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Brexit or Brand it? The Effects of Attitude Towards Brexit and Reshored Brands on Consumer Purchase Intention

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Brexit has caused a seismic shift in the British socio-economic and political landscapes, creating widespread uncertainties, while simultaneously giving hope and national pride to millions. The decision by a number of organizations to reshore their production has opened a new era for business management that challenges the axiomatic assumption of the benefits of offshored production. Although reshoring predates Brexit, the link between the two in the British context is not just serendipitous and they are argued to have reasonable interlinkages. However, there is inadequate empirical evidence to suggest that British consumers' attitude towards Brexit has any effect on their intention to purchase reshored brands. Through a mixed-methods study comprising a survey of 415 respondents and 20 in-depth interviews, this paper addresses this research gap. Findings suggest that corporate social responsibility (CSR) and consumer reshoring sentiment (CRS) have positive effects on consumers' attitude towards reshored brands. Despite CRS's positive influence on attitude towards Brexit, the latter does not have any significant effects on the intention to purchase a reshored brand, which is positively influenced by the attitude towards the same brand. As such, companies should enhance the image of their brands and CSR in order to harness the benefits of reshoring.

Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK)'s departure from the European Union (EU), popularly known as Brexit, is one of the most remarkable incidents in recent years, as it triggered a seismic shift in the socio-political and economic landscapes of the UK and EU member countries (Cumming and Zahra, 2016; McLeay, Lichy and Asaad, 2020; Wood and Budhwar, 2016). Brexit leaves businesses with complexities and uncertainties, due to the UK's exit from the European Single Market and the EU Customs Union (Brown, Liñares-Zegarra and Wil-

son, 2019; Casadei and Iammarino, 2021; Kellard *et al.*, 2022; Moschieri and Blake, 2019). British businesses are required to deal with the absence of the seamless supplies of accessories and workforce from the EU member countries (Fuller, 2021; Sampson, 2017). British products' duty-free access to the EU market has also come to an end. Brexit coincided with, and to some extent triggered, changes in the formation and operations of both large and small UK-based businesses (Moradlou *et al.*, 2021), which continue to grapple with the post-Brexit dynamics. For instance, Dyson planned to shift its production to

Singapore,¹ HSBC shifted its European units from London to France² and a large number of businesses and jobs in the financial sector moved from London to Dublin, Paris, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.³ On the other hand, some organizations, such as Clarks⁴ and Burberry,⁵ have resorted to reshoring their production back to the UK. The UK had the highest rate of reshoring in Europe, and this is argued to harness the benefits of using local value chains (Dachs *et al.*, 2019). This may well have a plausible link with the post-Brexit trade and economic conditions, which encourage organizations to leverage local production.

The concept of reshoring has received traction in the business and management disciplines in the last decade, with increasing evidence of large enterprises bringing their operations back to their home countries (Barbieri *et al.*, 2018; Gray *et al.*, 2013). This is the reverse of offshoring, which was widely adopted in the early part of this century (Antelo and Bru, 2010; Bailey and De Propriis, 2014; Kotabe *et al.*, 2008; Schmeisser, 2013). The high production costs in suppliers' countries, transportation costs and regulatory barriers often put organizations in a conundrum over the sustainability of offshored production (Konara and Ganotakis, 2020; Munjal Requejo and Kundu, 2019; Stensaker and Langley, 2010). Due to these difficulties, reshoring has emerged as a viable alternative.

Gap 1. The reshoring literature, thus far, mainly focuses on organizational strategies by delving into reshoring's roles in operations (Dachs *et al.*, 2019; Stentoft *et al.*, 2016), the supply chain (Ellram, Tate and Petersen, 2013; Fratocchi *et al.*, 2014; Wiesmann *et al.*, 2017) and issues related to tariffs and trade (Krenz, Prettner and Strulik, 2021). Although two recent articles (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2018, 2020) highlighted the need to assess reshoring from consumers' perspective, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical explanations of

the antecedents to and outcomes of consumers' attitude towards reshored brands. Furthermore, existing literature offers scant empirical findings on consumers' attitude towards an isolationist and nationalistic socio-political issue such as Brexit. Accordingly, we set our first research objective:

RO1: To examine the possible antecedents and the effects of these antecedents on attitude towards Brexit and attitude towards reshored brands.

Gap 2. It is argued that consumers favour brands that hold their preferred socio-political values (Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020; Nalick *et al.*, 2016). Brands shape and reflect consumers' sense of cultural and political identities (Chan and Ilicic, 2019; Ng, 2018). However, there is a lack of consensus amongst scholars on the extent to which consumers' attitude towards socio-political issues can lead to a consistent attitude towards certain brands that uphold a similar ethos (Duman and Ozgen, 2018; Matute *et al.*, 2021). This may well be the case for reshored brands, which embody a certain socio-political ethos, as reshoring involves domestic production, higher national employability and reduced carbon footprint. The concept of consumer reshoring sentiment (CRS) offers a broader set of metrics to assess consumers' attitudinal dispositions towards reshoring. Notwithstanding reshoring's underlying principles for operational and financial efficiency, the concept can be interpreted as pertinent doctrine to champion supporting the local economy and reducing environmental hazards. The former has strong relevance to the Brexit-induced isolationist view towards the economy. Accordingly, we endeavour to link CRS and reshoring with Brexit, which opposes an integrative economy and purports isolationism (Colantone and Stanig, 2018). That said, Brexit's association with CRS can help to develop a better conceptualization of reshoring by linking it with consumers' isolationist socio-political attitudes. Furthermore, attitude itself does not guarantee behavioural outcomes (Juvan and Dolnicar, 2014; Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020; Tan, Ooi and Goh, 2017). Hence, there is a lack of consensus in the existing literature on how socio-political attitudes can lead to behavioural outcomes (i.e. purchase intention) towards a brand. We address this research gap in the context of consumers' attitude towards Brexit and reshored brands:

¹Dyson's decision to relocate their headquarters to Singapore | The Open University Business School.

²HSBC shifts European branches to French unit control ahead of Brexit | Reuters.

³Brexit: Over 400 finance firms move jobs out of London (yahoo.com).

⁴NatWest | Bringing it all back home (natwestbusinesshub.com).

⁵Burberry | European Reshoring Monitor (europa.eu).

Table 1. Major focus of existing reshoring research and consequent gap

| Themes | Scholarly works | Key points |
|--|--|---|
| Reshoring: concepts and typologies | Gray et al. (2013); Fratocchi et al. (2014, 2016) | Reshoring (backshoring) has been conceptualized and characterized as part of a firm's dynamic internationalization strategies in the context of manufacturing and operations. Reshoring can be of different types based on a firm's motivation: value-driven, country-specific, efficiency-driven or firm-specific. |
| Factors/drivers/reasons for reshoring | Ellram, Tate and Petersen (2013); Stentoft et al. (2016); Wiesmann et al. (2017); Dachs et al. (2019); Moretto, Patrucco and Harland (2020); Krenz, Prettnr and Strulik (2021); McIvor and Bals (2021) | The key reasons for reshoring are identified as pursuit of skilled labour, reduction of materials and operational cost, country risk minimization, global competitive dynamics, government policies, brand reputation, tariffs, logistics management and supply chain completeness. |
| Implementation process of reshoring | Boffelli et al. (2020, 2021) | While implementing the reshoring strategy, several key issues have been identified, such as behavioural features (rationality, complexity and anchoring). |
| Reshoring, digitalization and Industry 4.0 | Ancarani, Di Mauro and Mascali (2019); Dachs, Kinkel and Jägerc (2019); Butollo (2021); Krenz, Prettnr and Strulik (2021) | Technological advances and Industry 4.0, such as digitalization and automation, play an important role in adopting and implementing reshoring (backshoring) decisions, as they facilitate performance outcomes of the manufacturing organizations. |

Gap 1: The major focus of reshoring research revolves around organizational strategies, government policies and trade efficiencies, and lacks consumers' perspectives.

RO2: To examine the importance of the mediating roles of the attitude towards Brexit and attitude towards reshored brands in determining the effects of consumers' reshoring sentiment on their purchase intention towards reshored brands.

The two objectives together constitute the overarching aim of this paper: to develop and analyse a consumer behavioural framework for reshored brands within a complex socio-political context such as Brexit.

By using the 'identity-based view of a corporation' (also known as corporate marketing – an organization-wide philosophy and culture) (Podnar and Balmer, 2021) as the theoretical lens for this research, we develop a conceptual framework as part of a sequential mixed-methods study that combines an extensive survey with in-depth interviews. Through the meta-inference of the quantitative and qualitative data, the paper concludes that attitude towards Brexit does not have any influence on consumers' intent to purchase reshored brands. However, consumers' reshoring sentiment, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and attitude towards reshored brands positively affect the intention to purchase reshored brands. We contribute to

the body of literature by suggesting that a socio-political sentiment (e.g. Brexit) does not necessarily influence consumers' economic decisions. That said, consumers' perceptions of a socio-political issue or ideology are often rooted in a highly nuanced and complex understanding and interpretation that may or may not influence how they choose or purchase brands.

Literature review and theoretical background

Reshoring and ethnocentrism

Many firms that have had decades of offshoring strategies have decided on reshoring due to multifarious motivations (Barbieri et al., 2019; Boffelli et al., 2020; Dachs et al., 2019). Reshoring refers to a company's decision to relocate its activities back to its home country (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2018). Existing studies on reshoring have mainly focused on firms' perspectives (Fratocchi et al., 2016), as reported in Table 1. Hence, reshoring is considered a strategic option to bring efficiency in the production process, which can potentially enhance operational and financial sustainability

Table 2. Research gap within reshoring studies from consumers' perspectives

| Scholarly works | Purpose | Major findings |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2015) | To test the impact of reshoring decisions on consumers' willingness to buy and willingness to pay for the products of companies implementing reshoring decisions. | Findings suggest that moral psychology factors, such as positive and negative emotions, consumers' perception of the company's motivation for reshoring and ethnocentrism, have impacts on consumers' purchase intention. The issue of ethnocentrism in particular is an important antecedent that has relevance to this paper. |
| Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2018) | To contribute to existing international business research by adding a new element – CRS – which is about the drivers for reshoring. | The study first identified six demand-based drivers that compose CRS, and then tested the link between CRS and consumer willingness to reward the reshoring company; and the effectiveness of CRS in segmenting and targeting the market. |
| Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2020) | To empirically better assess how reshoring can increase home-country consumers' perceived value of company offerings, depending on the specific host country from which the company has reshored. | The study findings verified the interplay between CRS and consumer animosity (CA), which leads to specific emotional reactions (gratitude and relief), which, in their turn, affect relevant market responses (positive word-of-mouth, willingness to buy and advocacy behaviours). |

Gap 2: The development of CRS is a significant advancement in reshoring research. It helps to analyse the factors that contribute to consumers' attitudes towards reshoring and willingness to engage with reshoring brands. However, these studies do not take into account consumers' attitudes towards socio-political issues and relevant aspects of reshoring companies' corporate identities. Furthermore, the concept of CRS, which is integral to the formation of corporate identity, also remains unexplored.

(Boffelli *et al.*, 2021; Fratocchi *et al.*, 2016). However, customers' perceptions of reshoring receive limited attention (Barbieri *et al.*, 2018; Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2015). Table 1 identifies this research gap by summarizing the research on reshoring.

Authors in contemporary literature respond to the call by highlighting consumers' perspective. It is argued that consumers share positive beliefs about reshoring due to the perceived value of the brands (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2018). The more recent studies have focused on CRS: that is, consumers' appraisal structure, formed by positive beliefs connected to reshoring (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2020). The appraisal structure of CRS, aligned with the psychological literature (Frijda and Mesquita, 2000), constitutes beliefs that demonstrate consumers' latent representations towards reshoring decisions (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2020). Such sentiments depict their desired outcomes or required actions for reshoring: for example, receiving higher-quality products or an increase in the rate of employment in the home country due to reshoring of brands (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2018). Nonetheless, the evidence of empirical and conceptual works linking reshoring with consumers' isolationist and nationalistic political ideology, such as Brexit, is tenuous. Due to CRS's link with ethno-

centrism (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2020), it is even more pertinent to seek how consumers' attitude towards Brexit relates to CRS. That leads to the second research gap, which is defined and explained in Table 2.

The link between reshoring and ethnocentrism is relevant for this research, because of the apparent link between national pride and Brexit, as purported by certain quarters of scholars and political commentators (Becker, Fetzer and Novy, 2017). The concept of ethnocentrism was first coined in the early part of the last century, mainly in the sociology literature, to denote individuals' differential treatments towards their 'out-group' members (Shimp and Sharma, 1987). The concept was subsequently adopted within the psychology literature and used to highlight how individuals' own normative values and cultural/national symbols contribute to their pride, while they tend to disassociate from the symbols and values of other cultures/nations (Gonzalez-Fuentes, 2019; Ma, Yang and Yoo, 2020; Triandis, 1990). In the contemporary marketing and international business literature, the concept is considered to be a useful tool to assess individuals' pride in their own national and cultural identities, and is used as an opposite of cosmopolitanism, which encourages integrative behaviour (Dey *et al.*, 2019; Han and Nam, 2019). The concept of consumer ethnocentrism provides

a consumption dimension for ethnocentric individuals by identifying their pride in local products and suspicion towards global brands and culture (Steenkamp, Batra and Alden, 2003). Hence, ethnocentric individuals are likely to be against globalization, and they may support isolationist notions such as Brexit.

CRS, CSR, attitude towards reshored brands and behavioural intention

While previous research differentiates and emphasizes a firm's brand to its multiple stakeholders through cognitive values (e.g. product/service quality, prices) and/or affective/emotional values (CSR, corporate credibility, personality or reputation) separately, this study proposes a new way for a corporate brand to project and differentiate itself via CSR elements in the context of reshored branding strategies underpinned by the identity-based view of the corporation (Podnar and Balmer, 2021). That is, a corporate brand represents the totality of its promise via its stances, philosophy, products, services or consumer experiences, from which its core values are derived (Greyser and Urde, 2019). In other words, the entire organization and its multiple stakeholders need to be considered when the overall marketing strategy is designed. Similarly, Argawal and Malhotra (2005) found that overall attitude (including choice) is a joint function of dimensional attitude (which is the salient brand attribute), holistic affect (emotions and feelings) and the interaction term.

In consumer research, Malhotra (2005) explains that the focal issue regarding cognitive and emotional branding has been and continues to be the question of the causality or interaction between the two and how that interaction influences the consumer decision-making process or choice. Additionally, Mitchell and Olson's (1981) study highlighted that the basic theoretical proposition of Fishbein's attitude theory is that beliefs cause attitude (Mitchell and Olson, 1981, p. 319) and 'a person's attitude is a function of his salient belief at a given point in time and belief is a subjective element' (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p. 222). Ajzen (1991) later extended this theory to include Behavioural Intention and Perceived Behavioural Control in what is known as the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

However, existing literature showcases a lack of consensus amongst scholars with regard to the ef-

fects of cognitive and affective components, calling for much effort to assess the effects of both (Muhammad *et al.*, 2021). Consumers' attitude towards socio-politically sensitive brands may involve both cognitive and affective components. For instance, product features can constitute cognitive attitude, while CRS and CSR can link with affective attitude. Instead of the partial analysis of attitudinal components, as suggested in the existing literature (see Malhotra, 2005; Mukherjee and Althuisen, 2020; Syed Alwi, Ali and Nguyen, 2017), we endeavour to take into account a holistic understanding of the attitude-behaviour relationship, incorporating both cognitive-affect (brand and CRS) and socio-political issues (Brexit) to form the overall attitude that leads to purchase intention. Due to the increasing importance of societal value, an identity-based view is needed in order for an organizational brand to succeed and receive strong stakeholder support (Podnar and Balmer 2021; Srivastava, 2020).

It is argued that often marketing strategies are fraught with narrow and myopic views (Bartikowski and Beren, 2021). The identity-based view towards corporate marketing underscores the importance of political, social and environmental factors. According to Podnar and Balmer (2021, p. 643), corporate marketing is 'a customer, stakeholder, societal and CSR/ethical focused philosophy enacted via an organizational-wide orientation and culture'. The relevant constituents of corporate branding (such as CSR, corporate marketing, corporate reputation and image, heritage and corporate branding) need to be aligned and consistent in order to have a synergistic impact on an organization's corporate identity. We use this conceptual lens to analyse the links between consumers' perceptions of reshoring, CSR and Brexit. For example, Clarks' brand identity is a result of 200 years of concerted marketing strategy delivered through craftsmanship and a strong sense of commitment to local community and responsibility towards the planet. As stated on their website: 'Acting with integrity has always been at the core of Clarks. From our beginnings almost 200 years ago, crafting our first pairs of shoes from offcuts and looking after our local community right through to the present day, where we work continuously to support people and planet'.⁶

⁶Our Commitment to You | Clarks Sustainability.

Table 3. Research gap emanating from a lack of scholarly consensus on the inter-relationship between socio-political attitudes and purchase intention for similar brands

| Theme | Authors | Key points |
|--|--|--|
| Consistent and conclusive relationship between political ideology and behavioural outcomes | Duman and Ozgen (2018); Chan and Ilicic (2019); Jung and Mittal (2020); Northey and Chan (2020); Chan and Palmeira (2021); Fernandes et al. (2022) | Customers' political conservatism, identity and ideology are significantly associated with their attachment and trust towards the brand, satisfaction, brand/corporate logo (symmetric/asymmetric) and other behavioural outcomes (e.g. word-of-mouth, purchase). While making a purchasing decision, political identity plays a more influential role. On the other hand, consumers punish brands that support political views that oppose their own. |
| Inconclusive relationship between political ideology and behavioural outcomes | Antonetti and Anesa (2017); Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) | The results from a series of studies, involving both unknown and well-known brands, demonstrated that consumers' attitudes towards the brand decreased substantially when they disagreed with the brand's stand, whereas there was no significant effect among consumers' attitude and response when they were supportive of the brand's stand. On a different note, consumers, irrespective of political views, generally condemn tax avoidance from companies. |

Gap 3: There is a lack of consensus on whether or not a positive attitude towards a socio-political issue (e.g. Brexit champions national pride) can lead to purchase intention for a brand (e.g. a reshored brand) that may hold a similar ethos (e.g. reshoring increases national employment and reduces foreign dependency, and hence champions national pride).

Furthermore, in a divisive society, there is fluidity as to what would be regarded as an acceptable politically and morally correct standpoint (Mukherjee and Althuizen 2020). Hence, there is a lack of consensus in the existing literature on whether or not a certain socio-political consumer attitude can lead to favourable purchase intention towards a brand that champions consistent corporate identities. It remains to be seen whether attitude towards Brexit can have a positive influence on consumers' intent to purchase locally made brands (i.e. reshored brands). Table 3 captures this research gap by summarizing relevant literature.

The three aforementioned research gaps provide the theoretical impetus for this research. Our theoretical positioning recognizes that a brand should represent the values of an organization (philosophy, culture, identity) and its stakeholders and consumers (e.g. CRS). In particular, we conceptualize CSR at a more emotional-abstract brand level through a firm's moral, ethical and social responsibility to its multiple stakeholders (Syed Alwi, Ali and Nguyen, 2017). That is, an organization can express these moral obligations through a set of values derived from several belief attributes (e.g. CRS and CSR), expressed through the ethical orientation of its action.

Hypothesis development

Antecedents of attitude towards Brexit and attitude towards reshored brands

Existing literature alludes to the multifarious and eclectic reasons behind the popular support for Brexit in the UK (Carl, Dennison and Evans, 2019). It is argued that the root causes of Brexit circle around the two most arduous and compelling factors – anti-immigration sentiment and isolationism (Arnorsson and Zoega, 2018). The former, being a complex and emotive issue, was felt palpably by the people of many Western European countries, including the UK, which experienced a free flow of immigrants from the Eastern parts of the continent (Abrams and Travaglino, 2018). Accordingly, Brexit gained popularity amongst working-class British voters who had experienced job loss and economic hardship (Becker, Fetzer and Novy, 2017). The last decade observed a surge in right-wing politics, fuelled by anti-immigration sentiment (Cumming, Wood and Zahra, 2020). Trump's popularity in the United States is often deemed to be aligned with the Brexit ethos, as both seek to magnify nationalism through self-reliant economic activities, which are argued to generate employment and boost nationalistic pride by fostering national economic growth (Franklin

and Ginsburg, 2019). The two central assumptions within the pro-Brexit narrative, as such, have relations with some of the underlying beliefs enshrined within CRS (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2020), which exalts national pride (the 'made-in' effect) and superiority (perceived efficacy and quality of the brand). Likewise, ethnocentrism also relates to national pride and superiority and therefore can lead to a positive attitude towards Brexit.⁷ Grappi *et al.* (2018) argue that consumer ethnocentrism strongly affects attitude towards reshored brands. Hence, this paper develops the following hypotheses:

- H1a: Consumer reshoring sentiment will have an effect on attitude towards Brexit.
- H1b: Consumer ethnocentrism will have an effect on attitude towards Brexit.
- H1c: Consumer ethnocentrism will have an effect on attitude towards reshored brands.

According to the identity-based view (Podnar and Balmer, 2021), a corporation's values are inextricably linked with how it represents and engages with various stakeholders, including customers. Organizational philosophy and core values construe what and how people perceive a corporate entity to be (Greyser and Urde, 2019). CRS, being a set of beliefs that shape consumer values, is likely to lead to a positive attitude towards a brand of a company that has reshored its production. As suggested by Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2020), CSR is an evaluative mechanism to appraise reshored brands. Existing literature argues that consumers' perceived quality (Guerrero *et al.*, 2000), pride (Mogaji and Danbury, 2017), positive feeling (Jhamb *et al.*, 2020) and assurance of competency (Niazi, Ghani and Aziz, 2019; Papisolomou and Vrontis, 2006) can contribute to a positive brand attitude. The constructs of CRS are separately linked with attitude towards brands, so we hypothesize the following:

- H2a: Consumer reshoring sentiment will have an effect on attitude towards reshored brands.

CSR is arguably part of a corporate brand's identity and is conceptualized as part of a com-

pany's set of core beliefs (which is also regarded as an emotional concept) (Syed Alwi, Ali and Nguyen, 2017). Engaging in CSR is a necessary condition before a brand is conceived favourably by the stakeholder (Podnar and Balmer, 2021). Reshored brands are thought to fulfil ethical and moral obligations through returning their production to their home country, which positively enhances attitude towards the brand through improved product quality as well as saving the environment (Cassia, 2020), and thus these brands are seen as 'responsible', leading to favourable attitudes towards the same. Hence, the 'CSR-identity' approach that is attached to a reshored brand's value serves as another point of brand differentiation that a company can pursue. That is, connecting its brand positioning concerning what it stands for (e.g. caring for the environment and behaving ethically towards society) defines the essence of the company. Additionally, Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2018) explain that when consumers regard a company or brand as behaving responsibly towards the environment, they are likely to develop a favourable brand attitude. Hence:

- H2b: Corporate social responsibility will have an effect on attitude towards reshored brands.

Mediating hypotheses: Attitude towards Brexit and attitude towards reshored brands.

- H3a: Attitude towards Brexit will mediate the effect between consumer reshoring sentiment and behavioural intention of reshored brands.
- H3b: Attitude towards Brexit will mediate the effect between consumer ethnocentrism and behavioural intention of reshored brands.

Mitchell and Olson (1981, p. 319) pointed out that 'marketing information such as advertisement affects consumers' beliefs. Subsequently, the influenced salient beliefs mediate the marketing variable's effect on attitude, and attitude in turn mediates the resulting effects on behavioural intention'. Likewise, Abdeen *et al.* (2016) highlight that the effect of CSR in marketing stimuli induces emotional belief about the brand, which in turn influences attitude towards the brand and purchase behaviour. When a consumer holds such a belief about the company (reshoring sentiment, impact on the environment), they are likely to develop a favourable intention towards the brand (Grappi,

⁷It needs to be clarified that this paper is written more than 5 years after the Brexit referendum and attitude towards Brexit does not necessarily explain how respondents voted or would have voted in 2016.

Romani and Bagozzi, 2020). van Rekom, Go and Calter (2014) explain that to be successful in today's environment, a company must enhance the level of its brand's perceived authenticity through ethical and societal engagement, which improves firm reputation and ethical branding. Additionally, ethical brands are less likely to cause customer churn and more likely to encourage purchase behaviour (Davies, Lee and Ahonkhai, 2012). Therefore, this paper investigates the effects of attitude towards the reshored brand, CSR and behavioural intention, as hypothesized below:

- H4a: Attitude towards reshored brands will mediate the effect between corporate social responsibility and behavioural intention towards reshored brands.
- H4b: Attitude towards reshored brands will mediate the effect between consumer reshoring sentiment and behavioural intention towards reshored brands.

Outcome of attitude towards Brexit and attitude towards a reshored brand: Behavioural intention to purchase a reshored brand

As mentioned, a positive attitude towards Brexit is likely to develop appreciation for locally manufactured products due to nationalist and isolationist ideologies. Although there is limited academic research on the direct link between support for Brexit and desire for reshored brands, the wider social science literature alludes to the possible relationship between Brexit and UK-made products (Moradlou et al., 2020). Proponents of Brexit in newspapers and mass media have repeatedly stressed this link by suggesting that 80% of the population aged over 50 (who mostly voted for Brexit) would prefer to buy local products.⁸ Nationalist consumers, in general, tend to support locally manufactured products (Ding, 2017; Sandıkcı and Ekici, 2009). However, the interrelationship between attitude towards Brexit and purchase of reshored brands has not yet been properly and academically investigated.

- H5: Attitude towards Brexit will have an effect on behavioural intention towards reshored brands.

⁸Brexit: Theresa May – Consumers more likely to buy 'locally grown food' | UK | News | Express.co.uk.

The role of emotions in particular has been demonstrated in the past to influence attitude towards the brand (A_b). That is, attitude towards an advertisement (A_{ad}) has been shown to influence consumer beliefs and evaluations towards the brand (A_b) (Fishbein and Azjen, 1975). Gardner (1985) explains that feelings can influence the effect of the advertisement or the subsequent processing of the information it portrays. Similarly, Grappi et al. (2018, 2020) argue that positive attitudes towards a reshored brand encourage positive word-of-mouth and intention to buy the reshored brand. Likewise, favourable responses of the CSR-identity attitude will enhance consumers' behavioural intentions (van Rekom, Go and Calter, 2014), and a more abstract favourable brand attitude – for example, through ethical and socially responsible business practices – will lead to enhanced brand loyalty (Syed Alwi, Ali and Nguyen, 2017). Hence:

- H6: Attitude towards reshored brands will have an effect on behavioural intention towards reshored brands.

The model in Figure 1 illustrates the above hypothesized relationships.

Methodology

The research philosophy is underpinned by pragmatism and driven by abductive reasoning. Figure 2 summarizes the research design. Table 4 provides the ontological and epistemological stance for this research.

Study one: Quantitative

Study one was conducted to empirically validate the proposed framework (Figure 1). Table 5 explains the questionnaire development and the quantitative data collection process. The questionnaire comprised six constructs – CRS, ethnocentrism, attitude towards Brexit, attitude towards reshored brands, CSR and behavioural intention – which were derived from previous literature (see Appendix B for constructs and items). The content and face validity of all constructs and scales were ensured, following Churchill (1979). At the outset, the respondents were briefed about the concept of reshoring and reshored brands. Subsequently, they

Table 4. Research design and methods

| | |
|---|--|
| Mixed-methods approach | In this study, we adopted a sequential mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2003) combining different research paradigms (qualitative and quantitative), where the quantitative strand plays a primary role and the qualitative study renders a supportive hand. As discussed in the literature review, Brexit is driven by eclectic and multifarious perceptions and opinions. While quantitative research provides interrelationships between various factors, it does not fully capture the plausible reasons and socio-culturally nuanced deeper understanding that can be obtained through qualitative enquiries. Moreover, there are tenuous empirical works relating reshoring and Brexit. Hence, the research requires both quantitative and qualitative enquiries to simultaneously define the inter-relationships and establish a plausible explanation rooted in nuanced understanding. Both the topics of reshoring and Brexit are relatively new; therefore, the adoption of mixed methods is deemed significant, as it corroborates the findings of both methods. In the extant literature, there are epistemological rationales (Slavova and Karanasios, 2018; Venkatesh, Brown and Bala, 2013) and methodological guidelines (Tashakkori, Teddlie and Teddlie, 1998; Venkatesh, Brown and Sullivan, 2016) for the adoption of sequential mixed methods. |
| Epistemological research stance: Pragmatism | The philosophical assumptions for the research are important, as they provide a logical argument to select an appropriate research approach and strategy. As mentioned, this research delves into a complex set of socio-psychological issues. The objectives and contextual sensitivity of this research fit with the pragmatic epistemological assumption, which proclaims that there is a single real world, constituted by multiple realities due to individuals' unique interpretations of social phenomena. It offers the features of abductive reasoning, which advocate 'back-and-forth' alternation between workable theory and applied methods through improved outcomes (Morgan, 2007). Pragmatism suggests selecting methods that better facilitate a practical and outcome-oriented approach to the research problem (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007). The adoption of pragmatism for this study enables us to embrace various perspectives and to recognize the existence of a natural or physical world and the presence of social and psychological entities such as nationalism, ethnocentrism and subjective thoughts. |
| Abductive reasoning | Abductive reasoning adopts mixed methods, involving a practical 'hermeneutic circling' between inductive and deductive approaches which maintains an alternation between qualitative and quantitative methods (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Abductive reasoning overcomes the individual shortcomings of deductive and inductive reasoning while enabling researchers to work with different theories and to move back and forth between various data (e.g. qualitative and quantitative) to unravel the unique research outcome (Venkatesh, Brown and Sullivan, 2016). Therefore, we adopted an abductive approach to get a deeper understanding of the inter-relationship between various constructs within our conceptual model. An initial deductive approach enabled us to develop and test the model, whilst an inductive qualitative enquiry provided further explanation and nuanced understanding. |
| Research context | The research was conducted in the context of the UK, while Brexit continues to be a dominating factor in the socio-economic and political sphere of the country. As evident in the background discussion and literature review sections of this paper, despite production and operational issues, reshoring is often considered as a viable alternative. The companies' reshoring decisions, coupled with Brexit, could offer interesting and significant marketing and theoretical implications in the context of UK consumers' reshoring sentiment and behavioural intentions. |
| Study one: Quantitative | Study one adopted a quantitative method to address the key objective of examining the effects of consumer reshoring brand sentiment on purchase intention in post-Brexit UK. To achieve this, data were collected from UK residents through a survey questionnaire, which offers a deductive and confirmatory means to examine the extent of the quantifiable attitudinal and behavioural variables identified in the extant literature. The survey investigated UK residents' attitudes towards Brexit, depth of reshoring sentiment, perceived CSR and the impact of these variables on their behavioural intention. |
| Study two: Qualitative | The second study was carried out to further explore and interpret the findings from study one. Study two, adopting a qualitative interpretative approach, used semi-structured interviews with UK residents. This study explored the underlying reasons and attitudes towards Brexit, consumers' perceptions of reshoring, and their inherent explanations for intention to purchase reshored brands. From an ontological perspective, study two adopted a constructionist position by examining the contextual nuances of the phenomena (Bryman and Bell, 2015). A constant comparison method was followed in the data analysis through iterative checking of the data and literature (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2003; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2013). Therefore, the second study, while it worked with a set of a priori themes and codes, kept an open mind to extract any kind of surprising but significant outcome (Bryman and Bell, 2015). |

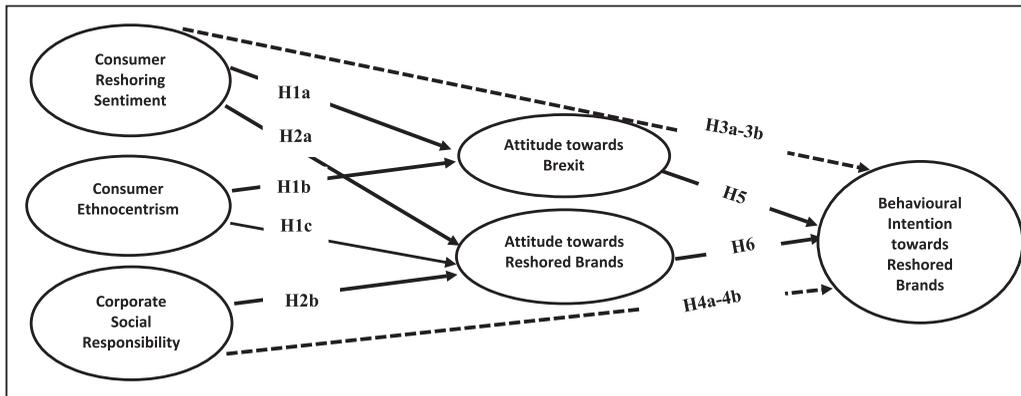


Figure 1. The conceptual model

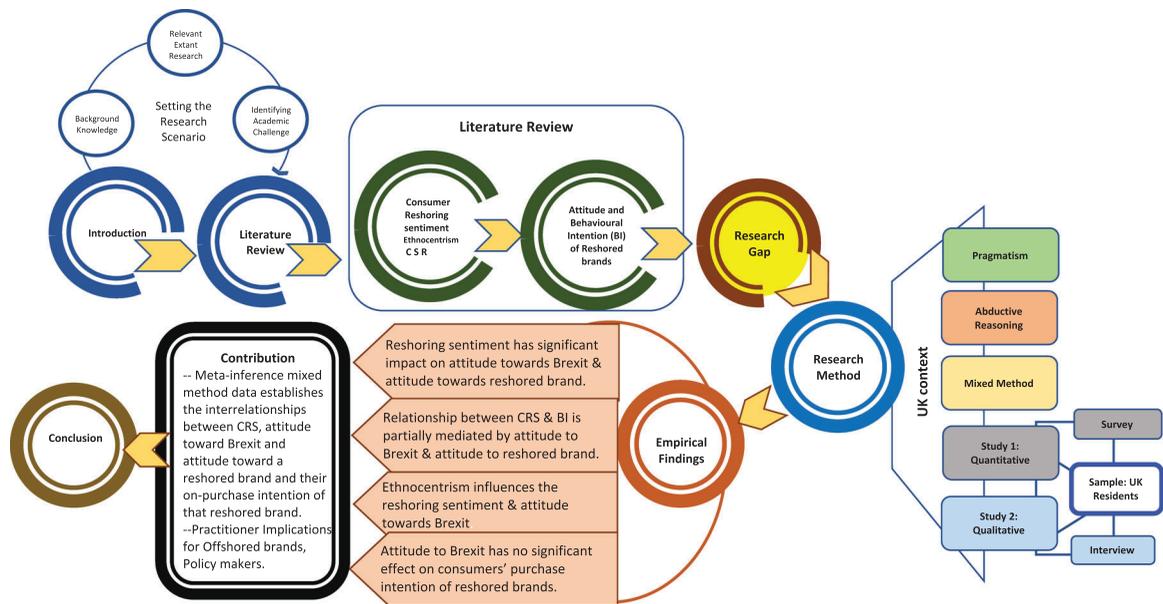


Figure 2. Research design [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

were asked to think about a scenario when they had come to know about a brand that had recently been reshored. The questions were related to a hypothetical situation, and not to any specific brands, and respondents did not need to have experience of using or purchasing such brands, as required to minimize the probable interviewer bias (Collis and Hussey, 2013). Seven-point Likert scales were used to measure CRS, ethnocentrism, CSR and behavioural intention. Attitude towards Brexit and attitude towards reshored brands were measured using seven-point semantic differential scales.

The study also modelled demographic factors (i.e. age, income, gender and ethnic background). The final sample represents the UK population well, with 62% being male and 37% female. The sample also adequately represents various other demographic parameters of the UK population, including 64% White British respondents (Appendix A).

Following Armstrong and Overton (1977), we compared the responses of early and late respondents using t-tests. The results revealed no significant differences between the early and late

Table 5. Questionnaire validation procedure

| | |
|--|--|
| Development of the survey questionnaire and pre-test | The measures of the construct and items were adapted from the extant literature. For the development of the survey instrument, apart from the researchers, two more academics and two practitioners were involved in the identification, scrutiny and initial confirmation of the items. Based on the feedback, for the respondents' better understanding, a reshoring scenario, along with definitions of the key points (e.g. reshoring, off-shore) were included in the questionnaire. All the items of the first-order constructs of CR sentiment were considered to estimate the higher-order construct, except for the Ethical issues in host countries dimension. The main reason for the exclusion of this first-order construct is that the items rarely addressed the objectives of this research. Instead of that dimension, the role of CSR was deemed more relevant. As discussed, seven-point Likert scales and seven-point semantic differential scales were used to measure various constructs. An attention check question was included in the questionnaire to ensure consistency and conduct a manipulation check (Antonetti and Maklan, 2016). The survey was pre-tested with 30 respondents, using convenience sampling. Only minor amendments were suggested, which included wording and syntax structure. |
| Pilot test | After incorporating all the changes from the pre-test round, a pilot study was conducted on 46 UK residents, recruited through convenience sampling. No errors were reported, and an acceptable level of internal consistency was recorded (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$, CR > 0.89). |
| Survey | The main fieldwork was carried out through a market agency, which collected the data in August and September 2021. As a token of appreciation and to increase participation in the survey, a nominal incentive was offered. To boost the response rate, a reminder email was sent to prospective participants in the second week. Altogether, we received 429 completed questionnaires, of which 14 were excluded due to incomplete responses. |

respondents. Hence, non-response bias does not have a significant impact on our findings.

Survey results

This research applied partial least squares-based path modelling (PLS-PM) with Smart-PLS 3.3.3 to examine the measurement properties. PLS-PM is an appropriate method, as it provides robust results by maximizing the variance explained (Staples and Higgins, 1998). In addition, PLS-PM can handle complex models (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2020), considers total variance in the measures while testing the model (Hair *et al.*, 2017), has greater statistical power (compared to covariance-based structural equation modelling: Sarstedt *et al.*, 2021) and is able to predict and explain a key endogenous construct (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2021). Accordingly, this paper adopted a two-stage process, as suggested by Becker, Klein and Wetzels (2012). In the first step, the measurement properties were examined. Subsequently, the higher-order structure of CRS and the proposed research model were tested.

Common method bias. In order to deal with the issue of common method bias (CMB), this research followed the statistical procedures suggested by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003). Respondents were assured of anonymity and instructed to respond freely. Secondly, the study used pre-

validated scales to measure the constructs and facilitate the psychological separation between the measurement of predictor and criterion variables.

In reference to the statistical remedies, Harman's one-factor test was conducted to test whether all the measurement items in the survey loaded onto a dominating factor that accounted for most of the variances between items. The first factor accounted for 25.05% of the total variance. This is lower than the acceptable criterion of 50% suggested by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003). Given criticisms of the efficacy of Harman's one-factor test for controlling for CMB, the researchers used a common latent factor linked to all measurement items to detect CMB (Hulland, Baumgartner and Smith, 2018). The results suggest that CMB is not a serious concern in this study.

Higher-order operationalization of CRS. CRS is considered as a higher (second)-order construct consisting of five first-order constructs: superior quality of reshored brands, greater ability to fulfil needs, government support, made-in effect and competency availability. Higher-order constructs tend to be more parsimonious, and they serve as better predictors of outcome variables (Polites *et al.*, 2012). We used the repeated-indicators approach to model the second-order CRS construct (Becker, Klein and Wetzels, 2012; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2019). The repeated-indicator approach estimates

Table 6. Validity and reliability measures of the model

| | CR | A | AVE | Att BRXT | Att Resh | BEH | CSR | CA | CE | GS | GA | ME | QS |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Att BRXT | 0.984 | 0.978 | 0.939 | 0.969 | | | | | | | | | |
| Att Resh | 0.922 | 0.89 | 0.748 | 0.156 | 0.865 | | | | | | | | |
| BEH | 0.932 | 0.915 | 0.664 | 0.293 | 0.370 | 0.815 | | | | | | | |
| CSR | 0.943 | 0.925 | 0.769 | 0.289 | 0.358 | 0.742 | 0.877 | | | | | | |
| CA | 0.956 | 0.931 | 0.879 | 0.401 | 0.223 | 0.554 | 0.485 | 0.938 | | | | | |
| CE | 0.935 | 0.907 | 0.783 | 0.358 | 0.091 | 0.39 | 0.363 | 0.616 | 0.884 | | | | |
| GS | 0.957 | 0.932 | 0.88 | 0.213 | 0.312 | 0.5 | 0.476 | 0.337 | 0.153 | 0.938 | | | |
| GA | 0.852 | 0.739 | 0.658 | 0.321 | 0.282 | 0.576 | 0.538 | 0.618 | 0.406 | 0.507 | 0.811 | | |
| ME | 0.949 | 0.919 | 0.861 | 0.271 | 0.384 | 0.607 | 0.555 | 0.556 | 0.278 | 0.648 | 0.618 | 0.928 | |
| QS | 0.893 | 0.817 | 0.737 | 0.296 | 0.269 | 0.542 | 0.559 | 0.575 | 0.389 | 0.465 | 0.669 | 0.601 | 0.858 |

Note: This table includes readings for Cronbach's α , composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). The square root of the AVE is represented on the diagonal in bold, whilst the correlations of the constructs are represented off the diagonal.

Table 7. Assessment of higher-order CRS

| | | | |
|--|-------|--------|-------|
| CRS → Government support | 0.723 | 20.819 | 0.000 |
| CRS → Competency availability | 0.765 | 30.308 | 0.000 |
| CRS → Made-in effect | 0.852 | 49.154 | 0.000 |
| CRS → Superior quality of reshored brand | 0.827 | 37.464 | 0.000 |
| CRS → Greater ability to fulfil needs | 0.853 | 45.497 | 0.000 |

all the constructs simultaneously (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2019).

We evaluated the measurement model by using the bootstrapped t-values using 415 cases and 5000 re-samples (Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2015). Results indicated that the factor loadings for all the first-order constructs were greater than the cut-off value of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha met the threshold values of 0.80 and 0.70, respectively (Hair *et al.*, 2006). In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) scores for all the first-order constructs were greater than 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2006), showing that the measurement model had convergent validity (Table 6).

The results shown in Table 7 suggest that the bootstrapped critical ratios were greater than 1.96, which indicates the significance of the reflective first-order CRS dimensions. The path coefficients (β) from each of the first-order dimensions to the second-order CRS were also significant and greater than 0.5. The path coefficients of the first-order dimensions ranged between 0.723 for government support and 0.853 for greater ability to fulfil needs. The R^2 value for second-order CRS was 0.65, supporting the proposed higher-order CRS structure. The predictive relevance of the higher-order CRS structure was measured using the blindfolding analysis with an omission dis-

tance of 7 (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005). The findings showed that all constructs' cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) values in the hierarchical structure exceeded 0.32, further supporting the higher-order model's predictive validity. Table 7 presents the results of the higher-order factor modelling of CRS and its relationship with the first-order dimensions.

The measurement model's discriminant validity was examined by using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method and the HTMT-ratio approach. The results showed that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded its correlation with the other constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), indicating discriminant validity. The HTMT results also remained under the value of 0.90 (Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2015), thus offering additional support for the measurement model's discriminant validity. The variance inflation factors (VIFs) were computed to check for inter-construct multicollinearity in the proposed higher-order CRS structure. The VIF values were less than 3.0, indicating that collinearity was not an issue in the higher-order conceptualization of CRS (Petter, Straub and Rai, 2007) (Appendix C).

Testing the proposed hypotheses. The structural model was tested using 5000 bootstrapped resamples based on 415 cases. The structural model's predictive relevance was also assessed by using the

Table 8. Hypothesis testing results

| Hypothesized paths | Path coefficients | t-Value | p-Value | Lower CI | Upper CI | Result |
|--|-------------------|---------|---------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|
| <i>Direct effects</i> | | | | | | |
| (H1a) CRS → Attitude towards Brexit | 0.262 | 6.021 | 0.00** | 0.078 | 0.334 | Accepted |
| (H1b) Ethnocentrism → Attitude towards Brexit | 0.233 | 4.436 | 0.00** | 0.131 | 0.338 | Accepted |
| (H1c) Ethnocentrism → Attitude towards reshored brands | -0.042 | 0.836 | 0.403 | -0.137 | 0.061 | Rejected ^{ns} |
| (H2b) CSR → Attitude towards reshored brands | 0.214 | 2.774 | 0.00** | 0.063 | 0.365 | Accepted |
| (H5) Attitude towards Brexit → BI | 0.040 | 0.389 | 0.18 ^{ns} | -0.042 | 0.115 | Rejected |
| (H6) Attitude towards reshored brands → BI | 0.310 | 6.162 | 0.00** | 0.127 | 0.339 | Accepted |
| <i>Indirect effects</i> | | | | | | |
| (H3a) CRS→Attitude towards Brexit→BI | 0.015 | 1.845 | 0.062 ^{ns} | -0.003 | 0.034 | Rejected |
| (H3b) Ethnocentrism→ Attitude towards Brexit→BI | 0.024 | 1.829 | 0.068 ^{ns} | -0.002 | 0.054 | Rejected |
| (H4a) CSR→Attitude towards reshored brands→BI | 0.181 | 3.622 | 0.02* | 0.081 | 0.228 | Accepted (partial mediation) |
| (H4b) CRS→ Attitude towards reshored brands→BI | 0.053 | 2.661 | 0.008* | 0.21 | 0.099 | Accepted (partial mediation) |

Note: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.001; ns = not significant.

R² values and Stone–Geisser’s Q² values (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The results showed that the R² value of the ultimate dependent variable BI was 0.55, which is acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The model’s predictive relevance was assessed by conducting a blindfolding analysis with an omission distance of 7 (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005). The results showed that the cross-validated redundancy (Q²) values of the model’s ultimate endogenous construct BI exceeded 0.3, thus providing further support for the predictive validity of the structural model (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Table 8 shows that CRS had a positive and significant impact on attitude towards Brexit ($\beta = 0.262, p < 0.001$) and attitude towards reshored brands ($\beta = 0.215, p < 0.001$), supporting H1a and H2a.

Results showed that consumer ethnocentrism positively influenced attitude towards Brexit ($\beta = 0.233, p < 0.001$), supporting H1b, and CSR had a positive impact on attitude towards reshored brands ($\beta = 0.214, p < 0.001$), supporting H2b. Attitude towards Brexit had no significant impact on behavioural intention, and hence H5 was rejected. However, attitude towards reshored brands positively impacted BI ($\beta = 0.310, p < 0.001$), supporting H6. The control variables – age, gender and ethnicity of respondents – did not have any significant impacts on the ultimate dependent variable, BI.

Results of mediation analysis (shown in Table 8) for H3a-b and H4a-b were obtained by using the indirect effects’ bias-corrected, bootstrapped con-

fidence intervals (Nitzl, Roldan and Cepeda, 2016; Preacher and Hayes, 2008). The indirect effects of CSR on BI via attitude towards reshored brands were significant ($\beta_{\text{indirect}} = 0.181, p < 0.05; LCI^9 = 0.08, UCI = 0.2228$) (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The direct effects espoused in H2b and H6 were significant, along with the direct effect of CSR on BI. Thus, we conclude that attitude towards reshored brands partially mediates the relationship between CSR and BI, providing partial support for H4a (Zhao, Lynch and Chen, 2010). The indirect effect of CRS on BI through attitude towards reshored brands was significant ($\beta_{\text{indirect}} = 0.05, p < 0.05; LCI = 0.04, UCI = 0.35$). The direct effects espoused in H2a and H6 were significant, along with the direct effect of CRS on BI. Thus, it is understood that the attitude towards reshored brands partially mediates the relationship between CRS and BI, providing partial support for H4b (Zhao, Lynch and Chen, 2010). Table 8 shows that the indirect effects between CRS and BI and between ethnocentrism and BI (mediated by attitude towards Brexit) were not significant and the confidence intervals included zero. Thus, it was concluded that attitude towards Brexit does not mediate the relationship between CRS and BI, or between ethnocentrism and BI. Hence, H3a and H3b were rejected (Nitzl, Roldan and Cepeda, 2016; Zhao, Lynch and Chen, 2010).

⁹LCI = lower confidence interval; UCI = upper confidence interval.

Table 9. Interview protocol

| Interview questions | Purpose and rationale |
|--|--|
| How would you describe your opinion about reshoring and offshoring? | This question was an ice-breaker to start the conversation. |
| What is your opinion about the benefits that reshoring can offer? | This question was asked to assess the perceptions of reshoring and how the respondents link them with CSR and ethnocentrism. |
| How would you assess Brexit? To you, what are the most salient aspects of Brexit? | This was a general question to start the conversation about Brexit. |
| How would you relate reshoring with an organization's commitment towards country and society? | This was in accordance with the survey findings on CSR and attitude towards reshored brands. |
| How would you relate your opinion on Brexit to that of reshoring? Do you find them to be consistent? | This question was directed to explore and analyse the survey findings on attitude towards Brexit, ethnocentrism and reshoring. |
| Do you think your opinion on reshoring can influence your decision to purchase reshored brands? | The purpose of this question was to explore respondents' behavioural intention towards reshored brands. |
| How would you make a decision while purchasing a reshored brand? | This was more of a general question regarding respondents' attitude and behavioural intention towards brands. |
| How do you think your assessment of Brexit can influence your decision to purchase reshored brands? | The question was designed to initiate discussion on Brexit and decision to purchase reshored brands. |

Study two: Qualitative

The sequential mixed-methods strategy was adopted in order to gain a deeper understanding of the inter-relationships between various constructs within our conceptual model. At the same time, the qualitative enquiries enabled us to gain a nuanced understanding of complex issues such as Brexit and perception of reshoring. The fact that quantitative findings identified no significant relationship between attitude towards Brexit and behavioural intention to purchase reshored brands led us to further investigate what could be the plausible reasons behind this counterintuitive result. Furthermore, findings suggest that ethnocentrism does not have an indirect effect on behavioural intention. The findings allude to a positive indirect effect of CSR on behavioural intention. These apparently counterintuitive and complex issues were investigated through qualitative enquiry.

Once the quantitative findings had been analysed, 20 in-depth interviews were conducted to find plausible explanations for the survey results. Following Boddy (2016), the number of interviews was decided on the basis of data saturation, which occurred from the 15th interview onward. The sample was drawn from the same demographic groups that constituted the survey respondents, following Srivastava and Chandra (2018). Appendix D presents interviewee profiles. Eighteen of the interviews were recorded, while two of

the respondents declined to have their interviews recorded for personal reasons. All the interviewees were contacted through the research team's professional and personal networks. Considering the issue of the pandemic and to optimize the response rate, the interviews were conducted through online methods.

On average, each interview took between 35 and 45 min. The interview protocol (Table 9) was developed from the themes identified in the literature and findings from the quantitative study. The authors kept an open mind and applied probing supplementary questions to obtain deeper insights into the issues of interest. Using NVivo, all transcribed interviews were analysed through thematic analysis (Spiggle, 1994), to address the research objectives and reflect the key themes of the literature, aid theoretical understanding and corroborate the findings of study one (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Following an iterative process, the data were initially coded and compared to generate the final categorization and interpretation of the codes. Then the codes were analysed to identify the emerging patterns and relationships between the shared themes (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In order to ensure external validity, preliminary findings were shared with several participants in the study, while reliability was ensured by triangulating the final coding results with the findings of study one and the literature and among the researchers (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Interview findings

Table 10 provides a summary of the interview findings against relevant themes.

Discussion and theoretical contributions

Through the meta-inference of the quantitative and qualitative data, as suggested in extant literature (Srivastava and Chandra, 2018; Venkatesh, Brown and Sullivan, 2016), this paper provides a more holistic theoretical framework by analysing the interrelationships between CRS, attitude towards Brexit and attitude towards a reshored brand. The paper adds a socio-political dimension to reshoring by combining the consumer brand behavioural response model (Ajzen, 1991) and the identity-based view of branding (Balmer and Podnar, 2021). The inclusion of a socio-political dimension in the form of attitude towards Brexit as part of the comparative assessment of the impact of cognitive and affective attitudes on behavioural intention offers a holistic theoretical model. We also clarify the point that opinions on complex socio-political issues such as Brexit do not necessarily lead to purchase intention towards reshored brands. Accordingly, we make a strong empirical case to advance the identity-based view of corporate branding by delineating how a complex socio-political issue such as Brexit can play a role in constituting consumers' attitude and behaviour towards reshored brands.

The qualitative data offer subtle nuances, enable clearer comprehension of the hypothesis test results and provide a robust understanding. First of all, it can be interpreted from the survey and qualitative data that CRS has a positive effect on attitude towards Brexit. The qualitative data suggest that respondents who were supportive of Brexit also appreciated the efforts and initiatives that enhance national pride, supported local employment and had confidence in the quality and competence of products that were produced in their own country. Hence, Brexit is linked with national pride. Regardless of their political affiliation with left-wing (Labour Party) or right-wing parties (Conservative and UKIP/Brexit Party), their opinions about Brexit reflected their desire to overcome perceived hegemonic control from an outside entity. Hence, Brexit is not just a right- or left-wing interpretation, although the

referendum was led mostly by ultra-socially conservative politicians. The widely argued concept of Lexit (Leftist Brexit), championed by some hard-line left wingers within the Labour Party, and Brexit's popularity in the Labour heartland in Northern England, further justify some of the interview responses and our consequent assertion.

Although some of the respondents were opposed to Brexit, they exhibited their support for reshoring in the interviews. They were less ethnocentric and more tolerant towards a multicultural environment. Similar sentiments towards Brexit are echoed in the wider social science literature (Carl, Dennison and Evans, 2019; Sampson, 2017), while management scholars (Braun and Zenker, 2022; Dey, Yen and Samuel, 2020) consider that Brexit discourse polarizes people's trust and confidence. As such, the paper can assert that positive reshoring sentiment can lead to positive attitude towards Brexit, which is also positively influenced by ethnocentrism.

It was also found that CSR positively affects attitude towards a reshored brand. Brexiters and remainers alike indicated that they considered CSR as an important and integral determinant of their positive attitude towards the reshored brand. This is a significant finding that has not been clearly spelled out in the existing literature. Current literature on consumers' assessment of reshoring (Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi, 2018, 2020) does not highlight this crucial aspect. This paper suggests that the CSR of an organization should be assessed along with the CRS as an antecedent to consumers' attitude towards the reshored brand of that organization. We further depart from Grappi, Romani and Bagozzi (2018) by rejecting the hypothesis that consumer ethnocentrism influences attitude towards reshored brands. Hence, consumers' attitude towards reshoring is not always driven by nationalism. It is relevant to mention that consumers are increasingly showing positive attitudes towards environmentally friendly and ethical marketing, underpinned by organizations' pursuit for social and environmental sustainability (Huang *et al.*, 2021; Singh *et al.*, 2022). The outcome of this hypothesis test and the qualitative findings concur with this growing support for sustainability.

The most striking findings of this research relate to a lack of significant effect of attitude

Table 10. Interview responses

| Themes | Codes | Response |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Consumers' perceptions of reshoring | Indifferent | "I was not very aware of the reshoring concept. But it sounds like a good way to support local employment and the global environment" (Participant 8). |
| | Positive and constructive | "I was never a fan of offshoring production to another country... I remember the Union opposed taking businesses overseas back in 2001/02. I do not know how business and management can cope with it. However, as a customer, I don't think we gained value through offshoring" (Participant 3). |
| | Sceptical | "I do not know how good reshoring would be. This seems to be yet another way to create economic nationalism. At the end of the day, as a consumer, I deserve quality products at a reasonable price – don't mind whether the product is produced in the UK or China" (Participant 18). |
| Consumers' perceptions of Brexit | Sense of scepticism | "I voted to remain, and I still think Brexit is a disaster. It has made us poor, diminished our importance in the international arena and legitimized ultra-right-wing politics in this country" (Participant 2). |
| | Sense of frustration | "I don't know what to say about Brexit. My family and friends have split opinions about it, even five years after the referendum. I didn't vote, but I always think Brexit is divisive. But it is good to come out of the EU. We couldn't cope with the burden of immigration" (Participant 5). |
| | Brexit driven by right-wing anti-immigration sentiment | "I support Brexit. There are many reasons – we cannot have uncontrolled immigration. In the UK, we value human lives, but our resources are limited. We cannot provide food, shelter and medical facilities to all due to uncontrolled immigration" (Participant 11). |
| | Lexit (Leftist Brexit) | "I have voted for the Labour Party all my life and will do so in future, but I never liked the EU. Labour leaders such as Tony Benn opposed the EU, who do not look after the interest of working-class people. You know what happened in Greece when they defaulted and the lefts campaigned for Greece to come out of the EU. I don't think Brexit is just a simple left-right polarization" (Participant 3). |
| | Brexit as a protest against elitism | "I am not a politically aligned person. To me, there is no difference between Labour and Tories. They all are rich elite people. They have allowed us to be dictated by the EU and then we have all problems starting from high immigration to poor social care. I don't trust them. Yes, I voted for Brexit" (Participant 7). |
| Brexit and reshoring | Remainer and pro-globalization | "As I said, I believe in globalization. We should live in an integrated system. Although I have pride in my nation, I think we should embrace the globalized world. That's the same reason I did not vote for Brexit" (Participant 2). |
| | Remainer and supporter of reshoring | "I voted to remain, but I find the idea of reshoring quite appealing. It is good for businesses to harness local resources as much as they can. Reshoring can also reduce carbon footprint" (Participant 12). |
| | Pro-Brexit and pro-reshoring | "Reshoring is something that Brexit should try to promote. If production takes place within the country, it will boost the local economy. Globalization hasn't worked well. It is another way to benefit large corporates by exploiting cheap labour" (Participant 3). "I voted for Brexit and by all means I would welcome reshoring. Government should support and promote reshored businesses" (Participant 17). |

Table 10. (Continued)

| Themes | Codes | Response |
|---|---|---|
| CSR, reshoring sentiment and attitude towards reshored brands | Positive link between CSR, reshoring sentiment and reshoring brands | “Yes, I think there is a fundamentally novel idea about reshoring. I would be even happier if the company simultaneously demonstrated concerns for society, commitment towards the environment and ethical standards” (Participant 3). “I think the reshoring concept works better if the company is genuinely willing to help the country, protect the environment and support the society. That will certainly enhance my appreciation for the brand” (Participant 9). |
| Attitude towards reshored brands and purchase intention | Positive link between attitude towards reshoring and purchase intention | “I like Clarks as a brand. It stands for quality and good image. Although it is a bit dearer, I prefer Clarks over some other brands. If its production is brought back to the UK, I would be very proud of my choice. However, even if it is not, I would still have gone for it” (Participant 15). “My decision to purchase a product will be driven by price and quality. To be honest, I don’t mind if it is reshored or not: as long as I like the brand, I will buy it” (Participant 6). |
| Brexit and intention to purchase reshored brands | Brexit does not necessitate protest against products from Europe | “Of course I will buy a product that offers good value for money. Yes, you are right – my decision for Brexit is not about detaching me from the rest of the world. I still enjoy French wines and Belgian beers. I support Manchester United, and Ronaldo is my most favourite player. My support for Brexit does not affect my appreciation for anything that is global or European” (Participant 11). |
| | Value and price | “No one voted for Brexit to get a worse life. I am a remainer and I knew Brexit would make things difficult... To be honest, I don’t mind if it is reshored or not: as long as I like the brand, I will buy it” (Participant 6). “Yes, I voted for Brexit. But, with the current difficult economic situation, with the pandemic and other issues, I am much more pragmatic with my purchase intention. To me, we British people have an open mind when it comes to product consumption. We go for the best value for money” (Participant 20). |

towards Brexit on consumers’ purchase intentions towards reshored brands. Hence, a conjecture can be reached that consumers’ attitude towards Brexit does not have any effect on their purchase intentions for reshored brands. In contrast, the positive and significant effect of attitude towards reshored brands on purchase intention plausibly suggests that although support for Brexit is driven by consumers’ appreciation for national pride and sympathy towards less integrationist economic and political systems, this may not transpire into a positive purchase decision. Here, the findings of the paper depart from the political rhetoric suggested by Brexit proponents and YouGov’s predictive survey.¹⁰ While existing literature reports links between extreme nationalism and product purchase

decisions (Ding, 2017; Sandıkcı and Ekici, 2009), this cannot be asserted for the attitude towards Brexit and reshored brands.

In behavioural studies, a similar paradoxical attitude–behaviour relationship is pronounced. Individuals are unable to exhibit consistent behavioural intention in a given context, despite holding a generally positive attitude towards a phenomenon (Malgarini and Margani, 2007). For instance, an individual may appreciate the importance of tax, but still may be opposed to paying additional tax. One respondent said that their support for Brexit did not diminish their appreciation for French wine or the inclusion of European players in their favourite Premier League football club. As such, it is evident from the data and subsequent interpretation that attitude towards Brexit does not necessarily lead to the purchase of reshored brands, although the latter may embody some of the core ethos of Brexit.

¹⁰Brexit: Theresa May – Consumers more likely to buy ‘locally grown food’ | UK | News | Express.co.uk.

Table 11. Managerial implications

| Practitioner groups | Implications |
|-------------------------|---|
| Reshored brand managers | <p>The promotion of the brand should highlight its image, capability, competencies and contribution to the local economy. For instance, local employment, generated by Clarks' reshored plant in Somerset, led to positive publicity in newspapers and may have contributed to the brand image.</p> <p>Consumers have higher preference for 'Made in Britain' fashion labels, which has led to a renaissance in UK clothing manufacture. Recently Ted Baker introduced a 'Made in Britain' range to enhance its image of 'Britishness'.¹ Earlier, some luxury fashion brands (e.g. Barbour, Burberry and Mulberry) and high-street fashion retailers (e.g. M&S and John Lewis) launched 'Best of British' ranges, having restarted production in the UK (Foresight, 2013; Robinson & Hsieh, 2016). In international markets, British-made products are regarded as providing high quality and value for money, and can generate at least £3.5bn per annum in export value, as suggested by a Barclays survey report.²</p> <p>However, Clarks' profits reduced in 2019 after they reshored their production. The decrease of profit is attributed to factors other than reshoring. Our study suggests that Clarks could have benefited from positive sentiment about reshoring, upon which they did not fully capitalize. Their marketing communications did not properly highlight the reshoring aspect.³</p> <p>The CSR of the reshored brand/company can provide significant leverage in building positive attitudes and generating sales volume. Burberry, for instance, have been able to create distinct positioning in the luxury fashion retailing by harnessing their CSR initiatives (Robinson & Hsieh, 2016). Similarly, Clarks proudly present themselves as a champion for sustainable and socially responsible business, which, according to our research, fits well with their reshoring strategy and feeds into their corporate identity.</p> <p>Reshoring may increase the operational cost; however, several telecom and financial service providers (e.g. EE, BT, Santander, Vodafone) have decided to bring customer service jobs back to the UK from overseas territories to ensure seamless and efficient solutions to their customers' problems.⁴ A study conducted by Lloyds Bank found that 71% of companies intend to reshore to the UK to improve product quality, which certifies the high standards of the UK manufacturing industry and supply chains.⁵</p> |
| Offshored brands | <p>As international trade and business is becoming ever more challenging due to COVID and increased energy prices, offshored businesses may consider reshoring their operations, provided that they capitalize on consumer sentiment and positive strong brand attitude. In order to give preference to customers' sentiment and attitude towards UK-made products, several companies from various industries (e.g. BEC group, BooHoo, McLaren, Frog Bikes, ASOS, Gtech) have decided to shift their production operations to the UK from China.^{6,7}</p> <p>While competing with reshored brands, offshored brands should continue to work on increasing their brand image through increased CSR activities and product and brand quality. It is understood from this research that consumers are likely to have appreciation for the competency and quality of reshored brands, which can potentially reduce competitive advantage for the offshored brands if they are not careful enough to uphold these aspects. A survey conducted by Make it British suggests that 93% of customers find that UK-made products are of higher value and better quality and they would pay more for clothing, food and items made in the UK.⁸</p> |
| Policymakers | <p>It has been found that people from both sides of the Brexit debate have fairly positive attitudes towards reshored brands due to their contribution to the local economy and reduced carbon footprints.</p> <p>Government assistance to reshored brands will hence garner public support.</p> <p>Government can incentivize organizations to reshore their businesses, which will not only help the local economy but also boost the positive image of the government. In this regard, Reshoring UK, an online collaborative marketplace of 32 trade associations, could play a pivotal role. The organization facilitates collaboration among the members of the associations that could bring in common benefits for the various stakeholders.⁹</p> |

¹ Ted Baker launches 'Made in Britain' collection.

² Made in Britain Barclays Brand Britain Report.

³ Clarks factory closure 'missed opportunity' (draperonline.com).

⁴ Britain is back in business as firms start 'reshoring' manufacturing to the UK.

⁵ Lloyds Bank, Business in Britain: Manufacturing, July 2019.

⁶ Britain is back in business as firms start 'reshoring' manufacturing to the UK.

⁷ Gtech to create 100 UK manufacturing jobs by shifting some operations from China.

⁸ 93% of shoppers willing to pay more for British goods.

⁹ <https://www.reshoring.uk/>.

Managerial implications

Table 11 provides managerial implications of this research.

Limitations and future research

Despite the robust contributions of this paper, there are some limitations. Brexit is an evolving scenario. Various issues such as COVID-19, energy crises and changes in the global political landscape (e.g. the US presidential election) have direct or indirect effects on the outcomes of Brexit, which in itself remains a divisive and emotive issue in the UK. The evidence regarding reshored businesses in the UK is also not abundant. With a longer duration of reshored businesses, consumers are likely to have a clearer understanding of their quality, capability and contribution to the local economy. Hence, a longitudinal study would have been able to capture how people's opinions and sentiments are shaped over time.

Our paper did not make comparative analysis in terms of various demographic groups and how they perceive Brexit, reshoring and reshored brands. Future research could explore this area.

Future research could conduct a comparative analysis between reshored and offshored brands, which was not within the remit of this paper. The findings could provide a different perspective towards assessing reshored brands and useful managerial implications for both types of organization.

A specific focus on one single industry and/or company could have provided useful and insightful findings. This paper opted for a generalized view towards reshoring, which, despite its benefits, might be weakened by a lack of specificity. If more organizations start reshoring, researchers will have the opportunity to deal with an adequate number of cases and further this understanding through research on specific brands.

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