

Research Article 04

Assessing the Influence of Country-of-Origin Image on Consumer Purchase Intentions in Sri Lanka's Automobile Sector: Evidence from Toyota

P.K.C. Dinesha

*Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management & Finance, University of Ruhuna,
Sri Lanka*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0874-8529>

Abstract

The country of origin pertains to information about the country where the product is manufactured. The country of origin may influence customers' decision-making processes and subsequent behavior positively or negatively. The primary objective of this research is to examine the influence of country of origin on consumer purchase intention within the Sri Lankan automobile market. The study specifically focuses on the Toyota automobile segment as the context for investigation. Many past studies have proved that consumers use the country of origin as a main factor that people consider while evaluating automobiles. In the automobile industry, Japan maintains a very strong reputation in terms of its engineering excellence, reliability, and technological innovation. Accordingly, it has developed a stronger image on Toyota brand, which positively impacts consumers' purchase intentions toward Toyota. Additionally, brand image and brand evaluation are incorporated as mediating variables to explore their intermediary role in the relationship between country of origin and purchase intention. The data collection process was structured according to cross-sectional analysis and the researcher employed a survey strategy for data collection. Toyota automobile consumers in Sri Lanka were the target population of the study, and the researcher selected 200 consumers as the sample of the study. The convenience sampling technique was the guided sampling technique of the research. Data analysis found a significant positive impact of country of origin on brand image and brand evaluation. And especially, the country of origin, brand image, and brand evaluation have been found a significant positive impact on customer purchase intention. Further, the research identified a significant mediating effect of brand image and brand evaluation on the impact of country of origin on customer purchase intention. Based on these findings, the study concluded that country of origin has a significant positive impact on customer purchase intention and brand image, and brand evaluation significantly mediates the impact of country of origin on purchase intention and in the automobile market in Sri Lanka. Based on the findings, marketers can develop their strategies for domestic companies by highlighting their high-quality dimensions.

Keywords: Automobile industry, country of origin, brand image, brand evaluation, purchase intention

Corresponding Author: P.K.C. Dinesha - pkchamaridinesha@gmail.com

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Introduction

Businesses may successfully connect with their target audience by understanding purchase intentions, which is a crucial component of understanding customer behavioral intention (Li & Setiowati, 2023). The consumer's desire to acquire a product or obtain a specific service in the future is reflected in their purchasing intention (Shirvani et al., 2020). The dynamics of customer preferences and purchasing intention are constantly changing in the modern global marketplace due to a variety of variables (Hien, Phuong, Tran,&Thang, 2020). Customers' acceptance of a brand from a certain nation is important for both the business and the nation; as a result, the country of origin or made-in label of a product builds a secondary link with customers. The country of origin (COO), as defined by Polla and Oey (2024), is the nation that consumers may assume a firm is from based on its name. It pertains to information about the country where a product's production facility is located or where the company marketing the brand or product has its major headquarters (Wulandari, Sakti,&Athar, 2022). Wulandari et al. (2022) assert that depending on the country in which the product is manufactured, the country of origin may influence customers' decision-making processes and subsequent behavior positively or negatively.

The automobile industry is one of the prominent industries that is concerned about COO when making buying decisions. Because of buying a vehicle is a long-term commitment that involves high financial cost and considerable risk, consumers give considerable attention before deciding with evaluating quality, reliability, safety, and technological innovation (Hotti, 2026). Accordingly, in the global automobile industry, customers have formed strong associations between specific countries and brands in this industry. For example, they special preference for Japanese vehicles as it has advance technologies, are reliable, and fuel-efficient. Furthermore, German brands such as Mercedes-Benz is associated with engineering excellence, precision, luxury, and high-performance automobiles (Akola et al. 2020). The Sri Lankan automobile industry primarily comprises imported vehicles. Mostly, the Japanese brands such as Toyota, Suzuki, Honda, and Nissan dominate this market with the reputation it has developed in the market. During the last decade, the presence of European, Korean, and Indian have increased in the market (Mkedder et al. 2026).

Few studies in globally have examined the connection between purchase intention and country-of-origin image, particularly the mediating function of brand evaluation and brand image. Sri Lanka is a developing country with distinct socioeconomic and cultural dynamics; therefore, variables influencing consumer behavior there are very different from those in established countries (Dharmadasa & Chanaka, 2017).

The subject of how country of origin affects customer purchase intention has been extensively researched in the literature across a range of study scenarios, and most studies have found that the country of origin has a significant positive impact on the purchase intention of customers (Jain&Bariar, 2019; Mostafa, 2015). However, the way of how and why the concept transforms the consumer decision into purchase has been studied limitedly (Pagan, et al., 2025). Shirvani et al. (2020) examined how the country of origin affected consumers' intentions for purchasing, with the function of brand equity dimensions. They verified that consumers' overall opinion of the quality of goods in a particular nation is influenced by its features, economy, political climate, history, and customs (Mkedder et al., 2026). As a result, it is anticipated that industrialized nations have left a favorable impression on emerging nations (Furukawa & Terasaki, 2025).

The purchase intention for automobiles doesn't only form on country of origin, link with some other factors such as brand equity, perceived quality, persuade of brand value (Upadhyaya et al., 2025; Pagan et al., 2025). However, the past studies rarely focused on the effect of country of origin on customer purchase intention with particular attention to the mediating role of brand image and brand evaluation, and a considerable theoretical gap can be found in the literature. By shaping consumer perceptions based on the reputation and stereotypes surrounding that nation's automotive industry, a country of origin can have a big impact on an automobile brand's success. This can increase the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase by creating positive associations with quality, design, technology, or performance. To simulate real-life decision-making, customers must make trade-offs between different car features and their country of origin (Train, 2009), which represents a clear gap in experimental research in the automotive setting. Such studies could provide important new information on how people prioritize and balance different traits when weighing their alternatives for a car, as well as the interplay impacts of various aspects in relation to Country of origin. Accordingly, the current study aims to explore how the country of origin impacts the customer's purchase intention in the automobile market in Sri Lanka. The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

- To study the effect of country of origin on customer purchase intention in the automobile market in Sri Lanka.
- To examine the effect of country of origin on the brand Image in the automobile market in Sri Lanka.
- To examine the effect of country of origin on the brand evaluation in the automobile market in Sri Lanka.
- To study the mediating effect of brand image on the impact of country of origin on customer purchase intention in the automobile market in Sri Lanka.

To study the mediating effect of brand evaluation on the impact of country of origin on customer purchase intention in the automobile market in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

The nation where the brand name originated is now one of the concepts that has been thoroughly studied in marketing, international business, and consumer behavior research. Consumers in one nation may now purchase goods from another as a result of globalization and a rise in international marketing (Crespo, & Velgan, 2025). The study is grounded in Country Image Theory. The theory discussed how a firm's identity can be used as an influencer for product evaluation, an extrinsic cue to evaluate product quality (Han, 1989; Roth&Romeo, 1992). International marketing is the practice of promoting products or services to customers outside of a brand's country of origin. Consequently, the place of origin or production of a product establishes a secondary tie with consumers. According to Raditya et al. (2025) the concept of country of origin describes how customers often see products from a certain country based on their prior evaluations of the advantages and disadvantages of the nation's production and marketing practices. Panda and Misra (2014) define the country of origin as the nation that consumers may assume a firm is from based on its name. It has to do with information about the country where the company selling the brand or product has its primary headquarters, or where a product's production facility is located (Bahrinizadeh, Esmailoor, & Haraghi, 2014). Customers' perceptions of the quality of the relevant items, their purchase preferences, and other factors are all influenced by the country of origin information (Bahrinizadeh et al., 2014). However, customers may gauge a nation's reputation for producing high-quality goods (Sanyal & Datta, 2011). Because it is

impossible to judge a product's quality until it is used, consumers may substitute the country of origin for any missing product information. Customers in developing nations view a product's country of origin as an indication of its overall quality; in addition, it can occasionally serve as a status symbol and boost buyers' self-esteem (Mostafa, 2015). Pointing out that the concept of country of origin can no longer be studied in isolation; rather, it needs to be examined in a multifaceted manner, particularly in light of recent technological advancements that have made it possible for consumers to associate different nations with a single brand, further obscuring their perceptions of hybrid products (Moradi&Zarei, 2011).

Purchase intention describes a consumer's capacity or willingness to make a future purchase of a certain good or service (Hien et al., 2020). Further, the probability that a customer will purchase a certain product is determined by the interplay of his or her desire for it, attitude toward it, and perceptions of both the product and the firm that manufactures it. A person's decision to act is reflected in their mental state, which is known as behavioral intention (Shirvani et al., 2020). Since it enables companies and marketers to comprehend what motivates customer behavior and how to affect it, it is an essential marketing concept. Since the intention to buy a product is known to be a reliable indicator of the actual behavior involved in making a purchase, the intention to buy primarily consists of a purchase behavior. Therefore, marketers may improve their communication with the target group by better understanding the behavioral goals of customers. The following hypothesis was developed based on the relationship as follows:

H1: Country of origin image has a significant positive impact on customer purchase intention.

Brand Image

When it comes to market competitiveness, brand competition is a company's final potential, and brand image is crucial. According to Li and Setiowati (2023), brand image is the way that customers see a brand, which is reflected in brand associations in their memory. According to Hien et al. (2020), brand image is the awareness of a brand that is structured in customers' thoughts and expressed by brand associations. Shirvani et al. (2020) claim that a customer's impressions of a brand together constitute its image. In addition to helping the business stand out from rivals, a great brand image increases consumer trust and confidence. Customers are more inclined to select goods or services over rivals when they have a favorable opinion of the brand. Additionally, by positioning a product and focusing on certain market groups, brand image serves as the foundation for more intelligent strategic marketing choices. As a result, a business with a positive brand image will have more brand impact than its rivals (Shirvani et al., 2020).

As a result of that, the brand image can be enhanced by the country of origin. It seems that consumers would highlight the product's nation of origin when they recognize it as belonging to a certain brand. According to Hien et al. (2020), a brand's image is mostly shaped by its country of origin. With these empirical findings in mind, the researcher advanced the

H2: Country of origin image has a significant positive impact on brand image.

Brand Evaluation

Consumers' emotional reactions to a brand, such as enthusiasm, trust, and desire, are referred to as brand evaluation (Hien et al., 2020; Huang, Wang, & Chen, 2020). In essence, it involves assessing the brand's power and influence from the perspective of the consumer. Consumers assess a brand according to their impressions of its whole experience, customer service, brand values, excellence, dependability, and consistency (Huang et al., 2020). Common characteristics and other visible and invisible indicators pertaining to the brand as a person or as a product are used by consumers to assess brands. Brand awareness, loyalty, trust, and satisfaction levels are some of the characteristics that impact the customer's brand appraisal.

The nation of origin of a brand has a significant impact on its value. The nation of origin can influence how consumers perceive a brand and improve their assessment of it. According to the research study by Hien et al. (2020), customers' brand evaluations are significantly improved by the country-of-origin image. The researcher created H3 as a result.

H3: Country of origin image has a significant positive impact on brand evaluation.

Customers' perception of a product or brand is recognized to be influenced by factors such as country of origin, brand image, and brand assessment. Perceived quality, brand image, country-of-origin image, and purchase intention are related. Purchase intention is positively impacted by perceived quality, which is positively impacted by the country of origin and brand image. Additionally, the perception of the nation of origin will influence how customers evaluate the goods and develop their attitudes. Purchase intention and brand awareness are significantly influenced by the country-of-origin image. The country-of-origin image is therefore established as the foundation of brand image and brand evaluation based on prior research (Hien et al., 2020). Purchase intentions are also seen as a final result. Significant mediation effects of brand evaluation and image on the influence of country of origin image on consumer purchase intention have been demonstrated by Hien et al. (2020). H4 and H5 were developed by the researcher based on these findings.

H4: Brand image is the mediator relationship between country of origin and customer purchase intention

H5: Brand evaluation is the mediator relationship between country of origin and customer purchase intention.

Conceptual Framework

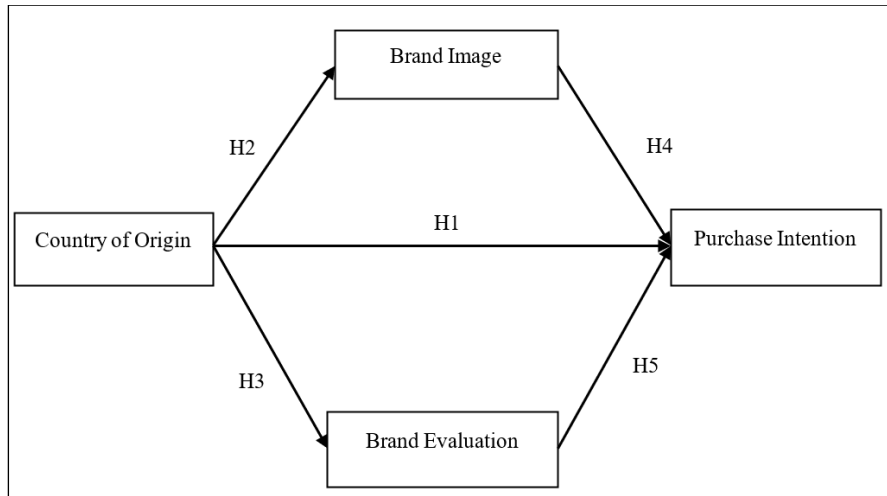


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by the author based on previous literature

Research Methodology

The study was conducted as a quantitative research study with the survey method. Data were analysed by using the statistical method that in quantitative techniques that data being in quantitative nature. Then the researcher found that the population of the study was the Toyota automobile users in Sri Lanka. The study sample was chosen by the researcher using convenience sampling techniques. Convenience selection focuses on choosing respondents depending on the convenience of the investigator or ease of accessibility and availability of the respondents (Kathori, 2004). Based on the population applied standard statistical formula the possible sample size was confirmed as 200. It has further been proved that Yunus and Rashid (2016), conducted a study The Impact of Country-of-origin on Customer Purchasing Intention with reference to the Mobile Phones Brand from China considering a sample of 200 respondents. Based on this empirical evidence, the present study aims to select 200 of Toyota automobile users as the sample of the research. Moreover, a structured questionnaire is used to collect data in the current study. The questionnaire of the study made up of two sections and the first part assesses the demographic data of the respondents, and second one assesses the key variables of the study. Both independent and dependent variables of the study were measured under 5 point Likert scale questions scaled from strongly disagree to strongly agree as the measurement base of the questionnaire. The primary test was conducted by sending with academics and with 25 respondents. The final version of the questionnaire was distributed and collected the responses through online basis.

Table 1: Measurements of the Variables

Country of Origin	High creativity, high technology, beautiful design, professional skills, qualified workers.	Hien et al. (2020),
Brand Image	Quality is high, features are better, characteristics can be distinguished, does not disappoint.	Hien et al. (2020),
Brand Evaluation	brand interesting, brand good, brand useful, brand promising, attracted to this brand	Hien et al. (2020),
Purchase intention	Immediately, buy the near future, confident of purchasing, introduce this brand.	Hien et al. (2020),

Source: Study survey (2025)

Results and Interpretations

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics show that all mean values for items related to country of origin are above 3.5, indicating that respondents generally agree with the questionnaire's items. In relation to the brand image, all mean values are greater than 3.5, implying that the respondents on average, have agreed with the items mentioned in the questionnaire to assess brand image. Further, all Skewness and Kurtosis values are greater than -3 and lower than 3, implying an acceptable level of normal distribution within the recorded data related to all three variables: country of origin, brand image, and brand evaluation.

Measurement Model Assessment

Basically, the assessment of the measurement model is used to validate the quality of the constructs in measuring the phenomenon that is intended to be measured and reliability and validity of the measurement instruments within the study. Figure 2 presents the graphical illustration of the measurement model of the study.

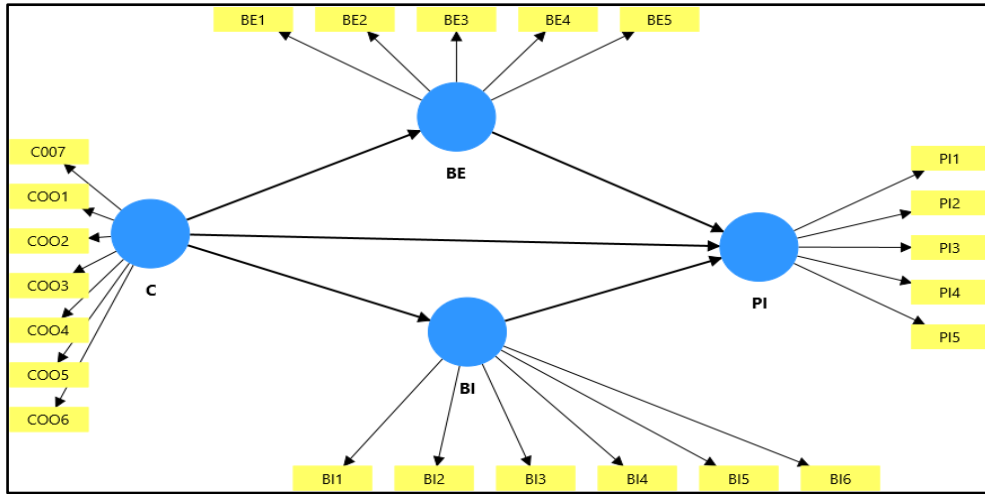


Figure 2: Measurement Model
Source: SmartPLS Output (2025)

The degree of association between each item in a correlation matrix and a certain main component is known as factor loading. It was discovered that every item under every dimension had factor loadings higher than the suggested threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2012b), as seen in Table 2. As a result, none of the questions were removed from the current list.

Table 2: Outer Loading

	BE	BI	COO	PI
BE1	0.947			
BE2	0.951			
BE3	0.972			
BE4	0.964			
BE5	0.968			
BI1		0.958		
BI2		0.947		
BI3		0.962		
BI4		0.967		
BI5		0.968		
BI6		0.961		

C007	0.959
COO1	0.938
COO2	0.945
COO3	0.950
COO4	0.954
COO5	0.949
COO6	0.947
PI1	0.954
PI2	0.959
PI3	0.973
PI4	0.973
PI5	0.962

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Reliability

The degree of internal consistency within the measurement instruments of the study used by the reliability test. Basically, the Cronbach's Alpha value is used to assess the reliability within the study. In order to prove an acceptable level of reliability within the study, Cronbach's Alpha values, Composite reliability values and average variance extracted values should be greater than 0.7 (Suhail, 2023).

Table 3: Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BE	0.979	0.979	0.983	0.922
BI	0.983	0.983	0.986	0.923
COO	0.982	0.982	0.984	0.900
PI	0.981	0.981	0.985	0.930

Source: Survey Data (2025)

According to table 3, Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables within the study are higher than 0.7 and indicate strong reliability within the study measurements. Moreover, the Composite reliability values and AVE values greater than 0.5 further confirm the acceptability of the measurement instruments used in the survey to measure the study constructs.

Discriminant Validity

According to the theory of discriminant validity, if two or more constructs within the study are unique, valid measures of each idea should not be associated with each other. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) and Fornell and Larcker Criterion are commonly used measures to assess the discriminant validity among the variables.

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Matrix

	BE	BI	COO	PI
BE				
BI	0.843			
COO	0.765	0.821		0.811
PI	0.785	0.745	0.654	

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 4.8 presents the HTMT value for the study and the recorded HTMT value between PI and COO is 0.654 (HTMT>0.85), between PI and BI is 0.745 (HTMT>0.85) and between PI and BE is 0.785(HTMT>0.85). These findings imply that the measurement indicators used to measure the study constructs are distinct from each other and establish discriminant validity within the study variables.

Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion is one of the frequently used methods of determining Discriminant Validity. As shown in Table 6, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values across the diagonal are consistently greater than the correlations with all other constructs. The higher AVE values across the diagonal confirm the study's discriminant validity.

Convergent Validity Analysis

Table 5: Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	BE	BI	C	PI
BE	0.960			
BI	0.956	0.961		
C	0.945	0.954	0.950	
PI	0.959	0.958	0.949	0.964

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 05, presents the Fornell and Larcker Criterion for the measurement model and further AVE values across the diagonal are greater than its correlation with all other constructs and confirms that the measurement instruments used to measure each construct are distinct from each other.

Multicollinearity

Table 6: Multicollinearity Statistics (VIF)

Indicator	VIF
BE1	6.738
BE2	6.903
BE3	9.890
BE4	9.167
BE5	9.062
BI1	8.756
BI2	7.082
BI3	9.679
BI4	8.659
BI5	8.848
BI6	9.713
C007	09.04
COO1	7.955
COO2	8.859
COO3	8.726
COO4	8.912
COO5	9.881
COO6	8.795
PI1	7.833
PI2	8.543
PI3	9.749
PI4	9.853
PI5	9.932

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 06 illustrates the VIF values for the study measurement items and VIF value is a statistical measure used to measure the multicollinearity within the variables. Multicollinearity means the variables within the study are highly correlated with each other and when variables are highly correlated in extreme levels, it can adversely affect the findings of the study. The VIF values should be lower than 10 to prove the absence of multicollinearity within the study (Suhail, 2023). The resulted all VIF values for the majority of indicators were satisfactorily lower than 10. Thus, it proves that the variables within each dimension are sufficiently different from each other, ensuring the reliability of the measurement model and confirming no multicollinearity issues.

Structural Model Analysis

The structural model is used to assess the causal relationships between the latent variables and observed variables within the research model.

Table 7: Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.015	0.024
dULS	0.066	0.160
dG	0.542	0.616

Source: Survey data (2025)

According to the data presented in Table 7, the SRMR value less than 0.08 indicates that the structural model is a good fit for the data. The smaller d_ULS value and d_G value further confirm the result.

Path Coefficient

The path coefficient values resulted under structure model use to test the study hypotheses and the T- statistics and significance values of the path coefficient provide insight on the impact of one variable on another variable.

Table 8: Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
BE ->PI	0.503	0.502	0.072	6.977	0.000
BI ->PI	0.273	0.276	0.082	3.331	0.001
COO ->BE	0.945	0.945	0.008	112.149	0.000
COO->BI	0.954	0.955	0.006	152.244	0.000
COO ->PI	0.215	0.213	0.064	3.352	0.001
C ->BI ->PI	0.261	0.263	0.079	3.321	0.001
C ->BE ->PI	0.475	0.474	0.068	6.935	0.000

Source: Survey data (2025)

Path coefficient statistics of the structural model are presented in Table 8. According to Table 8, country of origin has a present significant impact on both brand image and brand evaluation, having T- statistic greater than 1.96 as 152.244 (P= 0.000) and 112.149 (P = 0.000), respectively. Brand evaluation has a present significant positive impact on purchase intention (T = 6.977, P = 0.000) and brand image has a present significant impact on purchase intention (T = 3.331, P = 0.000). Country of origin has a present significant impact on purchase intention based on having a T-statistic greater than 1.96 (T statistic = 3.352) under one percent of significance level (P-value = 0.001). Further, the research study

identified that brand image mediates the impact of country of origin on purchase intention, with the T-statistic of 3.321 ($P=0.001$). Also, brand evaluation mediates the impact of country of origin on purchase intention, according to the T-statistic higher than 1.96 ($T = 06.935$, $P= 0.000$).

Accordingly, the key findings of the study were derived through the path coefficient statistics and confidence interval statistics. The researcher identified significant positive impact of country of origin on brand image ($T = 152.244$, $P = 0.000$) and Brand evaluation ($T = 112.149$, $P = 0.000$). Further the country of origin proved significant positive impact on customer purchase intention ($T = 3.352$, $P=0.001$). Both Brand image and brand evaluation have proved significant positive impact on customer purchase intention with the T-statistics of 3.331 ($P=0.001$) and 6.977 ($P = 0.000$), respectively. Eventually, the researcher identified significant mediating effects of brand image and brand evaluation on the impact of country of origin on customer purchase intention. The mediating effect of country of origin on the impact of brand image on customer purchase intention was supported by the T-statistic of 3.321 ($P = 0.001$) and the mediating effect of brand image on the impact of country of origin on customer purchase intention was supported by the T-statistic of 6.935 ($P = 0.000$).

Coefficient Determination

Table 9: Coefficient Determination

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
BE	0.893	0.893
BI	0.911	0.910
PI	0.952	0.951

Source: Survey data (2025)

The researcher used coefficient determination to assess the proportion of variance in an endogenous construct explained by its predictor constructs, indicating the model's explanatory power for that specific construct. According to Table 9, Country of origin has 89 percent of impact on brand evaluation, 91 percent of impact on brand image and 95 percent of impact on purchase intention in the automobile industry in Sri Lanka.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 10: Path Coefficients for Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient		Confidence Interval		Result
	T Statistic	P-Value			
H1: Country of origin image has a significant positive impact on brand image.	152.244	0.000	0.941	0.966	Accepted

H2: Country of origin image has a significant positive impact on brand evaluation.	112.149	0.000	0.927	0.960	Accepted
H3: Country of origin image has a significant positive impact on customer purchase intention.	3.352	0.001	0.091	0.344	Accepted
H4: Brand image has a significant positive impact on customer purchase intention.	3.331	0.001	0.112	0.436	Accepted
H5: Brand evaluation has a significant positive impact on customer purchase intention.	6.977	0.000	0.361	0.645	Accepted
H6: Brand image is the mediator in the process by which the country of origin influences the customer purchase intention	3.321	0.001	0.108	0.416	Accepted
H7: Brand evaluation is the mediator in the process by which the country of origin influences customer's purchase intention.	6.935	0.000	0.342	0.611	Accepted

Source: Survey data (2025)

Discussion

Regarding the country-of-origin image, the current study provides a consumer-focused analysis. Compared to the previous approach, which was often focused on the perspective of the companies, this suggests a substantial change. The impact of the country-of-origin image on Sri Lankan customers' propensity to buy cars was investigated by researchers both directly and indirectly. The researcher specifically concentrates on the Toyota automobile market in Sri Lanka to conduct the research study. Further, the mediating roles of the brand image and brand evaluation were tested within the research model. The findings reveal that both direct and indirect effects were seen. Means that the country of origin directly affects consumer automobile buying decisions in this sample. The findings of the study slightly align with the study conducted in the Korean automotive industry (Kim, Im, & Gim, 2025). Further, the study conducted by De Nisco & Oduro (2022) also confirmed the findings that COO has a significant, positive influence on consumer behavior, and compared with the product evaluation and brand evaluation, they mostly used it for purchase intention decisions. Some contradictory findings have been noted in previous investigations in smartphone buying, such as Hien et al. (2020) where the direct effect wasn't significantly related to buying. That would be the reason as proved by the, Liu, et al. (2022) the COO

cues significantly influence consumer sentiments and brand image, especially for high-involvement products like cars, influencing brand choice and trust in emerging markets.

Accordingly, all effects were significantly positive towards automobile purchase decisions. Additionally, the current results corroborate prior studies that focused on smartphones and discovered that the image of the nation of origin did affect consumers' intentions to buy. The results of this study specifically showed that the impact of country-of-origin on customer purchase intention might be mediated by brand image and consumer attitudes toward the brand. These findings largely support those of Tulipa and Muljani (2015), who found that brand image served as a mediating factor between the intention to buy mobile phones and the nation of origin

Conclusion and Recommendation

The main objective of the research study was to investigate the effect of the country-of-origin on the consumer purchase intention in the automobile market in Sri Lanka, taking into account the mediating role of brand image and brand evaluation. The research study identified a significant positive impact of country of origin on customer purchase intention and confirmed that both brand image and brand evaluation have a mediating effect on the impact of country of origin on customer purchase intention. Accordingly, the current study concluded that country of origin has a significant positive impact on customer purchase intention in the automobile market in Sri Lanka, and brand image and brand evaluation significantly mediate the impact of country of origin on purchase intention in the automobile market in Sri Lanka. It means that the consumers of the Toyota automobile industry in Sri Lanka tend to select the brand of Toyota as their preference based on the country of origin of Toyota automobiles. Toyota automobiles are one of the most prominent Japanese automobile brands, and the customer-based brand equity towards Toyota automobiles has been enriched through the strong country of origin image received in relation to the Japanese automobile industry.

Implications

The findings of the study have a number of management implications. The country of origin is one important factor that increases the equity for the clients. Marketers are expected to continuously strive to maintain and promote the favorable image of the country where the brand originates in order to enhance the overall perception of the brand. Additionally, marketers should highlight high-quality domestic businesses if they want to benefit from a favorable view of their country. With this focus, consumers could find it simpler to extrapolate product details across national brands. Additionally, this analysis makes it abundantly evident that businesses that compete in international markets should back major governmental institutions to improve unfavorable opinions about their home nations. Further, findings of the study provide more holistic views of country of origin and purchase intention of the automobile.

Limitations and Future Research

There are a few limitations to this study that could inspire further research directions. The small sample size is one of these drawbacks. Thus, the sample might be enlarged to incorporate customer feedback from various groups as an extension of this study to make it even more representative. There are various factors as determinants for purchase decisions of automobiles which were not focused on here. Further, findings are limited to Sri Lanka that can be notable difference between with geopolitical context and cultural context, which

haven't been examined well. The current study is limited to a selected industry and a particular brand, but it has limited the holistic view of the effect of the COO in different context.

As a result, it is impossible to determine what circumstances affect their propensity to buy. To better understand these components, it would be advantageous to differentiate between user, corporate, and product. That would provide a deep understanding for businesses.

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