Influence of Cultural Dimensions and Brand Country of Origin Image on Consumption Behaviour: A case of Jordanian Consumers

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Abstract:

Culture has the most complex and persuasive impact on behaviour as it controls the attitudes, behaviours, and lifestyles of consumers. Society, socialisation activities, and culture can influence consumers' consumption behaviour and their choice of foreign brands over local ones. Little is known about the influence of cultural dimensions on the preference of foreign versus local brands. The aim of this paper is to understand the influence of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and country of origin image on individuals' preferences of foreign clothing brands in Jordan.

 To fulfil the purpose of this study, this paper proposes a methodological approach that is unique in nature and new to the field and context of the study. This study, considered the first conducted in the context of this research, extends the work of previous authors who explored the influence of culture and country of origin image on consumption habits.

Word Count: 5198

Introduction:

Studying developing countries has a singular flavour, since they are unique in their own sense, and different from developed countries (Biswas et al., 2011). When referring to the economic development of a nation, the macro-economic aspect is addressed, showing the extent to which this nation can grow and improve (Banerjee, 2016). Different issues emerge - such as immigration - that influence the economic development of a country and result in influence upon the behaviour of individuals and the general culture (Montazer and Wheaton, 2011). Hence, culture, acculturation and globalization are very significant when it comes to the country's economic development (Anderson and Parker, 2009). Although some social and behavioural issues have raised their heads in such countries- the Middle East- lately (Mauseth et al., 2016), potential growth in these countries is promising, unlike Western countries that are already developed (Biswas et al., 2011).

Most importantly, the research and results conducted in developed countries may not be applicable in developing countries (Batra, 2000). (Zhou and Hui, 2003; Dogan and Ozkara, 2013) explain that economic, physical characteristics, culture, and politics may develop positive perceptions towards domestic products. Others (for example, Donadio 2010; Miller, 2011; Sheth, 2011) explain that consumers in developing countries prefer using western brand names in order to reflect a more positive image in terms of quality and status. In other cases (Hu et al., 2008; Zhou et al., 2010) cultural characteristics may result in the preference of foreign brands. Yet, these cases in particular need further clarification in order to develop understanding of their potential applicability to all developing countries.

With this in mind, economic development and culture are two inseparable factors that influence individuals (Ephraim and Alkalay, 2007). Additionally, it is significant to realize that everyday interactions and activities are also highly influenced by cultures (Hofstede, 2015). "Culture is the principal explanation of consumer behaviour disparities across countries, and so research on the impact of globalization on culture is essential (Cleveland et al., 2016)." Individuals' views differ according to our culture and tend to influence our consumption habits and behaviour (Ger and Belk, 1996), but also, cultural characteristics and dimensions influence responses towards certain products or brands (Moussetis et al., 2005). The influence of cultural dimensions on consumption habits is therefore an area worth exploring (Cleveland et al., 2013). In particular, the aim of this study is to try to grasp a better understanding of the role of culture on individuals' perceptions and the consumer's preference of certain goods due to the country of origin image of the brand or product.

To clarify, country of origin (COO) image refers to the way in which consumers perceive quality of products or brands made in a certain country (Bilkey and Nes, 1982). Some countries have positive perceptions and images embedded within the minds of consumers and as a result, all the brands and products made in that country are bathed in the same light of this image (Baker and Ballington, 2002). Therefore, it follows that country of origin image may influence consumers' perceptions of particular brands and products (Akdeniz and Kara 2014). COO image influences this product evaluation process through the "halo" and "summary" effect. The halo effect relates to the process of an individual making an assumption about the product quality based on the image he or she has about the COO of the product; the summary effect includes the incorporation of notions about the product into a country's image (Han, 1989).

Previous research has focused on examining the influence of COO image on consumers in developed countries, and has emphasized how consumers' perceptions change when this is associated with hedonistic brands (Guo et al., 2011). However, since the results of research in

developed countries do not necessarily reflect results in developing countries, the replication of perceptions towards consumption and country of origin image in developing countries and their comparison with results from developed countries is vital (Biswas et al., 2011). Therefore, and in order to gain a better understanding of the context of the research, the following section will elaborate on Jordanian culture, followed by the reasons behind choosing the product category of clothing, as a context for this research.

Context Background:

In the past six years, the Middle East has been suffering from certain significant and dramatic political incidents that have resulted in consequential social change throughout the entire Arab world region (Mauseth et al., 2016). Situated precariously between different Arab countries involved in war and other political conflicts, Jordan has been subjected to social and cultural changes (Mauseth et al., 2016). In fact, the socio-economic transformation that was initiated almost three decades ago has, it seems, resulted in influencing different practices in Jordan (Alsharari, 2017). This has led to a palpable rise in socio-cultural diversity within a context, which has allowed globalization to take place, not only through media exposure but also because of various interactions (Cleveland et al., 2016) within the Jordanian culture.

It follows then, that changes which influence Arab countries also result in influencing individuals in Jordan through altering consumption behaviours (Al-Omari et al., 2014), notably as it seems that Jordanian and Arab cultures are indistinguishable in nature as far as values, characteristics, beliefs and social influences are concerned (Sawalha and Meaton, 2012). Jordan is a developing country (Aloqili et al.,2013; World Economic Situation and Prospects, 2014) which consists of a culture that is masculine in nature, with high power distance and uncertainty avoidance, and is also known to be collective (Alkailani et al., 2012). The family and social connections are both considered holy within the Jordanian culture (Shryock, 2004); social expectations sometimes tend towards influencing consumption behaviours, especially when associated with several roles. In other cases, social learning is fundamental to the consequences of consumer behaviour (Ward, 1974); for instance, fathers are demonstrated to be the primary influence on children's consumption patterns among Jordanians (Al-Zu'bi et al., 2008).

It is important to realize that the two main socialization agents in this process are interpersonal and media communication; when it comes to interpersonal communication, the peer group acts as the most relevant agent since it leads to establishing certain behaviours and attitudes towards other entities (Moschis & Moore 1980). The peer group is also important since it assists in understanding the consumption behaviour of families and the impact of social trends on young people and their families and their consumption patterns (Ward, 1974). On the other hand, media communication helps individuals identify with virtual communities for purposes such as self-discovery, social enhancement, and purposive value (Sook Kwon et al., 2014). Therefore, based on the two socialization agents, communication or interactions with peers regarding consumption patterns influences is likely to occur (Gharaybeh, 2014). This phenomenon results in establishing social motivations that may lead to the preference and consumption of symbolic brands and products (Moschis & Moore 1980; Moschis et al. 1984).

Previously, research studies such as Al-Mousa (2003, p: 341), Gharaybeh (2005) and Gharaybeh (2014) have explored the Jordanian context in an attempt to understand the social geography and the influence of globalization on social behaviour. It has been found that the influence of modernization on Jordanian consumers resulted in drastic changes in their

lifestyles, such as, food habits and eating fast foods along with clothing, through which there has been a shift to a more westernized fashion style in order to seek the desired lifestyle of the west (Mousa et al., 2010). Others have discovered that culture influences consumption through aspects of social influences, where society acts as a guide to consumption (Abu-shanab and Ala'a, 2014). However, the literature pays little attention to the influence of cultural dimensions and country of origin image on the consumption of foreign brands within the Jordanian context. In addition, this research will highlight a different proposition to approach a better understanding of how culture, in the light of globalization and acculturation, and country of origin image results in influencing consumption in Jordan.

For the purpose of this research and due to the criteria discussed above, bearing in mind that developing countries need further exploration, and due to acculturation and globalization influences on a culture, Jordan was chosen as a focus for this study. Furthermore, and since the clothing industry in Jordan is well known internationally (especially in the United States of America and some other countries) the study will focus on understanding Jordanian consumer perceptions of foreign clothing brands through the lens of COO image and the culture they were raised in. Clothing transmits meanings to others, as it acts as a code that discloses information about an individual's social groups and cultural characteristics (McCracken, 1988). Furthermore, this study focuses on culture and consumption and as noted earlier, social connections are sacred among the Jordanian culture. Where consuming clothing, the brand is a significant aspect of conformity with social norms (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004). In fact, clothes have been recognised in their use as an economic, social and cultural symbol in a society ever since Veblen, (1899). Therefore, since the clothing industry has been flourishing over the past ten years, along with the need to establish a global branding strategy through managing the influence of COO image (Parvathi and Miranda, 2012), choosing such an industry will help in understanding the characteristics and dimensions of Jordanian culture and how it influences perceptions of foreign versus local brands. Hence, the research could also help local clothing industries to also establish local and international branding strategies.

The following section will expose a detailed explanation of cultural dimensions and their influence on the consumption of foreign brands. This exposition will highlight the lack of research on the impact of a culture's dimensions on the perception of brands and their COO image, particularly, in times and regions whereby globalization and acculturation have taken place. This includes shedding the light on the context of both clothing and Jordan.

Literature:

Culture demonstrates the basic guidelines with which societies identify and go by in order to communicate easily (Legoh'erel et al., 2009). Certain components within a culture influence a person's beliefs, values, behaviours and attitudes (Salim, 2012). There are external influences that result in reshaping cultures and individuals within them, such as acculturation and globalization (Berry, 2008; Cleveland et al., 2016). Whilst acculturation is defined as "how individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that are characteristic of a nascent and deterritorialized global consumer culture (Cleveland et al., 2013), globalization refers to the multiplicity of linkages and interconnections that transcend the nation-states (and - by implication - the societies) which make up the modern world system (Berry, 2008).

Previous scholars- (Craig and Douglas, 2006)- have recognized that consumers' behaviours, attitudes and identities are influenced by the transformation related to geographic location or certain cultural changes). For instance, there is insufficient research on the impact of globalization and acculturation on consumers and their behaviour (Cleveland et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, the perceptions of consumers in relation to certain brands are directly linked with the cultural context within which they reside (Keller, 1998). This is particularly true given that some brands are considered cultural vehicles that are demonstrated through consumption (Aaker et al., 2001). Cultures subconsciously influence perceptions of behaviour through the lens of social norms and expectations, regardless of globalization (Cleveland et al., 2016). In effect, the truth is that globalization tends to influence the social life within a culture, allowing for changes in consumption habits (Ekstrom, 2007; p. 523). In fact, globalization and diverse acculturations that are manifest themselves in different countries show a direct impact on consumption and individual's behaviour, to a greater extent than one's own national identity (Cleveland et al., 2016).

Furthermore, it is significant to realize that acculturation and globalization result in influencing perceptions when it comes to foreign versus local brands, where individuals start preferring foreign brands due to varied sociological factors (Berry, 2008). This notwithstanding, extant research fails to identify if and why consumers in developing countries have preferences towards foreign brands from a cultural perspective (Swoboda et al, 2012). In fact, the body of literature seems to have overlooked the matter of domestic consumers' perceptions of their own and foreign products or brands in the context of association with a negative country of origin image (Semaan et al., 2011).

For the sake of clarification then, the country of origin image of a brand is the overall view of the quality or performance of the brand compared to the image of its country of origin (Elliot and Cameron 1994). It is debated that COO image is only relevant when consumers are unaware of the brand and relate to its COO image in order to obtain a perception (Srivastava, 2015). Melnyk et al (2012) explain that foreign brand names or brands names written in a foreign language are very popular in emerging markets as it portrays to consumers that this brand is associated with a different country of origin and can result in the perception that it is of higher quality. There is also reference within the literature to the importance of COO image in public versus private consumption of goods (Hu et al., 2008); however, a perception is clearly associated with one's own view of the county of origin and hence cognitive processing leads to the consumer drawing a certain conclusion about the product or brand (Chao, 1998). It is thus important to recognise that results reveal that the product country image and COO are still relevant for marketing brands domestically and internationally (Zatepilina-Monacell, 2014).

In addition to the points made above, different cultural components have been shown to influence individuals' preferences of foreign brands, or their interpretation of COO image when purchasing imported goods; as an illustrative example, materialism links directly with the desire to own brands emanating from a better COO image (Richins, 2004). Other components such as norms, beliefs and lifestyles of a culture may influence the consumption of foreign brands as well (Cleveland & Laroche 2007). Significantly, individuals' own values, beliefs and behaviours can also influence their perceptions when it comes to identifying with groups and consumption activities (Bizumic et al., 2012). The body of literature reveals the importance of social relationships in a culture, and highlights it as being the reason for consumers' interaction with certain brands (Aggarwal, 2004). It is therefore logical to conclude that the norms and rules that exist within peoples interpersonal relationships have a tendency to have a dominant influence upon their brand relationships. (Fournier 1998; Aggarwal 2004).

Usunier et al., 2005 reveal the importance of cultural dimensions on the individual's consumption activities. Hofstede et al (2012) express the influence of one's cultural dimensions on his or her consumption of foreign brands. To clarify, and for the purpose of this research, four cultural dimensions will be explored and defined. The cultural dimensions used

for this research are individualism/collectivism, masculinity, power distance and uncertainty avoidance.

An individualist culture is concerned with an individual's self and the improvement of oneself, yet collectivist cultures focus on social ties and the benefit of others more than oneself (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). The inference can therefore be drawn that significant others, family members and friends tend to influence desired brands and consumption activities in collectivist countries, unlike the situation within individualist and independent cultures (Erdem et al., 2006).

The second dimension to be considered is the masculinity of a culture, which focuses on one's achievement and performance within a culture (Hofstede, 1980). As a result, individuals in masculine cultures prefer status related brands and aspire to acquire what is known to be most expensive (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Cultures with high power distance - the third dimension - desire prestige, money, wealth and class in order to construct positive images and fit in socially (Erdem et al., 2006).

Finally, cultures who have high levels of uncertainty avoidance, or the degree to which individuals doubt certain circumstances, define their consumption patterns based on the positive perceptions and trust in the brand (De Mooij and Geert Hofstede 2011). It is therefore found that consumers in high uncertainty avoidance cultures prefer prestige brands (Hofstede, 2015).

Nonetheless, the reviewed literature seems to overlook the significance of COO image on consumers' perceptions. Furthermore, and regardless of the fact that some of the developing countries have been the subject of studies, there is a need to explore a greater number of developing countries to widen the horizon (Saffu and Scott, 2009). Ahmed et al., (2012) have attempted to understand the influence of country of origin, brand effects and price on consumers in Lebanon where results reveal that the "made in" label or COO of the brand has a direct impact on consumption activities. However, in their study, the authors distributed surveys in shopping malls in Lebanon rather than taking a closer, more qualitative approach to examining each individual's consumption activities. Although surveys can be effective and cost-effective, individuals tend to provide dishonest or vague answers (Kelley et al., 2003).

The characteristics of Jordan may appear to be similar to the cultural characteristics of Lebanon (Sawalha and Meaton, 2012); as mentioned earlier, very few studies have been conducted in the Kingdom of Jordan and none has attempted this far to understand the country of origin image effect on Jordanian consumers, bearing in mind the dimensions of their culture.

It is also significant that research findings indicate that Jordanian consumers are highly influenced by the west (Mousa et al., 2010). This is to say that although the second-hand markets in Jordan are known to individuals with lower income levels, research findings reveal that all socio-economic levels purchase second hand clothing; this is especially true where the clothing is a foreign brand (Na'amneh and Husban, 2012). Hence, the choice of clothing can affect the behaviour of individuals because of to the messages they want to convey to others (Piacentini and Mailer 2004). People tend to make judgements made on the impressions gained from an individual's choice of clothing (Howlett et al., 2013), and yet, it is also important to remember that this impression also depends on the observer and the observer's culture since this has considerable impact upon the type of impression being made (McCracken and Roth, 1989). It therefore follows that certain brands and products are symbolic by nature in particular

countries and cultures, and this is also true of their country of origin (Torelli and Ahluwalia, 2012).

Discussion:

The main purpose of this paper is to understand the consumption behaviour of consumers in particular cultures in developing countries and to focus specifically on the influence of COO image and cultural dimensions upon consumer perceptions and consumption decisions.

Previous research has highlighted the significance of culture on consumption; however, it has also overlooked turbulent components within the relevant cultures that may change over time. In difficult times, acculturation and globalization may influence cultures and as a result have an impact on consumption activities. Furthermore, various authors (for example, Usunier et al, 2005; Hofstede et al., 2010) have addressed the significance of cultural dimensions on consumption; yet, according to our knowledge, understanding how cultural dimensions may influence the impact of COO image among consumers needs further attention and clarification. The following diagram highlights the three themes highlighted by this particular research study (Culture, COO image and Consumer).
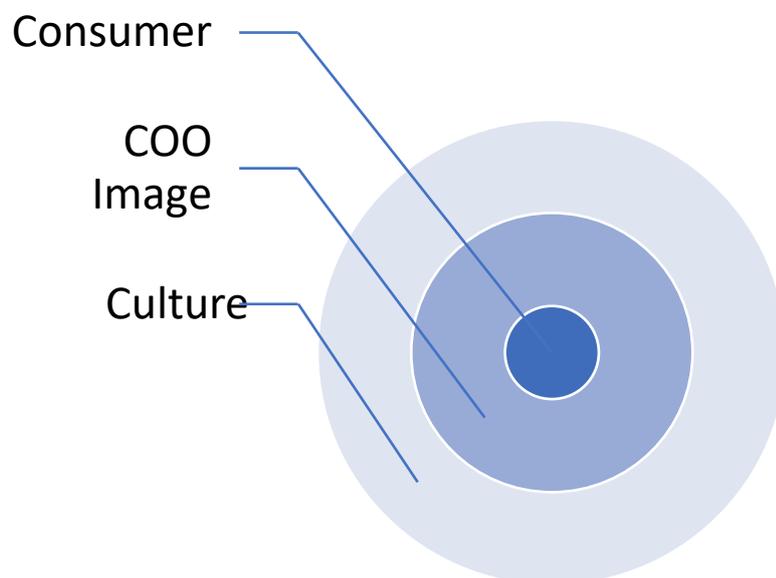
Individuals are influenced by the culture surrounding them, whether it be through the components of the culture (values, socialization activities, and beliefs), the dimensions, or through globalization and acculturation (Triandis, 1989). The influence of COO image may vary from one culture to another, depending on the level of economic development and on the dimensions of the culture under study (Sharma, 2011; De Mooji and Hofstede, 2011). The COO image may differ in its influence on consumers based on the degree to which it influences the culture as a whole. Thereupon, the question raises its head as to why and how these two themes holistically influence consumer perceptions when consuming foreign or local brands. Why

does the COO image of a brand or product influence some consumers more than others worldwide? What is the role of one's cultural dimensions in one's perception of a foreign brand? With this in mind, and in order to gain a better understanding of the influence of COO image on consumption activities in in the Jordanian culture, the following proposition is suggested in order to gain an in-depth perspective.

Proposition:

In order to liftme the metaphorical veil and gain a better understanding of how the four cultural dimensions - collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity - may result in influencing the perceptions of a brand due to its COO image. Scholars should consider a different methodological approach in order to grasp the influence of culture and COO image on consumers through the eyes of consumers themselves. In other words, generalizing findings does not quite reflect the way some consumers think of, or perceive foreign brands. Cultural influences on one country or group of consumers may differ from one country to another and one consumer to another. Each individual is unique in nature, and in order to perceive a better insight into consumers' lives, understanding from within is key. By way of illustrating the gap in extant research, Table 1, shows different studies that have been carried out in developing countries within the fields of culture and country of origin along with the methodological approach they have adopted to conduct the study.

Table 1:

Title	Authors	Methodology
Does country of brand origin (COBO) matter for the Lebanese consumers?	(Ahmed et al., 2012)	Quantitative Surveys
Country of origin effects in developed and emerging markets: Exploring the contrasting roles of materialism and value consciousness	(Sharma, 2011)	Quantitative
Identity, culture, dispositions and behaviour: A cross-national examination of globalization and culture change	(Cleveland et al., 2016)	Quantitative

Globalization, culture, religion, and values: Comparing consumption patterns of Lebanese Muslims and Christians	(Cleveland et al., 2013)	Quantitative
Influences on consumer socialisation	(Neeley, S.,2005)	Quantitative
Investigation of Brand Name-Country of Origin Preference in Four Different Product Groups with Respect to Conspicuous Consumption Tendency	(Dogan and Ozkara, 2013)	Quantitative
Purchase of global shampoo brands and the impact of country of origin on Lebanese consumers	(Zbib et al., 2010)	Quantitative

As demonstrated in table 1, a preponderance of the studies conducted to understand the effect of COO image or culture and consumption have been approached from a generally quantitative perspective, rather than digging deeper into the essence of consumer behaviour - the consumer itself. These studies have entered the field with prior assumption and hypotheses of two or more variables, or have predicted factors that influence the country of origin image phenomena. For instance, within their first hypothesis, Zbib et al (2010) have narrowed down the reasons behind consumers' perceptions of the quality of shampoo, based upon the product's country of origin and consumers' demographics. Nelly, 2005, also posited an explanation that parents accompany their female children more than accompanying their male children when it comes to consumption. Sharma (2011), on the other hand, focused on proving that consumers in developing or emerging countries tend to prefer brands or products that are imported from developed and not developing countries. This notwithstanding, these assumptions may limit the outcomes of the research as they specify prior relationships between consumer perceptions and consumption habits, yet pay little attention to why these relationships exist. In fact, understanding individuals' behaviour is very complex given that entities differ accordingly from one culture to another (Kates and Shaw-Garlock, 1999; Ritson and Elliot, 1999). Individuals attribute diverse meanings to different brands and this depends on various reasons, one of which is the context of consumption (Steven Kates, 2006). As an example of this, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) explain that certain subgroups or cultures express meanings associated to brands or consumption through storytelling activities.

It therefore follows, that adopting an interpretivist strategy may assist in gaining better insights on personal and social behaviour of individuals when it comes to their consumption activities (Kozinets, 2001). People, generally speaking, belong to one community, which shares similar interpretive characteristics (Steven Kates, 2006). Most of the time these interpretive communities share similarities in preferring certain brands as a tool for social expressions (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). Furthermore, in a context like Jordan, where relationships are sacred and the culture is purely collectivist - as they share characteristics of a tribe

(Gharaybeh, 2014) - gaining an understanding of the everyday activities of a Jordanian, and being immersed in the culture assists in the uncovering of certain elements that may normally be unnoticed when using traditional research approaches. In addition to this, it almost goes without saying that with the socio-economic changes that are happening in Jordan, constructivist approaches are needed for uncovering knowledge (Alsharari, 2017). In other words then, ethnography can ably assist the researcher to understand what meanings consumers attach to certain brands or products (Fournier, 1998). The aim of ethnography focuses on understanding and describing a group of people who interact with each other (Carson et al., 2001; p.146). Ethnography helps in understanding 'what works' and what is 'needed' within a particular context (Lumsden and Goode, 2016).

After being immersed within a group of people and participating in their daily activities, including consumption, the researcher can develop a holistic picture of that group (Sanday, 1979). Jordanians are known for their hospitable nature and they welcome all guests to their homes, family and social groups (Shryock, 2004). As a result of this behavioural pattern, gaining access can be achieved easily through certain gatekeepers within the society. The closeness to individuals and their views of reality when conducting ethnographic research allows the researcher to gain insight into the phenomena from the consumer's perspective (Ekstrom, 2007). For instance, certain meanings adopted by individuals of a particular culture could be a result of access to movies, books, travel and TV programs that can act as a vehicle for foreign brands (Bengtsson and Ostberg, 2006; 85). Perceptions of specific countries and the products emanating from those countries may also be adopted from westernized sources (Batra et al., 2000). Additionally, beliefs obtained by a culture or the various components of a culture may result in influencing consumption habits and preferences of foreign brands (Cleveland et al., 2013).

Even though a researcher's personality or previous knowledge may result in influencing aspects of the research, in ethnography there is no isolation between those are researched and the researcher especially because the ethnographer has to always be there (Payne, 1996; p.30); however, maintaining a semi-attached approach to controlling the self in the fieldwork is necessary (Coffey, 1999:1). This could be a valid point depending on the researcher, and the prior knowledge of that researcher in a particular field; yet, the researcher's own experience and biography are more relevant compared to the issues arising while observing participants (Newby, 1977:120).

Therefore, it is recommended that rather than adopting approaches that focus on generalizing phenomena and touching the surface of the matter, researchers should dig deeper into the main elements that trigger certain consumption activities. This is done through direct contact with consumers within the researcher's own community in Amman, the capital of Jordan, over a period of time to grasp the essence of consumers' perceptions and preferences of brands. The researcher's community consists of several age groups and it is significant to know that all the well-known shopping malls in Jordan are located in Amman, which resulted in Amman being chosen for the purpose of this research. In addition, this research focuses upon one on one interactions to determine the actual behaviour and to gain a better understanding through interactions than if virtual media friendships or activities may have an influence on consumption in the Jordanian context. Adopting an ethnographic approach in developing countries and particularly Jordan, will surely contribute to filling in gaps in the knowledge emerging from the literature.

Value:

This in-depth, qualitative study will contribute to extending the work of previous authors. It is also the first research to respond to calls for various studies related to brand cultures in emerging markets, providing a different approach to understanding how cultures and country of origin image of brands may influence the consumption of such brands.

The focus of this research is to investigate the significance of foreign brands over local brands to Jordanian consumers through the lens of COO image and the culture they reside in. Despite the contribution to the literature, there are also practical implications that are worthy of researchers' attention. Therefore, this research will help to enhance the productivity of local businesses by understanding more about Jordanian consumers and their lifestyles. In addition to this, the study will assist manufacturers in Jordan by determining the perceptions of consumers when consuming certain international clothing brands. Correspondingly, this study will contribute towards a positive shift in local perceptions if manufacturers properly respond to consumers' wants and needs. This will have the effect of enhancing the manufacturers' capabilities so that they would be able to compete locally and internationally more effectively, assisting them in entering a truly global competition. In fact, results from such research may help shrink the gap between these local businesses and their consumers and help establish better relationships in the long term.

Conclusion:

Consumers differ from one culture to another, where their buying behaviour, preferences and lifestyle can be shaped based on the culture in which they reside. Aspects such as socialization, acculturation, globalization and cultural dimensions influence consumer perceptions and consumption habits. In fact, the preference of foreign over local brands can be a result of these cultural aspects. However, it is evident that there is a lack of research on the impact of cultural dimensions - such as collectivism vs individualism, masculine vs. feminine, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance - on consumption preferences. In particular, little appears to be known regarding the influence of cultural dimensions on the preference of foreign brands, which is the case, especially, in developing and countries.

As a result of the identification of the above gaps in extant research, this paper focuses on highlighting the significance of cultural dimensions and country of origin on consumer preferences of foreign brands. To put this idea into action, the planned, empirical research will explore these influences in the Jordanian context through grasping a better understanding of why Jordanian consumers prefer foreign clothing brands to local ones. The aim of the study is to develop a better understanding of how Hofstede's cultural dimensions result in influencing perceptions of foreign brands among Jordanian consumers. As such, the study proposes a different approach for such matter through recommending an uncommon methodology that is relatively new to the context of this type of research. The choice of this ethnographic researcher-participant methodology allows for a better understanding of consumer perspectives through the ability of obtaining a closer look at the way consumers really think. Rather than only touching the surface, the researcher's interaction with consumers will help establish a concrete, in-depth knowledge through participant observations on how consumption habits are influenced by cultural dimensions and country of origin image and why consumers prefer foreign clothing brands over local ones.

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