

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND CONSUMERS' WILLINGNESS TO PURCHASE AN APPAREL

Emine Ercan

Associate Professor
Fashion and Textile Technology Department
Buffalo State College
State University of New York

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships among the consumer's ethnocentrism, Attention-to- Social-Comparison-Information (ATSCI) level, Country of Manufacture (COM), Country of Design (COD) cues, and Country Image Effect(CIE) and determine what effects they have on consumers' intentions.

The sample included American and Turkish university students. A model incorporating the hypothesized relationship among the variables was tested separately for the two apparel product categories of jeans and sweaters. Data were analyzed by a maximum-likelihood estimation procedure using LISREL VII. Findings indicated that favorable attitudes toward a product significantly predicted intention to purchase the product. The relationship between ethnocentrism, COM and country image were not statistically significant, but the relationship between ATSCI, COD and country image were specific of apparel product category for American consumers. The relationship between COD, ATSCI, ethnocentrism, and country image were found to be statistically significant whereas that between COM and country image was not statistically significant for both apparel product categories of Turkish consumers.

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Keywords: Consumer ethnocentrism, country image, apparel

1. INTRODUCTION

The Turkish apparel industry is currently transitioning from a volume-oriented, cost-based contractor role in the global apparel industry to assume more value-added activities such as design and product development. Worldwide famous branded clothes are produced by the Turkish factories under the permission of the patent

owners. These branded goods are being sold in the boutiques and department stores

throughout the world. Many Turkish clothing companies, on the other hand, have created their own brands and acquired their patents. Hence, they have opened up to the world markets through effective distribution policy by franchising and opening offices abroad. While some of them have emerged as world famous brand names, some others

have gained considerable reputation in the emerging markets. A noteworthy success has been achieved in the field of design in the clothing industry, such as Mavi (www.itkib.org).

At the same time, the rapidly growing consumer market in Turkey offers foreign brands a wide array of expansion opportunities. Several U.S. retailers have increased their market share in Turkey, such as Dockers, Levi's, DKNY, Calvin Klein (Tokatli & Boyaci, 1998). Turkey continues to show great promise as an export market for U.S. products (Fitzpatrick, 1995). Local brands especially are transforming their focus from being manufacturer-driven to more consumer-driven with a chain-store mentality. This evolution is also contributing to the beginning of brand development for Turkish apparel retailers and manufacturers (Oral, 1998).

Industry growth achieved through accomplishments and consolidations explains the changes taking place within the apparel supply chain. Internationally, the temporary General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and Multi-Fiber Arrangement have evolved into a permanent World Trade Organization, the purpose of which is to abolish all trade restrictions in textile and apparel industry. Geographical boundaries create less of a barrier as technology enables companies to conduct business globally. Furthermore, the economic competitions of doing the apparel business have forced change because products that were once produced domestically at considerable cost can now be produced offshore at lower cost. So many products now available in the marketplace are being sourced globally. It is now common for apparel companies to engage partner firms in other parts of the world to perform manufacturing or design works.

In apparel merchandising, fashion plays a critical role. Every season fashion designers show their collection at the international fashion trade weeks. Generally, consumers decide to buy a new garment

because of the constantly changing fashion, not the current garments that are worn out. Fashion: "A continuing process of change in the styles of dress that are accepted and followed by a large segment of the public at any particular time" (Jarnow, Jurdele, & Guerrerio, 1981). Fashion change means changing in color, styling, fabrication, silhouettes, and performance to reflect fashion trends (Glock & Kunz, 1995). Garments are mainly categorized into two groups: basic and fashion goods. Fashion goods are products that experience demand for change in styling and require frequent change in styling in order to maintain acceptance from consumers (Glock & Kunz, 1995). According to the "perceptual map," fashion goods fall into two groups, fashion/seasonal and fashion/staple. Fashion/seasonal goods experience changes in market demand that depend primarily on the time of the year. So these products have a short selling line. In contrast, fashion/staple goods are in continuous demand throughout the year.

The development of these global enterprises has spawned numerous hybrid products whose Country-Of-Origin (COO) designations are no longer easy to identify. Increasing arrays of products are appearing in markets with multiple affiliations (Chao, 2001). Trousers may show on the product label that they are designed in the U.S. and, assembled in Korea, using Italian fabric. Hundreds of studies have shown that the country of origin associated with a product influences consumer purchase decisions (Kaynak, 1983, Han, & Terpstra, 1988; Papdopoulos & Heslop 1993; Nebenzahl, Jaffe, & Lampert, 1997). Consumers may draw on existing beliefs and attitudes about a country's level of advancement, their people, and their desire for a closer link with the country when evaluating product characteristics. When a consumer has little information about a country, the said consumers may form opinions about the country in question based on product characteristics. These evaluations may vary in accordance with the type of product, the consumer's home country, and whether the

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country of origin cue is related to design or manufacturing activities.

Reputation is as important to countries as it is to corporations when it comes to marketing their products. Some research findings show that consumer evaluation of products is influenced by a country's stage of development, i.e., consumers hold more negative perceptions of products made in developing countries (Wang and Lamb, 1983). Nebenzahl and Jaffe (1996) found that the perceived value of a product is a weighted averages of its perceived brand and the values the country of manufacture. They also indicate that the image of branded product is similar to the image of the same product when its home country is specified as the country of manufacture. Country image effect (CIE) has the most important influence on consumers' evaluation of product. As the globalization of marketing efforts continues, the relationship between country-product image and purchasing behavior becomes more important. Nebenzahl, Jaffe, and Lampert developed a model of product CIE which is formed as a function of Home Country (HC), Origin Country (OC), Made in Country (MC), and Design in Country (DC). The model explains what role country image plays in product evaluation. Great deals of works have focused on country of manufacture (COM) effects on product evaluation, but few studies have focused on country of design (COD).

The present study used the model of country image effect (Nebenzahl et al., 1997) as a conceptual framework to explore the predictive linkages between consumer ethnocentrism, attention to social comparison information (consumers' individual characteristic variables), COM, COD cues, product-country image, product attitude, and purchase intention.

It is generally accepted that CIE is meaningful in reference to a specific product line (Gaedeke, 1973; Cattin, Jolibert, & Lohnes, 1982; Heslop, Liefeld, & Wall, 1987; Han & Terpstra, 1988; Eroglu & Machleit, 1989) or that there is linkage

between product categories and country-image-perceptions (Kaynak & Cavusgil, 1983; Roth & Romeo, 1992). Some studies have suggested that the influence of brand and COM cues in product evaluations is product-specific rather than country-specific (d'Astous & Ahmed, 1992; Etzel & Walker, 1974; Hafhill, 1980; Siu & Chan, 1997). d'Astous and Ahmed (1992) observed that the COM cue and brand name were relatively unimportant for T-shirts while consumers relied heavily upon these cues for more complex products such as VCRs and automobiles.

The purpose of this paper is to predict consumers' intentions when purchasing apparel products by examining how Country Image Effect (CIE) is affected by the interaction of consumer's ethnocentrism, Attention-to-Social-Comparison-Information (ATSCI) level, Country of Manufacture (COM), Country of Design (COD) cues. Sweaters, as a fashion/seasonal product, and jeans, as a fashion/stable product, were selected to examine the consistency of the relationships among variables for different product categories.

2. HYPOTHESES

2.1. Consumer ethnocentrism

Consumer ethnocentrism proposes that nationalistic emotions affect attitudes about products and purchase intentions. It is defined as the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products in place of locally made products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Shimp and Sharma (1987) reported that ethnocentric tendencies were less common among younger respondents. The concept of consumer ethnocentrism might improve the understanding of how consumers and corporate buyers compare domestic with foreign-made products and how and for what reasons their judgments may be subjected to various forms of bias and error. Highly ethnocentric consumers are probably most prone to biased judgment by being more inclined to adopt the positive aspects of domestic products and to discount

the virtues of foreign made products (Kasper, 1999, p.155). In particular, consumer ethnocentrism implies that purchasing of imported products is wrong, not only because it is unpatriotic, but also because it is harmful to the economy and results in loss of jobs in industries threatened by imports. In contrast, non-ethnocentric consumers evaluate imports more objectively regardless of national origin (McIntyre & Meric, 1994). Shimp and Sharma (1987) developed the consumer-ethnocentric tendency scale (CETSCALE), an instrument to measure consumers' ethnocentrism.

The economic competition and free trade environment have encouraged manufacturers and retailers to pursue offshore markets as a mean of expansion. This sets up the first hypothesis:

H1: Consumer ethnocentrism will not affect the country-image for both fashion/staple and fashion/seasonal apparel products.

2.2. Attention to Social Comparison Information

People with different types of self concepts may have different types of experiences, cognition, emotions, and motivations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) For example, people classified as independent believe that they are separated from the social context. They want to be unique and be able to express themselves. On the other hand, people classified as interdependent think that they are connected to the social context. They want to belong to a group and promote others' goals. They consider that relationships with others in specific contexts define the self. Therefore, they use others for social comparison and reflected appraisal. Personality factors can be the central reason for affecting the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention.

Using the ATSCI scale, Bearden and Rose (1990) found that persons scoring high in ATSCI were more aware of others' reactions to their behavior and were more concerned about the nature of those reactions than persons scoring low in

ATSCI. Fashion is one of ways to people explain themselves silently. Therefore, it is hypothesized that

H2: High Attention to social comparison information level will affect country image for fashion/staple and fashion/seasonal apparel products.

2.3 Country of design

Some studies (Saurer, Young, Unnava, 1991; Ahmed & d'Astous, 1995) have been conducted in an effort to determine whether the COD of a product is used by consumers as an information cue in product evaluations. Chao (2001) reported that COD is an important determinant in a consumer's perception of a product, because COM may have lost some of its information value throughout the years due to the increasing prevalence of outsourcing by many multinational corporations. Consumers may have greater confidence in the COD information and use it for attitude formation and perceptual judgments more readily than the COM information. So, the following hypotheses are thus formulated:

H3: Country of design will affect country image of fashion/seasonal apparel product (e.g., sweaters designed in Turkey or the U.S.), but will not affect country image of fashion/ staple apparel product (e.g., jeans designed in Turkey or the U.S.).

2.4. Country of manufacture

Hundreds of studies (Dickerson, 1982; Han & Terpstra, 1988; Shim et al., 1989; Thorelli et al., 1988; Wang & Lamb, 1983; Kim & Pysarchik, 2000) have been conducted in an effort to determine whether the COM of a product is used by consumers as an information cue in purchase decisions. Wang and Lamb (1983) reported that consumers were willing to purchase products manufactured in countries which were economically developed and democratic. This suggests negative stereotyping of less developed countries of origin. But d'Astous and Ahmed (1992) observed that the COM cue and brand name were relatively unimportant for T-shirts

while consumers relied heavily upon these cues for more complex products such as VCRs and automobiles. Thus, the hypothesis examined in this study is following:

H4: The Country of manufacture (Turkey and Romania) will not affect the product country image of both fashion/staple and fashion/seasonal apparel products.

2.5. Product attitude

Product attitude is defined as a predisposition to consumers toward a particular product in a favorable or unfavorable manner. The country image effect theory of Nebenzahl et al. proposes that a consumer's attitude toward a product is a function of consumer's country image perceptions. Therefore, it was predicted that

H5: Consumers' product country of image will positively affect their product attitudes for both fashion/staple and fashion/seasonal apparel products.

2.6. Purchase intention

In this study, the consumer's intention to purchase a product was used as the ultimate dependent variable. According to Fishbein's theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), consumers' purchase intention serves as the mediator between their attitude and their actual purchase behavior. Gruber (1971) suggests that intention provides a link between consumers' reactions to products and their acquisition or use of the products. Thus, purchase intention has been used in numerous studies as an alternative measure to purchase behavior. The final hypothesis to be tested, therefore, is

H6: Consumer product attitudes will positively affect their purchase intentions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This study used cross-national experimental design to investigate consumers' purchase intentions of fashion/seasonal and fashion/staple apparel products (sweaters and jeans) by examining consumers' ethnocentrism, ATSCI, COD, COM, product country image, and product attitudes. Generally, the university students prefer to wear sweaters and jeans. For this reason, Turkish and American university students were selected as a sample group.

The two apparel product categories selected for the study were jeans, and sweaters. Sweaters were selected as fashion/seasonal products, because it is sold in a particular season and reflect changes in fashion on trends. Jeans are sold throughout the entire season and reflect limited impact of the change in fashion, it was selected as fashion/staple goods.

The selected manufacturer countries Turkey and Romania are in the same geographical region and they have almost the same technological production level. Turkish companies even have production facilities in Romania because of the inexpensive energy costs. Many U.S. apparel companies import Turkish and Romanian products for distribution under familiar American brand names. The CODs were selected for each product; one was the home country of the design (U.S./Turkey) and the second was a foreign country selling to the U.S. or Turkish markets the jeans and sweaters under its own brand name (Turkey/U.S.).

Criteria selection for products and product country image were adopted from previous studies (Kim & Pysarhik, 2000; Han & Terpstra, 1988). These items included

- 1- That items should be mostly bi-national and
- 2- The average consumer should be likely to be familiar with the products

Additionally, focus group interviews were conducted to further investigate

consumers' attitude about the products, important attributes and quality/image perceptions of countries. In this research, fashion/seasonal and fashion/staple goods are chosen: The two products (fashion/staple garment piece and fashion/seasonal one) with relevant product attributes and country of design perceptions.

Previous research indicated that there was little difference in the estimation of country-of-origin effects when tangible product stimuli versus intangible product descriptions were used (Liefeld, 1993). Therefore, this study was designed using intangible product descriptions. Respondents were provided with a written survey instrument that described different hypothetical purchase situations associated with each product. The instrument used in the study was adapted from previously developed instruments (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Shrimp & Sharma, 1987; Lennox & Wolfe, (1984); Han & Terpstra, 1988).

Subjects were asked to imagine that they were visiting their favorite store to buy a new pair of jeans and sweaters. They were provided with written information about the two products, and then asked to respond to

questions about the products using a self-report written survey instrument. The products described were identical in each questionnaire except for the COD and COM which were manipulated as described below. No special attention was drawn to COM; it simply was listed as one of several product attributes for each of the products. Similarly, COD was only mentioned as a hypothetical purchase scenario for each product.

For this study four questionnaires were designed. Each questionnaire contained two products, with COM (Romania, Turkey) and COD (U.S., Turkey). Subjects were randomly assigned to one of four treatments, which resulted in between-subject measures: questionnaire A, jeans designed in Turkey, manufactured in Turkey and sweaters designed in the U.S., manufactured in Romania; questionnaire B, jeans designed in Turkey, manufactured in Romania and sweaters designed in the U.S., manufactured in Turkey; questionnaire C, jeans designed in the U.S. manufactured in Turkey and sweaters designed in Turkey, manufactured in Romania; questionnaire D, jeans designed in U.S., manufactured in Romania and sweaters designed in Turkey, manufactured in Turkey.

Questionnaire	A	B	C	D
	COD/COM	COD/COM	COD/COM	COD/COM
JEANS	TR/TR	TR/R	U.S./TR	U.S./R
SWEATERS	U.S./R	U.S./TR	TR/R	TR/TR

Table I: Questionnaire versions

4. MEASURES

4.1. Demographic Information

The sample included 319 Turkish and 145 American university students. Students were randomly assigned by one of the four questionnaires. An approximately equal number of respondents were assigned to each of the questionnaires. Respondents were asked about their age, gender, and income. The average age of the American respondents was 21 years old. Females represented 85.5 percent of the sample. Almost 69 percent of the American

respondents reported a monthly family household income of \$3500 or more; approximately 31 percent had a monthly household income of less than \$3500.

The average age of the Turkish respondents was 20 years old. Females represented 54 percent of the Turkish students' sample. Almost 25 percent of the respondents reported a monthly family household income of \$3500 or more; approximately 75 percent had a monthly household income of less than \$3500.

4.2. Consumer ethnocentrism

Consumer ethnocentrism was measured by the CETSCALE (Consumer Ethnocentric Tendency Scale) developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987). This scale is comprised of 17 items. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with each of the 17 statements, ranging from 1=strong disagreement to 5=strong agreement. Higher scores represented stronger ethnocentrism.

4.3. Attention –To – Social- Comparison- Information (ATSCI)

The ATSCI scale developed by Lennox and Wolfe (1984) was used. The ATSCI scale consists of 13 items. A five-point Likert scale was used where “1” was “strong disagreement” and “5” was “strong agreement.” Using the ATSCI scale (Bearden & Rose, 1990), researchers found that persons scoring high in ATSCI were aware of others’ reactions to their behavior and were more concerned about the nature of those reactions than persons scoring low in ATSCI.

4.4. Country Image Effect

Country image is defined here as consumers’ general perceptions of quality for product design in a given country. The country images were measured at the level of specific product categories (Etzel & Walker, 1974) which are two categories of garments in this study. Product dimensions for the country image were measured with five dimensions on a five-point Likert scale. The dimensions were developed from factor analysis on the measurements employed in previous studies (Kim & Pysarchik, 2000). They are prestige, trendiness, technological level of manufacturing, and overall quality.

4.5. Product attitude

Attitude toward the product concept was measured by a seven-point semantic differential scale reflecting overall feeling toward the product as favorable/unfavorable, foolish/wise and valuable/worthless. The scales were drawn from Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann (1983).

4.6. Purchase Intention

After reading the information in the hypothetical scenario, subjects were asked about their likelihood of buying the product as described. A subject’s purchase intention for each of the products was assessed by two measures: “If I had money I would buy the jean/sweaters” and “I believe that it would be wise for me to buy the jeans/ sweaters”, using a five-point Likert scale (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Lee,1990).

5. ANALYSIS

In order to compare the path coefficients between models, LISREL program was applied to analyze the data (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989). The independent variables are consumer ethnocentrism, ATSCI, COD, COM. The dependent variables are country images, product attitude, and purchase intention.

Because the scales used in this study revealed a reasonable degree of internal consistency, we decided to use a total scale score as a single item indicator (Brown et al., 1993). The Cronbach’s Alpha for the eight constructs is presented in Table II. As shown in the table, the reliabilities of the eight constructs are satisfactory. Because all of the variables Cronbach’s alpha are higher than 0.70.

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Constructs	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha	Std. Alpha
Ethnocentrism (US)	2.08	0.93	0.94
Ethnocentrism (TR)	2.64	0.94	0.92
ATSCI (US)	2.81	0.78	0.78
ATSCI (TR)	2.21	0.89	0.89
Country Image-Jean (US)	3.40	0.82	0.82
Country Image-Jean (TR)	3.74	0.78	0.78
Country Image-Sweaters (US)	3.34	0.78	0.78
Country Image-Sweaters (TR)	3.69	0.82	0.82
Product Attitude-Jean (US)	4.36	0.83	0.83
Product Attitude-Jean (TR)	4.13	0.81	0.81
Product Attitude-Sweaters (US)	4.37	0.92	0.92
Product Attitude-Sweaters (TR)	4.11	0.80	0.80
Purchase Intention-Jean (US)	3.27	0.82	0.83
Purchase Intention-Jean (TR)	3.89	0.92	0.92
Purchase Intention-Sweaters (US)	3.19	0.81	0.82
Purchase Intention-Sweaters (TR)	3.96	0.82	0.83

Table II. The reliability of constructs

According to Table II, the average of the subjects is not high ethnocentric and does not have high ATSCI level.

This research measured the respondent's familiarity of Romania and Turkey as a manufacturing country. A five-point Likert scale was used where "1" was "not familiar" and "5" was "very familiar." Mean of familiarity for Romania is 1.69 and mean of familiarity for Turkey is 1.91. It showed that American consumers are not familiar with these two countries.

When evaluating for Turkish respondents familiarity, mean of familiarity for Romania is 2.08 and mean of familiarity for the U.S. is 3.55. These results showed that Turkish consumers are familiar with both of the countries.

5.1 Proposed model

Several measures, such as a chi-square statistic, goodness-of fit-index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and root mean square residuals (RMSR), were used to evaluate the proposed model. Chi-square is a measure of overall fit of the model to the data. It measures the distance (difference, discrepancy, deviance) between the sample covariance (correlation) matrix and the fitted covariance (correlation)

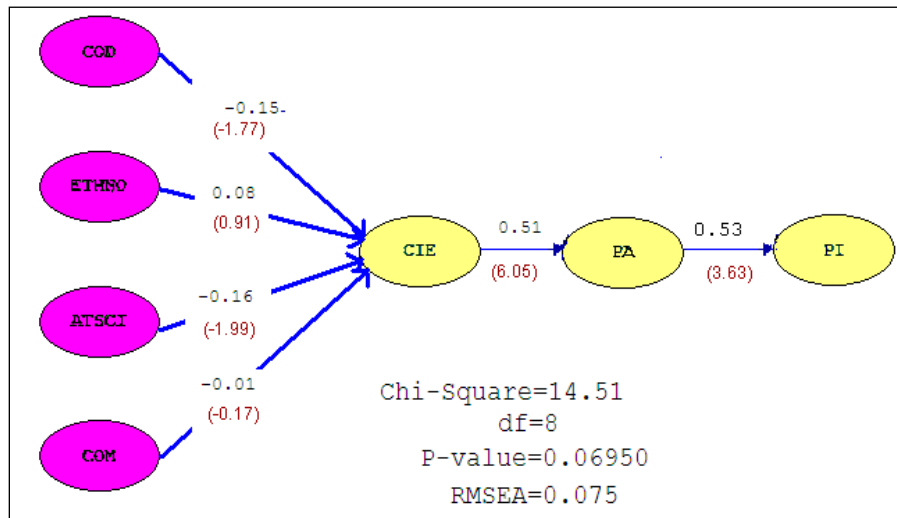
matrix. Chi-square is a badness-of-fit measure in the sense that a small chi-square corresponds to a good fit and a large chi-square to a bad fit. Zero chi-square corresponds to a perfect fit. GFI and AGFI scores are indicators of the extent to which the variance and covariance are explained by the model. The AGFI adjusts for the degree of freedom of a model relative to a number of variables, while the GFI does not (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989). The root mean square residual (RMSR) is the square root of the mean of the squared residuals-- an average of the residuals between observed and estimated input matrices (Hair et al., 1998). Generally, a p value for chi-square test > 0.05, GFI > 0.95, AGFI > 0.90, and standardized RMSRs < 0.05 are considered evidence of a good fit (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 1989).

The proposed model to the data shows reasonable model-data fit for the two apparel product categories and two responded groups (U.S. and Turkey). The value of chi-square for the model for jeans and American respondents was 14.51 (df = 8; p = 0.0695), and GFI, AGFI, and standardized RMSRs were 0.97, 0.90, and 0.075 respectively. The value of chi-square for the model for jeans and Turkish respondents was 28.81 (df = 7;

p=0.00016), and GFI, AGFI, and standardized RMSRs were 0.97, 0.90, and 0.099 respectively. The chi-square statistic associated with the model for sweaters and American respondents was 10.78 (df = 8; p=0.21442), and the GFI, AGFI, and standardized RMSR were 0.98, 0.93, 0.049

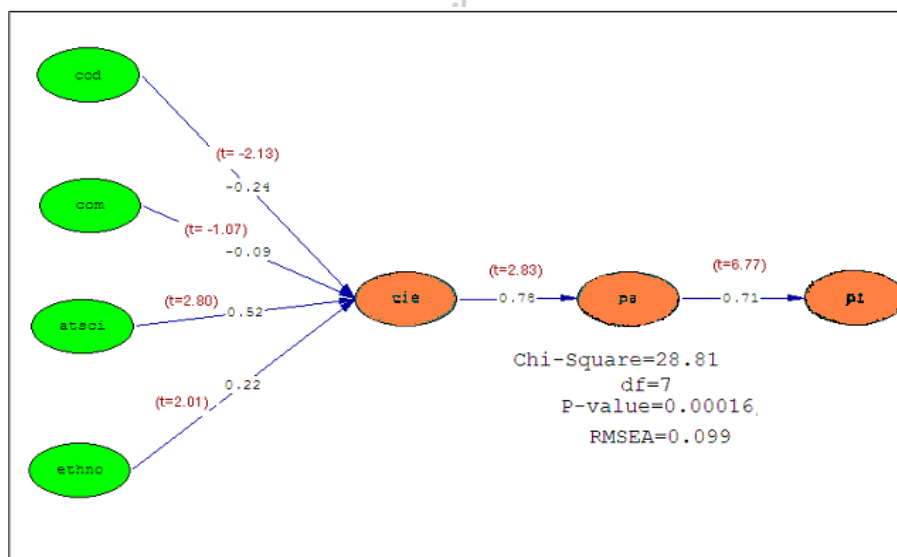
respectively. The chi-square statistic associated with the model for sweaters and Turkish respondents was 22.64 (df = 8; p=0.0038), and the GFI, AGFI, and standardized RMSR were 0.98, 0.93, 0.076 respectively.

Figure 1. Proposed model and parameter estimates (jeans) for American respondents



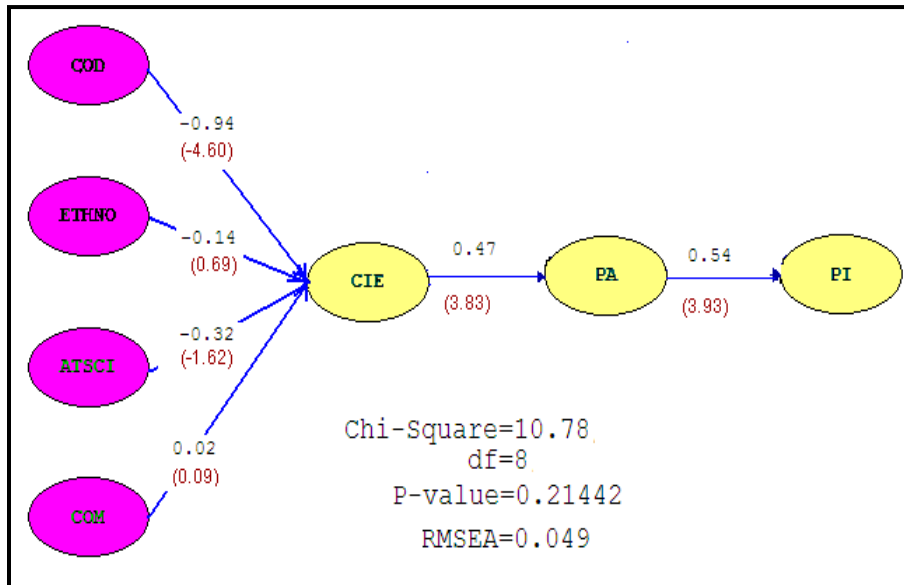
Note: Standardized estimates with t values in parentheses
 COD: 0= U.S; 1= Turkey;
 COM: 0= Romania; 1=Turkey

Figure 2. Proposed model and parameter estimates (jeans) for Turkish respondents



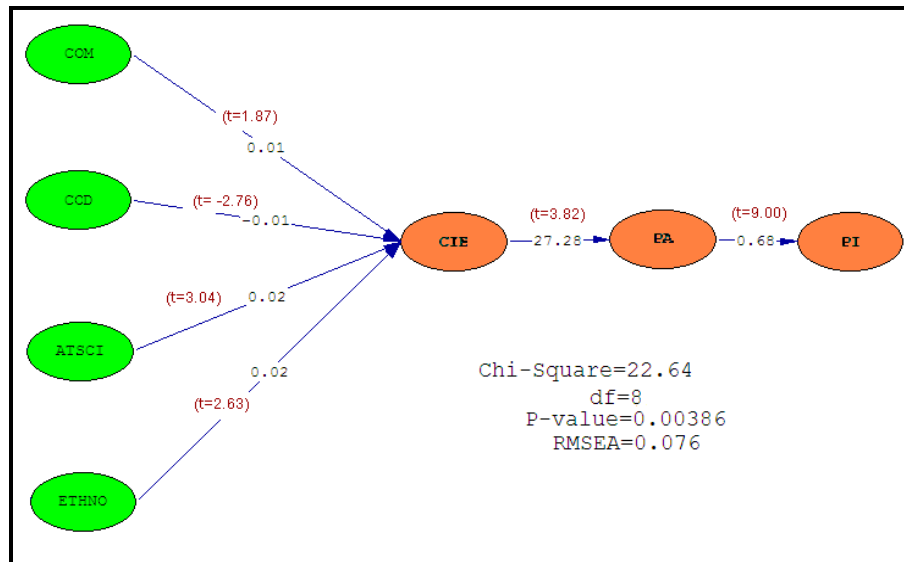
Note: Standardized estimates with t values in parentheses
 COD: 1= U.S.; 2= Turkey;
 COM: 1= Romania; 2=Turkey

Figure 3. Proposed model and parameter estimates (sweaters) for American respondents.



Note: Standardized estimates with t values in parentheses
 COD: 0= U.S.; 1=Turkey
 COM. 0=Romania; 1= Turkey

Figure 4. Proposed model and parameter estimates (sweaters) for Turkish respondents.



Note: Standardized estimates with t values in parentheses
 COD: 1= U.S.; 2=Turkey
 COM. 1=Romania; 2= Turkey

5.2. Test of Hypothesis

As shown in Figures 1 and Figure2, all of the hypothesized relationships were confirmed when the proposed models were

tested for jeans. In Figure 1, the results of the path coefficients showed that the two independent variables (i.e., COM and Ethnocentrism) had no significant effects both at 0.05 and 0.10 level on country image for product ($\gamma_{14} = -0.01$, $t = -0.17$; $\gamma_{12} = 0.08$, $t = 0.91$). COD had significant effects on country image for product at 0.10 level, but not significant effects on country image of product at 0.05 level ($\gamma_{11} = -0.15$, $t = -1.77$). Americans perceived the country image of jeans designed in America more favorably. However, only ATSCI had a direct casual influence on Americans' country image for product effect ($\gamma_{13} = -0.16$, $t = -1.99$). Respondents who exhibited higher level ATSCI tendencies were inclined to perceive domestic (U.S.) country image for product more favorably. When a person has a high level of self-confidence in evaluating a product, perceived country image for product will not be a major issue in influencing his/her tendencies. On the other hand, when a person has a low level of self confidence, perceived country image for product will become a salient factor in affecting his/her tendencies.

The last two hypotheses predicted the positive relationships between country image for product, product attitude, and purchase intention. Respondents' country image for product strongly affected their attitude toward the jeans ($\beta_{21} = 0.51$, $t = 6.05$), which in turn predicted their intention to purchase it ($\beta_{32} = 0.53$, $t = 3.63$).

In Figure 2, the results of the path coefficients showed that the three independent variables (i.e., COD, ATSCI, and Ethnocentrism) had significant effects both at 0.05 and 0.10 level on country image for product ($\gamma_{11} = -0.24$, $t = -2.13$; $\gamma_{13} = 0.52$, $t = 2.80$; $\gamma_{14} = 0.22$, $t = 2.01$). Turkish respondents perceived the country image of jeans designed in America more favorably

than the jeans designed in Turkey. Respondents who exhibited high level ATSCI tendencies were inclined to perceive domestic country image of product more favorably. When a person has a high level of self-confidence in evaluating a product, perceived country image for product will not be a major issue in influencing his/her tendencies. On the other hand, when a person has a low level of self-confidence, perceived country image for product will become a salient factor in affecting his/her tendencies. However, COM had no significant effects on country image for product at 0.05 level ($\gamma_{12} = -0.08$, $t = -1.07$). Respondents who exhibited higher level Ethnocentrism tended to perceive domestic (TR) country image for product more favorably.

The last two hypotheses predicted the positive relationships between country image for product, product attitude, and purchase intention. Respondents' country image for product strongly affected their attitude toward the jeans ($\beta_{21} = 0.78$, $t = 2.83$), which in turn predicted their intention to purchase it ($\beta_{32} = 0.71$, $t = 6.77$).

Figures 3 and 4 presents parameter estimates of the proposal model for sweaters which represents fashion/seasonal apparel products. Five of the six hypothesized relationship were confirmed for American respondents. In Figure 3, the results of the path coefficients showed that the three independent variables (Ethnocentrism, ATSCI, COM) did not have significant effects on country of product image ($\gamma_{12} = -0.14$, $t = 0.69$; $\gamma_{13} = -0.32$, $t = -1.62$; $\gamma_{14} = 0.02$, $t = 0.09$). We expected that COD would be an important factor in determining consumers' country image of fashionable apparel product. As we expected, COD was significantly related to consumers' country image of sweaters ($\gamma_{11} = -0.94$, $t = -4.60$). According to the results, respondents tend to perceive domestic and developed country design more favorably than foreign and developing country design.

In relation to the last two hypotheses, respondents' evaluations of the country

image exerted a strong positive effect on their attitude toward the sweaters ($\beta_{21}=0.47$, $t=3.83$), which in turn predicted their purchase intention ($\beta_{32}= 0.54$, $t=3.93$).

In Figure 4, the results of the path coefficients showed that the three independent variables (COD, ATSCI and Ethnocentrism) have significant effects on country of product image ($\gamma_{12}= -0.01$, $t=-2.76$; $\gamma_{13}= 0.02$, $t= 3.04$; $\gamma_{14}=0.02$, $t=2.63$). As we expected, COM was not significantly related to consumers' country image of sweaters ($\gamma_{11}= 0.01$, $t= 1.87$). According to the results, respondents tend to perceive foreign and developed country design more favorably than domestic design.

In relation to the last two hypotheses, respondents' evaluations of the country image exerted a strong positive effect on their attitude toward the sweaters ($\beta_{21}=27.28$, $t=3.82$), which in turn predicted their purchase intention ($\beta_{32}= 0.68$, $t=9$).

6. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is some evidence that country image effect is meaningful in reference to a specific product line (Gaedeke, 1973; Cattin, Jolibert & Lohnes, 1982; Heslop, Liefeld, & Wall, 1978; Han & Terpstra, 1988; Eroglu & Machleit, 1989) or that there is linkage between product categories and country image perceptions (Roth & Romeo, 1992). This study provided a model which incorporated the relationships between ethnocentrism, ATSCI, COM, COD cues, country image effect, product attitude, and purchase intention of apparel products.

1. First, the relationship between COD information and country image effect on the apparel products was examined. We expected that COD would have influence on country image effect of the fashion/seasonal apparel product such as sweaters. Generally, when the consumers are evaluating apparel products they may have greater confidence in the design cue. The design impacts the visual appeal of clothing

and it is easily judged at the point of sale, just by looking at it. The attractiveness of a garment affects the consumer emotionally and psychologically; a consumer is likely to purchase a garment that does meet his or her aesthetic standards. During the globalization era, media and entertainment industry (e.g., movie, theater, and music) are influencing aesthetic perception of the young generations. Fashion is one of the most important instruments in the media and entertainment sectors.

As expected, there was a significant effect of COD on perceptions of country of image effect of the fashion/seasonal product. But, in recent years, design elements are being used in fashion/staple garments such as jeans. The research results showed that COD has a partial effect on country image for jeans. For both apparel categories, the results showed that consumers preferred the developed country designer over developing country designer.

2. This study showed that ethnocentrism has no effect on the country image of the apparel product in both categories for the country which is not a main manufacturer country. But it has significant effect on the country image of the apparel product in both categories for the country that is an important apparel manufacturer. High ethnocentric level people preferred the domestic products over the imported ones.
3. Concerning the impact of ATSCI on country image effect, respondents who have a high self-confidence perceive country image of foreign design apparel product more favorably than the domestic apparel product. On the other hand, consumers who have a low self-confidence perceive country image of domestic design apparel product more favorably than the foreign one. In the fashion world, people want to have unique items, buying foreign-made goods in order to obtain items with distinctive design. In fact, for many decades, consumers have bought apparel

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made in other countries as they sought to be among the fashion elite (Dickerson, 1991). It should be noted that in the case of jeans, ATSCI relates to prestige and functional aspects of the jeans, but not much to its esthetics. Brand attitude relates to apparel prestige and functional aspects (Kim & Pysarchik, 2000). When purchasing a product based on self-esteem, consumers may have greater confidence with a prestigious brand name.

4. With regard to the COM effect, we expected that COM would have no influence on consumer perception of the country image effect of the product for soft goods such as apparel. As expected, there was no effect of COM country image effect of the products. Because many companies who have well-known brands such as Armani, Pierre-Cardin, and Boss, manufactured their goods in developing countries in order to reduce production cost. This is consistent with findings of d'Astous and Ahmed (1992).
5. As we expected, consumers' country image positively affected their overall attitude toward the apparel product. Finally, in an attempt to assess the consistency of consumer attitudes with consumer intention, the relationship between overall attitude toward an apparel product and purchase intention was examined. The relationship is significant for both fashion /seasonal and fashion/staple apparel products. This suggests that product attitudes may be a good predictor of intention to buy. This result supports Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My appreciation is to Dr. Barbara Fraiser who helped to design the survey and collected data.

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