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Role of Country of Origin on Purchase Decision towards Fashion Apparel among College Students

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Abstract: In the dynamic landscape of fashion consumption, understanding a product's country of origin (COO) plays a crucial significance. This abstract delves into the intricate relationship between COOs and purchase decisions concerning fashion apparel, particularly among college students. Drawing from a synthesis of existing literature, this research attempts to clarify the complex effects of COO on the purchasing decisions made by members of this particular group. Firstly, it investigates the psychological mechanisms underpinning the impact of COO on purchasing choices. Cognitive associations, perceived quality, and cultural stereotypes are among the factors explored how COO shapes consumers' perceptions and preferences. Additionally, the abstract delves into the regulating role of individual characteristics, such as consumer ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism, in this process. Furthermore, the abstract discusses the practical implications for marketers and policymakers in leveraging COO as a strategic tool to enhance consumer engagement and market penetration. Understanding the significance of COO cues can assist fashion brands in crafting effective marketing strategies tailored to the preferences and sensitivities of college students. Lastly, the abstract proposes paths for additional research to deepen the comprehension of COO impacts in the context of fashion apparel consumption. Exploring cross-cultural variations, the impact of globalized supply

chains, and the advent of e-commerce on COO perceptions present promising areas for scholarly inquiry. This review paper provides a comprehensive overview of the role of COO in shaping purchase decisions regarding fashion apparel among college students. By elucidating the intricate interplay between COO cues and consumer behaviour, this study contributes to the enrichment of theoretical frameworks and practical insights essential for navigating the complexities of the contemporary fashion market.

Introduction

Aspects of international marketing and business have received a lot of attention in the current era of globalisation. Foreign commodities and services have been imported and exported by almost every nation. However, it's vitally important for businesses and the nation that produces them to accept these rejections. Globally operating organisations must exercise extreme caution when it comes to the administration of manufacturing country associations. This is the rationale behind the significance of the Country-of-Origin (COO) notion. Since certain nations have become well-known for producing particular goods (like France for perfume, Germany and Japan for cars, etc.), COO-images may be predicated on national stereotypes. Customers' perceptions of the risk and quality of a product are influenced by the COO-image in that particular category. This COO influences consumers' perceptions and functions like a brand name. By setting the product apart from those of competitors, the COO is a feature that can help a firm get a competitive edge and improve its standing in the market. Positive attitudes towards items coming from a certain nation influence consumers' willingness to pay premium pricing, which can result in significant profits for the company. This is one of the effects of country of origin (COO). The notion of the country image effect encapsulates the brand's economic worth, and it has been widely observed that global marketers are starting to recognise the substantial equity that can be generated by strategically leveraging place of origin. Even though brand equity is important, the majority of study focused on creating measurement constructs for it rather than paying any attention to the elements that affect it. Furthermore, consumers in other countries can now purchase goods from another country due to globalisation and increased trade. As a result, a product's "made in" or country of origin (COO) label generates secondary associations. Consumers' perceptions are shaped by their country of origin (COO), which also influences their brand preferences and inclinations to spend more. This study aims to investigate the significance of the country-of-origin (COO) idea in the Kolkata market as well as the impact of COO on state college students.

Literature Review

One of the extrinsic signals that influences consumer perceptions, preferences, purchase intention, choices, and overall product evaluation is the product's country of origin (COO). COO has been referred to as "the country of manufacture or assembly" for a very long time. However, as globalisation progressed, the country of origin (COO) effect gained significant attention as a factor affecting global competitiveness. In addition, the rise of hybrid and bi-national brands and products has been aided by the expansion of multinational corporations and significant foreign direct investments in developing and less developed nations. A hybrid or bi-national product may be created in one nation, produced in another, and put together in a third, all while the brand is rooted in a fourth. Of the fact that COO must now be analysed as a multi-dimensional notion rather than a basic one, especially in light of recent technology advancements that have made it possible for customers to link different nations with a single brand.

Despite this, it seems that conceptualising COO is becoming harder to describe. Because COO was relied upon as a single cue and the significance of both country of manufacturing and country of brand origin (COB) was overlooked, several researchers questioned the findings of earlier studies regarding the impact of COO on product appraisal. It is important to note that, in the event that other product features are absent, COO or the "made in" label is used to assess various brands and products and can have a positive or negative impact on their equity based on national stereotypes. This indicates how customers feel about the "made in" nation, whether positively or negatively. Liu (2012) Furthermore, strong brands are adversely impacted and poorly assessed when manufactured in a less favourable country than their country of brand (COB), and the same holds true for COO, according to Haubl and Elord (1999) and Hui and Zhou (2003). In general, it will help brands connected to nations that are positively stereotyped, and vice versa. However, COM effects were greatly reduced in the presence of a well-known brand name and certain product qualities, and people judged a product primarily on the basis of its brand name. Prendergast et al. (2010) and Ulgado and Lee (1993) both emphasised the importance of COB on consumers' buying intentions. Saeed et al. (2013) and Ahmed and d'Astous (1995) highlighted the significance of COM to customers in contrast to other COO sub-components (e.g., COB, COA, COD). In contrast, Chao (1993) found that customers place equal importance on COB and COM. In multinational marketing, the dimension of country of origin (COO) theory often provides the framework for efficient comparison and evaluation of the perceived value of a product by consumers. Additionally, consumers' expectations of quality performance in the global marketplace are critically based on the COO phenomena (Patrick, Ladipo, & Solomon, 2016).

According to Seringhaus Brand's association with country of origin tends to have a strong impact on brand's reputation, especially in a specific industry such as

fashion. Piron stated that a product's country of origin has a stronger effect when considering luxury products (i.e. higher monetary risk) than necessities.

Traditionally, the country of manufacture or production is indicated by the COE. However, production now largely happens in a serial form across several nations due to recent advancements in supply chain management (SCM) and operations management (OM), as well as the trend towards outsourcing and offshoring. Furthermore, manufacturers are now compelled to collaborate with other manufacturing nations due to cost increases. Customers are finding it difficult to determine the product's true country of origin because of these numerous nations of origin. In light of this, the most recent research maintains that a consumer's perception of a product's origin has significant influence. Performance Equity (PE), also referred to as product performance-related associations, is one of the most well-known aspects of COE. Performance-related associations can be thought of as the classic COE, which is based on the consumer's understanding and experience of the performance of the products that originate in a specific nation. But this may also be applied to how consumers view the country's economic development and how comprehensively the source informs them on its financial, legal, and physical infrastructure. The consumer will eventually utilize this halo effect—produced by this experience and knowledge—as a guide when making judgements about what to buy. Emotional Equity (EE), also referred to as product-unrelated emotional associations, is the second most well-known dimension. It can be defined as the specific or general, positive or negative effect that consumers experience towards a country based on their exposure to information that is unrelated to the product and may have roots in macro factors like politics, labour practices, economics, culture, etc. Due to historical, economic, political, and military tensions between the two nations, Chinese customers may be reluctant to buy Japanese goods even though they prefer their quality to local Chinese ones. Because of this, it is proposed that these emotions—which have no direct bearing on the product's performance—may nonetheless affect consumers' intentions to buy because of their emotional connection to the product's COE.

Divergent views exist in the marketing literature about how to define the country of origin effect. Studies (Nebenzahl, Jaffe and Lampert 1997; Samiee 1994; Srinivasan, Jain and Sikand, 2004) have shown that the concept of country of origin is divided into several subcategories, including country of manufacturing (COM), country of assembly (COA), country of design (COD), and country of brand (COB). The "Made in Country" designation, which is also used frequently in the preliminary stages of country-of-origin investigation, is another name for the manufacturing country. The nation of assembly refers to the location where items were put together, whereas the country of design is the location where products were produced or designed. When companies decide to outsource their

production (or some manufacturing parts) due to cheaper labour force, these sub-categories of the country-of-origin notion are particularly applicable for hybrid products with global ethnicity, meaning a product cannot be identified with only one country.

In contrast to these sub-concepts, the country of brand (COB) refers to the location of the corporate headquarters of the corporation in charge of managing the product, even in cases where the product is not made there. Nonetheless, it is presumed that this is the nation that the brand or product is connected to (Johanson et al., 1985). Hence, in situations when precise information regarding the country of manufacture is unavailable, the country of brand might be utilized.

The country-of-brand notion was put up by Phau and Prendergast (2000) as a substitute suitable tool for evaluation, outlining its conceptual and strategic significance. The researchers come to the conclusion that premium businesses can benefit greatly from this notion when it comes to hybrid items. Customers are aware that these goods may not always be produced in the nation where the brand is headquartered. On the other hand, buyers view a brand's favourable country as a prestige symbol and a means of connecting with that specific brand. Furthermore, as consumers tend to judge luxury brands by their name, origin, personality, and national ethnicity, the manufacturing location has little bearing on the quality of the products or the brand's reputation.

The business and marketing literature has long used COO as a stand-alone trigger. Neal, Quester, and Hawkins (2000) state that situational, internal, external, and decision-process effects are all included in the overall model of consumer behaviour. According to empirical research, consumer internal factors like perceptions of product quality or attitudes, consumer external factors like social standing or patriotism, and consumer decision-process factors like shop preference and purchase can all be influenced by COO signals. These results demonstrate that the impact of COO extends beyond a single facet of consumer behaviour and affects nearly every feature of the model (i.e., COO effects -> internal influence -> external influence -> decision-process influence). Because of this, it is important to recognise the impact of a COO on consumer behaviour. Only elements pertaining to internal consumer effects connected to COO difficulties will be the focus of the primary examination. The project's specific goal is to comprehend how consumer perceptions of product quality and buy intents are impacted by the company's chain of command. This study will specifically look at Indian customers' preferences for domestically produced goods over those from foreign nations. The purpose of this literature review is to establish the scope of the study and to concentrate on aspects pertinent to the current research topic (i.e., the type and strength of COO impacts on consumer

purchase behaviour) rather than to provide an extensive coverage of previous studies.

Obejectives

1. To investigate the influence of country of origin on college students' decisions to buy fashionable clothing
2. To study the concern of college students towards COO while purchasing fashion cloths.

Research Methodology

Research is the methodical, in-depth utilising the scientific method to the study of a particular problem, concern, or issue. It is a series of actions intended to gather and examine data in order to improve comprehension of a subject or problem. Below is a discussion of the project's research techniques.

Research Instrument: - A comprehensive set of questions is created to gather data and accomplish the survey's goal.

The questionnaire is prepared for a survey and consists of 18 broad questions that cover the basic preference and behaviour of the customer towards branded apparel.

The survey is of the closed-ended variety. Different types of questions are used to prepare the questionnaire.

Data is gathered using a 5-point Likert scale in the questionnaire, with strongly agreeing being valued at 5 points, strongly disagreeing at 1 point, and so on.

Method of gathering data: - The survey method is used to gather data that are considered main data.

Most data are collected from college students.

202 respondents are being surveyed to comprehend the impact of their nation of origin at the time of purchasing decisions towards fashion goods (apparel and leather accessories).

Sampling Methodology:

Sample Size —202 respondents

Sample Unit- Consumers aged 18 and above years are considered as sampling unit, which also covers both male and female consumers, married and unmarried.

Samples are collected from an alternative category of college students

Sampling Region -. Samples are being collected from different colleges of Kolkata and Salt Lake.

Sampling Technique - Non-probability Judgmental sampling is used in this project considering the limitations of time, financial supports and additional resources

Analysis and Findings

A. Demographic Profile Analysis of the respondents

1. Gender Profile:

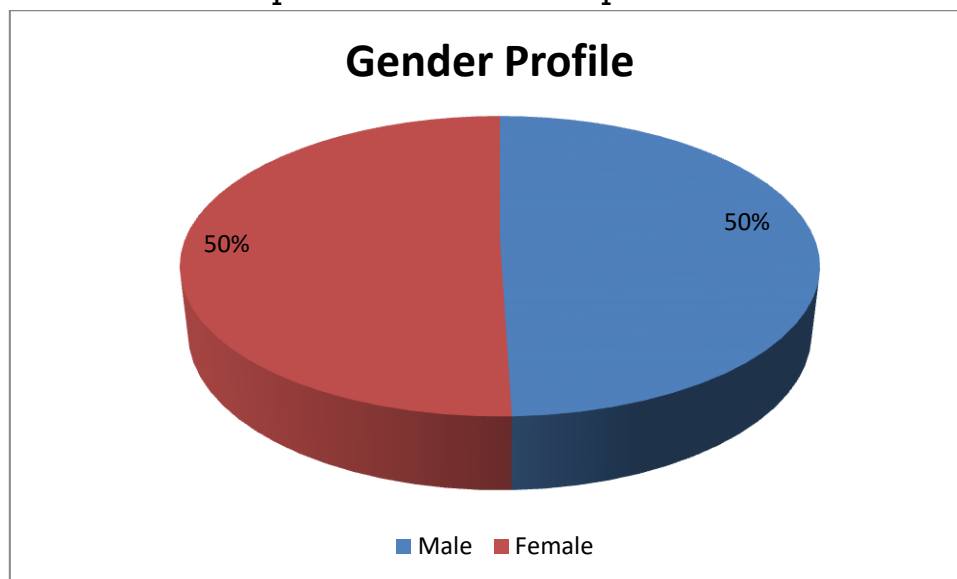
Respondent Number: 202

Gender profiles of the respondents are shown in the following Table 1:

Table 1: Respondents' gender profiles

Gender	Actual number of responders	Percentage of those surveyed
Male	100	49.5
Female	102	50.5
Total	202	100

The above table can be represented with the help of Pie Chart as shown below:



Interpretation

- The numbers of both male and female respondents are 100 and 102 respectively.
- Both male and female respondents have nearly equal (50 % each) participation in the study.

2. Age Profile:

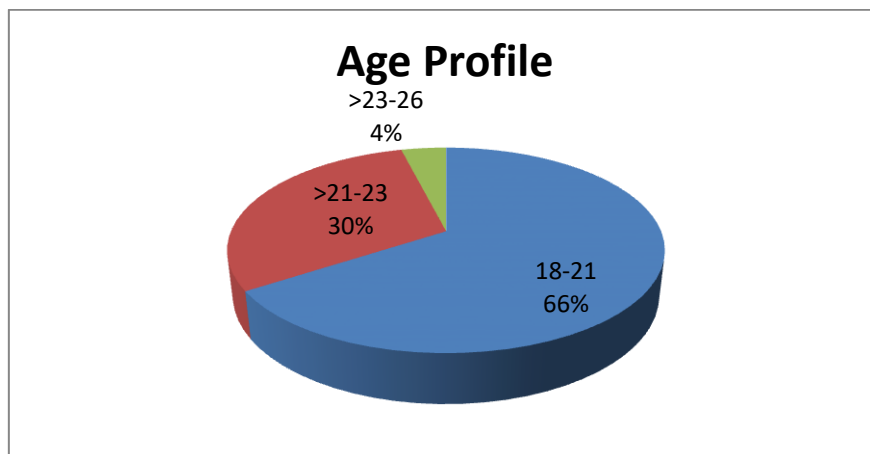
Respondent Number: 202

Age profiles of the respondents are shown in the following Table 2:

Table 2: The responders' age profiles

Age (Years)	Actual number of responders	Percentage of the respondents
(18 - 21) yrs	133	65.8
(21 - 23) yrs	61	30.2
(23 - 26) yrs	8	4.0
Total	202	100.00

The above data can be represented as follows with the help of Pie chart:



Interpretation

There are 133 (65.8%) respondents who are between the ages of 18 and 21, 61 (30.2%) respondents who are between the ages of 21 and 23, and 8 (4.0%) respondents who are between the ages of 23 and above.

3. Education Profile

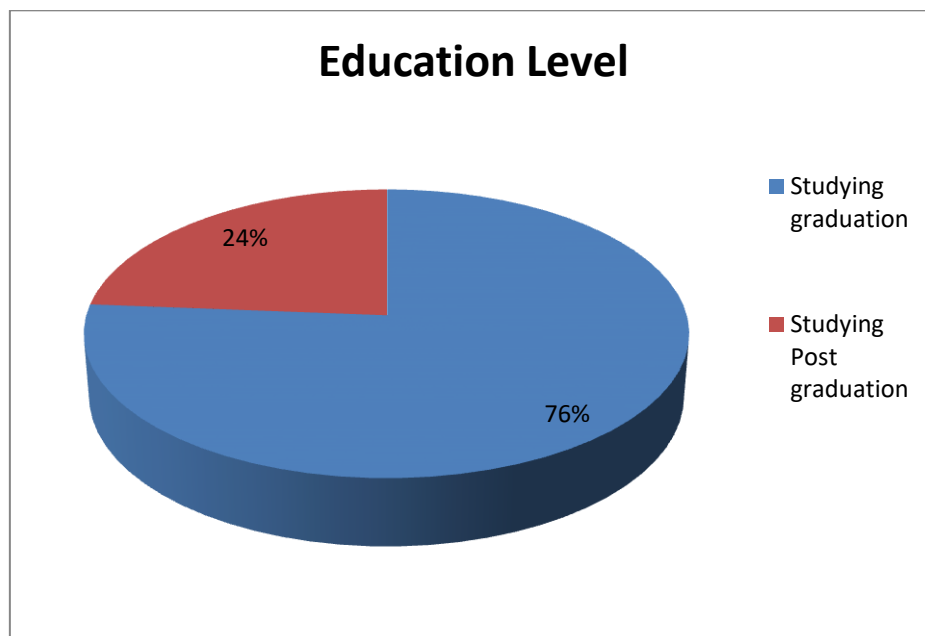
Respondent Number: 202

Education profiles of the respondents are show in the following Table 3:

Table 3: Education profiles of the respondents

Level of Education	Actual number of responders	Percentage of the respondents
Studying graduation	154	76.2
Studying Post graduation	48	23.8
Total	202	100.00

The above data can be represented as follows with the help of Pie Chart:



Interpretation:

- 154(76.2%) respondents are graduate
- 48 (23.8%) respondents are post graduate

4. Study Stream:

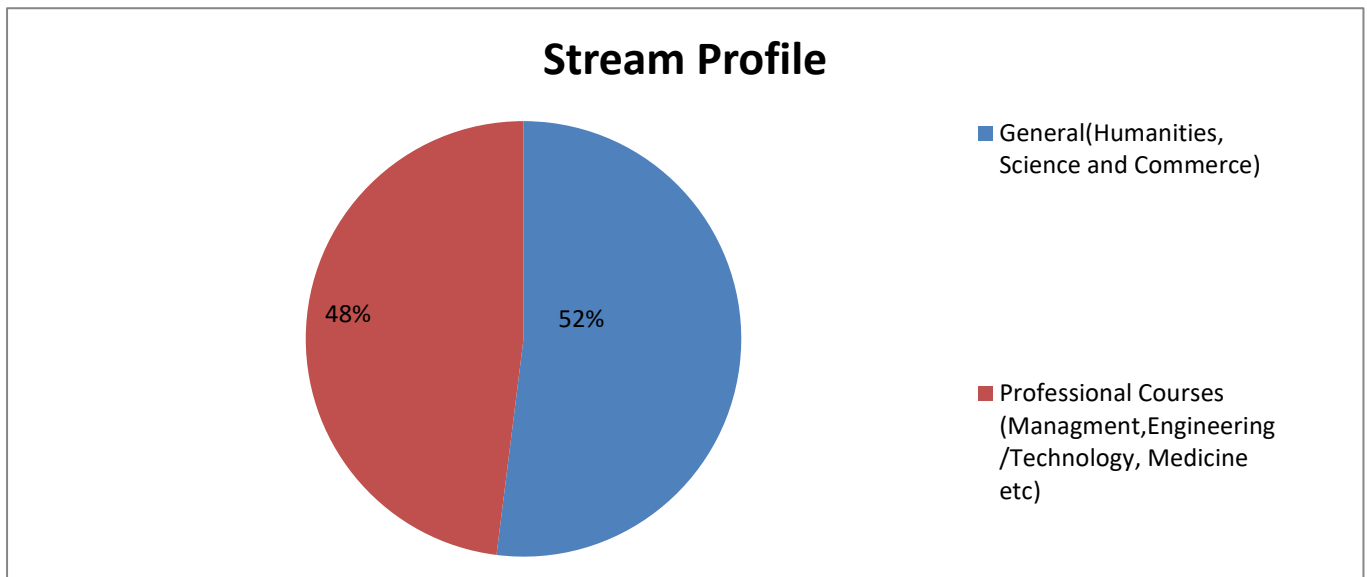
Respondent Number: 202

Stream profiles of the respondents are show in the following table 4:-

Table 4: stream profiles of the respondents

Stream	Frequency	Percent
General(Humanities, Science and Commerce)	105	52.0
Professional (Management, Engineering/Technology, Medicine etc)	97	48.0
Total	202	100.0

The above data can be represented as follows with the help of Pie Chart:



Interpretation:

- 105(52%) respondents are from General like Humanities, Science and Commerce stream, while 97(48.0%) respondents are from professional courses like Management, Engineering/Technology, and Medicine, etc.

5. Marital Status Profile

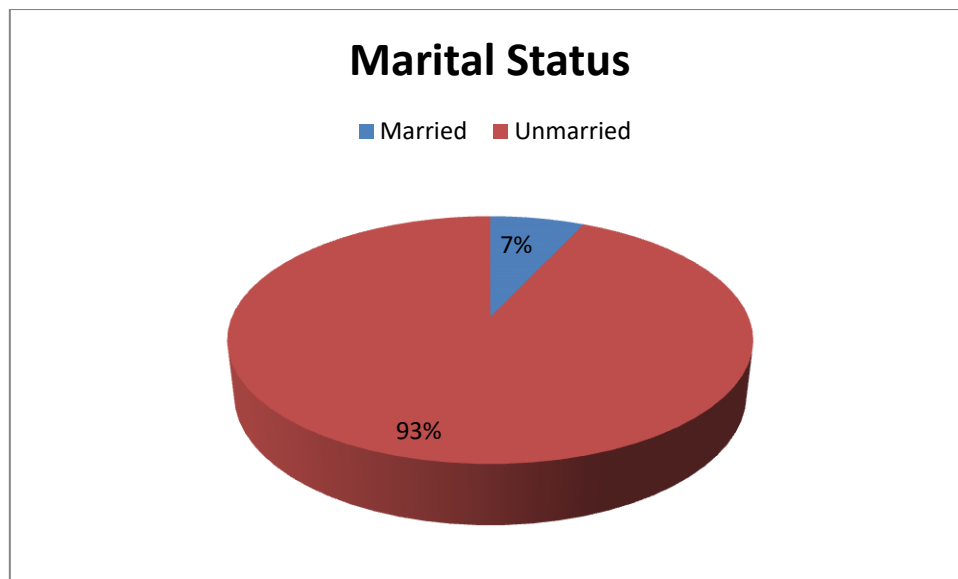
Respondent Number: 202

Marital Status profiles of the respondents are shown in the following table no 5:-

Table 5: stream profiles of the respondents

Marital Status	Actual number of responders	Percentage of the respondents
Married	14	6.9
Unmarried	188	93.1
Total	202	100.00

The above data can be represented as follows with the help of Pie chart:

**Interpretation:**

- The number of unmarried respondents is 188, which constitutes 93.1% of the total respondents.
- The number of married respondents is 14, which constitutes 6.9 % of the total respondents.

B. Analysis of the Respondents' Behaviour**Test of Reliability:**

The most widely used test of inter-item consistency reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, is used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire's items.

Table 6 exhibits the reliability statistics for the study.

Table 6: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Using Standardised Items as the Basis	No. of Items
.700	.699	18

As can be seen in the preceding table, is 0.700. The study's acceptance is supported by the relatively high internal consistency of the items, as indicated by the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient value of more than 0.70.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 7: College Students' Decision to Buy Fashion Apparels: The Influence of Country of Origin

Variables	Mean Value	Interpretation
When purchasing a costly item, like designer clothing, I always try to find out where the product is manufactured.	3.668	Relatively High Score When purchasing a costly item, like designer clothing, I always try to find out where the product is manufactured.
I check to see what nation the goods was created in to ensure that I purchase the best brand or product available.	3.52	Relatively High Score I check to verify what nation the goods was created in order to ensure that I purchase the best brand or product possible.
Finding out a product's nation of origin is crucial, in my opinion, when making a purchase.	3.406	Relatively a little less In Kolkata, it's crucial to consider a product's country of origin before making a purchase.
The nation of origin is the first factor I take into account when purchasing a new product.	3.099	Relatively a little less That the nation of origin is the first factor I look at when purchasing a new product
I search into a product's nation of origin before purchasing it to make sure my friends and family will approve of it.	3.104	Relatively a little less That I check the product's country of origin to make sure I'm purchasing something that my friends and family will approve of.

When I'm not very familiar with a product, I look for information on its country of origin to assist me make a better-informed choice.	3.376	Relatively a little less That in order to make a better educated choice, if I don't have much expertise with a product, I look into its nation of origin.
When purchasing a product with a low probability of malfunctioning, one should inquire about the nation of origin of the goods.	3.406	Relatively a little less That while purchasing a product with a relatively low chance of malfunctioning, one should inquire about the place of origin of the item.
Purchasing products made elsewhere is respectable.	2.936	Relatively a little less That It is prestigious to buy foreign makes
Indian products are inferior to foreign brands.	2.604	Relatively a little less The Indian brands are not as good as the foreign ones.
There is restricted access to foreign items in India.	3.218	Relatively a little less There is restricted access to foreign items in India.
Advertising for Indian items is not very common.	3.297	Relatively a little less Since there is little public promotion for Indian goods
A true Indian should only purchase Indian products.	2.752	Relatively a little less That only Indian brands should be

		purchased by authentic Indians
First, last, and foremost, Indian products.	3.01	Relatively a little less Indian goods come first, last, and most importantly
Products from outside India ought to be subject to high taxes.	3.084	Relatively a little less That there should be significant taxes on imported goods into India
Products from industrialised nations are often of higher quality.	3.208	Relatively a little less That goods from wealthy nations are typically of higher quality
The reputation of other items from the same nation will benefit if that nation enjoys success in a certain product category.	3.327	Relatively a little less That the reputation of other products from the same nation will benefit if that nation enjoys success in a particular product category
All imports ought to be subject to limitations.	3.074	Relatively a little less That all imports should be subject to curbs
If I choose to support a product's purchase by evaluating its nation of origin, it can end up costing me more in the long term.	3.223	Relatively a little less That if I choose to support buying a product by evaluating its nation of origin, it can end up costing me more in the long term.

Factor Analysis

The effect of country of origin on college students' decisions to buy fashion apparel and leather accessories was investigated by the researcher using exploratory factor analysis, which looked at the effects of several independent variables (factors). Using 18 variables and SPSS 18.0, this study examined the impact of country of origin on college students' decisions to buy fashion goods, such as garments and leather accessories, using the Principal Component Analysis Method.

Sample is adequate for factor analysis as per the result of KMO test, shown in the Table 8. The result of the Bartlett test shows high level of data significance.

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.690
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	543.055
	Df	153
	Sig.	.000

Table 8 indicates that the sampling adequacy is guaranteed by the KMO value of 0.690. Additionally, Bartlett's test statistics at a significance level of 0.00 show that factor analysis should be performed appropriately for the dataset.

The results of the factor loading on the variables are shown in the Table 9

Table 9: Factor Analysis (Rotated Component Matrix)

Variables	Code	Factor Loading
When purchasing a costly item, like designer clothing, I always try to find out where the product is manufactured.	V1	.743
I check to see what nation the goods was created in to ensure that I purchase the best brand or product available.	V2	.691
Finding out a product's nation of origin is crucial, in my opinion, when making a purchase.	V3	.637
The nation of origin is the first factor I take into account when purchasing a new product.	V4	.664
I search into a product's nation of origin before purchasing it to make sure my friends and	V5	.673

family will approve of it.		
When I'm not very familiar with a product, I look for information on its country of origin to assist me make a better-informed choice.	V6	.685
When purchasing a product that has a relatively low chance of malfunctioning, like leather shoes, one should inquire about the country of origin.	V7	.546
Purchasing products made elsewhere is respectable.	V8	.663
Indian brands are not as good as international ones.	V9	.786
There is restricted access to foreign items in India.	V10	.722
There is little promotion for Indian goods..	V11	.732
A true Indian should only purchase Indian products.	V12	.684
First, last, and foremost, Indian products.	V13	.806
Products from outside India ought to be subject to high taxes.	V14	.600
Products from industrialised nations are often of higher quality.	V15	.688
The reputation of other items from the same nation will benefit if that nation enjoys success in a certain product category.	V16	.719
All imports ought to be subject to limitations.	V17	.681
If I choose to support a product's purchase by evaluating its nation of origin, it can end up costing me more in the long term.	V18	.787

In the extraction procedure, major components are analysed. The rotation method that is employed is Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation. After 11 iterations, rotation converged.

The Varimax Rotation method with Kaiser Normalisation was taken into consideration, and the Principal Component Analysis Extraction Method was applied to the aforesaid result. After eleven iterations, rotation converged..

Every factor loaded has a high value greater than 0.5. Factor loadings show if it is appropriate to take into account the variables while examining how college students' decisions about what to buy for fashion clothes are influenced by their country of origin.

Recommendation

The survey was conducted on college students who make up the majority of the population census. They want to know the origin of their apparel and the collections of different origins of these apparel augment their social status and superiority over other people. This is the current major trend of thinking behind buying new clothes. Although it was conducted on the students of this particular city we can safely assume that this scenario holds true for the different parts of this state and, even so, in the country. A future businessman needs to sort their ideas on these definite set of parameters this will promote and reflect the recognition of the businessman brand to a huge deal of popularity.

The youth now a day's don't like locally manufactured products so imported products in wholesale brought at a cheaper rate will play a decisive role here. The businessman should also make note of the social, national, and international relations between the countries. The relations play a decisive role in altering the mindset of most of the youth the recent tension between China and India gives us a glimpse of these influences prevailing in the youth. Though from another nation of origin, they did not want to buy the products of the country with rich their country is having a clash. These greatly affect the sale f these products. The future businessman should make a proper note of these relations.

Conclusion

In light of the recent survey conducted on various institutions and colleges spread throughout Kolkata and Salt Lake we have come to the conclusion that nation of origin is very important for the hope of conducting future business here in this city. People value this aspect greatly and this aspect is reflected in their fashion apparel and the choices that lie underneath. Before buying expensive fashion apparel most of the students use to see what country the product is made In. College students seek for COO because they think that it may help them to make a correct decision for buying that product. In our project, we have seen that students' consideration is relatively less for COO as the first piece of information. It is not always true that college students seek for COO before buying a product that family and friends will approve of. Many students disagree with the statement that buying a product with a made-in tag can lower the risk of malfunctioning. Many students think imported goods are superior to those made in India and their

access is also very limited as Indian products are not widely advertised. Students of the colleges don't think that foreign products should be taxed heavily but they also don't think that the reputation of other items from the same nation will benefit if that nation enjoys success in a certain product category.

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Annexure

Impact of Country of Origin on Purchase Decision toward Fashion Goods (Apparels & Leather Accessories) among College Students

1.

Gender	Age (Yrs.)	Education Level	Stream	Marital Status
1. Male	1. 18-21	1. Graduate	1. General (Humanities, Sciences & Commerce)	1. Married
2. Female	2. 21-23	2. Post Graduate	2. Professional Courses (Management, Engineering/Technology, Medicine etc)	2. Unmarried
	3. > 23			

2. Show your degree of agreeability with the following items, where strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neither Agree nor Disagree (NADA) = 3, Disagree (DA) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SDA) = 1

Sl. No.	Variables	SA	A	NADA	DA	SDA
1	When purchasing a costly item, like designer clothing, I always try to find out where the product is manufactured..					
2	I check to see what nation the goods was created in to ensure that I purchase the best brand or product available.					
3	Finding out a product's nation of origin is crucial, in my opinion, when making a purchase.					
4	The nation of origin is the first factor I take into account when purchasing a new product.					
5	I search into a product's nation of origin before purchasing it to make sure my					

	friends and family will approve of it.					
6	When I'm not very familiar with a product, I look for information on its country of origin to assist me make a better-informed choice.					
7	When purchasing a product with a low probability of malfunctioning, one should inquire about the nation of origin of the goods.					
8	Purchasing products made elsewhere is respectable.					
9	Indian brands are not as good as international ones.					
10	There is restricted access to foreign items in India.					
11	Advertising for Indian items is not very common.					
12	A true Indian should only purchase Indian products.					
13	First, last, and foremost, Indian products.					
14	Products from outside India ought to be subject to high taxes.					
15	Products from industrialised nations are often of higher quality.					
16	The reputation of other items from the same nation will benefit if that nation enjoys success in a certain product category.					
17	All imports ought to be subject to limits..					
18	If I choose to support a product's purchase by evaluating its nation of origin, it can end up costing me more in the long term.					