

Country-of-Origin and Consumer Purchase Intention in the Sri Lankan Smartphone Market: The Mediating Roles of Brand Image and Attitude Toward the Brand (Western Province)

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Abstract

This study focuses on examining how the country-of-origin influences the purchase intention of Sri Lankan Consumers in Western Province. Data were collected from 384 respondents using the purposive sampling technique via an online questionnaire. Researcher used the bootstrapping method to explore how Brand Image and Attitude Towards the Brand act as bridges connecting Country of Origin with Purchase Intention. Findings reveal that Attitude Towards the Brand significantly mediates the relationship between Country of Origin and Purchase Intention, while Brand Image has no mediating effect. Furthermore, there is a direct relationship between the Country of Origin and Purchase intention of Consumers. This research contributes to the theoretical framework by focusing on the role of Brand Image and Attitude towards the Brand in mediating the relationship between Country of origin and Purchase intention of smartphones.

Keywords: *Attitude towards the brand, Brand image, Consumer purchase intention, Country-of-origin, Sri Lankan smartphone market*

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Introduction

Nowadays smartphones are essential component for people's lives. According to Statista, 2024, it is expected to increase the smartphone users up to 7.49 billion by 2025. Sri Lanka's smartphone market is expected to generate US\$0.7 billion in revenue by 2024, growing at a 4.44% annual rate (Statista, 2024). According to the Global System for Mobile Communication, there were 36.18 million cellular mobile phone connections in Sri Lanka at the beginning of 2023 (Kemp, 2023). Therefore, the Sri Lankan smartphone market is experiencing rapid growth, driven by increasing consumer demand, technological advancements, and an increase in digital connectivity across the country. According to Stat Counter Global Stats (2024), Samsung controls 37% of the smartphone market, Apple owns 13%, Huawei 7%, Vivo 5%, and Oppo 5% in the Sri Lankan Smartphone market.

Consumer Purchase intention can be define as the decision or mental reaction that shows a person's willingness to buy a product (Wang & Yang, 2008). Chen et al. (2018) define purchase intention as customers evaluating a product and choosing the one that offers the most expected satisfaction. Several factors influence consumers' purchase intention, shaping their decision-making and buying behavior. Brand, quality, price-performance ratio, and country of origin are among the vital factors which are impacting consumers' purchase intentions. (Sachinila & Leon, 2022). The country of origin is a key predictor that strongly influences consumer purchase intentions. According to Zbib et al. (2010), customers' perception of a product's country of origin enhances their perception that goods from that nation are superior to those from other nations.

According to the Schooler (1965), Consumers show emotional bias when judging products based on their country of

origin. When assessing products based on their place of origin, consumers frequently exhibit emotional biases since these opinions are affected by affective attitudes and preconceptions about the nation (Westjohn, & Zdravkovic, 2011). A recent study conducted by Smith and Lee (2024) found that consumers' emotional response to a product's country of origin act as a crucial role in influencing the consumer's purchase intention. The country of origin is a key predictor to influence consumer thoughts when they make purchasing decisions about a product.

There are lacuna of knowledge on exploring the relationship between the country of origin and purchase intention of Sri Lankan consumers (Sachinila & Leon, 2022). Furthermore, Tamas (2015), discovered that the impact of country of origin on consumer buying behavior is varying over time. Sri Lanka's smartphone market is expected to generate US\$0.7 billion in revenue by 2024, growing at a 4.44% annual rate (Statista, 2024). Smartphone usage is increasing in the Sri Lankan context.

This study addresses how Sri Lankan smartphone users' purchase intentions are influenced by their country of origin, brand image, and attitude toward the brand. Scholars identified that there is a considerable impact of country of origin on Consumer behavior in different markets and Products (Nguyen et al., 2023). Brand Image and attitude towards the brand mediate the relationship between country of origin and purchase intention of consumers (Smith & Lee, 2024). Understanding this mediating impact is important for marketers to make relevant strategies for specific cultural contexts (Chen & He, 2023). The findings of this study provide valuable insights for smartphone manufacturers and importers to understand the Sri Lankan consumers in a better way. Moreover, over this research lays the foundation for future research on how the country-of-origin influences



purchase decisions across various product categories.

Literature Review

Country of Origin

The nation of origin can be characterized as the nation in which the corporate headquarters of the firm that markets the brand is situated, irrespective of the location of the brand's manufacturing. (Rezvani et al., 2012). According to Schooler (1965), Consumers show emotional bias when judging products based on their country of origin. For instance, consumers' buying intentions are influenced by the perception that products from a particular country are of higher quality (Blanco-Encomienda, 2023). Similarly, signaling theory act as a quality signal, particularly by high involvement products like smartphones, where consumers associate with innovation and reliability (Blanco-Encomienda, 2023). Many businesses use the country of origin as a marketing mechanism to sell their products (Verlegh et al., 2005). Thus, it is evident that the country of origin impact consumers' purchase intentions. The purchasing decisions of Sri Lankan consumers are significantly influenced by their Country of origin. Dharmadasa and Wijewardena (2019), show that consumer decisions in Sri Lankan consumer preferences are affected by the Country of Origin. Emotional and quality perceptions are key factors in purchase decisions. The impact of country of origin on customer purchase intentions has been studied for decades, yet cultural and historical factors influence how consumers evaluate items when making decisions based on country of origin (Rezvani et al., 2012). However, some studies show that cultural pride influence some Sri Lankan customers to purchase Sri Lankan products (Perera, 2021), highlighting that both positive and negative effect of country of origin. Therefore, the generalizability of findings from another context to the Sri Lankan context is limited.

Purchase Intention

Today, international trademarks are popular and play a key role in attracting customers to products. However, many factors affect a product's success and customer choices. Intention can be defined as the decision or mental reaction that shows a person's willingness to buy a product (Wang & Yang, 2008). Another definition states that purchase intention refers to an individual's willingness to consider buying a specific brand (Rezvani et al., 2012). According to the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), attitude towards the brand significantly influences purchase intention. Daneshvary and Schower (2000) suggest that purchase intention is linked to demographic factors such as age, gender, occupation, and education. Another perspective suggests that specific product features, consumer perceptions, the country of origin, and how the country of origin is perceived all impact customer purchase intentions (Wang et al., 2012). Country of origin is one of the significant factors that is impacting Consumer purchase intention. The findings show that consumers often judge products from developing countries unfairly due to past biases, causing these countries to face unfair evaluations (Rezvani et al., 2012). Furthermore, consumers consider the country of origin as a sign of a product's quality (Lee & Lee, 2009). According to the scholars mentioned above, many people believe that products from developing countries are of poor quality.

Brand Image

The brand image represents the emotions tied to a company's brand or products that greatly affect consumer buying behavior (Arora and Stoner, 2009). Kotler and Armstrong (2008) suggest that consumers' attitude toward a particular brand include their assessments, emotional feelings, and tendencies toward that brand. According to the brand equity theory (Keller, 1993), Country of origin enhances the brand

image by reinforcing the perception of quality and prestige. Haque et al. (2015) showed that the image of a country's origin has a notable positive impact on brand image. At the emotional level, consumers' feelings toward a country significantly influence its brand image. This suggests that consumer's project their emotions about a particular country onto the brands associated with it (Blanco-Encomienda et al., 2023). Therefore, it is evident that there is a significant connection between the country of origin and the brand image of a product. Furthermore, "Consumer ethnocentrism" means consumers prefer local brands over foreign ones, no matter the product's features (De Mooji, 2011). In the Sri Lankan Context, studies have shown that consumer ethnocentrism impacts the purchasing behavior of customers, particularly young consumers. According to Karunaratne and Silili (2014), due to ethnocentric ideas, Sri Lankan youngsters are more likely to buy native products. However, the smartphone market in Sri Lanka is largely controlled by international brands such as Samsung, Apple, Huawei, Vivo, and Oppo. Local companies have tried to promote the "Made in Sri Lanka" label, but consumers still prefer to buy established international smartphone brands.

Consumer Attitude towards the Brand

Purchase intention and attitude are different. Attitude is how a person evaluates a product, while purchase intention is their readiness to buy it (Khan et al., 2009). Customers usually form attitudes based on their experiences with a brand's products. While a consumer's attitude toward a brand tends to remain stable over time, it can change due to factors such as new product experiences, advertising, and customer satisfaction (Solomon, 2020). In Sri Lanka, the nation of origin has a significant influence on perceptions of smartphone brands. Because of their reputation for high quality and cutting-edge technology,

brands from Countries like China and South Korea are seen favorably (Anuradha & Bandara, 2021). According to Oduro et al. (2023), countries known for producing high-quality products generally inspire a positive attitude in consumers toward products from those countries, and this is consistent with the findings of the above scholars. According to theory of reasoned action, attitude directly influences purchase intention. However, attitudes can change over time based on new experiences, advertising, and satisfaction (Solomon, 2020). For instance, if a Sri Lankan consumer has a bad experience with a smartphone, like frequent technical issues, their attitude toward the brand may change, making them less likely to buy it again. On the other hand, when people have negative feelings toward a country, often due to political or social factors, they are less likely to accept the product from that country.

Impact of Country of Origin on Purchase Intention

There is a significant positive relationship between the Country of origin and the consumer purchase intention, indicating that the origin of the product is a crucial factor that influences the purchasing decisions of the consumers (Sachinila & Leon, 2022). Therefore, researchers suggest the following hypothesis. It's interesting to note that a large percentage of Sri Lankans believe that smartphones from Western companies, like Apple, are of superior quality, which frequently leads to increased intent to buy these goods (Perera & Weerasinghe, 2018).

H1: Country of Origin positively impacts the consumer's Purchase Intention

Impact of Country of Origin on Brand Image

The brand image represents the emotions tied to a company's brand or products that greatly affect consumer purchasing behavior (Arora and Stoner, 2009). Haque



et al. (2015) showed that the image of a country's origin has a positive impact on brand image. Therefore, the researchers proposed the following hypothesis.

H2: Country of Origin positively impact the Brand Image

Impact of Country of Origin on Attitude towards the Brand

There are studies that explored the connection between the COO and Brand Image and consumer attitude towards the brand in several product categories like beer and computers (Chen, 2010), and milk powder (Nguyen et al., 2019).

In each case, the research consistently shows that the country of origin has a positive impact on consumer attitudes.

H3: Country of Origin Positively Impacts the Attitude towards the Brand

Impact of Brand Image of Origin on Consumer's Purchase Intention

Blanco-Encomienda and Munoz (2023) also highlight brand image as a key factor in purchase decisions. Similarly, Khuong and Tran (2018) state that a better brand image increases the likelihood of purchase. Therefore, the researchers propose the following hypothesis.

H4: Brand Image positively impacts the Purchase intention

Impact of Attitude toward the Brand on Consumers' Purchase Intention

According to Sha et al (2012), the Attitude towards the Brand has a significant positive effect on the consumer purchase intention. According to Jain & Singla (2023), consumer attitudes towards a brand significantly affect consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested based on the above information.

H5: Attitude towards the Brand will positively affect the Purchase intention

Mediation Impact of Brand and Consumer Attitude towards the Brand

Research evidence also supports this mediation effect. For instance, Haque et al. (2015) showed that a product's country of origin can strengthen its brand image, which then encourages consumers to buy it. Jain and Singla (2023) further highlighted that in high-involvement products such as smartphones, the impact of COO on purchase decisions mainly works through brand image rather than directly. In Sri Lanka, Perera and Weerasinghe (2018) found that many consumers are drawn to Western smartphone brands because the positive image of those countries is transferred to the brands themselves, making people more willing to purchase them.

H6a: Brand Image mediates the relationship between Country of Origin and Purchase Intention.

Previous studies have shown that consumers generally develop more positive attitudes toward products from technologically advanced countries, and these favorable attitudes increase their likelihood of buying those products (Oduro et al., 2023; Anuradha & Bandara, 2021). Similarly, Jain and Singla (2023) highlight that in high-involvement products like smartphones, the impact of COO on purchase decisions is channeled mainly through the attitudes consumers develop. This suggests that consumer attitude plays a mediating role by translating COO perceptions into actual purchase intentions.

H6b: Consumer Attitude mediates the relationship between Country of Origin and Purchase Intention.

Based on the following findings, the researchers developed the following model.

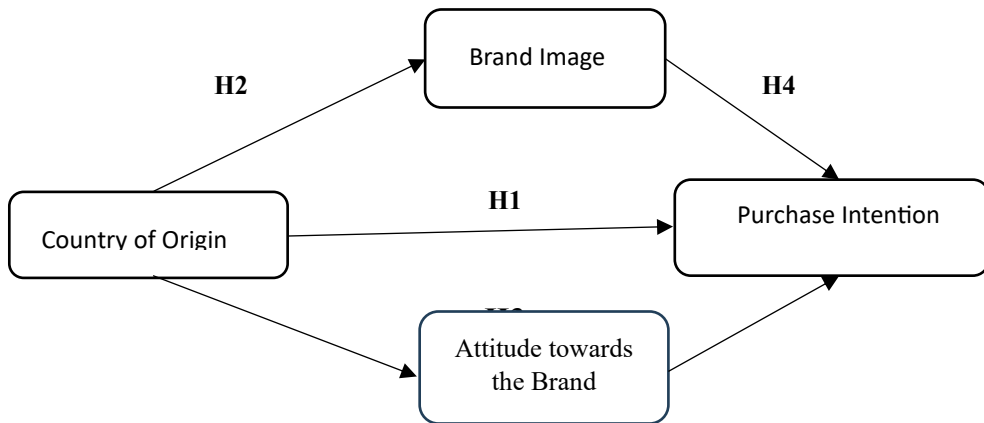


Figure 01: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by the Author

Methodology

This study employs purposive sampling to target smartphone buyers in the Western province, as they are more likely to be exposed to international smartphone brands and possess relevant knowledge about Country of Origin (COO), Brand Image (BI), and Purchase Intention (PI) (Etikan et al., 2016; Tongco, 2007). Given that Western province represents a major economic and technological hub in Sri Lanka, its consumers are highly engaged with global brands, making this sampling approach appropriate for the research objectives (Patton, 2015). On the other hand western province is the most urbanized region in the country and 28% of national population with highest smartphone penetration rates (Department of Census and Statistics, 2022). According to Hayes (2018), a minimum of 100-150 respondents is recommended for conducting robust mediation analysis. This ensures that the indirect effects can be reliably estimated and that the results are statistically significant. In this study, there are two mediators and one independent and dependent variable, therefore, in order to ensure the credibility of the results the data was collected from

384 participants through an online questionnaire. To ensure the respondents were relevant to the study, researcher used a screening question as “Do you intended to buy a smartphone within the next six months?” Only the respondents who said yes were included in to survey, and others were excluded. It’s crucial to have fair representation from the three districts in western province (Colombo District, Gampaha District, and Kalutara District). The three districts represent a mix of urban and semi-urban consumers, and it ensures the generalizability within the most economically vibrant region in Sri Lanka. As of 2021, the population of Colombo district is 2,479,518, the population density of Gampaha district is 2,423,000 and the population density of Kalutara district is 1,296,003 (Census and statistics, 2021). The total population from three districts is 6,198,521. Based on the population density, the sample was selected. Based on the population, 41% (157 respondents) of the respondents are selected from the Western province, 39% (150) of the respondents are selected from the Gampaha district, and 20% (77 respondents) of the respondents are

selected from the Kalutara District. The online questionnaire (Annexure 02) was distributed through the Social Media platform, such as Facebook, WhatsApp group, and e-mails. The questionnaire was sent to 500 participants and some of them are excluded due to mistakes in their responses. The questionnaire has two parts, and the first part comprises the demographic details of the respondents, and the next part included the measurement items to measure the variables (COO, BI, PI, ATB). 5-point Likert scale is used to conduct the study

which ranges from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). The measurement instruments, which are adopted from Blanco-Encomienda et al. (2023), and presented in Table 01. The demographic details of the respondents are presented in Table 02. The Bootstrapping technique is used to analyze the mediation impact of the model. IBM SPSS 27 Software (Process Macro Model 4) was used to analyze the data.

Table 01: Operationalization Table

Construct	Item	Code	Source
Country-of-origin (COO)	The technological products of this country are considered superior quality products	COO1	Blanco-Encomienda et al., 2023
	Technological products from this country are distributed and sold worldwide.	COO2	
	This country's technological products are manufactured by qualified professionals	COO3	
	The technological products of this country are reliable	COO4	
Brand Image (BI)	This smartphone brand have an interesting design	BI1	Blanco-Encomienda et al., 2023
	The company has a good reputation	BI2	
	This smartphone brand has interesting functions	BI3	
	The company is maintain strong research and development and innovation skills	BI4	
Attitude toward the brand (ATB)	I think this smartphone brand is attractive	ATB1	Blanco-Encomienda et al., 2023
	I have a positive view of this smartphone brand.	ATB2	
	I have a positive opinion towards this smartphone brand.	ATB3	
	Purchasing a smartphone from this manufacturer is an excellent idea.	ATB4	

Purchase Intention (PI)	If I were planning to buy a smartphone, I would consider getting it from this company, which originated from this country	PI1	Blanco-Encomienda et al., 2023
	In the future, I plan on purchasing devices from this brand and nation.	PI2	
	I would purchase smartphones from this brand and nation instead of any other accessible.	PI3	
	I would recommend that other people buy smartphones from this brand and nation.	PI4	

Source: Developed by the author

Table 02: Demographic Details of the respondents

Description	Categories	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	256	66.7%
	Female	128	33.3%
Age	20-24	59	15.4%
	25-29	145	37.8%
	30-34	119	31%
	35-39	61	15.9%
Education	Master's Degree	116	30.2%
	Bachelor's Degree	189	49.2%
	Diploma	37	9.6%
	Advanced Level	40	10.4%
	Other	2	0.5%
Occupation	Student	43	11.2%
	Private sector employees	247	64.3%
	Public sector employees	90	23.4%
	Self employed	4	1%
Favorite Smart Phone Brands	Samsung	98	25.5%
	Apple	121	31.5%
	Huawei	25	6.5%
	Vivo	18	4.7%
	Oppo	21	5.5%
	Xiaomi	87	22.7%
District	Colombo	157	41%



	Kalutara	150	39%
	Gampaha	77	20%

Source: Developed by Author

Results and Data Analysis

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis is an important step to ensure the internal consistency among measurement instruments used in the study. According to Nunnally & Bernstein (1994), a reliable instrument reduces the measurement errors in the instrument and provides credible results. According to Hair et al. (2019), Cronbach's Alpha assesses the internal consistency among the measurement instruments and authors

further explained that values higher than 0.70 are in the acceptable range. The Cronbach's Alpha values of the measurement instruments are mentioned in the table below. All the values in the measurement instruments exceed 0.7, showing that the internal consistency of the instruments falls within the acceptable range.

Table 03: Reliability Analysis

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha Values	No of Items
Country of Origin (COO)	0.788	04
Brand Image (BI)	0.804	04
Attitude Towards the Brand (ATB)	0.848	04
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.880	04

Source: SPSS Output

Model Summary

Table 04: Model Summary

Outcome Variables	R	R ²	MSE	F	df1	df2	P values
Brand Image	0.5511	0.3037	0.2014	166.6187	1	382	0.000
Attitude Towards the Brand	0.5382	0.2897	0.2211	155.8092	1	382	0.000
Purchase Intention	0.6371	0.4059	0.3046	86.5444	3	380	0.000

Source: SPSS Output

Table IV presents the model summaries regarding the relationships between Country of Origin (COO), Brand Image (BI), and Attitude towards the Brand (ATB) and Purchase intention. The results indicate that COO explains a significant variance in BI (30.37%) and ATTB (28.97%). The full model, incorporating COO, BI, and ATTB, explains 40.59% of the variance in (Purchase Intention) PI. The F statistics (166.6187) in BI explain that the model is statistically significant in

explaining the variation in Brand image in the model. Furthermore, the F-statistic (155.8092) of ATB depicts the model as statistically significant in explaining the

variance in ATB in the model. Moreover, the F-statistic (86.5444) of PI indicates that the model is statistically significant.

Regression Analysis



Multiple regression analyses were implemented to evaluate the direct influence of COO on BI and ATTB, as well as the cumulative effect of all variables on PI.

Effect of the Country of Origin on Brand Image

Table 05: Regression Result for Brand Image

Predictor	Co efficient	SE	P value	T value	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant	2.4305	0.1524	0.000	15.9457	2.1308	2.7302
COO	0.4724	0.0366	0.000	12.9081	0.4005	0.5444

Source: SPSS Output

COO is significantly predicting the BI because the P value is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). Therefore, we can conclude that the COO is having a significant positive impact on the BI. Furthermore, T value (12.9081) is larger than 2, it explains that the COO is highly statistically significant. Specifically, the positive coefficient

of 0.4724 suggests that an increase in the perceived favorability of the Country of Origin is associated with a corresponding increase in Brand Image. As a conclusion, the COO has a significant positive impact on the BI.

Effect of Country of Origin on Attitude towards the Brand

Table 06: Regression Results for Attitude towards the Brand

Predictor	Co efficient	SE	P Value	T value	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant	2.4379	0.1597	0.000	15.2639	2.1238	2.7519
COO	0.4787	0.0384	0.000	12.4824	0.4033	0.5541

Source: SPSS output

The analysis indicates that COO is a significant predictor of ATTB, as the p-value of 0.0000 is well below the critical threshold of 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). This shows that the relationship between COO and ATTB is statistically significant. The positive coefficient of 0.4787 further explains that a more favorable

perception of the COO leads to an improvement in the ATTB. Moreover, the T value (12.4824) is higher than 2, which shows that the COO and ATTB are highly statistically significant. As a conclusion, COO has a positive influence on attitude towards the brand.

Effect of Country of Origin, Brand Image, and Attitude towards the Brand on Purchase Intention

Table 07: Regression Results for Purchase Intention

Predictor	Co efficient	SE	P Value	T value	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant	0.0418	0.2500	0.8673	0.1672	-0.4498	0.5334



COO	0.3485	0.0554	0.000	6.2905	0.2396	0.4575
BI	0.1614	0.0818	0.0492	1.9735	0.0006	0.3222
ATB	0.3988	0.0781	0.000	5.1091	0.2453	0.5523

Source: SPSS output

The COO has a significant positive impact on PI because the P value (0.000) is less than 0.05. The P values of both BI and ATB ($P < 0.05$) show a significant effect on PI. Furthermore, we can conclude that ATB shows a stronger impact on PI than the BI. The effect on BI ($P = 0.0492$) is significant and relatively smaller when compared to the value of ATB ($P = 0.000$). As a conclusion, COO has a significant positive impact on PI and Brand image has

a weak but significant positive impact on PI. Moreover, ATB has a strongly significant positive impact on the PI.

Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis was conducted to identify the direct and indirect effects of COO on PI through BI and ATB. The results for the direct and indirect effect are presented below.

Table 08: Direct Effect and Indirect Effect of Mediation Analysis (Bootstrap Analysis)

Effect	Effect	SE	T	P value	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Direct Effect	0.3485	0.0554	6.2905	0.000	0.2396	0.4575
Indirect Effect	0.2672	0.0448	-	-	0.1807	0.3547
BI	0.0763	0.0501	-	-	-0.0230	0.1751
ATB	0.1909	0.0579	-	-	0.0847	0.3092

Source: SPSS output

The direct effect on COO on PI is 0.3485 and P value is 0.000, and it is less than 0.05, showing a statistically significant direct impact between the COO and PI. The indirect effect through the BI is 0.0763 and confidence intervals (-0.0230, 0.1751) include 0 and it explains that the effect is not statistically significant. It means that the BI does not strongly mediate the relationship between COO

and PI. The indirect effect through ATB is 0.1909 and the confidence intervals are

(0.0847, 0.3092) and do not include 0, confirming the statistical significance. This suggests that the ATB is significantly mediating the relationship between the COO and PI. Moreover, Partial mediation is present since the total indirect effect is significant, but COO still has a direct effect on PI.

Table 09: Hypotheses Summary

Hypotheses	Accept or rejected
H1: Country of Origin positively affects the Purchase intention	Accepted
H2: Country of Origin positively affects the Brand Image	Accepted
H3: Country of Origin positively affects the Attitude Towards the Brand	Accepted
H4 : Brand Image will positively impact the Purchase intention	Accepted
H5: Attitude towards the brand will positively affect the Purchase intention	Accepted



H6: Brand image mediates the relationship between country of origin and purchase intention	Rejected
H7: Attitude towards the brand mediates the relationship between the Country of origin and purchase intention	Accepted

Source: Developed by Author

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigates the role of two mediators, Brand Image and Attitude towards the Brand, in determining the impact of Country of Origin on purchase intention. Consumers' purchase intentions are influenced by the perception that products from a particular country are of higher quality (Blanco-Encomienda, 2023). This study also shows that the Country of Origin positively influences the purchase intention of smartphone buyers in the western province of Sri Lanka. Moreover, Haque et al. (2015) showed that the image of a country's origin has a notable positive impact on brand image. In this study, it also shows that the Country of Origin has a positive impact on the Brand Image.

The relationship between country-of-origin image and consumer attitudes toward brands has been studied across various product categories, such as beer and personal computers (Chen, 2010), and powdered milk (Nguyen et al., 2019). In each of the cases, it shows that the Country of Origin has a positive impact towards the Attitude towards the Brand. In this study, it is also proven that by showing the favorable impact of the Country of origin towards the Attitude towards the Brand. Furthermore, Blanco-Encomienda and Munoz (2023) provided that brand image as a key factor in purchase decisions. Similarly, Khuong and Tran (2018) state that a better brand image increases the likelihood of purchase intention of customers. In this study, it also shows that the Brand Image has a favorable impact towards the purchase

intention of smartphone buyers of Sri Lanka.

According to Sha et al, 2012, the Attitude towards the Brand has a significant positive attitude towards the consumer purchase intention. This study also shows that the Attitude towards the Brand has a positive impact towards the purchase intention of smartphone buyers in the Sri Lankan context. Moreover, the Brand image does not have a strong mediating effect on the relationship between the Country of Origin and Purchase intention of smartphone buyers in Western Province. But the Attitude towards the Brand has a strong mediating effect on the relationship between the Country of Origin and Smartphone buyers. Moreover, Partial mediation is present since the total indirect effect is significant, but COO still has a direct effect on PI.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature by enhancing the understanding of how Country of Origin affects consumer purchase intention, particularly in the context of smartphone buyers in Sri Lanka. The research investigates the role of Brand Image and Attitude towards the Brand as important mediators in the relationship between Country of Origin and purchase intention. This adds to the theoretical framework by demonstrating how these mediators can strengthen or weaken the influence of Country of Origin on Purchase intention of the smartphone buyers in the Sri Lankan Context.

The study broadens the scope of the Country of Origin by exploring its



application in the smartphone market in Sri Lanka, a developing country. This offers fresh insights on how the Country of origin impacts the consumer purchase intention in emerging markets like the Sri Lankan Market.

Managerial Implications

This study proved that Country of origin significantly influences consumer purchase intention. Managers can use this fresh insight to strategically prove that the country of origin can be used as a marketing mechanism to attract the customers towards their brand. This study offers managers a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in emerging markets like Sri Lanka. By recognizing the influence of Country of Origin on purchase intention, managers can develop strategies to align with the unique preferences and cultural values of the Sri Lankan Market and consumers.

Moreover, this study provides new insights regarding the consumer

preferences for several smartphone brands. This study provides important insights into consumer behavior while purchasing mobile phones. It also discusses how customers might become more conscious of the impact of country-specific views on purchasing decisions. This awareness may eventually cause individuals to reevaluate or even prioritize a Country of origin over other considerations when making a purchase.

Future Research Areas

This study only focused on Western Province. Future researchers can expand this by incorporating the other provinces in Sri Lanka. There may be a difference in perception regarding the Country of origin. Future research can concentrate on low participation products like FMCG with respect to the country of origin and high involvement products like computers and cars; however, this study only looked at Smartphones.

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