

The Effect of Country-Of-Origin On Consumer Purchase Behaviour Among Nigerian Elites: A Study of Imported Fashion Wears

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ABSTRACT: *This study was carried out in order to assess the effect of country of origin on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among the Nigerian elites. The determinant factors of country-of-origin that consumer considers when purchasing imported fashion wears were used as pre-determined factors in measuring consumer's purchase behaviour. These pre-determined factors formed the independent variables for the study which were Technology Sophistication, Brand Effects and Country Image while the dependent variable was Consumer Purchase Behaviour. The population was the consumers of imported fashion wears in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria belonging to the social class. Using Top-man formula, a sample size of 358 employees was considered for the study. A survey research design was adopted for the study. Research questions were answered using frequency, mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses stated were tested using simple linear regression model at a 5% level of significance. From the data analysis, the major findings revealed that Technology Sophistication had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears in Uyo, (t -statistic = 43.312 > p -value (0.000)). The study revealed that Brand Effects had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears in Uyo, (t -statistic = 48.491 > p -value (0.000)). The study also revealed that Country Image had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears in Uyo, (t -statistic = 42.292 > p -value (0.000)). From the findings, In line with this, it was recommended that international companies should aim at influencing their consumer' purchase behaviour by making their country-of-origin an important component of international marketing strategy. Foreign marketers need to ascertain the effects of their place of origin on consumers' demand for their products. Armed with this knowledge, marketers can decide whether any relevant action should be indicated.*

KEYWORDS: country-of-origin, consumer purchase decision, technology sophistication and country image

INTRODUCTION

Before the post-independence era (1960s), price and brands were used extensively by consumers as extrinsic cues to evaluate product quality and make purchase behaviour. Introductory studies on country-of-origin as a source used by consumers in evaluating product quality, started to gain

attention in academic literature during the early 1960s and researchers in consumer behaviour and retail marketing fields began paying attention to this newly explored dimension as a possible guide to the promotion of brand name products and positioning strategy in the retail sector. In the 1970s, country-of-origin started gaining attention as a consumer product evaluation attribute and was added to the list of external cues (Pharr, 2018). With the continued growth of globalization and the wide spread of international trade during the 1980s, many firms began to explore opportunities for distributing their products around the world. Likewise, consumers also have various choices among many products made in different countries. As a result, country-of-origin became a vital part in consumer's purchase decision-making process.

Consumers respond to products from other countries differently and this response which can either be positive or negative can influence consumer's perceptions and lead to their purchase behaviour. Country-of-origin serves as a guide to associations in the minds of consumers. In the course of buying, consumers are not only worry about the quality and price of a product but also other vital factors such as the brand's country-of-origin. Many consumers utilize country-of-origin stereotypes to appraise products for example, "Japanese electronics are reliable", "German cars are excellent", "Italian pizza are outstanding". Many consumers believe that a "Made in . . ." label means a product is "superior" or "inferior" depending on their perception of the country (Yasin *et al.*, 2007). Consumers with different levels of product knowledge and taste have inclined to make use of country-of-origin cues in their purchase behaviour in different ways and this is necessary in making inferences because the process of trial and error is generally not available in real life situations.

According to early economic theories, a consumers' choice was based upon assumption that he knew what he was buying. This was probably true for an era where the limited number of alternatives were available to consumers. But with increase in technology, emergence of marketing concept and increase in competition, there is a flood of products and brands available to consumers, thus, making consumer purchase behaviour more complex and with the availability of foreign goods in most national markets, the country-of-origin cue has become important as consumers often evaluate imported goods differently than they do with competing domestic products. Companies who are competing in the global market manufacture their products worldwide and the location where they manufacture their products often time affect the consumer's judgement on the quality of the product based on the country where the product is produced. Today, products originated from Italy such as shoes, furniture and clothing have already gained world class reputation. This includes clothing brands from Italy such as Gucci, Versace, Dolce & Gabbana (popularly known as D&G), Prada, Valentino, Armani, Marni, Iceberg, Missoni, Trussardi, Moschino, Dirk Bikkembergs, Etro and Zegna. A brand's country-of-origin can impact the brand's perceived positioning by reducing perceived risks, acting as a guarantee and enhancer for the positioning strategy. Thus it can influence customers' purchase decision and offer a important competitive advantage.

Regarding that businesses are going global more and more these days and the requirement to communicate with consumers with diverse cultural backgrounds is enhancing. It is essential for international organizations to comprehend how consumers incorporate country-of-origin in their consumption decision making especially in luxury goods such as perfumes, wrist watches, clothing, furniture etc. in order to influence their purchase behaviour. Hence, the goal of this research was to examine the effect of country-of-origin on consumers purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites by highlighting those country-of-origin factors that consumers considers when purchasing a product from another country. Determinants factors of country-of-origin that consumers considers when purchasing products from a particular country are consumer nationalism, demographics, brand effects, product quality and price. Others are consumer perception, technology sophistication, product features, brand familiarity, advertising images and country images (Ahmed *et al.*, 2014). From the forgoing, the main moderating factor of country-of-origin that determines purchases of fashion wears to be consider for this study are of Technology Sophistication, Brand Effects and Country Image to see how they influences consumers purchase behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

Understanding the guidelines that consumers use when evaluating the quality of products and making purchasing decisions is imperative for manufacturers of consumer products and marketers in the international trade. Country-of-origin matters for status and image-oriented products and given the growth of competition, increase in products' availability in the marketplace and the power of consumerism, product sourcing should not be taken lightly. Consumers ultimately decide whose product they will purchase and which brands and companies will fail or succeed and because of the growing competition from international firms, consumers' sensitivity to country-of-origin has become a relevant issue for brand managers. Researchers have studied this issue extensively by examining consumers' judgments of quality, their preferences and behavioural intentions in response to the country-of-origin cue. However, despite the large number of experiments and surveys measuring the effects of country-of-origin on perception and purchase intention, we are not aware of any major attempt to measure the impact of country-of-origin on consumer purchase behaviour in Nigeria and regarding that businesses are going global more and more these days and the requirement to communicate with consumers with diverse cultural backgrounds is enhancing. It is essential for international firms to comprehend how Nigeria consumers incorporate country-of-origin in their purchase decision making especially in luxury goods such as perfumes, wrist watches, clothing etc. It was against this backdrop that the researcher carried out this study to articulate on what constitutes country-of-origin in order to make for effective purchase behaviour of consumers in Nigeria social class and to determine the various factors of country of origin and its effect on consumer purchase behaviour.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of country-of-origin on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites. The sub objectives of this study include the following;

- i.To determine the effect of Technology Sophistication on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites.
- ii.To determine the effect of Brand Effects on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites.
- iii.To determine the effect of Country Image on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated from the objectives of the study as stated below:

- i.Does Technology Sophistication affect consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites?
- ii.Do Brand Effects have any influence on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites?
- iii.In what way does Country Image affect consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites?

Hypotheses of the study

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

H0₁: Technology Sophistication has no significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites?

H0₂: Brand Effects has no significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites?

H0₃: Country Image has no significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Country-of-Origin (COO)

Country-of-origin as a tool in marketing has been in existence for more than 40 years now and the concept have been widely defined by many authors. Ahmed *et al.* (2014) defined country-of-origin as the country that conducts manufacturing or assembling. It is the Country of Manufacture (COM) which represents the last location/country of manufacturing or assembling one product. It means the country that a manufacturer's product or brand is associated with; traditionally this country is called the home country. For some brands, country-of-origin belongs to a given and definite country, such as International Business Machines (IBM) belongs to the USA and SONY is a Japanese brand. Country of origin is an influence that the country of manufacturer has on a consumer's positive or negative perception of a product. Anwar *et al.* (2013) stated that country of origin is being viewed like different brands belonging to the different countries. Those owing countries are called country-of-origin. Example given by Anwar *et al.* (2013) is Dell. Dell is an American brand, thus America is country-of-origin for Dell. With increasing availability of foreign goods in most national markets, the country-of-origin cue has become more important as

consumers often evaluate imported goods differently than they do competing domestic products (Bilkey and Nes, 2012).

The positive or negative image a country has in consumers' mind will affect their purchasing behaviour since consumers are concerned with where products are made to expect the quality (Parkvithee and Miranda, 2012). In other words, besides brand name, appearance and design, country-of-origin has become one of the most important indicators of product quality. Country of origin is an extrinsic determinant and the label for brand name which guides the consumers to choose a particular product. Country-of-origin can be viewed as an asset when it has a positive connotation and as liability when it is associated with negative elements. A match between country-of-origin and product category associations is needed to avoid negative effects. The type of product associated with its country-of-origin is essential. For example, France has a positive image when it comes to wine, fashion or perfumes and a less positive association with cars and high technology. Country-of-origin may also contain contradictory associations. For example, the United States of America is considered a strong brand, but has nevertheless certain negative associations. However, these negative elements have not managed to reduce its perceived product attractiveness (Morgan *et al.*, 2004). On another note, many untapped positive country-of-origin associations exist. Turkey has developed a reputation regarding the product category of carpets, but has not yet leveraged this product reputation for creating a strong brand reputation. This situation reveals a country which can provide a strong product image, but a weak brand image (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2011).

In marketing, consumer formulates quality judgments on the basis of image of country a product belongs to. According to Verlegh (2011), two components of country-of-origin are geographic components and human component. Geography components include climate and landscape of a country whereas Human component refers to skill, competence and creativity level of people of country of origin of product. Both the components if positively evaluated with respect to a country create a favourable evaluation of product.

Country-of-Origin Variables

Various variables constitute country-of-origin factors. These include consumer nationalism, demographics, brand effects, product quality and price. Others are consumer perception, technology sophistication, product features, brand familiarity, advertising images and country images (Ahmed *et al.*, 2014). However, from the foregoing, the main moderating factor of country-of-origin that determines purchases of fashion wears to be considered for this study are of Technology Sophistication, Brand Effects and Country Image and analyzes their influence on consumers purchase behaviour.

Technology Sophistication: Technological sophistication is a fundamental country-of-origin dimension that has important implications on the purchase behaviour of a consumer. Consumers tend to believe that the quality of a product is based on how advanced the product is being produced compared to others. There is a close link between the quality of a product and technology

sophistication. A technologically sophisticated environment implies that the products and the processes utilized in the industry involve the use of very highly machines and complex operations technologies with a lot of research and development involved, while a relatively technologically unsophisticated environment implies the opposite. It is widely believe that technology is the key driver of economic growth of a country, region and city. Technological progress allows for an efficient production of more and better goods and services. Consumers believe that by implementing new technologies into a production there will be an increase in the efficiencies of the product, thus, reducing errors or the downtime to occur is significantly reduced and with this the quality of the product is increased. An appropriate technology is normally needed to produce a product of quality and countries with high technology sophistication manufacture product that are of high perceived quality and consumers easily consider this in their purchase behaviour.

Brand Effects: The brand effect is the ability of a brand's reputations to influence people's future behaviour. Brand effects shape human perception of attraction and familiarity as well as foster loyal customers and ongoing sales. The overall effect of a brand is influenced by the relative strength of a consumer's positive feelings towards the brand. The effect of the brand is linked to the intensity of the feelings aroused by the brand and can be based on a brand's ubiquity, visibility or functionality. Brand effects can be enhanced through advertising and promotion exposures, in-store product display, trial, purchase, consumption and online/offline referral communications. These experiences with a brand contribute to building a high level of knowledge about the brand (Campbell and Keller, 2013), which increase consumers' confidence in the brand. The power of branding comes from deep, subconscious part of our brain and it has the power to influence individual purchase behaviour. Names, logos, taglines and colours are given to products so as to enable people easily assign reputations, attributes and values in their mind.

Country Image: Country image is the economic, social, technological and political part of each nation. It refers to a mental picture of a country created in the mind of consumers on the basis of information about a country's political, legal and cultural environment or on the basis of degree of its economic development or on basis of set of personal experiences they have with the country. It is a total of descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country (Martin and Eroglu, 2014). Individual forms an image based on their personal frame of reference. In marketing we are very well aware about price quality relationship, that the higher the price, the higher will be the quality. Similarly consumer formulates quality judgments on the basis of image of country a product belongs to.

Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. It refers to the behaviour of both the personal consumer and the organizational consumer. Studying consumer behavior includes the study of what to buy, how to buy, where to buy and why people are buying (Chen, 2013). The present study has made an attempt to study the purchasing behaviour of personal consumers. The personal consumer buys goods and services for his or her own use, or

the household or as a gift for a friend. Consumer behaviour refers to the act of individuals who are directly involved in obtaining and using goods and services. It also includes the decision-making process, which leads to the act of purchase. Consumer behaviour is not only the study of what people consumes but also how often and under what conditions do they consume and what influences their choice of what to consume. It attempts to understand the buyer decision-making process both individually and collectively. It studies individual consumer characteristics behavioural variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. Consumer is that foundation of every business. What consumer sees, thinks, prefers and buys is of great importance to marketers to fine tune their marketing offers and achieve high level of consumer acceptance and satisfaction. Therefore, making a decision, the buyer considers many factors such as cultural factors, social, personal and psychological categories. It is essential for marketers to understand consumers and their purchase behaviour in order to survive and succeed in the competitive marketing environment.

The Consumer Purchase Behaviour

The consumer purchase behaviour is one of the stages on the consumer decision making process. The consumer decision-making process consists of five stages which are: Need recognition, Information search, Evaluations of alternatives, Purchase behaviour and Post-purchase behaviour. After alternatives have been evaluated, purchase behaviour become the next stage in the consumer decision-making process. The purchase behaviour is mainly influenced by the previous stages of the consumer decision-making process. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), the evaluation of alternatives stage has greater impact on the purchase behaviour and intention of consumers when it comes to different brands. This stage of the consumer decision-making model serves as the end goal of the customer (Shrestha, 2016). According to Stankevich (2017), customers make purchases to satisfy their needs and meet their demands. Additionally, a consumer can begin the process of making a decision on a given product but change their mind. This may be due to the fact that customers usually make sub decisions.

As identified by Kotler and Keller (2012), there are several such decisions that consumers can go through which are brand, dealer, timing, payment method and quantity. For instance, a consumer purchasing a smartphones has five aspects to follows: Brand (iPhone), Dealer (Apple store), Timing (during the week), Quantity (one) and Payment Method (Debit Card). These choices are evaluated by the customers since each one of them carry some sort of problems that may arise. Since smartphones are considered durable products or products that require high involvement and longer decision-making process, the time spent on shaping and constructing the decision can take longer before the actual purchase of the product. For more complex products consumers spend more time to come up with the most efficient choice (Stankevich, 2017). Also, as described by Ganlari (2016), the purchase decision stage of the consumer decision-making model can be influenced by preferences towards a specific brand and the opinion of family, friends and reference groups of the customer. Consumers gain preference between brands, products/services being considered and intend to purchase the brand of choice (Stefan, 2019).

Factors Influencing Consumers Purchase Behaviour

Certain factors influences a consumer in their purchasing behaviour, specificities and characteristics in their shopping habits, purchase intentions, the brands he buys or the retailers he goes. Some of the factors that can lead a consumer in their purchase behaviours are;

- i. Marketing factors such as product design, pricing, promotion, packaging, positioning and distribution.
- ii. Personal factors such as age, gender, education and upbringing.
- iii. Psychological factors such as buying motives, perception and attitudes.
- iv. Situational factors such as physical surroundings, social surroundings and time factor.
- v. Social factors such as social status, reference group, social media and family.
- vi. Cultural factors such as religion and ethnicity.
- vii. Lifestyle factors such as status, income and identity.
- viii. Geographical factors such as region, country and urban or rural.

A consumer purchase behaviour is a result of each of these factors and by understanding and identifying the factors that influence their customers, companies have the opportunity to develop a strategy, a marketing message (Unique Value Proposition) and adverting campaigns more efficient and in line with the needs of their target consumers.

Country-of-Origin Effect and Consumers Purchase Behaviour

The Country-of-origin has attracted the attention of international firms who have come to realize its effect on consumer's evaluation and purchase behaviour. The country-of-origin has been defined in many ways as a psychological effect describing consumers' attitudes and perceptions and its importance depends on the amount of information consumers have about the product and the product category. Country-of-origin is an important factor in product evaluation process as well as purchase behaviour. Purchasing behaviours are influenced by products' country-of-origin labeling, which may refer to where a brand is based, a product is designed or manufactured or other forms of value-creation aligned to the country. Country-of-origin serves as a cue from which consumers make inferences about product and product attributes. The country-of-origin cue triggers a global evaluation of quality, performance or specific product attributes. Consumers infer attributes to the product based on country stereotype and experiences with products from that country. Hence, a country-of-origin cue has become an information cue for consumers who are exposed to far more internationalized product selection and multinational marketing than ever before. Thus, the country-of-origin may even affect consumer's perception beyond their conscious control.

Conceptual Model

The underpinning conceptual model was drawn from the research: country of origin and consumer purchase behaviour model.

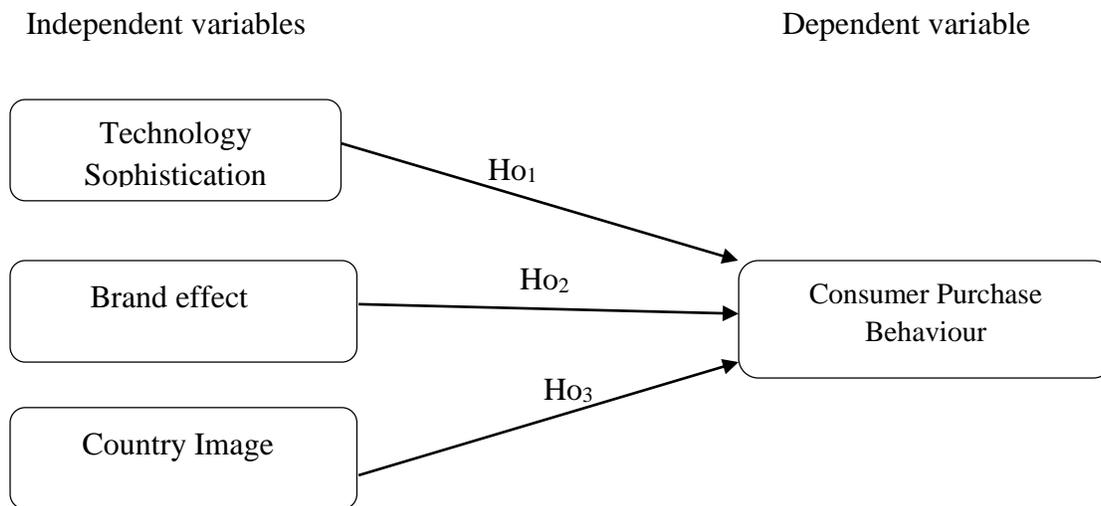


Figure 2.1: *Researcher Model: Country of Origin and Consumer Purchase Behaviour Model.*
Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, (2022)

Based on the research objectives, the conceptual model was constructed. This model was developed showing factors of country of origin to include technology sophistication, brand effect and country image as key underpinning towards consumer purchase behaviour. This model is important because it consists of variables that can be controlled by international companies to influence the purchase behaviours of their customers.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975)

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) was propounded by Fishbein, M.A and Ajzen, I. in 1975. The theory centers its analysis on the importance of pre-existing attitudes in the decision-making process. The theory states that consumers act on a behaviour based on their intention to create or receive a particular outcome. In this analysis, created by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in the late 1960s, the consumers are rational actors who choose to act in their best interests. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), behaviour can largely be predicted by the individual's attitudes towards performing the behaviour in question, through the intervening effect of behavioural intention. The important attitudes in this process are those that are specific to the specific behaviour being studied, it is not sufficient to consider the individual's attitudes more generally (Ajzen 1988; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975).

According to the theory, specificity is critical in the decision-making process. A consumer only takes a specific action when there is an equally specific result expected. From the time the consumer decides to act to the time the action is completed, the consumer retains the ability to change his or her mind and decide on a different course of action. Marketers can learn several lessons from the Theory of Reasoned Action. First, when marketing a product to consumers,

marketers must associate a purchase with a positive result and that result must be specific. The theory highlights the importance of moving consumers through the sales pipeline. Marketers must understand that long lags between initial intention and the completion of the action allows consumers plenty of time to talk themselves out of a purchase or question the outcome of the purchase.

Empirical Review

Ghalandari and Norouzi (2012) in their study on *The Effect of Country of Origin on Purchase Intention: The Role of Product Knowledge*. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of country-of-origin (COO) cues on purchase intention by considering the role of product knowledge. On the basis of the results of the present study, marketers are able to do a more effective job in formulating the contents of their messages in marketing communications. A total of 380 questionnaires were distributed to university students. Country-of-origin, the independent variable, was measured using Maheswaran (1994) scale; purchase intention, the dependent variable; and product knowledge was the moderator variable. Structural equation modeling was used for data analysis and to test the hypotheses. The results show that the effect of production origin country on willingness to purchase in individuals with low product knowledge is greater than in those with high product knowledge; also the effect of production origin country on willingness to purchase in individuals with low objective knowledge is greater than that in those with high objective knowledge. In final, Structural equation modeling shows that the effect of production origin country on willingness to purchase in individuals with low and high subjective knowledge of product was rejected because of quantity of T-value which was 1.4 and 1.9 respectively.

Yunus and Rashid (2016), in their study *The Influence of Country-of-origin on Consumer Purchase Intention: The Mobile Phones Brand from China*. The study aim was to investigate the determinant factors of country-of-origin that consumer considers in purchasing mobile phones brand that originated from China. Country image, perceived product quality and brand familiarity was used as pre-determined factors in measuring consumer's purchase intention. A total of 200 set of questionnaires were distributed randomly in Klang Valley. The hypotheses which were tested using Pearson Correlation have revealed that all pre-determined variables are significant and highly correlated in influencing consumer purchase intention towards mobile phones brand from China. Other than providing a remarkable change of people perceptions towards mobile phone brand from China, the findings would also be very useful to consumers and marketers especially who involve directly and indirectly with the country of China as their product and service providers' origin.

Hoang, Phuong, HoPhi and Chi Na (2017) in their study *Effects of Country of Origin and Product Features on Customer Purchase Intention: A Study of Imported Powder Milk*. Their aim was to investigate drivers of purchase intention for imported powder milk. They researchers adopted the partial least squares-structural equation model approach to analyze a data survey of 369 customers in Vietnam. The finding reveals that product attitude has strongest positive effect on purchase

intention while ethnocentrism has a negative effect on product quality and purchase intention. It was recommended that managers should identify key determinants to improve their business strategies in the market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study focused on determining the effect of country-of-origin on consumer purchase behaviour of imported fashion wears among Nigeria elites. The study was domiciled in international marketing and the units of analysis were consumers of imported fashion wears in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

The Descriptive Research Design was used to carry out this work. Since the work centers on determining the effect of Country of Origin on Consumer purchase behaviour, the survey method was used. The population for this study were the groups of persons in who exercise power and influence and also occupy a privileged position in the society ranging from public servants, government official, senior lecturers, professors to high ranking entrepreneurs whose salary ranges below ₦250,000 to 2million and above on a monthly bases. These classes of people were chosen because they suit the purpose for the study and they consume imported fashion wears within Uyo metropolis.

Given the largeness of the infinite population, it would be impossible to carry out a study of the whole population. The sample size was determined using the Top-man Formula for sample sizes were the population is finite but not known.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 (pq)}{e^2}$$

Where n=sample size

Z=value of Z-score associated with the selected degree of confidence (1.96 for 95% Confidence level)

e=estimated standard error (5%)

p=probability of success (0.5)

q=probability of failure (1-p)

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5) (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3.8416) (0.5) (0.5)}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 384.16$$

Since the sample size cannot be in fraction or decimal, the sample size will be approximated to the nearest whole numbers. Thus, n= 384.16=384 (approximation). Therefore, the sample size of 384 respondents was used, where 384 copies of questionnaire were administered to the consumers of imported fashion wears among the social class.

The tool adopted by the researcher to achieve the stated objectives of the study was the questionnaire. Using convenient sampling, 384 respondents were chosen from different locations within Uyo metropolis and its environs. In conducting this study, a fully structured questionnaire was used as an instrument in order to gather information from the respondents. It consists of the closed-ended multiple choice questions and Likert-scale questions which enable respondents to express their level of agreement and select the answer that suits them best.

The survey instrument had three sections; the first section contains background information about the respondents including their gender, age, occupation, monthly income and marital status. The second section will make up of items designed to elicit information relating to the effect of country of origin on consumer purchase behaviour in Uyo metropolis. These includes questions that will measure the effect of technology sophistication, brand effects and country images and the third section will includes questions about consumer purchasing behaviour. The data collecting questionnaire was a close-ended questionnaire where the researcher gave the respondents options from where they choose the one or ones that most represent their views, opinions, attitudes or behaviours (A sample copy of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix I). A five point Likert scale was adopted by the researcher for the questionnaire which was rated as follows:

Strongly Agreed (SA)	=4
Agreed (A)	=3
Disagreed (D)	=2
Strongly Disagreed (SD)	=1
Undecided (UD)	=0

Theoretical Specification of Models

The statistical tool that will be used in this study is the simple linear regression model. In this case, the measurement and the *a priori* expectation for each of the independent variables on the dependent variable were presented on the Table below;

Table 1: Variable Description

S/N	Variable	Abbr.	Measurement	<i>A priori</i> Expectation
1.	Consumer Purchase Behaviour	CPB	Five-Point Likert Scale	
2.	Technology Sophistication	TeS	Five-Point Likert Scale	Positive expectation
3.	Brand Effects	BE	Five-Point Likert Scale	Positive expectation
4.	Country Images	CI	Five-Point Likert Scale	Positive expectation

Source: *Researcher's Compilation, (2022)*

Empirical Specification of Model

The model for the study and all the variables are stated below:

The dependent variable is: Consumer Purchase Behaviour (CPB) while the independent variables are: Technology Sophistication (TeS), Brand Effects (BE) and Country Images (CI). Below is the model:

$$CPB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TeS + \beta_2 BE + \beta_3 CI + e_t \quad \text{Equation (3.1),}$$

where: β_0 = Intercept of CPB; β_1 , β_2 and β_3 = Coefficient of each of the independent variables; e_t = Random error terms.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The simple percentage, descriptive statistic and simple linear regression model were used to analyze the data collected and test the hypotheses stated as well and with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS-version 25). The level of significance was 5%.

Frequency Distribution Statistics showing the demographic data of Respondents

Table 2: Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage %
<i>Questionnaire Distribution</i>		
Questionnaire distributed	384	100
Questionnaire retrieved/used	358	93
Not returned	26	7
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	126	35
Female	232	65
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	228	63
Married	130	37
<i>Age Bracket</i>		
26 – 35	62	17
36 – 45	118	33
46 -55	105	29
56 above	73	21
<i>Salary Scale</i>		
₦250,000-500,000	54	15
₦550,000-1,000,000	147	41
₦1,050,000-1,500,000	105	29
₦1,550,000-above	52	15
<i>Level of Education</i>		
Degree	90	25
Master/MBA	158	44
PHD	57	16
Others	53	15
<i>Occupation</i>		
Government officials	43	12
Public Servants	105	29
Private business owners/Entrepreneur	138	39
Lecturers	72	20

(n=358)

Source: Researcher's computation, (2022).

From the Table 2 above, out of the three hundred and eighty four (384) copies of questionnaire distributed, 358 (93%) were successfully retrieved and in usable form while 26(7%) were not retrieved. Therefore, 93% respondents became a good representation for the study. The respondent's age varied from 26-35years (17%), 36-45years (33%), 46-55 (29%) and 56 years and above (21%) of which 35% (126) are male and 65% (232) are female. The respondent's statistics showed that 15% (54) of the respondents are on a salary scale of ₦250,000-₦500,000, 41% (147) are on the range of ₦550,000-₦1,000,000 while 29% (105) are on the range of ₦1,050,000-₦1,500,000 and 15% (52) are on the range of ₦1,550,000-above. The marital status showed 37% (130) of the respondents are married while 63% (228).

Data retrieved from educational qualification showed that participants with a Masters/MBA degree seemed to be the highest number with 158(44%) respondents. Respondents with degrees were 90(25%) while 57(16%) are PhD degree holders and participants with others educational qualifications were 53 (15%) in total. As regards the respondents occupation, data received show that 138 (39%) of the respondents are private business owners/entrepreneur, 105 (29%) are public servants, 72 (20%) are lecturers and 43 (12%) respondents are government officials. (A sample copy of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix I). Judging from this demographic data, most of the respondents are female consumers with the age range of 46-55 years and are single with a Master/MBA degree and the highest occupation is entrepreneurship.

Frequency Distribution Statistics Showing Response from the Respondents

Table 3: Mean Analysis of Technology Sophistication (TeS)

S/N	Question items	SA (1)	A (2)	D (3)	SD (4)	UD (0)	MEAN	SD
1	The technological know-how of a nation allows for an efficient production of more and better goods and services.	156	124	58	12	8	4.14	0.0029
2	Countries with high technology sophistication manufacture product that are of high perceived quality.	124	156	48	20	10	4.02	0.0027
3	Consumers consider the Technology sophistication of a country when making purchase behaviour.	213	91	42	9	3	4.40	0.0034
4	The higher the technology sophistication, the higher the perceived quality of the product.	197	104	37	12	8	4.31	0.0032
Grand mean							4.218	0.0031

Source: Field Survey Data, (2022)

Table 3 above showed the opinion of respondents on the effect of technology sophistication on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria. The research items 1,2,3,4 have mean score of above 4.0 point respectively and it was rated great by respondents. The respondents are in agreement with all the items. (The grand mean 4.218 was

greater than the cutoff point 3). Thereby study revealed that technology sophistication has a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour among Nigerian elites.

Table 4: Mean Analysis of Brand Effects (BE)

S/N	Question items	SA (1)	A (2)	D (3)	SD (4)	UD (0)	MEAN	SD
5	The names, logos, taglines and colours given to a product helps consumers to easily assign reputations, attributes and values in their mind.	180	100	48	23	7	4.18	0.0030
6	A brand's reputation influences consumer's future behaviour.	126	158	44	20	10	4.20	0.0030
7	The knowledge about a particular brand increases consumers' confidence in the brand.	200	101	45	9	3	4.36	0.0033
8	Positive branding message can help influence consumer purchase behaviour in the right way.	190	111	35	12	10	4.28	0.0032
Grand mean							4.255	0.0031

Source: Field Survey Data, (2022)

Table 4 above showed the opinion of respondents on the effect of brand effects on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria. The research items 1,2,3,4 have mean score of above 4.0 point respectively and it was rated great by respondents. The respondents are in agreement with all the items. (The grand mean 4.255 was greater than the cutoff point 3). Thereby study revealed that brand effects have a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour among Nigerian elites.

Table 5: Mean Analysis of Country Image (CI)

S/N	Question items	SA (1)	A (2)	D (3)	SD (4)	UD (0)	MEAN	SD
9	The country image is the first piece of information to consider when making purchases.	126	158	44	20	10	4.20	0.0030
10	I find out the imported fashion wear's country image to determine the quality of the imported fashion wear.	116	158	54	13	17	4.13	0.0029
11	I look for country of origin information to choose the best imported fashion wear available in the fashion wear class	180	100	48	23	7	4.18	0.0030
12	When buying a kind of expensive imported wear, I always seek to find out what country that fashion wear was made in	197	104	37	12	8	4.31	0.0032
Grand mean							4.205	0.0030

Source: Field Survey Data, (2022)

Table 5 above showed the opinion of respondents on the effect of country image on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria. The research items 1,2,3,4 have mean score of above 4.0 point respectively and it was rated great by respondents. The respondents are in agreement with all the items. (The grand mean 4.205 was greater than the cutoff point 3). Thereby study revealed that country image have a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour among Nigerian elites.

Reliability Test and Validity of Data Collection Instrument

Reliability: A convenience sample of 38 respondents was used to pre-test on a test re-test basis. The questionnaire was used to calculate the correlation coefficient, an estimate of the reliability of the data collection instrument. Using Pearson correlation coefficient, a correlation coefficient of .89 was obtained. This indicated a high reliability of the research instrument.

Validity: The questionnaire had to undergo face and content validity before being administered on the respondents. The content validity was estimated as the questionnaire items were scrutinized by four senior lecturers in the department of marketing.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study were tested with the use of t-statistics, probability value (p-value) and F-ratio as criteria for accepting or rejecting any of the hypotheses (null or alternative hypothesis) computed using simple linear regression.

Hypothesis One

The simple linear regression statistics were computed and presented on the Table 4.5:

Table 6: Simple Linear Regression Output

Variable	Beta (β)	t-Stat.	P-Value	Remark	R	R ²	Adj R ²	F-ratio
Constant	0.640	5.645	0.000	Significant	0.917	0.840	0.840	1875.954, p<0.05
TeS	1.095	43.312	0.000	Significant				

*Dependent Variable=CPB

Source: Computed by the Researcher, (2022)

In testing the hypothesis, technology sophistication (TeS) was regressed against consumer purchase behaviour. The result of the simple regression analysis showed the model to examine the effect of TeS on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria. **Consumer Purchase behaviour = 0.640 + 1.095TeS**. The result showed that the coefficient of TeS had positive effect on consumer purchase behaviour. This means that TeS has positive and direct effect on consumer purchase behaviour. The results of the t – statistic denotes that the coefficient was statistically significance because observed values of t – statistic (43.312) was greater than its P-values (0.000). The results of the F – statistical test showed that the overall

regression of the hypothesis one was statistically significance because observed value of the F – statistic (1875.954) was greater than its p-value (0.000). Again, our result shows that the Pearson product moment correlation analysis (r) was 0.917. The strength of relationship between the two variables was high. However, we rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that TeS had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Uyo.

Hypothesis Two

The simple linear regression statistics were computed and presented on the Table 4.6:

Table 7: Simple Linear Regression Output

Variable	Beta (β)	t-Stat.	P-Value	Remark	R	R ²	Adj R ²	F-ratio
Constant	0.650	6.401	0.000	Significant	0.932	0.869	0.868	2351.338, p<0.05
BE	1.109	48.491	0.000	Significant				

*Dependent Variable=CPB

Source: Computed by the Researcher, (2022)

In testing the hypothesis, brand effects (BE) were regressed against consumer purchase behaviour. The result of the simple regression analysis showed the model to examine the effect of BE on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria. **Consumer Purchase behaviour= 0.640 + 1.109BE.**

The result showed that the coefficient of BE had positive effect on consumer purchase behaviour. This means that BE has positive and direct effect on consumer purchase behaviour. The results of the t – statistic denotes that the coefficient was statistically significance because observed values of t – statistic (48.491) was greater than its P-values (0.000). The results of the F – statistical test showed that the overall regression of the hypothesis one was statistically significance because observed value of the F – statistic (2351.338) was greater than its p-value (0.000). Again, our result shows that the Pearson product moment correlation analysis (r) was 0.932. The strength of relationship between the two variables was high. However, we rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that BE had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Uyo.

Hypothesis Three

The simple linear regression statistics were computed and presented on the Table 4.7:

Table 8: Simple Linear Regression Output

Variable	Beta (β)	t-Stat.	P-Value	Remark	R	R ²	Adj R ²	F-ratio
Constant	0.195	2.275	0.024	Significant	0.941	0.885	0.884	2734.409, p<0.05
CI	1.015	52.292	0.000	Significant				

*Dependent Variable=CPB

Source: Computed by the Researcher, (2022)

In testing the hypothesis, country image (CI) was regressed against consumer purchase behaviour. The result of the simple regression analysis showed the model to examine the effect of CI on consumer purchase behaviour on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria. **Consumer Purchase Behaviour= 0.640 + 1.015CI.**

The result showed that the coefficient of CI had positive effect on consumer purchase behaviour. This means that CI has positive and direct effect on consumer purchase behaviour. The results of the t – statistic denotes that the coefficient was statistically significance because observed values of t – statistic (42.292) was greater than its P-values (0.000). The results of the F – statistical test showed that the overall regression of the hypothesis one was statistically significance because observed value of the F – statistic (2734.409) was greater than its p-value (0.000). Again, our result shows that the Pearson product moment correlation analysis (r) was 0.941. The strength of relationship between the two variables was high. However, we rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that CI had a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Uyo.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The result shows technology sophistication has a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria such that consumers taken into consideration the technological know-how of a country before making purchases.

The result from the analysis shows that brand effects have positive effect on consumer purchase behaviour. This shows that consumers make purchases of brand that have a good reputation and positive branding messages. Also, the finding reveals that country image have significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria. This implies that the information available about a country image can influence the purchase behaviour of a consumer.

CONCLUSION

From the data analysis, it is obvious that country of origin is a viable international marketing communication tool. In line with the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached; the study has established that country of origin has positive significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Nigeria. This positive significant effect implies that, an increase in TeS, BE and CI will influence consumer purchase behaviour.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings of the study.

- i. From the study, it was shown that country of origin has a positive significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour among consumers of imported fashion wears in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. That is, international companies should influence their consumer' purchase behaviour by making a country-of-origin an important component of international marketing strategy. A challenge foreign marketer's face is to ascertain the effects of their origin countries on consumers' demand for their products. Armed with this knowledge, marketers can decide whether any relevant action is indicated. Such actions may include promotion of the origin images, suppression of the images or using price strategy to enhance the competitiveness of products with unfavorable origin images. Marketers must be prepared to meet consumers where they are, study their usage patterns and understand what makes them go from search to purchase.
- ii. TeS is seen as having a positive effect on consumer purchase behaviour and as such, international companies should improve their technological facilities to influence their consumer behaviour.
- iii. The study revealed that BE has a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour. On this note, international companies should ensure the availability of good names, logos and taglines in order to build a positive brand reputation.
- iv. From the study, CI variable is seen as having a significant effect on consumer purchase behaviour and as such the international company should provide positive information about their country image in order to build a good quality about their product.

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APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Please read carefully and tick the appropriate answer among the alternatives. You are to mark(x) against the answer of your choice

BIO-DATA

Do you purchase imported fashion wears Yes () No ()

Age group: 26-35 () 36-45 () 46-55 () 56 & above ()

Sex of respondent: Male () Female ()

Educational qualifications: Degree () Masters/MBA () PhD ()

Others ()

Monthly income: ₹250,000-500,000 () ₹550,000-1,000,000() ₹1,050,000-1,500,000() ₹1,550,000-above ()

Occupation: Public Servants () Government Officials () Private/Entrepreneur ()
Lecturers () Others ()

SECTION B: COUNTRY IMAGE

Instructions: Please tick (√) in the appropriate box below. From the options given; A is for Agree, SA is for strongly agree, UD is for Undecided, D is for Disagree while SD is for strongly disagree

S/N	Technology Sophistication Dimension	A	SA	UD	D	SD
1)	The technological know-how of a nation allows for an efficient production of more and better goods and services.					
2)	Countries with high technology sophistication manufacture product that are of high perceived quality.					
3)	Consumers consider the Technology sophistication of a country when making purchase behaviour.					
4)	The higher the technology sophistication, the higher the perceived quality of the product.					

S/N	Brand Effect Dimension	A	SA	UD	D	SD
5)	The names, logos, taglines and colours given to a product helps consumers to easily assign reputations, attributes and values in their mind.					
6)	A brand's reputation influences consumer's future behaviour.					
7)	The knowledge about a particular brand increases consumers' confidence in the brand.					
8)	Positive branding message can help influence consumer purchase behaviour in the right way.					

S/N	Country image Dimension	A	SA	UD	D	SD
9)	The country image is the first piece of information to consider when making purchases.					
10)	I find out the imported fashion wear's country image to determine the quality of the imported fashion wear.					
11)	I look for country of origin information to choose the best imported fashion wear available in the fashion wear class					
12)	When buying a kind of expensive imported wear, I always seek to find out what country that fashion wear was made in					

SECTION C: Please tick (√) in the appropriate box below. From the options given; A is for Agree, SA is for strongly agree, UD is for Undecided, D is for Disagree while SD is for strongly disagree

S/N	CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION DIMENSION	SA	A	D	SD	UD
13	The technological advancement of a country influences the consumer purchase behaviour.					
14	The brand of a product influences the consumer purchase behaviour of that product.					
15	When making purchases of foreign wear, I consider the image of the country it was produced.					
16	The place of origin of a product influences the consumer purchase behaviour.					

APPENDIX II

The output of the analysis was presented accordingly:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.917 ^a	.840	.840	.407818	2.003

a. Predictors: (Constant), TeS

b. Dependent Variable: CPB

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	311.992	1	311.992	1875.954	0.000 ^b
	Residual	59.207	356	.166		
	Total	371.198	357			

a. Dependent Variable: CPB

b. Predictors: (Constant), TeS

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.640	.113		5.645	.000
	TeS	1.095	.025	.917	43.312	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CPB

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate
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1	.932 ^a	.869	.868	.37028	
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a. Predictors: (Constant), BE

b. Dependent Variable: CPB

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	322.388	1	322.388	2351.338	0.000 ^b
	Residual	48.811	356	.137		
	Total	371.198	357			

a. Dependent Variable: CPB

b. Predictors: (Constant), BE

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.650	.102		6.401	.000
	BE	1.109	.023	.932	48.491	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CPB

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.941 ^a	.885	.884	.34657

a. Predictors: (Constant), CI

b. Dependent Variable: CPB

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	328.438	1	328.438	2734.409	0.000 ^b
	Residual	42.760	356	.120		
	Total	371.198	357			

a. Dependent Variable: CPB

b. Predictors: (Constant), CI

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.195	.086		2.275	.024
	CI	1.015	.019	.941	52.292	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CPB