

How Does the Country-of-Origin Influence Consumer Purchase Decisions? Evidences from Oman

Eman Al-Abri¹

Department of Management, University of Nizwa

Mohammed Usman²

Department of Economics, University of Nizwa

Swadhin Mondal³

Department of Economics, University of Nizwa

Abstract

Country-of-origin is one of the important factors that play a significant role in consumer's purchase decision. This study examines how the country-of-origin factors affect Omani consumers towards their purchasing process to choose domestic products or foreign products and how the country's law affects the decision by using primary survey data collected from 400 Omani consumers from January to February 2020. The study found that the country of origin and consumerism both have a positive relationship with domestic products. However, the study revealed no significant moderation effects of countries laws in predicting foreign products' prestige. This indicates that the country rules and regulations do not affect the relationship between country of origin and foreign products' prestige on Omani consumers. Omani consumers are less likely to purchase their products for prestige, and they are not concern about it. They do not judge the quality of products according to the country of origin. The study discards the idea which called that the developed countries products were higher quality than developing countries. The study concludes that Omani consumers are concerned with the country of origin when purchasing domestic products. However, country rules and regulations do not influence the relationship between country of origin and domestic products.

Keywords

Brand Origin, Country-of-Origin Image, Brand Awareness, Consumerism, Country Laws, Oman

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Background

There is a recent trend that consumers determine the product quality by looking in these two words: "made in..", which easily explain the goodness of goods from the consumer's perspective. The phrase "Made in" is related to "country of origin", which reflect consumer's expectation of the quality of products according to which country is made in and determine their purchase decisions. Numerous studies suggest that there are different factors affecting consumers purchase decisions—competition, consumerism, and availability of products (Kalicharan, 2014), country-of-origin image, the knowledge of products, and product involvement (Shirin et al. 2011), perceived quality (Yunus et al. 2016), consumers income level, and products demand and quality (Sarker and Rahman, 2017) and extrinsic cues which affected consumers products evaluation (Rezvani et al., 2012).

However, Consumer's behaviours differ from one country to another. For instance, marketing strategies that are successful in Europe may fail in Asia. Also, the controlling of information flow is affecting consumers purchasing decisions and that will impact their confidence in the country products (Stankevich, 2017). Following suit with other researchers, Pappu et al. (2006) documented that there is a concept called—"transference of beliefs", which mean that consumers loyalty are more to the brands which are produced in a specific a country which has a strong relationship with the products categories than the same brands in another country a weak relationship with the products categories. Generally, people believe that developed country's products having higher quality than the developing countries. Consumers prefer to purchase developed countries products when they are considering about the quality, and developing countries products when they are considering about the price (Ayob and Hussain, 2016).

In the Middle East and the GCC, country of origin playing a big role in the consumers purchasing process and their purchasing decisions. In GCC, the impact of country of origin is directly related to country brands. A recent study by Getaruelas (2019) found that social media platforms are a good way for Omani consumers by helping them with their purchase decisions and increasing the brand awareness of products among them. About the brands' presence in Oman, Simha (2013) found that in the automobile's aspect, Omani women prefer Toyota Lexus brand compared to another brand. In Saudi Arabia, country of origin is the main factor affecting Saudi managers' purchase decisions in industrial products, especially in machine tools and parts (Albarq 2014). Al-Rajhi (2008) found that Saudi's consumers prefer to check the products and the brand before purchasing their products. Also, he found that the product category affects their evaluation of the product brand (Sohail 2005, Abdelkader 2015). Ireland and Abdollah (2011) indicates that Muslim consumers in UAE feel great concern about the foreign food products they are purchasing, if not Halal. El Omari (2008) showed that Emirati's consumers prefer foreign products more than their local products, and the main factor of their purchase decisions of products is the country of origin.

Secondly, In the Middle East, Shahin et al. (2012) stated that the country of origin is affected by different factors: brand awareness in Iran. Because of the country of origin, brands can differentiate themselves from others to choose it directly because of their awareness. In Yemen, the local products' level of quality determines if consumers decide to purchase the products. Still, usually, they are willing to purchase the brands of their domestic products because of their patriotism (Al-Ekam et al. 2012). Al-Abdallah and Abo-Rumman (2013) found that in Jordan, the country of origin does not affect universities students when they are purchasing mobile devices because of the differentiated manufacturing devices. Therefore, the brand's name is not more important than before in their minds, and for that, the significance of the association of country of origin was declined. Turkish consumers think that it is not important for them to know some products from which country because those countries did not create a unique image on their minds to remember it when they are purchasing. Lack of awareness of products also negatively affects their purchase decisions (Tigli and Erdem, 2010).

Globally, Country of origin also affecting consumers purchase decisions in different ways. Sevanandee and Damar-Ladkoo (2018) study indicate that Mauritian consumers prefer purchasing their mobile phones made in developed countries than developing countries. Country of origin is significant for Mauritian consumers when they are deciding to purchase their mobiles phones. Their purchase decisions are not focusing on the country-of-origin image. They focus on mobile's phones performance, quality, and brand reputation. Country of origin information affects

consumers perception of products positively. Gudero (2009) found that because of the availability of country-of-origin information, students at Oklahoma State University prefers Brazilian coffee to Columbian and Ethiopian coffee. Saeed et al. (2013) stated that, Pakistani consumers prefer foreign cosmetic products to their local products. They are focusing on the quality of the products and the country of origin to evaluate the products, and they are not caring about the price; they are willing to pay high prices to get high-quality cosmetic products. Leko-Simic (2001) highlighted that Croatian consumer focus on the quality of products, the price, and the country of origin in their purchasing process. Because of their positive perception of their local products, Croatian consumers prefer their domestic products to foreign products. Ghanaian consumers prefer foreign apparel products to their local because of the quality, brand name, and the development of the country of origin (Frimpong, 2011).

In This study examines how the country of origin affects Omani consumers on their purchase decisions by focusing on the origin of the product brand and the influences of countries rules and other regulations. More specifically, this research aims to understand Omani consumer's behaviour on their purchase decisions according to the country which made the product. It is essential to understand Oman's market to bridge the gap between the Omani consumers and the factors affected by the country-of-origin products in their purchases processes. The study's specific objectives are (1) to investigate the country-of-origin factors affecting Omani consumers on their purchase decisions and (2) to determine Omani consumers' behaviours toward their domestic products and foreign products. The specific research questions and the hypotheses are shown below in table 1.

Literature Review

Country of origin is the place where the products are made and by of its consumers ruling about the quality of products (Munjaj, 2014). Roth et al. (2008) found that according to the country of origin, when linked to the products with the specific country, it will impact consumers' expectations of quality, loyalty, and awareness of the products. Country of origin (COO) have a high effect on building brands worldwide, and this brand will impact consumers' purchase decisions (Wegapitiya and Dissanayake, 2018). This finding was supported by Phau et al. (2008); they are pointed out that the country of image and the brand personality both are affected positively by purchase intention. By increasing them, the purchase intention of the consumer will increase. Consumers usually prefer purchasing products from the developed countries rather than from developing countries. (Chu et al. 2010). Tabassi et al. (2013) also agreed that, according to the country of origin, consumers usually prefer products that are produced in the developed countries than the developing countries, and the reason is the quality of products.

Country of origin plays a big role in influencing consumers' change by making perceptual competitive differences of products in consumers' minds during their purchase decisions through the impact of the products' intrinsic cues (Gudero 2009). Based on Adina et al. (2015) there are three mechanisms that country-of-origin image impact on products: cognitive, affective and normative. Firstly, in the cognitive aspect, the country-of-origin image's products affect the product's perceived quality. Secondly, in the affective aspect, the emotion related to the country-of-origin influences consumers' personality and lifestyles. Thirdly, in the normative aspect, different variables can be affecting consumers perceptions about the products, like ethnocentrism.

Consumer's income has a direct relationship with purchase decisions; this fact has been used in several studies like Wekeza and Sibanda (2019) and Aldmour et al. (2017). The income of consumers and the price of products are greatly affecting purchase decisions. there is a positive relationship between the consumer's income and their quantity demanded (not include inferior goods) (Khan et al., 2014). Consumer's income is a significant factor affecting their purchase decisions, Aldmour et al. (2017) found that in Jordan, consumers income plays an important role in their decision about purchasing online tickets. There is a direct relationship between consumers economic situation and their purchase behaviour, and if they have a high salary, they can purchase what they want and vice versa. Also, consumers occupation impacts their purchase decisions, and that appears clearly between the level of workers on the one firm (Rani 2014).

Most Omani consumers prefer to purchase fresh fish from Oman, either it was from local fisherman's or purchase it from supermarkets. According to Omezzine et al. (2003) they stated that there are different variables affecting on consumers purchase decision in fish market in Oman, and the main variable is consumer's income. Depending on income, a high-level income

consumer prefers to purchase fishes from supermarkets because the fish was already sliced, but on the contrary the low-level income consumers prefer to purchase it from on-shore markets. As a result of that, the two criteria's: odor and moistness are affecting on consumers purchase decision and both of them are related to the consumers income and their purchasing behaviors. Education is affecting to consumers purchase decisions, the higher educated consumers on their purchase decision process are differ from those who are less educated consumers. That can be differ on many things, likes: the level of awareness, their backgrounds information of products, cultures are differ from rural to cities and other things. Anand (2014) stated that the less educated consumers in rural of India, because of their less learning they prefer not purchasing branded products and they have their methods of purchasing products. On the contrary, the educated consumers are awareness of brands and they are making their own choices of what brands they want. f the Omani consumers prefer to purchase fresh fish from Oman, either local fishers or purchase it from supermarkets. According to Omezzine et al. (2003), they stated that there are different variables affecting consumers purchase decision in the fish market in Oman, and the main variable is the consumer's income. Depending on income, a high-level income consumer prefers to purchase fishes from supermarkets because the fish was already sliced, but on the contrary, the low-level income consumers prefer to purchase it from on-shore markets. As a result of that, the two criteria's: odour and moistness are affecting consumers purchase decision and both of them are related to the consumer's income and their purchasing behaviours.

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Consumers using country of origin image as a guide to estimate and evaluate the products that they did not know about it before (Yang and Wibowo, 2016). Koubaa (2008) found that country of origin image was impacted positively on brands image. Consumer's expectation of brands depends on their perspective of a country image. The brand image and reflects on consumers trusts, and a great number of authors has discussed their purchase decisions. Pappu et al. (2006) show that country image is important, and marketers should focus on it when they are developing a product. According to Diamantopoulos et al. (2011), the positive aspects of the country-of-origin image is that in some countries like Germany, Turkey, and Austria, a strong brand supports less well- brands. Kariuki (2015) argued that the products that have a favourable image among consumers would increase the competitiveness between marketers, reflecting on the market share performance, which will be positively affected. Also, supermarkets brand image enhances consumer's perceptions about the products, affecting their purchase decisions. That was agreed by Tu and Chih (2013) they declared that the brand image of firms is largely affected on customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Should firms reflect positively brand images to attracts customers trusts and make them loyal to their products? Also, Dagger (2011) accept that the good image of developed countries is why consumers are willing to buy, and the poor image of developing countries makes them unwilling to buy. Souiden et al. (2006) found that corporate name impacts are not only on consumers' perception of the products, but also it impacts significantly on the corporate image. Because the corporate has customers from different environments and cultures, marketers should design their products and services to be suitable for all customers categories. Following suit with other researchers, Ongel et al. (2014) documented that to improve the country image and achieve success in foreign markets, companies need to develop their marketing strategies.

Kyei (2017) stated that brand awareness positively impacts consumers' purchase decisions. To keep the brand in consumers' minds, marketers should focus on strategic branding by mixing the knowledge and consumers' desires. Such studies found that the Halal labels affect consumers Muslims on their purchasing decisions about foreign products. This finding supported by Nasution et al. (2018) showed that the country of origin positively affects consumers' purchase behavior, especially when the products information contains a "halal label". Halal labels in their foods is a prior consideration for Indonesian Muslims when they are shopping.

Consumerism

Researchers found that consumerism has affected consumers' psychology, and that impacts negatively on themselves and their societies (Pereraa et al. 2014). Based on Goodwin et al. (2008), consumers are the main purpose of producing products from the producer's perspective and improving their well-being. The justification of producer's efforts is that consumers are the source of demand, and this is their aim to run the economic system. A lot of people's happiness feelings are increased by increasing their consumption. Dubuisson-Quellier (2010) showed that governments started to focus on the concept of "a disciplined consumer", which reflects the idea of consumers who must not consider themselves because of the strong relation between consumerism and citizenship only but for the good of the community also. Undoubtedly, increasing consumerism reflects negatively on our environment, and many scholars in their research showed this point. Goodwin et al. (2008) indicate that the main reason for our environment's degradation is increasing the level of consumption among people. As Bugra (2014) findings, the environment will be damaged by continuing increase in consumerism. That was agreed by Pereraa and Gunawardanab (2014) they stated that consumerism had destroyed our environments, and we need to think about it is impacts on future generations.

Domestic Products

Some domestic products are favourable to consumers than foreign products. for example, Pakistani consumers like Pakistani cotton because they know it has a high quality globally and is cheaper than foreign cotton. So, sometimes consumers are biased toward their domestic products (Javed and Has, 2013). Some consumers tend to help the local producers by purchasing their country domestic products to support their economic development. This is not just because it made on their country, but also because they are known the quality of their domestic products (Cazacu, 2016). This finding is supported by Boran (2013), who stated that one of the countries of origin impacts is that consumers trusting the local products more than foreign products because of their national feelings. John and Brady (2010) found that consumers reject foreign products that threaten their national economy and prefer their local products. In addition to that, Jekanowski et al. (2000) explore that if domestic products are available to consumers, they will be willing to purchase them. It depends on the availability of the products options, and this will impact positively local producers. Based on Akdogan et al. (2012), their study found that when there is an international economic crisis, consumers usually prefer to prioritise their countries, and their purchase decisions only focus on their domestic products. They are worried that their country economy will be affected by the crisis.

Fast-Moving Consumers Goods (FMCG) Products

The concept of Fast-Moving Consumers Goods "FMCG" usually related to the cheap and short shelf-life products, and the process of purchasing it usually depends on consumers' routine usage of products. FMCG playing a big role in consumers' daily life, and for that reason, competitors around the world trying to focus on innovative products to attract customers (Sarker and Rahman, 2017). According to Salim et al. (2015), they found that the main reasons consumers preferring domestic Fast-Moving Consumers Goods (FMCG) in Oman are the quality of products, brand preferences, and the price of products. Also, advertisements affecting positively on Omani consumers purchase decisions in FMCG. Adams (2016) found that FMCG brands are affecting consumers positively; it can build trust and improve satisfaction level among consumers. The way used by firms to attracts consumers to their FMCG products is important. With regard to this, Malhotra (2014) stated that marketers should increase awareness of their FMCG products in consumers' minds to make them loyal, for instance, Dove's Real Beauty Campaign, which used its consumers in their ads and focuses on them rather than celebrities. They make the brand image of Dove on consumers' minds and make them a brand ambassador. When it comes to FMCG products marketing, Pongiannan and Chinnasamy (2014) they are agreed that there is a great positive effect of Advertisements on FMCG products between young and middle-aged consumers in India.

Foreign Products

In another aspect is that some consumers would rather purchase foreign products rather than their domestic products because of the country image on their minds. Nguyen (2017) stated that country of origin positively affects foreign products evaluations as a predictor. Hamzaoui and Merunka (2007) demonstrate that usually, consumers are attracted by the design and manufacture of products which they are not found on their domestic products. According to that consumer prefer to purchase some products from specific countries (developed countries) because of the negative image of emerging countries. Carter and Maher (2015) found that purchasing foreign products are affected positively by different factors according to consumers, and these factors can be: product evaluation, consumer behaviour, consumer purchase intention, brand image, product prices, and country of origin image. Ramsaran (2015) stated that Mauritian consumers prefer to spend more on foreign products to enjoy prestige and quality. Because of quality and the high social status "prestige", consumers in developing countries prefer foreign products rather than their local products, at the same time, consumers in developed countries prefer their local products over foreign products (Lumintang et al., 2018). According to Boran (2013), he found that there was a direct relationship between country of origin and the quality of products.

Data and Methodology

This study is based on primary data collected by conducting a field survey using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies by Alexander (1986), Yasin et al. (2007), Sumithra (2013), Shahzad (2014), and Adams (2016). The first draft of the questionnaire was developed for pretesting to the next stage. The usage of pretesting of the questionnaire to help to identify the variables and which scale needed to be used for it. The variables use for the study were adapted from previous studies—country of origin (Sevanandee and Damar-Ladkoo, 2018), country of origin image (Carter and Maher, 2015), The other variables were developed for this research, which means no one made it before in a relationship with the country of origin, those variables were: consumerism, foreign products (prestige and quality), and countries laws. The variable—country's laws—was used as a mediation between the country-of-origin factors and domestic and foreign products.

The first variable was: country of origin (seven items). In this group, the seven items were adapted from Shahzad (2014). The second variable was: country of origin image (three items). In this group, the three items were adapted from Yasin et al. (2007). The third variable was: consumerism (three items). In this group, two items were adapted from Alexander (1986), and the third item was adapted from Sumithra (2013). The fourth variable was: domestic products: (seven items). In this group, five items were adapted from Shahzad (2014), and the other two items were adapted from Adams (2016). The fifth variable was: foreign products (prestige): (two items) and foreign products (quality): (two items). The group of foreign products in (prestige) items were adapted from Shahzad (2014). The other group of foreign products related to quality and prestige were also adapted from Shahzad (2014). The sixth variable was: countries laws (rules and regulations): (four items). In this group, the four items were adapted from Alexander (1986).

In addition, the reasons behind choosing this specific variable: Firstly, the three variables; consumerism, foreign products (prestige and quality) and countries laws, all of them are not discussed that much in literature reviews. Secondly, to know how governments rules and regulations protect the local crafts, which reflect its identity and culture. Researchers collected Data via an online electronic survey—questionnaires were distributed to the different groups, and each group related to a specific variable. The population of the research composed of all Omani consumers in Sultanate of Oman and the questionnaire was shared for them online through the WhatsApp app, and a few of them are hardcopy to all Omani consumers. A convenience sampling was taken because of the limitation of time. The Reliability: The reliability test according to the items of each component summarize in table 2.

The variable was redefined using factor analysis. There are six different components—country of origin, country of origin image, consumerism, domestic products, foreign products (prestige and quality), and countries laws (rules and regulations). To test the dimensionality of the instrument, all 39 items of it were analyzed. These components were distributed as country of origin (five items), country of origin image (seven items), consumerism (three items), domestic products: (seven

items), foreign products (prestige): (two items) and foreign products (quality): (two items), and countries laws (rules and regulations): (four items). Not all components were used; a few items were deleted because Cronbach's Alpha was less than 0.6.

Data analysis and Results

The totals of respondents in this research survey were 400 Omani consumers. Table 4.4 represent the respondent profile, which includes gender, marital status, age, education level, work status and monthly income. They are slightly different between males and females' respondents, but the major difference was in their marital status. The majority of them were married (70.8 %). Most of the respondents were youth, and only there was one person whose age was 62 and above. About their education level, most of them were students at colleges/universities and at the same time, a lot of respondents were employees (61.8 %). Also, 29.3 % of respondents chose in the monthly income question the label: not applicable, and those may be colleges students who were still studying and not working yet. 29% of respondents getting 1000 OMR and above per month. There were a few missing data in respondents' profiles, one in the education level and four in the monthly income. The last one, the reason maybe they prefer to keep this information for themselves.

Hypotheses testing

The following section explaining the results of the hypotheses. The hypotheses discussed were according to the models of dependent variables in SPSS. Table 4 represent the results of the first six hypotheses: H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H3a, and H3b. The results show that the beta coefficient of MCOO is 0.284 and the t value is 5.778, shows a statistically significant result (Table 4). In hypothesis H1b, the beta coefficient of MCMR is 0.129, and the t value 2.624 shows a significant result. This indicates that the two factors—country of origin and consumerism—both have a positive relationship with domestic products.

To test the second set of hypotheses, the foreign product's prestige was used as a dependent variable and the country of origin and consumerism as an independent variable. The results show that in H2a, MCOO is negatively correlated with MFPP ($\beta_1 = -0.61$ and t -value = -1.166) and indicates an insignificant result (table 4). The next hypothesis H2b shows that MCMR is negatively correlated with MFPP ($\beta_1 = -0.40$ and t -value = -0.773). These results show that the Omani consumers did not purchase their products for prestige, and they don't take care of them.

Similarly, in H3a shows that MCOO and MFPQ has no statistically significant relation ($\beta_1 = -0.013$ and t -value = -0.239). H3b shows a positive relation between MCMR and MFPQ ($\beta_1 = -0.12$ and t -value = -0.230) and it statistically insignificant (Table 4). Those two rejected hypotheses represented that the Omani consumers were doesn't judge the quality of products according to the country of origin; they rejected the idea which called that the developed countries products were higher quality than developing countries.

Hierarchical multiple regression

This is also called the "sequential regression", it is about entering the independent variables into the equation in a specific order as the researcher choose based on theoretical ways (Pallant, 2013). Those hypotheses were tested according to the moderate variable—countries laws "Rules and regulations". To test the fourth set of hypotheses, the countries laws (rules and regulations) was used as a moderator variable between the independent variables—country of origin and consumerism, and the dependent variables—domestic products and foreign products (prestige and quality).

Table 5 indicated that there are no significant moderation effects of countries laws in predicting domestic products. The results show that Omani consumers are concerned with the country of origin when purchasing domestic products. But the country rules and regulations does not influence the relationship between country of origin and domestic products. Therefore, hypothesis H4a is rejected.

The above results show that there are no significant moderation effects of countries laws in predicting the prestige of foreign products (Table 6). The results indicate that the country rules and regulations do not affect the relationship between country of origin and prestige of foreign

products on Omani consumers.

Table 7 shows that there are no significant moderation effects of countries laws in predicting the quality of foreign products. The results confirm that Omani consumers are not concerned with the country of origin when purchasing foreign products. Also, the country rules and regulations do not affect the relationship between country of origin and quality of foreign products.

H4b The relationship between consumerism and domestic products is moderated by countries laws (rules and regulations).

Table 8 shows a significant negative moderation effect of countries laws on consumerism in predicting domestic products. If a country's rules and regulations very strong, it will affect consumers purchasing a domestic product. This hypothesis was accepted.

H4b1 The relationship between consumerism and prestige of the foreign products are moderated by countries laws (rules and regulations).

The study also found no significant moderation effects of countries laws in predicting foreign products' prestige. The results show that the increase in the purchasing level between Omani consumers (consumerism) doesn't affect the prestige of foreign products' purchasing (table 9). The country rules and regulations do not affect the relationship between consumerism and the prestige of foreign products.

H4b2 The relationship between consumerism and the quality of foreign products are moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).

Table 10 was stated that there are no significant moderation effects of countries laws in predicting the quality of foreign products. The results show that consumerism doesn't affect the quality of the foreign products purchasing by Omani consumers. The country laws do not affect the relationship between consumerism and the quality of foreign products.

Discussion and Conclusion

There are twelve hypotheses in this research; three of them are accepted, and they remain nine hypotheses were rejected. Firstly, hypotheses related to how the country-of-origin factors affecting Omani consumers in their purchasing process, whether to choose domestic products or foreign products, according to this topic, there are six hypotheses that were tested, as shown below:

H1a There is a relationship between country of origin and domestic products.

H1b There is a relationship between consumerism and domestic products.

H2a There is a relationship between the country of origin and prestige of the foreign products.

H2b There is a relationship between consumerism and prestige of the foreign products.

H3a There is a relationship between country of origin and quality of the foreign products.

H3b There is a relationship between consumerism and quality of the foreign products.

The factor (consumerism) was used for the first time in this research in relation to the country of origin. It was not tested before; because of that, there were no hypotheses of previous studies related to it to compare the results. The results show that the first two hypotheses H1a and H2a, both of them are accepted, and the remain four hypotheses are rejected. That means those hypotheses **H1a** and **H1b** describes that the two factors: country of origin and consumerism, have a positive relationship with domestic products. The first hypothesis, **H1a**, was supported by Javed and Hasnu (2013), who founded that Pakistani consumer like Pakistani cotton because they know it has a high quality in the world, and it is cheaper than foreign cotton. So, sometimes consumers are biased toward their domestic products. On the other hand, those four hypotheses **H2a**, **H2b**, **H3a**, and **H3b**, have a negative relationship between the factors: country of origin and consumerism with the prestige and quality of foreign products. This explains that is: Omani consumers prefer their domestic products, and their reasons for purchasing foreign products are not the quality of it or the prestige. The results of the hypotheses **H2a** and **H3a** are opposite to the Ramsaran (2015) results, which found that Mauritian consumers prefer to spend more on foreign products to enjoy prestige and quality.

Secondly, hypotheses related to how the moderating variable (like countries laws) playing an important role between the country-of-origin factors and domestic and foreign products, according to this topic, there are six hypotheses that were tested, as shown below:

H3a: The relationship between country of origin and domestic products are moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).

H3b: The relationship between consumerism and domestic products are moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).

H4a1: The relationship between country of origin and prestige of the foreign products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).

H4a2: The relationship between country of origin and quality of the foreign products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations)

H4b1: The relationship between country laws moderate consumerism and prestige of the foreign products (Rules and regulations).

H4b2: The relationship between country laws moderate consumerism and quality of the foreign products (rules and regulations).

This moderating variable (countries laws) was used for the first time at this research is related to the country of origin, it was not tested before, because of that, there were no hypotheses of previous studies related to it to compare the results. The results show that there is only one hypothesis that is accepted, the other five were rejected. The hypothesis **H4a2** represented that the relationship between consumerism and domestic products is moderated by countries laws that are means countries laws playing a big and important role between consumerism and domestic products. That represented if a country's rules and regulations very strong, it will affect on consumers purchasing domestic products. The remaining hypotheses **H3a**, **H3b**, **H4a1**, **H4b1**, and **H4b2** represented that the countries laws were not important as a moderate variable between these relationships: country of origin and domestic products, country of origin and prestige of foreign products, country of origin and quality of foreign products, consumerism and prestige of foreign products, and the final relationship consumerism and quality of foreign products.

This research's contribution was that there are three factors: foreign products prestige and quality, consumerism and countries laws (rules and regulations), were used for the first time in this research in relation to the country of origin, which means it was not used before. Accordingly, new hypotheses were created and tested in this research. This study is the first attempt to investigate the effect of country of origin on Oman's purchase decisions. It used a new variable that was not used before in previous studies in relation to the country of origin; those variables were: consumerism and countries laws (rules and regulations).

This research's findings would be important for sellers, marketers, and producers in Oman to know the consumer behaviours and which country of origin products they prefer. The findings of this study also contribute substantive empirical knowledge about consumers' responses in their purchase decisions about the country of origin. Furthermore, it is important to know how countries laws were affecting consumers purchasing decisions.

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Tables

Table 1

Research questions and research hypotheses

Research Question 1:	RQ How are the country of origin factors affecting Omani consumers in their purchasing process, whether to choose domestic products or foreign products?
Research Hypothesis 1:	<p>H1a: There is a relationship between country of origin and domestic products.</p> <p>H1b: There is a relationship between country of origin image and domestic products.</p> <p>H1c: There is a relationship between consumerism and domestic products.</p> <p>H2a1: There is a relationship between country of origin and prestige of the foreign products.</p> <p>H2a2: There is a relationship between country of origin and quality of the foreign products.</p> <p>H2b1: There is a relationship between country of origin image and prestige of the foreign products.</p> <p>H2b2: There is a relationship between country of origin image and quality of the</p>

	foreign products.
	H2c1: There is a relationship between consumerism and prestige of the foreign products.
	H2c2: There is a relationship between consumerism and quality of the foreign products.
Research Question 2:	RQ How does a moderating variable (like: countries laws) playing an important role between country of origin factors and domestic and foreign products?
Research Hypothesis 2:	H3a: The relationship between country of origin and domestic products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).
	H3b: The relationship between country of origin image and domestic products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).
	H4a1: The relationship between country of origin and prestige of the foreign products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).
	H4a2: The relationship between country of origin and quality of the foreign products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).
	H4b1: The relationship between country of origin image and prestige of the foreign products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).
	H4b2: The relationship between country of origin image and quality of the foreign products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).
	H4c1: The relationship between consumerism and prestige of the foreign products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).
	H4c2: The relationship between consumerism and quality of the foreign products is moderated by country laws (rules and regulations).

Table 2

Data reliability test

Components	Reliability test
Country of origin	.0823
Country of origin image	.602
Consumerism	.627
Domestic products	.860
Foreign products prestige	.626
Foreign products quality	.689
Countries laws (rules and regulations)	.737

Source: Analysis of survey data**Table 3:**

Frequency table of the respondent profile

Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	205	51.3
Female	195	48.8
Marital status		
Single	117	29.3
Married	283	70.8
Age		
18-28	141	35.3
29-39	166	41.5
40-50	82	20.5
51-61	10	2.5
62 and above	1	0.3

Education level		
High school secondary	54	13.5
Tertiary	74	18.5
College university	215	53.8
Postgraduate	56	14.0
(Missing data)	1	0.3
Work status		
Student	58	14.5
Job seeker	72	18.0
Employed	247	61.8
Retired	23	5.8
Monthly income		
Not applicable	117	29.3
199 OMR and below	23	5.8
200 OMR- 500 OMR	31	7.8
600 OMR-900OMR	109	27.3
1000 OMR and above	116	29.0
(Missing data)	4	1.0

Source: Author’s calculation, from primary survey data

Table 4:
Multiple regression results

Hypothesis	IV	DV	Beta(β ₁)	T	p	Result
H1a	MCOO	MDP	.284	5.778	.000***	Accepted
H1b	MCMR	MDP	.129	2.624	.009**	Accepted
H2a	MCOO	MFPP	-.061	-1.166	NS	Rejected
H2b	MCMR	MFPP	-.040	-.773	NS	Rejected
H3a	MCOO	MFPQ	-.013	-.239	NS	Rejected
H3b	MCMR	MFPQ	.012	.230	NS	Rejected

Significant level at p< .001***; p<.01**

Note: MCOO: Country of origin; MCMR: consumerism; MDP: domestic products; MFPP: Foreign products ‘prestige’; MFPQ: foreign products “quality” NS: Not Significant; IV: Independent variable; DV: Dependent variable.

Table 5:
Moderation effects of MCLR on MCOO in predicting MDP

Variable	R	R ² Change	B	SE _B	BETA
MCOO	.321***	.103***	.524	.368	.403 ^{NS}
MCLR	.253***	.025***	.388	.345	.292 ^{NS}
MCOO_x_MCLR	---	.001 ^{NS}	-.041	-.085	-.213 ^{NS}
(Constant)			1.475	.759	

Significant level at p< .001***; p<.01**; P<0.001***; p<0.01**; p<0.05*

Note: MCOO: Country of origin; MCLR: Countries laws (rules and regulations); MDP: Domestic products; NS: Not Significant.

Table 6:
Moderation effects of MCLR on MCOO in predicting MFPP

Variable	R	R ² Change	B	SE _B	BETA
MCOO	-.072 ^{NS}	.005 ^{NS}	-.590	.447	-.393 ^{NS}
MCLR	-.178 ^{***}	.027 ^{***}	-.791	.419	-.516 ^{NS}
MCOO_x_MCLR	---	.004 ^{NS}	.132	.103	.588 ^{NS}
(Constant)			5.762	1.791	

Significant level at $p < .001^{***}$; $p < .01^{**}$; $P < 0.001^{***}$; $p < 0.01^{**}$; $p < 0.05^*$

Note: MCOO: Country of origin; MCLR: Countries laws (rules and regulations); MFPP: Foreign products prestige; NS: Not Significant.

Table 7:
Moderation effects of MCLR on MCOO in predicting MFPPQ

Variable	R	R ² Change	B	SE _B	BETA
MCOO	-.009 ^{NS}	.000 ^{NS}	-.184	.481	-.116 ^{NS}
MCLR	.319 ^{***}	.006 ^{NS}	-.326	.451	-.201 ^{NS}
MCOO_x_MCLR	---	.000 ^{NS}	.049	.111	.207 ^{NS}
(Constant)			4.226	1.968	

Significant level at $p < .001^{***}$; $p < .01^{**}$; $P < 0.001^{***}$; $p < 0.01^{**}$; $p < 0.05^*$

Note: MCOO: Country of origin; MCLR: Countries laws (rules and regulations); MFPPQ: Foreign products quality; NS: Not Significant.

Table 8:
Moderation effects of MCLR on MCMR in predicting MDP

Variable	r	R ² Change	B	SE _B	BETA
MCMR	.210 ^{***}	.044 ^{***}	.884	.357	.718 ^{**}
MCLR	.253 ^{***}	.035 ^{***}	.933	.331	.703 ^{**}
MCMR_x_MCLR	---	.010 [*]	-.168	.082	-.915 [*]
(Constant)			-8.31	1.412	

Significant level at $p < .001^{***}$; $p < .01^{**}$; $P < 0.001^{***}$; $p < 0.01^{**}$; $p < 0.05^*$

Note: MCMR: Consumerism; MCLR: Countries laws (rules and regulations); MDP: Domestic products.

Table 9:
Moderation effects of MCLR on MCMR in predicting MFPP

Variable	R	R ² Change	B	SE _B	BETA
MCMR	-.058 ^{NS}	.003 ^{NS}	-.199	.425	-.140 ^{NS}
MCLR	-.178 ^{***}	.029 ^{***}	-.484	.393	-.316 ^{NS}
MCMR_x_MCLR	---	.001 ^{NS}	.051	.097	.241 ^{NS}
(Constant)			4.272	1.679	

Significant level at $p < .001^{***}$; $p < .01^{**}$; $P < 0.001^{***}$; $p < 0.01^{**}$; $p < 0.05^*$

Note: MCMR: Consumerism; MCLR: Countries laws (rules and regulations); MFPP: Foreign products prestige; NS: Not Significant.

Table 10:
Moderation effects of MCLR on MCMR in predicting MFPPQ

Variable	R	R ² Change	B	SE _B	BETA
MCMR	.008 ^{NS}	.000 ^{NS}	-.176	.456	-.117 ^{NS}
MCLR	-.075 ^{NS}	.007 ^{NS}	-.373	.422	-.230 ^{NS}
MCMR_x_MCLR	---	.001 ^{NS}	.057	.105	.252 ^{NS}
(Constant)			4.267	1.802	

Significant level at $p < .001^{***}$; $p < .01^{**}$; $P < 0.001^{***}$; $p < 0.01^{**}$; $< 0.05^*$

Note: MCMR: Consumerism; MCLR: Countries laws (rules and regulations); MFPP: Foreign products prestige; NS: Not Significant.