



Made in China: The effect of country label on consumer perceptions

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of country-of-origin labels on Portuguese consumer perceptions, focusing on the effects of Chinese and non-Chinese brands. The research aims to evaluate how these labels impact consumers' trustworthiness, purchase intentions, loyalty, brand reputation, attitude towards the brand, business ethics, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Through an experimental design involving 90 participants, the research evaluates consumer responses across different product categories (clothing and technology), country labels (China, Japan, and Ireland), and brand identities (Huawei, Sony, Shein, and Primark).

The results indicate that country-of-origin labels significantly affect consumer perceptions, with Japanese brands receiving the highest scores across all dimensions, while Chinese brands face penalties in "match" conditions (correct country-of-origin information). However, these penalties are mitigated in "mismatch" conditions, suggesting that disassociating brands from negative stereotypes associated with their origin can improve consumer perceptions.

The study concludes that country-of-origin plays a significant role in consumer perceptions and that understanding cultural biases and CSR practices is crucial for global marketing strategies. The findings highlight the importance of managing brand identity and CSR messages to overcome stereotypes and improve brand perception in international markets.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Country of Origin, Portuguese Consumers, Brand Perception.

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Resumo

Este estudo investiga a influência dos rótulos de país de origem nas percepções dos consumidores portugueses, com foco nos efeitos das marcas chinesas e não chinesas. O objetivo desta investigação é avaliar como esses rótulos impactam a confiabilidade, as intenções de compra, a lealdade, a reputação da marca, a atitude em relação à marca, a ética e a responsabilidade social corporativa dos consumidores. Através de um desenho experimental envolvendo 90 participantes, o estudo avalia as respostas dos consumidores em diferentes categorias de produtos (vestuário e tecnologia), rótulos de países (China, Japão e Irlanda) e identidades de marca (Huawei, Sony, Shein e Primark).

Os resultados indicam que os rótulos de país de origem afetam significativamente as percepções dos consumidores, com as marcas japonesas obtendo as pontuações mais altas em todas as dimensões, enquanto as marcas chinesas enfrentam penalizações em condições de "correspondência" (informação correta do país de origem). No entanto, essas penalizações são mitigadas em condições de "não correspondência", sugerindo que dissociar as marcas dos estereótipos negativos associados à sua origem pode melhorar as percepções.

O estudo conclui que o país de origem desempenha um papel significativo na percepção dos consumidores e que compreender as influências culturais e as práticas de CSR é crucial para estratégias de marketing. Os resultados destacam a importância de gerir a identidade da marca e as mensagens de CSR para superar estereótipos e melhorar a sua percepção.

Palavras-chave: Responsabilidade social corporativa, País de origem, Consumidores portugueses, Percepção da marca.

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My grandmother, Maria da Glória, whom I admired so much, continues to be a source of inspiration. Her passion for knowledge and her determination were an example to follow. Although she is no longer physically present, I know she would be proud of this work. I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandmother, in gratitude for all she taught me.

List of Acronyms

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR1: Corporate Social Responsibility: Economic

CSR2: Corporate Social Responsibility: Social

CSR3: Corporate Social Responsibility: Environmental

ETH: Ethics

TRU: Trustworthiness

PI: Purchase Intentions

LOY: Loyalty

ATB: Attitude toward brand

REP: Brand's reputation

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Introduction

Consumer impressions play an essential role in influencing purchase decisions and building brand loyalty. Many variables impact these opinions, including marketing methods, product quality, and, more recently, country-of-origin labels. Such labels act as cognitive shortcuts, helping consumers to make preliminary assessments of a brand's quality, dependability, and values (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). However, the influence of these labels is far from universal, since cultural and geographical variables frequently mitigate their effects.

This phenomenon is particularly pertinent for Chinese brands, which encounter distinct challenges in Western markets. While Chinese products are frequently associated with affordability and large-scale production, they often face skepticism regarding their quality and ethical standards (Zhang, Ma, & Morse, 2019). These perceptions stand in stark contrast to those associated with brands from countries like Japan or Ireland, which tend to evoke more positive impressions. For businesses aiming to succeed in international markets, understanding the role of country-of-origin information is indispensable.

Despite extensive study into the impacts of country-of-origin labels, little is known about their impact on Portuguese consumers. Portugal's distinct cultural and economic setting provides an invaluable prism through which to investigate consumer views regarding these branding and their relationship with corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions.

The research also stands out for its practical relevance, offering a detailed analysis of Portuguese consumers' perceptions of country-of-origin labels—an area still underexplored. By examining how these perceptions intersect with specific sectors, such as fashion and technology, and with corporate social responsibility initiatives, the research aims to contribute to more effective business strategies, particularly for brands facing challenges related to their national origin.

This study aims to explore how country-of-origin information influences Portuguese consumers' perceptions across multiple dimensions, including trustworthiness, purchase intentions, brand loyalty, attitudes toward the brand, brand reputation, business ethics, and the perceived effectiveness of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. By focusing on Portugal's unique cultural and economic context, the research seeks offer insights into the

interplay between country-of-origin labels and these critical consumer perception variables, particularly within the clothing and technology sectors.

Several key business questions guide this investigation:

- How do country-of-origin labels influence consumer perceptions of product quality and reliability?
- Does a mismatch between a brand's actual origin and its presented country label alter consumer perceptions?

To explore these questions, this dissertation employs an experimental design that manipulates country-of-origin information for brands within two product categories: clothing and technology. By isolating the effects of these labels, the study examines how they influence Portuguese consumers' perceptions. Additionally, the research delves into how CSR messages interact with country-of-origin labels to influence brand reputation and consumer purchasing decisions.

The first chapter contains a literature review on customer perceptions, country-of-origin impacts, and corporate social responsibility. The second chapter discusses the approach, which includes the experimental design and data collecting. The third chapter provides and examines the study findings, which examine the influence of country-of-origin labels and corporate social responsibility activities on customer attitudes and perceptions. Finally, the fourth chapter analyzes the importance of the findings, the study's shortcomings, and potential future research areas.

The findings from this research offer practical insights for international businesses, particularly those from emerging economies like China, as well as for policymakers and marketers committed to fostering fair competition and responsible business practices. The following chapters explore the theoretical background and methodology behind the research, share the key results, and reflect on their broader implications, highlighting opportunities for future exploration.

Literature review

Consumer perceptions

Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) define consumer perception as "the process by which consumers interpret and make sense of the information they receive about products, services, brands and companies".

As far as the perception process is concerned, according to Kotler & Armstrong (2018) we can divide it into three phases or stages:

- Selective selection - where consumers are exposed to large amounts of information, but only pay attention to part of it.
- Organization - which is the stage where consumers organize the information, creating processes of categorization, comparison and evaluation of the information received.
- Interpretation – it is the last stage of the process, in which consumers interpret the information they receive based on their experiences, values and beliefs.

On the other hand, Michael R. Solomon (2010) consider not three, but four phases:

- Attention - where consumers pay attention to the information being disseminated.
- Perception - organizing information takes place, which can involve categorizing, comparing and evaluating information.
- Memory - storing the information received.
- Decision making:

It is crucial to recognize that consumer perception is a dynamic process shaped by numerous situational and contextual elements. A customer's first impression can be influenced by the way businesses convey their messages, the aesthetics of products, the packaging used, and the setting in which the interaction occurs. As stated by Kotler and Keller (2016), sensory components like colors, sounds, and fragrances are crucial in this process because they forge emotional bonds that influence the perception and comprehension of information.

This emphasizes the necessity for businesses to create strategies that extend beyond mere product functionality, engaging the emotional and symbolic elements that influence consumer perception. In doing this, companies can forge stronger, more significant relationships with their audience and leave a lasting impact on their choices.

It is therefore clear that consumer perception is a complex process that influences consumer behavior, which is made up of several stages. The importance of companies understanding how consumers perceive their products is crucial to their success.

Consumer perceptions determinants

Regarding the factors we can define them in at least four categories: personal factors, social factors, cultural factors and marketing factors Schiffman and Kanuk (2010).

Personal factors include individual characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, income level, education and lifestyle. These factors can affect consumer preferences, priorities and behavior in various ways (Gajjar, 2013).

With regard of social factors, which are of great importance when it comes to consumer perception, they are also considered to play a key role. Social factors, including reference groups, family, peers, and social class, play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences and decisions. As highlighted by Burns and Bush (2000), informational influence comes from seeking advice from reference groups, while normative influence involves conforming to group expectations to gain approval. These influences guide consumer behavior, particularly in product choices and brand selection, and can vary across different cultural contexts.

Culture is also a crucial point in consumer perception. Cultural factors, including cultural values, norms, religion, and rituals, play an important role in consumer behavior. According to Jiao and Zhao (2023), in more individualistic cultures, consumers tend to be more independent and self-centered, prioritizing personal achievements and desires. In contrast, in collectivist cultures, consumers are more interdependent and group-oriented, placing greater importance on harmony and the needs of the group. Additionally, countries with higher levels of consumerism typically see consumers buying and discarding products more easily, whereas in countries with lower consumption levels, such behaviors are less pronounced

Finally, according to Stewart and Furse (2000), marketing factors such as price, product, and promotions play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions. For instance, the price of a product can influence the consumer's perception of its quality, with higher prices often being associated with better quality. Moreover, promotions are shown to enhance the likelihood of

consumers purchasing products, as they effectively increase the perceived value and urgency of buying.

Thus, it is evident that all these factors operate in an interconnected manner, shaping consumer perception and behavior. While personal factors highlight intrinsic characteristics, social, cultural, and marketing factors emphasize external and contextual influences that impact purchasing decisions. Companies must comprehend this interaction in order to create strategies that effectively address the demands and expectations of customers in marketplaces that are becoming more dynamic and diversified.

CSR definition

CSR has been studied for more than 60 years, and over time we can count more than 35 definitions of CSR in the existing literature. With regard of the first definitions of CSR we can consider Burns (1957) when he argued that companies have a social responsibility beyond profit or Bowen (1953) where he defined CSR as "the obligation of companies to make decisions and act in ways that promote the economic and social well-being of society as a whole".

One of the most important definitions of CSR was proposed by Carroll's Model in 1979. According to this model, the company's responsibilities are divided into four categories. Economic responsibility is the basis of CSR; companies need to be economically viable in order to be socially responsible. Legal responsibility is complying with all applicable laws and regulations. Ethical responsibility is acting fairly and equitably, even if it is not legally required. Finally, philanthropic responsibility is giving back to the communities where companies operate.

Mc Williams and Siegel (2001) go further, defining CSR as "when a company's actions go beyond its legal and economic requirements to promote social well-being". They also consider that CSR brings a competitive advantage to companies.

In recent years, CSR has become even more prominent in the academic world. Perhaps one of the most recent definitions of CSR is that of Aguinis and Glavas (2012) who defined it as the set of policies and actions of organizations aimed at meeting the expectations of stakeholders, including the social, economic and environmental needs of society.

There are several existing definitions. Therefore, for this research we will consider the definition adopted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, which is part of the United Nations, defining it as "a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders".

Consumer perceptions and CSR

The importance of understanding consumer perceptions of CSR in business is due to the fact that they can influence consumer purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and willingness to pay. It is worth noting that in developed societies there is also a growing awareness of social and environmental issues, increasingly present in the population, with this issue increasingly playing a decisive role in the success of companies (Wekesa, 2024).

Brown and Dacin (1997) were among the first to investigate this issue, finding that the associations a consumer has with a particular company influence their response to that company's products.

There are several factors that can influence the perceptions that a consumer has about the CSR of a given company. Hustvedt and Kang (2013) consider that companies should not only carefully consider the type of CSR that is perceived by consumers but should also focus on CSR activities that are sincere, aligned with their core business and that have a positive impact on the society, communicating them in a clear and transparent way.

Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) argue that consumers' perceptions of a company's CSR can have a significant impact on their evaluation of the company and can even lead to a halo effect. The halo effect occurs when a general impression is formed based on a single characteristic of something or someone Thorndike (1920). Thus Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) state that consumers who perceive a company as socially responsible are more likely to evaluate the products positively; pay more for the products; be more loyal and recommend the products to others.

On the other hand, this leads to consumers tending to generalize their perceptions of a company's CSR actions to other areas of the company's performance, even when they have little

or no information about these areas, which Smith, Read, and López-Rodríguez (2010) called the CSR Halo Effect.

Adding to this, the integration of CSR into a company's strategy goes beyond simply meeting consumer expectations—it is increasingly becoming a competitive advantage. Companies that effectively incorporate CSR into their business model not only build trust and credibility but also differentiate themselves in the marketplace. As consumer awareness continues to evolve, businesses that fail to address social and environmental concerns risk losing relevance, whereas those that embrace CSR as a core value can foster deeper connections with their audience and achieve long-term success.

China and CSR

The Western view of CSR in China remains complex, with issues like transparency and corporate governance fuelling skepticism about China's commitment to CSR (Zhang, Ma, & Morse, 2019). However, studies suggest that CSR in China is evolving, with notable growth driven by both governmental regulations and the increasing need for sustainability (Chang, He, & Wang, 2021).

Dr. Gow's analysis highlights the unique nature of CSR in China, shaped by the country's political and economic context. Unlike the traditional capitalist debates on CSR, where the focus is on profit and stakeholder interests, in China, CSR is largely about aligning corporate actions with national development goals. Gow traces the evolution of CSR in China through four phases: the Revolutionary Phase (1921-1949), the Maoist Phase (1949-1976), the Reform and Opening Phase (1978-2012), and the New Era (2012-present) under Xi Jinping. In the current phase, CSR is integrated into a "corporate state apparatus," with businesses expected to align with state objectives. Corporate messaging often mirrors state propaganda, with the Communist Party's social agenda reflected in advertising and other business practices. This contrasts with the Western view of CSR as voluntary; in China, it is closely tied to fulfilling national goals (O'Brien, 2024).

In fact, this is a hot topic not only in China but also worldwide. China's rapid economic growth has increasingly tied the corporate sector to environmental and social responsibilities, reflecting both challenges and opportunities in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). As one of the world's largest economies, China is pushing companies to align with national development

goals and sustainability frameworks. Businesses are now expected to contribute not only to the economy but also to societal and environmental well-being, a shift toward more strategic CSR that aligns with China's broader goals for sustainable growth (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Importantly, these changes in China's CSR landscape may be reshaping global perceptions. As China's approach to CSR becomes more aligned with international sustainability goals, it could help mitigate negative stereotypes, fostering a more positive image of Chinese companies and their role in global CSR initiatives. This shift could lead to a broader acceptance of China's corporate sector as an active player in addressing global social and environmental issues.

Hypothesis Development and Conceptual Framework

In this study we propose to analyse the effect country labels on the perceptions of Portuguese consumers. We are interested in studying the effect of a Chinese country label. Country labels play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions, often triggering associations with quality, reliability, and cultural or industrial stereotypes. For example, a Chinese label might evoke ideas of affordability, mass production, or even concerns about business ethics, all of which can influence how consumers view a brand.

This study delves into the impact of country labels on consumer attitudes, exploring how they affect trustworthiness, purchase intentions, loyalty, and overall brand reputation. By comparing perceptions of Chinese labels with those of non-Chinese labels, such as Japan or Ireland, the research seeks to uncover the extent to which these associations guide consumer evaluations and decision-making processes.

We will manipulate three independent variables: product type/market (clothing and technology), country of origin (Chinese and non-Chinese), and brand identity, using a set of four brands (Table 1). Importantly, to test whether the observed effects are specifically due to the country label and not to the brand itself, a mismatch condition was added, where only the country-of-origin information for the brands was swapped, while all other attributes remained constant.

Table 1. Brands used in country by product in the match condition.

		Country	
		Chinese	Non-Chinese
Product	Clothing	Shein	Primark
	Technology	Huawei	Sony

To measure consumer perceptions, we use several dependent variables: trustworthiness (TRU), purchase intentions (PI), brand reputation (REP), loyalty (LOY), attitude toward the brand (ATB), business ethics (ETH), and corporate social responsibility (CSR1, CSR2, CSR3). These variables encompass key dimensions of consumer evaluation. Trustworthiness and reputation are vital for building strong consumer relationships, while purchase intentions and loyalty

reflect immediate and long-term behavioral outcomes. Attitude toward the brand provides a holistic view of consumer sentiment, shaped by past experiences and emotional connections. Additionally, business ethics and CSR address the growing importance of social and environmental responsibility in shaping consumer attitudes.

Hypothesis

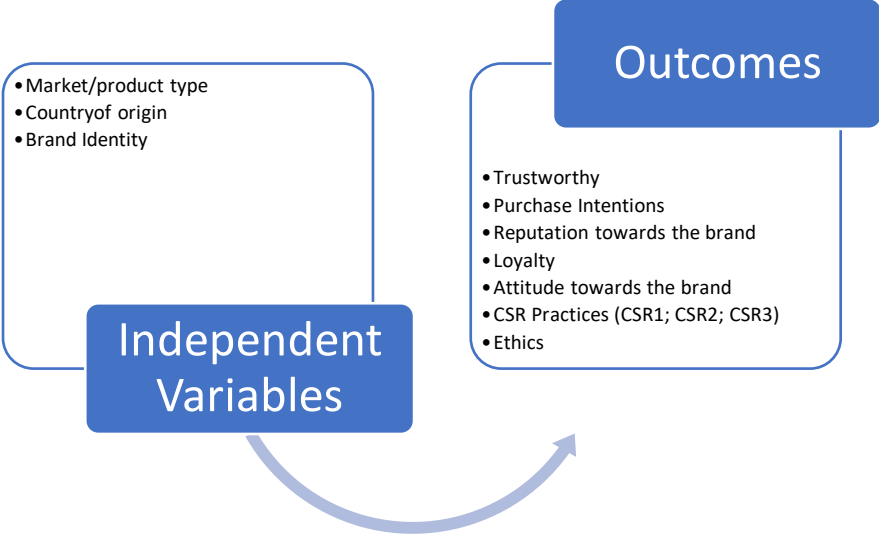
- **H1:** Portuguese consumers will perceive non-Chinese brands (Sony, Primark) more favorably than Chinese brands (Huawei, Shein) when the country label matches the brand's actual origin (Match condition).
- **H2:** In the mismatch condition, where brands are incorrectly labelled, Portuguese consumers will still have less favorable perceptions of mislabelled Chinese brands (Primark, Sony) compared to mislabelled non-Chinese brands (Shein, Huawei).

This study isolates the effect of country-of-origin information by maintaining all other factors—such as CSR practices, product characteristics, and brand identity—constant. This approach allows for a precise evaluation of how the accuracy of country labels influences consumer perceptions, including trustworthiness, purchase intentions, and overall brand evaluation.

We consider three independent variables as moderators to explore their influence on consumer perceptions:

1. **Market/Product:** This variable compares two distinct sectors: technology (Huawei and Sony) and clothing (Shein and Primark). The sector influences consumer expectations—technology is often judged based on innovation and quality, while clothing is assessed by affordability, style, and accessibility.
2. **Country of Origin:** This variable contrasts Chinese brands (Huawei and Shein) with non-Chinese brands (Sony and Primark). Country of origin shapes consumer perceptions by evoking associations related to quality, trust, and reliability. This study seeks to identify how a brand's nationality affects consumer evaluations and whether noticeable differences exist between perceptions of Chinese and non-Chinese brands.
3. **Brand Identity:** A brand's identity is central to consumer perceptions. Strong branding fosters trust, loyalty, and emotional connections, significantly influencing product evaluations. The selected brands—Huawei, Sony, Shein, and Primark—were chosen for their global presence and varied market positions, providing a robust basis for analysis.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the experimental design.



Methodology

Sample

Since the goal of the study is to comprehend Portuguese consumers perceptions and responses to Chinese and non-Chinese brands, the target sample will consist of all customers who reside in Portugal and are older than eighteen.

The sample consisted of a total of 90 people, of which 44.4% were male and 55.56% were female. Regarding the age of the sample, the age groups with the highest participation rates were those between 18 and 24 years old (40%) and between 25 and 34 years old (26.67%). A substantial proportion of individuals have advanced degrees, such as an undergraduate degree (40%).

Study Design

The questionnaire was designed using Qualtrics and distributed through social media and email from April 1st to May 10th, 2022. It was based on validated scales and used a combination of Likert and semantic differential scales. It was designed in Portuguese, as the target sample consisted exclusively of Portuguese consumers in order to analyze its perceptions.

Procedure

Participants were invited to participate through social media and email outreach, ensuring a broad reach to potential respondents. The invitation emphasized the academic purpose of the study and assured confidentiality to encourage honest participation. After providing informed consent, participants accessed the survey online and were guided through a structured set of questions designed to evaluate their perceptions based on predefined scenarios.

The survey was structured into four sections, each designed to examine consumer perceptions and behaviors. The first section gathered socio-demographic information, such as participants' place of residence, gender, age, and education level.

The second section focused on assessing product relevance by evaluating participants' interest in the product presented. This step aimed to determine whether the participant would consider purchasing the product, serving as a filter to decide if their subsequent responses were valid for inclusion in the analysis.

In the third section, participants were randomly assigned to one of eight scenarios. Each scenario featured a product, a brand (Huawei, Sony, Shein, or Primark), and a country of origin.

Finally, the fourth section evaluated participants' reactions to the products and brands presented in their respective scenarios. Several key dimensions were assessed, including trustworthiness, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, loyalty, brand reputation, and perceptions of ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Participant Characterization

The study started with the participant characterization. This part of the survey began with an introduction to the study and a consent form, ensuring participants agreed to the use of the information they provided. A filter question was then included to select participants who were residing in Portugal and actively engaging with the Portuguese market at the time of the survey. Individuals who did not meet these criteria were redirected to the end of the survey.

Subsequently, socio-demographic questions were presented to collect key participant information, including gender, age, and education level. These questions were essential for understanding the profile and characteristics of the participants, providing context for the analysis.

Product Relevance

The study followed with a section aimed to assess the significance of the product in a consumer's purchase decision. To achieve this, the "Product Relevance" scale was employed, which utilizes seven-point Likert-type items to measure the degree to which consumers prioritize a product's brand when making a purchase. The questions focused on the perceived importance of the product in purchasing decisions, providing insights into the factors that influence consumer behavior.

Stimuli

Participants were asked to evaluate one of four brands: Huawei (a technology brand from China), Sony (a technology brand from Japan), Shein (a clothing brand from China), or Primark (a clothing brand from Ireland). Each participant assessed only one brand. The study involved eight distinct scenarios, divided into four scenarios for technology products (mobile phones) and four scenarios for clothing products (t-shirts). Within each product category, two scenarios provided accurate information about the brand and its correct country of origin (Match), while the other two scenarios presented incorrect information about the brand's country of origin (Unmatch).

All participants viewed the same core information about the product, including the brand (Huawei, Sony, Shein, or Primark), the country of origin (China, Japan, or Ireland), and the company's CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and ethical practices. The only variable element across scenarios was the country of origin.

The CSR and ethical practices information highlighted four key aspects: the company's use of ecological resources to reduce its environmental impact, its efforts to promote a fair, balanced, and inclusive workplace, its contributions to society through funding universities, museums, and charitable programs, and its adherence to high ethical standards through a transparent and values-driven corporate structure.

These scenarios were created to explore how the match or mismatch between the declared country of origin and the actual country of origin of the brand influences consumer evaluation. All participants were shown a unique combination of information about the product, the brand, the country of origin, and CSR practices, allowing for an assessment of whether the country factor is determinant in brand perception, while also exploring how factors such as sustainability, diversity, community engagement, and corporate ethics shape purchasing decisions.

Consumer Perception

Following the presentation of the product and its details, participants were asked to evaluate the product across multiple dimensions, including trustworthiness, attitude, purchase intention, loyalty, reputation, ethics, and CSR perception. These constructs were measured using validated scales and included questions about these variables (Table 2).

Attitude toward the brand (ATB) was assessed through six items created from the scale established by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008). This variable assesses an individual's overall judgment of a particular business organization. Respondents were requested to indicate their degree of agreement on a seven-point scale for each of the six items.

Trustworthiness (TRU) was measured using a validated three-item scale adapted from Kirmani et al. (2017). Participants rated their agreement with statements about the company's honesty and integrity on a seven-point Likert scale.

Purchase intentions (PI) were measured using a single-item, 7-point Likert scale. Participants were asked, "Would you buy something from this company?". This direct approach aligns with established research methodologies by Spears & Singh (2004) and Hauser (1986).

Loyalty (LOY) was assessed using a seven-item Likert scale adapted from Altaf et al. (2017). Participants rated their agreement with statements on a 7-point scale. This approach aligns with established research on brand loyalty (Altaf et al., 2017).

Brand Reputation (REP) was measured using a multi-item scale adapted from Walsh and Beatty (2007). Participants rated their agreement with statements such as 'Is concerned about its customers' (customer orientation), 'Seems to be a good company to work for' (employer reputation), 'Tends to outperform competitors' and 'Seems to have a clear vision of the future' (financial strength), and 'Seems to be environmentally responsible' and 'Appears to support good causes' (social and environmental responsibility) on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. This scale assessed perceptions of the company's customer orientation, employer reputation, financial strength, and social responsibility.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR1, CSR2, CSR3) perception was measured using a multi-item scale adapted from previous research by Salmones et al. (2005) and Mohr and Webb (2005). Participants rated their agreement with statements related to the company's economic, philanthropic, and environmental responsibilities on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from

"Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." For example, participants were asked to assess the company's commitment to obtaining maximum long-term success, its efforts to reduce pollution, and its involvement in social initiatives.

Business Ethics (ETH) perception was measured using a multi-item Likert scale adapted from Brunk (2012). Participants rated their agreement with statements such as "This company always adheres to the law" on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This scale assessed participants' perceptions of the company's moral behavior and commitment to ethical practices.

Results

Overall perceptions about the products

All variables were assessed on a scale from 1 to 7, with 4 serving as the midpoint. On average, respondents had a positive perception of the companies, giving high scores to variables such as "Attitude towards brand", "Trustworthiness", "Brand's reputation", and "Corporate Social Responsibility: Economic" (CSR1). The analysis of the means for the outcomes indicates that the "Attitude towards brand" variable has the highest average (4.37), reflecting a favorable attitude among consumers towards the brand. In contrast, "Loyalty" shows the lowest average (3.23), suggesting that despite the brand's positive image, consumers are not sufficiently committed or satisfied to become loyal. Among the determinants, CSR1 stands out with the highest average (5.67), demonstrating a strong appreciation for the company's social responsibility initiatives, while "Corporate Social Responsibility: Environmental" (CSR3) presents the lowest average (3.99), indicating a lesser perception of this specific area. Overall, respondents exhibited a positive perception of the companies, with high scores on variables such as brand attitude, trustworthiness, and reputation. However, the "Loyalty" variable not only had the lowest average but also reflected a negative perception.

The Pearson Correlation analysis revealed several significant relationships between the variables examined. There was a very strong positive correlation between "Attitude towards brand" and "Trustworthiness", suggesting that respondents who had a favourable attitude towards the brand were also likely to perceive it as trustworthy, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .88$ and a p-value of less than .001, confirming the statistical significance of this relationship.

Moreover, the results determined a high positive correlation between "Attitude towards brand" and "Brand reputation" ($r = .81$, $p < .001$). This means that consumers who rated their attitude towards the brand as positive also rated the brand as having a good reputation. In the same approach, "Trustworthiness" and "Loyalty" had a positive correlation that was rather moderate ($r = .62$, $p < .001$) meaning awareness of the brand's trustworthiness increased the chances of loyalty to it for the respondents.

Further the analysis provided evidence of yet another strong positive correlation between "Attitude towards brand" and CSR1 ($r = .85$, $p < .001$), suggesting that people who appreciated

the social responsibility of the company were more likely to have a positive attitude to the brand. In contrast, moderate correlation was noted between 'Loyalty' and CSR3 ($r = .57, p < .01$) meaning that beliefs advanced with regard of the responsibility for the environment had lower effects on loyalty than other beliefs tested in this study

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation of all Variables.

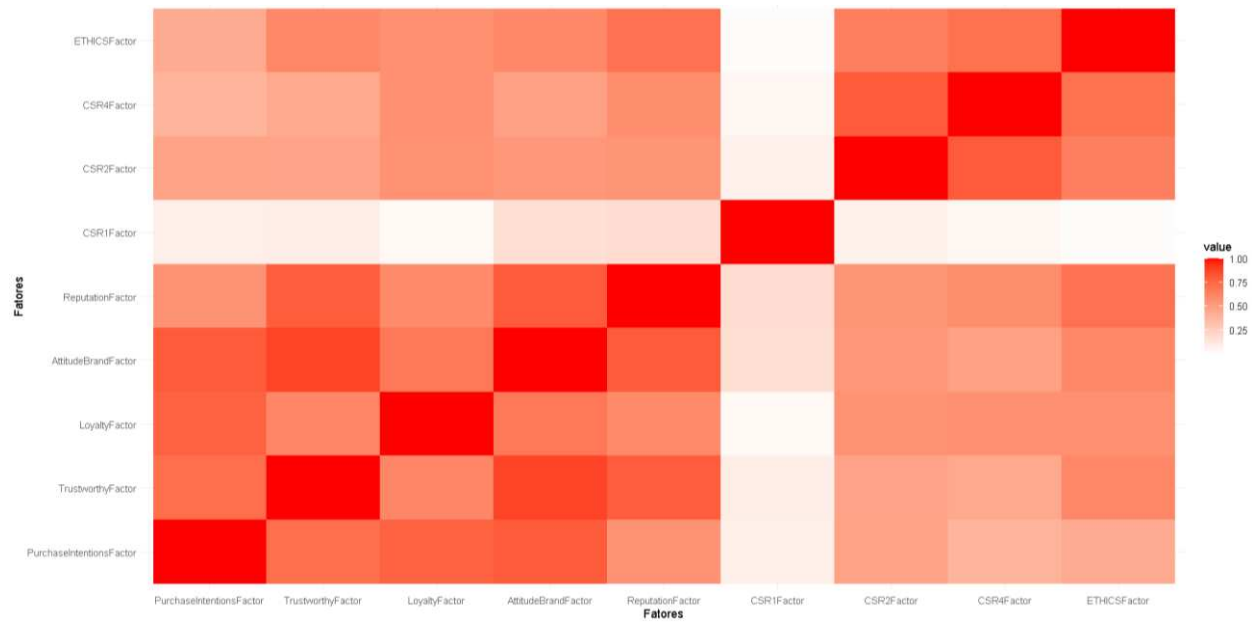
VARIABLE	MEAN	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1. TRU	4.25	1.27	1								
2. ATB	4.37	1.39	0.88***	1							
3. PI	4.09	1.44	0.77***	0.79***	1						
4. LOY	3.23	1.56	0.62***	0.61***	0.77***	1					
5. REP	4.34	1.16	0.79***	0.81***	0.55***	0.59***	1				
6. ETHICS	4.22	1.17	0.60***	0.60***	0.43***	0.57***	0.71***	1			
7. CSR1	5.67	1.02	0.09	0.28	0.85***	0.04	0.18*	0.013	1		
8. CSR2	4.12	1.24	0.47***	0.52***	0.47***	0.56***	0.54***	0.64***	0.075	1	
9. CSR3	3.99	1.23	0.44***	0.48***	0.39**	0.57***	0.58***	0.71***	0.04	0.80***	1

Note:

SD - Standard Deviation

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Figure 2. Correlation heatmap.



The effect of country on brand perceptions

Nine ANOVAs, one for each depended variable (Trustworthy; Attitude towards Brand; Purchase Intentions; Loyalty; Reputation towards Brand; Ethics; and 3 dimensions of CSR – economic, social and environmental responsibility) were conducted to examine the effects of **Country** (China, Ireland, Japan), **Brand** (Huawei, Shein, Primark, Sony), and **Product** (Technology, Cloth) on five outcome variables, with a particular focus on the **Match** vs. **Mismatch** factor.

By examining different types of products and brands, we controlled for the effect of these factors on the effect of country of origin. By using a match/mismatch factor manipulation, we controlled whether the effect of country of origin is consistent, regardless of whether the country-of-origin information is correct or not. This allowed us to isolate the specific impact of country of origin on consumer perceptions, allowing for a clearer understanding of its influence.

Table 3. F-values for the ANOVA Analysis.

GENERAL	TRU	ATB	PI	LOY	REP	ETH	CSR1	CSR2	CSR3
COUNTRY	6.26**	6.59**	4.37*	6.48**	6.96**	3.05	0.76	7.70**	2.01
PRODUCT	6.61*	10.17**	1.44	1.54	11.56**	3	0.36	5.02*	0.21
BRAND	5.01**	6.20***	1.19	1.57	5.90**	1.69	0.50	2.82*	0.85
MATCH X BRAND	1.85	1.96	2.24	3.86*	3.01*	2.15	0.16	2.89*	2.31

Note:

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Overall, the results of the ANOVA indicated several main effects of product, country, and brand on consumer perceptions, particularly in relation to “Trustworthiness” and “Brand’s reputation.”

In more detail, **Country** had significant effects on all variables, particularly on “Brand’s reputation” ($F = 6.96$), “Loyalty” ($F = 6.48$), “Attitude” ($F = 59$), “Trustworthiness” ($F = 6.26$), and “Corporate Social Responsibility: Social” ($F = 7.70$), highlighting the importance of cultural context.

The **Product** category was significant for “Trustworthiness” ($F = 6.61$), “Attitude towards brand” ($F = 10.17$), “Brand’s reputation” ($F = 11.56$), and “Corporate Social Responsibility: Social” ($F = 5.02$), suggesting that the type of product influences these perceptions.

Brand also influenced “Attitude” ($F = 6.2$) and “Brand’s reputation” ($F = 5.90$), showing brand-specific effects. Finally, the **Match x Brand** interaction was significant for “Loyalty” ($F = 3.87$), “Brand’s reputation” ($F = 3.01$), and “Corporate Social Responsibility: Social” ($F = 2.89$), suggesting that the match between a brand and its country of origin can enhance these perceptions.

The condition country of origin has the most influence

The results of the Nine ANOVA's analysis indicate that the country of origin has a significant impact on all nine outcome variables, namely "Trustworthiness", "Attitude towards brand", "Purchase intentions", "Loyalty", "Brand's reputation", and CSR2. This suggests that the country of origin plays a substantial role in shaping consumers' perceptions of brands. Japan exhibits a distinctive performance across all aspects, reflecting a more favourable perception of its brands in comparison to China and Ireland.

About the variable of "Trustworthiness", Japan is in a position of clear superiority, with an average score of 4.95 and a low standard deviation ($SD = 1.3$), which indicates a high degree of reliability in the trust placed in its brands. About "Attitude towards brand", Japan is in a superior position, with an average score of 5.14 while China (4.15) and Ireland (3.89) evince less favourable views.

Regarding "Purchase intentions," Japan is the clear frontrunner, with a score of 4.8, indicating that consumers are more inclined to purchase Japanese products than those from China (3.77) and Ireland (3.87). Regarding "Loyalty", Japan once again achieves the highest score (4.1), indicating greater consumer allegiance. In contrast, China (2.8) and Ireland (3.01) exhibit notably lower levels of loyalty.

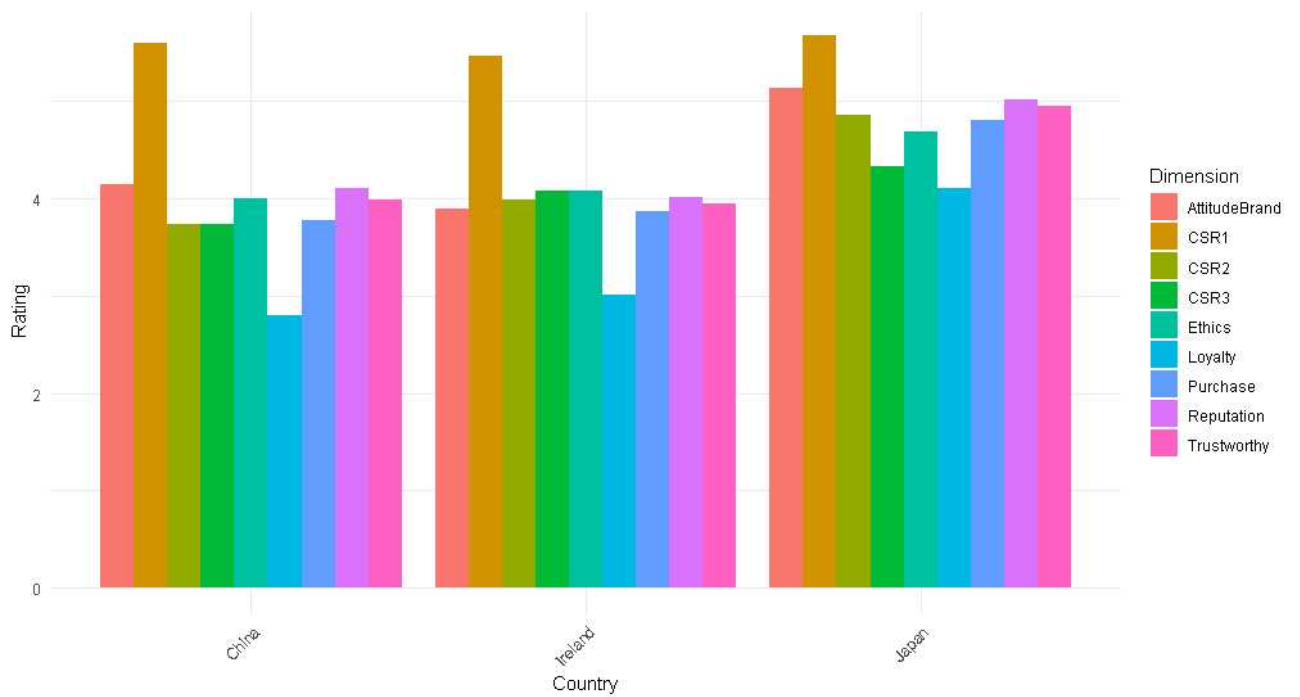
Regarding "Brand's reputation", Japan occupies the leading position, with an average score of 5.013, thereby reinforcing the favourable perception of Japanese businesses. Furthermore, Japan demonstrates a notable proficiency specifically in CSR2, achieving the highest score of 4.86, which reflects strong consumer perceptions of Japanese brands in this dimension of corporate social responsibility. In contrast, the lowest score for CSR2 was observed for China (3.74), indicating less favourable views. Ireland presents a more moderate and consistent score, yet still lower than Japan. These findings suggest that cultural factors and the reputation of business practices in different countries significantly influence consumers' perceptions of brands in terms of CSR2.

Table 4. Averages (and standard deviations) per country across all dependent variables.

COUNTRY	TRU	ATB	PI	LOY	REP
CHINA	3.98 (1.02)	4.15 (1.15)	3.77 (1.31)	2.8 (1.4)	4.1 (1.08)
IRELAND	3.95 (1.37)	3.89 (1.49)	3.87 (1.46)	3.01 (1.33)	4.01 (1.12)
JAPAN	4.95 (1.30)	5.14 (1.37)	4.8 (1.44)	4.1 (1.68)	5.01 (1.06)

COUNTRY	ETH	CSR1	CSR2	CSR3
CHINA	4 (1.19)	5.6 (1.07)	3.74 (1.2)	3.73 (1.2)
IRELAND	4.08 (1.2)	5.46 (0.98)	3.98 (1.27)	4.07 (1.2)
JAPAN	4.68 (1.02)	5.68 (1.02)	4.86 (0.97)	4.33 (1.25)

Figure 2. Averages of Variables: Condition Country.



The condition product had some effects on variables

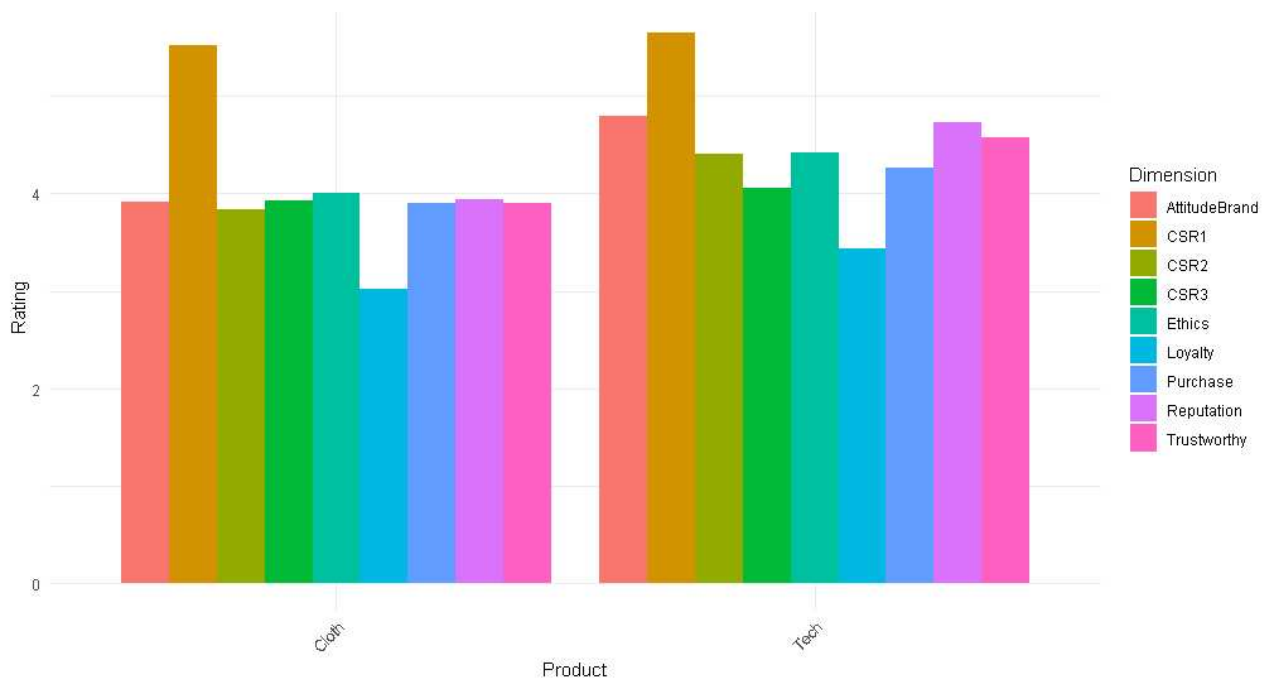
According to the results of the ANOVA, product type had a significant effect on four of the nine dependent variables. Technology items are uniformly rated superior to clothing in every aspect. Regarding “Trustworthiness”, technology items receive an average rating of 4.58 and a standard deviation of 1.24, signifying a consistently elevated level of trust, whereas clothing products have a reduced trust score of 3.9. The “Attitude towards brand” is also influenced by technology products, averaging 4.8, whereas apparel trails at 3.91, suggesting a generally more positive view of technology brands. We can see that technology products enjoy a better “Brand’s reputation”, achieving an average score of 4.73, while apparel scores 3.94, highlighting the favorable perception linked to technology items. Additionally, technology products score 4.4 on “CSR2” outperforming clothing products, which score 3.83 on the same dimension, further indicating a more positive perception of technology in terms of corporate social responsibility.

Table 5. Averages (and standard deviations) per type of product across all dependent variables.

PRODUCT	TRU	ATB	PI	LOY	REP
TECH	4.58 (1.24)	4.8 (1.2)	4.26 (1.39)	3.43 (1.6)	4.73 (1.03)
CLOTH	3.9 (1.21)	3.91 (1.43)	3.9 (1.48)	3.02 (1.49)	3.94 (1.15)

PRODUCT	ETH	CSR1	CSR2	CSR3
TECH	4.42 (1.07)	5.65 (1.04)	4.4 (1.06)	4.05 (1.17)
CLOTH	4 (1.24)	5.52 (1.01)	3.83 (1.35)	3.93 (1.3)

Figure 3. Average of Variables: Condition Product.



Brand had some effects on variables

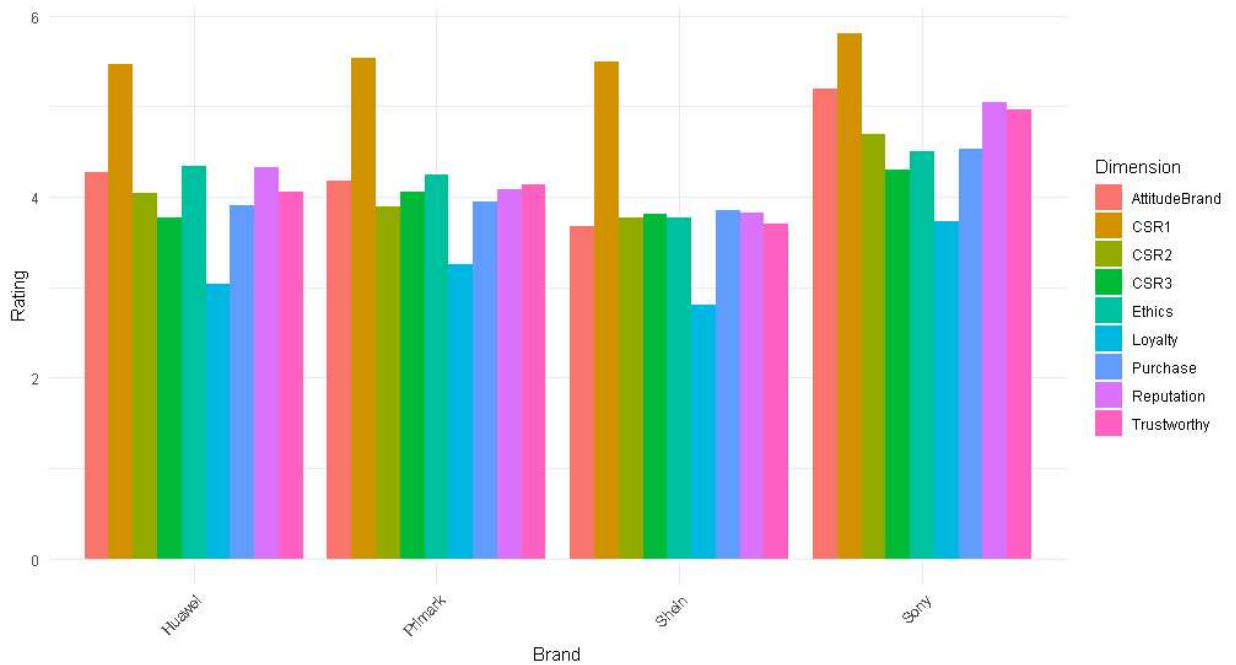
According to the results of the ANOVA, the brand had a significant effect on four dependent variables. In terms of “Trustworthiness”, Sony ranks highest with an average score of 4.97 and a standard deviation of 1.15, reflecting a strong level of trust with moderate reliability. Primark has a trust score of 4.13, followed by Huawei at 4.06, while Shein ranks the lowest with a score of 3.7, indicating reduced perceived trustworthiness. In terms of “Attitude towards brand”, Sony again achieves the highest score of 5.2, indicating the most positive consumer perception. Huawei and Primark scored similarly, with 4.275 and 4.18, respectively, while Shein recorded the lowest attitude score of 3.67, suggesting a less positive brand perception. Regarding “Brand’s reputation”, Sony excels with the top score of 5.04, indicating a robust, favorable public perception. Huawei and Primark have similar scores of 4.32 and 4.079, whereas Shein has the lowest score at 3.82, suggesting a poorer overall reputation. Additionally, when considering CSR2, Sony has a high score of 4.7, followed by Huawei at 4.037. Primark scores 3.89, while Shein has the lowest CSR2 score at 3.77, further reflecting differences in consumers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility across brands.

Table 6. Averages (and standard deviations) per brand across all dependent variables.

BRAND	TRU	ATB	PI	LOY	REP
HUAWEI	4.06 (1.2)	4.275 (1.26)	3.91 (1.42)	3.04 (1.62)	4.32 (0.99)
SONY	4.97 (1.15)	5.2 (1)	4.53 (1.32)	3.73 (1.56)	5.04 (0.98)
PRIMARK	4.13 (0.89)	4.18 (1.24)	3.95 (1.33)	3.25 (1.42)	4.08 (1.12)
SHEIN	3.7 (1.44)	3.67 (1.57)	3.85 (1.64)	2.81 (1.56)	3.82 (1.19)

PRODUCT	ETH	CSR1	CSR2	CSR3
HUAWEI	4.34 (0.91)	5.47 (1.15)	4.04 (0.9)	3.77 (0.97)
SONY	4.5 (1.2)	5.8 (0.95)	4.7 (1.1)	4.3 (1.27)
PRIMARK	4.25 (1.08)	5.54 (1.17)	3.89 (1.41)	4.06 (1.26)
SHEIN	3.77 (1.36)	5.5 (0.87)	3.77 (1.33)	3.81 (1.36)

Figure 4. Average of Variables: Condition Brand.



A few effects of the interaction between Match and Brand

The ANOVA model revealed that the interaction between Match and Brand had a significant effect on the perception of “Loyalty”, “Brand’s reputation” and CSR2. Note that when examining the data regarding “Loyalty” and “Brand’s reputation”, we notice differences based on whether the brands are in a "match" or "mismatch" scenario. "Match" describes scenarios where the brand corresponds with its country of origin, while "mismatch" denotes instances where the brand does not correspond with its country of origin.

The results indicate that “Loyalty” is influenced by the match or mismatch of country and brand, with different patterns between technological and low-cost brands. For Sony, a technological brand, loyalty decreases when mismatched, with a score of 4.47 (SD = 1.4) in the match condition (Japan) versus 2.55 (SD = 1.01) in the mismatch condition (China). This suggests that aligning Sony with Japan significantly increases loyalty. Conversely, Huawei, another technology brand, shows the opposite pattern, with loyalty increasing under mismatch, reaching 3.5 (SD = 2) when labelled as Japanese compared to 2.57 (SD = 1.04) in the match condition (China).

For low-cost brands, the mismatch effect is less pronounced. Primark shows a slight increase in “Loyalty” in the mismatch condition (China), with a score of 3.3 (SD = 1.75) compared to 3.2 (SD = 1.14) in the match condition (Ireland). Shein maintains a similar level of “Loyalty” across conditions, scoring 2.79 (SD = 1.68) in the match condition (China) and 2.83 (SD = 1.51) in the mismatch condition (Ireland), indicating low and consistent loyalty regardless of country association.

Regarding “Brand’s Reputation”, Sony shows a consistent decline under mismatch, scoring 5.42 (SD = 1.4) in the matched (Japanese) condition compared to 4.43 (SD = 1.01) under mismatch (Chinese). Huawei, on the other hand, achieves a higher reputation when mismatched (4.37, SD = 1.25 as Japanese) than when matched (4.28, SD = 1.04 as Chinese). For low-cost brands, the mismatch effect is less clear. Primark's “Reputation” improves slightly from 3.87 (SD = 1.02, Ireland) to 4.32 (SD = 1.23, China). Similarly, Shein's “Reputation” improves slightly under mismatch, from 3.45 (SD = 1.08, China) to 4.15 (SD = 1.23, Ireland).

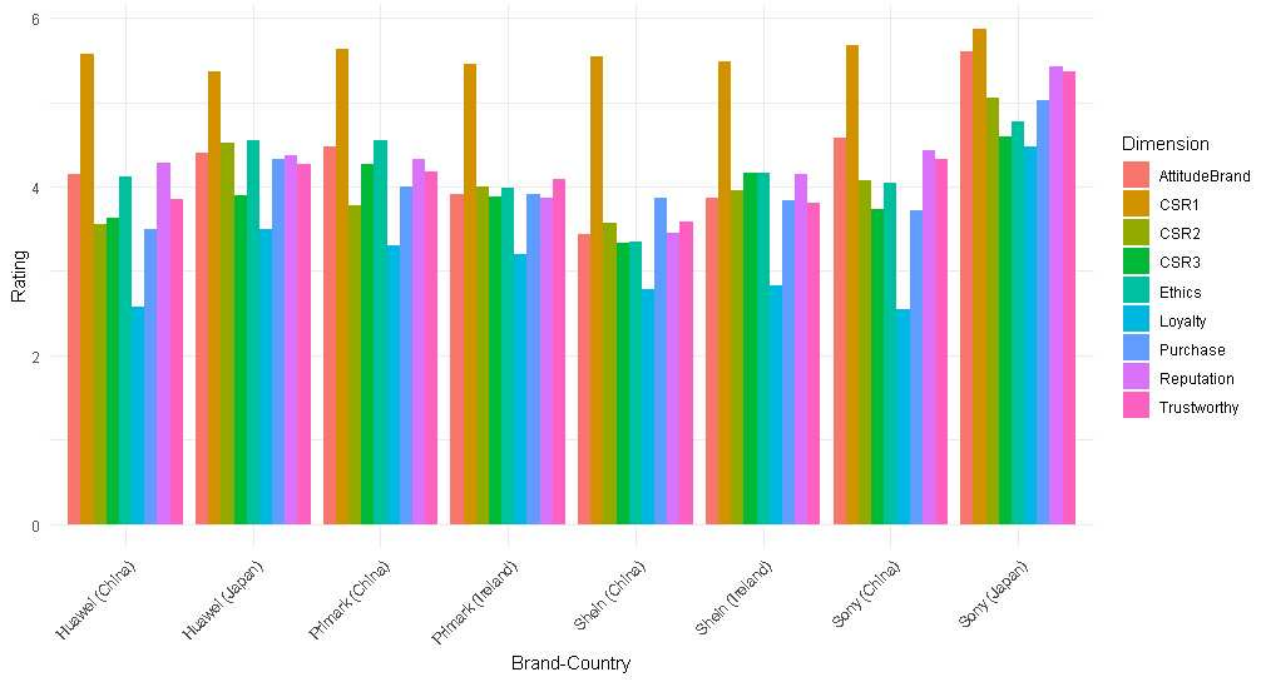
Finally, the CSR2 results reveal consistent patterns between match and mismatch scenarios, with variations based on the type of brand. For Sony, the score in the match scenario (Japan) is 5.06 (SD = 1.1) but decreases in the mismatch scenario (China) to 4.07 (SD = 0.83). In contrast, Huawei shows the opposite trend, with its score increasing from 3.55 (SD = 0.9) in the match scenario (China) to 4.52 (SD = 0.6) in the mismatch scenario (Japan). For low-cost brands, the effect is subtler; Primark shows a slight increase under mismatch, rising from 4.0 (SD = 1.09) in the match scenario (Ireland) to 3.77 (SD = 1.74) in the mismatch scenario (China), while Shein demonstrates a minor improvement, increasing from 3.57 (SD = 1.21) in the match scenario (China) to 3.96 (SD = 1.46) in the mismatch scenario (Ireland).

These findings suggest that for technology brands, country of origin alignment strengthens consumer perceptions. However, this effect appears to be weaker or absent for low-cost brands, where misalignment can enhance certain perceptions.

Table 6. Averages (and standard deviations) per condition (match x brand) across all dependent variables.

<u>MATCH</u>					
BRAND	TRU	ATB	PI	LOY	REP
HUAWEI (CHINA)	3.85 (0.57)	4.15 (0.8)	3.5 (1.15)	2.57 (1.04)	4.28 (0.71)
SONY (JAPAN)	5.37 (0.86)	5.6 (0.97)	5.03 (1.31)	4.47 (1.4)	5.42 (0.7)
PRIMARK (IRELAND)	4.09 (0.92)	3.91 (1.16)	3.91 (1.2)	3.2 (1.14)	3.87 (1.02)
SHEIN (CHINA)	3.59 (1.15)	3.44 (1.35)	3.86 (1.64)	2.79 (1.68)	3.45 (1.08)
<u>MISMATCH</u>					
BRAND	TRU	ATB	PI	LOY	REP
HUAWEI (JAPAN)	4.27 (1.6)	4.4 (1.63)	4.32 (1.6)	3.5 (2)	4.37 (1.25)
SONY (CHINA)	4.32 (1.3)	4.58 (0.75)	3.72 (0.91)	2.55 (1.01)	4.43 (1.08)
PRIMARK (CHINA)	4.17 (0.9)	4.48 (1.31)	4 (1.53)	3.3 (1.75)	4.32 (1.23)
SHEIN (IRELAND)	3.81 (1.71)	3.87 (1.8)	3.83 (1.71)	2.83 (1.51)	4.15 (1.23)
<u>MATCH</u>					
BRAND	ETH	CSR1	CSR2	CSR3	
HUAWEI (CHINA)	4.12 (0.78)	5.57 (1.11)	3.55 (0.9)	3.63 (0.88)	
SONY (JAPAN)	4.77 (1.04)	5.87 (0.84)	5.06 (1.1)	4.6 (1.31)	
PRIMARK (IRELAND)	3.98 (1.09)	5.45 (1.02)	4 (1.09)	3.88 (1.03)	
SHEIN (CHINA)	3.34 (1.3)	5.54 (0.79)	3.57 (1.21)	3.33 (1.26)	
<u>MISMATCH</u>					
BRAND	ETH	CSR1	CSR2	CSR3	
HUAWEI (JAPAN)	4.55 (1.02)	5.37 (1.24)	4.52 (0.6)	3.9 (1.08)	
SONY (CHINA)	4.05 (1.35)	5.67 (1.13)	4.07 (0.83)	3.73 (1.07)	
PRIMARK (CHINA)	4.55 (1.04)	5.63 (1.36)	3.77 (1.74)	4.27 (1.5)	
SHEIN (IRELAND)	4.17 (1.34)	5.48 (0.98)	3.96 (1.46)	4.25 (1.35)	

Figure 5. Averages of Variables: Condition Match x Brand.



Discussion

Overview

This research examines how Portuguese consumers perceive brands from China and elsewhere, focusing on the impact of the country of origin and whether it aligns with the brand. By looking at how cultural stereotypes and opinions on corporate social responsibility (CSR) affect trust, purchasing habits, and loyalty, the study offers valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer behavior.

The methodology used was an experimental study involving 90 participants who evaluated manipulated scenarios combining different brands, countries of origin, and sectors (technology and clothing). The results indicated that country of origin significantly influences consumer perceptions across all variables analyzed, such as trustworthiness, reputation, and loyalty. Congruence between the brand and its country of origin (Match) led to more positive perceptions for non-Chinese brands (Sony and Primark), while the opposite (Mismatch) reduced the depreciation of Chinese brands (Huawei and Shein).

Main Findings

The findings revealed notable differences between products, brands, and the effect of country of origin. Technology products, such as those by Sony and Huawei, were consistently rated more positively than clothing products, regardless of country of origin. This underscores the relevance of product category in shaping perceptions of quality and reliability. Sony emerged as the highest-rated brand across all dimensions, reinforcing the impact of a strong global reputation. In contrast, Shein received the lowest ratings, possibly due to its association with questionable production practices and low cost. Finally, the country of origin proved to be the most significant factor. Japanese brands (Sony) achieved the best results, while Chinese brands (Huawei and Shein) were penalized in Match conditions. Interestingly, the Mismatch condition mitigated the depreciation of Chinese brands, suggesting that dissociation from the country of origin alleviates negative stereotypes.

This phenomenon is supported by the data, which indicates that in Mismatch scenarios, the negative impact of cultural stereotypes on Chinese brands was reduced. Consumers appeared to rely more on objective attributes, such as design and functionality, rather than cultural biases, when evaluating these brands. For instance, in the Mismatch condition, slight improvements in trustworthiness, reputation, and loyalty were observed for Chinese brands compared to the Match condition. These findings suggest that removing explicit associations with the country of origin allows consumers to assess the product on its intrinsic qualities, mitigating the influence of stereotypes.

The results are driven by two primary factors: the impact of cultural stereotypes and the role of product categories.

Cultural stereotypes play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions. Japanese brands like Sony, widely associated with high quality, reliability, and innovation, scored highest across all metrics. This reflects the enduring influence of Japan's positive reputation as a global leader in technological excellence. In contrast, Chinese brands, such as Huawei and Shein, encountered negative biases linked to perceptions of mass production and ethical concerns. These stereotypes penalized Chinese brands in Match conditions but were alleviated in Mismatch scenarios, where dissociation from their country of origin allowed consumers to focus on other product positive attributes.

Product type also emerged as a critical factor. Technology brands, often judged by innovation and quality, outperformed clothing brands across all variables. This pattern highlights consumer expectations that are sector-specific, with technology being associated with higher standards of performance. The results further underscore the combined impact of product type and brand-country alignment, reinforcing the importance of context when analyzing consumer behavior.

The findings offer practical insights for companies looking to improve their global presence, especially those from countries with negative stereotypes. Focusing on transparency in CSR practices can help change consumer perceptions. For example, brands can showcase their contributions to environmental sustainability, ethical labor, and community engagement to counter biases and build trust.

Companies might also consider rebranding to distance themselves from negative country associations, especially when it harms their image. This is particularly important for tech companies like Huawei, where the focus could shift to design, innovation, and

functionality, rather than the country of origin. For clothing brands, promoting CSR efforts—like diversity or eco-friendly materials—can help combat stereotypes and enhance reputation.

It's also crucial to tailor strategies to specific sectors. In tech, emphasizing innovation and precision can boost consumer trust. Clothing brands, on the other hand, might benefit from highlighting ethical production and affordability. These focused approaches can help improve brand perception, fostering loyalty and a positive reputation in competitive markets.

Limitations and future studies

Despite the insightful findings, the study has limitations that need to be addressed:

- The Brand Reputation variable combined items from distinct factors—Customer Orientation, Good Employer, Financial Strength, and Social and Environmental Responsibility—into a single construct for analysis. This aggregation may have masked important differences between these factors. Analyzing these dimensions separately could provide a deeper understanding of their unique contributions to brand reputation.
- The experimental design was limited as this was a pilot study. Future research could incorporate more rigorous controls over variables such as consumers' familiarity with the brands and products presented.
- There is a risk of "faking good," where participants may have responded in ways aligned with perceived researcher expectations. Blinding strategies could be implemented in future studies to minimize this bias.
- The sample was restricted to Portuguese consumers, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Future studies could replicate the experiment in different countries to test the robustness of the findings.

These suggestions can enhance the understanding of how cultural stereotypes and incongruences between brand and country of origin influence consumer perceptions, contributing to more effective global marketing strategies.

Conclusions

This study underscores the significant role of country of origin as a central determinant in shaping consumer perceptions, highlighting its impact on trustworthiness, loyalty, brand reputation, purchase intentions and other perceptions. Brands associated with Japan consistently received more favorable evaluations across all dimensions, while Chinese brands faced challenges, particularly in match conditions. However, the findings also reveal that dissociating a brand from the negative stereotypes of its country of origin can mitigate unfavorable perceptions, allowing consumers to focus more on intrinsic product attributes such as design and functionality.

The study also demonstrates how product type exerts a moderating influence on perceptions. Irrespective of geographical location, technology products – which are frequently linked to innovation and quality – were rated higher than apparel items. This research suggests that customers' interpretations of country-of-origin labels are significantly influenced by the product category.

From a practical perspective, the present study underscores the necessity for companies hailing from countries frequently associated with unfavorable stereotypes to adopt proactive strategies with the aim of enhancing consumer perceptions. A focus on transparent communication regarding ethical practices, coupled with a prioritization of impactful corporate social responsibility initiatives, can assist brands in overcoming such biases. By emphasising intrinsic product attributes and aligning with consumer values, companies can build stronger connections with their audiences in global markets.

In terms of future research opportunities, the findings suggest the exploration of how these dynamics manifest in different cultural contexts. The replication of this study in diverse countries could assist in validating the findings, while a more profound examination of the emotional and cognitive factors that underpin consumer stereotypes would enhance our comprehension. Further studies might also investigate other product categories or industries to determine whether the observed patterns apply more broadly. These insights would be instrumental in refining global marketing strategies and supporting brands in navigating diverse and complex consumer landscapes.

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Appendix Index

Appendix I – Survey Portuguese Version

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Appendix III – Scale of Variables

Appendix I – Survey Portuguese Version

Q1. Introdução

Caro participante,

Este questionário é parte integrante da investigação para a minha dissertação do mestrado em Business, realizado na Universidade Católica Portuguesa de Lisboa. O objetivo desta pesquisa é avaliar como os consumidores do mercado português percecionam produtos da indústria da moda e tecnologia.

Os resultados obtidos serão utilizados apenas para fins académicos e as respostas são anónimas. Leia cada pergunta com atenção e selecione a resposta que você acredita que melhor se aplica. O preenchimento do questionário demora cerca de 5 a 10 minutos.

Ao clicar no botão abaixo, reconhece que a sua participação no estudo é voluntária, que tem 18 anos de idade e que está ciente de que pode optar por encerrar a sua participação no estudo a qualquer momento e por qualquer razão.

Obrigado pela sua participação nesta pesquisa. Qualquer dúvida contactar o email [s_pmrprazeres@ucp.pt](mailto:pmrprazeres@ucp.pt).

Q2. Atualmente vive em Portugal?

- Sim
- Não

Ao responder a este questionário, fica elegível a ganhar um vale-presente no valor de 10€ que poderá utilizar nas lojas FNAC. Para participar, basta partilhar o seu e-mail no final do questionário (o email será utilizado apenas para seleção e comunicação com o vencedor). Boa sorte!

Sócio-Demográficas

Q3. Qual é o seu género?

- Masculino
- Feminino
- Outro

Q4. Qual é a sua idade?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 ou mais

Q5. Qual o nível de escolaridade mais elevado que completou?

- Nenhum
- Ensino básico 1º ciclo
- Ensino básico 2º ciclo
- Ensino básico 3º ciclo
- Ensino secundário
- Ensino pós-secundário (Cursos de especialização tecnológico não superior)
- Curso técnico superior profissional
- Licenciatura
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento

Avaliação de Product Relevance

Q6. Estamos interessados em analisar o seu comportamento enquanto consumidor. Pense na sua experiência quando está para adquirir um produto novo.

De acordo com as suas experiências, diga qual é o seu nível de concordância com as seguintes frases:

- Ao fazer a seleção de um produto, não estou muito preocupado com o resultado de minha escolha.
- A decisão sobre qual o produto a comprar requer muita reflexão.
- Escolho os produtos que compro com muito cuidado.
- As marcas dos produtos que compro fazem muito pouca diferença para mim.



Instruções da Tarefa





Em seguida será apresentada a imagem de um produto. Subsequentemente será interrogado sobre questões referentes ao produto e marca. Na escolha não tenha em consideração o preço da peça ou a sua disponibilidade monetária.



Cenários

Tabela 7: Cenários mostrados de forma aleatória.

	Match	Unmatch
Huawei	<p>Cenário 1</p> <p>A Huawei é uma empresa global de infraestrutura de tecnologia de informação e comunicação (TIC). Fornece equipamentos de telecomunicações e vende dispositivos eletrônicos.</p> <p>Esta empresa destaca-se em quatro áreas-chave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utiliza recursos ecológicos nos seus produtos, reduzindo assim o impacto ambiental. - Promove ativamente a Diversidade e Inclusão, criando uma cultura de trabalho justa e equilibrada. - Financia universidades, museus, programas de solidariedade e caridade. 	<p>Cenário 2</p> <p>A Huawei é uma empresa global de infraestrutura de tecnologia de informação e comunicação (TIC). Fornece equipamentos de telecomunicações e vende dispositivos eletrônicos.</p> <p>Esta empresa destaca-se em quatro áreas-chave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utiliza recursos ecológicos nos seus produtos, reduzindo assim o impacto ambiental. - Promove ativamente a Diversidade e Inclusão, criando uma cultura de trabalho justa e equilibrada. - Financia universidades, museus, programas de solidariedade e caridade.

	<p>- Promove altos padrões éticos, possuindo uma estrutura corporativa transparente, concisa e alinhada com bons valores ético-morais.</p> 	<p>- Promove altos padrões éticos, possuindo uma estrutura corporativa transparente, concisa e alinhada com bons valores ético-morais.</p> 
<p>Sony</p>	<p>Cenário 3</p> <p>A Sony é fornecedora de produtos eletrônicos de áudio/vídeo e tecnologia de informação e comunicação (TIC). Fornece equipamentos de telecomunicações e vende dispositivos eletrônicos.</p> <p>Esta empresa destaca-se em quatro áreas-chave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utiliza recursos ecológicos nos seus produtos, reduzindo assim o impacto ambiental. - Promove ativamente a Diversidade e Inclusão, criando uma cultura de trabalho justa e equilibrada. - Financia universidades, museus, programas de solidariedade e caridade. - Promove altos padrões éticos, possuindo uma estrutura corporativa transparente, concisa e alinhada com bons valores ético-morais. 	<p>Cenário 4</p> <p>A Sony é fornecedora de produtos eletrônicos de áudio/vídeo e tecnologia de informação e comunicação (TIC). Fornece equipamentos de telecomunicações e vende dispositivos eletrônicos.</p> <p>Esta empresa destaca-se em quatro áreas-chave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utiliza recursos ecológicos nos seus produtos, reduzindo assim o impacto ambiental. - Promove ativamente a Diversidade e Inclusão, criando uma cultura de trabalho justa e equilibrada. - Financia universidades, museus, programas de solidariedade e caridade. - Promove altos padrões éticos, possuindo uma estrutura corporativa transparente, concisa e alinhada com bons valores ético-morais.

		
<p>Shein</p>	<p>A Shein é um comerciante online internacional de roupas e cosméticos especializada em fast fashion.</p> <p>Esta empresa destaca-se em quatro áreas-chave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utiliza recursos ecológicos nos seus produtos, reduzindo assim o impacto ambiental. - Promove ativamente a Diversidade e Inclusão, criando uma cultura de trabalho justa e equilibrada. - Financia universidades, museus, programas de solidariedade e caridade. - Promove altos padrões éticos, possuindo uma estrutura corporativa transparente, concisa e alinhada com bons valores ético-morais. 	<p>A Shein é um comerciante online internacional de roupas e cosméticos especializada em fast fashion.</p> <p>Esta empresa destaca-se em quatro áreas-chave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utiliza recursos ecológicos nos seus produtos, reduzindo assim o impacto ambiental. - Promove ativamente a Diversidade e Inclusão, criando uma cultura de trabalho justa e equilibrada. - Financia universidades, museus, programas de solidariedade e caridade. - Promove altos padrões éticos, possuindo uma estrutura corporativa transparente, concisa e alinhada com bons valores ético-morais.
		
<p>Primark</p>	<p>A Primark é um comerciante internacional de roupas e cosméticos especializada em fast</p>	<p>A Primark é um comerciante internacional de roupas e cosméticos especializada em fast</p>

	<p>fashion.</p> <p>Esta empresa destaca-se em quatro áreas-chave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utiliza recursos ecológicos nos seus produtos, reduzindo assim o impacto ambiental. - Promove ativamente a Diversidade e Inclusão, criando uma cultura de trabalho justa e equilibrada. - Financia universidades, museus, programas de solidariedade e caridade. - Promove altos padrões éticos, possuindo uma estrutura corporativa transparente, concisa e alinhada com bons valores ético-morais. 	<p>fashion.</p> <p>Esta empresa destaca-se em quatro áreas-chave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utiliza recursos ecológicos nos seus produtos, reduzindo assim o impacto ambiental. - Promove ativamente a Diversidade e Inclusão, criando uma cultura de trabalho justa e equilibrada. - Financia universidades, museus, programas de solidariedade e caridade. - Promove altos padrões éticos, possuindo uma estrutura corporativa transparente, concisa e alinhada com bons valores ético-morais. 
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Variáveis Dependentes

Q7. Expresse em que grau concorda com as seguintes afirmações. (Corporate Social Responsibility). Formato de resposta de sete pontos.

- Tenta obter o máximo lucro da sua atividade.
- Tenta obter o máximo sucesso a longo prazo.
- Tenta sempre melhorar o seu desempenho económico.
- Preocupa-se em respeitar e proteger o meio ambiente.
- Patrocina ou financia ativamente eventos sociais (desporto, música...).
- Direciona parte do seu orçamento para doações e causas sociais.
- Está preocupada em melhorar o bem-estar geral da sociedade.

- Faz todos os esforços para reduzir a poluição das suas fábricas.
- Usa materiais reciclados na fabricação de novos produtos.
- Tem programas de fábrica para economizar água e energia.

Q8. Expresse em que grau concorda com as seguintes afirmações. (Business Ethics).

Formato de resposta de sete pontos.

- Respeita as normas morais.
- Cumpre sempre a lei.
- Evita comportamentos prejudicial a todo custo.
- Toma uma decisão apenas após uma consideração cuidadosa das potenciais consequências positivas ou negativas para todos os envolvidos.

Q9. Descreva o que sente face à marca mencionada anteriormente. (Trustworthy).

Formato de resposta de sete pontos.

- Desonesta/Honesta.
- Insincera/Sincera.
- Manipuladora/Não Manipuladora.
- Não Confiável/Confiável.

Q10. Expresse o que sente em relação à marca citada anteriormente. (Attitude toward brand). Formato e resposta de sete pontos.

- Negativa/Positiva.
- Não Agradável/Agradável.
- Sem Valor/Com Valor.
- Má/Boa.
- Desfavorável/Favorável.
- Não Gosto/Gosto.

Q11. Qual a probabilidade de comprar o produto selecionado? (Purchase Intentions).

Formato de resposta de sete pontos.

- Nunca/Sempre.
- Definitivamente não pretendo comprar/Definitivamente pretendo.
- Interesse de compra muito alto/baixo.
- Provavelmente não/Provavelmente sim.

Q12. Expresse em que grau concorda com as seguintes afirmações. (Loyalty). Formato

de resposta de sete pontos.

- Se alguém me perguntar qual marca escolher, recomendo esta marca.
- Não escolherei nenhuma outra Marca se esta Marca estiver pronta para resolver os meus problemas.
- Considero-me leal a esta marca.
- Esta marca seria a minha primeira escolha no futuro para qualquer compra.

Q13. Expresse em que grau concorda com as seguintes afirmações. (Brand Reputation).

Formato de resposta de sete pontos.

- Está preocupada com seus clientes.
- Parece uma boa empresa para trabalhar.
- Parece reconhecer e aproveitar as oportunidades de mercado.
- Parece ter uma visão clara do seu futuro.
- Parece ser ambientalmente responsável.
- Parece suportar boas causas.

Appendix II – Survey English Version

Introduction

Q1. Dear participant,

This questionnaire is part of the research for my Master's dissertation in Business, carried out at the Catholic University of Portugal in Lisbon. The objective of this research is to evaluate how Portuguese consumers perceive products from the fashion and technology industry. The results obtained will be used for academic purposes only and the answers are anonymous. Please read each question carefully and select the answer that you believe best applies. Completing the questionnaire takes approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

By clicking on the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, that you are 18 years of age or older, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

Thank you for your participation in this research. For any questions, please contact spmprazer@ucp.pt.

Q2. Currently, do you live in Portugal?

- Yes
- No

By answering this questionnaire, you are eligible to win a €10 gift voucher that you can use at FNAC stores. To participate, simply share your email at the end of the questionnaire (the email will only be used for selection and communication with the winner). Good luck!

Socio-Demographic Questions

Q3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

- Other

Q4. What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 or over

Q5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- None
- Primary education (1st cycle)
- Primary education (2nd cycle)
- Primary education (3rd cycle)
- Secondary education
- Post-secondary education (non-higher technical specialization courses)
- Higher professional technical course
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate

Product Relevance Assessment

Q6. We are interested in analyzing your behavior as a consumer. Think about your experience when you are about to purchase a new product.

According to your experiences, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- When selecting a product, I am not very concerned about the outcome of my choice.
- The decision about which product to buy requires a lot of reflection.
- I choose the products I buy very carefully.
- The brands of the products I buy make very little difference to me.





Task Instructions



Next, you will be presented with an image of a product. Subsequently, you will be asked questions about the product and brand. When choosing, do not consider the price of the item or your monetary availability.

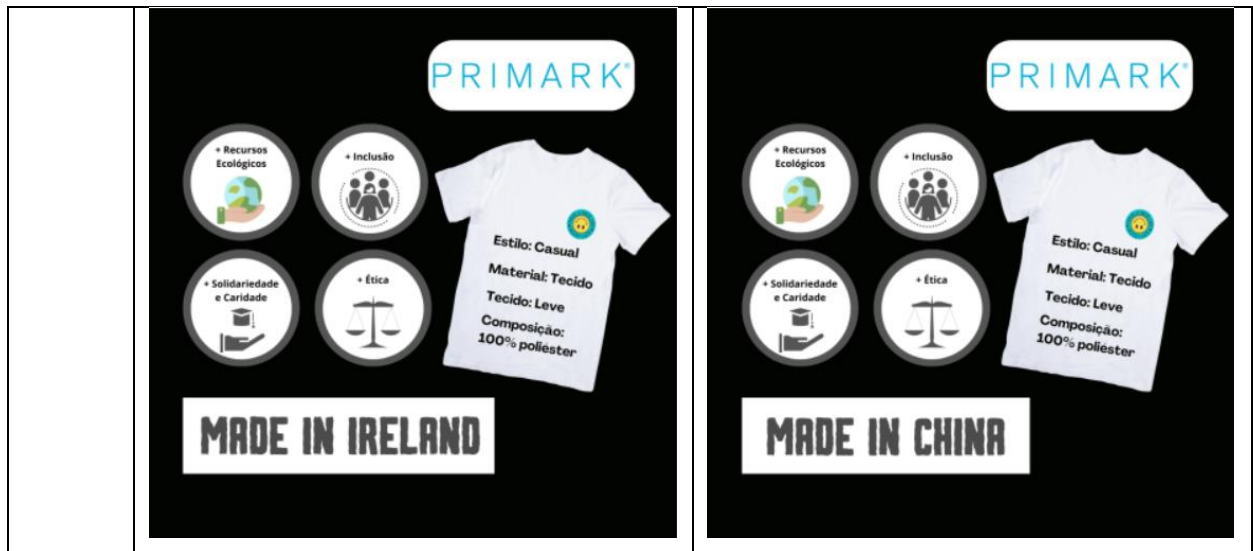
Scenarios

Table 7: Randomly assigned scenarios to participants

	Match	Unmatch
Huawei	<p>Scenario 1</p> <p>Huawei is a global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure. It supplies telecommunications equipment and sells electronic devices.</p> <p>The company stands out in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses eco-friendly resources in its products, thereby reducing its environmental impact. -Actively promotes Diversity and Inclusion, creating a fair and balanced work culture. -Funds universities, museums, and solidarity and charity programs. -Promotes high ethical standards, having a transparent, concise corporate structure aligned with sound ethical values. 	<p>Scenario 2</p> <p>Huawei is a global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure. It supplies telecommunications equipment and sells electronic devices.</p> <p>The company stands out in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses eco-friendly resources in its products, thereby reducing its environmental impact. -Actively promotes Diversity and Inclusion, creating a fair and balanced work culture. -Funds universities, museums, and solidarity and charity programs. -Promotes high ethical standards, having a transparent, concise corporate structure aligned with sound ethical values.

		
<p>Sony</p>	<p>Scenario 3</p> <p>Sony is a provider of audio/video electronic products and information and communications technology (ICT). It supplies telecommunications equipment and sells electronic devices.</p> <p>The company stands out in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses eco-friendly resources in its products, thereby reducing its environmental impact. -Actively promotes Diversity and Inclusion, creating a fair and balanced work culture. -Funds universities, museums, and solidarity and charity programs. -Promotes high ethical standards, having a transparent, concise corporate structure aligned with sound ethical values. 	<p>Scenario 4</p> <p>Sony is a provider of audio/video electronic products and information and communications technology (ICT). It supplies telecommunications equipment and sells electronic devices.</p> <p>The company stands out in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses eco-friendly resources in its products, thereby reducing its environmental impact. -Actively promotes Diversity and Inclusion, creating a fair and balanced work culture. -Funds universities, museums, and solidarity and charity programs. -Promotes high ethical standards, having a transparent, concise corporate structure aligned with sound ethical values. 

<p>Shein</p>	<p>Shein is an international online retailer of clothing and cosmetics specializing in fast fashion. This company stands out in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It utilizes eco-friendly resources in its products, thus reducing its environmental impact. -It actively promotes Diversity and Inclusion, creating a fair and balanced work culture. -It funds universities, museums, and solidarity and charity programs. -It promotes high ethical standards, possessing a transparent, concise corporate structure aligned with strong ethical values. 	<p>Shein is an international online retailer of clothing and cosmetics specializing in fast fashion. This company stands out in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It utilizes eco-friendly resources in its products, thus reducing its environmental impact. -It actively promotes Diversity and Inclusion, creating a fair and balanced work culture. -It funds universities, museums, and solidarity and charity programs. -It promotes high ethical standards, possessing a transparent, concise corporate structure aligned with strong ethical values. 
<p>Primark</p>	<p>Primark is an international retailer of clothing and cosmetics, specializing in fast fashion. This company stands out in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It uses eco-friendly resources in its products, thus reducing its environmental impact. -It actively promotes Diversity and Inclusion, creating a fair and balanced work culture. -It funds universities, museums, solidarity programs, and charities. -It upholds high ethical standards, with a corporate structure that is transparent, concise, and aligned with strong ethical values. 	<p>Primark is an international retailer of clothing and cosmetics, specializing in fast fashion. This company stands out in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It uses eco-friendly resources in its products, thus reducing its environmental impact. -It actively promotes Diversity and Inclusion, creating a fair and balanced work culture. -It funds universities, museums, solidarity programs, and charities. -It upholds high ethical standards, with a corporate structure that is transparent, concise, and aligned with strong ethical values.



Dependent Variables

Q7. Indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements. Corporate Social Responsibility. Response format: seven-point scale.

- Seeks to maximize the profit from its activities.
- Strives to achieve long-term success.
- Is always committed to improving its economic performance.
- Is concerned with respecting and protecting the environment.
- Actively sponsors or funds social events (sports, music, etc.).
- Allocates part of its budget to donations and social causes.
- Is committed to improving society's overall well-being.
- Makes every effort to reduce pollution from its factories.
- Uses recycled materials in the manufacture of new products.
- Implements factory programs to save water and energy.

Q8. Indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements. Business Ethics. Response format: seven-point scale.

- Respects moral norms.
- Always complies with the law.
- Avoids harmful behaviors at all costs.
- Makes decisions only after careful consideration of potential positive or negative consequences for all involved.

Q9. Describe how you feel about the brand mentioned earlier.
Trustworthiness. Response format: seven-point scale.

- Dishonest/Honest.
- Insincere/Sincere.
- Manipulative/Non-Manipulative.
- Untrustworthy/Trustworthy.

Q10. Express how you feel about the brand mentioned earlier.
Attitude Toward the Brand. Response format: seven-point scale.

- Negative/Positive.
- Unpleasant/Pleasant.
- Worthless/Valuable.
- Bad/Good.
- Unfavorable/Favorable.
- Dislike/Like.

Q11. What is the likelihood of purchasing the selected product?
Purchase Intentions. Response format: seven-point scale.

- Never/Always.
- Definitely do not intend to buy/Definitely intend to buy.

- Very low/high purchase interest.
- Probably not/Probably yes.

Q12. Indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.
Loyalty. Response format: seven-point scale.

- If someone asks me which brand to choose, I would recommend this brand.
- I would not choose any other brand if this brand were available to solve my problems.
- I consider myself loyal to this brand.
- This brand would be my first choice for any future purchase.

Q13. Indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.
Brand Reputation. Response format: seven-point scale.

- Cares about its customers.
- Seems like a good company to work for.
- Appears to recognize and seize market opportunities.
- Seems to have a clear vision of its future.
- Appears to be environmentally responsible.
- Seems to support good causes.

Appendix III – Scale of Variables

Table 9. Dependent Variables Scales.

Scale	Items	Response format	References
<i>Trustworthy scale</i>	<p>You consider this company:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dishonest/honest • Insincere/Sincere • Manipulative/Not manipulative • Not trustworthy/trustworthy 	Items appear to be 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree scales	Kirman, A., Hamilton, R. W., Thompson, D. V., & Lantzy, S. (2017). Doing Well versus Doing Good: The Differential Effect of Underdog Positioning on Moral and Competent Service Providers. <i>Journal of Marketing</i> , 81(1), 103–117.
<i>Loyalty scale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If anyone asks me which Brand to choose, I will Recommend this Brand • I will not choose any other Brand if this Brand is ready to solve my problems • I consider myself loyal to this Brand • This Brand would be my first choice in future for any problem. 	Items appear to be 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree scales	Altaf, M., Iqbal, N., Sany, SS, & Sial, MH (2017). Managing consumer-based brand equity through brand experience in Islamic banking. <i>Journal of Islamic Marketing</i> , 8(2), 218–242. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-07-2015-0048
<i>Customer-Based Reputation/Brand Reputation</i>	<p>Factor 1: Costumer Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has employees who are concerned 	Items appear to be 7-point	Walsh, Gianfranco and Sharon E. Beatty (2007), “Customer-Based Corporate Reputation of a Service Firm: Scale Development and

	<p>about customer needs</p> <p>Factor 2: Good Employer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks like a good company to work for <p>Factor 3: Reliably and Financially Strong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems to recognize and take advantage of market opportunities • Seems to have a clear vision of its future <p>Factor 4: Social and Environmental Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems to be environmentally responsible • Appears to support good causes 	<p>strongly disagree to strongly agree scales</p>	<p>Validation,” Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 35, 127–43.</p>
<p><i>Purchase Intentions</i></p>	<p>Would you buy something from this company?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never/Definitely • Definitely not do intend to buy/ Definitely intend • Very low/High purchase interest 	<p>Items appear to be 7-point strongly disagree to strongly</p>	<p>Spears, N., & Singh, S. N. (2004). Measuring Attitude Toward the Brand and Purchase Intentions. Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising, 26(2), 53-66. doi:10.1080/10641734.2004.10505164</p> <p>Hauser, J. R. (1986). Agendas and consumer choice. Journal of Consumer Research, 23(3), 237-250.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely not to buy it/Definitely buy it 	agree scales	https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378602300301
<i>Attitude towards the brand</i>	<p>You consider this brand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative/Positive Unpleasant/Pleasant Worthless/Valuable Bad/Good Unfavorable/Favorable Dislike a lot/Like a lot 	Items appear to be 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree scales	Hagtvedt, H., & Patrick, V. M. (2008). Art Infusion: The Influence of Visual Art on the Perception and Evaluation of Consumer Products. <i>Journal of Marketing Research</i> , 45(3), 379–389. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.45.3.379
<i>CSR perception scale</i>	<p>This company... Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tries to obtain maximum profit from its activity Tries to obtain maximum long-term success Always tries to improve its economic performance <p>Philanthropic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is concerned to respect and protect natural environment Actively sponsors or finances social events (sport, music...) 	Items appear to be 7-point strongly disagree to strongly agree scales	Salmones, M. D. G., Crespo, A. H., & Bosque, I. R. (2005). Influence of corporate social responsibility on loyalty and valuation of services. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 61(4), 369–385. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-5841-2 ; Mohr, L. A., & Webb, D. J. (2005). The effects of corporate social responsibility and price on consumer responses. <i>Journal of Consumer Affairs</i> , 39(1), 121–147. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.2005.00006.x

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs part of its budget to donations and social works • Is concerned to improve general well-being of society <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make every effort to reduce the pollution from their factories • Use recycled materials in manufacturing new products • Have factory programs to conserve water and energy 		
<i>Ethics perception scale</i>	<p>This company...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects moral norms; • Always adheres to the law; • Avoids damaging behaviour at all cost; • Will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative 	<p>Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'</p>	<p>Brunk, K. H. (2012). Un/ethical company and brand perceptions: Conceptualising and operationalising consumer meanings. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>, 111(4), 551–565. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1339-x</p>

	consequences for all those involved.		
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