

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN,  
CONSUMER'S ATTITUDES AND PURCHASE  
INTENTION: A STUDY OF AUTOMOTIVE  
PRODUCTS IN KOTA KINABALU**

PERPUSTAKAAN  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**TIONG YING YING**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC  
UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA SABAH  
2013**



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UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR FULFILMENT FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC  
UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA SABAH  
2013**



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JUDUL KAJIAN: THE RELATIONSHIP OF COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN, CONSUMER'S ATTITUDES AND PURCHASE IINTENTION: A STUDY OF AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS IN KOTA KINABALU

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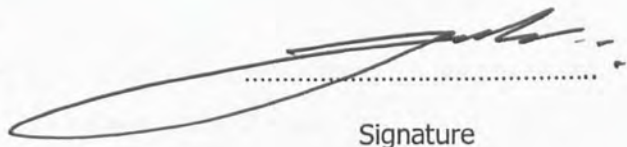
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Thank you!

## ***ABSTRACT***

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of country-of-origin, consumer's attitude and purchase intention in the context of tyres. The study has been examining relationship between country-of-origin attributes and consumer's attitudes; country-of-origin attributes and purchase intention; as well as the relationship between consumer's attitudes and purchase intention. The study has conceptualized country-of-origin as multidimensional construct which consists of six dimensions of attributes (i.e. Innovativeness, Technology Advancement, Prestige, Workmanship, Market Presence and Price). The study involved 251 respondents throughout Kota Kinabalu Sabah to gather data and findings on. The multi regression analysis is used to test the relationship between the independent variables (i.e. country-of-origin attributes) with mediator (consumer's attitudes) and dependent variables (purchase intention). The result has found that there are significant relationships in the assumptions of hypothesis of consumer's on purchase intention; and hypothesis on country-of-origin attributes on consumer's attitudes and country-of-origin attributes on purchase intention are partially supported. Besides, the hypothesis on the mediating effect of consumer's attitudes on the six country-of-origin attributes dimensions and purchase intention is also partially supported. Issue that had been arising from this study is that the market presence of the products that made in a certain country can affect the consumer's attitudes and therefore the purchase intention. Also, the country-of-origin image has a significant effect on the price that will influence the consumer's buying attitude and the willingness to buy the tyres. For future research, the study suggests that there should be an in-depth study on predicting factors that contribute to influencing country-of-origin attributes towards attitudes and purchase intention of tyres products.



## **ABSTRAK**

### ***Tajuk: Hubungan Negara Asal, Sikap Pengguna dan Niat Membeli: Kajian Ke Atas Produk Automotif di Kota Kinabalu***

*Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan negara asal dengan sikap pengguna, dan niat pembelian dalam konteks tayar. Kajian ini telah mengkaji hubungan antara sifat-sifat negara asal dan sikap pengguna; sifat-sifat negara asal dan niat pembelian; serta hubungan antara sikap pengguna dan niat pembelian. Kajian ini berkonsepkan negara asal kepada enam dimensi yang terdiri daripada Inovasi, Kemajuan Teknologi, Prestij, Mutu Hasil Kerja, Kehadiran Pasaran dan Harga. Kajian ini turut melibatkan seramai 251 responden di seluruh Kota Kinabalu Sabah untuk pengumpulan data dan penemuan. Analisis regresi dijalankan di beberapa peringkat untuk menguji hubungan diantara pembolehubah tidak bersandar (iaitu sifat-sifat negara asal) dengan pengantara (sikap pengguna) dan pembolehubah bersandar (niat pembelian). Keputusan kajian yang diperolehi mengatakan bahawa ada hubungan penting dalam andaian hipotesis sikap pengguna kepada niat pembelian; dimana hipotesis tentang sifat-sifat negara asal kepada sikap pengguna, dan sifat-sifat negara asal kepada niat pembelian tidak disokong sepenuhnya. Selain itu, hipotesis tentang kesan daripada pengantara iaitu sikap pengguna kepada enam dimensi sifat-sifat negara asal dan niat pembelian juga tidak disokong dengan sepenuhnya. Isu yang telah diutarakan daripada kajian ini adalah bahawa kehadiran pasaran produk-produk yang dibuat di negara tertentu boleh memberi kesan kepada sikap pengguna, dan oleh itu ada kesan langsung ke atas niat pembelian. Selain itu, imej negara asal juga mempunyai kesan yang besar ke atas persepsi harga produk dimana dapat mempengaruhi sikap pengguna untuk membeli tayar tersebut atau tidak. Bagi penyelidikan pada masa hadapan, kajian yang lebih mendalam tentang faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi sifat-sifat negara asal ke atas sikap pengguna dan niat pembelian produk tayar adalah digalakan.*



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In a market, consumer is playing a vital role in deciding how success a marketer will be. There is no point for a business to sustain without any consumers to buy and use the goods produce by the company. Therefore, it has been suggested that those global marketers need to pay much attention on consumer's purchase behaviour in particularly towards the product made in different country (Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994; Agrawal, Kamakura, 1999; Choy & Ng, 2011; and Wang, Barnes & Ahn, 2012). Product country of origin has been long recognised as one of the significant factors that influence consumers' behaviour and purchasing decisions. This can be seen when there are arrays of similar product with little or no different on its attributes, and especially when people have no experience or knowledge on neither the product itself nor its brand name; people often opt to refer to the labelled product "made in" country or also known as product Country-of-Origin (thereafter known as COO).

In accordance of this, it is particular important for a tyre production company to identify the COO effect that may affect to their global tyres sales. In Malaysia, there are three major tyre producers are producing passenger car tyre, commercial vehicle tyres and earthmover tyres, while another nine are manufacturing other types of tyres (MITI, 2013). According to Malaysia Rubber Board (2013), the tyre exporting in Malaysia had marked a significant growth of 3.3% to RM807.3 million in 2012 from RM779.3 million in 2011. The exported rate of Malaysia tyres products are however only contribute to a very small portion of world tyres revenue when the total world revenue of tyre exporting strive RM274.29 billion in 2012, where Malaysia tyres accounted only 0.18%. The low export rate make Malaysia tyres producer difficult to compete in both home country as well as global market. The consumption pattern to include factors to influence consumers' attitude and purchase intention is therefore very important to be studied by the marketer. COO effect should be prioritised in this case.



The research on the significance of COO in consumer decision was started earlier in 1965 by Robert Schooler with the beginning of the research on the bias of the Central American market towards the product from the other country. Most researchers refer COO to the information concerning place where the products produced, manufacturers, as well as growth. Hence, to identify the product COO is crucial as the product's originated country may have certain extend of influence, either negatively or positively on consumer's decision process or subsequent behaviour (Elliott & Cameron, 1994).

The allures of profit are always the main factor mirrors the motive of an organization to go outside one's country boundaries to penetrate into the other market (Robert, Michael & Dean, 2008). In addition to the advancement in technology and the improvement of people's skill and educational level, go global becoming the main aim for most of the entrepreneur to grab financial advantage and to strengthen their competitiveness abroad. However, due to the versatility of the global market and uncontrollable consumer's decision or behaviour, it makes it more challenging for Malaysia tyre producers to compete in the global market. Considering the COO effect is then become necessary while the tyres producers in Malaysian business are aspiring to go global. Also, there is room for improvement for Malaysia tyres exporting business as there are pooled of talent in the country as well as the technology that yet to be explored. Apart from that, Malaysian tyres producer are having advantages which can easily obtain the raw material from their home country as compared to the other country.

Apart from the COO effect itself, the studies of other researchers also relate COO with perception, satisfaction, loyalty, attitudes and the purchase intention (Patterson & Tai, 1991; Zain & Yasin, 1997; Sohail & Anwar, 2003; Godley et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2012). This is more obvious when a consumer have a little knowledge about a country, but has a vast amount of knowledge about a specific product from this country (Han, 1989). Hsieh, Pan and Setiono (2004) had confirmed that consumer's purchase intentions are affected by country's image. And other researchers found that attitudes determined purchase intention and behaviour (Bredahl 2000; and Perner, 2008). However, there is no existing study

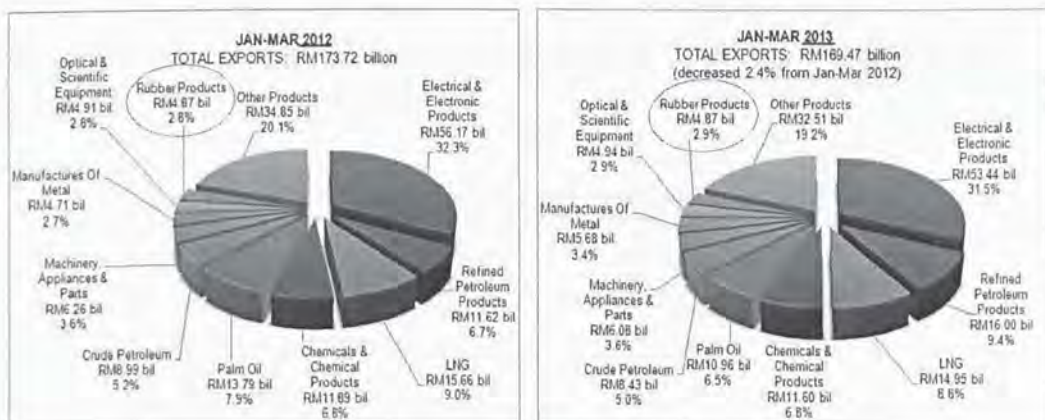


that examines the COO effect towards purchase intention on tyres that mediates by consumers' attitude.

## 1.2 The Rationale of Malaysia Tyres Industries

Rapid transformation of the global economy is one of the bigger challenges for Malaysia. Malaysia export and import are active along the year and ASEAN, Republic of China, Japan, European Union, and United States of America are the top five trading partners. Other than that, Malaysia also recorded trade with other countries like Australia, India, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Korea. According to the statistic of MATRADE (2013), total trade in 2012 had rose to RM1.31 trillion compared to RM1.27 trillion recorded in 2011. Exports grew by 0.6% to RM702.19 billion while imports expanded by 5.9% to RM607.36 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of RM94.82 billion. Malaysia had experience successive trade surplus since fifteen years ago.

World Rubber Market (2013) revealed that Malaysia is the world third largest rubber producer after Thailand and Indonesia in 2012. Exporting of rubber had marked a significant growth while the rubber export market is growing when the total exports of Malaysia had decrease. The exported volume marked an increasing of 0.1% to 2.9% compared to 2.8% in 2012 (MATRADE, 2013). The chart below shows the comparison of the total export rate in Malaysia:



Source: MATRADE official website Top 10 Major Export Products, 2013



Among the countries that imports natural rubber from Malaysia, the Republic of China marked the highest imported rate of 306,512 tonnes in 2012 followed by Germany 111,891 tonnes compared to the other countries in the list below:

Table 1.1: Export Rate of Natural Rubber in Malaysia

Countries	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	tonnes	%	tonnes	%	tonnes	%	tonnes	%	tonnes	%
<b>China</b>	301,178	32.9	274,013	39.3	347,589	38.6	408,597	43.2	306,512	39.7
<b>Germany</b>	123,302	13.5	81,963	11.7	117,930	13.1	113,717	12	111,891	14.5
<b>South Korea</b>	51,791	5.7	46,925	6.7	48,946	5.4	43,582	4.6	31,664	4.1
<b>USA</b>	52,541	5.8	28,754	4.1	40,076	4.4	34,360	3.6	33,200	4.3
<b>Iran</b>	40,180	4.4	32,177	4.6	38,821	4.3	27,679	2.9	32,695	4.2
<b>France</b>	31,631	3.5	18,252	2.6	21,754	2.4	16,370	1.7	12,150	1.6
<b>Brazil</b>	33,624	3.7	20,941	3.0	26,790	3.0	26,790	2.8	22,666	2.9
<b>Netherlands</b>	21,341	2.3	19,538	2.8	26,634	3.0	23,304	2.5	10,927	1.4
<b>Italy</b>	17,292	1.9	9,370	1.3	12,436	1.4	10,100	1.1	8,957	1.2
<b>Taiwan</b>	16,107	1.8	13,232	1.9	13,760	1.5	11,096	1.2	10,432	1.4
<b>Turkey</b>	21,361	2.3	16,806	2.4	20,007	2.2	21,344	2.3	15,803	2.0
<b>U.K.</b>	16,787	1.8	7,761	1.1	12,043	1.3	18,300	1.9	11,709	1.5
<b>South Africa</b>	15,306	1.7	14,509	2.1	13,813	1.5	12,063	1.3	14,094	1.8
<b>Spain</b>	7,552	0.8	4,309	0.6	57,97	0.6	4,094	0.4	1,199	0.2
<b>Japan</b>	7,554	0.8	4,897	0.7	10,837	1.2	5,176	0.5	4,917	0.6
<b>Belgium</b>	12,984	1.4	5,171	0.7	6,198	0.7	13,594	1.4	12,378	1.6
<b>Others</b>	143,976	15.7	98,994	14.2	137,758	15.3	155,915	16.5	130,020	16.9
<b>Total</b>	915,507	100	697,562	100	900,880	100	946,081	100	771,194	100

*Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia*

Despite that, most of the countries listed in the list above are also country-of-origin of the world top tyre manufacturers’.

Natural rubber is among the most important raw material for the automobile industry as rubber is the main material in producing the tyre for the vehicles and also being used in some other part of the vehicle. Statistic of Europe Tyre and Rubber Manufacturer Association (2013) shows the increasing demand of both car and light commercial vehicle as well as medium and heavy commercial vehicle from year 2000 until 2010, and the numbers are expected to grow again in 2015, 2020 and 2025. The increasing number of automobile needed indicates the

increasing numbers of tyre that will be needed in the future. Table below is the numbers of vehicles demanded in markets and also the projected amount that needed in the future.

Table 1.2: Evolution of passenger car (PC) and light commercial vehicle (LCV) parc on world major markets

<b>PC&amp;LVC Parc (million units)</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
Africa	18,2	22,0	26,5	31,4	38,0	46,3
ASEAN	19,5	27,9	35,6	46,0	56,6	66,3
China	15,1	32,4	80,5	181,9	293,0	381,2
East Asia	87,3	95,1	99,0	105,1	111,7	116,5
Europe	276,6	308,9	341,6	368,3	404,1	440,5
India	10,1	15,2	24,6	42,0	64,7	91,0
Middle East	20	29,2	42,2	54,7	69,6	86,5
North America	246,2	268,6	284,3	301,9	316,8	332,8
Oceania	14,3	16,1	18,3	20,6	22,8	25,3
South America	36,0	43,9	53,6	73,5	93,1	110,4
<b>World Total</b>	<b>739,7</b>	<b>859,5</b>	<b>1006,2</b>	<b>1225,5</b>	<b>1470,4</b>	<b>1696,6</b>

Source: LMC International

Table 1.3: Evolution of medium and heavy commercial vehicle (HCV) parc on world major markets

<b>M &amp; HCB Parc (million units)</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
Africa	1,5	1,7	2,0	2,3	2,7	3,3
ASEAN	1,7	1,9	2,3	2,1	3,4	4,3
China	3,6	5,1	7,9	12,0	16,7	22,5
East Asia	1,2	1,2	1,4	1,5	1,7	1,9
Europe	8,4	8,7	9,2	9,9	11,3	13,1
India	2,6	3,2	4,3	5,7	7,3	9,3
Middle East	2,1	2,7	3,5	4,5	6,0	8,3
North America	7,1	7,6	8,2	8,6	8,9	9,2
Oceania	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9
South America	2,9	3,5	4,3	5,1	6,0	7,1
<b>World Total</b>	<b>31,5</b>	<b>36,4</b>	<b>43,7</b>	<b>53,2</b>	<b>64,8</b>	<b>80,0</b>

Source: LMC International



China Chemical News (2012) had reported the top 75 global ranking tyre ranks in 2012. Among the top brand in the world is Bridgestone from Japan, Michelin from France, Goodyear from United States and other brand like Multistrada from Indonesia, The Vee rubber from Thailand, the Apollo Tire from India and The Southern Rubber from Vietnam. Four of the top five rubber producer in the world – Thailand, Indonesia, India and Vietnam's tyre had ranked as the world top 75 tyre manufacturer. However, Malaysia who ranked as the top three rubber producer in the world is flunk from the top ranking. Although there is no fact saying that the world top rubber producer should be the top tyre manufacturer in the world; but operating from the rubber producer home country is value added to the tyre manufacturer in Malaysia. They can work against scarce resources as Malaysia itself is producing rubber, work more cost effective as the transportation fee and government tax induced is lesser. Therefore, this is not only benefit to the tyre manufacturers but also contributes in stimulating Malaysia economic growth.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

With the technology advancement and the improvement on human skills nowadays, more and more business are capable to produce in higher standard of quality and produce in higher volume. To earn higher in terms of profit and brand awareness, these companies always opt to expand their business globally. However, the technology and improvement in human skills also put companies in a challenging position as they would faces with more competition in the global marketplace which is threatening to their survival in the global market. To address this issue, several researchers suggest that country that carried more positive dimension on country image may generate more positive perception (Sauders, 1978; and Lopez, Gotsi & Andriopoulos, 2009) on purchase intention (Tsiotsou, 2005; Wong, Garma & Polonsky, 2007; and Ahmad & Juhdi, 2010).

The increasing of consumers' knowledge on the products type is the main reason to conduct studies on COO. COO helps global marketers to analyse the preference of consumers on the product of origin. Follow the pace of the global marketplace, recent researches had developed more studies on COO with the other

factors to give bigger picture on the effect of COO. More and more studies gradually shifted from evaluating differences in product evaluations and preferences based on the mere notion of the product COO such as the country (Zain & Yasin, 1997; and Sohail, 2005) to a more complex construct, by explicitly measure the image of a country as product origin, or also known as country image (Roth and Romeo, 1992; Martin and Eroglu, 1993; Chao, 1993; Pappu, Quester & Cooksey, 2007; and Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009).

As discussed, there is no literature reach consensus on the country image construct. Past research also considered price and value, marketing strategy (Nagashima, 1970 and Heslop & Papadopoulos, 1993), social, technology, economics, politics (Martin & Eroglu, 1993) as country image construct. Country image such as the level of economic development, political status, and characteristics of peoples and its impact towards consumer perception has led to a believe that COO effects are developed by consumer's cognition about products' COO affect toward the country's people, and conation towards its peoples which indicates the desires level of interaction (Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994; and Laroche et al., 2003). Therefore, it is significant to differentiate between cognitive and affective country image due to the fact that peoples always hold cognitive and affective perceptions inconsistently while evaluating products from particular country (Wang et al., 2012).

Studies also examined the relationship among country of origin with purchase intention (Ahmad & Juhdi, 2010; and Wang et al., 2012). In addition, several studies also found that attitude mediate the relationship between country image and purchase intention (Wong, Garma and Polonsky, 2007; and Maher and Carter, 2011). Several of studies had examined the relationships between country image, and the perception on its dimensions in food and beverage (Verlegh, 2001; Ittersum, Candel & Meulenberg 2003 and Ahmad & Juhdi, 2010) as well as automobile and electronics industry (Haub, 1996; Papadopoulos et al., 2000; Knight et al., 2003; Nebenzahl et al., 2003 and Pappu, Quester and Cooksey, 2007) and products in general (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999; Papadopoulos et al., 2000; Heslop et al., 2004 and Wang et al., 2012). But, there is no specific research study



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