

# Impact of the Country-of-Origin Image on the Purchase Intention of Foreign Products in Mexican Consumers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

This study aims to determine if the image of the United States country and the image of the China country positively impact the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Non-probability snowball sampling was used. The survey was sent through social networks. The sample obtained was 393 consumers from Mexico City, Jalisco, and Nuevo León with ages between 16 and 66 years. Multiple linear regression was performed using the stepwise method. The findings showed that the image of the United States country ( $\beta = 0.418$ ;  $t = 7.851$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and the image of the China country ( $\beta = 0.125$ ;  $t = 2.343$ ;  $p = 0.020$ ) positively impact the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic by 17.4% and 1.5% respectively. Mexican companies could be affected if the consumption of domestic products remains lower than the consumption of foreign products. Therefore, the results of this research may be useful to senior managers of national companies because they will be able to develop strategies to increase the purchase intentions of domestic products.

## Keywords

Mexican consumers, image of the United States, image of China, purchase intention of foreign products, COVID-19 pandemic

## 1. Introduction

The global pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has affected many countries on all continents (WHO, 2020). In addition, it has caused changes in the purchasing intentions and behaviors of Mexican consumers. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2021), the consumption of foreign products has been more significant than the consumption of domestic products for eight years. This event could affect Mexican companies, mainly new companies.

Today, the country-of-origin image plays a central role in the purchasing behavior of consumers because, with the increase in electronic commerce that operates across borders, it is possible to have access to a wide variety of products on the global market (Bao et al., 2021). Reasons why understanding the country-of-origin image of imported products can significantly benefit companies that compete in the domestic market (Knight, 1999) because consumers tend to maintain stereotypes of different countries and use the information of the country-of-origin to choose products (Wall et al., 1991). Besides, consumers conceive different images for developed and developing countries (Allred et al., 2000). Thus, analyzing the country-of-origin image is of utmost importance to better understand consumer buying behavior. Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009) explain that, in globalized markets, a favorable image of a country has a significant impact on the evaluation that consumers make of foreign products and, thus, influences their subsequent purchase decision.

Authors like Diamantopoulos et al. (2011), Martin and Eroglu (1993), and Wang and Lamb (1980) recommend that future research analyze if the country-of-origin image of a product influences the purchase intention of foreign products in order to understand the stereotypes that consumers have about certain countries.

Knight and Calantone (2000) mention that there is little empirical research even though much research suggests that consumers' image of a product's country-of-origin influences the purchase decision. In addition, Al-Aali et al. (2015) emphasize that more research of the country-of-origin image is required in developing countries.

Therefore, the present study focuses on Mexican consumers. It is worth mentioning that the United States country and China country were used to analyze the variable country-of-origin image. These two countries are Mexico's main trading partners according to data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2019).

## 1.1 Objective

This study aims to determine if the image of the United States country and the image of the China country positively impact the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, this study seeks to answer the research question: Do the image of the United States country and the image of the China country positively impact the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic? Answering this research question is of great relevance in developing strategies that increase the purchase intention of national products and help Mexican companies remain in the market during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Purchase intention of foreign products

In this research, the purchase intention of foreign products is used as a dependent variable. Ajzen (1991) defines intention as the probability that individuals will perform a particular behavior. Rezvani et al.(2012) explain that intention is a person's motivation in the sense that the intention becomes a behavior. Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) define the purchase intention as the antecedents that stimulate and drive consumers' purchases of products and services (cited in Haque et al., 2015). In comparison, Spears and Singh (2004) define the purchase intention as the conscious decision of consumers to buy a particular product (cited in Bao et al., 2021). In this study, purchase intention of foreign products is defined as the probability of buying a product of foreign origin.

### 2.2 Country-of-origin image

Nagashima (1970) was one of the first authors to study the country-of-origin image concept and make a scale for its measurement. Nevertheless, he did not test the reliability and validity of its measurement instrument and did not distinguish between the concept of the country-of-origin image and the product image; reasons for which it has been criticized by other authors such as Allred et al. (2000), Martin and Eroglu (1993), and Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009). However, it was his study that got other researchers interested in this concept and study it.

Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009) mention that the definition of the country-of-origin image can be approached in three different ways: 1) country-of-origin image, 2) product-country image, that is, the image of the countries and their products, and 3) product image of a country.

Table 1 shows the definitions of the country-of-origin image in the three different ways in which different authors have used this concept. The above, in order that the concept can be clearly understood, and the differences of the three different ways in which the concept has been used can be appreciated so that there is no confusion.

Table 1. Definitions of the country-of-origin image in the three different ways it has been used.

Concepts	Definitions
Country-of-origin image	Stereotypical images, attributed to a country within specific foreign markets (Bannister and Saunders, 1978).
	Stereotypical images of foreign countries (Papadopoulos et al., 1990).
	The total of all the descriptive, inferential, and informational beliefs about a particular country (Martin and Eroglu, 1993).
	The perceptions of consumers about a particular country (Li et al., 1998).
	The perception or impression that consumers have about a country (Allred et al., 2000).
	A mental network of affective and cognitive associations connected to the country formed through travel, personal contacts, education, and media reports (Verlegh, 2001).

	<p>It is a three-dimensional concept that consists of cognitive, affective, and conative components, which reflect the country beliefs, people affect, and desired interaction with the place (Laroche et al., 2005).</p> <p>Rein et al. (1993) define the country's image as the sum of people's beliefs and impressions about places. The images represent a simplification of many associations and pieces of information related to a place. They are a product of the mind trying to modify and select essential information from large amounts of data about a place (cited in Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009).</p> <p>Perceptions that consumers have about a specific country (Lee, 2020).</p>
Product-country image	<p>The product-country image is produced at two levels: at the macro level because the mention of a particular country can convey a general image of the country, and at the micro-level because a more specific image of the product is created (Hooley et al., 1988).</p> <p>Consumers' perceptions of the different countries and the products manufactured in these countries (Li et al., 1998).</p> <p>Consumers' stereotypes of different countries, so people use the country of origin information to choose products (Wall et al., 1991).</p> <p>The link between the countries' opinions and their people with the opinions of the products produced in those countries (Heslop and Papadopoulos, 1993).</p> <p>A mental representation of a country's people, products, culture, and national symbols, so the images of the product country contain widely shared cultural stereotypes (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999).</p> <p>Consumers' perceptions of the quality of products manufactured in a particular country and the nature of the people in that country (Knight and Calantone, 2000).</p> <p>Consumers' image of a specific country and associates it with a particular product or brand (Hien et al., 2020).</p>
Product image	<p>The image, the reputation, the stereotype that entrepreneurs and consumers attribute to the products of a specific country (Nagashima, 1970).</p> <p>Perceptions about the quality of a product from a particular country (Bilkey and Nes, 1982).</p> <p>The photograph, the reputation, or the stereotype that consumers attribute to the products of a specific country (Darling and Arnold, 1988).</p> <p>The general perception of products made in different countries (Han, 1989).</p> <p>The general perception that consumers have of the products of a particular country, based on their previous perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of production and marketing of the country (Roth and Romeo, 1992).</p> <p>Buyers' opinions regarding the relative qualities of goods and services produced in various countries (Bilkey, 1993).</p> <p>An integrated image of the fact in, consisting of mental facsimiles, reputations, and stereotypes associated with products originating in each country of interest (Strutton et al., 1995).</p> <p>Consumers' perceptions about the products manufactured in a particular country (Li et al., 1998).</p> <p>Consumers' images regarding the quality of specific products marketed by companies associated with a country-of-origin (Verlegh et al., 2005).</p> <p>Consumers' perceptions about a product from a particular country (Wibowo et al., 2021).</p>

Source: Author's own elaboration.

So far, there are few studies (Allred et al., 2000; Laroche et al., 2005; Li et al., 1998; Martin and Eroglu, 1993; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009) who know how to distinguish between the country-of-origin image, the product-country image, and the product image. Most of the authors (Bannister and Saunders, 1978; Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Darling and Arnold, 1988; Han, 1989; Heslop and Papadopoulos, 1993; Hooley et al., 1988; Knight and Calantone, 2000; Nagashima, 1970; Papadopoulos et al., 1990; Roth and Romeo, 1992; Strutton et al., 1995; Verlegh, 2001; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; Verlegh et al., 2005; Wall et al., 1991) do not clearly distinguish between the country-of-origin image and the product image, even though the concept of the country-of-origin image is used to specify the image of

a particular country from which a product come. So, their measurement scales do not distinguish which is being measured (Martin and Eroglu, 1993).

Similarly, Laroche et al. (2005) affirm that the country-of-origin image has been measured more through the product rather than the country's measures, which causes the construct to be not well defined. Consequently, it is the product image rather than the country-of-origin image that is captured by the definition of the construct (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009) and, as a result, there is a limited number of studies that include country's measures (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2003).

Table 2 shows the dimensions of the country-of-origin image. The dimensions from the definitions of Bannister and Saunders (1978), Papadopoulos et al. (1990), and Verlegh (2001)—presented in Table 1—are excluded because they have product-oriented dimensions. Bannister and Saunders (1978) were based on the study of Nagashima (1970), who made no distinction between the concept of the country-of-origin image and the product image. For these reasons, although the three authors adequately define the country-of-origin image, they are not included in Table 2.

Table 2. Definitions and dimensions of the variable country-of-origin image.

Authors	Definitions of the country's image	Dimensions
Martin and Eroglu (1993)	The total of all the descriptive, inferential, and informational beliefs that consumers have about a particular country. To define the domain of the construct, the authors used three dimensions: (1) politics, (2) economics, and (3) technology—the social desirability component as the fourth dimension was captured by the three emerging dimensions—.	1. Politics. 2. Economy. 3. Technology.
Rein et al. (1993)	The sum of the beliefs and impressions that people have about places. The images represent a simplification of many associations and pieces of information related to a place. They are a product of the mind trying to modify and select essential information from large amounts of data about a place (cited in Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009).	1. Beliefs about places. 2. Impressions about places.
Li et al. (1998)	Consumers' perception of a particular country.	1. Economic development. 2. Technological advance. 3. Political development.
Allred et al. (2000)	The perception or impression that organizations and consumers have about a country. This perception or impression of a country is based on the economic condition, political structure, culture, conflict with other countries, working conditions, and environmental issues.	1. Economic condition. 2. Political structure. 3. Culture. 4. Conflict with other countries. 5. Working conditions. 6. Environmental issues.
Laroche et al. (2005)	It is a three-dimensional concept consisting of cognitive, affective, and conative components, which reflect the country's beliefs, consumers' affective response, and consumers' desired level of interaction with the place.	1. Cognitive component. 2. Affective component. 3. Conative component.
Lee (2020)	Consumers' perceptions about a specific country.	1. Cognitive image of the country. 2. Affective image of the country.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

After explaining the concept of the country-of-origin image in the three different ways in which it has been used by different authors (Table 1) and, later, analyzing the dimensions of the country-of-origin image in the general way (Table 2), the definition of Laroche et al. (2005) is presented because it is used in this study; therefore, the country-of-origin image is a three-dimensional concept that consists of components: 1) cognitive due to the beliefs that

consumers have about the industrial development and technological advance of the country, 2) affective due to the affective responses of consumers towards the people of the country, and 3) conative due to the desired interaction that reflects the intention of consumers to build close economic ties with the target country (Laroche et al., 2005).

Table 3 summarizes the empirical studies that show the relationship between the independent variable country-of-origin-image and the dependent variable purchase intention of foreign products. The authors, the unit of analysis, and the results obtained by the authors are included. As can be seen, there are empirical studies that show a positive and significant relationship between the variables of this study.

Table 3. Empirical studies of the country-of-origin image and the purchase intention of foreign products.

Authors	Unit of analysis	Results
Wang and Lamb (1980)	American consumers (n = 273) with nine countries to analyze.	The country-of-origin image directly and positively influences the purchase intention of foreign products (p = 0.0001).
Wang and Lamb (1983)	American students (n = 273) with 36 countries for their study.	The results showed that the country-of-origin image positively impacts the purchase intention of foreign products (p < 0.001). The results showed that there are significant differences between the countries used in the study.
Laroche et al. (2005)	Residents of 23 municipalities in North America between 20 and 64 years (n = 436) with Japan and Sweden as countries to be analyzed.	The results showed that the country-of-origin image has a direct and positive effect on purchase intention of foreign products, specifically for Japan ( $\chi^2 = 4.016$ ; p = 0.046) and for Sweden ( $\chi^2 = 7.133$ ; p = 0.008).
Diamantopoulos et al. (2011)	UK consumers (n = 404) between 18 and 65 years old. The authors used American and Chinese products for their study.	The authors found that one of the four proposed scenarios was the best of all ( $\chi^2 = 68.555$ ; df = 16; RMSEA = 0.099; NNFI = 0.934; CFI = 0.976, $\Delta\chi^2 = 294.804$ ; $\Delta df = 4$ ; p < 0.001). They concluded that the country-of-origin image affects the purchase intention of foreign products indirectly. In the study, its influence is mediated by the brand's image.
Li et al. (2012)	Students from three universities in Beijing, China (n = 290), with Japan and China as countries to be analyzed.	The results showed that the image of Japan country has a positive influence on the purchase intention to buy foreign products ( $\beta = 0.28$ ; p < 0.01).
Augusta et al. (2019)	Indonesian women (n = 213). The authors used products from Korea.	The results showed that the country-of-origin image positively impacts the purchase intention of foreign products (p-value = 0.027).
Hien et al. (2020)	Citizens of Ho Chi Minh and Da Nang in Vietnam (n = 283).	The results showed that the country-of-origin image significantly influences the purchase intention of foreign products ( $\beta = 0.292$ ; t = 4.5; p-value < 0.000).

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The country-of-origin image strongly influences the consumer decision process (Köse and Eroglu, 2021). Shirvani et al. (2020) ensure that the country-of-origin image is an essential variable in the purchase decision process since countries with a favorable image know that consumers will readily accept their brands. In addition, Rusiviro and Pattyranie (2021) explain that the country-of-origin image has managed to gain a better position in understanding consumer behavior within the marketing area, specifically in the preference and purchase of foreign products.

Hooley et al. (1988) ensure that consumers develop stereotypical images of countries, impacting consumer behavior, so they recommend that international marketing specialists understand these images to develop sound strategies.

According to Papadopoulos et al. (1990), marketing specialists who identify country images define unique product positions against competitors by highlighting differences between product origins. Besides, Strutton et al. (1995) ensure that the country-of-origin image helps measure import perceptions.

Lee and Lee (2009) mention that the country-of-origin image is an essential variable in international marketing because if consumers have favorable images of a foreign country, it will positively impact the purchase intention of foreign products. Similarly, Parts and Life (2011) claim that the country-of-origin image provides evidence that consumers have diverse perceptions that affect consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and purchasing behaviors in international marketing.

Authors like Diamantopoulos et al. (2011), Martin and Eroglu (1993), and Wang and Lamb (1980) recommend that future research analyze if the country-of-origin image influences the purchase intention of foreign products; The above, helps to understand the stereotypes that consumers have about certain countries. In addition, it was found through the literature review that more research is needed on the country-of-origin image as a causal factor of the general form. That is because few authors (Allred et al., 2000; Laroche et al., 2005; Li et al., 1998; Martin and Eroglu, 1993; Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009) do not confuse the concept of the country-of-origin image with the product image.

Likewise, Knight and Calantone (2000) mention that much research suggests that the country-of-origin image of a product influences the consumer's purchase decision and explain that despite this, there is little empirical research. According to Al-Aali et al. (2015), more research about the country-of-origin image is needed in developing countries, and consequently, this research focuses on consumers in Mexico. It is worth mentioning that the United States country and China country were used to analyze the variable country-of-origin image because they are the two main trading partners of Mexico (IMF, 2019).

Therefore, in this research, the variable country-of-origin image is used as a causal factor because there are empirical studies in which there is a positive and significant impact on the dependent variable purchase intention of foreign products (Augusta et al., 2019; Diamantopoulos et al., 2011; Hien et al., 2020; Laroche et al., 2005; Li et al., 2012; Wang and Lamb, 1983; Wang and Lamb, 1980). Studying this relationship is essential to verify if the country-of-origin image positively impacts the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, the following two hypotheses arise:

**H1:** The image of the United States country positively impacts the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**H2:** The image of the China country positively impacts the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this research, which allows visualizing the research hypotheses that emerged through the literature review, representing the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

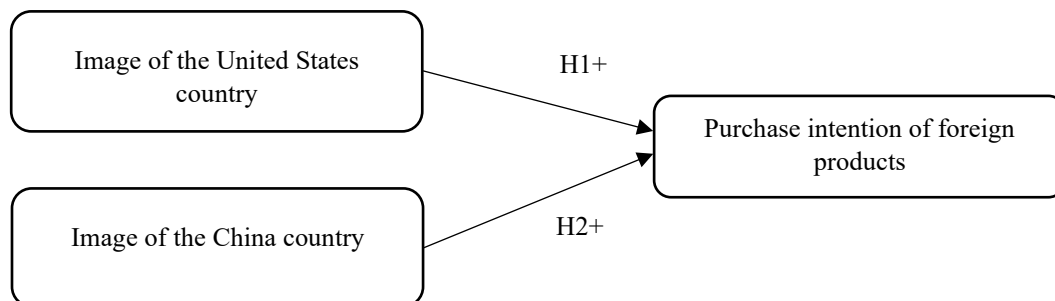


Figure 1. Conceptual research model.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The proposed conceptual research model (see Figure 1) allows us to visualize that the image of the United States country and the image of the China country positively impact the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3. Methods

This research had a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design and a correlational-causal scope. A seven-point Likert-type scale was developed, and it was made up of six items to measure the dependent variable purchase intention of foreign products. Responses range was from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree. Items were adapted from the authors' scales Darling and Arnold (1988), Dodds et al. (1991), Infosino (1986), and Wang and Lamb (1983), selecting and modifying certain items to delimit it specifically to foreign products. A seven-point Likert scale was adapted from Laroche et al. (2005) to measure the variable country-of-origin image. This variable consists of three dimensions: 1) country beliefs, 2) people affect, and 3) desire interaction. This variable comprised eighteen items because it includes three items per dimension and has three dimensions for each country—the United States and China—. Responses range was from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree. It should be noted that Likert-type scales are the most used in social sciences and market studies (Lozano et al., 2008; Matas, 2018).

### 4. Data Collection and Sample

The target population was men and women over 15 years of age from Mexico City, Jalisco, and Nuevo León. Non-probabilistic snowball sampling was used because the data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, at which the government implemented time isolation measures to prevent infections in the Mexican population. The survey was developed in Google Forms and sent to the target population through social networks in mid-2020.

A pilot test of 96 surveys was carried out to find out if the measurement instrument was reliable. Cronbach's Alpha test confirmed that the survey was reliable because alphas greater than 0.80 and less than 0.90 were obtained. Subsequently, the survey was sent to the target population to continue with data collection. Finally, 393 surveys were available to carry out the pertinent statistical analyzes. Statistical analyzes were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The Run test was used to confirm that the data were collected randomly, and the data were checked for normality with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The sample consisted of 393 consumers from Mexico City, Jalisco, and Nuevo León. Regarding the gender and age of the respondents, women stood out with a percentage of 61% while 39% correspond to men, with ages between 16 and 66 years.

### 5. Results and Discussion

The image of the United States country ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ), the image of the China country ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), and the purchase intention of foreign products ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ) represent good internal consistency among items. It is concluded that the measurement instrument is reliable because Cronbach's alpha coefficients were greater than 0.80, and it suggests good reliability. The results of the Run test showed that there is randomness in the sample for the variable image of the United States country (p-value = 0.37), the variable image of the China country (p-value = 0.62), and the variable purchase intention of foreign products (p-value = 0.36). In addition, the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the data have a normal distribution (p-value > 0.05). Subsequently, the parametric test of multiple linear regression was performed using the stepwise method to find out if the image of the United States country and the image of the China country positively impact the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The above, in order to answer the research question and meet the objective of the study.

The multiple linear regression by the stepwise method considered the two variables as significant. It yielded two models: the first model included only the variable image of the United States country with an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.237 and the second model included both variables—image of the United States country and image of the China country—with an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.246. Thus, model 2 was selected to report the results.

Table 4 summarizes the results of the multiple linear regression. As can be seen, model 2 explains 24.6% of the purchase intention of foreign products variance. Both independent variables were significant; the variable image of the United States country was statistically significant at 99% confidence with p-values less than 0.01 ( $\beta = 0.418$ ;  $t = 7.851$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and the variable image of the China country was statistically significant at 95% confidence with p-values less than 0.05 ( $\beta = 0.125$ ;  $t = 2.343$ ;  $p = 0.020$ ). It is worth mentioning that there is no multicollinearity between

the variables because the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was 1.475, the tolerance was 0.678, and the condition index was 15.101.

Table 4. Summary of the results of the multiple linear regression, Model 2.

	Image of the United States country	Image of the China country		
Standard error	0.068	0.076	R Square	0.250
Standardized Beta coefficients	0.418	0.125	Adjusted R Square	0.246
t	7.851	2.343	F (ANOVA)	64.89
p-value	0.000	0.020	Significance (ANOVA)	0.000
VIF	1.475	1.475	Condition index	15.101
Tolerance	0.678	0.678		

Source: Author's own elaboration

Empirical findings showed that the image of the United States country explains 17.4% of the purchase intention of foreign products variance, and the image of the China country explains 1.5% of the purchase intention of foreign products variance. Therefore, H1 and H2 are accepted. It is concluded that the image of the United States country and the image of the China country positively impact the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic. So, the research question is answered, and the objective of the study is met. It is worth mentioning that the established by Hien et al. (2020), Augusta et al. (2019), Li et al. (2012), Laroche et al. (2005), Wang and Lamb (1983), and Wang and Lamb (1980) is supported because they also found a positive and significant impact of the variable country-of-origin image on the variable purchase intention of foreign products.

## 6. Conclusions

The in-depth theoretical analysis of the literature confirmed that few empirical studies use the variable country-of-origin image as the independent variable and the variable purchase intention of foreign products as the dependent variable. This is because most of the literature is theoretical, and the empirical studies carried out by some authors do not adequately use the country-of-origin image concept since they tend to confuse the concept and its meaning when using the country-of-origin image and the product image as dimensions of the concept of the country-of-origin image. Hence in this study, the definition of Laroche et al. (2005) was correctly used, so the definitions of the variables, the scales, and the empirical relationships between variables define and measure what the concept of the country-of-origin image represents.

The new findings showed that the image of the United States country positively impacts the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic ( $\beta = 0.418$ ;  $t = 7.851$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and that the image of the China country positively impacts the purchase intention of foreign products in Mexican consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic ( $\beta = 0.125$ ;  $t = 2.343$ ;  $p = 0.020$ ). Thus, H1 and H2 were accepted. Reasons why, it can be affirmed that with the pertinent statistical analyses, it was possible to answer the research question and fulfill the study's objective.

### 6.1 Practical implications

Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected most companies and small businesses in Mexico. Therefore, companies, small businesses, and consumers in Mexico have adapted to the changes that the pandemic has brought. Likewise, consumption habits in Mexico have changed in the last year. An example of this is online purchases, which has increased due to the implementation of isolation measures by the government as a strategy to avoid contagion in the Mexican population during the COVID-19 pandemic, where physical stores were closed, and work and classes were suspended in offices and schools.

It is worth mentioning that previously people used to have certain insecurities when shopping online (Barrios et al., 2021). The above shows that consumers change their habits quickly under specific conditions, which can become



permanent. In addition, resilient companies, and businesses, which are flexible and better adapt to the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, will have a better chance of growing and staying in the market. Considering the above, companies have the challenge of satisfying the needs and trends demanded by society in daily practices (Nevárez et al., 2020).

In Mexico, the consumption of foreign products has been more significant than domestic products for eight years (INEGI, 2021). It should be noted that the consumption of foreign products and domestic products decreased from the year 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, consumption of foreign products is still higher than the consumption of national products during the years 2020 and 2021.

Consequently, this could affect Mexican companies, mainly new companies that have only been in business for a short time and that may go bankrupt due to the lack of sales of their national products. Thus, the results of this research provide knowledge of the area of marketing and international business, which can be of great use and interest for senior managers of national companies because they will be able to develop strategies to increase the purchase intentions of domestic products.

## 6.2 Future lines of research

It is recommended that future studies derived from this research use consumers from emerging economies and developing countries as the target population. Furthermore, it is recommended that researchers use the concept of the country-of-origin image correctly and do not confuse the concept and its meaning. In other words, nor use the country-of-origin image and the product image as dimensions of the country-of-origin image of the general form. Some authors, such as Papadopoulos (1993) and Pappu et al. (2007), use both concepts as dimensions of the country-of-origin image, considering them as macro images—country image—and micro image—product image—which may be considered inappropriate by other authors.

Martin and Eroglu (1993) recommend that if the country-of-origin image is being measured, the scale items should capture the relevant attributes of the country; on the other hand, if the product image is being measured, the scale items should reflect the measurement of the specific product attributes. So, in the present study, the concept of country-of-origin image is correctly used, as Martin and Eroglu suggested.

Therefore, it is suggested that researchers use the concepts of the country-of-origin image and product image as different variables, such as Laroche et al. (2005) and Li et al. (1998) have done; it may be that one variable causes the other and vice versa or as mediating variables. The above, in order that the definitions of the country-of-origin image, the scales, and the empirical relationships between variables define and measure what the concept of the country-of-origin image really represents.

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## **Biography**

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