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Impact of Country Image on Visit Intention with Mediating Role of Purchase Intention and Moderating Role of Personality Type

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate the influence of Country Image (CI) on Visit Intention (VI), with a focus on the mediating role of Purchase Intention (PI) and moderating role of personality types. To accomplish this, a quantitative research approach was employed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Cross-sectional data was collected, utilizing an explanatory research approach. The target population consisted of individuals residing in Pakistan who use mobile phones made in China. Purposive sampling was employed to gather data, with an initial distribution of 25 questionnaires for pre-testing, followed by the distribution of 330 questionnaires. Ultimately, 299 completed and valid responses were obtained for analysis, addressing various research questions related to demographic profiles and constructs assessing CI, PI, and VI, to explore their relationships. The analysis reveals significant indirect effects for three critical variables: Country Image (CGPS), Economic Work (Eco Work), and Environment Labor Work Condition (ELW). The results demonstrate that these variables exert a noteworthy influence on Visit Intention through the mediating factor of Purchase Intention. Lastly, the results observed the moderating effect of personality types on observed variables. The strength of these indirect effects is substantiated by high beta coefficients and statistically significant t-statistics.

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Introduction

Over the past decade, there has been a growing interest worldwide in the field of nation and place marketing, recognized by scholars, policy makers, and business professionals (Anholt, 2002). The application of marketing strategies to countries has the potential to influence global wealth distribution, cultural development, and economic growth (Anholt, 2002). Place branding, which involves creating a consistent image to distinguish a place, has gained prominence in both academic and practitioner circles (Cai, 2002). However, despite the acknowledged importance of place image, there has been limited theoretical development due to its complexity, necessitating a deeper understanding of its elements and relationships.

The significance of a country's image in shaping consumer behavior is well-established (Bruwer & Buller, 2012; Parkvithee & Miranda, 2012). Scholars have identified five personality traits as indicators of consumer behavior intention (Jaffar and Sulman, 2017; Devis, 2018). In this study, we aim to explore the connection between country image, visit intention, purchase intention, and the moderating impact of personality traits (Agreeableness, extrovert, openness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism). Additionally, we will examine how purchase intention acts as a moderator in the relationship between country image elements and visit intention, guided by the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Halpenny, Kono, & Moghimehfar, 2018).

The process of purchasing a product involves several phases, including interest, persuasion, knowledge, awareness, and purchase intention (Arsan & Altoona, 2010). Previous research has established a significant influence of a nation's image on visit intention and purchase intention, linking these factors to behavioral norms, perceived control, and intention (Wen, Prybutok, & Xu, 2011). A customer's purchase intention for a product from a specific nation is shaped by their attitudes and prior experiences (Woo & Ramkumar, 2017), with the theory of planned behavior being a prominent framework in understanding purchase intention (Fischer et al., 2012).

Country image indirectly affects how foreign tourists perceive a destination, with destination image playing a mediating role, especially in terms of psychological image, and familiarity acting as a mitigating factor (Parkvithee & Miranda, 2012). The "made in China" image has faced challenges due to perceptions of low-quality products. In response, the Chinese government prioritized product quality and promoted brands like Xiaomi, Huawei, Oppo, Vivo, and Lenovo (Parkvithee & Miranda, 2012). However, these efforts haven't fully changed the negative image among Pakistani customers, particularly in the mobile market. Chinese mobiles have a significant presence globally, and this study will investigate whether the "made in China" image influences consumer perceptions in this market.

Despite the growing attention towards country and place marketing, there exists a dearth of thorough theoretical advancement in comprehending the concept of place image. This knowledge is of utmost importance for places and enterprises, as it enables them to effectively capitalize on the favorable parts of their image while simultaneously resolving any unfavorable impressions. The primary objective of this study is to fill the existing research gap by investigating the correlation between country image, visit intention, and purchase intention, while taking into account the potential mediating effect of purchase perception and moderating effect of personality type.

2.0 Literature Review

Perceptions of country image and the impact of country-of-origin effect (COO) on consumer attitudes are critical topics in international marketing research. COO focuses on how a nation's reputation influences perceptions of its products and how brand image can, in turn, shape country image. The study of country image has a rich history, with numerous research articles spanning the last half-century, primarily aiming to explain consumer attitudes toward products from specific countries. This exploration led to investigations into how consumers' perceptions of a country's image were often intertwined with their perceptions of products from that country. In this context, the concept of country image evolved (Papadopoulos, 2007; Nagashima, 1977).

The origins of country image study may be traced back to the 1930s and 1940s, with a primary emphasis on the examination of national stereotypes and attitudes. With the expansion of the global economy, consumers have been granted a wider range of local and foreign goods and brands, resulting in a heightened fascination with the notion of place of origin. Nevertheless, the specific concept of national image has remained rather ambiguous, despite its considerable importance. The literature has shown a tight association between terms such as nation image, country-of-origin image, and product-country image (Mossberg and Kleppe, 2005). Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009) have put forward a framework consisting of three distinct levels of origin notions for country image, namely nation, product class, and individual product. This framework adds a layer of intricacy to the comprehension of country image.

Destination image research emerged in the 1970s, with a particular focus on tourists' perceptions of destinations. Destination marketers recognized the need to effectively convey the unique identities of their locations to attract travelers. To enhance visit intentions, they aimed to communicate positive destination images (Roodurmun & Juwaheer, 2010). Like country image, destination image research has produced multiple definitions, but the core idea remains consistent—a destination image is the sum of thoughts and impressions that individuals have of a place (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Both country image and destination image studies have largely relied on attitude theory, emphasizing the cognitive component. However, recent research has delved into the emotional and conative aspects of these images, recognizing that a holistic understanding includes cognitive and affective evaluations as well as the choices individuals make concerning travel destinations (King, Chen, & Funk, 2015; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007).

Familiarity, a critical factor affecting perceptions of destinations, has gained attention in both product-country image (PCI) and destination image research. Factors like travel experiences and information sources significantly influence familiarity and ultimately shape perceptions (K. Kim & Hallab, 2012). Familiarity has been defined and measured in various ways, including informational and experiential dimensions, and it has been shown to impact destination image, visit intentions, destination choice, and tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Alvarez & Korzay, 2011).

Recent studies have also highlighted the moderating role of familiarity in both PCI and destination image research. Familiarity can influence evaluation outcomes and the relationship

between attitudes, quality perceptions, and travel preferences (Santos Requejo, 2007; Horng Liu & Tsai, 2012).

The examination of country image and destination image has developed independently, however there have been recent scholarly works that have explored both notions within the realm of marketing and branding. The use of both country and destination imagery has been exploited as marketing strategies for promoting export products, with destination marketing being the predominant field in which this approach is seen (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005). Scholars have conducted investigations into the associations between country image and destination image, whereby examinations have been centered on the influence of a destination's reputation on the perceptions of its indigenous goods (Lee & Lockshin, 2011; Zhang & Cai, 2011). Nevertheless, it is crucial to distinguish between the pictures of products and destinations, since they may possess unique characteristics and connections (Campo & Alvarez, 2010).

The literature has extensively examined the major emphasis given to the moderating impact of personality type in the link between country image and visit intention. Numerous scholarly investigations have been conducted to examine the potential impact of an individual's personality qualities, including extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness, on their perception and reaction towards a country's standing as a desirable tourist destination. For example, persons who possess elevated levels of openness to experience may exhibit a greater inclination to travel to countries that possess distinctive and unorthodox characteristics. Conversely, those who score high in conscientiousness may priorities factors such as safety and trustworthiness when making decisions about their travel plans. The results of this study indicate that personality qualities have the potential to moderate the link between country image and visit intention, influencing both the magnitude and direction of this association. Understanding these moderating effects is crucial in order to customize destination marketing techniques to cater to diverse personality types, hence augmenting the efficacy of place marketing endeavours (Papadopoulos, 2007; Nagashima, 1977).

In summary, the examination of country and destination images has progressed concurrently, propelled by the acknowledgment of their significant impact on consumer choices regarding items, services, and trip locations. Both attitude theory and the study of country and destination images have common origins. Gaining a comprehensive grasp of these concepts helps enhance the development of more efficient positioning and branding strategies for both locations and goods. Despite the persistent difficulty in defining and assessing these ideas, they continue to have a significant influence on customer perceptions and preferences. Furthermore, the inherent fluidity of these visual representations emphasizes the significance of analyzing them within the framework of evolving political, economic, and social environments (Campo and Alvarez, 2010).

3.0 Methodology

The study aims to investigate the influence of Country Image (CI) on Visit Intention (VI), with a focus on the mediating role of Purchase Intention (PI). To accomplish this, a quantitative research approach was employed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Cross-sectional data was collected, utilizing an explanatory research approach. The target population consisted of

individuals residing in Pakistan who use mobile phones made in China. Purposive sampling was employed to gather data, with an initial distribution of 25 questionnaires for pre-testing, followed by the distribution of 330 questionnaires. Ultimately, 299 completed and valid responses were obtained for analysis, addressing various research questions related to demographic profiles and constructs assessing CI, PI, and VI, to explore their relationships.

The process of data collecting was made possible through the development of an online survey using Google Forms. Participants were instructed to access the questionnaire by following a designated web link. The components in the research were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale. The assessment of CI included seven dimensions, whereas the measurement of PI and VI drew upon existing literature sources, namely the works of Martin and Eroglu (1993) and Al-Swidi et al. (2014). The Likert scale had a range of values, with 1 denoting a strong disagreement and 7 indicating a strong agreement. A neutral position was represented by the value of 4. The statistical analysis was performed using software tools, namely the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Smart PLS. Factor analysis was used to evaluate the factor loadings of the constructs, hence guaranteeing their validity. The study used reliability analysis and hierarchical moderation/multiple linear regression techniques to investigate the associations among the variables. Furthermore, the researchers performed mediation analysis using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method to investigate the mediation effects inside the conceptual model.

4.0 Results

Demographics, reliability, exploratory factor analysis (loading, alpha, and variance), and hypothesis analysis are all included in descriptive analysis. To begin, a summary of the consumer demographics reveals the characteristics of the target audience. The loadings, alpha, and variance of computing value and index were then estimated using exploratory analysis. Table 5.1 the study's respondents were divided into four categories based on their gender, age, education, income, and occupation. The sample size is 299 respondents, with 201 men accounting for close to 67.2 percent of the total, and 98 females accounting for 32.8 percent. Respondents were geographically located in Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Table 1: Distribution of demographic information

Description	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender			
Male	201	67.2	67.2
Female	98	32.8	100.0
Age			
18 − 25 years	175	58.5	58.5
26 − 35 years	116	38.8	97.3
46 − 55 years	06	2.0	99.3
56 − 65 years	02	0.7	100.0
Education			
High School	07	2.3	2.3
Under Graduate	104	34.8	37.1
Post Graduate	183	61.2	98.3

PhD	05	1.7	100.0
Occupation			
Unemployed	17	5.7	5.7
Private Sector Employed	89	29.8	35.5
Public Sector Employed	18	6.0	41.5
Self Employed/Own Business	29	9.7	51.2
Student	146	48.8	100
Income			
Less than14999	19	6.4	6.4
15000 to 49999	59	19.7	26.1
50000 to 99999	72	24.1	50.2
100000 to149999	87	29.1	79.3
150000 to Above	62	20.7	100

2.0 Hypothesis testing and Analysis

The model findings analyzing the influence of country image on visit intention are shown in Table 3. In order to examine our hypothesis, we performed a regression analysis, using country image as the independent variable and visit intention as the dependent variable. The main contention put out in this article is that the perception of a country, often referred to as its "country image," has a noteworthy and favorable impact on the desire to visit such country. The findings of this study substantiate this claim, corroborating earlier research conducted by Tarkiainen (2005) and Goldsmith (2015).

Table 2 Country Image on Purchase Intention

$Variable$	$Coef.$	$Std.Err.$	$t-statistic$	$Prob.$
$Cons.$	-0.002	0.312	-0.014	0.989
Eco	0.239	0.197	3.562	0.000
$CGPS$	0.316	0.147	5.118	0.000
ELW	0.250	0.176	3.454	0.001
$R^2 = 0.539$	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.535$	$F-statistic = 115.09$	$Prob.F-statistic = 0.000$	

Note: Ecowork = economical and work condition CGPS = confit and political structure
ELW = Environment, Labor and work condition

The findings pertaining to the regression analysis of Purchase Intention on Visit Intention have been presented in Table 2. The independent variable in this hypothesis was purchase intention, whereas the dependent variable was visiting intention. We argued that purchase intention has a substantial beneficial influence on visit intention in this study. A buy intention demonstrates significance, indicating that the hypothesis is accepted since the p-value is 0.000, which is considerably lower than the necessary standard of 0.05.

Table 3 Purchase Intention on Visit Intention

$Variable$	$Coef.$	$Std. Err.$	$t-statistic$	$Prob.$
$Cons.$	1.320	0.104	12.649	.000
PI	0.487	0.027	9.613	.000
$R^2 = 0.237$	adjusted R^2 = 0.235	$F-statistic$ = 92.412	$Prob.F-statistic$	= 0.000

Note: PI = Purchase Intention

Our dependent variable, visit intention, has a standardized coefficient of 0.487, which indicates that a one-unit increase in the independent variable, buy intention, is equivalent to a 0.487-unit increase in the dependent variable, visit intention. The result of R2 is 0.235, which indicates that the intention to make a purchase account for 2.35 percent of the total variation in the dependent variable visit intention.

Mediation Analysis

Tabel 4: Mediation Analysis

Variables	Effect	β	t-statistic	significance
CGPS>PI>VI	Indirect effect	0.104	3.907	0.000
Eco Work>PI>VI	Indirect effect	0.099	4.317	0.000
ELW>PI>VI	Indirect effect	0.101	3.997	0.000

In the presented results, it is evident that three variables, namely Country Image (CGPS), Economic Work (Eco Work), and Environment Labor Work Condition (ELW), have a significant indirect effect on Visit Intention (VI) through the mediator Purchase Intention (PI). The beta (β) coefficients of 0.104, 0.099, and 0.101 respectively indicate the strength of these indirect effects. Furthermore, the associated t-statistics for each of these indirect effects are notably high, with values of 3.907, 4.317, and 3.997, all of which are statistically significant at a p-value of 0.000. This suggests that the influence of these variables on Visit Intention is partially mediated by Purchase Intention, emphasizing the importance of Purchase Intention as a mediator in the relationship between these factors and Visit Intention.

Moderating Analysis

The table illustrates the moderating impact of extroversion (EX) on the association between

the independent variables (Eco Work, CGPS, ELW) and the dependent variable. In the first model, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.170, suggesting a moderate level of explanatory capability for the model as a whole. In Model 2, the inclusion of extroversion as a moderator leads to an increase in the R^2 value to 0.178, indicating that extroversion has a moderating influence on the observed association. Model 3 provides more evidence in favour of this claim, since it has a higher coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.233. Furthermore, the interaction terms (IT EX Eco Work, IT EX CGPS, IT EX ELW) exhibit statistical significance, as denoted by asterisks indicating the level of significance ($*p<0.05$, $**p<0.01$, $***p<0.001$). This underscores the crucial role of extroversion as a moderator in shaping the association between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 5 Moderation effect with extroversion

Moderation with Ex	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
$R2$	0.170	0.178	0.233
Adjusted R^2	0.161	0.167	0.214
F-statistic	20.09	15.95	12.62
Independent variables	Coefficient β	Coefficient β	Coefficient β
Eco Work	.011	-.020	.345***
CGPS	.296***	.262**	.539**
ELW	.132	.115	-.369**
Moderating variables			
EX		.118	.375**
Interaction terms			
IT EX Eco Work			0.47***
IT EX CGPS			.385**
IT EX ELW			0.64***

Note: $EcoWork = economical\ and\ work\ condition\ \ CGPS = confit\ and\ political\ structure$

$ELW = environment, labour\ and\ work\ condition\ EX = Extroversion$

The moderation analysis for the association between country image and purchase intention is shown in Table 6, with neuroticism (N) serving as the moderating variable. The initial R² value in Model 1 is 0.170, and this value climbs to 0.212 in Model 3 after including the moderating effect. This finding indicates that the impact of neuroticism on the connection is substantial. The regression model includes coefficients for the independent variables (EcoWork, CGPS, ELW) and the interaction terms (IT N Eco Work, IT N CGPS, IT N ELW) to examine the moderating effect of an individual's degree of neuroticism on the relationship between these factors and purchase intention. The interaction term "IT N Eco Work" has a statistically significant negative impact on purchase intention, highlighting the moderating influence of neuroticism in influencing purchase intentions related to nation image.

Tabel 6: Neuroticism moderates the relationship between country image andpurchase intention

Moderation with N	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
R2	0.170	0.177	0.212
Adjusted R2	0.161	0.166	0.193
F Statistic	20.09	15.83	11.17
Independent variables	**Coefficient β**	**Coefficient β**	**Coefficient β**
EcoWork	.011	.021	.714
CGPS	.296	.281	.089
ELW	.132	.096	-.193
Moderating variables			
N123		.096	.608
Interaction terms			
IT N Eco Work			-.297***
IT N CGPS			.278
IT N ELW			.423

Note: $EcoWork = economical\ and\ work\ condition \quad CGPS = confit\ and\ political\ structure$
$ELW = environment, labour\ and\ work\ condition\ N123 = Neuroticism$

The table illustrates the moderating impact of the personality trait "Openness" (OTE) across three distinct models. As the transition is made from Model 1 to Model 3, there is an observed rise in the R-squared value, suggesting that the introduction of the moderating variable has a beneficial effect in elucidating the variability in the dependent variable. In Model 3, the influence of OTE as a moderator on the association between the independent variables (Eco Work, CGPS, and ELW) and the dependent variable is notably strengthened. This is supported by the coefficients of the interaction terms (IT OTE) and their significant levels (***), indicating that Openness plays a moderating role in the relationship between these independent variables and the desired outcome.

Table 7 Moderation effect with Openness

Moderation with OTE	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
$R2$	0.170	0.178	0.201
$Adjusted\ R^2$	0.161	0.166	0.182
$F\ statistic$	20.09	15.88	10.48
Independent variables	**Coefficient β**	**Coefficient β**	**Coefficient β**
Eco Work	.011	.085	0.151
CGPS	.296	.301	0.522
ELW	.132	.170	0.962
Moderating variables			
OTE		-.143	.283
Interaction terms			
IT OTE Eco Work			-.911***
IT OTE CGPS			-.029***
IT OTE ELW			.186

Note: $EcoWork = economical\ and\ work\ condition\ \ CGPS = confit\ and\ political\ structure$

$ELW = environment, labour\ and\ work\ condition\ OTE = Openess\ to\ Experience$

The current study investigates the moderating role of Agreeableness (Agree) in the

association between the independent variables (Eco Work, CGPS, and ELW) and the dependent variable ($R2$), as shown in Table 8. The first model has a $R2$ value of 0.170, which suggests the presence of a baseline connection. In Model 2, after include Agreeableness as a moderator, the coefficient of determination ($R2$) remained unchanged at 0.170. However, in Model 3, the coefficient of determination ($R2$) rises to 0.193, indicating that the variable of Agreeableness acts as a moderator in the connection. The analysis of the interaction terms (IT) involving Agreeableness and the independent variables (IT Agree Eco Work, IT Agree CGPS, IT Agree ELW) demonstrates statistically significant effects, suggesting that Agreeableness functions as a moderator in these associations. The aforementioned results highlight the significance of taking into account personality qualities, particularly Agreeableness, when analysing the influence of independent factors on the dependent variable.

Tabel 8 Moderation with Agreeableness

Moderation with Agree	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
$R2$	0.170	0.170	0.193
Adjusted R^2	0.161	0.159	0.174
F Statistic	20.09	15.06	9.97
Independent variables	Coefficient β	Coefficient β	Coefficient β
Eco Work	.011	.025	0.760
CGPS	.296	.299	0.023
ELW	.132	.137	0.428
Moderating variables			
Agree		-.030	.322
Interaction terms			
IT Agree Eco Work			-.221
IT Agree CGPS			.075***

IT Agree ELW   .656***

Note: *EcoWork = economical and work condition   CGPS = confit and political structure*

ELW = environment, labour and work condition Agree = Agreeableness

Conclusion

      The central objective of this research endeavor is to delve into the intricate dynamics of how country image shapes visit intention, with an added layer of complexity brought about by the mediating role of purchase intention. This comprehensive investigation seeks to unravel several facets: firstly, it seeks to elucidate the direct impact of country image on both purchase intention and visit intention. Lastly, it delves into the mediating mechanism whereby purchase intention acts as a mediator in the relationship between country image and visit intention, shedding light on the intricate interplay of these constructs. To unravel these multifaceted effects, the research employs a combination of factor analysis and regression analysis, allowing for a rigorous examination of the intricate relationships at play within this complex framework.

Komal Hassan Shamsi: Problem Identification and Model Devolpement
Muhammad Shaukat Malik: Literature search, Methodology and final drafting

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

    The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest in this article's research,authorship, and/or publication.

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