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AN INVESTIGATION OF ELITE CONSUMERS ATTITUDES AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF FOREIGN PRODUCTS TO ACHIEVE PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL GOALS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of COO effects on elite consumers purchase intentions of foreign products across different product categories by integrating theory of planned behavior, self-image congruity and consumption values. The data was gathered via a self-administered survey conducted amongst 316 elite Sri Lankan consumers. The findings suggest that the addition of self-image congruity and consumption values-strengthen the cognitively driven TPB and enhance its ability to predict behavior but also makes it an actionable framework for marketers. The study provides a richer understanding of cognitive, social, self- image and value driven physiological and psychological factors that affect consumers' purchasing decisions.

Key words;

Country of Origin (COO) Effects, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Self-Image Congruity, Consumption Values, Emerging Markets Elite Consumers, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Research into consumer decision making suggests when evaluating products consumers consider variety of attributes namely intrinsic (such as taste) and extrinsic attributes (price, brand) to infer product quality. Of these, country of origin is considered as one of the key attribute that consumers consider when evaluating products. As consumers are often confronted with products and services from different country of origins, obtaining a deeper understanding of the role played by COO of a product on consumer product evaluation is extremely important for international marketers (Magnusson and Westjohn 2011, in Jain and Griffith,2011). Furthermore, COO act as an intangible barrier to enter in to a market. However, if properly managed, COO represents a greater source of competitive advantage, which can be utilised to position firms' products in the eyes of consumers (Khan and Bamber 2008). Thus, it is crucial for international marketers to obtain COO intelligence, particularly on how consumers perceive products made in foreign countries when making their purchase decisions.

Hence, the present study seeks to investigate COO effects on elite consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions of foreign products in an emerging market namely Sri Lanka. Despite the plethora of research on COO effects on consumer purchase decisions, the COO research has been heavily criticised as academic narratives and has been heavily criticised for lack of conceptual, theoretical and methodological transparency and relevance (Samee, 2011, Usunier, 2006, 2011, Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2003; Laroche et al., 2005; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999).

For the purpose of the present study the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) will be integrated to predict elite Sri Lankan consumers purchase intentions of foreign products. However, TPB, is largely a cognitively driven framework and criticised heavily for lack of sufficiency and predictive ability as theoretical models, which are solely based on cognitive dimensions. Thus, limits the predictive ability of complex human behavior (Corner and Armigate, 2002). Therefore, in the present study two antecedents of attitudes namely consumer self-image congruity and consumption values will be integrated to TPB, as

these constructs capturers the affective aspects such as self-image emotions, and values attached with consumption.

Integrating TPB framework and two aforementioned antecedents of attitudes towards products, the present study to develop COO-TPB framework to predict elite Sri Lankan consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions of technically simple vs. technically complex foreign products. It is expected that the findings of the present study and the COO-TPB framework of the present study will advance the body of knowledge of COO effects on elite consumers purchase decisions in emerging markets. Furthermore, it will enable marketers and academics to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between COO effects attitudes, and intentions of foreign products across different product categories.

Moreover, Venketesh and Swamy (1994) suggest that even though consumers in developing/emerging nations want to embrace global consumption, not all consumers have the power to do so. However, as per Khan et al. (2012) and Khan and Bamber (2008) "the elites" (who enjoy high standard of living with a high disposable income) have the ability to consume products made in foreign countries (Khan et al., 2012; Khan and Bamber, 2008, Hussan, 1990). Despite of these studies, research regarding consumers from emerging markets and their attitudes towards domestic and foreign made products remains scarce, particularly with reference to elite consumers (Khan et al, 2012; Khan and Bamber, 2008). These wealthy elites in emerging markets represent a lucrative niche market for existing and potential new entrants, due to their purchasing power and ability to afford high priced foreign goods (Khan et al, 2012; Rodrigo et al, 2011). Thus, obtaining a clearer understanding of the COO effects on consumer behaviour of profitable consumers segments such as elites, have become an essential prerequisite to the formulation of better marketing strategies and policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The following sections of the paper will present a review of the relevant literature on COO effects on consumer purchase intentions, TPB, self-image congruity and consumption values and the key hypothesis that will be tested in the present study.

COO effects and consumer purchase intentions of foreign products in emerging markers

Research on the COO effects or the influence played by product COO on consumer purchase decisions dates back to 1960's and to-date more than 1900 publications have appeared on the subject (Papadapoulos, 2011). These studies have focused on variety of aspects related to COO effects and consumer purchase decisions. For example, previous research into COO effects has been conducted to investigate COO effects on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions of products in general; focusing on products from specific foreign countries, local vs. foreign products, hybrid products, brands, services and art products. These studies have focused on range of consumers from developed countries, emerging markets, and utilised different samples such as households, industrial buyers, and students. However, the findings of these studies tend to be unequal.

For example, Ahmed et al (2002) Liu and Johnson (2005) Tse and Gorn (1993) conclude that consumers' consider COO when making purchase decisions. On the other hand, researchers such as Samiee, (2011), Unsier (2006) argue that the current research field on COO effects seems to lose its relevance for real world. Unsier (2006) also argues that most of the studies that have focused on COO effects are tend to be academic narratives, which have greatly influenced by past studies, irrespective of the fact that the relevance of COO is diminishing due to rapid globalisation of manufacturing and marketing practices. Furthermore, it is also questioned whether consumers are aware of COO information and if so to what extent consumers consider it as a significant cue (Samiee, 2011).

Furthermore, research on consumption of consumers from emerging nations indicate that consumers in these nations they deeply desire to pursue western products and consider them as status symbols (Ustuner & Holt, 2010). Some studies also found that consumers from emerging markets do not evaluate all products made in foreign countries favourably (Ahmad d'Astous, 2008). For example, the findings of COO research conducted emerging markets such as India and Pakistan suggest that consumers in emerging/ developing nations still consider COO as an important attribute. These studies demonstrate that compared to products made in other foreign countries, consumers in emerging nations evaluate products made in developed foreign countries, more favourably due to status, pride, esteem, attached with the ownership of foreign made products (Khan et al; 2012; Khan & Bamber, 2008; Kinra, 2006).

On the otherhand,, the economic downturn, market saturation of developed markets, and fierce competition in the established international markets has force companies to look for attractive markets and segments in other regions. Samiee and Leonidou (2011, p.74) argue, "It is plausible that some individuals in each society place much importance to COO in their purchase decisions" (Samiee and Lenidou, 2011, cited in Jain and Griffith, 2011). However, in some instances consumers may completely ignore COO information. Thus, they argue that COO may be relevant to certain segments and the absence of segmented nature in COO research makes it puzzling as "despite greater recognition of the segmented nature of the CO(O) phenomenon, empirical studies of CO (O) have yet to incorporate the concept formally" (Samiee and Leonidou, 2011, p.74). One of the key COO sensitive segments could be the elite' consumer segment in emerging markets (Khan et al, 2012).

A recent research conducted in COO effects on elites consumers" by Khan et al (2012) indicate that COO information is still relevant for elites in Pakistan. These elites represent consumers belongs to the high social stratum and living an affluent lifestyle, they have a high disposable income and purchasing capacity and a willingness to buy comparatively expensive foreign goods and services" (Khan & Bamber, 2007 cited in Khan, Bamber & Quazi, 2012, p.1191). Nevertheless, despite of the vast range of studies into

COO effects, studies that investigates the effects of COO on purchase decision of s elite consumers in emerging markets (those who belongs to the upper income stratum and) remain scarce. (Khan and Bamber 2008).

Hence, the present study will be conducted focusing on elite consumers in an emerging market namely Sri Lanka. In line with Khan et al (2012) and Khan and Bamber (2008) in the present study elite consumers will be defined as consumers who enjoy high standard of living and who has a higher level of education, professional status and high disposable income. These elites includes normally include highly skilled professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, managers who belong to the upper stratum of the income level and social class. (Khan and Bamber, 2008, Hussan, 1990). The following section will present an overview of Sri Lanka

Emerging Sri Lanka

During the last few years, the country context of Sri Lanka has changed rapidly. With the end of countries 26 years of ethnic conflict, the macro economic conditions of Sri Lanka have improved. Even though the country is classified as a middle-income country, Sri Lanka maintains a strong growth rate (about 5% per year). India is the largest trading partner of Sri Lanka followed by the China and the USA. On the other hand, USA is the largest export destination of Sri Lanka, followed by UK and India.

The major exports of Sri Lanka are comprised of agricultural exports such as tea, rubber, coconut and industrial exports such as textiles and garments. About 40 present of garments manufactured in Sri Lanka are exported to USA. On the other hand, more than 20 present of garments manufactured in Sri Lanka are exported to UK. The major items that are imported to Sri Lanka are classified as consumer, intermediate and investment goods. The mainly imported consumer goods comprised of food, beverages, and other consumer goods such as vehicles, medical pharmaceuticals, home appliances, clothing and accessories. On the other hand, intermediate goods such as fertilizer, chemicals, fuel and textiles) and investment

goods which include building materials, transport equipment and machinery and equipment are imported to Sri Lanka.

Even though the country is considered as an emerging nation, the upper 10% of the population in terms of the income and professional status represent an attractive niche markets for international marketers who are seeking profitable new markets to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. For international marketers, two significant opportunities exist I n enraging Sri Lankan market. Firstly, the rise of consumer demand for different types of consumer goods such as fashion, electronics and food in Sri Lanka provides firms particularly those manufacture such goods to target Sri Lankan consumers, particularly the elites who has the ability to purchase imported goods at a higher price. Secondly, the end of 30 years of ethnic conflict, the healthy economic and political environment, growth in countries infrastructure, the strong government support given to investors and in Sri Lanka, provides international marketers a profitable opportunity to target consumers and gain entry into Sri Lanka at a lower cost, compared to other emerging nations in south Asia such as China and India(Rodrigo et al., 2011).

Integration of theory of planned behavior (TPB) to predict consumer attitudes and purchase intentions of foreign products

Samiee and Leonidou (2011) suggest that COO research need to identify "theories established in other disciplines such as international business, consumer psychology or strategic management and to transfer them to explain CO effects". They further suggest that COO research need to develop more integrated and theatrically anchored models integrating antecedents, and outcomes of COO effects. Thus, in the present study, the TPB and some antecedent variables namely self-image congruity, consumption values, product type will be integrated to investigate COO effects on elite Sri Lankan consumers attitudes and purchase intentions of foreign made products with an intention to offer market entry intelligence for marketers who wish to gain entry into emerging markets such as Sri Lanka.

TPB is an extension of theory of reasoned action (TRA). TPB/TRA has been utilised in many marketing, social, psychological and health related studies (Ajzen, 2011; Smith et al, 2008; Armitage & Corner, 2001; Xie, Bagozzi,Osti, 2013). The TPB have been also applied to wide range of research that focuses on behavioural intentions, actual behaviours to predict pro environmental behaviour (Bamberg, 2003), unethical behaviour (Mann, 1998) leisure participation (Ajzen & Driver, 1999) and sexual behaviour (Wilson et al; 1992).

TPB assumes that humans are rational, powerful actors and therefore a strong intention to achieve a particular goal would lead to successful achievement of the goal, even if it require changing current behaviour (Ajzen, 2010). In the TPB model, attitude towards the behaviour is a function of individuals beliefs and evaluation of those beliefs. Subjective norms are functions of normative beliefs and individuals motivation to comply with those beliefs. Finally, PBC is a function of control beliefs (perceived obstacles or barriers to perform behaviour) and perceived power.

In the context of COO effects research, few researchers have applied the theory of planned behaviour. For example, Li et al (2009) has found that TPB has the ability to predict students' enrolment intention for offshore educational programs and the effect of these three was contingent on the COO of the program. Smith et al (2010) argue that since COO effects research are concerned with consumer product-country related beliefs which influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, the TPB framework is appropriate to predict consumer beliefs and purchase intentions of imported foreign products. In their study, Smith et al (2010) found that there is a significant difference in beliefs of people who intended to purchase products made in home country (Australian products and/or services) compared to people who did not intend to purchase them. It was also found that purchase intentions were also influenced by favourable cost-benefit analysis of consumer product COO related beliefs

However, the application of TPB to predict consumer preferences for foreign products in emerging markets and remains scarce. Understanding how beliefs, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control influence consumer attitudes, and purchase intentions of foreign products would be advantageous to international marketers as it will provide rich insight into most potential attractive consumer segments. Against this backdrop, the present study integrate TPB framework to predict COO effects on consumer purchase intentions of products made in foreign countries..

The following sections will present the hypothesis that will be tested in the present study in relation to TPB variables.

Attitudes towards the behaviour

The attitudes towards the behaviour refers to the extent to which a person believes that a particular behaviour generate a positive /negative outcome. Therefore, if a person believes that there will be a positive outcome, it is highly likely that the person will perform that behaviour. In the present study, this is conducted in the COO context attitude towards behaviour focused on consumer attitude towards products made in foreign countries. For example, if a consumer believes that purchasing foreign products will deliver a higher level of satisfaction, it is highly likely that he/she will buy foreign products. Therefore, it is hypothesized that

H1 Attitudes towards foreign products have a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of foreign products

Subjective norms

Subjective norms refer to the persons perceptions of what "important others" think about what he or she should or should not perform. In the COO context, if a consumer believe that the people important to

him/her believe that he or she should buy foreign products, he or she will have a high level of intention to buy foreign products.

H2 Consumers' perceptions of the extent to which others who are important to them approve or disapprove of buying foreign products have a significant positive influence on consumers' intention to buy products made in foreign countries.

Perceived behavioural control

Perceived behavioural control refers to the perceived ease or difficulty that a person perceives about performing a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The previous research has found that inclusion of perceived behavioural control have significantly enhanced the predictive ability of behaviour in different contexts.

Thus it is hypothesized that

H3 Consumers' perceptions of their ability to buy foreign products (perceived behavioural control) have a significant positive influence on consumer intention to buy products made in foreign countries

Effect of consumer related antecedents

One of the major limitations of TPB is that it does not specify what background factors may influence consumer behaviour. These background factors could be consumer related, consumption related, and product related factors. Understanding the effects of these background factors is important as these can deepen our understanding of consumer purchase behaviour. The present studies therefore, seek to extend the TPB incorporating two consumer related background factors. These include consumer self- image congruity and consumer consumption values the following sections will have a detailed look at each of these variables.

Self- image congruity

It has long been established that consumers tend to buy products that are congruent with their self-image or identity (Britt, 1966). While self-identity refers to how consumers see him/herself as a typical user of a products (Smith et al, 2008),

Self-image congruity (Self-image –product image congruity) refers to the process which consumers use to purchase products/brands, that they feel have similar characteristics which reflect their own characteristics (Sirgy, 1997). Concisely, the self-image congruity theory suggests that consumers will have positive attitude towards and purchase intentions towards products/brands if the product/ brand matches their self-image (Bosnjak and Rudolph, 2008). Thus, self-image congruity involves activation of self- schema as a result of a product cue (Sirgy 1982). According to self-image congruity theory, different self-image motive status will influence purchase motivations differently (Sirgy, 1982). Therefore, high self-image congruity will lead to positive attitude towards products and low self-image congruity will lead to a negative attitude towards products. Moreover, it has also found that there is an interaction between self-concept, attitudes and behaviour and therefore, consumers who see a congruence (incongruence) between self-image and product –image will have a favourable (unfavourable) attitude towards behaviour and will have a stronger (weaker) intention to perform behaviour (Prendergast and Tsang, 2008).

Against this backdrop, it can be argued that self-image congruity could have a significant influence on attitudes towards behaviour, purchase intentions of foreign products and therefore, indicate a useful extension to TPB in the COO effects context. Since, self-image congruity emphasis the activation of self-schema due to a product cue (Sirgy, 1982), it could be argued that it enhances our understanding of human behaviour, particularly of their attitude towards foreign products in many ways. First, it will provide an insight on the motivational drivers behind foreign product intentions. Second, it could provide an explanation concerning the discrepancy between the attitudes and intentions of purchasing foreign made products. Hence, it could also serve as a background variable that moderate the relationship between

intention and behaviour, which is however, beyond the focus of the present study. Finally, since Self-congruity, theory has been successfully utilised to range of product categories including automobiles, clothing and travel destinations as advertising and retailing (Borne, Shimp and Scrott, 1999), it is expected that adding self-image congruity to TPB to predict purchase intentions would enhance the applicability of TPB and predictability of purchase intentions across different consumer settings.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that

H4 Self- image congruity has a significant positive influence on consumer attitudes towards products made in foreign countries.

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H5 Self- image congruity has a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of products made in foreign countries.

Consumption values

According to the theory of consumption values of Sheth et al (1991) there are five types of values namely, functional, social, economic, epistemic and conditional (see figure 1) that guide consumer decision to purchase/consume a particular product. These values are collectively considered as consumption values, which are directly related to consumer consumption. Previous research on consumption value suggests that consumer purchase decisions could be influenced by any or all-aforementioned consumption values.

("Figure 1 goes about here")

A brief description of each of the above values is provided in the table 1 below.

("Table 1 goes about here"))

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Consumption values have been found to influence consumer purchase decisions in many ways. Providing an example, Sheth et al (1991) suggest that a consumer may decide to purchase gold coins as inflation hedge (functional value) and may obtain a sense of security (emotional value) from the investment. Hence, they suggest that functional and emotional values act as the key drives behind the gold coins and the social, epistemic and conditional value may have a little influence. The theory of consumption values has been used in the context of consumer behaviour to explain consumer attitudes and behaviour.

For example, consumption value theory has been utilised to identify influences on global brand image of clothes (Park & Rabolt, 2009), to investigate the consumer intention to download music files in peer to peer context (Chen, Shang & Ling, 2008), to determine consumer reactions to frequent flyer programmes (Shiffman, 2000), to discriminate products brands and to identify consumers who are aware and unaware of firms sponsorship activities (Pope, 1998).

On the other hand, a research conducted by Xiao and Kim (2009) suggests that Chinese consumers tend to display a positive attitude towards foreign products in contrast to local products. They further suggest that Chinese consumers tend to view imported brands as high quality brands with high value, which enables them to associate with western life style. Moreover, Xiao and Kim (2009) suggests that Chinese consumers view shopping for imported/foreign brand as an act which demonstrates there modernity and enables them to satisfy their hedonic and emotional needs. Against this backdrop, it would be reasonable to propose that the functional, social, emotional and epistemic values can have influence on consumer attitude towards foreign products and consumer intention to purchase products made in foreign countries. Hence, in this study, it is hypothesized that

H6 Consumption values (functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional) have a significant positive influence on consumers' attitudes towards products made in foreign countries.

H7 Consumption values (functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional) have a significant positive influence on consumers' purchase intentions of products made in foreign countries.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework developed for the purpose of the present study are presented in figure 2.

Figure 2 goes about here

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following section presents an outline of the data collection procedure, sampling method, product selection, questionnaire employed in the present study and the analysis of the key constructs of the present study.

Sampling and data collection procedure

The data for the present study was gathered via a self-administered survey conducted among elite Sri Lankan consumers, belonged to the Colombo district in the western province of Sri Lanka. The respondents for the study were selected employing cluster sampling approach. A total of 540 questionnaires were distributed of which 316 usable questionnaires were returned, resulting a 41% response rate.

Product type selection

Complexity in product context is defined in relation to the amounts of and variety of parts, materials, functions of a product (Hart, Jonas & Roune, 2013). For example, products such as computers, cell phones, and camera are considered as highly complex products compared to the simple products such as clothes, shoes, and tooth brush (Piron 2000; Ahmed and d'Astous, 2001) Thus, previous research suggests that as the level of product complexity increase, the consumers' propensity to seek product related

information also increases. Moreover, when a product is simple with less features, parts and functions, consumers feel less need for interaction with the product (for example a tooth brush) than for a product which is highly complex such as car and a camera (Hart, Joneas & Roune, 2013). Within the context of COO, it has been found that when a product become complex, the importance placed on salient extrinsic cues such as COO by consumers also increases as cues such as COO will remain as a simple cue that can be integrated in consumer product evaluations without any greater effort (Eroglu and Machleit, 1988). For example Piron (2000), Ahmed and d'Astous, (2001) have found that COO effects are more significant for complex products such as cars, personal computers, cameras and VCR.

Following Ahmad, d'Astous and Eljabri(2002), two products that vary according to technological complexity were selected based on a pre-test to assess elite Sri Lankan consumers' perceptions towards foreign made products. These included clothes (technically simple) and Digital Camera (technically complex).

Questionnaire development and measures

The questionnaire consists of 58 standard items to measure the TPB constructs and other background variables, namely self-image congruity and personal values. All items were measured on a five point likeret scale. Of the 58 items in the questionnaire, 29 focused on purchasing clothes and the other 29 focused on purchasing camera. *The TPB components were measured using four items per constructs adapting TPB scales developed by Ajzen, 1991*. The Self- image congruity was measured using four items taken from Sirgy (1997). Finally, four items for each value type were used to assess the influence of the emotional, social, functional, epistemic and conditional consumption values. These items were adapted from Sheth et al (1991).

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following sections will present the key findings of the present study.

Respondents' profile

Of 316 respondents, 62% were male and 38% of the respondents were female. 54% of the respondents belonged to 45-54 age groups. In terms of the profession, 28% of respondents were senior managers, 16% were doctors, 30% were engineers, 11% were bankers, 14% were businessperson and 1% were lawyers. Out of 316 respondents 59% were university graduates, 18% were postgraduates and 23% respondents had other (professional) qualifications. The mean monthly income of the respondents was 118 000 Sri Lankan Rupees (590 British Sterling Pounds).

Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis for all constructs related to the present study across both product types were conducted. The results indicated that Cronbach alpha was above .7 for all constructs for both product categories. A summary of reliability analysis is provided in appendix A.

Hierarchical regression analysis of TPB variables self-image congruity and consumption values

In order to test the hypothesised relationships between purchase intentions with TPB variables, self-image congruity and consumption values, two separate hierarchical regression models were tested for technically simple product (clothes) and technically complex products. The table 2 indicate the descriptive and correlations for intention to purchase clothes and camera made in foreign counties

As shown in table2, for the technically simple product (clothes) it was found that out of the TPB variables, subjective norms is the best predictor of intention (r=.627) followed by attitude towards buying foreign products (r=.602) and perceived behavioural control (r=.458). However, overall model correlations

indicate that self-image congruity is the best predictor of intention of purchasing clothes made in foreign countries, (r=.892) followed by social values (r=.813) and emotional values (r=.534).

On the other hand, for technically complex product (camera,) it was found that out of the TPB variables, attitudes towards purchasing foreign products is the best predictor of intention (r=644), followed by perceived behavioural control (r=.633) and subjective norms (r=.626). However, the results of TPB extended model suggests that the best predictor of TPB extended model is functional values (r=.852).

Table 3 indicate the results of hierarchical regression analysis of buying technically simple product (clothes) and technically complex (camera) made in foreign countries. In the first step, attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (TPB variables) were entered into the model followed by self-image congruity in the model 2 and consumption values in the model 3.

("Table 3 goes about here")

For technically simple products, the hypothesis Ha suggests that Attitudes toward technically simple products made in foreign co the countries have a significant positive influence on purchase intentions of technically simple products made in foreign countries. The hierarchical regression analysis indicate that attitude towards clothes made in foreign countries are positively related to purchase intentions (B=.106,P<.001).

Therefore, hypothesis H1a was supported. Moreover, hypothesis Hb which suggest subjective norms are positively related to purchase intentions were also supported as the regression results indicate subjective norms are positively related to purchase intentions (B=.129, P<.001). For H3a the results indicate a non-significant effect of perceived behavioural control on purchase intentions when considered with other antecedents of attitudes namely consumption values and self-image congruity. Furthermore, concerning

the effect of self-image congruity on purchase intentions, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicate that self-image congruity is positively related to purchase intentions.(B=.539, p<.001). Therefore, hypothesis H5a is supported. However concerning the consumption values, for technically simple products, only emotional values (B=.104,P<.001) and social values (B=189,P<.001). Functional values found to have a negative yet non-significant relationship on intentions (B=-.059, p n.s). Interestingly, negative yet significant relationship was found between epistemic (B= and conditional (B=-.069, P<.01) and conditional values. Therefore, hypothesis H7a is partially supported.

Overall, the results for purchasing clothes (technically simple product) made in foreign countries indicate that TPB variables accounted for 51.3%, F 3(316) = 111.794, P <.001 of the variance in consumer intention to purchase clothes made in foreign countries. The addition of self-image congruity raised the extraction of variance to 84.9%, F 4(316) = 443.449, P <.001 Further addition of consumption values increased the variance to 86.9%, F 9(316) = 232.919, P <.001.

On the other hand, the results for purchasing camera (technically - complex product) made in foreign countries indicate that of TBP variable, attitudes towards products are positively related with purchase intentions (B=.281, P<.01). Therefore, hypothesis H1b is supported. On the other hand, subjective norms also found to have a significant relationship with attitudes. This provides support for hypothesis H2b. Nevertheless, the results indicate that there is no positive relationship between perceived consequences and purchase intentions (B=-.023, p, n.s). Therefore, hypothesis H3b is not supported.

Furthermore, concerning the effect of self-image congruity on purchase intentions of technically complex products, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicate that self-image congruity is not positively related to purchase intentions.(B=.-.020, p, n.s.). Therefore, hypothesis H5b is not supported. However concerning the consumption values, for technically complex products, functional values (B=.176,P<.001) and social values (B=.674,P<.001) found to have a significant positive relationship with

attitudes. No significant positive relationship was found between emotional values (B=-110,p, n.s) epistemic values (B=.035, p, n.s) and conditional values (B=-.008, P<.n.s) with purchase intentions. Therefore, hypothesis H7b is partially supported.

Overall, the results suggest that TPB variables accounted for $55.9 \,\%$, F 3 (316) = $134.228 \,$, p<0.001 of the variance in consumer intention to purchase a camera made in foreign countries. The addition of self-image congruity however, did not result in any change in extraction of the variance F 4 (316) =100.452, p<0.001. Nevertheless, the inclusion of consumption values raised the extraction of variance to 82.2%, F 9(316) = 162.116, P <.001.

Relationship between self-image congruity, consumption values and attitudes

To assess the relationship to what extent self-image congruity and consumption values are related with consumer attitudes towards products made in foreign countries, two separate hierarchical regression models were tested, treating attitudes as the dependent variable for technically simple product (clothes) and technically complex products. The table 4 indicate the descriptive and correlations for intention to purchase clothes and camera made in foreign counties.

("Table 4 goes about here")

As shown in table 4, for the technically simple product (clothes) it is evident that self- image congruity is positively related to attitude towards buying foreign products (r=.499). Thus, hypothesis 4a was supported. In terms of consumption values, out of the five consumption values social values (r=.542), emotional values (r=.173) and functional values (.063) are positively related with attitudes towards foreign products while, conditional values (r=-.262) and epistemic values (r=-.175) have negative relationship with attitudes towards technically simple foreign products. Therefore, hypothesis 6a is partially supported.

For technically complex products (camera) it was found that self-image congruity has a weak positive relationship (r=.016) between attitudes towards camera made in foreign countries. Hence, hypothesis 4b is not supported. However, out of the consumption values, functional values (r=461) found to have a significant positive relationship with attitudes towards buying camera made in foreign countries. On the other hand, social values were negatively related with attitudes towards buying foreign made camera. (r=.032). Hence hypothesis H6b was partially supported. Table 5 indicate the results of multiple regression analysis

("Table 5 goes about here")

As shown in table 5, for the technically simple product (clothes) it is evident that there is a non-significant yet positive relationship between self- image congruity and attitude towards buying foreign products (B=.102, p.n.s)). Thus, hypothesis 4a is not supported.

In terms of consumption values, out of the five consumption values social values (B=.493, P<.001), found to have positive relationship with attitudes towards foreign products while, epistemic values (B=-.255, p<.005) found to have significant yet negative relationship with attitudes towards technically simple foreign products. No significant relationship was found between functional values (B.047, p.n.s) and attitudes towards products. Similarly no significant positive relationship was found between emotional values (B.-087., p.n.s) and conditional values (B=-.045, pn.s) with attitudes towards products. Therefore, hypothesis 6a is partially supported.

For technically complex products (camera) it was found that self-image congruity has no significant positive relationship (B=.022, p.n.s.) between attitudes towards camera made in foreign countries. Hence, hypothesis 4b is not supported. However, out of the consumption values, it was found that there is a significant positive relationship between functional values and attitudes (B=.475, p<.01); and between the emotional values and attitudes (B=547, P<.01). Interestingly, a significant yet negative relationship was

found between social values and attitude towards buying camera made in foreign countries (B=-.519, P<.01).

On the other hand, no significant positive relationship with attitudes towards foreign made cameras was found for epistemic values (B=-.011, p, n.s.) or conditional values (B =.017,p n.s). Therefore, hypothesis H6b was partially supported.

The results of the multiple regression analysis indicates that for technically simple products self-image congruity and consumption values together explain 36.7% variance in attitudes towards purchasing technically complex products made in foreign countries. On the other hand, for technically complex products, it was found that self-image congruity and consumption values together explain 24.9% variance in attitudes towards purchasing technically complex products made in foreign countries.

Table 6 provides a summary of the results of hypotheses tested in the present study.

("Table 6 goes about here")

DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings of present study indicate that only 51.3% variance in purchase intentions of foreign made technically simple products and 55.9% variance in purchase intentions of foreign made technically complex products can be predicted by TPB components. Moreover, it was also found that when considered TPB based product images only subjective norms was the best predictor of intentions of foreign made clothes, followed by attitudes. This suggests that TPB variables cannot fully explain the factors that influence of purchase intentions, (in the present study purchase intentions of foreign products. This confirms the views of Corner and Armigate (1998) regarding the insufficiency of TPB in predicting human behaviour.

Nevertheless, the addition of self-image congruity and consumption values raised the variance explained in purchase intentions of technically simple products to 86.9% and technically complex products to 82.5%. This implies that the addition of variables that capture the effect of social context and affect such as self-image congruity and consumption values could enhance the predictive ability of TPB framework which is largely cognitively driven. Hence, this supports the views of Charng et al (1998), who suggests TPB/TRA frameworks need to be extended integrating variables that capture effect of social context on human behaviour.

However, the findings suggests that the relative significance of TPB variables and the effect of self-image congruity and consumption values on purchase intentions vary according to the product type (technically simple vs. technically complex). Concerning the technically simple products, it was also found that that the self-image congruity and consumption values significantly positively related to purchase intentions, but no significant relationship was found with attitudes. This therefore partially supports the view of Britt (1966), Bosnjak and Rudolph, (2008) who suggests that consumers hold positive attitude/purchase intentions of products / brands, which are in line with their self-image.

On the other hand, for technically simple products, both attitudes and purchase intentions are influenced by self-image congruity emotional and social values. Thus, it could be argued that the purchase intentions of foreign products are driven by consumers need to achieve identity and emotions related to psychological needs for example internal end goals and reflected in values such as excitement, self-fulfilment, and sociological goals such enhancement of social identity, gaining peer approval and status. These findings are in line with Batra et al (2000), Kinra (2006), Xiao and Kim (2009) who suggests that foreign products enable consumers in emerging markets to achieve their identity, hedonic, emotional needs and enhance status.

Furthermore, these findings also confirm the findings of Khan et al (2012) who found that "elite consumers seek COO Information that confirms the social status of a particular purchase and which is popular amongst their family and friends "(Khan et al 2012, p.1205) and elite consumers decision to buy is "entwined with the values of elite consumers life goals". (Khan et al 2012, p.1206). Nevertheless, in contrast to findings of Park and Robolt (2009), who found that clothing preferences of American consumers are influenced by conditional values, the findings of present study indicate that conditional values are negatively related to purchase intentions.

For technically complex products, the findings suggest that self-image congruity is not an important determinant of purchase intentions of products. On the other hand, consumption values such as functional values followed by social values found to have a significant influence on attitudes towards foreign made digital cameras. This suggests that the more a product get complex, satisfying physiologically driven functional values such as reliability, availability, value for money become important than satisfying psychologically and internally based emotional values such as happiness and satisfaction. This supports the views of Khan et al (2012) who suggests "when a product has a low connection to self, COO information is subservient to functional product attributes". (Khan et al 2012; p.1206).

Nevertheless, the findings of present study also suggest that social values also play a significant role in consumer evaluation of technically complex foreign products. This suggests that consumer attitude and purchase intentions of technically complex foreign products are developed based on factors that go beyond functionality and influenced by how products are perceived by peers and its symbolic value. Hence, it is essential for marketers to emphasis on both functional and social value of technically complex products, if they seek to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by targeting elites in emerging markets such as Sri Lanka.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Overall, the results of the present study suggest that the TPB variables and other additional variables significantly predict elite Sri Lankan consumers' purchase intentions of foreign products and the variance explained differ according to product category. These findings therefore yield several implications for marketers who thrive to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in emerging markets. Firstly, marketers need to understand the emotional and consumption value based aspects that drive consumer purchased factors decisions. Secondly, the inter-play between the background factors with different forms needs to be understood careful, if they are to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

Moreover, from a COO perspective, findings suggests that COO effects or the purchase intentions of foreign made technically simple products are mostly driven by subjective norms, attitudes and self-image congruity and COO effects on purchase intentions of technically complex products are mostly driven by attitudes, subjective norms and functional consumption values. Therefore, when developing marketing communication strategies for example, incorporating a self-image based appeal would be advantageous for a technically simple product such as clothes and a consumption value based appeal would be advantageous for technically complex products such as camera.

On the other hand, it was also found that consumption value perceptions also differ across the two products. In this regard, technically simple clothes were positively evaluated in terms of emotional and social values and technically complex product-camera received a positive evaluation on functional value. Thus, marketers who seek to gain entry into emerging markets can utilize the findings on the differences of consumption value perceptions for technically simple and complex products to develop appropriate market entry, targeting and positioning strategies along with consumer COO preferences for these products.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

This study contributes to the body of knowledge of COO effects and consumer behavior in many ways. Firstly, research that focuses on COO effects on elite consumers remain scarce (Khan et al 2012). Therefore, the findings of the present study conducted in an emerging market namely Sri Lanka would enhance the current limited understanding of COO effects on elite consumers purchase intentions of foreign products, across different product categories.

Second, the TPB-COO framework proposed in the present study would be a significant contribution to the COO field which is often criticized for its atheoretic nature (Samiee and Leonidou,2011). Furthermore, for the body of knowledge of consumer behavior, the extended TPB framework would be a significant contribution as it incorporates both cognitive and effect of social context, values and other product related influences such as the product type to predict the complex consumer purchase decisions.

Thirdly, the addition of self-image congruity and self- variables will strengthen the cognitively driven TPB and enhance its ability to predict behavior but also makes it an actionable framework for marketers. Therefore, from a practitioner perspective the present study provides a richer understanding of both cognitive and social, identity and value driven factors that affects consumer purchase decisions. Thus, marketers can effectively utilize the extended TPB-COO framework to develop informed marketing mix strategies to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, in emerging markets such as Sri Lanka.

Moreover, COO studies are often criticised for the use of student samples (Samiee and Leonidou, 2011; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009, Bhaskeran and Sukumaran, 2007). Use of student samples for studies concerning consumer purchase decisions are considered as inappropriate as student samples lack generalizability compared to non-student samples due to the limited financial resources. Moreover, the needs of the students and their level of knowledge on products and countries are limited and significantly different from general population. Furthermore, Reynolds et al (2003) also suggests external validity of

studies using student samples is lower than studies with non-student samples. Thus, researchers are advised to use non-student samples for COO research. Hence, from a methodological perspective, the present study that uses elite consumers would advance the body of knowledge by investigating purchase intentions of foreign products among real consumers.

Furthermore, the present study also recognise the segmented nature of the COO phenomenon, which has not been considered by majority of previous COO studies (Samiee and Leonidou, 2011) as it provides insights of COO effects on attitudes and purchase intentions of local vs. foreign products of elites, a consumer segment with a high purchasing power in an emerging Asian market.

Finally, from COO research perspective, the findings of present study indicates that the COO is still valid concept and propose a framework that can be utilized by COO researchers to investigate the COO effects across different product types.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

However, the present study also poses some limitations. Firstly, the study focused on only three consumers, consumption and product related variables that could affect consumer intensions.

Incorporation of other variables such as effect of consumption situation, and moderating variables such as involvement, familiarity consumer knowledge is required to further enhance the sufficiency of the proposed extended TPB model. On the other, hand the present study focused on consumer attitudes towards buying foreign products (technically simple vs. complex) in an emerging market namely Sri Lanka. Therefore, the proposed extended model need to be validated in different consumption contexts and across different consumer segments and product types.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of the study contribute to the body of knowledge by investigating COO effects on real consumers' segment, which also represent a profitable niche for international marketers who are seeking attractive markets in emerging nations. From a theoretical perspective, the present study demonstrate how TPB and consumer and consumption relevant construct can be integrated to develop a conceptual framework to predict the COO effects on consumer purchase intentions of products made in foreign countries.

On the other hand, the proposed TPB-COO framework and the findings of the present study would provide marketers rich insights and a useful framework that could be integrated when designing market entry and marketing mix strategies to target consumers in emerging markets. Furthermore, the findings indicate that COO is still relevant for elites and still have an "X" factor that enables consumers to achieve self- image and value driven physiological and psychological goals.

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FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1-Types of consumption values Sheth et al (1991)

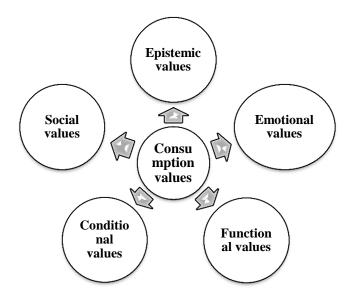
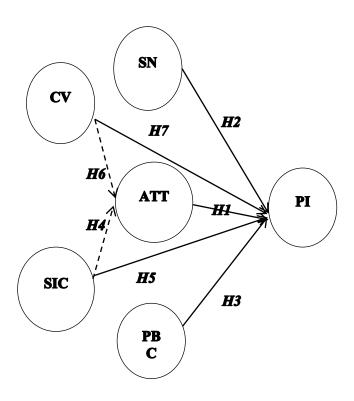


Figure 2 conceptual framework



Key

ATT = attitude toward the behaviour; SN = subjective norm; PBC = perceived behavioural control; INT = intention; SIC = self-image congruity; CV; consumption values (emotional + functional + social + conditional + epistemic)

Table 1 – Descriptions of consumption values

Value type	Description			
Functional	Functional value refers to the perceived utility of the object in choice			
	situation (Pope, 1998, p125). Moreover; functional value is associated			
	with different attributes such as product performance, reliability,			
	durability and price.			
Emotional	Emotional values are the values that associated with affective or			
	emotional response to the product.			
Social	Social value refers to the value associated to the product from its			
	association to the social groups.			
Conditional	Conditional value refers to the value obtained from an object/product			
	through circumstance or through the situation of use (Sheth et al, 1991).			
Epistemic	Epistemic value refers to the value gained through curiosity, or value			
	acquired in terms of novelty and through knowledge seeking			

Source Sheth et al (1991)

Table 2; Mean, Standard Deviations & Correlations; Purchase Intention of foreign made clothes and camera (n=316)

	Mean	SD									
			INT	ATT	SN	PBC	IC	EM	SV	FV	EPI
Intent	ion to purc	chase clot	hes made i	n a foreign	country						
INT	4.31	.827									
ATT	4.20	.844	.602								
SN	4.15	.790	.627	.530							
PBC	3.74	.892	.458	.537	.295						
SIC	4.18	.836	.894	.499	.512	.441					
EM	4.13	.894	.534	.175	.241	.226	.596				
SV	4.26	.813	.858	.541	.542	.372	.900	.545			
FV	4.29	.626	.038	.063	084	.165	.137	.160	.119		
EPI	4.19	.887	122	262	176	167	.032	.265	.026	.181	
CO N	4.29	.868	215	175	194	218	155	.162	097	059	.193
Intentio	on to purc	hase cam	era made ii	n a foreign	country						
INT	4.34	.853									
ATT	4.09	.917	.644								
SN	4.16	.785	.626	.473							
PBC	4.17	.828	.633	.702	.569						
SIC	4.73	.444	.001	.016	050	015					
EM	3.29	1.20	.852	.461	.556	.575	.052				
SV	3.19	1.15	.069	.049	.095	037	100	050			
FV	4.21	.908	.037	032	.082	043	048	022	.910		
EPI	4.81	.390	.116	.032	.107	.195	016	.109	065	041	
CO N	4.84	.368	.085	.045	.078	.183	053	.100	021	.005	342

Note. ATT = attitude toward the behaviour; SN = subjective norm; PBC = perceived behavioural control; INT = intention; SIC= self-image congruity; EM= emotional values; SV=social values; FV= functional values; EPI= epistemic values; CON= conditional values

Table 3 - Hierarchical Regressions analysis with self-image congruence and consumption values on intention to purchase clothes made in foreign countries and camera made in foreign countries

	Step 1		Step 2			Step 3		
	\boldsymbol{B}	Adjusted R2	В	Adjusted R2	Change	В	Adjusted R2	Change
Intention to	purchase clo	thes made in	foreign co	ountries				
ATT	.278**		.140**			.106**		
SN	.425**		.177**			.129**		
PBC	.183**	.513	.009			.010		
SIC			.729**	.849	.336	.539**		
FV						059		
EM						.104**		
SV						.189**		
EPI						096**		
CON						069*	.869	.002
Intention to	purchase can	nera made i	in foreign o	countries				
ATT	.341**		.341**			.281**		
SN	.355**		.356**			.120**		
PBC	.191*	55.9	.191*			023		
SIC			.016	55.9	0.000	020		
FV						.176**		
EM						110		
SV						.674**		
EPI						.035		
COND						008	82.2	26.3

Dependent Variable: INT **P< 0.01; *P< 0.05

Table 4; Mean, Standard Deviations & Correlations; attitudes towards purchasing foreign made clothes and camera (n=316).

	Mean	SD	ATT	IC	FV	EM	SV	EPI
A 44:4m dog 4 omround	la al a4h aa		famaian a	-				
Attitudes toward			i toreign co	ountries				
ATT	4.20	.844						
SIC	4.18	.836	.499					
FV	4.29	.626	.063	.137				
EM	4.13	.894	.175	.596	.160			
SV	4.26	.813	.541	.900	.119	.545		
EPI	4.19	.887	262	.032	.181	.265	.026	
COND	4.29	.868	175	155	059	.162	097	.193
Attitudes toward	ls camera	made ir	ı foreign c	ountries				
ATT	4.09	.917						
SIC	4.73	.444	.016					
FV	4.21	.908	.461	.052				
EM	3.29	1.20	.049	100	050			
SV	3.19	1.15	032	048	022	.910		
EPI	4.81	.390	.032	016	.109	065	041	
COND	4.84	.368	.045	053	.100	021	.005	342

Note. ATT = attitude toward the behaviour; <math>SN = subjective norm;

PBC = perceived behavioural control; INT = intention; SIC= self-image congruity; EM= emotional values; SV=social values; FV= functional values; EPI= epistemic values; CON= conditional values

Table 5- Hierarchical Regressions analysis with self-image congruity and consumption values attitudes towards purchasing clothes made in foreign countries and camera made in foreign countries

	В	Adjusted R2	
Attitudes tov	vards clothes mad	e in foreign countries	
SIC	.102		
FV	.047		
EM	087		
SV	.493**		
EPI	255**		
CON	045	.36.7	
Attitudes tov	vards camera ma	de in foreign countries	
SIC	.022		
FV	.475**		
EM	.547**		
SV	519**		
EPI	011		
COND	.017	24.9	

Table 6; Summary of the outcomes of the hypothesis tested

	Hypothesis	Outcome
H1	Attitudes towards foreign products have a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of foreign products.	Supported
H1a	Attitudes toward technically simple products made in foreign countries have a significant positive influence on purchase intentions of technically simple products made in foreign countries.	Supported
H1b	Attitudes toward technically complex products made in foreign countries have a significant positive influence consumer purchase intentions of technically complex products made in foreign countries.	Supported
H2	Consumers' perceptions of the extent to which others who are important to them approve or disapprove of buying foreign products have a significant positive influence consumer intention to buy products made in foreign countries.	Supported
Н2а	Consumers' perceptions of the extent to which others who are important to them approve or disapprove of buying foreign products (subjective norm) have a significant positive influence on intention to buy technically simple products made in foreign countries.	Supported
H2B	Consumers' perceptions of the extent to which others who are important to them approve or disapprove of buying foreign products (subjective norm) have a significant positive influence on consumer intention to buy technically simple products made in foreign countries.	Supported
Н3	Consumers perceptions of their ability to buy foreign products (perceived behavioural control) have a significant positive influence on consumer intention to buy products made in foreign countries	Supported
НЗа	Consumers perceptions of their ability to buy foreign products (perceived behavioural control) have a significant positive influence on consumer intention to buy technically simple products made in foreign countries	Supported
НЗЬ	Consumers perceptions of their ability to buy foreign products (perceived behavioural control) have a significant positive influence on consumer intention to buy technically complex products made in foreign countries	Supported
H4	Self- image congruity has a significant positive influence on consumer attitudes towards products made in foreign countries.	Partially Supported
Н4а	Self- image congruity has a significant positive influence on consumer attitudes towards technically simple products made in foreign countries.	Supported
H4b	Self- image congruity has a significant positive influence on consumer attitudes towards technically complex products made in foreign countries.	Not Supported

Table 6 continued

Н5	Self- image congruity has a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of products made in foreign countries.	Partially Supported
Н5а	Self- image congruity have a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of technically simple products made in foreign countries.	Supported
H5b	Self- image congruity have a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of technically complex products made in foreign countries.	Not Supported
Н6	The consumption values (functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional) have a significant positive influence on consumer attitudes towards products made in foreign countries.	Partially supported
Н6а	The consumption values (functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional) have a significant positive influence on consumer attitudes towards technically simple products made in foreign countries	Supported
H6b	The consumption values (functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional) have a significant positive influence on consumer attitudes towards technically complex products made in foreign countries.	Not Supported
Н5	The consumption values have a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of products made in foreign countries.	Partially supported
Н5а	The consumption values have a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of technically simple products made in foreign countries	Not Supported
H5b	The consumption values have a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intentions of technically complex products made in foreign countries.	Supported

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Items and Reliability

Items	Cronbac	h's Alpha
IUIIIS	Clothes	Camera
Attitudes	.86	.81
I feel buying clothes/ camera made in foreign countries are good-bad,		
I have very favourable-unfavourable, attitude towards clothes/ camera made		
in foreign countries		
I have a very positive-negative attitude towards clothes/ camera made in		
foreign countries		
I find clothes/ cameras made in foreign countries are interesting –boring.		
Subjective norms	.83	.85
Most people who are important to me think I should buy clothes/ camera made		
in foreign countries		
Most people I value most would approve my decision to buy foreign		
clothes/camera		
Most of my friends buy clothes/ camera made in foreign countries		
It is expected of me that I buy clothes/ camera made in foreign countries		
Perceived behavioural control	.79	.81
Whether or not I buy foreign clothes/camera is completely up to me		
For me buying foreign clothes/camera is" (easy-difficult),		
I am confident that if I want I could buy foreign clothes/camera		
Having the ability to purchase would enable me to buy clothes/camera made in		
foreign countries when I need		
Purchase intention	.88	.88
I plan to buy clothes/camera made in foreign countries		
I will make an effort to buy clothes/camera made in foreign countries		
I intend to buy clothes/camera made in foreign countries		
I will definitely buy clothes/camera made in foreign countries		
Self-image congruity	.79	.83
Use of clothes /camera made in foreign countries is consistent with how I see		
myself,		
Use of clothes/camera reflects who I am,		
People similar to me use clothes/camera made in foreign countries and		
The kind of person who typically use clothes /camera made in foreign		
countries is very much like me.	0.1	
Consumption values	.81	.84.
(a) Functional value		
Clothes/camera made in foreign countries are reliable		
Clothes/camera made in foreign countries are easy to get		
Clothes/camera made in foreign countries are high quality		
Clothes/camera made in foreign countries are good value for money		

	.79
.81	.81
.78	.77
74	71
	.78