

The Impact of Country of Origin on U.S. Consumer Intentions

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Received: Aug 12, 2024

Accepted: Sept 23, 2024

Published: Dec 30, 2024

Abstract: The country of origin (COO) effect plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making, particularly in a globalized marketplace where it acts as a heuristic influencing perceptions of product quality, brand image, and trust. This study examines the impact of COO on U.S. consumers' purchase intentions, with a specific focus on Turkish origin products and broader COO related dynamics. Using data from 255 U.S. based participants, the research explores COO's function as a cognitive cue shaping consumer evaluations across product categories. Key demographic factors, including education level and duration of residence in the U.S., are analyzed to provide a nuanced understanding of COO's influence. The findings reveal COO's dual impact: shaping perceptions of Turkish products while also uncovering broader patterns in how COO influences consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. Country image emerges as the strongest predictor of purchase intention, followed by COO perception and Türkiye specific associations. In contrast, product specific attributes like quality and value show limited direct effects, emphasizing the dominance of macro-level perceptions in global consumer behavior. This study provides actionable insights for marketers seeking to leverage COO effectively in positioning strategies. It also contributes to the literature on international trade by offering a detailed analysis of the interplay between COO and consumer behavior, particularly in the context of emerging markets like Türkiye.

Keywords: Country of Origin, Country Image, Consumer Purchase Decision

JEL Classification: P4

1. Introduction

As globalization accelerates, the influence of a product's country of origin (COO) on consumer purchasing decisions has gained increasing prominence. COO image refers to the perceptions consumers form about the country where a product is manufactured, encompassing the economic, cultural and political attributes associated with that country. These perceptions play a pivotal role in shaping how consumers

evaluate product quality, reliability, and desirability, ultimately influencing their purchase decisions.

Within this framework, the perceptions of Türkiye and its products among consumers residing in the United States, alongside the broader impact of COO on purchasing decisions, represent critical areas of inquiry. Over the past decade, Türkiye has emerged as a significant player in the global market, offering a diverse range of products recognized for their quality and value. However, understanding how American consumers perceive Turkish-origin products and how these perceptions influence their purchasing behavior remains an underexplored area requiring further investigation.

This study aims to examine the attitudes of U.S. based consumers towards products originating from Türkiye, focusing on the interplay between COO image and consumer behavior. By analyzing the perceptions of Türkiye's country image and its reflection in consumer decision-making, the research seeks to elucidate the mechanisms through which COO shapes purchase intentions and behaviors. The findings aim to provide actionable insights for Turkish producers and marketers, enabling them to develop more effective strategies for positioning their products within the competitive U.S. market.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Country of Origin

The concept of country of origin (COO) emerged as a significant factor in global trade during the early 20th century, particularly following World War I. The requirement for German manufacturers to label their products with "Made in Germany" initially served as a punitive measure but later evolved into a symbol of quality and reliability as Germany strategically enhanced its industrial policies (Han, 1989). Over time, COO has become an indispensable element in global marketing, shaping consumer perceptions and preferences.

COO encompasses a broad set of beliefs consumers hold about a country, reflecting its political, economic, and cultural attributes, as well as its historical relations and technological advancements (Mutlu et al., 2011). These perceptions are often influenced by prior experiences, biases, and impressions of the country's products and services (Cengiz, 2009). In international marketing literature, the interplay of objective and subjective factors in COO perception is termed the "Country of Origin Effect" (Armağan & Gürsoy, 2011).

COO is often associated with the "Made in" label, serving as an external cue for consumers to assess a product's quality independently of its intrinsic characteristics (Ceylan, 2010). For instance, German automobiles (e.g., BMW, Audi, Mercedes-Benz) are globally recognized for their engineering excellence, highlighting how COO can positively influence consumer attitudes. Conversely, products from less economically or politically stable countries may face skepticism despite high quality.

2.2. Consumer Purchasing Decision

2.2.1. Content of the Consumer Purchase Decision

The consumer purchasing decision refers to a multi-stage process where individuals determine when, how, and why to acquire a product or service (Coşkun, 2019). This process includes pre-purchase information search, evaluation of alternatives, the purchase itself, and post-purchase evaluation (Blackwell et al., 2001).

Studies emphasize the cognitive and emotional dimensions of purchasing decisions, with various factors influencing this process, including product characteristics, external cues like COO, and psychological motivators (Durmaz & Bahar, 2011). Additionally, demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level play pivotal roles in shaping consumer preferences (Tan & Ooi, 2018). For example, younger consumers often prioritize brand image and innovation, whereas older consumers may focus on reliability and practicality.

2.2.2. Impacting Factors on Consumer Purchase Decision

Numerous factors affect purchasing decisions, with the COO serving as a critical determinant. COO not only informs consumers about the origin of a product but also evokes associations tied to the country's economic development, cultural identity, and political stability (Roth & Romeo, 1992). These associations significantly shape consumer attitudes and influence brand loyalty.

Socio-cultural factors, including traditions, values, and social class, further contribute to purchasing behavior (Yücedağ, 2005). For example, products aligned with cultural preferences or values are more likely to resonate with consumers. Additionally, psychological factors, such as motivations and perceived risks, play a role in determining whether consumers perceive a product as trustworthy and desirable (Gunawan, 2015).

2.2.3. COO's Role in the Purchasing Process

The consumer purchasing decision process, as outlined by Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2001), consists of several key stages that guide consumers from recognizing a need to evaluating their post-purchase satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

1. Problem Recognition: COO may act as a trigger, particularly if a consumer associates a country's products with quality or innovation.

2. Information Search: COO serves as a heuristic for filtering information, especially when consumers have limited knowledge of a product.

3. Evaluation of Alternatives: Consumers compare products based on COO-related attributes, such as perceived quality or brand reputation.

4. Purchase Decision: COO can reinforce or deter the final decision, depending on the consumer's trust in the country.

5. Post-Purchase Behavior: Positive COO perceptions enhance satisfaction and brand loyalty, while negative experiences can lead to cognitive dissonance and hesitancy in future purchases (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Understanding these stages is crucial for businesses to tailor their marketing strategies effectively and meet consumer needs at each step (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

2.3 Linking COO to Consumer Purchasing Decisions

Research indicates that COO acts as a crucial extrinsic cue, particularly in situations where intrinsic product attributes are less discernible (Hui & Zhou, 2002). While COO can positively influence perceptions of quality, reliability, and desirability, its impact varies across demographic groups and cultural contexts. For instance, U.S. consumers may exhibit varying sensitivities to COO based on their cultural background and personal experiences.

This review highlights that COO is both a cognitive and emotional factor in consumer purchasing decisions. Understanding its influence is essential for businesses seeking to develop strategies that resonate with culturally diverse audiences, particularly in competitive markets like the U.S.

3. Methodology

In this study, the survey method was employed to understand how Turkish-origin products are perceived by consumers residing in the United States (U.S.) and how these perceptions influence their purchasing decisions. As a quantitative research tool, the survey is an appropriate method for collecting data from a large participant pool and

was chosen as the primary data collection instrument for this study. It was conducted using a descriptive and cross-sectional research design. This design aims to examine participants' current attitudes and behaviors within a specific time frame.

The sample of the study consists of individuals residing in the United States, representing various age groups, education levels, and socio-demographic characteristics. The sample size was maintained at a sufficient level to ensure the generalizability of the results to the broader population, and participants were selected randomly. A total of 255 individuals participated in the study.

3.1. Hypotheses

H1: Country image has a positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions.

H2: The country of origin significantly affects consumers' perceptions of quality and purchase intentions.

H3: Perceived product quality and product value positively influence consumers' purchase intentions.

H4: Perceptions of Türkiye, country image, country-of-origin effect, perceived product quality, and product value influence consumers' purchase intentions.

H5: Product quality perception and product value are associated with country image.

H6: Country of origin perception is associated with country image.

3.2. Data Collection Instrument and Process

The survey form used in the research consists of questions designed to measure variables such as participants' demographic characteristics, perception of Türkiye, country of origin perception, country image, and purchase intention. The survey was developed using closed-ended questions and Likert-type scales. The Likert scale allows participants to rate their level of agreement with specific statements on a five-point scale (1: Strongly disagree, 5: Strongly agree).

The survey was distributed to participants via an online platform. The online survey method allowed for quick and easy access to a geographically dispersed sample. The survey was completed within the specified time frame, and the data obtained were subjected to statistical analyses.

3.3. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods to examine the relationships between COO perceptions, demographic characteristics, and

purchase intentions. Descriptive statistics summarized the sample's demographic profile and general trends in key variables.

Inferential analyses included Kruskal–Wallis and Mann–Whitney U tests to assess group differences across demographic factors, correlation analysis to explore relationships among variables, and regression analysis to evaluate the predictive effects of COO perceptions, country image, and product quality on purchase intentions.

All analyses were conducted using SPSS, with Cronbach's alpha confirming the reliability of the survey instrument. Statistical significance was determined at $p < 0.05$.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1. Demographic Frequency Analysis

The distribution of participants' demographic information was examined using frequency analysis.

Table 1. Demographic Information

		n	%
Gender	Female	143	56,1
	Male	110	43,1
	Prefer not to say	2	,8
Marital Status	Married	108	42,4
	Single	147	57,6
Age	18–25	29	11,4
	26–35	81	31,8
	36+	145	56,9
Education Level	Did not graduate high school	7	2,7
	High school	71	27,8
	Associate's degree	32	12,5
	Bachelor's Degree	87	34,1
	Master or PhD degree	58	22,7
If not a native in the United States, how long have you lived here?	1–5 years	12	18,2
	6–10 years	14	21,2
	11–15 years	7	10,6
	15+ years	33	50,0

An analysis of gender distribution reveals that 56,1% of the participants are female, 43,1% are male, and 0,8% preferred not to disclose their gender. Regarding age distribution, 11,4% of the participants fall within the 18–25 age group, 31,8% are in the 26–35 age group, and 56,9% are aged 36 or older.

In terms of education, 2,7% of participants are high school dropouts, 27,8% have a high school diploma, 12,5% hold an associate's degree, 34,1% have a bachelor's degree, and 22,7% possess a master's or doctoral degree.

When examining the residency duration of non-native participants in the United States, 18,2% have lived in the country for 1-5 years, 21,2% for 6-10 years, 10,6% for 11-15 years, and 50% for more than 15 years.

4.2 COO Perceptions and Sectoral Preferences

Participants' familiarity with Turkish products and their sectoral preferences are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' Attitudes Towards Turkish Products

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Prior purchase of Turkish products	Yes	207	81,2
	No	48	18,8
Sector of Turkish products purchased	Food	159	35,7
	Jewelry	96	21,5
	Textiles	91	20,4
	Furniture	79	17,7

Most participants (81,2%) reported prior experience with Turkish products, with food products being the most frequently purchased category (35,7%), followed by jewelry (21,5%) and textiles (20,4%). These findings highlight Türkiye's competitive advantage in sectors that align with cultural expectations and preferences in the U.S. market.

4.3. Non-Parametric Tests

Non-parametric tests were performed to explore differences in COO perceptions and purchase intentions across demographic groups. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U Tests (N = 255)

Variable	Demographic Factor	p-value	Significant Difference
COO Perceptions	Gender	0,035	Male > Female
	Age	0,0025	36+ > 18-25
	Education Level	0,000	Postgraduate > High School

Significant differences in COO perceptions were observed across gender ($p = 0,035$), age ($p = 0,025$), and education level ($p < 0,05$). Male participants, older individuals (36+), and those with higher education levels demonstrated more favorable

perceptions of Türkiye and its products. These findings underscore the need for tailored marketing strategies to target specific demographic groups effectively.

4.4. Correlation Analysis

The relationships between COO perceptions, country image, product quality, and purchase intentions were analyzed using Pearson correlation. The results, summarized in Tables 4–7, reveal statistically significant correlations among the variables, providing valuable insights into the determinants of U.S. consumers' purchase decisions for Turkish-origin products.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix (N = 255)

	Türkiye Perceptions	Country Image	COO Perceptions	Product Quality and Value
Purchase Intentions	0,439*	0,385*	0,386*	0,271*

*p<0,05

The analysis revealed a statistically significant and moderate positive relationship between purchase intention and Türkiye perception ($r = 0,439$, $p < 0,05$), indicating that favorable perceptions of Türkiye enhance the likelihood of purchasing Turkish-origin products. Similarly, country image and COO perception showed moderate positive correlations with purchase intention ($r = 0,385$, $p < 0,05$ and $r = 0,386$, $p < 0,05$, respectively), highlighting their importance in shaping consumer attitudes. These results support H1, H2, and H3, confirming that country-level and origin-related factors significantly impact purchase intentions.

A weaker but still statistically significant positive correlation was observed between purchase intention and product quality and value ($r = 0,271$, $p < 0,05$). This finding supports H4, suggesting that while product-specific attributes like quality and value influence purchasing decisions, their impact is less pronounced compared to broader factors such as country image and COO perception.

Table 5. Correlation Between COO Perception and Product Quality and Value

	COO Perceptions
Product Quality and Value	0,522*

*p < 0,05.

The correlation analysis indicates a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between COO perception and product quality and value ($r = 0.522$, $p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that consumers' perceptions of a product's country of origin significantly influence their evaluations of its quality and value. A higher COO perception corresponds to higher perceived product quality and value, highlighting the importance of COO information in shaping consumer judgments about a product's attributes.

These results emphasize the role of COO perception in bridging the gap between broader country-level factors and product-specific attributes. The strong correlation supports the idea that COO perception serves as a critical intermediary influencing how consumers evaluate products based on their origin.

Table 6. Correlation Between Country Image and Product Quality and Value

	Country Image
Product Quality and Value	0,111 ($p=0,076$)

The analysis reveals a weak and statistically insignificant relationship between country image and product quality and value ($r = 0,111$, $p = 0,076$). These findings suggest that perceptions of a country's overall image do not have a direct and meaningful influence on how consumers evaluate the quality and value of its products.

The lack of a significant correlation leads to the rejection of H5, which posited that country image would be associated with product-specific attributes such as quality and value. This result highlights that product-related evaluations may depend more on factors specific to the brand or industry, rather than the broader image of the product's country of origin.

Table 7. Correlation Between COO Perception and Country Image

	COO Perception
Country Image	0,098 ($p=0,120$)

The correlation analysis indicates a weak and statistically insignificant relationship between COO perception and country image ($r = 0,098$, $p = 0,120$). These findings suggest that perceptions of a product's country of origin are not directly linked to the broader image of the country. In other words, COO perception operates independently and may be influenced by product-specific or sector-specific factors rather than general views of the country.

This result leads to the rejection of H6, which hypothesized an association between COO perception and country image. The findings underline the complexity of consumer perceptions, where COO evaluations might reflect individual product attributes more than the overarching image of the country.

4.5 Regression Analysis

To evaluate the effects of Türkiye perception, COO perception, country image, and product quality and value on purchase intention, a regression analysis was conducted. This analysis provides insights into the relative importance of each independent variable in predicting consumer purchase intention. The results are summarized in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Regression Analysis: Predictors of Purchase Intention.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	T	P-Value	Std. Beta	F	Model P-Value	Adjusted R ²
Purchase Intention	Constant	0,91	3,14	0,002	-	31,6	0,000	0,34
	Türkiye Perception	0,29	4,81	0,000	0,28			
	COO Perception	0,14	3,03	0,003	0,20			
	Country Image	0,44	6,07	0,000	0,32			
	Product Quality and Value	0,05	0,75	0,452	0,04			

The regression model demonstrates that Türkiye perception, country image, and COO perception have statistically significant effects on purchase intention ($p < 0,05$). The model explains 34% of the variance in purchase intention (Adjusted R² = 0,34), indicating that these variables collectively have a substantial impact on consumer behavior.

Among the predictors, country image emerges as the most influential factor ($\beta = 0,44$, $p = 0,000$), suggesting that an increase of one unit in country image leads to a 0,44 unit increase in purchase intention. Türkiye perception follows as the second most significant predictor ($\beta = 0,29$, $p = 0,000$), with each one-unit increase in Türkiye perception resulting in a 0,29 unit increase in purchase intention. COO perception also has a significant but smaller effect ($\beta = 0,14$, $p = 0,003$), indicating its relatively modest role in shaping purchase intentions.

In contrast, the effect of product quality and value on purchase intention was found to be statistically insignificant ($\beta = 0,05$, $p = 0,452$). This suggests that consumers'

evaluations of product-specific attributes such as quality and value do not directly influence their overall purchase intention in this context. Excluding this variable from the model did not significantly alter the model's explanatory power, confirming its limited contribution.

These findings support the primary hypotheses (H1, H2, H3) by demonstrating the critical role of Türkiye perception, country image, and COO perception in shaping purchase intentions. However, the results lead to the rejection of H4, which proposed a significant effect of product quality and value on purchase intention. The prominence of country image as the strongest predictor underscores the importance of a country's overall reputation in influencing consumer behavior.

Table 9. Regression Analysis for the Effect of Türkiye Perception on Purchase Intention

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	β	T	P-Value	Std. Beta
Purchase Intention	Türkiye Perception	0,29	4,81	0,000	0,28

The regression analysis indicates that Türkiye perception has a statistically significant and positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0,29$, $p < 0,05$). This finding supports H1, suggesting that consumers with favorable perceptions of Türkiye are more likely to consider purchasing Turkish-origin products. The standardized beta coefficient (Std. Beta = 0,28) highlights Türkiye perception as a moderately strong predictor of purchase intention.

Table 10. Regression Analysis for the Effect of Country Image on Purchase Intention

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	β	T	P-Value	Std. Beta
Purchase Intention	Country Image	0,44	6,07	0,000	0,32

The regression analysis shows that country image has a significant and positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0,44$, $p < 0,05$). This result supports H2, indicating that a stronger and more favorable country image leads to higher purchase intention. The standardized beta coefficient (Std. Beta = 0,32) demonstrates that country image is one of the strongest predictors of purchase intention, surpassing other variables like COO perception and product quality.

Table 11. Hypotheses Testing Summary

	Path	Findings
H1	Country image → Purchase intention	Country image significantly impacts purchase intention.
H2	COO perception → Purchase intention	Positive COO perception leads to stronger purchase intention.
H3	Türkiye perception → Purchase intention	Türkiye perception strongly predicts purchase intention.
H4	Product quality and value → Purchase intention	No significant effect observed.
H5	Product quality and value → Country image	Weak and statistically insignificant relationship.
H6	COO perception → Country image	No significant relationship identified.

The hypotheses testing revealed significant insights into the role of country level factors such as country image and COO perception in shaping purchase intentions. While H1, H2, and H3 demonstrated strong support, highlighting the importance of broader macro-level perceptions, H4, H5, and H6 were not supported, suggesting that product specific attributes and the relationship between COO perception and country image are less impactful in this context. These findings underline the dominance of country-level constructs over product specific evaluations in influencing U.S. consumer behavior toward Turkish origin products.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing U.S. consumers' purchase intentions toward Turkish-origin products. The findings highlight the dominant role of country-level factors such as country image and COO perception over product-specific attributes like quality and value. The significant effect of country image (H2 supported) aligns with Saridakis and Baltas's (2016) findings, emphasizing that a positive COO association can drive brand differentiation and pricing power. Similarly, the results support Blanco-Encomienda et al.'s (2024) argument that COO perception indirectly influences consumer behavior by shaping brand-related attitudes.

The rejection of H4 regarding the impact of product quality and value on purchase intention presents a deviation from earlier studies, such as Zeithaml (1988), which emphasized quality as a central determinant in consumer decision-making. This discrepancy may be attributed to the overarching influence of macro-level perceptions like country image and COO, as noted by Li et al. (2021), who found that psychological

and cultural factors play a greater role in shaping consumer preferences in globalized markets.

The study also highlights notable demographic differences. Male participants exhibited stronger purchase intentions and more favorable perceptions of Türkiye, consistent with Bakewell and Mitchell's (2003) research on pragmatic decision-making among male consumers. Additionally, participants with higher education levels displayed a more positive perception of Türkiye, supporting Josiassen's (2011) findings that educated consumers evaluate COO attributes more objectively and are more open to cultural diversity.

However, the divergence between this study's findings and prior research may stem from the unique characteristics of the U.S. consumer market and the specific context of Turkish-origin products. In globalized markets like the U.S., macro-level factors such as country image and COO perception may overshadow product-specific attributes like quality and value. Consumers might rely more on general perceptions about a country due to the abundance of product options and their limited ability to evaluate every product individually. This aligns with the heuristic role of COO as a cognitive shortcut in decision-making.

Additionally, the lack of a significant relationship between COO perception and country image (H6) may reflect the fragmented nature of Turkish product awareness in the U.S. market. While some Turkish products, such as textiles and food, enjoy a positive reputation, this sectoral differentiation may prevent the broader country image from directly influencing product evaluations. This suggests that U.S. consumers perceive Turkish products more on a category-specific basis rather than as a unified representation of the country's overall image.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings highlight the evolving dynamics of COO effects in highly competitive and diverse markets. The increasing importance of sustainability, branding, and digital marketing strategies might also dilute the impact of traditional COO perceptions. For Turkish producers, this presents an opportunity to strengthen sector-specific branding while working to enhance the consistency and visibility of Türkiye's overall image in global markets.

These findings underscore the importance of leveraging Türkiye's cultural and economic strengths while addressing the limitations of product-specific attributes. The results offer both theoretical and practical implications for understanding the interplay

of macro- and micro-level factors in shaping consumer behavior toward Turkish-origin products.

5.2. Conclusion

The study confirms that country image is the most influential factor in shaping purchase intentions, followed by Türkiye perception and COO perception. These findings demonstrate that a strong and favorable national image is essential for enhancing the competitiveness of Turkish origin products in international markets. The insignificant role of product quality and value highlights the dominance of macro-level perceptions in this context.

Overall, the results reinforce the importance of strategic marketing efforts focused on strengthening Türkiye's global image. By aligning branding strategies with broader cultural and geographic narratives, Turkish brands can enhance their appeal and competitiveness in diverse consumer markets.

The findings of this study underline the importance of strengthening Türkiye's national branding to improve the global perception of its products. Policymakers and practitioners should focus on developing cohesive campaigns that emphasize Türkiye's cultural richness, innovative production capabilities, and adherence to international quality standards. Clear and consistent COO labels, such as "Made in Türkiye," should be utilized across marketing channels to foster trust and authenticity among consumers. These efforts can enhance the competitiveness of Turkish origin products, particularly in competitive markets like the United States.

Targeted marketing strategies should also be developed to cater to specific demographic groups. For instance, campaigns tailored to male consumers could highlight the reliability and practicality of Turkish products, while messaging for educated audiences should emphasize innovation, sustainability, and quality. Additionally, Turkish brands should strengthen their presence in retail and e-commerce channels by collaborating with major U.S. retailers and platforms such as Amazon and Walmart. Highlighting unique product attributes through detailed descriptions and engaging visual content can further attract consumer interest and boost sales.

From an academic perspective, future research should focus on exploring cross-cultural differences in COO perceptions to identify how Turkish products are perceived in diverse global markets. Comparative studies across regions, such as Europe and

Asia, could provide valuable insights into the factors that influence consumer behavior in different cultural contexts. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to examine the long-term impact of national branding and marketing initiatives on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions.

Furthermore, investigating emerging trends such as sustainability and digital marketing can shed light on how these factors interact with COO perceptions. Understanding the role of eco-friendly production processes and digital communication strategies can provide actionable insights for both academics and practitioners aiming to enhance the marketability of Turkish origin products.

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