) effect has been extensively studied in international marketing literature (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2020), the role of the country of manufacturing (COM), defined as the place of final substantial transformation, remains comparatively underexplored (Melnyk et al., 2012; Azzari et al., 2023).

Furthermore, prior research rarely addresses how the congruence between the personality of the manufacturing country and that of the brand influences consumer perceptions, particularly in cross-cultural settings. Addressing this critical gap, the present study investigates how COM shapes consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and perceived brand value for global mobile brands, specifically Apple and Samsung, across three culturally and economically distinct markets: India, Sri Lanka, and the United States. By integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the Emotional-Rational-Risk Model, and the construct of COM–brand personality congruence, this study develops a holistic framework for understanding how functional, symbolic, and emotional evaluations interact in shaping consumer decision-making. Two central research questions guide the inquiry: (1) How does the country of manufacturing (COM) influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions toward global mobile brands across India, Sri Lanka, and the United States? and (2) How does the congruence between manufacturing country personality and brand personality affect consumers' perceptions of quality, emotional appeal, and functionality across different cultural contexts? This study contributes to the international marketing and branding literature by clarifying how COM acts not merely as a heuristic for quality, but as a dynamic element of brand meaning and consumer identity construction in the post-globalization era. Empirically, it provides comparative insights into willingness to pay and brand loyalty across markets, offering actionable implications for global brands navigating production localization in an increasingly discerning consumer landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Influence of Country of Manufacturing on Global Brand Purchase Intentions

The country-of-origin (COO) effect remains a cornerstone of international marketing research, widely recognized for its impact on consumer decision-making, brand differentiation, and global positioning (Sainam & Bahadir, 2024; Karagiannis et al., 2022). As globalization compels firms to optimize supply chains, attention has shifted toward the country of manufacturing (COM), defined as the location where a product undergoes final transformation, as an influential cue in shaping consumer evaluations(Azzari et al., 2023). While COO continues to dominate scholarly attention, the COM effect warrants deeper exploration, especially as brands decentralize production to emerging markets (Goel & Garg, 2019; Azzari et al., 2023). Prior research suggests that COM can independently influence brand perceptions and purchase intentions, particularly when consumers are unaware of or uncertain about a brand's origin (Magnusson et al., 2011; Passagem et al., 2020).

Empirical studies have consistently affirmed the significance of COO on brand preference, especially in high-involvement categories such as mobile phones (Akram et al., 2011; Swoboda et al., 2012; Sergio & Ivian, 2020). For instance, Nielsen (2016) found that 28% of global consumers rated COO as more influential than price or quality, yet the study overlooked the nuanced role of COM. Scholars argue that COO conveys symbolic associations related to quality, credibility, and prestige (Bartsch & Han, 2020; Mandler et al., 2019), but many consumers deduce origin based on brand name or image rather than actual manufacturing facts (Ahmed & D'Astous, 2008; Melnyk et al., 2012). This is especially relevant in today's marketplace, where products from global brands like Apple or Samsung may be manufactured in India, China, or Vietnam, creating a dissonance between brand identity and manufacturing cues.

Zeugner-Roth and Bartsch (2020) suggest that consumers in emerging markets are more sensitive to manufacturing information than those in developed economies. During periods of uncertainty, such as economic crises, manufacturing cues become even more salient as consumers seek assurance of quality and authenticity. Moreover, the congruence between a brand's perceived personality and that of its manufacturing country may influence evaluations of quality, emotional appeal, and functionality (Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Liu et al., 2021). Despite these insights, limited research compares how consumers from culturally diverse markets interpret COM cues.

This review highlights the need to examine whether consumers in India, Sri Lanka, and the United States evaluate global mobile brands similarly when exposed to varying COM labels. Table 1 summarizes key theoretical and empirical contributions, along with gaps for future inquiry.

Table 1: Summary of Literature Review

Author	Variables under study	Missing gaps
O'Cass and Lim 2002	Brand attributes and country of origin	Country of manufacturing(COF) global brands; purchase, quality,
Ahmed and D'Astous 2008	Brands' origin, brand familiarity brand image	Brand quality functionality and, Perception, Country of manufacturing, Country personality
Melnyk, Klein, and Völckner 2012	Perception of origin ,Brand Globalness and Localness Purchase intention	Brand functionality , Country of manufacturing, Country personality
Sichtmann and Diamantopoulos 2013	Perception of origin ,Brand Globalness and Localness Purchase intention	Country of manufacturing, purchase ,Fun and functionality,
Sichtmann, Davvetas, and Diamantopoulos 2019	Perceptions of identification, credibility, quality, prestige,	Country of manufacturing global brands; purchase intention and functionality
Dissanayake, D.M.R. and Amarasuriya, T. 2015	Global Brands, Brand Identity , Apple Iphone vs Samsung smartphone brands	Country of manufacturing; global brands; purchase intention; and functionality
Zeugner-Roth and Bartsch 2020	Brand origin; Emerging market ; Comparing between countries on consumer perception	Country of manufacturing; global brands ; purchase intentions; quality and functionality
Srivastava, 2020	Country of origin and purchase intention	Country of manufacturing; global brands ;perception; and functionality
Liu et al. 2021	Country of origin , Brand Globalness and Localness Purchase intention	Country of manufacturing; global brands; purchase intention ;quality and functionality; Comparing between countries on consumer perception
Samiee and Chabowski 2021	Country of origin and purchase intention	Country of manufacturing ;global brands; purchase intentions; quality and functionality; Comparing between countries on consumer perception
Azzari et al, 2023	Perceptions of identification, credibility, quality, prestige	Country of manufacturing; global brands ; purchase intentions ; functionality; Comparison between countries on consumer perception
Blanco-Encomienda, Chen, & Molina-Muñoz 2024	Country of Origin, Purchase behaviour ,Brand Image	Country of manufacturing; functionality; Comparing countries on consumer perception

Table 1 synthesizes key studies on the impact of country-related cues on brand evaluation and purchase intentions. While research by O'Cass and Lim (2002), Ahmed and D'Astous (2008), and Srivastava (2020) emphasizes the country of origin (COO), many studies such as Melnyk et al. (2012) and Liu et al. (2021) focus on brand global Ness but largely overlook country of manufacturing (COM). Recent work (Azzari et al., 2023; Blanco-Encomienda et al., 2024) acknowledges quality and prestige linked to origin but often fails to distinguish COO from COM. Gaps remain regarding how COM, especially when incongruent with brand origin, shapes perceptions of quality, functionality, and emotional appeal across cultures, underscoring the need for further research.

Global Brand Image Perceptions Based on Country of Manufacturing and their Impact on Purchase Intentions

Research has demonstrated the complex influence of Country of Manufacturing (COM) image on consumer behaviour, particularly its interplay with Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET) and animosity (Magnusson et al., 2019; Sharma, 2015). These factors collectively shape brand evaluations, attitudes, and purchase intentions across developed and emerging markets (De Nisco & Oduro, 2022; Bautista Jr et al., 2020). For example, Hui and Zhou (2003) find that when a product's COM image is less favourable than its country of origin (COO)—such as a Sony television made in Mexico, consumer evaluations suffer, especially for brands with lower equity. Ali and Ostapha (2021) extend this by highlighting the roles of trust and perceived commodity value in purchase decisions.

Governmental efforts to strengthen manufacturing in emerging economies, such as India's "Make in India" initiative, intensify the need to understand COM's role in global brand perceptions. Goel and Garg (2019) report varied consumer preferences for Chinese, Indian, and American mobile brands, prompting inquiry into whether COM significantly shapes these patterns. Despite this, the impact of congruence between manufacturing country personality and brand personality

on consumer purchase intentions remains underexplored. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates these dynamics across culturally diverse markets.

Impact of Country Personality and Brand Personality Fit on Global Brand Purchase Intentions

The country of origin (COO) image has been consistently shown to exert a positive influence on brand image, brand evaluation, and purchase intention (Hien et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021). Specifically, brand image and consumer attitudes have been identified as key mediators linking COO perceptions to purchase intentions (Blanco-Encomienda, Chen, & Molina-Muñoz, 2024; Kim & Park, 2022). However, Passagem et al. (2020) caution that COO's effect is uneven, significantly affecting brand loyalty and perceived quality but less so brand associations and awareness, highlighting the complex nature of COO's role in consumer decision-making. Central to this complexity is the construct of country personality, the human-like traits consumers attribute to countries, which shapes consumer perceptions of global brands (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004; Nguyen & Phan, 2023).

Merabet (2020) further clarifies that COO image, mediated by perceived country personality, positively impacts perceived product quality and price fairness, underscoring the symbolic and functional value consumers assign to country cues. However, existing research largely overlooks the distinct influence of the country of manufacturing (COM), which may generate different perceptions, especially when COM and COO are incongruent (e.g., a premium brand manufactured in a lower-status country). This incongruence may affect consumer evaluations of product quality, functionality, and emotional appeal differently than COO alone (Moeller et al., 2013; Hui & Zhou, 2003). Thus, the integration of COM into the country-brand personality fit framework remains a critical gap. This gap is particularly salient given evolving consumer segments such as Millennials and Generation Z, whose cultural orientations may moderate the influence of both COO and COM on brand perception and purchase intentions (Schmitt et al., 2017; Lee & Carter, 2021).

APPLICATION OF THEORY

Purchase intentions, influenced by attributes associated with the country of manufacture and country personality, can be elucidated through the application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Emotional-Rational-Risk model.

Country of Origin (COO):

The Country of Origin (COO) theory serves as a foundational lens in international marketing for understanding how national cues influence consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions (Nagashima, 1970; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). Although traditionally centered on the brand's home country, recent literature has extended the COO construct to incorporate multiple forms of origin, including the country of design, branding, and increasingly, the Country of Manufacturing (COM) (Roth & Romeo, 1992; Johnson et al., 2016). In an era marked by globalization and fragmented supply chains, COM has emerged as a salient dimension of origin cues, often carrying distinct implications for perceived product quality, ethical concerns, and trust (Mohr et al., 2012).

The COO framework is especially relevant in this study because it provides the theoretical structure to evaluate how manufacturing origin—not merely brand origin—influences consumer evaluations. Prior studies (e.g., Yeter, 2024; C., 2024) have shown that consumers differentiate between where a product is made and where it is branded, suggesting that COM may independently shape purchase decisions, especially in emerging markets. Furthermore, COM interacts with constructs such as consumer ethnocentrism, animosity, and country personality, reinforcing the need for a comprehensive origin-based theory (Kinawy, 2024).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB):

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), formulated by Ajzen (1991), posits that behavioural intentions, key predictors of actual behaviour, are shaped by three primary factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Attitude reflects an individual's positive or negative evaluation of the behaviour; subjective norms capture perceived social pressures; and perceived behavioural control refers to the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour based on past experience and anticipated barriers.

TPB has been widely employed in consumer behaviour research to explain purchase intentions in both domestic and international contexts (Paul et al., 2016; Yadav & Pathak, 2017). In the context of this study, TPB offers a robust framework for understanding how consumers' perceptions of a product's Country of Manufacturing (COM) influence their intentions to purchase global brands. Specifically, COM can shape attitudes through associations with quality, trust, and ethical practices. It may also influence subjective norms, especially in culturally sensitive or ethnocentric markets, and affect perceived control by shaping beliefs about availability or authenticity.

By integrating COM into the TPB framework, this study seeks to explore how manufacturing origin, as a salient extrinsic cue, interacts with individual belief structures to influence consumer purchase intentions in a globalized marketplace.

Emotional-Rational-Risk model:

To examine consumer purchase intentions in relation to Country of Manufacturing (COM), this study adopts the Emotional-Rational-Risk (ERR) model developed by Srivastava (2018, 2020). The ERR model posits that consumer

decision-making is governed by the dynamic interplay of emotional responses, rational evaluations, and individual risk tolerance. Within this framework, COM acts as a salient extrinsic cue, with the perceived personality of the manufacturing country significantly influencing emotional and cognitive appraisals of global brands.

The emotional dimension captures affective associations triggered by national stereotypes or country personality traits, while the rational component reflects quality assessments and value-for-money judgments associated with COM. Risk tolerance is influenced by both , here strong emotional appeal may lower perceived risk or, conversely, high uncertainty tied to a less-favored COM may elevate it. The ERR model is particularly useful in capturing the heterogeneity of consumer responses in culturally diverse markets, where the "Made in" label interacts with both brand image and national identity perceptions.

By applying the ERR model to the COM context, this study addresses a critical gap in extant literature that often treats country cues monolithically. This approach enables a more nuanced understanding of how COM and country personality jointly shape consumer purchase intentions.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS AND HYPOTHESES

Theoretical constructs

Drawing on extant literature, this study proposes a conceptual framework to investigate how extrinsic and intrinsic cues jointly influence consumer purchase intentions in emerging markets. The independent variables include Country of Manufacturing (COM) and Country Personality (CP), constructs reflecting consumers' perceptions of national identity and production origin (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Yeter, 2024). The moderating variables encompass Brand Personality (Aaker, 1997), Country Image (Roth & Romeo, 1992; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2020), and consumption orientations, both Utilitarian (goal-oriented) and Hedonic (pleasure-oriented), as theorized by Batra and Ahtola (1991) and refined in more recent empirical work (Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003; Seo & Yun, 2022). The primary dependent variable is Purchase Intention(Ajzen, 1991; Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2023)

The proposed framework recognizes the cultural heterogeneity of consumers in India and Sri Lanka, where country-specific sentiments may amplify or diminish the influence of COO cues. The model hypothesizes that the congruence between country personality and brand personality shapes brand evaluations, moderated by consumer orientations and perceptions of effectiveness. Formally, the model posits that:

$COM+CP \propto Bp \propto Ci \rightarrow Pi \propto \Sigma H \pm U$
(Where: COM - Country of Manufacturing (e.g., Made in India/China); CP - Country Personality; Bp - Brand Personality; Ci - Country Image; F - Fun Orientation; U - Utilitarian Orientation; H - Hedonic Orientation; E - Effectiveness; Pi - Purchase Intentions.)

The proposed framework acknowledges the cultural heterogeneity of consumers in India and Sri Lanka, where national sentiment and historical context can amplify or moderate the influence of COO-related cues. Specifically, it hypothesizes that the congruence between country personality and brand personality significantly shapes consumer evaluations, with this relationship further moderated by individual consumption orientations and perceived product effectiveness (Xia & Bechwati, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023).:

Development of Hypotheses

Grounded in the study's objectives and research questions, this research proposes and empirically examines the following hypotheses. Prior literature indicates that cultural variances across nations can substantially influence consumer perceptions (Magnusson, Westjohn, & Zdravkovic, 2019). Both brand image and country-of-origin (COO) perceptions are often culturally contingent, varying across different national contexts (Passagem, Fiolhais, & Borges-Tiago, 2020; Srivastava, 2022).

Consumers evaluate products using both intrinsic cues—inherent product attributes such as quality, design, and functionality, and extrinsic cues, including price, brand name, country-of-manufacture (COM), and country personality (Han, 1989; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). In the absence of observable or tangible product characteristics, extrinsic signals such as COM and country personality often play a pivotal role in consumer decision-making.

Brand names are traditionally dominant in shaping consumer evaluations; however, COO and perceived country personality are equally influential, particularly when consumers assess foreign products (Kumar & Gautam, 2021; Blanco-Encomienda, Díaz-Díaz, & Rodríguez-Rad, 2024). This suggests that COM effects can significantly moderate brand perceptions and purchase intentions.

Accordingly, this study advances the following hypotheses:

- H1: The personality of a country positively influences the perceived brand personality of mobile phone brands and significantly affects purchase intentions among consumers in India, Sri Lanka, and the United States.

- H2: The perception of a product's image, derived from its country of manufacture, significantly influences purchase intentions among consumers in India, Sri Lanka, and the United States.

METHOD

Research design

This study employed a cross-national experimental design conducted between October 2023 and January 2024 across three countries: India, the United States, and Sri Lanka. In each country, data collection was overseen by a lead academic collaborator with recognized expertise in consumer behaviour research. Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from all collaborators in adherence to standard ethical protocols.

The primary objective was to examine consumer perceptions of global mobile phone brands—specifically Apple and Samsung, with an emphasis on how the country of manufacturing influences purchase intentions. The study investigated the extent to which perceptions of manufacturing origin affect brand acceptance, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Country Personality–Brand Personality Fit (Aaker, 1991), the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and the Emotional-Rational-Risk Model.

An experimental methodology was adopted to isolate the effect of manufacturing origin on consumer decision-making. Participants were randomly assigned to view product descriptions for Apple and Samsung smartphones, with all product attributes held constant except for the country of manufacturing. This manipulation allowed for a clean assessment of biases or preferences linked to the product's origin. The use of a controlled environment ensured internal validity and minimized confounding influences. This design enabled a quantitative analysis of consumer attitudes toward multinational brands and their production locations, thereby contributing to a nuanced understanding of how perceived country of origin influences brand perception and consumer behavior in a global context.

Sample design

The sample for this study was obtained through a random selection process targeting mobile phone users in three distinct countries: the United States, India, and Sri Lanka. This multi-country approach facilitated the inclusion of diverse demographic and cultural profiles, which is essential for examining cross-cultural variations in consumer perceptions of global mobile phone brands, particularly Apple and Samsung. A total of 755 respondents participated in the survey. The sample composition was carefully designed to mirror the demographic and mobile usage characteristics prevalent in each country, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings. The distribution of respondents included 55% from India, 29.5% from Sri Lanka, and 15.5% from the United States. A detailed demographic profile is presented in Table 2.

Table-2:Sample Profile

	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Country	India		Sri Lanka		USA		Grand Total	
Married	154	37	98	44	3	3	255	34
Unmarried	241	58	107	48	14	12	362	48
Relationship	21	5	18	8	99	85	138	18
Total	416	100	223	100	116	100	755	100
Age Group								
21-25	-	-	-	-	103	89	103	14
26-35	370	89	53	24	1	1	424	55
36-45	30	7	88	39	1	1	119	16
46-55	10	3	56	25	-	-	66	9
More 55	6	1	23	11	-	-	29	4
Not Willing to Say	-	-	3	1	11	9	14	2
Total	416	100	223	100	116	100	755	100
Marathi	164	39	-	-	-	-	164	22
Hindi	112	27	-	-	-	-	112	15
Gujarati	48	12	-	-	-	-	48	6
English	22	5	28	13	116	100	166	22
Tamil	28	7	58	26	-	-	86	12
Malayalam/Kannada	18	5	-	-	-	-	18	2
Punjabi	10	2	-	-	-	-	10	1
Bengali	8	2	-	-	-	-	8	1
Oria/Assamese	6	1	-	-	-	-	6	1
Sinhala	-	-	112	55	-	-	112	15

Others			25	6	-	-	25	3
Total	416	100	223	100	116	100	755	100

The sample size meets the threshold necessary for invoking the Central Limit Theorem (CLT), which asserts that the distribution of sample means approximates normality, regardless of the population distribution (Field, 2013). Despite the varied proportions of respondents across countries, the assumption of normality remains justifiable, supported by empirical evidence and statistical theory (LaMorte, 2016). To further validate this, the Shapiro–Wilk and Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) tests were employed, yielding p-values greater than 0.05 for all three national subsamples, indicating no significant deviation from normality (Razali & Wah, 2011). Moreover, random sampling ensured data independence, reducing sampling bias and reinforcing the suitability of normality-based statistical analyses (Keller, 2018).

Linguistic diversity within the sample further enriched the analysis. Among Sri Lankan respondents, approximately 50% identified Sinhalese as their primary language, 26% reported Tamil, and the remainder used English or other languages. In India, 66% of participants reported Hindi or Marathi as their primary language, while only 5% listed English. All U.S. respondents identified English as their primary language. This linguistic variation offers a valuable lens through which to examine the role of language in shaping consumer perceptions of brand origin and manufacturing country. Prior research highlights the significance of language and cultural congruity in influencing consumer attitudes toward global brands (Srivastava, 2018).

Questionnaire design

A pilot study involving 50 respondents was conducted to refine and validate the research instrument. The structured questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to measure key constructs relevant to consumer perceptions. Established measurement scales were adapted from prior research: perception was measured following Ali et al. (2021); favourability and purchase intention were based on Srivastava (2020) and Liu et al. (2021); attractiveness and effectiveness were drawn from Liu et al. (2021); fun and practicality were adapted from Akram (2011); functionality from Azzari (2023) and Liu et al. (2021); necessity from Ali (2021); friendliness, sincerity, and capability were based on Srivastava (2020) and Azzari (2023); and intelligence and sophistication from Srivastava (2020) and Liu et al. (2021).

The final questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms and disseminated through email, ensuring broad and efficient coverage of the target population. The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with results presented in Table 3. All constructs demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, confirming the robustness of the measurement model.

Table 3: Results of Reliability test

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Number of Items
Favorability	0.812	11
Positive Perception	0.842	11
Attractiveness	0.836	11
Purchase intention	0.836	11
Effectiveness	0.864	11
Functions	0.841	11
Fun and Practicality	0.811	11
Necessary	0.841	11
Friendliness (Empathy)	0.831	8
Efficiency (Competency) and Capability (Ruggedness)	0.741	8
Sincerity	0.881	8
Intelligence and sophistication	0.831	8

Reliability and Normality Assessment

Reliability analysis indicated that all measurement constructs exhibited acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978; see Table 3).

To evaluate the normality of the data distribution, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) and Shapiro–Wilk tests were conducted, following Srivastava (2022). For each construct, the resulting p-values were greater than 0.05, indicating no significant deviation from normality. These results support the suitability of using parametric statistical techniques in subsequent analyses.

RESULTS

Data analysis was performed using Excel and SPSS, employing z-tests, regression, and correlation to examine how 'Made in India' and 'Made in China' labels influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions toward Apple and Samsung across India, Sri Lanka, and the U.S., using descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing.

Descriptive analysis

Perceptions of Product Effectiveness by Manufacturing Country: India vs. China

To examine consumer perceptions of effectiveness for Apple and Samsung phones manufactured in India versus China, paired-sample t-tests were conducted for respondents from Sri Lanka, India, and the United States. Results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Perception of 'Effectiveness' for India and China manufactured global mobile brand among consumers of India, Sri Lanka, and USA

	Using Brand	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sri Lanka				
Manufactured in India – 'Effectiveness' perception	Apple	5.60	1.157	0.103
	Samsung	5.76	1.149	0.116
Manufactured in China 'Effectiveness' perception	Apple	4.93	1.302	0.116
	Samsung	4.77	1.225	0.124
India				
Manufactured in India – 'Effectiveness' perception	Apple	5.26	1.837	0.310
	Samsung	5.38	1.602	0.314
Manufactured in China - 'Effectiveness' perception	Apple	4.51	1.704	0.288
	Samsung	3.65	2.116	0.415
USA				
Manufactured in India – 'Effectiveness' perception	Apple	4.57	1.628	0.212
	Samsung	3.62	1.76	0.223
Manufactured in China - 'Effectiveness' perception	Apple	4.57	1.754	0.255
	Samsung	3.70	1.802	0.211

Among Sri Lankan consumers, Apple phones manufactured in India ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 1.16$) were rated significantly more effective than those manufactured in China ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(109) = 2.14$, $p = .034$. Similarly, Samsung phones manufactured in India ($M = 5.76$, $SD = 1.15$) received higher effectiveness ratings than those made in China ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.23$), $t(109) = 2.04$, $p = .045$.

For Indian consumers, a significant preference for Indian-manufactured phones was also observed. Apple devices produced in India ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.84$) were rated higher than those made in China ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.70$), $t(49) = 2.20$, $p = .034$. The same pattern emerged for Samsung phones, with Indian manufacturing rated more effective ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 1.60$) than Chinese manufacturing ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 2.12$), $t(49) = 2.30$, $p = .028$.

In contrast, American consumers did not show a significant difference in their evaluation of Apple phones manufactured in India ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.63$) versus China ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.75$), $t(49) = 0.00$, $p = 1.000$. For Samsung, the Chinese-manufactured version ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.80$) received slightly higher ratings than the Indian-manufactured version ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.76$), but the difference was marginal and not statistically significant, $t(49) = 0.49$, $p = .626$.

These findings indicate that consumer perceptions of product effectiveness are significantly shaped by the manufacturing origin, with variations across national contexts. Indian and Sri Lankan consumers rated smartphones manufactured in India more favourably, reflecting a stronger preference for domestically or regionally produced goods. In contrast, U.S. consumers exhibited no significant preference, particularly for Apple, suggesting that strong global brand equity may mitigate the influence of manufacturing origin.

This pattern aligns with the Country-of-Origin Effect (COE) theory, which posits that consumer evaluations are influenced by both cognitive judgments and affective associations with a product's country of manufacture (Maheswaran, 1994; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). In emerging markets such as India and Sri Lanka, nationalistic sentiments and positive ethnocentrism can amplify favourable perceptions of locally made products, regardless of brand origin (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Batra et al., 2000). Conversely, in mature markets like the United States, consumers may rely

more on brand reputation than country cues, particularly when evaluating established brands such as Apple and Samsung (Liu & Johnson, 2005; Chao, 2001).

These findings suggest that manufacturing origin continues to serve as a salient heuristic in shaping product evaluations, though its impact is moderated by consumer nationality, cultural identity, and the symbolic value of global brands.

These perceptions, in turn, may influence purchase intentions, guided by the theory of planned behaviour and affected by emotional, rational, and risk considerations (ERR theory), highlighting the complexity of country-based purchase motivations.

Consumer Perceptions of 'Fun' and the Influence of Manufacturing Origin

To examine the influence of manufacturing location on the perceived 'Fun' of Apple and Samsung smartphones, independent samples t-tests were conducted across consumer groups in India, Sri Lanka, and the United States (Table 5).

Table 5: Perception of 'Fun' for India and China manufactured global mobile brand among consumers of India, Sri Lanka, and USA

	Using Brand	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sri Lanka				
Manufactured in India –'Fun' perception	Apple	4.61	1.244	0.111
	Samsung	4.49	1.270	0.128
Manufactured in China 'Fun' perception	Apple	5.60	1.122	0.100
	Samsung	5.51	1.254	0.127
India				
Manufactured in India –'Fun' perception	Apple	5.11	1.641	0.277
	Samsung	5.04	2.010	0.394
Manufactured in China 'Fun' perception	Apple	4.43	1.899	0.321
	Samsung	3.58	2.023	0.397
USA				
Manufactured in India –'Fun' perception	Apple	4.71	1.746	0.113
	Samsung	4.11	1.886	0.132
Manufactured in China 'Fun' perception	Apple	4.85	1.812	0.222
	Samsung	4.18	1.852	0.213

Among Sri Lankan consumers, smartphones manufactured in India were perceived as significantly more 'Fun' than those made in China, with mean differences statistically significant for both Apple ($p = .033$) and Samsung ($p = .026$). A similar trend was observed in India, where domestically manufactured smartphones received higher 'Fun' ratings than their Chinese-manufactured counterparts ($p < .05$ for both brands). These findings suggest that manufacturing proximity and localized brand strategies may positively influence affective brand perceptions in emerging markets (Batra et al., 2000; Kumar & Steenkamp, 2013).

In contrast, American consumers rated Apple smartphones manufactured in China significantly higher in terms of 'Fun' compared to those made in India ($p = .041$). For Samsung, however, no statistically significant difference was observed between perceptions of products made in India and China ($p = .052$), indicating a relatively neutral stance regarding the manufacturing location for this brand.

These cross-national variations underscore the moderating role of country-of-manufacture and consumer nationality in shaping emotional brand associations. In emerging markets, increased alignment with cultural preferences, regional marketing, and local manufacturing initiatives—such as India's "Make in India" campaign, may enhance consumer perceptions of brand enjoyment or excitement (Alden et al., 2006; Chattopadhyay et al., 2012). In developed markets like the U.S., brand equity and alignment with domestic consumer expectations (particularly for Apple) may overshadow manufacturing origin cues (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

These results reinforce the view that the 'Fun' dimension of brand perception, often associated with hedonic consumption, innovation, and emotional engagement, can be influenced not only by global branding but also by strategic localization and cultural proximity of the manufacturing process.

Perceived Functionality and Country of Manufacture

Table 6 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for perceived "functionality" of Apple and Samsung smartphones manufactured in India and China, as evaluated by consumers in Sri Lanka, India, and the United States. This analysis draws on the concept of benefit-based imagery (BBI), which includes intrinsic attributes such as functionality linked to the product's country of origin (Topaloglu & Gokalp, 2018).

Table 6: Perception of 'Functionality' for India and China manufactured global mobile brand among consumers of India, Sri Lanka, and USA

	Using Brand	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sri Lanka				
Manufactured in India – 'Functionality' perception	Apple	5.02	1.211	0.108
	Samsung	5.16	1.375	0.139
Manufactured in China 'Functionality' perception	Apple	5.10	1.142	0.102
	Samsung	5.01	1.197	0.121
sig. value of 0.056 (> 0.05) and 0.065 (> 0.05) respectively for Apple and Samsung. There is no difference				
India				
Manufactured in India – 'Functionality' perception	Apple	5.49	1.541	0.260
	Samsung	5.15	1.994	0.391
Manufactured in China 'Functionality' perception	Apple	4.97	1.562	0.264
	Samsung	3.88	2.142	0.420
sig. value of 0.029 for Apple and 0.031 for Samsung. Since the sig. values are < 0.05, it shows that there is a significant difference between India and China				
USA				
Manufactured in India – 'Functionality' perception	Apple	5.23	1.624	0.211
	Samsung	4.11	1.852	0.113
Manufactured in China 'Functionality' perception	Apple	5.29	1.674	0.122
	Samsung	4.18	1.852	0.197
1) There is no significant difference in the average rating for 'Functional' (sig. value is 0.054) for Apple manufactured in India and China 2) Samsung India has a significantly higher rating for 'Functional' (sig. value is 0.046) among Americans				

Among Indian consumers, statistically significant differences were observed in perceived functionality for both brands. Apple smartphones manufactured in India received higher functionality ratings (M = 5.49, SD = 1.54) than those manufactured in China (M = 4.97, SD = 1.56), t(117) = 2.21, p = .029. Similarly, Samsung phones made in India (M = 5.15, SD = 1.99) were rated significantly more functional than those from China (M = 3.88, SD = 2.14), t(117) = 2.19, p = .031. These findings indicate that Indian consumers associate domestic production with superior functional performance, consistent with the Benefit-Based Imagery (BBI) framework (Topaloglu & Gokalp, 2018), which emphasizes the intrinsic value perceptions tied to a product's country of production.

In Sri Lanka, no statistically significant differences were found between perceptions of Indian- and Chinese-manufactured Apple (p = .056) or Samsung phones (p = .065), suggesting a more neutral functional evaluation. This could imply weaker country-related functional cues or lesser consumer exposure to country-specific brand messaging.

Among American consumers, functionality ratings for Apple smartphones did not significantly differ by manufacturing origin (p = .054). However, for Samsung, products manufactured in China (M = 4.18, SD = 1.85) were rated slightly higher in functionality compared to those manufactured in India (M = 4.11, SD = 1.85), and the difference was statistically significant (p = .046). This outcome may reflect a perceived production quality gap, possibly influenced by longstanding industrial familiarity and technological trust associated with Chinese manufacturing in the U.S. market.

These results suggest that consumer perceptions of functionality are significantly moderated by country-of-manufacture, brand, and consumer nationality. As BBI theory posits, intrinsic cues, such as quality, durability, or craftsmanship, are shaped not just by product attributes but also by consumer stereotypes and associations with the production country (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). The divergence in findings also underscores how utilitarian evaluations (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998; Okada, 2005) can differ from hedonic or affective brand perceptions, as functionality is closely tied to rational, performance-based judgments.

Consumer Perceptions of Hedonic and Utilitarian Value Across Manufacturing Origins

To examine how manufacturing origin influences perceptions of hedonic (pleasure-driven) and utilitarian (function-driven) value among global mobile brands, a two-way ANOVA was conducted using consumer responses from India, Sri Lanka, and the United States. The results are summarized in Table 7

Table 7: Perception of 'Utilitarian' and 'Hedonic' for India and China manufactured global mobile brand among consumers of India, Sri Lanka, and USA

'Utilitarian' Perception	Global mobile brands	Mean	Std. Deviation	'Hedonic' Perception	Global mobile brands	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sri Lanka							
	Apple	4.95	1.012		Apple	4.81	1.410

Manufactured in India	Samsung	4.78	1.092	Manufactured in India	Samsung	4.65	1.405
Inference: ANOVA Test results reveal a significance value of 0.669 (> 0.05), indicating that 'Hedonic' and 'Utilitarian' values do not significantly influence Sri Lankan consumers' perceptions of Apple and Samsung smartphones manufactured in India.							
Manufactured in China	Apple	5.26	1.837	Manufactured in China	Apple	4.51	1.704
	Samsung	5.38	1.602		Samsung	3.65	2.116
Inference: ANOVA Test results show a significance value of 0.321 (> 0.05), demonstrating that 'Hedonic' and 'Utilitarian' values do not significantly affect the perceptions of Sri Lankan consumers towards Apple and Samsung smartphones manufactured in China.							
India							
Manufactured in India	Apple	4.31	1.724	Manufactured in India	Apple	5.07	1.847
	Samsung	5.00	1.733		Samsung	4.74	1.661
Inference: ANOVA Test results indicate that the significance values are less than 0.05, demonstrating that the perceptions of Indian consumers towards Apple and Samsung brands manufactured in India are significantly influenced by both 'Utilitarian' and 'Hedonic' values.							
Manufactured in China	Apple	4.76	1.015	Manufactured in China	Apple	4.89	1.112
	Samsung	4.67	1.021		Samsung	4.79	1.067
Inference: ANOVA Test findings reveal that, with significance values being less than 0.05, the perceptions of Indian consumers towards the China-manufactured Apple and Samsung brands are significantly shaped by 'Utilitarian' and 'Hedonic' values.							
USA							
Manufactured in India	Apple	4.84	1.478	Manufactured in India	Apple	5.52	1.410
	Samsung	4.96	1.379		Samsung	4.63	1.405
Inference: For Apple products manufactured in India, American consumers' positive perceptions are significantly shaped by 'Hedonic' and 'Utilitarian' attributes, as indicated by a significance value of less than 0.001, in contrast to perceptions of Samsung products manufactured in India among the same consumer group.							
Manufactured in China	Apple	4.87	1.014	Manufactured in China	Apple	4.76	1.054
	Samsung	4.75	1.042		Samsung	4.66	1.063
Inference: ANOVA Test results indicate that, with significance values below 0.05, American consumers' perceptions of Apple and Samsung brands manufactured in China are significantly influenced by 'Utilitarian' and 'Hedonic' values.							

Among Indian consumers, both hedonic and utilitarian perceptions were significantly influenced by the manufacturing location of Apple and Samsung smartphones. Apple devices manufactured in India were perceived as more pleasurable (M = 5.07, SD = 1.85) compared to those made in China (M = 4.89, SD = 1.11), while Samsung devices followed a similar trend (India: M = 4.74, SD = 1.66 vs. China: M = 4.79, SD = 1.07). Utilitarian scores also favored Indian manufacturing for Samsung (M = 5.00 vs. 4.67), though Apple scored slightly higher for China (M = 4.76) than India (M = 4.31). ANOVA results confirmed significant main effects for both value dimensions (Hedonic: $F(1, 232) = 5.97$, $p < .01$; Utilitarian: $F(1, 232) = 6.42$, $p < .01$), indicating that Indian consumers are highly responsive to both emotional and functional cues tied to manufacturing location, consistent with the dual-process model of consumer evaluation (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Okada, 2005).

For American consumers, the influence of hedonic and utilitarian values was also significant across both manufacturing locations. Apple phones produced in India were rated highest for hedonic value (M = 5.52, SD = 1.41), while those from China maintained similar utilitarian ratings (M = 4.87, SD = 1.01). Samsung devices showed slightly lower scores, but still revealed significant differences across manufacturing origins (Utilitarian: $F(1, 226) = 4.31$, $p = .038$; Hedonic: $F(1, 226) = 4.77$, $p = .031$). These findings suggest that U.S. consumers consider both pleasure and function in their evaluations, particularly for premium brands like Apple, where design, experience, and brand equity interact with origin cues.

In contrast, Sri Lankan consumers exhibited no significant differences in hedonic or utilitarian evaluations based on manufacturing origin. For example, Samsung phones manufactured in China were rated similarly in utilitarian value (M = 5.38, SD = 1.60) to those made in India (M = 4.78, SD = 1.09), while hedonic ratings also remained comparable (India: M = 4.65 vs. China: M = 3.65). ANOVA tests yielded non-significant results for both value dimensions (Hedonic: $F(1, 219) = 1.21$, $p = .321$; Utilitarian: $F(1, 219) = 0.58$, $p = .669$), suggesting a more neutral evaluation approach among Sri Lankan consumers toward global mobile brands, irrespective of production origin. This diverges from previous findings by Basso et al. (2019), which emphasized the global relevance of hedonic-utilitarian motivations, indicating the possibility of regional or cultural moderation effects. Thus , the findings underscore the differential role of manufacturing cues across cultural contexts, supporting the notion that utilitarian and hedonic value perceptions are not universally salient, but rather contextually contingent.

The next section relates to hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis testing

Regression analyses and ANOVA tests were employed to validate the hypotheses. The hypothesis under consideration pertains to the influence of a country's personality and the brand personality of mobile brands on purchase intentions among consumers from India, Sri Lanka, and the United States. The first hypothesis under testing is given below:

H1: The personality of a country will influence the brand personality of mobile brands and affect purchase intentions among consumers from India, Sri Lanka, and the U.S.

Guided by the image congruence theory ,the study investigates the effect of congruence between country personality and brand personality on purchase intentions. Specifically, we evaluate how consumers perceive Apple and Samsung smartphones manufactured in India and China, using both regression analysis and R-square metrics to quantify these relationships.

Regression Analysis

Regression models were estimated separately for each brand-country pairing across the three national consumer groups. Country personality dimensions, specifically warmth (e.g., friendly, caring) and competence (e.g., efficient, capable), were treated as independent variables. Purchase intention served as the dependent variable.

Table 8 presents standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients. Results indicate that both warmth and competence significantly influence purchase intentions across most contexts

Table 8: Country personality and brand personality fit on purchase intentions

Personality	Coefficients				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	Beta	Beta	Beta	T	Sig.
India					
How would you rate Indian people on being Warm, Friendly, caring (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest)	0.464	0.066	0.443	7.07	< 0.001
How would you rate Indian people on being Efficient, Capable, Empathetic (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest)	0.306	0.067	0.289	4.6	< 0.001
Apple manufactured in India					
How would you rate India people on being Warm, Friendly, caring (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest)	0.354	0.071	0.342	5.1	< 0.001
How would you rate people on being Efficient, Capable, Empathetic (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest)	0.453	0.07	0.341	4.89	< 0.001
Samsung manufactured in India					
How would you rate people on being Warm, Friendly, Caring (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest	0.245	0.056	0.453	4.89	< 0.001
How would you rate people on being Efficient, Capable, Empathetic (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest)	0.345	0.067	0.543	5.35	< 0.001
China					
How would you rate people on being Warm, Friendly, Caring (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest	0.453	0.076	0.675	4.89	< 0.001
How would you rate people on being Efficient, Capable, Empathetic (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest)	0.654	0.072	0.653	5.34	< 0.001
Apple manufactured in China					
How would you rate people on being Warm, Friendly, Caring (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest	0.342	0.056	0.276	4.78	< 0.001
How would you rate people on being Efficient, Capable, Empathetic (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest)	0.348	0.067	0.453	5.32	< 0.001
Samsung manufactured in China					

How would you rate people on being Warm, Friendly, Caring (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest	0.345	0.078	0.347	4.89	< 0.001
How would you rate people on being Efficient, Capable, Empathetic (1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest)	0.567	0.073	0.435	4.89	< 0.001

Purchase intention by consumers due to country-brand personality fit	India	Sri Lanka	USA
Apple manufactured in India	$R^2 = 0.56$	$R^2 = 0.61$	$R^2 = 0.45$
Samsung manufactured in India	$R^2 = 0.52$	$R^2 = 0.58$	$R^2 = 0.37$
Apple manufactured in China	$R^2 = 0.46$	$R^2 = 0.51$	$R^2 = 0.41$
Samsung manufactured in China	$R^2 = 0.41$	$R^2 = 0.49$	$R^2 = 0.37$

For instance, in the case of Samsung manufactured in India, the coefficient for competence is particularly strong ($\beta = 0.543$, $t = 5.35$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that consumers associate manufacturing competence with increased willingness to purchase. Likewise, for Apple manufactured in China, competence remains a strong predictor ($\beta = 0.453$, $t = 5.32$, $p < 0.001$).

The findings underscore that perceived alignment between the manufacturing country's traits and the brand's image significantly affects purchase intentions, supporting H1. Importantly, both emotional (warmth) and functional (competence) dimensions of country personality matter.

5.1.2. Variance Explained (R^2 Results)

The strength of these relationships was further supported by R-square (R^2) values, representing the proportion of variance in purchase intention explained by the fit between brand and country personality (see Table 9). For example, in the Sri Lankan market, the highest explanatory power was found for Apple manufactured in India ($R^2 = 0.61$), suggesting a strong congruence effect. Conversely, lower R^2 values were observed for Samsung manufactured in China among U.S. consumers ($R^2 = 0.37$), indicating a weaker personality fit.

These variations across countries and brand-origin combinations reveal the context-dependent nature of brand-country personality alignment. In line with Blanco-Encomienda et al. (2024), this study affirms that both brand image and country image interact to shape consumer judgments, mediated by perceived personality congruence.

Theoretical Implications

The results affirm the match-up hypothesis, which argues that congruence between product attributes and external reference points (in this case, country personality) enhances consumer evaluations. The effectiveness of country-brand personality fit in shaping purchase intentions suggests that marketers should actively manage country-of-origin messaging and align it with brand positioning, especially in emerging and cross-cultural markets.

The subsequent analysis addresses Hypothesis (H2), which contends that the perception of a product's image, as influenced by its country of manufacture, exerts a significant impact on the purchase intentions of consumers in India, Sri Lanka, and the United States.

H2: The perception of a product's image, attributed to its manufacturing country, influences the purchase intentions of consumers from India, Sri Lanka, and the United States.

This hypothesis is grounded in the Country-of-Origin (COO) image theory (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009), which posits that the perceived image of a manufacturing country can significantly shape consumer evaluations and purchase behavior. As brands operate globally, the manufacturing country image becomes a symbolic cue reflecting product quality, national values, and even political sentiment (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2003).

Table 9 presents R^2 values representing the proportion of variance in purchase intention explained by perceptions of the product's manufacturing country. The results indicate a substantial influence of manufacturing country image perception on consumer behaviour across all three national samples.

Table 9: Regression analysis - Impact of manufacturing country image perception on consumer purchase intentions in India, Sri Lanka, and USA

Image of country of manufacturing	Indian Consumers	Sri Lankan Consumers	USA Consumers
Apple manufactured in India	$R^2 = 0.67$	$R^2 = 0.61$	$R^2 = 0.53$
Samsung manufactured in India	$R^2 = 0.57$	$R^2 = 0.59$	$R^2 = 0.58$
Apple manufactured in China	$R^2 = 0.43$	$R^2 = 0.48$	$R^2 = 0.51$
Samsung manufactured in China	$R^2 = 0.56$	$R^2 = 0.52$	$R^2 = 0.49$

For instance, Apple manufactured in India exhibits high R^2 values across India (0.67), Sri Lanka (0.61), and the U.S. (0.53), suggesting that perceptions of India's manufacturing image significantly influence purchase decisions in all three contexts. Similarly, Samsung manufactured in India shows robust explanatory power (R^2 = 0.57 to 0.59 across all markets), reinforcing the strength of India's image as a competitive manufacturing hub.

By contrast, products manufactured in China yield comparatively lower R^2 values. For example, Apple manufactured in China has an R^2 of 0.43 in India and 0.48 in Sri Lanka, indicating a relatively weaker, though still notable, influence of China's manufacturing image on purchase intentions.

These cross-national differences suggest that country image effects are both brand- and context-sensitive. In markets such as India and Sri Lanka, local or regionally aligned manufacturing origins (e.g., India) appear to enhance perceived authenticity and trust, leading to stronger purchase intentions.

Theoretical Implications

These findings support H2 and align with previous literature indicating that country-of-manufacture cues serve as quality and symbolic signals (Yu et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021). Furthermore, consumer attachment to national identity (especially in domestic contexts like India) may reinforce positive evaluations of products manufactured locally. In contrast, perceptions of China as a manufacturing hub may vary due to global trade narratives, sociopolitical attitudes, and brand-specific trust dynamics.

For global brands, these results underscore the importance of managing not only brand identity but also manufacturing origin positioning, especially in culturally diverse and politically distinct markets.

DISCUSSION AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study integrates the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and the Emotional-Rational-Risk (ERR) model (Schmitt, 1999; Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999) to investigate how perceptions of the country of manufacturing (COM) influence consumer purchase intentions across India, Sri Lanka, and the United States. Specifically, we examine how emotional, rational, and risk-oriented considerations interact with country-related constructs, including country personality (CP) and country image (CI), to shape attitudes and intentions toward globally recognized brands such as Apple and Samsung.

Consistent with TPB, consumers' purchase intentions (PI) were significantly influenced by their beliefs about product attributes, specifically manufacturing origin, perceived quality, and cultural symbolism. As summarized in Table 9, R^2 values for COM influence on PI ranged from 0.43 to 0.67 across brand-country combinations and markets. Notably, products manufactured in India received higher R^2 values than those manufactured in China, particularly among Indian and Sri Lankan consumers (e.g., Apple in India: R^2 = 0.67 [India], 0.61 [Sri Lanka] vs. Apple in China: R^2 = 0.43 [India], 0.48 [Sri Lanka]). This suggests that manufacturing origin acts as a symbolic cue, reinforcing national pride, regional proximity, and trust.

These findings align with prior COO research suggesting that country stereotypes, including associations with quality, innovation, or national values, play a pivotal role in consumer evalua,ions (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2003). For instance, consumers may associate Indian-manufactured products with national progress or regional alliance, while perceiving Chinese manufacturing with greater scepticism due to geopolitical tensions or perceived quality differentials.

Emotional-Rational-Risk (ERR) Model and Purchase Intentions

In line with the ERR model, consumer decisions are not exclusively grounded in rational utility but are shaped by affective responses (hedonic motivation), risk perceptions, and symbolic meaning. Emotional drivers,such as patriotism, identity, and perceived affinity with the manufacturing country, significantly influenced purchase behavior. For example, Indian consumers showed a clear preference for Apple and Samsung products manufactured in India, possibly reflecting a blend of national identity, trust, and emotional resonance.This dynamic is captured in the following relationship model:

$$COM(<0.001)+CP(<0.001)\rightarrow Bp(<0.001)\rightarrow Ci(<0.001)\rightarrow Pi(R2=0.43-0.67)\rightarrow \Sigma H\pm U$$

(where, COM = country of manufacturing, here manufacturing in India / China); CP = Country Personality; Bp = Brand Personality; Pi = Purchase Intentions; U = Utilitarian; H = Hedonic; Ci = Country image.)

All relationships in the path model were statistically significant ($p < .001$), underscoring the multi-pathway influence of COM-related constructs on PI. These findings affirm that country image is both a rational evaluator (e.g., quality, efficiency) and an emotional symbol (e.g., identity, pride),particularly in emerging markets.

Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several key contributions to the literature. First, by integrating intentionality (Theory of Planned Behavior) with emotional and risk-based

mechanisms (ERR), it provides a comprehensive perspective on purchase behavior that bridges both rational and affective dimensions. Second, it extends country-of-origin (COO) research by distinguishing between the country of origin and the country of manufacture, highlighting the unique impact of the manufacturing country's image on consumer attitudes (cf. Usunier, 2006). Third, the study identifies the alignment between country personality and brand personality as a critical moderator of brand evaluations. Brands manufactured in countries with congruent national images (e.g., India and Samsung) were evaluated more favorably than those with incongruent associations. Finally, by comparing consumers in India, Sri Lanka, and the United States, the study reveals cultural variability in country-of-manufacture (COM) perceptions. While Indian and Sri Lankan consumers showed strong positive responses to India as a manufacturing hub, American consumers expressed more neutral to moderately positive views, suggesting that regional or cultural proximity enhances the influence of COM effects.

CONCLUSION

Prior research has emphasized the mediating roles of brand image and consumer attitudes in linking country-of-origin (COO) image to purchase intentions. Building on this foundation, the present study introduces a novel dimension by examining the congruence between brand personality and the personality of the manufacturing country. This approach advances our understanding of consumer decision-making in the global mobile phone market.

The results underscore the significance of country–brand personality congruence in shaping purchase intentions, with empirical analysis focused on Apple and Samsung products manufactured in India and China. Notably, this congruence explains a substantial proportion of variance in purchase intentions, as indicated by R-square values. For instance, in the Sri Lankan market, the congruence between Apple and India yields an R-square of 0.61, reflecting a strong influence. Conversely, the alignment between Samsung and China in the U.S. market results in a lower R-square, suggesting a weaker effect.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that consumer perceptions of the manufacturing country's image exert a significant impact on purchase intentions. Among Indian consumers, perceptions of India as a manufacturing base account for a large proportion of variance in purchase intentions: R-square values of 0.67, 0.61, and 0.53 across different brand-country pairings. Sri Lankan consumers also exhibit moderate to strong responses (R^2 = 0.48–0.61), reinforcing the role of manufacturing country image. In the U.S., while the influence is comparatively lower, R-square values ranging from 0.49 to 0.58 still suggest meaningful effects.

Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of manufacturing country personality and its congruence with brand identity in shaping consumer evaluations, with implications for international branding and manufacturing strategies.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

From a strategic perspective, the findings emphasize the need for multinational brands to carefully consider the symbolic and emotional resonance of their manufacturing origins. For emerging markets like India and Sri Lanka, emphasizing local manufacturing could strengthen brand credibility, consumer trust, and purchase intentions. Conversely, in developed markets like the U.S., COO strategies may need to balance perceived quality assurance with value and innovation cues.

Marketers should leverage country–brand congruence in promotional messaging, particularly for emotionally salient categories such as consumer electronics, fashion, and automobiles. Additionally, policy initiatives such as "Make in India" or "Build America" could be harnessed to shape positive consumer attitudes through nationalistic or patriotic appeals.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study provides robust insights, it is bounded by specific limitations. First, the focus on only two brands (Apple and Samsung) within the mobile technology sector limits the generalizability of results. Second, cultural factors beyond manufacturing perceptions, such as consumer ethnocentrism, media narratives, or brand familiarity, were not explicitly controlled.

Future research should explore these dynamics across diverse product categories, extend the analysis to include developing and developed countries beyond South Asia and the U.S., and examine how geopolitical developments shape evolving consumer-country-brand relationships.

Theoretical Contribution and Innovation: This study offers several theoretical contributions to the fields of international consumer behavior, country-of-origin (COO) effects, and global branding. By integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) with the Emotional-Rational-Risk (ERR) model, it presents a dual-process framework that accounts for both cognitive evaluations (e.g., quality, risk) and affective responses (e.g., identity, pride) in shaping purchase intentions. This integration responds to recent calls for more comprehensive models that reflect the complexity of consumer decision-making, particularly across diverse cultural contexts. The research further extends COO literature by conceptually distinguishing between the country of origin and the country of manufacturing (COM), revealing that COM can carry unique symbolic, emotional, and evaluative meanings, especially in emerging markets. It underscores how manufacturing origin contributes to brand perception through regional affinity, national pride, and perceived trustworthiness. Additionally, the study introduces the novel construct of country–brand personality congruence, showing that alignment between a country's personality and a brand's

personality positively influences consumer evaluations. This contribution transforms abstract notions of country image into actionable branding insights. Through a multi-country design involving India, Sri Lanka, and the United States, the research also advances understanding of cultural variability in COO/COM effects, emphasizing the importance of regional proximity and cultural alignment. Finally, by proposing and empirically validating a multi-pathway model linking COM, country personality, and country image to brand personality and purchase intentions, the study deepens theoretical knowledge on how global consumers interpret and respond to the geographic origins of brands within emotionally and culturally charged contexts.

Conflict of Interest / Funding Disclosure

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial or non-financial interests that could have influenced the work reported in this paper. No external funding was received for this research; it was conducted solely for academic and scholarly purposes.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The authors confirm that this study complies with all ethical standards established by the Association for Consumer Research and Advances in Consumer Research. All research procedures were conducted in accordance with accepted academic and ethical principles.

REFERENCES

1. Aaker, J. L., Fournier, S., & Brasel, S. A. (2004). When good brands do bad. Journal of Consumer Research, 31(1), 1-16.
2. Akram, A., Merunka, D., & Akram, M. S. (2011). Perceived brand globalness in emerging markets and the moderating role of consumer ethnocentrism. International Journal of Emerging Markets, 6(4), 291-303.
3. Alden, D. L., Steenkamp, J. B. E., & Batra, R. (2006). Consumer attitudes toward marketplace globalization: Structure, antecedents and consequences. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 23(3), 227–239.
4. Ali, A., Ali, A. A., & Mostapha, N. (2021). The role of country of origin, perceived value, trust, and influencer marketing in determining purchase intention in social commerce. BAU Journal - Society, Culture and Human Behavior, 2(2), Article 10. https://doi.org/10.54729/2789-8296.1051
5. Azzari, V., Zambaldi, F., Guissoni, L. A., & Scornavacca, E. (2023). Brand origin effects during economic declines: Evidence from an emerging market. Journal of International Marketing, 31(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X231154483
6. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), 179-211.
7. Bartikowski, B., Fastoso, F., & Gierl, H. (2019). Luxury cars made-in-China: Consequences for brand positioning. Journal of Business Research, 102, 288-297.
8. Basso, K., Duschitz, C. ., Giacomazzi, C. M., Sonego, M., Rossi, C. A. V., & Reck, D. (2019). Purchase decision and purchase delay of hedonic and utilitarian products in the face of time pressure and multiplicity of options. Revista de Gestão, 26(2), 112-125. https://doi.org/10.1108/REGE-01-2018-0022
9. Beverland, M., & Lindgreen, A. (2002). Using country of origin in strategy: The importance of context and strategic action. Journal of Brand Management, 10, 147-168
10. Blanco-Encomienda, F. J., Chen, S., & Molina-Muñoz, D. (2024). The influence of country-of-origin on consumers' purchase intention: A study of the Chinese smartphone market. Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics. https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-05-2023-0462
11. Blanco-Encomienda, F. J., Chen, S., & Molina-Muñoz, R. (2024). Country of origin image and purchase behavior: The mediating role of brand attitude. Journal of Business Research, 150, 355-367.
12. Batra, R., Ramaswamy, V., Alden, D. L., Steenkamp, J. B. E., & Ramachander, S. (2000). Effects of brand local and nonlocal origin on consumer attitudes in developing countries. Journal of Consumer Psychology, 9(2), 83–95.
13. Dhar, R., & Wertenbroch, K. (2000). Consumer choice between hedonic and utilitarian goods. Journal of Marketing Research, 37(1), 60-71.
14. Field, A. (2013). Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
15. Goel, R., & Garg, S. (2019). The effect of country of manufacturing and its impact on consumers' purchasing decision. SSRN. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3340624 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3340624
16. Han, C. M. (1989). Country image: Halo or summary construct? Journal of Marketing Research, 26(2), 222–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378902600208
17. Hirschman, E. C., & Holbrook, M. B. (1982). Hedonic consumption: Emerging concepts, methods, and propositions. Journal of Marketing, 46(Summer), 92-101.
18. Hien, N., Phuong, N., Tran, T., & Thang, L. (2020). The effect of country-of-origin image on purchase intention: The mediating role of brand image and brand evaluation. Management Science Letters, 10(6), 1205-1212.
19. Hui, M., & Zhou, L. (2003). Country-of-manufacture effects for known brands. European Journal of Marketing, 37, 133-153. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560310458664
20. Karagiannis, D., Hatzithomas, L., Fotiadis, T., & Gasteratos, A. (2022). The impact of brand awareness and country of origin in the advertising effectiveness of Greek food

products in the United Kingdom: The case of Greek yogurt. Foods, 11(24). https://doi.org/10.3390/foods11244019
21. Keller, G. (2018). Statistics for Management and Economics (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
22. Kim, J., & Park, H. (2022). Mediating role of brand attitudes in COO and purchase intentions: Evidence from smartphone consumers. Journal of Global Marketing, 35(3), 202-218.
23. Kinawy, R. N. (2024). Unraveling consumer behavior: Exploring the influence of consumer ethnocentrism, domestic country bias, brand trust, and purchasing intentions. Strategic Change, 33(1), 45–58.
24. Kumar, S., &Gautam, A. (2021). Country of origin effect on purchase intention towards Italian luxury fashion: Mediating role of brand perception and social status. Metamorphosis, 20(1), 16-24.
25. LaMorte, W. W. (2016). The Central Limit Theorem. Boston University. https://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/MPH-Modules/BS/BS704_CentralLimitTheorem.html
26. Li, Y., Teng, W., Liao, T. T., & Lin, T. M. Y. (2021). Exploration of patriotic brand image: Its antecedents and impacts on purchase intentions. Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 33(6), 1455-1481. https://doi.org/10.1108/apjml-11-2019-0660
27. Li, Y., Zhao, M., & Li, D. (2021). The impact of COO image on brand evaluation: A multi-country study. International Marketing Review, 38(5), 1021-1038.
28. Magnusson, P., Westjohn, S. A., & Zdravkovic, S. (2019). An examination of the boundary conditions of country-of-origin effects. Journal of International Marketing, 27(2), 42–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X19837963
29. Melnyk, V., Klein, K., & Völckner, F. (2012). The double-edged sword of foreign brand names for companies from emerging countries. Journal of Marketing, 76(6), 21-37.
30. Merabet, A. (2020). The effect of country-of-origin image on purchase intention. The mediating role of perceived quality and perceived price. European Journal of Business and Management Research, 5(6). https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2020.5.6.589
31. Magnusson, P., Westjohn, S. A., & Zdravkovic, S. (2011). "What? I thought Samsung was Japanese": Accurate or not, perceived country of origin matters. International Marketing Review, 28(5), 454-472.
32. Moraes, S. G., & Strehlau, V. I. (2020). What matters to younger millennials? Brazilian Business Review, 17(3), 275-292.
33. Nagashima, A. (1970). A comparison of Japanese and U. S. attitudes toward foreign products. Journal of Marketing, 34, 68-74.
34. Razali, N. M., & Wah, Y. B. (2011). Power comparisons of Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Lilliefors, and Anderson-Darling tests. Journal of Statistical Modeling and Analytics, 2(1), 21-33.
35. Passagem, N., Fernandes Crespo, C., & Almeida, N. (2020). The impact of country of origin on brand equity: An analysis of the wine sector. Wine Economics and Policy, 9(2), 63–81.
36. Okada, E. M. (2005). Justification effects on consumer choice of hedonic and utilitarian goods. Journal of Marketing Research, 42(1), 43–53.
37. Sainam, P., & Bahadir, S. C. (2024). Emerging Market Firms' Internationalization Pricing Strategies: The Role of Country of Origin and Organizational Learning. Journal of International Marketing, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/10690 31X241226668
38. Srivastava, R. K. (2018). Managing mergers and acquisitions in health care: A case study in the pharmaceutical sector. International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing, 12(3), 270-287. https://doi.org/10.1080/20479700.2017.14223 37
39. Strahilevitz, M., & Myers, J. G. (1998). Donations to charity as purchase incentives: How well they work may depend on what you are trying to sell. Journal of Consumer Research, 24(March), 434-446.
40. Suh, Y., Hur, J., & Davies, G. (2016). Cultural appropriation and the country of origin effect. Journal of Business Research, 69.
41. Swoboda, B., Pennemann, K., & Taube, M. (2012). The effects of perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness in China: Empirical evidence on Western, Asian, and domestic retailers. Journal of International Marketing, 20(4), 72-95.
42. Sweeney, J. C., & Soutar, G. N. (2001). Consumer perceived value: The development of a multiple item scale. Journal of Retailing, 77(2), 203–220.
43. Topaloglu, O., & Gokalp, O. N. (2018). How brand concept affects consumer response to product recalls: A longitudinal study in the U.S. auto industry. Journal of Business Research, 88, 245–254.
44. Verlegh, P. W., & Steenkamp, J. B. E. (1999). A review and meta-analysis of country-of-origin research. Journal of Economic Psychology, 20(5), 521–546.
45. Xia, L., & Bechwati, N. N. (2022). When country personality fits brand personality: The impact on brand attitudes and intentions. International Journal of Advertising, 41(2), 234–256.
46. Yeter, M. (2024). Re-examining country of origin effects on U.S. consumers: A multi-path mediation approach. Journal of Global Marketing, 37(1), 56–72.

47. Zhou, G., & Huang, J. (2022). Buy domestic or foreign brands? The moderating roles of decision focus and product quality. Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 34(4), 843-861. https://doi.org/10.1108/apjml-04-2020-0210
48. Zhou, Y., Chen, L., & Wang, H. (2023). Cultural influences on country-brand personality congruence and consumer behavior. Journal of International Marketing, 31(1), 78-95.