PERCEPTION OF COUNTRY OF BRAND ORIGIN AND COUNTRY OF PRODUCT MANUFACTURING AMONG LITHUANIANS AND EMIGRANTS FROM LITHUANIA

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Abstract. Though the issue of product country of origin has been researched by numerous researchers, due to globalization, currently consumers have more problems perceiving the country of origin than ever before. This brings marketing specialists back to the discussion of the topic once again, with emphasis on a distinction between the country of manufacturing origin and the country of brand origin. The impact of country of manufacturing and country of brand image varies from country to country under the influence of numerous impact factors, often summarized within a culture or subcultures. One type of such subcultures could be formed by immigrants, whose perceptions might include aspects of their home country combined with those of the host country. The main purpose of this paper was to evaluate the attitudes of Lithuanians who live in Lithuania (as a country of an emerging economy) and those of emigrants living in selected countries (Ireland, the United Kingdom and Finland) with regard to the importance of country of origin. Three brands were selected for the research – *Panasonic*, *LG* and *BEKO*, and three different cases were presented to the respondents. First, both the brand name (*Panasonic*) and the manufacturing country (the United Kingdom) were associated with a developed country. In the second case, country of brand origin (*LG*) was identified as a developed country while country of manufacture represented an emerging economy (Poland). Finally, an emerging economy of the country of brand origin (*BEKO*) and an emerging economy of the country of manufacturing (Turkey) were dealt with.

Findings provide evidence that, in general, more developed countries had a better image as countries – manufacturers of TV sets than less developed countries (emerging economies). Analysis of opinions about country of brand origin revealed that brands from developed countries were evaluated better than those from emerging economies. In addition, analysis showed that respondents who live in an emerging economy have more positive attitude towards the surveyed brands compared with Lithuanian emigrants to developed countries. Finally, strong

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correlation was found between the evaluation of a brand and evaluation of the country of brand origin, while there was no correlation between evaluation of a brand and evaluation of country of manufacturing.

Key words: country of manufacturing, country of brand origin, emigrants, emerging economies, developed countries.

Introduction

A number of binational, hybrid products become available on international markets. Globalization constantly requires to reconsider market possibilities, competitive positions, and to evaluate future tendencies. The obvious and hard criteria for product selection, such as price, design and product characteristics have been the main criteria for a long time. However, due to the impact of globalization, the importance of soft criteria like brand, the country of manufacturing and the country of brand origin for consumers and organizations has increased (Cornish-Ward et al., 1998). The country of manufacturing, the country of assembling, the country of design and the country of brand might be quite different.

Due to globalization consumers have more problems in understanding the country of origin, and that opens a discussion that this construct has more associations with cultural influences as well as associations with specific countries. Since companies moved their manufacturing technologies to less developed countries (and, in some cases, developed ones), marketing researchers started to discuss the topic of the country of origin once again and make a distinction between the country of manufacturing and the country of brand origin (Hamzaoui et al., 2006). This topic was important for developed countries for a long time and later it became interesting for emerging economies as well. Several researches have been done about the importance of the country of origin (COO) in emerging economies, for instance in Lithuania (Pikturnienė et al., 2009; Urbonavičius et al., 2007; Urbonavičius et al., 2009; Čapas et al., 2007).

However, the impact of the country of manufacturing origin and the country of brand image can vary from country to country, since every country has its own culture that influences people's perception of the product. In addition, various subcultures exist within a certain culture. One of such subcultures could be immigrants. Their attitudes could influence the culture of the native country as well as the culture of the country where they live currently.

Before 2004, the actual movement of labor within the EU was rather limited, and only 4 percent of EU citizens had ever lived in another EU state (Eurofound, 2006, p. 14). However, the situation has changed after 2004, when EU-8 acceded to membership of the European Union. For example, when the British government took the decision to allow workers from EU-8 to work in the UK, it estimated that no more than 5,000 to 13,000 workers per annum would move to Britain (Dustmann et al., 2003, p. 58). However, these predictions were underestimated – there were between 10,000 and 20,000 of applications per month (Dobson, 2009). That means that the number of

immigrants grows every year in developed EU countries, and immigrants form specific subcultures that differ both from their home country and the host country.

Being one of these EU-8 countries, Lithuania as an emerging economy was a suitable subject of the analysis. The level of emigration from Lithuania grows every year. According to the Department of Statistics of Lithuania, approximately 7,000 Lithuanians left the country in 2002, and this number increased almost three times in 2009 (approximately to 22,000). Compared to the total population of the country (under 3.5 million), this is a significant number.

Lithuania is one of the Post-Soviet countries, which historically had a limited access to products manufactured outside this group of countries. Products originated from developed countries were almost inaccessible, and therefore perceived as having specifically high value. This was applicable towards many types of products, including audio-video items, which are further analyzed in this research. Transition to a market economy made these products available, but often mentally categorized into two groups, related either with developed countries or with emerging economies. Although the country has been open for foreign products for more than 20 years now, we expect that products from developed countries still will be evaluated better than products manufactured in emerging economies.

It is also assumed that Lithuanian emigrants might share a different set of perceptions about the country of origin, since they absorb a part of cultural influences from the cultural environment of their current host countries. The main purpose of this work was to evaluate the attitudes of people who continue living in an emerging economy (Lithuania) and those of Lithuanian emigrants living in various other countries with regard to the products originated and manufactured in either a developed country or an emerging economy.

The importance of the country of manufacturing and the country of brand origin

Traditionally country of origin was understood as the country of manufacturing or the country of company's headquarters (Thanasuta et al., 2009, p. 360). Emergence of binational products has made concept of the country of origin confused and undefined. Therefore researchers started to use such concepts as „country of manufacturing", „country of design", „country of assembly" and „brand origin country" (Schweiger et al., 1997). Moreover, some of researchers prefer to use the concept „Made in ..." instead of the country of origin, since this concept defines the exact country in which the product was made (Thanasuta et al., 2009; Cornish-Ward et al., 1998). While much attention was paid to such concepts as country of manufacturing, country of design, country of assembly, the concept of the country of brand origin received less attention (Sinha et al., 1999). The country of brand origin is understood as the country or territory where the headquarters of the company that owns the brand are located, and therefore often are perceived as a 'home' country of the brand. According to Thakor and Kohli (1996), the country of brand origin

might also mean a certain geographical place of brand origin, which could differ from the one that consumers understand as the real country of origin. In any case, the country of brand origin is that which consumers directly relate with the brand. Therefore Coca-Cola, McDonald or Kodak are perceived as American products; Sony, Panasonic or Honda are understood as Japanese products. Another concept of the country of brand origin – the country where the main marketing department of the company is located (Balabanis et al., 2008) – is less popular in consumer studies, since majority of consumers might not know this information. In addition to this, Liefeld emphasizes the importance to distinguish between the country of brand origin and the country of manufacturing, because different parts and components could be produced in different countries (Liefeld, 2004). However, some authors believe that the country of manufacturing has become less important than the country of brand origin (O'Cass et al., 2000).

It is commonly agreed that the impact of the country of origin was and still is an important aspect of international marketing, which has a strong impact on formation of the image of the product. The effect of country of origin could be defined in different ways: a) as a factor which creates positive or negative perception of a product (Ghazali, 2008, p. 92); b) a certain aspect of perception, by which the information affects the evaluation of the product (consumer experience from visiting a country, gathered information about a country, political beliefs, ethnocentrism, etc.) (Gürhan-Canli et al., 2000). We can be sure that image of a certain country is related with the products, manufactured in the country (Hamin et al., 2005, p. 32), at the same time the product manufactured in the country receives the image of that country (Jenes et al., 2009). It is worth noticing that the image of country of origin is constructed from a person's subjective perception of the object (Jeffe & Nebenzahl, 2002).

A person's attitude toward the country of origin and/or brand origin (Han, 1989) can be influenced by personal experience (e.g. traveling, studying in other countries), knowledge about the country, one's political beliefs (Sohail, 2005). Also, the importance of country of origin depends on product category and its importance for a person (Gürhan-Canli et al., 2000). Attitudes toward a product's country of origin can also be determined by a person's specific knowledge about a product or its category. Schweiger proved the hypothesis that strength of impact of country of manufacturing depended on technical complexity of product category (Bluemelhuber et al., 2007). Demographical data of consumers (age, gender, incomes, and education) could have an impact on attitude toward country of origin (Balabanis, 2002).

An impact of cultural environment on perception of the country of origin

Stereotypes are another category of factors which could be important for judgment about products from different countries. A stereotype that is related with a country serves as the basis for creation of schemes for evaluation of countries - producers. They influence evaluations of other characteristics of a product (quality, price) (Ahmed et al., 2004). On the other hand, existence of stereotypes not always and not for everybody is an impor-

tant factor for evaluation of the product, since a stronger impact is made by the personal beliefs (Janda et al., 1997). Moreover, the compared product category and the country's stereotypes could be understood differently in various countries. Due to cultural, historical, political, religious or geographical specifics, countries might have certain differences or similarities. Equally, similar cultural differences or similarities exist among consumers who live in different countries. According to Kotler and Keller (2007, p. 113), „culture is the most important and crucial factor influencing consumer's behavior". In some cases, certain country of manufacturing and the country of brand origin can be perceived differently, depending on the cultural specifics of the respondent. Klein et al. (1998) determined that Japan is a quality standard for Chinese, and the USA was a similar standard for Europeans (Badri, 1995). Foscht (2008) analyzed the perception of Red Bull brand in six different countries and found that the brand had different image even though the positioning was the same. That allows us to conclude that the consumer's culture and cultural environment can influence the perceptions about the country of origin.

Larosche (2002) analyzed Canadians' attitudes about certain countries and their products and found certain differences between English and French subcultures. Meng et al. (2007) measured the effect of country of origin among three groups – Africans and Caucasians who lived in the USA, and Chinese. Results of the research showed that culture is a very important factor, and it can induce essential differences of attitude. These studies specifically argue that subcultures may significantly differ from the major cultural context within a country, thus resulting in specific evaluations of other countries and product attributes. This leads to an assumption that emigrants to other countries, while blending into host country culture, also retain certain stereotypes from their native (home country) culture.

A person who decided to emigrate from his native country encounters a problem of adaptation in a different culture, or acculturation. Such process of acculturation is continuous, and requires some changes in behavior and attitudes. It is a very important process since a person tries to establish balance with the environment. Some emigrants are successful in acculturation, while others have the reaction of rejection, a cultural shock, when the amount of changes exceeds the person's ability to adapt to a foreign culture (Gaidelytė, 2007).

Kaufman-Scarborough (2000) and Palumbo et al. (2004) analyzed acculturation in their studies of subcultures in the USA. They state that immigrants could take values and behavior of a foreign country and did not lose link with their native culture, thus immigrants as a community do not necessarily disappear in a foreign society. They learn a new way of thinking, and experience a new way of behavior. Though there are several levels of assimilation with the local culture, in many occasions immigrants may be studied as a certain subculture within it. Some immigrants assimilate with the foreign culture and lose their native culture. Other immigrants choose integration when they are able to save their ethnical identity and equally participate in a foreign culture. Still others undergo a process of marginalization during which they refuse their native as well as a foreign culture. (Gaidelytė, 2007; Palumbo et al., 2004).

Research settings and hypotheses development

Lithuania is a typical Post-Soviet country, which had to change all economic and political life and can be called an emerging economy (according to the World Bank, July 2008). Being a part of the Soviet Union, Lithuanians had a deficit of products or availability of only outdated products made in the Soviet countries, which caused Lithuanians' xenophily. The ability to get foreign-made products was related with a high social status. Transition to a market economy had numerous effects on people's economic, cultural and social life. However, this transition period increased a level of xenophily, since the ability to purchase foreign video equipment showed a social status (due to high differences in income). Being an emerging economy Lithuania has had a high level of growth and a number of crises. Such lack of stability in Lithuanian politics and economy, inconsistent policy between city and countryside caused a wave of emigration (Bagdanavičius, 2008). Emigration accelerated when Lithuania was accepted to the EU. In addition, some personal motives, such as possibility to get a higher salary, better working conditions, etc., encouraged emigration. The main countries of emigration were the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany and the USA. Almost 40% of emigrants selected two countries, the UK and Ireland. Therefore emigrants to these two countries were chosen since these countries could be named as developed countries. Finally, one group represented Lithuanians who live in Lithuania. Their attitudes are influenced by the native culture that is characterized as an emerging economy rather than a developed one.

Based on literature overview, we have noticed a few aspects of country of origin analysis that may be further developed. First, there is a noticeable research gap in the analysis and comparison of the 'developed country' versus 'emerging economy'. This includes comparison of attitudes of the respondents from the two groups of countries, and also – the comparison of products (brands) originating from the two types of countries. Second, there might be differences between the opinions and attitudes towards the country of origin of the population that lives within domestic cultural environment, and those who have emigrated to more developed countries, thus partly assimilating into the local cultural context. And third, the country of origin construct can be divided into the constructs of country of manufacturing and country of band origin. Though previous research argues that the country of brand origin is more strongly related with the image (stereotype) of specific countries, rather little evidence from emerging economies has been found yet.

This leads to formulating two hypotheses that are based on the countries of manufacturing, two others that explore the construct of the country of brand origin, and one more that compares the two sub-constructs among themselves. Namely:

H_1: Respondents from an emerging economy (Lithuania) have different opinion about the country of manufacturing compared with the respondents that emigrated to a developed country.

H_2: For the respondents who live in or have emigrated from an emerging economy, developed countries have a better image as a country of manufacturing than emerging economies.

The same hypotheses were developed about the country of brand origin.

H$_3$: Respondents from an emerging economy (Lithuania) have different opinion about the country of brand origin compared with the respondents that emigrated to a developed country.

H$_4$: For the respondents who live in or have emigrated from an emerging economy, brands from developed countries have a better image than those from emerging economies.

According to O'Cass et al., we can assume that the country of brand origin will be more important than the country of manufacturing, and that consumers will relate the brand with the country of brand origin.

H$_5$: Respondents more strongly relate brands with the country of brand origin than with the country of manufacturing.

The latter hypothesis to some extent summarizes two research tracks (on country of manufacturing and country of brand origin).

Research methodology

Measurements

Three brands were selected for the research – Panasonic, LG and BEKO. The first two of these brands largely announce their country of brand origin, while BEKO prefers to communicate this aspect less openly, Turkey being its country of brand origin. During the research, three pictures with brands and countries of brand origin – Japan, South Korea and Turkey were shown to the respondents. Brands were related with the countries of manufacturing, describing that Panasonic is produced in the United Kingdom, LG in Poland, and BEKO in Turkey. This allowed to form three different cases: in the first, both the brand name and the country of manufacturing were associated with a developed country; in the second the country of brand origin was identified as a developed country while the country of manufacturing represented an emerging economy; third – both the country of brand origin and the country of manufacturing was the same emerging economy (BEKO manufactured in Turkey).

It was planned to research respondents' attitude toward the three products, with just abstract information about them, therefore Han's model (1989) was chosen as a background for measurement of the country of brand image. The image of the country was measured in relation with some specific product category (TV sets) instead of measuring total image of the country. Five dimensions were used (innovation, style, status, competence and excellence (Roth & Romeo, 1992). Image of each of the five countries was measured using the five criteria mentioned above and 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree". The analysis of scale reliability showed Cronbach's alpha coefficient for Japan – 0.79, Poland - 0.91, the United Kingdom - 0.91, Turkey - 0.93 and South Korea - 0.82. We used 10 statements related with external, internal and quality attributes (stylishness, attractiveness, ingenious de-

sign, additional functions, audio-video quality, technical progressiveness, durability, reliability, quality of components, common quality) developed by Leonidou (2007). Attitudes were measured using a seven-point scale ranging from 1="totally disagree" to 7="totally agree". The analysis of scale reliability showed Cronbach's alpha coefficient for Panasonic 0.89, for LG - 0.92 and for BEKO - 0.95.

Sample

The survey was performed in four countries: Lithuania, Ireland, the UK and Finland at the same time. Respondents were selected using a snowball technique, as respondents were Lithuanians who lived in Lithuania (Lithuania inhabitants) and the Lithuanians who lived in other three countries at that moment. The survey was performed by sending the questionnaires by e-mail. In total, 320 questionnaires were included into the analysis. Almost equal number of respondents was selected from each country (see Table 1). Among emigrants, almost 20% of respondents had left Lithuania 1-2 years ago, while the largest group was those who emigrated 3-6 years ago – it accounted for more than a half of the sample. Another 27.5% of emigrants had left Lithuania 7-19 years ago.

TABLE 1. **Sample profile**

Incomes	Percentage	You live in	Percentage	Years of living in the country	Percentage
Low	38.8	Lithuania	25.0	1-2	19.6
Medium	53.8	Ireland	25.3	2-6	52.9
High	7.5	the UK	25.0	7-19	27.5
		Finland	24.7		
Gender					
Male	52.5				
Female	47.5				

The sample included almost equal number of male and female respondents. The average of respondents' age was 30 years. The respondents were divided into three groups on the basis of their income - low income, medium and high income. Since income in Lithuania significantly differs from that in other countries, the respondents were asked to evaluate their income compared with the average income of the country they live in. Just 7.5% of the respondents stated that their income was high, while more than half of the respondents selected the answer "medium" and almost 39% reported low income.

Research findings

The respondents had different opinions about the selected countries - producers of TV sets. Japan received the best evaluation (see Table 2). The evaluation of South Korea ranked significantly lower (m_{Japan}=4.4681, m_{Korea}=3.9119, t= 13.553, p< 0.001). The

TABLE 2. **Evaluation of countries as TV producers**

	Mean
Japan	4.4681
South Korea	3.9119
the UK	3.2313
Poland	2.0281
Turkey	2.0019

evaluation for the UK was neutral rather than positive and that differed significantly from South Korea evaluation (difference from South Korea m_{Korea}=3.9119, $m_{the UK}$=3.2313, t= 19.318, p< 0.001). Respondents evaluated Poland and Turkey negatively. That well confirms Hypothesis 2 (H_2).

It was expected that Lithuanians who live in Lithuania and emigrants to the selected countries did not have the same opinion about the country of manufacturing. Actually, both groups of respondents have the same opinion about Japan and South Korea as the countries of manufacturing (see Table 3). However, their attitudes differ about the UK, Poland and Turkey. So we can conclude that the developed countries with well-known brands are evaluated equally and different cultural environment did not influence them. Unexpectedly, inhabitants of Lithuania had better attitudes about another developed country (the UK) and emerging economies (Poland and Turkey) than the Lithuanians living abroad. This evidence rejects H_1. At the same time such results present the idea that the country of manufacturing is not so important for respondents as the country of brand origin.

TABLE 3. **Differences of attitudes about countries of manufacturing between the Lithuanians living in Lithuania and the emigrants.**

Country of manufacturing	Respondents	N	Mean	T test	Sig. (2-tailed)
Japan	Emigrants	240	4.4700	0.103	0.918
	Lithuania inhabitants	80	4.4625		
South Korea	Emigrants	240	3.9192	0.322	0.748
	Lithuania inhabitants	80	3.8900		
the UK	Emigrants	240	3.0408	-8.604	0.000
	Lithuania inhabitants	80	3.8025		
Poland	Emigrants	240	1.9258	-3.414	0.001
	Lithuania inhabitants	80	2.3350		
Turkey	Emigrants	240	1.9417	-2.126	0.035
	Lithuania inhabitants	80	2.1825		

Furthermore, there was no significant correlation between the duration of living in the country and the attitude toward the country (see Table 4). Only in one case a very weak positive correlation between time of living in a country and opinion about South Korea (r=0.140, p< 0.05) was discovered.

Statistical analysis showed that there is a statistically significant correlation between attitudes toward different countries as producers of TV sets. A negative correlation was noticed between Japan and other less known countries – producers of TV sets: Poland (r=-0.255, p< 0.001), the UK (r=-0.222, p< 0.001) and Turkey (r=-0.119, p< 0.05). However, the respondents who evaluated Japan positively had a positive opinion about

TABLE 4. **Correlation between image of country – producer of TV sets and years of living in the country (Lithuanian respondents are not included)**

		Years of living in the country
Japan	Pearson Correlation	0.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.164
Poland	Pearson Correlation	0.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.295
the UK	Pearson Correlation	-0.119
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.066
Turkey	Pearson Correlation	-0.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.085
South Korea	Pearson Correlation	0.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.030

South Korea as well (r=0.240, $p< 0.001$) (see Table 5). The strongest positive correlation was noticed between attitudes toward Poland and Turkey (r=0.560, $p< 0.001$) and opinion about the UK (r=0.436, $p< 0.001$). Furthermore, the opinion about Poland has a weak positive correlation with South Korea. Evaluations of South Korea as a producer of TV sets positively correlated with the UK (r=0.282, $p< 0.001$) and negatively with Turkey (r=-0.206, $p< 0.001$). We can conclude that broad statements like "developed countries" or "emerging economies" could produce very different image depending on product category, as opinions of South Korea positively correlate with such countries as Japan and the UK. On the contrary, the UK negatively correlated with Japan and had a positive correlation with the image of Poland.

TABLE 5. **Correlation between image of different countries – producers of TV sets.**

		Japan	Poland	the UK	Turkey
Poland	Correlation	-0.255			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
the UK	Correlation	-0.222	0.436		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
Turkey	Correlation	-0.119	0.560	0.075	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.033	0.000	0.180	
South Korea	Correlation	0.240	0.157	0.282	-0.206
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.005	0.000	0.000

TABLE 6. **Evaluation of brand image.**

	Mean
Panasonic	5.6516
LG	5.5775
BEKO	3.3456

The second part of the research focused on the image of brands of TV sets. Panasonic received the best evaluation, and LG image was very similar to that of Panasonic ($m_{Panasonic}$=5.6516, m_{LG}=5.5775, t= 1.976, p< 0.05) (see Table 6). However, BEKO was evaluated much worse, with significant difference from Panasonic ($m_{Panasonic}$=5.6516, m_{BEKO}=3.3456, t= 34.551, p< 0.001) and LG (m_{LG}=5.5775, m_{BEKO}=3.3456, t= 34.369, p< 0.001). Here it is worth noticing that Panasonic was assembled in the UK which did not receive high evaluation as a producer of TV sets. Moreover, LG was made in Poland that received low evaluations. That well confirms Hypothesis 4 (H_4).

Attitudes to brands of TV sets differ between Lithuania inhabitants and emigrants to other countries. Lithuania inhabitants have the more positive opinion about all brands – Panasonic, LG and BEKO than emigrants (see Table 7). These findings confirm the third (H_3) hypothesis.

TABLE 7. **Differences of attitudes about brands of TV sets between the Lithuanians living in Lithuania and the emigrants to other countries.**

Brands	Respondents	N	Mean	T test	Sig. (2-tailed)
Panasonic	Emigrants	240	5.5858	-2.931	0.004
	Lithuania inhabitants	80	5.8488		
LG	Emigrants	240	5.5037	-2.764	0.006
	Lithuania inhabitants	80	5.7988		
BEKO	Emigrants	240	3.2467	-2.988	0.003
	Lithuania inhabitants	80	3.6425		

Finally, a strong correlation was found between the evaluation of brand and the evaluation of country of brand origin. Image of Panasonic had a positive correlation with the image of Japan (r=0.511, p< 0.001), but there was no relation between the image of Panasonic and the image of country of manufacturing – the UK (see Table 8). The same situation is observed in the case of LG. The image of LG had a positive correlation with the image of country of brand origin – South Korea (r=0.385, p< 0.001). However, no correlation was found with the image of country of manufacturing – Poland. In addition, it is noteworthy that the image of Panasonic had a positive correlation with the image of South Korea (r=0.356, p< 0.001); similarly, the image of LG positively correlates with the image of Japan (r=0.404, p< 0.001).

TABLE 8. **Correlation between image of country and brand.**

		Panasonic	**LG**	**BEKO**
Japan	Pearson Correlation	0.511	0.404	-0.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.525
Poland	Pearson Correlation	-0.054	-0.099	0.469
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.339	0.076	0.000
the UK	Pearson Correlation	0.088	0.060	0.539
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.115	0.285	0.000
Turkey	Pearson Correlation	-0.063	-0.021	0.417
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.260	0.706	0.000
South Korea	Pearson Correlation	0.356	0.385	0.170
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.002

The image of BEKO positively correlates with the image of Poland ($r=0.469$, $p< 0.001$), the UK ($r=0.539$, $p< 0.001$) and Turkey ($r=0.417$, $p< 0.001$). Our findings support Hypothesis 5 (H_5) that the country of brand origin is more important than the country of manufacturing.

Discussion and conclusions

The research was based on the assumption that a certain socio-cultural context may influence consumers' attitudes towards the country of manufacturing and the country of brand origin. The research was conducted among the Lithuanians living in Lithuania, and Lithuanian emigrants who live in four different countries.

Findings provide evidence that, in general, more developed countries had a better image as countries – manufacturers of TV sets than less developed countries (emerging economies). This was rather expected, and just confirms findings from previous studies. However, it was observed that opinions differ between those who currently live in their home country (Lithuania) and emigrants that currently live in developed countries. Evaluations of respondents currently living in an emerging economy towards a developed country (the UK) as the country of manufacturing are higher than those of emigrants. Since this was just an exploratory study, it is rather difficult to interpret this finding. One of possible ways to argue is that emigrants know realities of the UK better, and have lost part of the initial very positive opinion about it. The respondents who did not have closer personal experience from within a developed country still retain a "dose" of overvaluation towards it. However, this opens opportunities for further research that would directly compare attitudes of local population with those of immigrants, also trying to pinpoint the main factors that influence possible differences.

Analysis of opinions about country of brand origin revealed that brands from developed countries were evaluated better than those from emerging economies. Again, this was rather typical of the numerous studies that were performed in emerging econo-

mies. The current study added new evidence that respondents who live in an emerging economy have more positive attitude towards the analyzed brands compared with Lithuanian emigrants who currently live in developed countries.

Finally, strong correlation was found between the evaluation of a brand and evaluation of the country of brand origin, while there was no correlation between the evaluation of a brand and evaluation of country of manufacturing. This supports the statement that the country of brand origin is more important than the country of manufacturing. This in a sense explains why global firms may move their manufacturing to low cost countries relatively painlessly in regard to their overall image and reputation.

This study has certain limitations. One of the main restricting factors was that samples from the different countries were not identical in terms of demographical data. Also, it was not possible to measure influence of time spent in emigration, though it is a crucial factor for cultural assimilation. However, the exploration of the change of emigrants' attitudes might open a quite new research track in studying COO within the context of globalization.

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