

## Conceptual Review on Country of Origin Effect in International Markets

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**ABSTRACT:** *Country of Origin (COO) is one of the most researched areas in the international marketing discipline. It identifies COO as a key variable in consumer decision making process. Most of the previous studies assumed effect of COO connects to brand perception and evaluations in international markets. The notion of COO is widely a connected concept whereas country perspectives and product contexts differently deal with it. There are different concepts and theories being discussed with the notion of COO. However, research insights prove newness and further research priorities are still found with COO depending on empirical arguments and complexities associated with the concepts. In line within, this papers reveals the concept of COO in relation to different theories and empirical contributions. A deductive method was employed and extensive literature review was carried out as the main research tool. An attempt was made to highlight cases and contextual explanations within. Authors discuss research insights and arguments found within COO. Finally, paper presents future research directions whilst specific attention is made on Sri Lankan context.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Country of Origin Effect, International Markets, Perception, Product Evaluation*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

From the emergence of international trade thousands of years ago, manufacturers used country of origin (COO) to gain competitive advantage resulting opportunities to entertain a price premium for a product (Agrawal, 2004). During last few decades, globalization has become a key consideration in business and the changes created by globalization is inevitable whilst the notion of COO is interested in many researches (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002).

This has given considerable importance to country of origin in consumer decision making process. Due to the importance of country of origin in the international marketing, it is being one of the most researched area in the discipline (Bikey & Nes, 1982; Pharr, 2005). Further, research has found that country of origin is helpful in developing a favorable association on a product in marketing and promotional activities (Hsieh, Pan, & Setiono, 2004). Generally performance based country of origin effect is the most researched topic in the international marketing domain (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). Country of origin benefits the manufacturers whilst consumers also are benefited in evaluating a brand leading to perceptual judgments (Agrawal, 2004).

With the emergence of global market, wide verity of products flowing into the market place from different manufacturing countries. This has given the customers wide choice of the product and limited information to make the decision of purchasing and one of the important sources of information in the global context is the country of origin of the product (Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2002). Depending on the consumers favorable or unfavorable associations regarding the country, consumers are likely to perceive product quality superior or inferior (Maheswaran, 1994).

Many researchers have defined country of origin in different perspectives. “Any influence positive or negative that the country of manufacture might have on consumer’s choice, process or subsequent behavior” (Samiee 1987). Johansson et al. (1985) and Ozsomer and Cavusgil (1991) define country of origin as the location where the headquarters of a company is located (e.g., Honda headquarters located in Japan and imply Japanese origin). Schaninger (1996), Papadopoulos (1993) and White (1979), in their publications have defined country of origin as the final point of assembly/ manufacture which could also be the location of Headquarters.

According to Peterson and Joliber (1995) country of origin cue is similar to price, brand name or warranty that not directly reflect the performance of the product. However some studies confirms the fact that emotional associations that are not related to the product, either chronic or activated by transient incidents have significant impact on consumer decision making process (Hong & Kang, 2006; Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998; Maheswaran & Chen, 2006, 2009).

Scientific or systematic study on Country of origin effect was initiated by Schooler (1965) with publication on “Product Bias in the Central American Product Market”. In early publications, there was a serious limitation of considering only single cue especially in studies of consumer goods. Country of origin was the only information given to the respondents. This situation has led to bias results in favor of Country of Origin effect. The study of Bilkey and Nes (1982) led other researchers to seek advance knowledge on COO and wide range of research on theoretical explanation on relative influence when other cues such as price and quality are available.

Nations equity is a recently formed framework that provide structured theoretical basis for comprehensively examine both product based cognitive associations and product un-related emotions based associations of consumers towards countries (Maheswaran & Chen, 2006, 2009). Equity consists of two major components, performance equity and emotions equity. This concept emphasis that the comprehensive study of country of origin should include both product related cognitive associations and product unrelated emotional association. It is significant to institute this comprehensive perspective to understand the role of country of origin effect in the highly modern and complex markets which have greatly influenced by ever increasing globalization.

## **II. SCOPE THE STUDY**

Country of origin effect is the most researched area in the international marketing domain (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999). Nations equity approach has set the background for compressive study on the research investigating various aspect such as ethnocentrism, animosity, foreignness and quality (Maheswaran, Chen and He, 2015). One of the main objectives of this paper is to review the major components of the nation’s equity that have had influenced the international consumer buying behavior and propose new aspects that have not been recognized before for future research. This paper attempts to review empirical and theoretical arguments to discuss how COO is attributed on consumer and brands. It still finds arguments to say COO as attributed by rational or empirical appeals. Supportively, studies found in Sri Lankan context reveled emotional appeals largely contribute to COO as an influencing mechanism rather rational appeals (Weerasiri & Dissanayake, 2010). But, COO is viewed as more rational connection in other studies that result product evaluation and perceptions like quality (Maheswaran, et.al.2015). Thus, studies need to further argue on this matters to investigate how COO is attributed by emotional and rational appeals for a holistic impact on customers and manufacturers or brands.

Accordingly, paper follows a deductive approach to review the concepts and empirical contributions. Research tools include literature survey methods and journal articles, case studies, industry reports and theories were examined to organize the arguments and conclusions. Paper provides a discussion based on empirical arguments and it concludes future research directions accordingly.

## **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Paper presents the literature review considering COO as the main concept whilst supportive theoretical and empirical contents are presented in line. Authors attempt to highlight some cases on products and countries to highlight how the concept of COO acts for different outcomes.

### **3. 1.Review on the Effect of COO**

Schooler (1965) with his publication on “Product Bias in the Central American Product Market” initiated the scientific study on country of origin effect. Most of the early studies on the COO was focused on documenting of the existence of COO in various circumstances. According to Peterson and Jolibert (1995), statistically significant COO effects have been documented related to the various products categories and for industrial and consumer from the early days but quantitative analysis was rare. Bilkey and Nes (1982) published an article on qualitative review of twenty five COO studies up to that point of time. In this publication they have pointed-out a serious limitation of considering only single cue especially in studies of consumer goods. Country of origin was the only information given to the respondents. This situation has led to bias results in favor of Country of Origin Effect. The study of Bilkey and Nes (1982) led other researchers to seek advanced knowledge on COO and wide range of research on theoretical explanation on relative influence when other cues such as price and quality are available.

Han (1989) suggested that the country of origin can act as a stereo type measure or substitute for other product attributes for consumers unfamiliar about the product category. According to Han (1989) COO can be served as a summery index that will reduce the information required for the buying decision. Hong and Wyr (1990); Hung (1989); Roth and Romeo (1992) in their publications have pointed out the importance of assessing COO as one of the cues. These studies suggests the requirement of adopting multi-cue approach in evaluating the country of origin effect on product evaluation. Other than country of origin, other cues should be available for the respondents to make their decision. At the same time factors influencing buying behavior including respondents characteristics / personality, nationality or previous knowledge about the product or product category should be studied, (Johansson, Douglas and Nonaka1985).

Multi Attribute Attitude Model developed by Backwith and Lehmann (1975) would be a base for developing a multi cue model for the consumer buying evaluation including COO. The main assumption of this model is that “Several attributes can be used to explain each individuals overall evaluative attitudes toward alternative products” (Moore and James 1977) have extended their agreement to Backwith and Lehmann’s model. According to this model, an individual is presumed to associate some particular level of attribute with each stimulus. Some attributes could be more salient than other and weight to each attribute will be given to satisfy the deferential significance to the individual.

Country of origin effect on Uni- national and Bi-national products is another area of research that is highly useful in modern complex globalized production and marketing. “Hybrid Products” is one outcome of this globalization of business (Czepec and Cosmas 1983; Han and Qualls 1985) or Bi- National Products. Bi-national products can be described as manufactures in one country and carries a brand of a different country. For an example, Apple I Phone is manufactured in China carries American brand or Honda Jet, a Japanese brand manufactured in United States.

During last two decades, manufacturing processes have become so complex. Cost and efficiency has become prime consideration in locating the manufacturing. With the fast connectivity in both information and transport, a new manufacturing culture has evolved. Multi- National products are becoming more and more common in the market. Airbus, world leading aircraft manufacturer source components from many countries in EU and other parts of the world and assemble them in factories in Germany or France. This has evolved so fast and even apparel manufacturers have adopted it. Literature on this area is so rare and hardly any research is being carried out. Even though country of origin effect is being studied for five decades, it has not been advanced beyond Uni- National products till 1990’s, which 100% production is carried out in a single country. In particular previous research has not indicated any evidence of the effect of Multi – Nation products or international brands. Studies by Bannister and Saunders (1978) and Yaprak and Parameswaran (1986) have suggested that unfavorable situations could be created by foreign products carry established brand. According to the study by Johansson and Nebenzahl (1986), perception about the same product may vary depending on the country it is manufactured. Japanese made tyres are perceived as higher quality than the same brand of tires with same design and technology manufactured in Indonesia, consumers are paying higher price for the Japanese made tyres for perceived higher quality.

Country of origin effect is not essentially positive. According to Kotler and Gertner (2002), as much as some country of origins boost the confidence of the buyer about the product, some may create doubts. According to Fields (1990), there are evidence that there is negative impact on consumer brand awareness and choice. There are numbers of studies that have provided evidence that there is no significant impact on consumer buying behavior by COO effect. Johnson (1985), Samiee (1987) and Olson and Jacoby (1972) argue that there is only a minor effect on the consumer buying behavior. Nevertheless, majority of published studies support the fact the COO do exists (Elliot and Cameron 1994). Etzel and Walker (1974) argued that consumers do not perceive all products from a specific country as being the same or very similar and product itself generate a favorable associations related to a country based on various attributes.

### **3. 2 Comparison of COO on More Developed Countries (MDC) vs Less Developed Countries (LDC)**

According to Bilkey and Nes (1982) stereotyping has been found on the product source country whether the product is manufactured or sourced from a MDC or LDC. Bannister and Saunders (1978) have suggested that, even among MDC or LDC all countries are not equality evaluated. But attitude towards a country may change with the time based on various factors. White and Cundiff (1978); Yaprak (1978). Poor quality image Japan had during 50’s and 60’s has drastically improved in 80’s and later. In most of the MDC’s, there is a tendency to consider own country’s product is superior than other countries Nagashima (1979)

Several research studies have revealed that there is a positive relationship between product evaluation and the economic situation of the sourcing country (Krishnakumar 1974; Schooler 1971; Tongberg 1972; Wang 1978). There are few other influencing factors including culture and the history, political orientation and stability and similarities of the belief system of the sourcing country (Tongberg 1972). According to Wong (1978) degree of evaluation of economy of USSR by US consumers was higher than actually how it was but as a country of sourcing they gave very low evaluation (During the cold war period, USA and USSR politically and culturally so distant and consumers believed other country is an enemy). Consumer evaluation of one country of other country might be different to how third country’s consumers evaluated the same country. Krishankumar (1974) found that evaluation of England as a destination for education by Indian students was much higher than the evaluation of the same destination by Taiwanese students. Consumer perception towards a country greatly depend on the economic level. Wang (1978). Gaedeke (1973) reveled in his study that there is a significant consumer bias between MCD’s and LDC’s. But price could be an offsetting factor based on the product category and sensitivity on the quality of the product in application. Schooler (1965) found that there is bias with in the LDC’s. After evaluating findings of the various researchers, it is possible to depict the consumer evaluation of a country is based

on the economic development stage. Relationship among LDC and MDC as well as with the group. Sri Lanka as an emerging economy needs to penetrate the COO for tea tourism even though it has captured a good perception in global market for tea (Koththagoda, & Dissanayake, 2017). Thus, it seems COO needs to be examined with different product sectors and market contexts to evaluate its overall effectiveness to consumers and products.

### **3.3 The Influence of COO: Effect of Stereo Typing**

Reierson (1966) is a pioneer in research in the area of country of origin bias. In his research, he investigated, if notions consumers having about foreign products are opinions about specific products or national stereo types. According to the findings of the study, it was clearly recognizable that stereo typing is more prominent than product specific notions. Schooler (1965) was the first to research on the country of origin effect and his study suggest that Guatemalan and Mexican products were rated higher than Costa Rica and El Salvador products. Gaedeke (1973) extended the concept of stereo typing to cover products from developing nations. He studied the opinion about the overall quality of the products from developing countries of US consumers. Opinion of two hundred students were recorded and the product categories were decided based on the quantity of import. According to the findings, most of the students rated US products much higher than the same product imported from developing countries. Gaedeke (1973) concluded in his study that country stereo typing not significantly effecting the branded products. Etzel and Walker (1974) also studied on the national stereo types and specific product categories. Autos, cameras, and mechanical toys were tested from three different countries, Germany, Japan and the USA. Sample size for the study was 293 females. According to the findings, there was significant consumer stereo type and the specific product perception. According to Darling and Kraft (1977), previous experience and reputation are some of the variables impacting the effect of country of origin label. They conclude that “this label provides a great deal of information to consumers as a result of their past experience with representative national products, learned stereotypes and reputations of national products, and perhaps more general images of traditions and customs of foreign people” (Darling and Kraft, 1977, p. 520). White and Cundiff (1978) are the pioneers in studying the stereo typing related to the industrial products and perception on the county of origin in their evaluation process. The products they were used to do the study was industrial forklifts and metal working equipment. According to the findings, there was a statistically significant bias on the perception of the products made in USA and Germany. Most of the respondents (236 usable questionnaires out of 480 of total sample of National Association of Purchasing Management USA) indicated higher perception on equipment manufactured in USA and Germany over Japan and equipment manufactured in Brazil received very low level of confidence.

Keown and Casey (1995) conducted a study on factors influencing the purchasing wins of Northern Ireland Consumers manufactured in 14 countries. 10 factors were listed including country of origin and the findings revealed that the country of origin is the most important factor. Respondents ranked France, Germany and Italy, traditional manufacturers high and USA and UK low. Niss (1996) studied what extent Danish exporters use country of origin as a marketing tool. The results revealed that most of the exporters whose products are in mature state in the product life cycle used country of origin as a tool for differentiation. Study concludes that, when a product moves on life cycle towards the maturity and decline stage, requirement of information to consumers declines as they are fully aware about product’s functional information and other aesthetic values. Country of origin plays a vital role in differentiating the product from the completion at this stage Niss (1996).

Country of origin stereo typing is highly affected by ethnocentrism (Hooley et al., 1988; Lee et al., 1992; Stoltman et al., 1991). This term “appears to impact consumer choice both through product attribute evaluation and through direct affective factors regarding the purchase itself” (Yaprak and Baughn, 1991, p. 265). According to the findings of Han (1988), consumer patriotism of consumers affects the cognitive evaluation of the consumers and this will greatly affect the purchasing decision (E.g., Indian consumers prefer to buy Indian products and “Buy Hindustan” campaign boosted the patriotism during 80’s and 90’s). There are research studies found investigating ethnocentrism (Gudum and Kavas, 1996), (Peris and Newman, 1993, Good and Huddleston, 1995, Bailey and Pineres, 1997). These studies have carried out in various countries and related to numerous products and almost all studies have proved that ethnocentrism is a highly influencing factor in consumer evaluation process and directly linked with the country of origin. Additionally, this paper highlights how global fast food chains follow host country centric adoptions including Sri Lanka and India as case highlights to build favorable brand perceptions whilst original stereo typing effect of COO is still maintained for brand perceptions. The applications of service innovations and sensory branding strategies need more investigation within those industries to evaluate how it results consumer behavioral responses. For instance, fast food global brands introduce country specific sensory branding for new products whilst applying visual promotions to absorb favorable brand responses. Extended studies may address to those practices to confirm their effectiveness.

### **3.4 Emergence of Nation’s Equity**

Nation Equity (NE) is a framework that is developed in early twenty first century which sets a structures theoretical basis for studding complex associations consumers have towards the countries. This includes both product related cognitive associations and product unrelated emotional associations (Maheshwaran and Chen 2006). Nations equity can be defined as “Equity or goodwill associated with a country. According to Maheswaran, Chen & He (2015), comprehensive evaluation of county of origin should include both product performance related and product un-related aspects such as emotions. The emotional and rational attributes usually create different strength to COO depending on the products and market contexts as referred in the study of Weerasiri & Dissanayake (2010).

The traditional country of origin effect derives from the performance equity. In addition, emotions equity is generated through positive or negative emotions towards the country. In the complex modern globalized world of business, understanding of both sets of perspectives is highly important in realizing the role of country of origin. Over the time countries will develop strong equity on product categories and additions and extensions of the same product category will carry the strong equity created (Gudero, 2009). Country of origin promotional strategies will develop a favorable or positive equity (Hsieh, Pan, & Setiono, 2004). This reflects that when county has developed with a strong brand equity, it generates the opportunity for new and existing manufactures to take advantage in the competitive market place.

According to Maheswaran & Chen, (2009), there are three main emotions has been identified; ethnocentrism, foreignness and animosity. These emotions are reviewed in this paper for further knowledge. These equity associations produce a halo effect and serves as decision cues in influencing consumers’ perceptions and inferences about various product characteristics (Bilkey&Nes, 1982; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

### **3.5 Ethnocentrism and COO**

Ethnocentrism is a concept challenging some of the assumptions traditional evaluation of COO. In the traditional research study it is assumed that each consumer is identified with a single country (Zolfagharian& Sun, 2010). In most of the literature related to country of origin and consumer ethnocentrism ignore the notion that not only the country of origin but the country of consumption also important (Zolfagharian, Saldivar & Sun, 2014). Cultural diversification has started to challenge the traditional assumptions. Cultural diversification has become essential phenomena in more and more countries due to immigration and inter-ethnic marriages. Technical transformation and globalization are also greatly influenced (Klein et. al., 1998; Mihailovich, 2006).

Some researchers have raised their concerns over the relevance of existing knowledge given the multicultural mosaic of contemporary society (Maheswaran &Shavitt, 2000; Miller, 1997; Yamada &Singelis, 1999). For example, existing consumer ethnocentrism scales (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and country of origin scales (Martin &Eroglu, 1993) are limiting the number of countries the respondent can choose to only one which is not relevant to most multicultural consumers without major adjustments. This will cover the information of the second or parallel option a consumer could have. Consumer ethnocentrism is studied in Sri Lankan context with reference to fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) and it concludes that COO influence brand awareness and recalled power when brand highlight ethnocentrism combined with COO ( Wanninayake & Dissanayake,2009).

Meanwhile, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel and Turner, 1986) suggests that consumers identify and aligns with their positively perceived in-groups and utilize the values, meaning and objects with in-groups to construct and negotiate a positive self-identity. Further, Social Identity Theory explains that consumers have tendency to see negatively on the values, meanings and objects of out-groups and keep them distance. The relevance of Social Identity Theory on immigrant consumers is interesting to study. Whereas local consumers belong to a single national in-group comprising the mainstream populace in the host country, immigrants face at least two in-groups including their ethnic roots associated with the home country and the larger mainstream group in the host country (Pen ˜aloza, 1994; Su et. al., 2010; Tai, 2009). When the immigrant population is large in a country, ethnocentrism plays a considerable role in country of origin effect, especially when immigrants are from many ethnically diverse countries with different roots of values. Most often immigrants maintain in-groups of both the newly settled country and where they have the roots (Askegaard et al., 2005; Oswald, 1999; Pen ˜aloza, 1994;Zolfagharian &Sun, 2010).

Research has revealed that immigrants consider the host nation and as in-group and both local and immigrants have positively bias towards the products and services manufactures in the host nation (Trefler, 1995). Consumer ethnocentrism has a significant influence over the consumer quality evaluation and purchasing decisions. Highly ethnocentric consumers in both MDC’s and LDC’s tend to purchase product and services of their own countries produce (Sharma et al., 1995); (Watson and Wright, 2000). Acharya and Elliott (2003) suggest that highly ethnocentric consumers are preferred to purchase products produced in their own country and low ethnocentric consumers are high quality products from economically developed countries.

### **3.6 Foreignness Effect of COO**

Consumers may develop a favorable emotion towards an imported products. According to Schooler (1971), this scenario can be generally observed in developing countries but that does not exclude developed countries. Foreignness is described as the general desire to associate a product has a foreign country of origin and it is beyond pure product quality or performance inferences. According to Batra et al. (2000), products from developed countries will be considered as representation of life style of developed countries and believing the consumption of such product will demonstrate a high level of social class. Emotional and symbolic meanings associated with consumers of developing countries conclude that imported products are in high quality. This effect is strongly associated with the products which are used outside or presence of other people. According to Chen, Brockner, & Katz, (1998) foreignness effect is not limited to consumers in developing nations, but it is associated with self-esteem of any consumer group. Thus, emotional and rational appeals of COO is a significant fact to investigate with country perspectives since effectiveness of promotion COO is attributed by emotional vs rational contents ( Weerasiri & Dissanayake,2010). It denotes that belonging to an elite group will seek for finest products in the category and made in a specialized country will satisfy the emotional need.

Additionally, Klein et. al. (1998) propose animosity as the ‘remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political or economic events.’ Concept of animosity demonstrate a slight different from ethnocentrism that animosity seems to have little direct effect on evaluation of the quality of the product. Animosity may prevent the customer from consuming the product. Other significant feature of animosity is it is country specific whereas ethnocentrism treats all products produce in other countries are inferior in quality (Klein, 2002). Animosity effect can be induced by military or religious reasons and it could be short term as well as long term (Klein, 2002).

#### **IV. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

Baker and Currie (1993) suggested that country of origin effect should be the fifth element of the marketing mix. From 1960's there have been many research work on the country of origin effect and majorly of these studies suggest that country of origin contribute in consumer evaluation process. (Baker and Currie, 1993; Baker and Michie, 1995; Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Thakor&Katsanis, 1997; Yaprak&Baughn, 1991). However the concern on the intensity of the influence of the country of origin remains and therefore opinions appear to differ widely (Baker and Currie, 1993). Most of the earlier studies are focused on the single cue models which means, country of origin has taken as the only cue in consumer decision making. With the identification of the lapses, later studies adding multiple cue models appear to show a much lesser role of country of origin influencing consumer product evaluation (Ahmed et.al., 1995; Ettenson et. al., 1988; Johansson 1985; Roth & Romeo, 1992).

There are empirical studies found related to the country of origin effect and concepts developed later on the consumer evaluation process on imported products. With globalization, boundaries of market place have widened like never before in the human history. According to Klein et al., (1998) and Mihailovich, (2006), cultural diversification took place in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries has made consumer behavior and decision making process much more complex. Country of origin effect not only important in imports and exports as a country but it could be narrowed down to organizational level. Further it could be associated with the brands. Developing brands in the global market will highly influenced by the country of origin. According to Al- Sulaiti and Baker (1998), among the factors influencing consumer brand knowledge, Country of origin is the most researched and it is the most discussed in the international buying behavior (Tan &Frarley, 1987; Martin &Remeo 1992; Lee &Bringberg, 1995). Previous studies confirm that country of origin influence strongly on the building a brand in the global market. As many researchers argue, significance of place of manufacturing is diminishing due to complex manufacturing methods such as multi location production and outsourcing. The notional perceived risk associated with the COO and how people respond to perceived risk need more investigations across the markets and products. But origin of brands will continue and it is a key information in customer decision making process. Future research could be more focused on brands. How Nation's equity effect brand equity will be an interesting area of study and will key knowledge in developing brands in competitive markets.

Clear understanding on the country of origin effect and own county's equity is highly important for policy makers. Improving a country as a brand is vital in improving trade balance and attracting investment (Kotler & Gertner 2002). Even though it is not researchers area of study, the knowledge crated by research on nation's equity with be useful in studies on foreign direct investments (FDI's) and various other bi-lateral negotiations. Higher the equity, higher the negotiation power. Proper understanding of country of origin effect is very important in marketing communication resulting brand awareness and recall (Wanninayake & Dissanayake, 2009). Promotional activities carried out by the government, industry associations and organizations should be done with the understanding of country of origin effect (Durand, 2015).

Studies found with different products and cases in Sri Lanka referring how brand related equity and consumer responses are created with COO and ethnocentrism including cultural value association (Koththagoda & Dissanayake, 2017; Weerasiri &Dissanayake 2010). It is said that consumers associate product quality with the country of origin depending on whether the country has favorable or unfavorable associations (Maheswaran,

1994). We suggest to examine consumer responses within industries like fast food chains that apply different marketing strategies adapting to cultural contexts including product differentiation, sensory marketing and service innovations whilst highlighting COO per say. The cross cultural consumer responses on COO is to be examined with constructive research strategies. Alongside, value association of the COO of Sri Lanka needs to be further examined when it comes to how foreign clients respond to “Made in Sri Lanka” products found in major export categories such as Tea, textile, ICT, gem, industrial products and rubber sectors products. The penetration to upmarket and new markets of those sectors need a special attention (Performance of the Export Sector of Sri Lanka, 2017). Thus, empirical studies are encouraged to examine how COO results consumer evaluations and perceptions towards Sri Lankan products within aforesaid product contexts in international markets.

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