

Review Article

Examining the Association of the Country's Origin Image on Purchasing Decision of Egyptian Customers' Automotive Spare Parts

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between the country-of-origin [COO] image and purchase decision-making, focusing on the role of perceived value as a mediator in the context of car spare parts customers in Egypt. The research employs structural equation modeling to analyze these relationships. A quantitative, deductive approach was used, with a survey targeting a sample of 362 participants. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS statistical software. The results show a significant positive correlation between the COO image, perceived value, and purchasing decisions. Specifically, the findings suggest that the COO image influences perceived value, which in turn affects purchase decisions. Moreover, the study reveals that the impact of the COO image on purchase decisions is stronger when perceived value is considered as a mediating factor. In summary, the research highlights the importance of the COO image in shaping customers' perceived value, which significantly influences their purchasing behavior. It emphasizes the critical role of perceived value in mediating the relationship between COO and purchase decisions, offering valuable insights for businesses in the car spare parts industry.

Keywords

Country's Image, Product's Image, Perceived Value, Purchasing Decision Making

1. Introduction

As a result of globalization that business organizations have been experiencing since the last decades of the last century, and the increased interest of major organizations in operating in international markets to achieve expansion, growth, and establish a positive reputation in the minds of customers in these markets, competition among these organizations has intensified. There has also been an increased reliance on imported foreign products and a growing similarity among customers in international markets [1]. Consequently, cus-

tomers can switch from one brand to another with little cost, leading to a decrease in customer loyalty to various brands and organizations. This necessitates that organizations maintain good relationships with customers and enhance customer retention [2].

The country of origin is considered one of the most important factors influencing customers' purchasing decisions and their retention. Customers evaluate many brands based on the country of origin and their mental image of that country.

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For customers, the country of origin serves as a cognitive shortcut that saves time and effort in evaluating products. If there is positive knowledge about the country of origin, the positive evaluation of brands from that country increases, and vice versa [3]. Many studies, such as those by [4], have shown that products manufactured in less developed countries are perceived as low quality, in contrast to products made in developed countries, which are viewed as high quality. The image of the country of origin plays a significant role in customers' perceptions of products and brands from any country [5]. For example, customers judge German cars to be of superior quality compared to other cars, due to their mental image of the seriousness and precision of workers and engineers in Germany [3, 6].

According to the World Trade Organization, the value of manufactured goods exports increased more than fivefold between 1990 and 2013, indicating a growing reliance on foreign products by customers [7]. The image of the country of origin is considered one of the most important factors influencing customers' perceptions of the quality level of foreign products. Many customers assess the quality of a product based on its country of origin, such as the evaluation by most customers that Japanese electronics are of higher quality than other electronics [8].

The perceived value for the customer serves as a unique strategic option and is essential for achieving differentiation in the business environment. Organizations strive to provide superior value to their customers to secure a chance for survival, maximize profits, and enhance their market share compared to their competitors [9]. Major institutions aim to exceed customer satisfaction levels and seek to astonish and impress customers by creating marketing experiences that surpass their expectations and aspirations [10]. Thus, this current study revolves around examining the relationship between the country of origin image and purchasing decisions: the mediating role of perceived value. A review of previous studies indicates that there has been no research linking these variables together.

2. Literature Review and Hypothetical Development

The researchers will discuss the theoretical framework, followed by a presentation of previous studies and the research gap, as follows:

The country of origin is a subject of debate among researchers in the field of marketing. Some view it as the country where the product is manufactured, while others consider it to be the country where the product is designed. Regarding the first approach [considering it as the country of manufacture], the country of origin is a concept that refers to the location of the company that manufactures the product. This perspective can be expressed with the phrase "Made in...." where some believe that the country of origin is linked

to the country where the product is manufactured and completed in its final form. This approach is criticized for assuming that the design, manufacturing, and assembly of the product all occur in the same country, which is not the case for many products that are designed in one country, produced in several countries, and assembled in multiple locations, as is the case with cars. For example, Peugeot cars are French but are assembled in Turkey, and BMWs are German but are assembled in various countries, including China [11, 12].

On the other hand, the second approach [considering it as the country of design] states that the country of origin refers to the location of the parent company that designs the product, which can be recognized by its brand name. For instance, Samsung and LG are brands of Korean origin, even though they are manufactured in many countries, including Egypt [3, 6, 13, 14]. The approach based on the manufacturing country is difficult to apply currently due to the globalization of production and organizations. Most major global companies often produce and assemble their products in several countries [11-15]. Therefore, this study will rely on the second concept of the country of origin, which is the country of design or the "brand country. Regarding the image of the country of origin, researchers have provided various definitions: [Lee et al., 2017] defined it as the image formed in customers' minds about products from a specific country. Hanzae and Khosrozadeh defined it as the conclusions and beliefs that customers form about a particular country through various means, such as media or past experiences, whether personal or related to acquaintances [5]. Also, [14] defined it as a summary of customers' beliefs and information about a specific country, concerning its living standards, industrial and technological levels, and political situation. The image of the country of origin is shaped by the products and national events representing the country, as well as its political, economic, cultural, and technological background. Through the review of previous studies related to the image of the country of origin, three levels of studying the brand image of the country of origin have emerged [11, 12].

2.1. General Brand Image of the Country of Origin

This approach measures the image of the country of origin based on the customer's perceptions of that country, concerning its economic, technological, social, and cultural levels. As customer awareness has increased, they tend to prefer products from developed countries, believing that these countries possess the capabilities and skills necessary to produce high-quality, unique products at appropriate prices. [16-18] have clarified that there are two dimensions to the general brand image of the country of origin, which can be outlined as follows [17]:

- 1) Perceptual Brand Image: This refers to the informational beliefs that a customer forms about a country, such as its economic development, technological advancement, cul-

tural and educational levels, living standards, and technical skills. Customers perceive the quality of products manufactured in developed countries as superior to those made in developing countries.

- 2) Emotional Brand Image of the Country: This reflects the emotional connection the customer has with the country of origin and is defined as the emotions and feelings that a customer associates with a particular place.

2.2. Brand Image of Products from the Country of Origin

According to this approach, the image of the country of origin is measured through customers' perceptions of the products from that country, such as the overall quality of these products, their durability, and the craftsmanship and precision in their production. Customers often form these perceptions based on their previous experiences with products from that country, their market presence, and the trust and opinions customers hold about them, such as the trust in Japanese and German products [19, 20] identified four dimensions of the brand image of products from the country of origin:

- 1) Creative Capabilities: This refers to the possession of technological and engineering skills that enable the country of origin to produce high-quality and innovative products. As a result, customers view products from developed countries as superior to those from developing countries, as they possess the skills and capabilities necessary to produce distinctive and unique products that are difficult to replicate in developing countries.
- 2) Manufacturing Craftsmanship: This refers to the availability of technological capabilities and skilled labor that enables the country of origin to produce reliable products in terms of quality and durability.
- 3) Design Excellence: This refers to the ability of the country of origin to provide unique and diverse designs for the product.
- 4) Social Status of Products from the Country of Origin: This includes the product name, uniqueness, reputation, social standing, and competitive position.

2.3. Brand Image of a Specific Product from the Country

According to this approach, the image of the country of origin is measured based on customers' perceptions of a specific product from a particular country. The brand image of the country may vary depending on the product; for example, the image of the country of origin may be positive for some products and negative for others, such as the preference for German cars over French cars, and the preference for French perfumes over German ones. In this approach, the same dimensions developed by [20] regarding the product's creative capabilities, manufacturing craftsmanship, design excellence, and social status of products from the country of origin are

used, as well as the suitability of the product price to its quality. The general image of the country of origin and the image of a specific product within the country of origin are among the most common approaches to measuring the country of origin image, as seen in studies by [16, 17-23]. Therefore, the current study will rely on these two approaches to measure the country of origin image.

2.4. Purchasing Decision Making

A review of the literature on purchasing decisions reveals numerous definitions that vary from one author to another, depending on differing perspectives. These include:

- 1) Dalton [2000] defined it as the primary goal that institutions aim to achieve through various processes, which is to reach an appropriate decision for the development of the institution or to solve a problem it faces [24]. This process involves several stages and methods, most notably electronic brainstorming, where proposals and ideas are randomly presented without discussion. After this stage, the attendees analyze those proposals to clarify their strengths and weaknesses, eventually reaching the most suitable suggestion and making adjustments until the best decision is made, enabling the institution to operate with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.
- 2) Rizq [2013] defined it as a cognitive behavioral process that builds specific strategies for gathering information and facts to find alternatives to available options and balance them to reach the most suitable choice and implement it [25].
- 3) SCHIFFMAN and KANUK [1951] described it as the selection of an alternative from several available options before the buyer. Each day, buyers make multiple decisions related to purchasing, such as buying a specific product from several available products or choosing a product from certain brands. Buyers can also choose the marketing channel through which to make their purchases; for example, they can select a store from several options or shop from home via phone or the internet [26]. Additionally, buyers can decide how to pay for their purchases, whether in cash, by credit card, or by paying the total amount upon delivery of the product.
- 4) Al-Shahri [2021] defined it as issuing a specific judgment about what an individual should do in a situation after contemplating the different alternatives available [27].
- 5) Mahmood & Ali [2011] described it as the final judgment and specific will of the decision-maker about what should and should not be done regarding a certain situation and a specific, definitive outcome [28]. There is another dimension that can be added to the concept of decision-making: individuals' actions can be divided into two main categories: a conscious category resulting from contemplation, calculation, and thought, and an

unconscious, automatic category. The first category produces what we call decisions, while the second leads to spontaneous actions. Whenever there is room for a decision, there must also be an outcome to be achieved and means and pathways to reach that outcome.

Based on the above, we can conclude that the purchasing decision-making process is not an easy one, given the sequence of activities associated with it, which do not rely solely on intuition and guesswork by the decision-maker but are based on scientific foundations and studies regarding the problem, as well as the data and information connected to it to reach the most suitable decision.

Peter & Donnelly [1992] argued that the purchasing decision-making process involves numerous complex procedures due to the multiple factors affecting individuals in this area. Consequently, accurately determining these procedures is quite challenging. However, generally, the steps involved in the purchasing decision-making process can be defined as the stages the buyer goes through when making choices about products [29].

From reviewing previous studies related to the purchasing decision-making process, five dimensions have been identified:

A. Awareness of Need:

Al-Khoury [2004] considers need one of the psychological factors that play a significant role in determining behavior. Needs arise from deprivation, leading to instability among individuals, prompting them to seek satisfaction and achieve the required stability and balance. Goods and services are among the means used to satisfy the latent desires of individuals who represent potential consumers [30]. There are two types of needs namely, Innate needs that exist in individuals from birth and, acquired needs resulting from individuals interacting with society and being exposed to environmental factors. Hisham and Abu Hamida [2007] indicated that the purchasing process begins when the consumer feels a need for a product and wants to satisfy it, whether the need is fundamental or otherwise. Goods and services are primarily used to fulfill the adequate desires of prospective consumers. Marketing efforts at this stage aim to identify unmet needs and stimulate sufficient desires to trigger instincts and emotions, aiding in creating a desire to acquire a specific product [31].

B. Identifying Available Alternatives:

Hisham and Abu Hamida [2007] suggest that when a consumer feels the need for a product, they conduct research and gather information about the desired item [31]. The consumer has a variety of sources from which to obtain information, with friends, family, colleagues, personal experience, and the nature of the required information revolving around the product's quality, availability, characteristics, price, and payment method being the most important. There is a variance among consumers regarding the length of time spent gathering information. Al-Khoury [2004] states that at this stage, the individual attempts to find as many solutions to their problem as possible by obtaining information from various sources,

which can be divided into: Commercial information provided through marketing communication efforts, such as sales, advertising, publications, and promotional activities. And Social information obtained from family members and friends [30].

C. Evaluating Alternatives:

Al-Khoury [2004] indicated that at this stage, the collected information about the product to be purchased is evaluated, and a comparison of that information is made to choose the most suitable alternative by establishing a measurement criterion or priority scale [30]. Hisham and Abu Hamida [2007] noted that the consumer evaluates the various available alternatives for the desired product after gathering the necessary information and uses a set of criteria in the evaluation process. These criteria differ among consumers based on their psychological, demographic characteristics, and purchasing power [31].

D. Making the Purchase Decision and Actual Purchase:

Al-Khoury [2004] considered this dimension one of the most important stages of actual decision-making, as its significance relates partially to each of the previous stages. Individuals make the purchase decision after reaching a level of confidence in the proposed solutions and selecting the most suitable alternative based on their beliefs [30]. Hisham and Abu Hamida [2007] emphasize that the evaluation process results in the selection of the appropriate product that satisfies their needs and desires [31]. The purchasing decision, like any decision, involves choosing between available alternatives and weighing their benefits against their costs. Therefore, it is a complex decision with various aspects, as it results from a series of interconnected partial decisions about purchasing a specific product of a particular type, from a certain place, at a specific time, and at a certain price using a specific payment method.

E. Post-Purchase Evaluation:

Hisham and Abu Hamida [2007] suggest that after the purchase process, the consumer evaluates their purchasing decision based on their previous expectations and whether the product provided adequate satisfaction [31]. If the product meets the consumer's expectations, they will be satisfied; otherwise, they will not be. Al-Khoury [2004] notes that individuals compare the outcomes of their purchasing decision with the level of satisfaction and fulfillment they sought [30]. If the desired satisfaction and fulfillment are not achieved, it will lead to unfulfilled needs and prevent individuals from alleviating the anxiety and imbalance caused by deprivation. Consequently, they will refrain from repurchasing the product, returning instead to search for information and collect data to identify possible solutions and select the appropriate alternative. However, if satisfaction and fulfillment of needs are achieved, and the required balance is restored, individuals will gain suitable information and experience, forming a positive experience toward the alternative, making the likelihood of repeated purchases possible.

2.5. Customer Perceived Value

The researchers present some concepts from various researchers regarding this notion to arrive at a broader and more comprehensive definition of customer perceived value:

- 1) Moosa and Hassan [2000]: A comprehensive assessment of the product's utility based on what the customer receives and what they pay for it [32].
- 2) Eggert and Ulage [2002]: The outcome of a comparative process that relies on knowledge of the size of benefits and sacrifices and balances between them, differing from satisfaction, which relies on emotion before knowledge [33].
- 3) Keller [2008]: The perceived benefit of the brand in relation to its cost, assessed by the consumer based on simultaneous considerations of what was received and what was sacrificed to obtain it. The consumer's choice of a specific brand depends on the perceived balance between the product's price and all benefits [34].
- 4) Muhammad et al. [2015]: Represents a comparison between two components: the first is the gain, which consists of the benefits received by the customer from vendor offers, and the second is the giving, represented by the monetary and non-monetary costs incurred to obtain those offers [35].
- 5) Ehsani and Hashim [2015]: The value perceived by the customer when using the good or service, which directly affects their purchasing behavior [36].

Thus, the researchers define customer perceived value as: The perceived comparison between the total benefits and sacrifices of the company's offerings compared to alternative offers, which in turn influences the customer's purchasing behavior. Many studies have indicated that the dimensions of customer perceived value include: [functional value, social value, emotional value, financial value, and perceived quality]. However, no study has combined all five dimensions, prompting the researchers to address these dimensions collectively, as follows:

2.5.1. Functional Value

- 1) Alarcin and Uydaci [2015]: The overall perception of the superiority and quality of the product or service regarding its intended purpose compared to other alternatives [37].
- 2) Ehsani and Hashim [2015]: The utility provided by the attributes of the product or service through personal experience or expectations [36].
- 3) Alarcin and Uydaci [2015]: The utility that the product achieves by reducing perceived costs [38].
- 4) Therefore, the researchers define functional value as: The perceived utility from owning the product with distinctive functional, utilitarian, or tangible characteristics that achieve effectiveness and ease of finding that product with minimal effort [time, perception].

2.5.2. Social Value

Opiri [2015] stated it as the product's ability to satisfy social needs, particularly the need for belonging. Thus, the researchers view social value as: The perceived utility from the product's association with a social, cultural, ethnic, or demographic group, achieving satisfaction of social needs—specifically the need for belonging—focusing on the social aspect in the purchasing process [39].

2.5.3. Emotional Value

Perrea et al. [2015] defined it as the value related to the excitement and enthusiasm stemming from purchasing new products [40]. Also Giesbert and Steiner [2015] stated it as, the perceived utility from the emotions generated by goods and services [41]. Therefore, the researchers see emotional value as: The perceived utility obtained when the customer experiences personal interaction with goods or services that stimulate and evoke emotions and affective states.

2.5.4. Personal Value

Bridson and Evans [2004] defined it as the product's ability to have a moral impact on customers through its mental image and its reflection in their minds, referred to in marketing literature as symbolic capabilities, measured through two axes: representational [association with socially similar groups] and symbolic [reflection of self-image] [42]. Saleem et al. [2015] stated it as all characteristics and features of the product or service capable of satisfying the customer's declared and latent needs [43]. Therefore, the researchers define personal value as: The personal judgments and perceptions of the customer regarding the characteristics and features of the product or service compared to available competing alternatives, achieving maximum satisfaction of declared and latent needs.

2.5.5. Financial Value

Abdul Hamid et al. [2017] defined it as the value resulting from the superiority of benefits [attributes, trust, and quality] over sacrifices [monetary and non-monetary] and its impact on customer satisfaction [44]. Also, Al-Tamimi [2012] stated it as the costs the consumer incurs, whether direct or indirect, such as physical and psychological effort, and the waiting cost for obtaining the product. Thus, the researchers define financial value as: The value resulting from the superiority of benefits represented by [product or service attributes, quality, trust] versus sacrifices represented by monetary and non-monetary sacrifices, which in turn affects—high value—customer value and satisfaction [45].

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypothetical Development

Abou Ali et al., [2021] tried to enhance understanding of

the reasons behind customers' intentions to make purchases online via social media networks [46]. The study investigated several factors influencing purchase intention, including the country of origin effect, trust, perceived value, and influencer marketing, specifically regarding consumers' willingness to buy clothing through social commerce. The results indicated that country of origin, trust, and perceived value are three key factors influencing customers' purchase intentions in the context of social commerce. Additionally, both country of origin and perceived value can affect trust beliefs, while influencer marketing has the potential to enhance the perceived value of the products being purchased.

Consumer values are essential for driving successful purchases and encouraging customers to buy more. Gandhi, et al. [2023] investigated how the perception of customer value influences purchase intentions for private label apparel [47]. The results showed that perceptions of financial, functional, individual, and social value positively affect the perceived quality of private labels. However, among the value perceptions, only financial and individual values significantly influence consumer purchase intentions; functional and social values do not. Moreover, perceived quality directly impacts consumer purchase intention [47].

In addition, Aman et al., [2021] aimed to explore the impact of perceived value on purchasing decisions through consumer trust among users of the OVO application, using Fanā Coffee Malang customers as a case study [48]. A key element influencing purchasing decisions is the speed of the buying process, which is easier to access compared to similar services. The findings indicated that perceived value significantly affects purchasing decisions; specifically, a higher perceived value increases the likelihood of making a purchase. Additionally, consumer trust is crucial, as greater confidence among consumers enhances purchasing decisions. Moreover, perceived value affected purchasing choices by strengthening consumer trust, indicating that positive perceptions of value can elevate both purchasing intentions and consumer confidence. Also, ALHuwaishel and AL-Meshal [2018] confirmed that both loyalty and quality have significant statistical effects on decision-making. Conversely, while perceived value influences brand trust, it does not affect the purchase decision [49].

Merabet [2020] investigated the influence of a country's image on purchase intentions, with a focus on two mediating factors: perceived quality and perceived price [50]. The results showed that the country-of-origin image positively affects both perceived quality and perceived price. Furthermore, they underscore the mediating effect of perceived price on the link between country-of-origin image and purchase intention, which in turn influences customers' decision-making. Also, [5], examined the impact of country-of-origin image, product knowledge, and product involvement on consumers' intentions to search for information and make purchases. The results indicated that the country-of-origin image, product knowledge, and product involvement all have a significant

positive effect on both consumer information search and purchase intentions. Future studies could explore the different aspects of involvement and product knowledge in relation to consumer purchase intentions.

Moreover, Javed and Hasnu [2013] investigated the impact of various country-of-origin images on consumers' purchasing decisions across three different product categories [51]. Taking a consumer-centric approach, it seeks to determine how much the country of origin influences customer choices for these products. The research also explored the behavior of different customer segments based on demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and income. It assessed the significance of the "Made in Pakistan" label in comparison to products from other countries.

Furthermore, the study examined how product involvement affects purchasing decisions and the connection between product knowledge and consumer choices. The results indicated that consumers who actively seek country-of-origin information have specific perceptions of different countries related to various products. The findings suggested that Pakistan is preferred for fabric products but not for electronics or cosmetics. Additionally, both product involvement and knowledge significantly impact customer preferences across different categories, with demographic factors also influencing the country-of-origin effect [51]. The previous studies reviewed by the researchers revealed a direct relationship between country-of-origin image and brand value, as well as a direct relationship between country-of-origin image and customer loyalty. Additionally, there is a direct relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty. Thus, the research gap in this study lies in the absence of studies that measured the indirect relationships between the research variables, and these studies have not measured the direct relationships among these variables collectively. Consequently, the scientific contribution of this research will be its measurement of both direct and indirect relationships among these variables. Therefore, the researchers studied the relationship between country-of-origin image and customer loyalty, mediated by brand value.

Thus, the researchers supposed the following hypotheses:

H1: There is no significant correlation between country-of-origin image, perceived value, and purchasing decision-making.

H2: There is no significant effect of country-of-origin image on perceived value.

H3: There is no significant effect of perceived value on purchasing decision-making.

H4: There is no significant effect of country-of-origin image on purchasing decision-making.

H5: Perceived value does not significantly mediate the relationship between country-of-origin image and purchasing decision-making.

H6: There are no significant differences in the perceptions of automotive spare parts customers in Egypt regarding country-of-origin image, perceived value, and purchasing

decision-making based on demographic characteristics

4. Research Problem

Despite the fact that country-of-origin image has become a vital element of daily life and is urgently needed to enhance perceived value and influence purchasing decisions, the researcher conducted a pilot study by preparing an initial survey for a convenience sample of 50 individuals from automotive spare parts customers in Egypt via the internet to gather their opinions on their most recent purchasing decision based on social media. In light of the data analysis, the sample was divided into three groups according to the mean: the first group represents a good decision, the second group represents an acceptable decision, and the third group represents a poor decision, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the Analysis of Survey Data Based on Percentage.

Statement	Good		Acceptable		Poor	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Purchase Decision	35	70%	2	4%	13	26%

Source: made by researchers

Table 1 shows that most respondents in the pilot sample believe that their last purchasing decision was good. In light of this, the researchers can formulate the research problem by seeking answers to the following questions: Is there a relationship between country-of-origin image and perceived value? Is there a relationship between country-of-origin image and purchasing decision-making? Is there a direct relationship between country-of-origin image and purchasing decision-making when perceived value is mediated? Thus, the research problem is articulated through the following questions:

- 1) Is there a relationship between country-of-origin image, perceived value, and purchasing decision-making? What is the nature of this relationship if it exists?
- 2) What is the effect of country-of-origin image on perceived value? What type of effect is this if it exists?
- 3) What is the effect of country-of-origin image on purchasing decision-making? What type of effect is this if it exists?
- 4) What is the effect of perceived value on purchasing decision-making? What type of effect is this if it exists?
- 5) Does perceived value mediate the relationship between country-of-origin image and purchasing decision-making?

- 6) Are there significant differences in the perception of automotive spare parts customers in Egypt regarding country-of-origin image, perceived value, and purchasing decision-making based on demographic characteristics.

5. Material and Method

The study includes the required data, sources of information, research population, sample, measurement of research variables, research tool, data collection method, and statistical analysis techniques, as follows:

5.1. Required Data and Sources: The Researchers Relied on Two Types of Data

5.1.1. Secondary Data

Obtained by reviewing previous research that addressed the study variables and related topics, enabling the researchers to establish the concepts and prepare the theoretical framework for the study.

5.1.2. Primary Data

Collected from automotive spare parts customers in Egypt and analyzed to test the validity of the research hypotheses and reach conclusions.

5.2. Research Population and Sample

Population: Includes automotive spare parts customers in Egypt, The researchers relied on a sample of users from social media by creating a survey available online due to the difficulty in determining the population size or setting a specific framework, given the widespread nature of the subjects. The survey was designed using Google Drive and was available online for three months starting from May 1, 2024. A total of 373 responses were received, with 11 incomplete responses excluded, resulting in a final sample size of 362 entries used for statistical analysis.

5.3. Research Tool and Data Collection Method

The tool used in this research is a survey questionnaire. To achieve the objectives of this research, a questionnaire consisting of 76 statements was prepared to measure the research variables [included in the research appendix]. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" [5] to "Strongly Disagree" [1]. The final section of the questionnaire relates to demographic characteristics. The researchers developed and adopted these scales from relevant previous studies, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Measurement variables.

Variable	Dimensions	Code	Measurement Statements for Each Variable	Previous Studies
Country of Origin Image	1. General mental image of the country of origin.	X1	1-8	[16-23]
	2. Mental image of the products of the country.	X2	9-14	
	3. Mental image of a specific product from the country.	X3	15-21	
Purchase Decision	1. Feeling of need.	Z1	22-26	[30, 31]
	2. Identifying available alternatives.	Z2	27-33	
	3. Evaluating alternatives.	Z3	34-37	
	4. Decision to purchase and actual purchase.	Z4	38-45	
	5. Post-purchase evaluation.	Z5	46-54	
Perceived Customer Value	1. Functional value.	Y1	55-60	[36-44, 52-58]
	2. Social value.	Y2	61-65	
	3. Emotional value.	Y3	66-69	
	4. Personal value.	Y4	70-72	
	5. Financial value.	Y5	73-76	

Source: made by researchers

6. Validity and Reliability Tests for Research Variables

After the initial design of the survey questionnaire, the researchers conducted validity and reliability tests as follows:

Validity Test: This test is used to determine the extent to which the statements in the survey accurately measure what they are intended to measure, ensuring that the statements convey the same meaning and concept intended by the researchers. The researchers employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis [CFA] for the validity test. This is an application of the Structural Equation Modeling [SEM] approach, used to assess the validity of a specific model. It also allows for veri-

fication that the scale statements measure what they were designed for. The researchers conducted this analysis for each scale related to the research variables using AMOS version 20 as follows:

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Country of Origin Image Variable: The results of the statistical analysis, as shown in "Table 3", indicated that all standardized coefficients were significant. The analysis revealed that the Goodness of Fit Index [GFI] value was 0.935 [where values range from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating a more significant model]. Additionally, the Comparative Fit Index [CFI] was 0.944 [with similar interpretation], indicating that the scale is significant and that the statements measure what they were intended to.

Table 3. Standardized Coefficients for Factor Analysis of the Variable Country of Origin Image.

Statement Number	Standard Coefficients	General Mental Image of the Country of Origin	Mental Image of Products of the Country of Origin	Mental Image of a Specific Product from the Country
1	**0.663			
2	**0.972			
3	**0.870			
4	**0.650			

Statement Number	Standard Coefficients	General Mental Image of the Country of Origin	Mental Image of Products of the Country of Origin	Mental Image of a Specific Product from the Country
5	**0.801			
6	**0.803			
7	**0.966			
8	**0.991			
9		**0.965		
10		**0.788		
11		**0.806		
12		**0.919		
13		**0.720		
14		**0.947		
15			**0.704	
16			**0.810	
17			**0.920	
18			**0.747	
19			**0.908	
20			**0.719	
21			**0.728	

Note: ** Significant at the 0.01 level.

Source: made by researchers

6.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Perceived Value Variable

The results of the statistical analysis, as shown in [Table 4](#),

indicated that all standardized coefficients were significant. The analysis revealed that the Goodness of Fit Index [GFI] value was 0.910, and the Comparative Fit Index [CFI] was 0.923. This indicates that the scale is significant and that the statements measure what they were intended to.

Table 4. Standardized Coefficients for Factor Analysis of Perceived Value.

No.	Standardized Coefficients				
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
	** 0.907				
	** 0.915				
	** 0.762				
	** 0.868				
	** 0.954				
	** 0.944				
		** 0.919			
		** 0.960			

No.	Standardized Coefficients				
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
		** 0.887			
		** 0.790			
		** 0.942			
			** 0.873		
			** 0.972		
			** 0.790		
			** 0.782		
				** 0.982	
				** 0.840	
				** 0.962	
					** 0.880
					** 0.945
					** 0.761
					** 0.789

Note: ** Significant at the 0.01 level.
 Source: made by researchers

6.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Purchase Decision Variable

The results of the statistical analysis, as shown in Table 5, indicated that all standardized coefficients were significant.

The analysis revealed that the Goodness of Fit Index [GFI] was a perfect score of 1.0, and the Comparative Fit Index [CFI] also achieved a perfect score of 1.0. This indicates that the scale is significant and that the statements measure what they were intended to.

Table 5. Standardized Coefficients for Factor Analysis of Purchase Decision.

No.	Standardized Coefficients				
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
	** 0.910				
	** 0.918				
	** 0.875				
	** 0.859				
	** 0.804				
		** 0.864			
		** 0.809			
		** 0.901			
		** 0.841			
		** 0.827			

No.	Standardized Coefficients				
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
		** 0.906			
		** 0.974			
			** 0.921		
			** 0.764		
			** 0.942		
			** 0.918		
				** 0.861	
				** 0.743	
				** 0.925	
				** 0.978	
				** 0.944	
				** 0.788	
				** 0.902	
				** 0.908	
					** 0.923
					** 0.756
					** 0.965
					** 0.972
					** 0.974
					** 0.753
					** 0.976
					** 0.919
					** 0.924

Note: ** Significant at the 0.01 level.

Source: made by researchers

7. Reliability Test

This test is used to determine the reliability of the ques-

tionnaire in producing consistent data. Given the clear variation among the research variables, the researchers relied on Cronbach's alpha [reliability coefficient], as shown in [Table 6](#).

Table 6. Reliability Test for Research Variables.

variable	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Country of origin image		
General image of country of origin	8	0.849
Image of product from country of origin	6	0.781

variable	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Image of a specific product from the country	7	0.908
Perceived value		
Functional value	6	0.750
Social value	5	0.963
Emotional value	4	0.730
Personnel value	3	0.770
Financial value	4	0.929
Purchasing decisions		
needs	5	0.753
Identifying available alternatives	7	0.883
Evaluating alternatives	4	0.970
Purchasing decisional and actual purchases	8	0.840
Post purchase decision	9	0.907

Source: made by researchers

For the Country of Origin Image Scale: The Cronbach's Alpha ranged from 0.781 to 0.908, indicating a high level of reliability. An alpha value between 0.50 and 0.60 is considered acceptable, while a value of 0.80 or higher is deemed very reliable [Idris, 2008: 423].

- 1) For the Perceived Value Scale: The alpha values ranged from 0.730 to 0.963, also indicating a high level of reliability.
- 2) For the Purchase Decision Scale: The alpha values ranged from 0.753 to 0.970, again indicating a high level of reliability.

Statistical Analysis Methods:

The researchers relied on the following statistical methods:

- 1) Spearman Correlation Coefficient: Used to measure the relationship between two or more variables, determining the type and strength of the relationship. It was employed to test the first hypothesis.
- 2) Path Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling: Used to measure both direct and indirect relationships between variables. It was applied to test from the second hypothesis to the fifth.
- 3) Mann-Whitney U Test: Used to assess the significance of differences between two groups. It was utilized to measure differences based on gender and place of residence in the sixth hypothesis.
- 4) Kruskal-Wallis Test: Used to evaluate the significance of differences between more than two groups. It was employed to measure differences based on income level in the sixth hypothesis.

8. Results and Discussion

This section presents the characteristics of the research sample and hypothesis testing as follows:

Characteristics of the Research Sample:

The respondents in the research sample included 244 males [67.4%] and 118 females [32.6%]. The age group of 30 to less than 50 was the most common within the sample, comprising 44.2%. The most prevalent educational level was university education, making up 57.5% of the sample. Additionally, the high-income group was the largest, accounting for 45.9% of the participants. These characteristics are summarized in [Table 7](#).

Table 7. Sample Characteristics.

		Number	Ratio
Gender	Male	244	0.674
	Female	118	0.326
	Total	362	100
Age	Less than 30 years	114	0.315
	30-50 years	160	0.442
	50 years or more	88	0.243
	Total	362	100
Education	Moderate	110	0.304
	Graduate	208	0.575

		Number	Ratio
Income	Postgraduate	44	0.121
	Total	362	100
	Low	84	0.232
	Medium	112	0.309
	High	166	0.459
	Total	362	100

Value, and Purchase Decision: To examine the correlation between the research variables, the researcher formulated the first hypothesis: "There is no significant correlation between the country of origin image, perceived value, and purchase decision." The statistical analysis conducted using the Spearman correlation coefficient revealed the results for this relationship, as shown in Table 8. From Table 8, it is evident that the first hypothesis is rejected, as there is a significant positive correlation between the country of origin image and perceived value at the 0.01 level. Additionally, there is a significant positive correlation between the country of origin image and purchase decision at the 0.01 level. There is also a significant positive correlation between perceived value and purchase decision at the 0.01 level.

The researchers tested the hypotheses of the study as follows:

Correlation between Country of Origin Image, Perceived

Table 8. Correlation Matrix.

	1X	2X	3X	X	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y
1X	1									
2X	**0.840	1								
3X	**0.701	**0.850	1							
X	**0.940	**0.721	**0.794	1						
Y1	**0.885	**0.807	**0.806	**0.903	1					
Y2	**0.743	**0.803	**0.830	**0.901	**0.869	1				
Y3	**0.898	**0.908	**0.972	**0.835	**0.876	**0.705	1			
Y4	**0.774	**0.807	**0.905	**0.720	**0.752	**0.874	**0.803	1		
Y5	**0.990	**0.815	**0.700	**0.748	**0.760	**0.865	**0.904	**0.879	1	
Y	**0.864	**0.834	**0.703	**0.710	**0.908	**0.618	**0.974	**0.865	**0.765	1
Z1	**0.834	**0.855	**0.875	**0.705	**0.751	**0.875	**0.805	**0.861	**0.920	**0.953
Z2	**0.587	**0.901	**0.710	**0.640	**0.630	**0.615	**0.974	**0.840	**0.687	**0.684
Z3	**0.901	**0.770	**0.694	**0.986	**0.579	**0.753	**0.891	**0.643	**0.764	**0.913
Z4	**0.705	**0.751	**0.875	**0.805	**0.834	**0.703	**0.710	**0.908	**0.972	**0.835
Z5	**0.748	**0.760	**0.865	**0.865	**0.904	**0.834	**0.703	**0.710	**0.875	**0.705
Z	**0.753	**0.891	**0.643	**0.840	**0.687	**0.684	**0.748	**0.908	**0.972	**0.835

Table 8. Continued.

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	z
1X						
2X						
3X						
X						

	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	z
Y1						
Y2						
Y3						
Y4						
Y5						
Y						
Z1	1					
Z2	**0.843	1				
Z3	**0.870	**0.766	1			
Z4	**0.815	**0.700	**0.748	1		
Z5	**0.751	**0.875	**0.720	**0.752	1	
Z	**0.876	**0.710	**0.640	**0.630	**0.972	1

To examine the Direct and Indirect Effects between Country-of-Origin Image, Perceived Value, and Purchase Decision, the researchers developed a proposed model using Structural Equation Modeling [SEM] with AMOS Version 20. To de-

termine the significance of the direct relationships among the model variables, the Maximum Likelihood method was employed, confirming the significance of the model. The results are detailed in [Table 9](#).

Table 9. Model Fit Indices.

	Obtained Value	Standardized Value
χ^2 [p. value]	0.9264	0.05 >
Goodness of Fit Index [GFI]	0.954	0.90 <
Root Mean Squares of Errors [RMR]	0.0125	0.06 >
Comparative of Fit Index [CFI]	0.974	0.95 <

The statistical analysis showed the results of the path analysis, as detailed in [Table 10](#).

Table 10. Direct, Indirect and Total Relationship between research variables.

Variables			Direct Coefficient	Indirect Coefficient	Total Coefficient
Independent	Mediator	Dependent			
X1	—	Y	**0.698	—	**0.698
X2	—	Y	**0.543	—	**0.543
X3	—	Y	**0.445	—	**0.445
X1	—	Z	**0.440	—	**0.440
X2	—	Z	**0.564	—	**0.564
X3	—	Z	**0.532	—	**0.532

Variables			Direct Coefficient	Indirect Coefficient	Total Coefficient
Independent	Mediator	Dependent			
Y	—	Z	**0.482	—	**0.482
X1	Y	Z	**0.440	**0.236	**0.676
X2	Y	Z	**0.564	**0.310	**0.874
X3	Y	Z	**0.532	**0.218	**0.750

Note: ** Significant at the 0.01 level.
Source: made by researchers

From Table 10, the following was evident:

The positive direct effect of the dimensions of the country image on perceived value was statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the second hypothesis. The positive direct effect of the dimensions of the country image on purchase decision-making was statistically significant at the 0.01 level, resulting in the rejection of the third hypothesis. The positive direct effect of perceived value on purchase decision-making was statistically significant at the 0.01 level, leading to the rejection of the fourth hypothesis.

Perceived value significantly mediates the relationship between the general country image and purchase decision-making, improving the total effect from 0.440 to 0.676, indicating an increase of 0.236 [the value of the indirect path]. Perceived value significantly mediates the relationship between the country image of products and purchase decision-making, improving the total effect from 0.564 to 0.874, indicating an increase of 0.310 [the value of the indirect path]. Perceived value significantly mediates the relationship between the image of a specific product from the country and purchase decision-making, improving the total effect from 0.532 to 0.750, indicating an increase of 0.218 [the value of the indirect path]. From the above, the fifth hypothesis was rejected.

The statistical analysis also provided results regarding the coefficient of determination, as detailed in Table 11.

Table 11. R square Coefficient.

Independent [s] Var- iable [s]	Dependent Vari- able	R square Coeffi- cients
X1, X2, X3	Y	0.816
X1, X2, X3, Y	Z	0.783

From "Table 11", the following was evident:

- 1) The general country image, the image of country products, and the image of a specific product from the country together explain 0.816 of the variance in per-

ceived value, with the remaining percentage attributed to other factors not included in the model.

- 2) The general country image, the image of country products, the image of a specific product from the country, and perceived value together explain 0.783 of the variance in purchase decision-making, with the remaining percentage attributed to other factors not included in the model.

To investigate these Differences among Car Parts Customers in Egypt Regarding Research Variables Based on Demographic Characteristics, the researchers formulated the sixth hypothesis: "There are no significant differences in the perceptions of car parts customers in Egypt regarding the country image, perceived value, and purchase decision-making based on demographic characteristics [gender, age, education level, and monthly family income]."

This hypothesis is divided into the following sub-hypotheses: 3/1 There are no significant differences in perceptions based on gender. 3/2 There are no significant differences in perceptions based on age. 3/3 There are no significant differences in perceptions based on education level. 3/4 There are no significant differences in perceptions based on monthly family income.

These hypotheses were tested as follows:

Sub-Hypothesis 1: No Significant Differences Based on Gender

To test this hypothesis, the researchers used the Mann-Whitney test, which is employed to determine differences between two groups. The statistical analysis results for this hypothesis are detailed in Table 12.

Table 12. The Differences between customers according to Gender.

Variables	Gender	Number	Mean	[Z]	Sig.
X	Male	244	4.67	12.901-	0.000
	Female	118	2.32		
Y	Male	244	4.86	15.546-	0.000
	Female	118	2.1		

Variables	Gender	Number	Mean	[Z]	Sig.
Z	Male	244	4.36	22.378-	0.000
	Female	118	2.51		

From Table 12, it is evident that there are significant differences in customers' perceptions of all research variables [country image, perceived value, and purchase decision-making] based on gender, favoring males. The researchers attribute this to male customers being more aware of

the country image, as they are more focused on purchasing car parts and more knowledgeable about them. Consequently, they recognize the added value of these products and countries, which significantly influences their purchasing decisions. Thus, the first sub-hypothesis is rejected.

Sub-Hypothesis 2: No Significant Differences Based on Age

To test this hypothesis, the researchers used the Kruskal-Wallis test, which is employed to identify differences among more than two groups. The statistical analysis results for this hypothesis are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. The Differences between customers according to Age.

Variables	Age	Number	Mean	[Chi Square]	Sig.
X	Less than 30 years	114	3.8	117.146	0.000
	30-50 years	160	4.91		
	50 years or more	88	2.3		
Y	Less than 30 years	114	3.1	136.672	0.000
	30-50 years	160	4.43		
	50 years or more	88	2.36		
Z	Less than 30 years	114	3.72	125.861	0.000
	30-50 years	160	4.48		
	50 years or more	88	2.53		

From Table 13, it is evident that there are significant differences among customers based on age regarding all research variables, favoring customers in the second age group. Their perceptions of the country image, perceived value, and purchase decision-making are higher than those of other age groups. The researchers attribute this to younger customers being more aware of the country image, as they are more inclined to purchase car parts and possess greater awareness, allowing them to recognize the added value of these products and countries. This significantly influences their purchasing decisions. Thus, the second sub-hypothesis is rejected.

Sub-Hypothesis 3: No Significant Differences Based on Education Level

To test this hypothesis, the researchers utilized the Kruskal-Wallis test, which is designed to identify differences among more than two groups. The statistical analysis results for this hypothesis are presented in Table 14.

From Table 14, it is evident that there are significant differences among customers based on education level regarding all research variables, favoring customers with a university education. Their perceptions of the country image, perceived value, and purchase decision-making are higher among this

group. The researchers attribute this to these customers being more engaged in the purchasing process and having a heightened interest in evaluating their purchases, allowing them to recognize the added value, which significantly influences their purchasing decisions. Therefore, the third sub-hypothesis is rejected.

Table 14. The Differences between customers according to education level.

Variables	Education	Number	Mean	[Chi Square]	Sig.
X	Moderate	110	3.45	137.098	0.000
	Graduate	208	4.78		
	Postgraduate	44	2.2		
Y	Moderate	110	3.23	106.843	0.000
	Graduate	208	4.56		
	Postgraduate	44	2.43		
Z	Moderate	110	3.69	105.764	0.000

Variables	Education	Number	Mean	[Chi Square]	Sig.
	Graduate	208	4.52		
	Postgraduate	44	2.27		

Sub-Hypothesis 4: No Significant Differences Based on Monthly Household Income

To test this hypothesis, the researchers utilized the Kruskal-Wallis test to identify differences among more than two groups. The statistical analysis results for this hypothesis are presented in Table 15.

Table 15. The Differences between customers according to income level.

Variables	Income	Number	Mean	[Chi Square]	Sig.
X	Moderate	84	2.21	101.875	0.000
	Graduate	112	3.74		
	Postgraduate	166	4.53		
Y	Moderate	84	2.59	124.086	0.000
	Graduate	112	3.2		
	Postgraduate	166	4.81		
Z	Moderate	84	2.64	129.972	0.000
	Graduate	112	3.3		
	Postgraduate	166	4.63		

From Table 15, it is evident that there are significant differences among customers based on monthly household income regarding all research variables, favoring customers with a high income. Their perceptions of the country image, perceived value, and purchase decision-making are higher among this group. The researchers attribute this to high-income customers having greater financial capacity and a heightened awareness of the country image, as they tend to be more interested in branding and the origin of products. Their strong focus on evaluating the purchasing process allows them to recognize added value, which significantly influences their purchasing decisions. Therefore, the fourth sub-hypothesis is rejected.

9. Conclusion and Recommendation

9.1. Conclusions

- 1) There is a relationship between the country of origin

image, perceived value, and purchasing decision.

- 2) There is a significant positive effect of the country of origin image on perceived value.
- 3) There is an effect of the country of origin image on the purchasing decision.
- 4) There is an effect of perceived value on the purchasing decision.

The effect of the country of origin image on the purchasing decision increases when perceived value is mediated.

There are significant differences in the perception of customers of automotive spare parts in Egypt regarding the country of origin image, perceived value, and purchasing decision according to demographic characteristics.

9.2. Recommendations

The country of origin image in the minds of customers is one of the important factors determining the purchasing decision; therefore, global companies in general and companies in the automotive spare parts industry in particular should pay attention to:

- 1) Highly trusted by customers.
- 2) Good reputation in the minds of customers.
- 3) Economically, technologically, and industrially advanced.
- 4) High standard of living

It is essential for manufacturers of automotive spare parts to provide all information related to the produced vehicles in a way that enables the customer to evaluate them positively, especially if the spare parts are produced in a country that is not industrially or technologically advanced, thereby neutralizing the negative impact of the country of origin. Also, It is necessary for manufacturers of automotive spare parts to offer incentives to customers, especially when the vehicle faces fierce competition from spare parts with a good reputation produced in countries known for their good reputation in the automotive industry. Thus, this study found an increase in the effect of the country of origin image on purchasing behavior with perceived value as a mediating variable. Therefore, the study recommends working on establishing a brand with a strong personality through:

- 1) Credibility in dealing with customers by adhering to promises and maintaining credibility in advertising campaigns.
- 2) Continuously engaging customers by offering vehicles with specifications that are unexpected by customers.
- 3) Providing high-quality spare parts that meet all customer needs, including comfort, speed, warranty, economy, and parts availability.
- 4) Continuously developing produced automotive spare parts to meet all modern requirements.
- 5) Offering spare parts with high durability and providing original spare parts.

9.3. Recommending Further Future Researches

The researchers suggest conducting further studies related to both the country of origin image and perceived value, which include the following proposals:

- 1) Applying the current study to other important sectors such as mobile phones and electrical appliances.
- 2) Studying the relationship between the country of origin image and other important marketing variables such as customer loyalty, brand equity, and customer citizenship.

Abbreviations

COO	Country of Origin Image
PD	Purchasing Decision
PCV	Perceived Customer Value

Disclosure Statement

No potential competing interest was reported by the authors.

Author Contributions

Ahmed Amin Hegazy: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Validation, Writing - review & editing

Alaa Abd Elkader elnazer: Conceptualization, Data curation, Methodology, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing

Data Availability Statement

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article and its supplementary materials. Data is available on reasonable request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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