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"The Influence of Logos' Country-of-Origin Cues (Color and Shape) on Consumers' Willingness to Pay"

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Abstract

Marketing experts and academics agree that communicating a brand's country-of-origin (COO) is a powerful tool to capitalize on positive country associations among consumers and thus influence consumers' product perceptions and behaviors. A favorable COO is most typically highlighted through origin labels or the phrase "Made in…" on product packaging. There are, however, other implicit and legally unregulated strategies to make the origin of products known, such as incorporating COO-specific shapes and colors into a brand logo. Even though these strategies can closely intertwine a brand with its COO and offer a variety of foreign branding opportunities, research has paid little attention to COO-cues in brand logos. Specifically, it is still uncertain if and to what extent COO-cues in brand logos influences consumers' willingness to pay (WTP). Drawing from signaling theory, this thesis therefore examines the influence of brand logos' COO-cues (logo shape and logo color) on consumers' WTP. For this purpose, an experimental study with Austrian consumers in a between-subjects design was conducted. Results of the study revealed that adding COO-specific shapes to the brand logo increased consumers' WTP (compared to a logo without any indication of the brand's origin). In contrast, the inclusion of the COO's national colors to the logo had no significant impact on consumers' WTP. Furthermore, combining multiple COO-cues (both logo shape and logo color) had no additional effect. Based on these findings, implications for research and practice were discussed and suggestions for future studies were made.

Key words: *brand logo, implicit country-of-origin cue, willingness to pay*

Table of contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abbreviations

ANCOVA	analysis of covariance
ANOVA	analysis of variance
BDM	Becker-DeGroot-Marschak
BO	brand origin
C-COSMO	consumer cosmopolitanism
CI	country image
COA	country of assembly
COB	country of brand
COD	country of design
COM	country of manufacture
COO	country of origin
DV	dependent variable
ELM	Elaboration Likelihood Model
e.g.	for example (Latin: exempli gratia)
et al.	and others (Latin: et alia)
etc.	and so on (Latin: et cetera)
EU	European Union
GNI	gross national income
i.e.	that is (Latin: id est)
IV	independent variable
M	mean
N	total number of individuals in the population
p.	page
PII	Personal Involvement Inventory
PSM	Price Sensitivity Meter
SD	standard deviation
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
USA / US	United States of America
vs.	versus
WTP	willingness to pay

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic of this master thesis, underscoring its relevance. Next, the research question and objectives are introduced as well as the motivation to conduct the study.

1.1. Relevance

For the purpose of benefitting from a number of potential positive associations, companies commonly "mention directly or […] indicate indirectly the country-of-origin (COO) of the company and/or of its products" (Aichner et al., 2017, p. 43). Country-of-origin (COO) can be defined as "the country which a consumer associates a certain product or brand as being its source" (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006, p. 29), such as *Google*, *McDonald's*, or *Apple* are frequently associated with the USA, *Volkswagen* or *Mercedes-Benz* with Germany or *Samsung* with South Korea. Research has shown that COO „creates emotional values associated with heritage and history" (Rashid & Barnes, 2018, p. 314) and COO-cues act as signals of product quality, thus influencing consumers' perceptions of risk and value, as well as the likelihood of purchase (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012).

The main driver of COO-effects on customers' responses is the country image (CI), namely "the overall perception consumers form of products from a particular country, based on their prior perceptions of the country's production and marketing strengths and weaknesses" (Roth & Romeo, 1992, p. 480). Specifically, "a product from a COO with a favorable country image is likely to be associated with a higher benefit than a product from a COO with a less favorable country image" (Koschate-Fischer et al. 2012, p. 23), resulting in more favorable brand attitudes, brand image and willingness to pay (WTP) (see Han, 1989; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). In addition to the higher associated benefit of brands with a favorable CI, products from a less favorable COO are frequently related to greater perceived risk (Ahmed et al., 2004).

A favorable COO (i.e., a COO with a favorable CI) is most typically advertised through *legally regulated* origin labels or the phrase 'Made in…' on product packaging. "Companies are generally not free to use these elements if they do not fulfill a number of requirements,

which are prescribed by national law, regional law and/or regulations of public, semi-public or private organizations" (Aichner, 2014, p. 84). There are, however, "a number of other [legally unregulated] explicit and implicit strategies to make the origin of products known" (Aichner, 2014, p.81). For instance, various authors have examined the methods used to convey the COO through the brand name (e.g., Leclerc et al., 1994; Magnusson et al., 2011; Samiee et al., 2005) or celebrity endorsements (Usunier, 2011). Another strategy is to use visual cues such as brand logos, which are "icons or symbols of an organisation […] to orchestrate the desired features that the organisation wants to express towards its stakeholders (Van Riel & van den Ban, 2001, p. 428). Logos can make use of the national flag's colors and specific shapes such as well-known landscapes and buildings from a country. These colors and shapes can thus communicate a brands' origin and allow customers to quickly associate a product to its COO (Aichner, 2014; Rashid & Barnes, 2018).

Several studies (e.g., MacInnis et al., 1999; Melewar & Saunders, 2000; Olins, 1990) have found that a brand logo is a key driver for brand identity, which "can project what the organisation is, what it stands for and what it does" (Melewar & Saunders, 2000, p. 538). COO-cues on a brand logo can therefore create a strong link between a company and its COO, potentially leading consumers to transfer positive associations with a country onto the company and the brand. Moreover, there is in fact reason to believe that visual COO-cues such as brand logos work better than origin labels, because "among the many stimuli that can activate origin recognition, marketers are always willing to put the brand in the forefront. Because the brand is clearly displayed, it is a visually salient cue which does not require much [cognitive] effort on the part of consumers, much less than trying to find a 'Made-in' label" (Usunier, 2011, p. 488). For instance, the Swedish furniture brand *IKEA* uses the Swedish colors in its logo, while *Toblerone* features a Swiss mountain on its chocolate bars as well as the Swiss national color in its name.

Despite the considerable amount of COO research focusing on the influence of a product's origin on consumers' responses (i.e., the COO-effect) (e.g., Ahmed & d'Astous, 1996; Berry et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2017; Yunus & Rashid, 2016), little attention has been paid to: (i) the role of brand logos (color and shape) as COO-cues, and (ii) the effects of brand logos on consumers' price responses. Indeed, prior COO research has focused on explicit COO cues, such as 'Made-in' labels (e.g., Bannister & Saunders, 1978; Chasin & Jaffe, 1980; Ettenson et al., 1988). Furthermore, literature on brand logo design in marketing has investigated the logo

as an instrument for identification and differentiation of a brand from its competitors (e.g., MacInnis et al., 1999; Melewar & Saunders, 2000), logo recognition and consumers' design preference (e.g., Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017; Torbarina et al. 2021) as well as consumer affective reactions to logos (e.g., Henderson & Cote, 1998; Machado et al., 2015; Van der Lans et al., 2009).

What makes a brand logo an especially interesting way to convey COO-cues is that, as opposed to origin labels (e.g., 'Made in'), it is usually not legally regulated, meaning that "there is no need to communicate the company's actual origin" (Aichner, 2014, p. 88). This offers many opportunities for foreign branding – i.e., the strategy of "trying to make customers believe that the company and/or its products originate from a more favourable country than they actually do" (Aichner et al., 2017). For instance, a Serbian company may use the Italian national colors and the Pisa tower, a famous Italian building, in their logo design to make their product look Italian and to benefit from possible positive expectations by Serbian customers associated with Italy and Italian products (Aichner, 2014; Hamzaoui & Merunka, 2006). "Given the vast amount of information and diversity of sources of information about brands, it is easy to understand how consumers develop inaccurate brand origin perceptions. For example, if not explicitly and accurately stated in advertisements or on brand packaging, consumers may rely on cues from other sources to determine brand origin" (Magnusson et al., 2011, p. 458).

Examples of this strategy include *Puschkin Vodka*, a German brand that utilizes the name of the Russian poet and novelist Alexander Sergejewitsch Puschkin as brand name and features a brown bear in its logo – an animal often associated with Russia. Another well-known example is the Dutch brand *Desperados*, which opted for a Spanish brand name as well as Mexican national colors and shapes (e.g., the agave leaf and cacti) to promote its tequila-flavored beer.

Finally, even though COO in general is perhaps the most thoroughly researched construct in international marketing, "price-related consequences of COO have been widely neglected in extant literature" (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012, p.21). This is problematic, as focusing on price provides a much more rigorous test of COO-effects, compared to studies that measure quality evaluations or purchase intentions. According to Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012), this is because it is possible for consumers to evaluate a product from one country more positively than a product from another country, but at the same time they are unwilling to pay a premium price for the higher rated product. Measuring price related consequences therefore

takes the consumer's sacrifice into account, as price represents "the amount of money we must sacrifice to acquire something we desire" (Monroe, 2003, p. 5).

These research gaps further confirm the relevance of the current study. The findings of this work therefore have the potential to make an important contribution to current scientific research in the field of the COO-effect and specifically the influence of brand logos as COO-cues. Beyond the scientific relevance of the work, the findings also have managerial implications.

1.2. Research question and objectives

This study aims to answer the following research question:

To what extent do the country-of-origin cues color and shape on brand logos influence consumers' willingness to pay?

Thus, the main objective of this thesis is to examine the influence of COO-cues (color and shape on brand logos) on consumers' willingness to pay (WTP). Specifically, the study aims to identify whether a brand logo – without any other indication of the brand's origin – can be used as an effective strategy for communicating COO information by using the national colors and/or COO-specific shapes such as well-known landscapes, buildings or symbols. In doing so, the current study employs signaling theory (Spence, 1973) and an experimental quantitative research design.

From a theoretical standpoint, the expected contribution of this work is the expansion of the sparse literature on (i) COO-cues in brand logos and their impact on consumers, (ii) price-related consequences of COO. Furthermore, results are expected to generate insight on color and shape as COO-cues and provide a comparison between the impact of those COO-cues on consumers' WTP.

From a managerial perspective, on the other hand, the results are expected to provide empirically based insights into the extent to which brand logos can function as a COO-cue. Questions such as "Is the inclusion of (favorable) COO-cues to the brand logo beneficial for consumers' WTP?", or "Can companies with a favorable COO charge premium prices by

adding COO-cues to their logos?" might be answered more accurately based on this study. Managerial implications also include foreign branding strategy, as brand logos are generally legally unregulated and have the potential to be used to benefit from positive associations customers have with foreign countries. The findings of this study should therefore be of great value to international marketing managers who are responsible for tasks such as brand logo design and development of pricing strategies.

1.3. Motivation

The motivation of this thesis is reflected in the established relevance of the COO-effect and, in particular, the potential consequences of new findings. The investigation of uncommon and unregulated COO-strategies – such as COO-cues (color and shape) on brand logos – could potentially lead companies to increasingly attempt to exploit the COO effect.

With brand logos being a key driver of brand identity (e.g., MacInnis et al., 1999; Melewar & Saunders, 2000; Olins, 1990) and being visually more salient and accessible than 'Made-in' labels (Usunier, 2011), the communication of COO information through the logo can potentially closely intertwine a brand with its COO. From a foreign branding perspective, with the logo being a largely unregulated COO strategy, it presents numerous opportunities to deceive consumers. For instance, an increasing number of brands with a less favorable COO could potentially start making use of unregulated COO-strategies by incorporating COO-specific colors and shapes of other, more favorable countries into their logo, packaging, website, or other areas of their aesthetic footprint. "It is easy to understand why a brand marketer from a country that has relatively low country equity – that is, with respect to product quality perceptions – may indeed choose to use […] [brand communication] that dissociates it from its source country and suggests it has originated in a country known for high quality" (Samiee et al., 2005, p. 392).

In order to counteract this type of foreign branding, a few countries have taken legal action. Switzerland, for instance, has passed the "Swissness" legislation in 2017, prohibiting companies from using national symbols, Swiss crosses or the term "Swiss made" on products that are not made of at least 80 percent Swiss raw materials. For this reason, *Toblerone*, which had moved much of its production from Switzerland to another country, recently had to remove

the Matterhorn (a well-known Swiss mountain) from its logo and replace it with a generic mountain top (Sprick, 2023). This is an exception, however, as most other countries do not have such laws that prevent foreign branding.

Marketing managers could therefore considerably benefit from understanding the potential role of COO-cues in logo design. Consequently, managerial implications and the chance of practical applicability of the new findings have great potential.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter presents the relevant literature to support the empirical part of the study. This section is divided into four parts. The first introduces extant literature on country-of-origin (COO) and country-of-origin effect. The second part focuses on brand logo, particularly on logo color and logo shape. The third part provides an overview on consumers' willingness to pay (WTP), and the last part comprises an outlook on product involvement.

2.1. COO and COO-effect

According to Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2006, p. 29), COO is defined as "the country which a consumer associates with a certain product or brand as being its source, regardless of where the product is actually produced." Consumers tend to transfer typical characteristics of a COO onto the product, the brand, and/or the service being purchased, making them more or less preferable (Andéhn et al., 2016; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). COO therefore serves as an extrinsic informational cue for consumers' perceptions and evaluations of a product (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). It is believed that the COO acts as a signal implying a certain level of product quality and therefore being an important influence and bias for consumers' perception of risk and value (Pharr, 2005). This COO influence on consumers' responses is called COO-effect.

It is believed that this effect occurs because consumers try to minimize elaboration, rely on peripheral information processes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), and use heuristic cognitive shortcuts based on cues (Chaiken, 1987). "Over time, these judgments take place automatically as a 'thoughtless' response in the cognitive repository in a manner introspectively unavailable to the actor" (Magnusson et al., 2011, p. 458). COO was first mentioned by Dichter (1962), who argues that a product's origin may have a huge influence on the acceptance and success of products. Since then, COO and its potential effects have received significant research attention (Magnusson et al., 2015). Papadopoulos et al. (2011) have counted more than 1,000 scientific articles addressing some aspect of the COO phenomenon, yielding a large amount of – sometimes contradicting – results.

Given the high number of articles published to date, it stands to reason that both COO definitions and operationalizations have changed over time. According to Srinivasan et al. (2004), COO research can be divided into two phases. The first wave of studies on the COO-effect, from the 1960s to the 1990s, associated the COO with the location of production – "the country in which the product is manufactured or assembled" (Hamzaoui & Merunka, 2006, p. 412) – and therefore primarily focused on the 'Made-in' label as COO-cue (Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Usunier, 2006). Schooler (1965) was the first to empirically test the COO-effect by evaluating products that were identical in all respects, except for the COO (communicated by means of a 'Made-in' label). The results of the study found significant differences in the evaluation of those products, suggesting that products made in less developed countries are evaluated as significantly lower in quality (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998). This study by Schooler (1965), as well as similar studies (e.g., Nagashima, 1970; Reierson, 1967; Schooler & Wildt, 1968), used the 'Made-in' label as the only informational cue available for consumers to evaluate the product – which is why this early wave of research was later referred to as single-cue studies (Maheswaran et al., 2013; Phau & Prendergast, 2000). Criticism that these single-cue studies over-estimate the influence of COO and fail to reflect reality triggered the second wave of COO research beginning in the 1990s (Bilkey & Nes, 1982). Subsequent works started to consider multiple cues – such as brand, design or price (Lu et al., 2016) – as consumers were thought to base their evaluations on more information rather than only the 'Made-in' label (Usunier, 2006). Several studies (e.g., Chao, 1998; Roth & Romeo 1992) have since found that COO-effects also occur when multiple cues are included.

Moreover, the increasing globalization of markets pushed researchers in the 1980s to split the COO construct into different dimensions (Magnusson et al., 2011; Usunier, 2011). As the country of the brand was becoming mostly different to the country of manufacture or assembly, there was a need for differentiation of terms (Pharr, 2005; Usunier, 2006). While the COO originally referred to the country of manufacture or the 'Made-in' label (Nebenzahl et al., 1997; Samiee, 1994), other origin labels or COO concepts were introduced (e.g., Aichner, 2014; Johnson et al., 2016; Usunier, 2006). According to Coskun and Burnaz (2016, p. 108), "the COO concept has been subdivided into some variations that are associated with the various countries that have a relationship with the product." Examples of COO concepts include the country of brand (COB) (e.g., Phau & Prendergast, 2000) or brand origin (BO) (e.g., Samiee et al., 2005), country of design (COD) (e.g., Usunier, 2006), country of manufacture (COM) (e.g., Arora et al., 2015) and country of assembly (COA) (Insch & McBride, 2004). This multiplicity

of COO components that most products have today has led consumers to predominantly associate the product's origin with the location of the *brand* rather than the place of manufacture (Usunier, 2011). For that reason, COO conceptualization in recent years has focused primarily on the brand origin, i.e., "the country where the corporate headquarters of the company marketing the product or brand is located" (Johansson et al., 1985, p. 389).

Although some research suggests that globalization has reduced the relevance of country association's influence on product evaluations altogether (e.g., Liefeld, 2004; Samiee, 2011; Usunier, 2011), according to Magnusson et al. (2015), the immense academic evidence indicates that country associations do indeed impact product evaluations (e.g., Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Magnusson et al., 2011; Sharma, 2011; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). This is supported by several studies suggesting that, in addition to consumer perception of product quality (Piron, 2000; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999), COO directly affects consumers' brand attitudes (Magnusson et al., 2011), consumers' behavior (Han, 1989; Tseng & Balabanis, 2011), and willingness to pay (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Siew et al., 2018). Additionally, extensive research by Hu and Wang (2010) has shown that sellers with favorable COOs (i.e., countries with a favorable CI), such as the United States, enjoy a price premium – meaning they can generally charge higher amounts for their tangible products and intangible services simply because of their COO.

COO effects, however, cannot be generalized to all countries, as – based on the country image (CI) – COO information may have both positive or negative effects on consumers' product perceptions (Elliott & Cameron, 1994; Maheswaran, 1994; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). As already mentioned, this can be attributed to the COO-effect being driven by country image (CI), a construct which examines why consumers prefer products or brands originating from one specific country instead of another country (Carneiro & Faria, 2016; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). According to Roth and Romeo (1992), the overall impression consumers have of a particular country's products stems primarily from their previous perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of that country's production and marketing. "What consumers know (or think they know) about a country's manufacturing ability, flair for style and design, and technological innovativeness seems […] congruent with product perception formation" (Roth & Romeo, 1992, p. 480). According to several studies on CI (e.g., Han & Terpstra, 1988; Nagashima 1970; Narayana, 1981; White, 1979), these strengths and weaknesses can be summarized into four categories: innovativeness (i.e., use of new technology

and engineering advances), design (i.e., appearance, style, colors, variety), prestige (i.e., exclusivity, status, brand name reputation), and workmanship (i.e., reliability, durability, craftsmanship, manufacturing) (Roth & Romeo, 1992).

These strengths and weaknesses of a country's production and marketing lead consumers to rate some countries as more favorable than others (Roth & Romeo, 1992). Positive (negative) effects of a favorable (unfavorable) image on consumer behavior are reflected in different ways (Maheswaran et al., 2013), as literature has consistently revealed that consumers evaluate products from a country with a more favorable image more positively than products from a country with a less favorable image (e.g., Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Tseng & Balabanis, 2011). Furthermore, "from a consumer's perspective, a product from a COO with a favorable country image is likely to be associated with a higher benefit than a product from a COO with a less favorable country image." (Koschate-Fischer et al. 2012, p. 23). In addition to the more positive product evaluations and higher associated benefit of products with a favorable CI, past research (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2004; Pharr, 2005) have found that products with a less favorable CI are frequently related to greater perceived risk. Thus, companies with an unfavorable CI would therefore be well advised to either not mention their COO at all or use a foreign branding strategy. Companies that do have a favorable CI, on the other hand, can greatly benefit from communicating their products' COO (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2004; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Pharr, 2005; Tseng & Balabanis, 2011).

As far as COO strategies are concerned, the origin of a product can be communicated by either explicitly (directly) mentioning the COO or by implicitly (indirectly) hinting at it (Aichner, 2014; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013). According to Aichner (2014), explicit COO strategies include 'Made-in' labels, quality and origin labels as well as the COO being embedded in the company name (e.g., *Air France*, *Deutsche Bank*, *Vienna Insurance Group*). On the other hand, the following examples illustrate implicit COO strategies (Aichner, 2014):

- The use of COO language (e.g., German automobile producer *Volkswagen* using the slogan 'Das Auto' in foreign advertisements).
- Typical COO words embedded in the company name (e.g., US insurance provider *Lincoln National*; Danish pharmaceutical company *Novo Nordisk*)
- The use of famous or stereotypical people from the COO (e.g., in 2011, the Italian brand *Giotto* used the Italian actress and model Elisabetta Canalis in their international TV commercials).

- The use of COO flags and symbols (e.g., British bookmaker *William Hill* using British flags in a 2012 TV commercial in Germany; *IKEA* using Sweden's national colors in their brand logo).
- The use of typical landscapes or famous buildings from the COO (e.g., Swiss chocolate brand *Toblerone* using a picture of a Swiss mountain on its logo).

While explicit strategies rather imply a low communication complexity for companies, implicit strategies have a medium or high complexity, as "the customer's knowledge, perception and stereotypes about certain foreign countries can differ significantly depending on their own nationality and culture" (Aichner, 2014, p. 91). Therefore, using implicit COO strategies requires a certain degree of knowledge about customers from the respective target market. "Even though there are several companies that use just one COO strategy to communicate the COO, most companies combine two or more COO strategies" (Aichner, 2014, p. 91).

According to this classification, one *implicit* strategy of communicating a company's COO is using the brand logo – specifically COO flags (or the flag's colors) and COO-specific shapes (such as typical landscapes or famous buildings). The next section will further elaborate on this strategy.

2.2. Brand logo

As pointed out by Henderson and Cote (1998), the word *logo* can refer to a variety of graphic and typeface elements. In the context of this thesis, specifically, the term logo is used "to refer to the graphic design that a company uses, with or without its name, to identify itself or its products […] and to communicate itself to internal and external audiences" (Henderson & Cote, 1998, p. 14). "Ultimately, companies want their name recalled, so the logo serves as shorthand for the company" (Van Riel & van den Ban, 2001, p. 429). According to Van den Bosch et al. (2005), the brand logo is a property of the organization and provides visibility, as pictures are generally perceived faster than words (Edell & Staelin, 1983). This is important because many company communications are seen only very briefly (e.g., driving by outdoor advertising, walking by products on shelves, flipping through advertisements in magazines) (Henderson & Cote, 1998).

Therefore, as one of the most salient visual elements of a brand, the logo is commonly employed as a management tool to convey desired features and messages that the organization wishes to communicate to its stakeholders (Foroudi et al., 2017; Van Riel & van den Ban, 2001). It is one of the main vehicles for communicating the corporate image and cutting through clutter to gain attention (Henderson & Cote, 1998). In short, the logo has the potential to visually express organizational characteristics and identity (Van Riel & van den Ban, 2001).

Furthermore, a brand logo is part of an organization's aesthetic footprint, which also entails other visual components of corporate identity design (e.g., website, advertisements, packaging) and constitutes an important intangible asset that significantly impacts firm performance (O'Connor, 2011). A company's aesthetic footprint first and foremost aims to achieve visual differentiation from its competitors within its industry or market, invites people to learn about a brand and helps build customer loyalty (MacInnis et al., 1999; O'Connor, 2011).

While the majority of extant research on brand logo design in marketing has focused on the identification and the differentiation of the brand from its competition through the logo, recent studies have highlighted consumer affective responses, emphasizing that logos can evoke positive emotions and convey brand meaning (Machado et al., 2015; Van der Lans et al., 2009). Park et al. (2013, p.180), for instance, point out that "logos can be more than simple tools for identification and differentiation", as they can significantly shape the brand's reputation (e.g., Baker & Balmer, 1997; Olins, 1989; Van den Bosch et al., 2005), brand awareness and recognition (e.g., Berry, 1988; Morrow, 1992; Peter, 1989; Torbarina et al., 2021) as well as consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (e.g., Jun et al., 2008; Williams & Son, 2022). If managed correctly, a logo can serve as a competitive advantage and be a way to boost a company's reputation and overall evaluation (Baker & Balmer, 1997; Olins, 1989). This is in line with what authors from other disciplines, such as the sociologist Baudrillard (1968), have recognized much earlier – a good is consumed not necessarily because of a concrete and tangible need associated with that good, but because of the semantic content it conveys.

In the context of brand logos, "positive affect can develop over time with increased exposure but also can be evoked by the initial design of the logo" (Henderson & Cote, 1998, p. 15). A brand logo design consists of several components such as the logo's color, shape, typeface and words (Torbarina et al., 2021). The two aspects relevant to the current study – color and shape – are discussed in detail in the following sections.

2.2.1. Color

Color can generally be defined as a "phenomenon of light or visual perception that enables one to differentiate otherwise identical objects. […] Their appearance may be described in terms of hue, lightness, and saturation […] that is other than and as contrasted with black, white, or gray" (Merriam-Webster, 2022a).

Color has been gaining attention in advertising and brand literatures over the last few decades (Wedel & Pieters, 2015). For instance, in their normative guidelines for logo creation, Henderson and Cote (1998) state that color greatly affects the perception of design and plays a decisive role in the messages a logo sends as well as how those messages are interpreted by consumers (Henderson & Cote, 1998). In line with this, Labrecque and Milne (2012) have found that color also plays a big role to shape brand personality, while O'Connor (2011) suggests that color "signalizes affiliation to the specific industry sector, making it easier to position a brand in a complex macro environment and consumers' minds" (Torbarina et al., 2021). In addition, several studies address the impact of logo color on recognition. There is evidence that logos in color are recognized much faster and more accurately than achromatic or grayscale logos (Tanaka & Presnell, 1999; Yip & Sinha, 2002). "Color can be an effective mnemonic device" (Henderson & Cote, 1998, p. 28), meaning it can serve to aid the memory and brand recognition.

In this context, it is also important to mention that from a color psychology perspective – i.e., color theory (Jung, 1957) –, colors elicit certain emotions and convey certain attributes. According to Jacobs et al. (1991), for example, blue is perceived as sincere, dependable and trustworthy, while red is associated with love and adventure. Overall color preference indicates that blue and green are the most popular, while red and yellow are the least preferred colors (Whitfield & Wiltshire, 1990).

This approach has already been applied in the marketing field, with researchers mostly focusing on the appropriateness (Bottomley & Doyle, 2006) or meaning (Hynes, 2009) of color in the aesthetic footprint. Bottomley and Doyle (2006, p. 79), for instance, have indicated that "colors and products have connotative meanings that are sufficiently shared by people to produce a systematic pattern of results. […] Brands promoting a functional image were better received in blue, while brands promoting a sensory-social image were better received in red." Results of a study by Hynes (2009), on the other hand, strongly support the communicative

value of color in expressing corporate identity, with certain attributes clearly associated with particular logo colors – overall, the colors match the attributes published on color theory. Madden et al. (2000) pointed out, however, that research on color is always influenced by cultural context, as people might have different associations with the same color depending on their context (e.g., white can be associated with peace and neutrality, but also with death depending on the culture).

2.2.2. Shape

The current study defines *shape* as "the visible makeup characteristic of a particular item; […] a spatial form or contour" (Merriam-Webster, 2022b). This includes both geometric and natural figures of a brand logo. Logo shapes have been the subject of a considerable number of studies over the past decades (e.g., Bottomley & Doyle, 2006; Henderson & Cote, 1998; Machado et al., 2015; Pittard et al., 2007; Torbarina et al. 2021; Walsh et al., 2011).

In their study on logo shape and its influence on brand evaluation and recognition, Torbarina et al. (2021) draw a distinction between concrete and abstract shapes. Concrete shapes (also figurative or natural shapes) are "those that resemble real-life objects - something people are usually exposed to" (Torbarina et al., 2021, p. 36). These include for example letters, flowers, fruit, vegetables, animals, faces, bodies, landscapes or buildings. Abstract shapes, on the other hand, have no resemblance to anything people usually see in real life. Abstract shapes are "artificially constructed and non-representative (i.e., squares, rectangles, triangles, horizontal or vertical stripes, circles and dots, ovals, arcs, swooshes, etc.)" (Machado et al., 2015, p. 81).

There is scientific evidence to show that logo shape is powerful enough to affect consumers' perceptions of a company's attributes. Henderson and Cote (1998), for instance, were able to demonstrate that circular shapes activate softness associations, while angular shapes activate hardness associations. In a later study, Jiang et al. (2016) concluded that the mere circularity/angularity of a logo influences consumers' inferences about products as well as their attitudes toward them. Furthermore, several studies suggest that concrete, naturalistic logos are recognized more correctly and accurately than abstract logos (Henderson & Cote, 1998; Machado et al., 2015). Pittard et al. (2007) were able to show a universal preference for

divine proportions and natural shapes across cultures, while highly abstract logos are generally less popular. According to Jacoby and Dallas (1981), these effects are related to familiarity, as familiar-looking stimuli (i.e., concrete shapes) tend to be perceived and processed faster, which is particularly important for logos. “Familiar meaning can be maximized (without reducing distinctiveness) by selecting a unique, but easily interpreted, design of a familiar object” (Henderson & Cote, 1998, p. 24). Accordingly, Torbarina et al. (2021) point out a need for marketers in both western and eastern cultures to select logo designs that are elaborate, natural, and harmonious.

In the following section, the interrelationship between the COO-effect and brand logos is described. This interrelationship is the foundation of the present thesis.

2.2.3. COO and brand logo

As already mentioned in previous chapters, the brand logo can serve as an unregulated and easily implemented implicit strategy of communicating a company’s COO. According to Hynes (2009, p. 554), “the logo design and color can be a vital aid” in emphasizing a brand’s origin, values, mission statement and characteristics. Of course, the way in which a company can advertise their COO through their logo varies. Two very common methods are (i) the use of national colors, flags or emblems and (ii) the use of typical shapes and symbols from the COO (Aichner, 2014).

According to Rashid and Barnes (2018), by using the national flag’s colors or emblems in their logo, brands can communicate its heritage, history, and other COO-elements, therefore allowing consumers to build strong associations between a brand, product or service and its COO. After all, “color has a strong association with country and culture […] and the association with color reflects not only a brand’s history and values but also its identity” (Rashid & Barnes, 2018, pp. 323). This strategy is especially effective for typical products of a country, such as hamburgers, popcorn, ketchup (United States), bratwurst, beer (Germany), and pasta or pizza (Italy) (Aichner, 2014). Figure 1 provides some real-world examples of companies using national colors in their brand logo.

Figure 1: Companies using national colors in their brand logo

Similarly, the integration of COO-specific shapes in a brand logo design can ensure that strong cognitive links between the brand and the COO are created in consumers' minds. These COO shapes usually include well-known elements of the country, such as typical/famous landscapes, buildings, animals, or symbols. Examples include the Eiffel Tower, baguette or a rooster (France), the Statue of Liberty or a bald eagle (United States), the tower of Pisa, the Coliseum, pasta or pizza (Italy), Corcovado with the statue of Cristo Redentor (Brazil), the Taj Mahal (India), etc. (Aichner, 2014). Real-life examples of companies using this strategy of COO-specific shapes in their brand logo can be found in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Companies using COO-specific shapes in their brand logo

Of course, these strategies are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are quite often used in combination with each other (Aichner, 2014). Many companies that advertise their COO through their logo do so by means of both the logo color and the logo shape. Again, some real-life examples of this can be found in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Companies using both national colors as well as COO-specific shapes in their brand logo

As mentioned above, there is a lack of research focusing on the influence COO-cues on brand logos (such as color and shape) might have on consumer behavior. In one of the few studies regarding this topic, Aichner (2014) states that both the integration of the national colors as well as COO-specific shapes in the aesthetic footprint have *potential* to increase customers' COO awareness, recognizability and likeability. However, this study does not empirically test that potential. Furthermore, Rashid and Barnes (2018) have found that, according to several retail and wholesale representatives in the UK, brands can convey heritage and history through the use of specific colors on their logos, as colors evoke strong associations with culture and a country. However, they focused on the retailers and wholesalers' perspective, neglecting the consumers' point of view. To the best of my knowledge, these effects have not yet been empirically tested from a consumer perception. Thus, the current study is therefore the first to investigate price-related consequences of COO-cues on brand logos.

2.3. Willingness to Pay

According to Homburg et al. (2005, p.85), WTP refers to "the maximum amount of money a customer is willing to spend for a product or service." It represents a measure of the value that a person gives to a consumption or usage experience in monetary units (Homburg et al., 2005). Similarly, Monroe (2003, p. 5) refers to consumers' WTP as the reservation price, with the term *price* representing "the amount of money we must sacrifice to acquire something we desire."

2.3.1. COO and brand logo

There are generally two techniques to elicit a consumer's WTP – price-response data and survey data. Price-response data (i.e., *revealed* preferences) include laboratory/field experiments, auctions, and data obtained through market observations (Breidert et al., 2006; Kloss & Kunter, 2016), while survey techniques (i.e., *stated* preferences) include direct and indirect questions for collecting data on WTP. "With direct surveys, respondents […] are asked to state how much they would be willing to pay for some product. In indirect surveys some sort of rating or ranking procedure for different products is applied in order to estimate a preference structure from which WTP can be derived" (Breidert et al., 2006, p. 9). The most common indirect surveying methods for determining WTP include *Conjoint Analysis* and *Discrete-Choice Analysis* (Breidert et al., 2006). For direct survey methods, the *Price Sensitivity Meter* (PSM) (Van Westendorp, 1976) and the *Becker-DeGroot-Marschak* (BDM) mechanism (Becker et al., 1964) are among the most popular techniques (Kloss & Kunter, 2016).

Literature on COO and price responses has mainly used direct survey methods, measuring consumers' WTP with a single question (e.g., Pucci et al., 2017; Siew et al., 2018), in which consumers simply indicate their maximum WTP for products originating from different countries (Backhaus et al. 2005). While, according to Breidert et al. (2006), this single question approach has its advantages such as cost and time efficiency, it also comes with flaws, as consumers generally tend to overestimate their price sensitivity (Lipovetsky et al., 2011). Therefore, "asking only one question about WTP is not recommended; using multiple questions provides more realistic results for pricing decisions, regardless of the format" (Desmet, 2016, p. 684), which is why PSM and BDM are preferred.

One COO study that employed the BDM mechanism is Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012). BDM is based on an auction or lottery, where participants simultaneously submit an offer price in order to purchase a certain product (Breidert et al. 2006). The product's selling price is then randomly drawn from a distribution of prices, which can range from zero to a price greater than the anticipated maximum price. All bidders whose bids are higher than the randomly determined selling price receive a unit of the good and pay an amount equal to this selling price. The mechanism is incentive compatible because a given bid determines only whether the bidder has the right to buy the good that is auctioned off. The price is set by some mechanism and is below the participants bid (Breidert et al., 2006). However, according to Wertenbroch and Skiera (2002), the BDM approach is restricted to certain market situations, since in

supermarkets and general retail stores the product supply is usually unlimited, and no competition is required to purchase a product. Hence, "WTP estimates elicited in auctions may differ from point of purchase situations" (Völckner, 2006, p. 139). Furthermore, there are "limitations of surveys that require people to actually purchase the product, [which] may represent a drawback of the BDM procedure" (Völckner, 2006, p. 148).

For these reasons, the present master thesis employs PSM by Van Westendorp (1976). In addition to the advantage of not creating a purchase obligation, PSM asks multiple questions in order to measure a consumer's WTP. This helps PSM to provide more realistic results for pricing decisions, compared to single question approaches (Desmet, 2016). Specifically, the method measures WTP by asking target consumers to indicate the price levels for which they consider a product to be:

- *Too cheap*: the price of the product is at such a low level that the consumer questions the product's quality and as a result decides not to purchase it.
- *Cheap*: the price of the product is considered a bargain and the consumer considers buying the product.
- *Expensive*: the consumer is thinking about purchasing the product as he/she considers the price as being expensive but still acceptable.
- *Too expensive*: products in this price range are considered so high as to prevent the purchase.

According to Diamantopoulos et al. (2021), PSM has been widely used in practice, provides very acceptable results at relatively low costs. This method also "provides reliable information about consumers' reaction to prices" (Çolak & Koşan, 2021, p.70).

Some recent studies have attempted to only use a single question of PSM – the *expensive* price – as a proxy for WTP (e.g., Fischer et al., 2022). This approach is not advisable, however, as the *expensive* price level is not necessarily the consumer's WTP. "If WTP is approached under a conventional economic perspective, then it should represent the consumer's reservation price, that is the maximum price that a consumer would be willing to pay for the product/brand. Under this light, the 'expensive' price level thus seems to be a gross underestimation of WTP" (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021, p. 755). It is therefore recommended to survey all dimensions of PSM in order to reliably measure consumers' WTP.

2.3.2. COO and WTP

Even though COO in general is perhaps the most thoroughly researched construct in international marketing, only a few studies have investigated the impact of COO and CI on product price. Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012, p.21) also point out this shortcoming, emphasizing that "price-related consequences of COO have been widely neglected in extant literature." This lack of research especially applies to WTP, as most of the few studies addressing price-related issues in the COO context focus either on consumers' price tolerance (e.g., Drozdenko & Jensen, 2009; Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1993) or price acceptance (e.g., Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999; Hulland et al., 1996), rather than the WTP.

Thus far, most studies on COO-effects have predominantly examined *softer* outcome variables, such as brand evaluations or purchase intentions (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). However, the use of such measures has drawn criticism for several reasons. Firstly, the impact of COO often diminishes as consumers get closer to making a purchase decision (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). Secondly, the sacrifice a consumer must make to purchase a product is not considered with these softer outcome variables (Monroe, 2003). Furthermore, positive product evaluations or a higher purchase intention do not necessarily mean that consumers are also willing to buy the product, as "it is possible for consumers to evaluate a product from country X more positively than a product from country Y but, at the same time, be unwilling to pay a price premium for it" (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012, p. 20).

These limitations of softer outcome variables can be overcome by instead measuring the WTP, which allows researchers "to study how COO affects actual [consumer] behavior" (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012, p. 22). "Focusing on price rather than quality evaluations or purchase intentions as a dependent variable offers a (much) stricter test of COO effects" (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012, p. 20), making it possible to *monetize* the COO-effect (Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1996). As price has a significant effect on consumers' purchase behavior and consequently on firm sales and profits (Han et al., 2001), this monetization of the COO-effect can be very useful from a managerial perspective.

Despite the sparsity of literature in this regard, some studies have found a positive link between COO and consumers' WTP – using a variety of approaches such as PSM, BDM, or single questions (e.g., Aichner et al., 2017; Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Drozdenko & Jensen,

2009; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Siew et al., 2018). Research has generally shown that consumers are indeed showing an increased WTP for products from a COO with a more favorable country image as opposed to products with a less favorable one (e.g., Hu & Wang, 2010; Pucci et al., 2017). Furthermore, "consumers also showed a positive bias (i.e. increased willingness to pay a higher price) toward products from developed countries relative to less developed countries" (Drozdenko & Jensen, 2009, p. 375).

Of all methods to measure the WTP, PSM has only recently been used in this field. Diamantopoulos et al. (2021) conducted the first attempt to examine the COO pricing footprint by using PSM. This study generated contradicting results, with one experiment suggesting that a significant difference in CI between two countries does not necessarily transfer into pricing footprint differences. A second experiment, however, illustrated that country image differences actually do translate into substantial pricing footprint differences. These contrasting findings suggest that the specific context involved (in terms of the studied country and particular product category) influences the relationship between country image favorability and pricing footprint perceptions" (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021, p. 755).

Considering the general lack of research on the relationship between the COO-effect and the WTP, specifically applying the PSM, the current study aims to contribute to the scant body of research on this issue. The next section focuses on the last construct relevant for this thesis, i.e., product involvement.

2.4. Product Involvement

The term product involvement essentially indicates the amount of interest a consumer finds in a product class (Mittal & Lee, 1989) and the level of "consumer's thoughtfulness and motivation when buying a product" (Prendergast et al., 2010, p. 181). It is "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342) and thus "an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest [which] is evoked by a particular stimulus or situation […]. Its consequences are types of searching, information-processing and decision making" (Rothschild, 1984, p. 217).

The concept of involvement has played an increasingly important role in explaining consumer behavior (Mittal & Lee, 1989). At the heart of this concept is the notion of personal relevance, as, according to Engel et al. (1986), involvement reflects the extent to which a purchase decision is personally relevant to the individual's basic values, goals, and self-concept. This means that a consumer's level of involvement with a product depends on how relevant they personally consider the product to be (Zaichkowsky, 1985). This influences consumers' decision processes and search for information, because depending on their level of involvement, they may be passive or active when they receive advertising communication, and limit or extend their processing of this communication (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). Product involvement therefore occurs when and because a product is seen to satisfy valuable goals (Mittal & Lee, 1989).

With regards to purchase decisions, involvement leads consumers to search for more information and spend more time searching for the right selection. Consequently, the more involved consumers are, the more information and time they need to make their purchasing decision (Nugroho et. al., 2014). Most studies on involvement apply a dichotomous approach and differentiate between high and low product involvement (Engel et al., 1986). "High involvement decisions are those that involve extensive search and critical evaluation before choice. Low involvement decisions encompass purchases which involve no search and little evaluation before choice" (Zaichkowsky, 1984, pp. 1). Indeed, there is a large body of theoretical work that addresses the differences between high and low involvement conditions, as it has been hypothesized that individuals who are highly involved in a product take longer to make decisions (Tyebjee, 1979), perceive greater differences between products (Robertson, 1976), and are less price sensitive (due to their focus on non-price attributes) (Rothschild, 1978). Prendergast et al. (2010) further elaborate that, by relying more on relevant factual information, individuals with high product involvement tend to be more risk averse in their purchase decisions. On the other hand, individuals with low personal involvement in a particular product tend to be more willing to take risks in their purchase decisions and are more susceptible to secondary information cues (Zaichkowsky, 1984).

2.4.1. Measurements of product involvement

When it comes to operationalizing product involvement, there is currently little agreement on how best to measure it (Cohen, 1983) – mainly due to the multitude of approaches to conceptualizing the construct (Mittal & Lee, 1989). According to Zaichkowsky (1984), some early research on involvement and advertising has employed respondents' reactions to messages as the primary indicator of involvement (e.g., Krugman, 1967; Wright, 1974; Ray et al., 1973); when examining product categories, the relative importance of the various products was used to measure involvement (e.g., Howard & Sheth, 1969; Hupfer & Gardner, 1971), while research on purchase decisions has used differences in subjects' search/evaluation processes as an indicator (e.g., Belk, 1982; Clarke & Belk, 1979). However, these studies are limited as they provide no theoretical defense of product involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1984).

In an attempt to measure product involvement as a whole and single construct, Mittal and Lee (1989) have proposed a unifying theoretical framework to accommodate the diverse approaches to conceptualizing involvement. "Several concepts related to involvement are integrated in a causal network of forms, sources, and effects" (Mittal & Lee, 1989, p. 363). Although the results of the study are not to be discounted, its complex methodology goes far beyond the construct needed in this study.

One fairly simple approach to measure involvement that has been proven in practice to yield acceptable results is the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) by Zaichkowsky (1984). By scoring on a seven-point semantic differential scale of word-pairs, the PII measures both cognitive and emotional involvement (Prendergast et al., 2010) and captures a person's perceived relevance of the object based on their inherent needs or values (Zaichkowsky, 1984). The ten word-pairs were identified by the researcher through reduction from an originally larger pool of pairs. Initially, 168 word-pairs were evaluated as to their representativeness of involvement, considering the domains of advertisements, products, and purchase situations (Zaichkowsky, 1994). They were then judged in terms of content validity and further reduced to thirty items. These thirty items were reduced to 20 items after reliability tests of internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Zaichkowsky, 1984). A decade later, the PII was finally shortened to a ten-item inventory (for details, see section 4.3.3.) (Zaichkowsky, 1994). The present master thesis employs this shortened ten-item PII to operationalize product involvement.

2.4.2. COO and product involvement

In recent years, research has increasingly addressed the role of involvement in moderating the relationship between COO and product evaluations – mostly measuring product involvement by applying the PII (e.g., Cilingir & Basfirinci, 2014; Josiassen et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2005; Prendergast et al., 2010). In general, previous findings indicate that COO is more likely used by consumers that present a low involvement rather than by those who are more involved (Nugroho et. al., 2014). This means that the lower the product involvement, the stronger the COO effect, as consumers consider the image of the country to be "more important for their product evaluations when they are less involved with the products that they are evaluating" (Josiassen et al., 2008, p. 435). When consumers are lowly involved and do not spend much time and effort on gaining information about the product, they often rely on a few salient and extrinsic cues (e.g., brand name, price, COO), which activate generalizations from memory about the product category and brand reputation (Nugroho et. al., 2014), regardless of physical attributes and the brand (Cilingir & Basfirinci, 2014). This makes low involvement respondents generally more sensitive to COO than those more highly involved with the product (Prendergast et al., 2010).

It is believed that this moderating effect of involvement on the relationship between COO and product evaluations has its theoretical roots based in Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Cilingir & Basfirinci, 2014; Prendergast et al., 2010). According to ELM, consumers are confronted with hundreds of persuasive messages every day, making it impossible for them to thoughtfully process all information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). There are therefore two pathways through which consumers generally process information: they can diligently consider the information in a message (via the central/systematic route to elaborate the massage – this one requires a great deal of cognitive effort), or they attend to positive or negative cues rather than rational argument (the peripheral/heuristic route) to guide their response (Prendergast et al., 2010). Therefore, the degree of personal involvement moderates the link between the message and the response by determining the pathway to be used in processing. Low involvement consumers tend to use more heuristic processes and peripheral signals (e.g., COO) to form their attitudes (Prendergast et al., 2010).

Although there is considerable research to support this moderating effect, some studies nevertheless point to an opposite impact of involvement. Nugroho et. al. (2014), for instance, hypothesizes that highly involved customers – who show a high level of importance and interest

in the product and spend more time and costs searching for information about the product – are more likely to notice and act on COO cues. In contrast, when the product is not important/interesting to the consumers, they do not want to spend a lot of effort to evaluate it and they perhaps do not really care about COO (Nugroho et. al., 2014). Even though there are not many results supporting these claims, one can nevertheless conclude that the construct of product involvement and its moderating effect still need to be further investigated. This is highlighted by Prendergast et al. (2010), who have called for more research on the impact of involvement on COO perceptions.

In the next chapter, the conceptual framework as well as research hypotheses of this master thesis are introduced.

3. Conceptual framework and research hypotheses

This chapter describes the conceptual model, its theoretical underpinnings, and the research hypotheses developed from it.

3.1. Conceptual model

Based on the literature review and research gaps, this master thesis investigates the research model shown graphically in Figure 4.

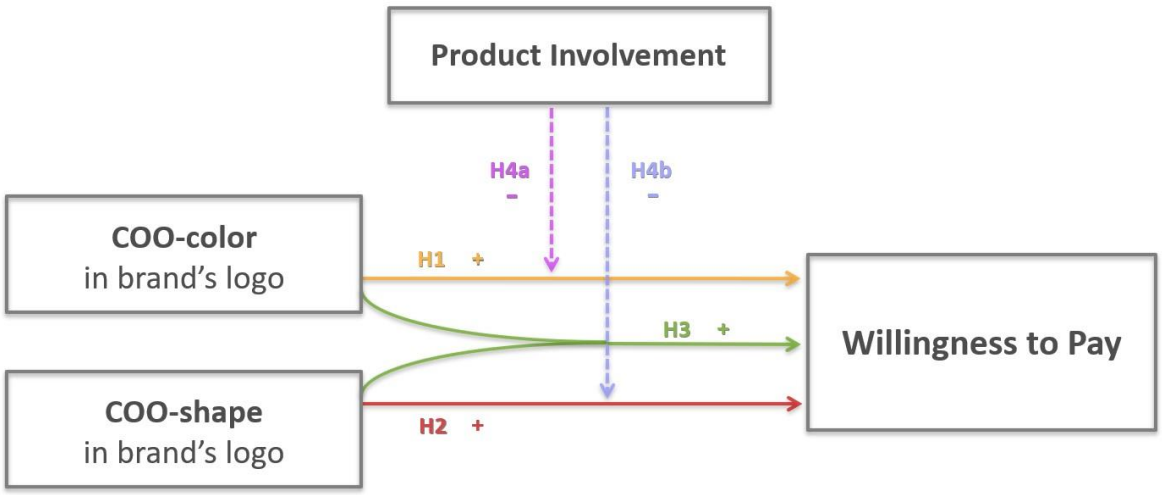

Figure 4: Conceptual model

The model depicts the influence of the logos' COO-cues color and shape on consumers' WTP, with product involvement acting as a moderator.

In the next section, the theoretical underpinning of the model as well as the corresponding hypotheses illustrated in Figure 4 are described.

3.2. Research hypotheses

This thesis draws on signaling theory (Spence, 1973) to underpin the hypothesized relationship between COO – communicated by the brand logo (color and shape) – and consumers' WTP for a brand. The theory is discussed below in order to establish the research hypotheses.

"The main focus of signaling theory is whether a signal delivers credible information while reducing information asymmetry between parties of a transaction" (Akdeniz & Talay, 2013, p. 602). The theory is therefore applied to describe behavior in situations – such as economic transactions – where two (or more) parties have different access to information (Magnusson et al., 2015). It is assumed that, because sellers have more information about their product than buyers do, transactions are generally subject to information asymmetry (Akdeniz & Talay, 2013; Schmid & Dauth, 2014).

As this difference in access to information increases the potential buyer's perceived risk and creates uncertainty, it is in the interest of both parties to reduce the information asymmetry of the transaction (Rao et al., 1999; Schmid & Dauth, 2014). This reduction is achieved by brands communicating information (i.e., signals) about unobservable product quality to their customers (Akdeniz & Talay, 2013; Rao et al., 1999). To reduce information asymmetry, sellers send market signals to inform prospective buyers about the brand (Magnusson et al., 2015). Buyers who seek to reduce the perceived risk of a transaction then "update their beliefs about product quality by observing and interpreting product- and market-related signals within the environment, where signals serve as heuristics and help customers to evaluate product quality before purchase. […] According to signaling theory, consumers benefit from the existing signals in the environment to differentiate a high-quality from a low-quality product" (Akdeniz & Talay, 2013, p. 603).

Thus, "a *signal* is an action that the seller can take to convey information credibly about unobservable product quality to the buyer" (Rao et al., 1999, p. 259). When product quality is not readily observable, one of the challenges in marketing is to convey a credible signal to transform prospective consumers into actual consumers of the offered product or service (Akdeniz & Talay, 2013). Those signals can be either extrinsic or intrinsic product cues, which consumers can rely on when evaluating brands and forming their purchase decisions (Diamantopoulos & Zeugner-Roth, 2010; Han, 1990; Liefeld, 2004). While intrinsic cues are

directly related to the physical product and cannot be changed easily without transforming the product itself, extrinsic cues can be modified such that the objective nature of the product is not influenced (Olson & Jacoby, 1972). Despite consumers' preference to make purchase decisions based on intrinsic product cues (e.g., performance, taste, quality), they are oftentimes forced to rely on extrinsic cues (e.g., price, brand name, warranties) (Magnusson et al., 2015).

The product's COO belongs to the category of extrinsic cues. Indeed, international marketing literature provides significant evidence that a product's COO is an important extrinsic quality signal (Magnusson et al., 2015), influencing consumers' perceptions of risk and value (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). The COO therefore communicates unobservable product attributes and is used by consumers to access the overall product quality (Rao et al., 1999; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). In other words, a product's COO is an informational signal which, like other informational cues such as price, brand name or brand logo, helps consumers to evaluate products and develop attitudes towards them (Chamorro et al., 2015).

Additionally, a more (less) favorable COO should rise (reduce) consumers' WTP because the brand logo (color/shape) acts as a positive (negative) COO signal that is transferred to the consumer. Past research also demonstrated a positive relationship between COO favorability and consumers' price responses (e.g., Drozdenko & Jensen, 2009; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Siew et al., 2018). As a consequence, a logo with a favorable COO's color should generate a higher WTP compared to logos with no COO colors (i.e., a grayscale logo), as the color conveys a positive COO signal for customers. Similarly, a concrete logo shape that suggests a favorable COO should result in a greater consumers' WTP compared to an abstract shape that is not related to the country. Thus:

H1: Logos using the (favorable) COO's national colors will generate a higher consumers' WTP than grayscale logos.

H2: Logos using (favorable) COO-specific shapes will generate a higher consumers' WTP than abstract shapes.

With regards to the combination of both favorable COO-signals (logo color and logo shape suggesting the same COO), this thesis argues that it should generate the highest WTP,

because two positive COO-cues are being sent to consumers as quality signals. This argument is based on the assumption that a higher number of COO-cues leads to a stronger association with the COO. According to Siew et al. (2018, p. 600), how strongly a product is associated with its COO has an impact on the strength of the effect: "*How* 'French' or 'American' a brand is, has a significant influence on downstream variables related to affect and behavioral intentions." Literature has also shown that cumulating positive COO information leads to more favorable product evaluations (e.g., Bartikowski et al., 2019; Eng et al., 2016). Therefore:

H3: Logos using both the COO's national colors as well as COO-specific shapes will generate the highest consumers' WTP.

Finally, concerning the role of product category involvement, Prendergast et al. (2010), Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran (2000) and Lee et al. (2005), indicate that the lower the product involvement, the stronger the effect of COO, as lowly involved consumers are likely more sensitive to COO than those more highly involved. In line with signaling theory, this means that in a low involvement situation, COO will be a stronger signal of a product's quality to consumers, exerting a positive influence on their WTP. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H4a: Product involvement negatively moderates the impact of the COO's national colors on consumers' WTP.

H4b: Product involvement negatively moderates the impact of COO-specific shapes on consumers' WTP.

In the next chapter, the research's methodology is outlined.

4. Methodology

The following chapter describes the methodology of the study, including the research design, country of research, variables and measures, stimuli, and procedure of data collection.

4.1. Research design

To investigate the research question and test the literature-based hypotheses, an experimental quantitative research design in the form of an online survey was chosen. This approach allows for the formulation of cause-effect relationships. In the current study, the causality between COO-cues on brand logos (color and shape) and consumers' WTP is investigated.

A 2×2 full-factorial between-subjects design was employed, meaning that each respondent is exposed to only one condition (Field, 2018). This method was chosen for the purpose of avoiding any carry-over effects. Furthermore, according to Frederick and Fischhoff (1998), between-subjects designs are more accurate for investigating consumers' WTP, as within-group designs have shown that consumers want to differentiate in their answers and thus tend to overestimate their WTP.

This study manipulated *logo color* and *logo shape*. The two levels of the variable *color* were (i) the COO's national colors and (ii) grayscale. For the variable *shape*, the two levels were (i) COO-specific shape and (ii) abstract shape. Figure 5 illustrates the experimental design. Except for the brand logo, the stimuli were identical across all four experimental conditions (see Appendix A).

		IV 1: COLOR	
		COO's national colors	Greyscale
IV 2: SHAPE	Concrete, COO-cue		
	Abstract		

Figure 5: 2×2 factorial design

Next, the country of research is introduced.

4.2. Country of research: Austria

Both the pretest as well as the main study were conducted in Austria, which is a suitable choice for several reasons. First, Austria has a strong economy and high purchasing power. According to The World Bank (n.d.-a), with a gross national income (GNI) per capita of USD 52,760 (in 2021), Austria classifies as a high-income country. In fact, out of 217 countries, this value ranks as the 18th highest worldwide (The World Bank, n.d.-b). As a result, Austrians generally have enough disposable income to afford products like the one chosen for the current study.

Second, Austria is a large importer of goods on the global market. As an open market economy, Austria has developed a widely branched and highly differentiated foreign trade. In 2021, Austria imported goods worth EUR 185.7 billion. That amounts to an average of EUR 20,550 of imports per person in 2021, the 5th highest value in the European Union and top 20 worldwide (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, 2022).

This is further supported by the fact that Austria was ranked 7th in the 2021 KOF Globalisation Index (ETH Zürich, 2021). This index measures globalization along the economic, social and political dimension for almost every country in the world and, according to Gygli et al. (2019), has become the most widely used globalization index in the academic

literature. This high position in the KOF Globalization Index indicates that Austria is a highly globalized country involved in far-reaching flows of goods and services. Consequently, the consumption of foreign products is nothing out of the ordinary for Austrian consumers as they are frequently confronted with them and are generally open-minded towards products from foreign countries.

Third, the product category selected for the current study – athletic footwear (for details, see section 4.4.3.) – is a very common product category in the Austrian market. The segment has boomed in recent years, gaining in importance over classic street shoes (Statista, 2023). Projected sales in the sneaker segment in Austria will amount to approximately EUR 430 million in 2023, which converts to an average of EUR 47.37 spent on sneakers per person. The average per capita consumption in the sneaker segment in Austria is expected to be 0.74 pairs in 2023 (Statista, 2023). Thus, being confronted with a purchase of sneakers will not be an unfamiliar situation for most subjects of the study.

In the following section, the main variables are shown.

4.3. Variables and measures

In this section, the variables and measures used in the study are described.

4.3.1. Dependent variable

The dependent variable (DV) represents the assumed effect (i.e., outcome) in an experiment and is thought to be affected by changes in an independent variable (IV) (Field, 2018). This variable is therefore often referred to as the outcome variable.

In this study, the DV is *consumers' willingness to pay* (WTP), operationalized with Van Westendorp's (1976) Price Sensitivity Meter (PSM) and four prices: *too cheap, cheap, expensive, and too expensive*. Table 1 shows the DV and its measurement.

Table 1: Dependent variable

Variable	Measurement
Willingness to pay "The maximum amount of money a customer is willing to spend for a product or service" (Homburg et al., 2005, p. 85).	4 items with open-ended questions following Van Westendorp's (1976) PSM: • At what price would you consider this product to be so low that you would question its quality? *(Too cheap price)* • At what price would you consider the product to be a bargain – a great buy for the money? *(Cheap price)* • At what price would you consider the product starting to get expensive – not out of the question, but you'd need to give some thought to buying it? *(Expensive price)* • At what price would you consider this product so expensive that you would not consider buying it? *(Too expensive price)*

In accordance with PSM guidelines, respondents providing inconsistent and intransitive responses (i.e., respondents who violated the *very cheap* < *cheap* < *expensive* < *very expensive* sequence) should be excluded from the analysis (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021).

Many studies using the PSM have examined the four pricing elements separately (e.g., Diamantopoulos et al. 2021; Müller, 2009). Instead, this thesis averages the *expensive* and *too expensive* prices to obtain an estimate of consumers' WTP at the individual level. This method of using the mean value was chosen because (i) simply using the *too expensive* price would overestimate consumers' WTP, because at this price level consumers would not consider buying the product; and (ii) using the expensive price would underestimate consumers' WTP, as this price level is not the maximum price consumers would be willing to pay. Thus, taking the mean of the *expensive* and *too expensive* price elements corrects for both the underestimation and overestimation of the elements and constitutes an adequate approximation of consumers' actual WTP.

The study's independent variables are explained next.

4.3.2. Independent variables

An independent variable (IV) is thought to be the cause of some effect. The term is usually used in experimental research to describe a variable that the experimenter has manipulated in order to predict the DV (Field, 2018). The IV is therefore often referred to as the predictor variable.

In the current study, the independent variables are the *COO-color* and the *COO-shape* in a brand logo. The IVs are directly manipulated by exposing each treatment group to only one of the four visual stimuli – i.e., each recipient is only subjected to one brand logo (as described in section 4.1.).

The COO-cues on the brand logos are operationalized as depicted in Figure 5 (section 4.1.). The baseline logo contains no COO-cues whatsoever (i.e., gray color, abstract shape). Two other stimuli each contain one COO-cue, either color (i.e., national colors of the COO) or shape (COO-specific shape). The final stimulus contains a combination of both COO-cues – both the color and the shape of the logo indicate the brand's COO. The comparison of the average WTP of each group allows to draw conclusions that can be attributed to the manipulation of the IVs. Table 2 shows the IVs and their manipulation.

Table 2: Independent variables

Variable	Measurement
Country-of-origin… "The country which a consumer associates with a certain product or brand as being its source, regardless of where the product is actually produced" (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006, p. 29). **…signaled through the brand logo** "The graphic design that a company uses, with or without its name, to identify itself or its products" (Henderson & Cote, 1998, p. 14).	Manipulated by varying the COO-cues on the stimuli of each treatment group: • No COO-cue on brand logo • Brand logo with COO-colors • Brand logo with COO-shape • Brand logo with both COO-colors and COO-shape

The following section describes the moderator variable.

4.3.3. Moderator variable

According to Field (2018, p. 484), "a moderator variable is one that affects the relationship between two others," meaning that the moderator influences the strength or direction of the relationship between the IVs and the DV. This thesis claims that the strength of the relationship between COO-cues in brand logos (color and shape) and consumers' WTP is affected by the moderator variable *product involvement* (see section 2.4. again).

The current study measures product involvement by means of the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) by Zaichkowsky (1994), which is a 10-item inventory on a seven-point semantic differential scale measuring "both cognitive and emotional types of involvement" (Prendergast et al., 2010, p. 181). Product involvement is treated as a categorial, binary variable with the characteristics high and low involvement. After data collection, respondents across all groups are split in half, using the median of PII scores. This allows for a distinction between high and low involvement respondents and an examination of the moderating effect on the relationship between the IVs and the DV. Table 3 shows the moderator variable and its measurement.

Table 3: Moderator variable

Variable	Measurement
Product involvement "The level of consumer's thoughtfulness and motivation when buying a product" (Prendergast et al., 2010, p. 181). "A person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342)	10 word-pairs on a seven-point semantic differential scale according to Zaichkowsky's (1994) Personal Involvement Inventory (PII): 1) important - not important 2) relevant - not relevant 3) means a lot - does not mean a lot 4) valuable - not valuable 5) interesting - not interesting 6) exciting - not exciting 7) appealing - not appealing 8) fascinating - not fascinating 9) needed - not needed 10) involving - not involving

Next, the study's covariates are described.

4.3.4. Covariates

A covariate is a type of control variable (also known as confounding variable) that is of no direct interest to the researcher but may have an effect on the DV. “In any experiment, there may be […] variables that confound the results (i.e., variable other than the experimental manipulation that affect the outcome variable)” (Field, 2018, p. 576). If any such variables are known, then *controlling* for them – i.e., including them as covariates – can remove them as potential explanations for the effect of interest and therefore make the results of the study more accurate (Field, 2018).

Based on the literature review on COO and WTP, two control variables that might influence consumers’ price perceptions were identified and measured: price sensitivity and consumer cosmopolitanism (C-COSMO). According to Wakefield and Inman (2003, p. 201), price sensitivity reflects “the extent to which individuals perceive and respond to changes or differences in prices for products or services.” Previous research has shown that consumers who are less price sensitive are more willing to pay higher prices for a particular product than highly price-sensitive consumers (Goldsmith & Newell, 1997). Thus, it is important to control for this variable.

C-COSMO is “the extent to which a consumer (1) exhibits an open-mindedness towards foreign countries and cultures, (2) appreciates the diversity brought about by the availability of products from different national and cultural origins, and (3) is positively disposed towards consuming products from foreign countries” (Riefler et al., 2012, p. 287). Research has shown that C-COSMO positively influences consumer product preferences toward foreign and global brands (e.g., Cleveland et al., 2009; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015; Zhou & Belk, 2004). It can therefore be assumed that, in a similar way, C-COSMO positively influences consumers’ WTP, meaning that more cosmopolitan consumers may be willing to pay more for foreign products. For the purpose of avoiding implications of this effect in the current study, the variable is controlled for.

The measurements of the covariates were adapted from previous studies on COO research and the items are calculated by using the arithmetic average. Including these covariates reduces the risk of overestimating the impact of the IVs (COO-cues color and shape on brand logos) on the DV (consumers’ WTP). Table 4 shows these covariates and their measurement.

Table 4: Covariates

Variable	Measurement
Price sensitivity "The extent to which individuals perceive and respond to changes or differences in prices for products or services" (Wakefield & Inman, 2003, p. 201).	3 items on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree") according to Wakefield and Inman (2003): • I'm willing to make an extra effort to find a low price for [product]. • I will change what I had planned to buy in order to take advantage of a lower price for [product]. • I am sensitive to differences in the prices for [product].
Consumer cosmopolitanism "A relative distance from one's own culture and affiliation and openness towards other cultures and customs" (Riefler et al., 2012, p. 285).	12 items on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree") according to Riefler et al. (2012): • When traveling, I make a conscious effort to get in touch with the local culture and traditions. • I like having the opportunity to meet people from many different countries. • I like to have contact with people from different cultures. • I have a real interest in other countries. • Having access to products coming from many different countries is valuable to me. • The availability of foreign products in the domestic market provides valuable diversity. • I enjoy being offered a wide range of products coming from various countries. • Always buying the same local products becomes boring over time. • I like watching movies from different countries. • I like listening to music of other cultures. • I like trying original dishes from other countries. • I like trying out things that are consumed elsewhere in the world.

Demographic variables (gender, age, nationality, occupation, monthly net income) were also included in the main questionnaire (see Table 5).

Table 5: Demographic variables

Variable	Measurement
Gender	**Gender:** ( ) female ( ) male ( ) diverse
Age	**Age:** _____ years old
Nationality	**Nationality:** ( ) Austrian ( ) Other
Education	**Education:** ( ) Less than high school diploma ( ) High school degree or equivalent ( ) Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BSc) ( ) Master's degree (e.g., MA, MSc, MEd) ( ) Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD) ( ) Other (please specify) _____
Occupation	**Occupation:** ( ) Employed ( ) Self-employed ( ) Unemployed ( ) Student ( ) Retired ( ) Homemaker ( ) Military / community service ( ) Other
Monthly net income	**Net Income:** _____ Euros

Next, the stimuli are described.

4.4. Stimuli

In this section, the stimuli of the experimental study are presented. Specifically, the stimuli's product/brand origin (i.e., COO), fictitious brand name and brand logos as well as the product category are explained. All stimuli are illustrated in Appendix A.

4.4.1. Country

The chosen COO of this study's product is the USA. The choice of product/brand origin was based on a pretest, which examined the fit of several potential countries for the study (for details, see section 4.5.1.). The main criteria for the choice of COO were a favorable country image (CI) as well as a positive product-country typicality.

Country image (CI) can be defined as "the overall perception consumers form of products from a particular country" (Roth & Romeo 1992). In this study, a favorable CI is an important factor, as it intends to measure the *positive* effect of COO (i.e., the effect of a favorable CI, communicated through COO-cues on the brand logo). This approach was chosen because, in practice, it is almost exclusively brands with a favorable COO that advertise their products' origin. Brands with an unfavorable CI, on the other hand, tend not to explicitly indicate the origin of their products (Hornikx & van Meurs, 2020). It is believed that their unfavorable COO may be interpreted as a negative signal for product quality and may thus negatively affect consumer evaluation (Hamzaoui & Merunka, 2006). Thus, a country with a positive CI was selected.

Furthermore, a positive product-country typicality is important for the study to produce credible results. Product-country typicality refers to the "associations that consumers make between countries and generic products, [as] some products are typically associated with a particular country of origin (COO)" (Usunier & Cestre, 2007, p. 32). In other words, product-country typicality refers to the cognitive congruence in consumers' minds between a COO and a product category. In practice, companies tend not to explicitly advertise their COO if the characteristics of their product do not match the characteristics of the country. If product-country typicality is high, on the other hand, communicating the product's COO often has positive effects on consumers' evaluations (Kelly-Holmes, 2005). The fact that there are numerous US athletic footwear brands in the Austrian market (e.g., Nike, New Balance,

Skechers, Under Armour) indicates a high degree of country-product typicity and makes the USA a realistic COO for the product category under study. Nonetheless, the product-country typicality between USA and athletic footwear was also checked in the pretest (for details, see section 4.2.1.).

4.4.2. Brand

In this study, a fictitious brand with a random name and a fictitious logo was used in order to avoid effects due to brand equity and familiarity (Dimofte et al., 2008). Furthermore, using existing brands might affect internal validity, as the size, strength, or corporate reputation of real brands could distort the relationships between CI and the pricing footprint elements (Davvetas et al., 2015).

The fictitious brand name employed for this experimental study was "Y2K". This name was randomly generated and checked in the pretest. The two criteria tested for the brand name were associations between *a)* the name and the country and *b)* the name and the product category (for details, see section 4.5.1.).

The four fictitious brand logos went through several rounds of design and were also reviewed in the pretest. For the logos, two different shapes (COO-specific shape vs. abstract shape) and two different colors (COO's national colors vs. grayscale) were chosen (see again section 4.1. to visualize the logos).

For the logos with a COO-specific shape, the shape of the Statue of Liberty was chosen – a world famous sculpture and symbol associated with the USA. According to Aichner (2014), COO shapes usually include well-known elements of the country, such as typical landscapes, buildings, animals, or symbols. The abstract shape, on the other hand, is an arbitrarily chosen shape of curved lines that has no resemblance to anything people usually see in real life and has no connection whatsoever to the USA. As defined by Machando et al. (2015), it represents an artificially constructed and non-representative shape.

Regarding the color scheme of the brand logos, the two logos with COO-specific colors are featured in red, white and blue – the colors of the USA (as seen on their national flag and several US coats of arms). For the purpose of making the connection to the USA unmistakable, stars and stripes (as used in the US flag) were added to the logos in addition to the colors. The

two grayscale logos were simply painted in a dark shade of gray, so as not to give any indication of the product's origin based on the color.

4.4.3. Product category

Product category selection in studies on COO is crucial, as previous research has shown that COO-effects varied significantly by product segment (Drozdenko & Jensen, 2009). For this reason, the product of the present experimental study was selected very carefully. As previously mentioned, the focal product category chosen for this study was athletic footwear. This choice was made for many reasons, which are outlined next.

In a paper similar to the present thesis, Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012) also selected athletic footwear/sports shoes for their experimental study and justified this based on the following points. "First, consumers usually take interest when buying such a product because the performance of the shoes during sports activities is a critical issue" (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012, p. 30). In other words, the product category has potential for high involvement. A certain fluctuation in product involvement is important for the current study, as respondents will be split into high and low involvement consumers in order to test the moderator variable (see section 4.3.3.). Second, athletic footwear is a widely used product by many types of consumers, regardless of gender, age, or wealth. And third, the value of the product should be in line with most people's budget, and in response a reasonable price range can be expected (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012).

In addition, athletic footwear is a product category for which many foreign brands (especially from the USA) are available in the Austrian market. With a projected market volume of approximately EUR 24 billion in 2023, the USA generates the most revenue in the athletic footwear segment in Austria (Statista, 2023). This underlines the product-country typicality described in section 4.4.1., which was verified by means of the pretest (see section 4.2.1.).

Lastly, there are several real-life examples of athletic footwear brands that communicate their COO through the brand logo, improving the external validity of the study's results. Some of those brands use the COO's national colors, some use COO-specific shapes, and some use both.

Figure 6 shows two examples of athletic footwear brands using logo colors to communicate their COO. *Reebok* is a British brand that has included the UK flag to their logo in the past (until 1986). Since then, they have exclusively used colors from the British flag (red and blue) as their logo colors. Despite the misleading name, *K-Swiss* is a US-American brand that uses the US colors (red, white, blue) in their logo.

Figure 6: Athletic footwear brand logos using COO-colors

Figure 7 presents an example of a sneaker brand using logo shapes to communicate its COO. *Converse* is a US brand that has always used a star and stripes (typical symbols for the USA) in their brand logo.

Figure 7: Athletic footwear brand logo using COO-specific shapes

Lastly, Figure 8 provides two examples of athletic footwear brands using both logo colors and logo shapes to communicate their COO. *Hoka One One* is another US brand that uses the color blue and an eagle in their logo – both signals to consumers that point to the USA as the brand's origin. *Karhu*, on the other hand, is a Finnish brand that uses a blue and white logo depicting a grizzly bear. Both color and shape indicate the origin of the brand, as blue and white are the colors of Finland's national flag, while grizzly bears are typically associated with northern countries (in Europe especially with Finland and Russia).

Figure 8: Athletic footwear brand logos using both COO colors and COO-specific shapes

In the following section, the procedure of the study is outlined in detail.

4.5. Procedure

In this section, the procedure of the experimental study is presented. Specifically, the approach to the pretest and main questionnaire are described.

4.5.1. Pretest

As previously mentioned, a pretest was conducted to ensure appropriate stimuli – including the product's COO, product category, brand name, and brand logos – were selected for the main study. The pretest was essential in order to develop a valid questionnaire and served as a manipulation check – a method "to assess the effectiveness of a treatment and for […] empirical verification that the manipulation had the intended psychological effect" (Hauser et al., 2018, p. 3). According to Festinger (1953, p. 145), such checks are important because "it is rarely safe to assume beforehand that the operations used to manipulate variables will be successful and will tie in directly with the concept the experimenter has in mind. It is a worthwhile precaution to check on the success of the experimental manipulations."

4.5.1.1. Design and method

The objective of this pretest was to ensure that (i) the product's COO had a favorable CI, (ii) the COO and the product category were congruent (i.e., high product-country typicality, (iii) the fictitious brand name was neither linked to a specific country nor to a specific product category, and (iv) the fictitious brand logos were correctly identified and associated (or

correctly not associated – depending on the stimuli shown) with their COO. The pretest is included in Appendix B.

The pretest was designed as an online survey in the web application *SoSci Survey* (n.d.). The link to the questionnaire was distributed to a convenience sample (family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues) and was additionally published on social media channels. Moreover, recipients were asked, if possible, to forward the link to their friends, family, or colleagues as well (i.e., snowball sampling). This method allowed the acquisition of a total of 64 Austrian participants.

Based on extant literature (and assumptions on favorable CI and positive product-country typicality), the two countries examined in the pretest as potential COOs for the main study were the USA and Switzerland. For the purpose of minimizing learning effects of participants (i.e., avoid the cumulative effect of sequentially seeing the stimuli), the pretest was divided into two groups. All participants were randomly assigned to one of the groups and were exposed to logos from both countries. Specifically, participants were shown a total of 4 logos (2 from the USA, 2 from Switzerland, respectively) and were asked identical questions. Group 1 was exposed to the following logos in this exact order: USA *abstract shape / grayscale color* – Switzerland *abstract shape / grayscale color* – USA *COO-shape / COO-color* – Switzerland *COO-shape / COO-color*. Group 2 was shown the remaining logos in the following order: USA *COO-shape / grayscale color* – Switzerland *COO-shape / grayscale color* – USA *abstract shape / COO-color* – Switzerland *abstract shape / COO-color* (see Appendix B for visualization).

4.5.1.2. Results

Respondents were between 19 and 65 years old, with an average age of 37.6 years (SD = 12.87). The sample was composed of 35 women (54.7%) and 29 men (45.3%), all of whom were Austrian citizens. Most of the respondents were employed (65.6%), students (18.8%), or self-employed (10.9%).

The construct country image (CI) was operationalized by using Roth and Romeo's (1992) well-established semantic differential scale (see Table 6). Both countries scored highly across all items, confirming their favorable CI. The USA recorded an average value of 5.81 (SD = 0.89), while Switzerland achieved a score of 6.25 (SD = 0.66) (with 7 being the highest score).

Neither country's minimum score across all respondents was below 3.5. Furthermore, for the purpose of testing reliability and internal consistency of all answers, Cronbach's alpha (α) (Cronbach, 1951) was calculated. With values of 0.87 (USA) and 0.75 (Switzerland), the measurements of CI for both countries were above the critical Cronbach's α value of 0.7 and can therefore be considered as reliable and internally consistent (Field, 2018).

Table 6: Country image (CI)

Variable	Measurement
Country image (CI) "Overall perception consumers form of products from a particular country, based on their prior perception of the country's production and marketing strengths and weaknesses" (Roth & Romeo 1992, p. 480).	4 items on a seven-point bipolar semantic differential scale, according to Roth and Romeo (1992): • Innovativeness (i.e., the use of new technology and engineering advances): 1 = "not innovative"; 7 = "innovative" • Attractiveness of the design (i.e., appearance, style, colors, and variety): 1 = "no attractive design"; 7 = "attractive design" • Prestige (i.e., exclusivity, status, and brand name reputation): 1 = "low prestige"; 7 = "high prestige" • Workmanship (i.e., reliability, durability, craftsmanship, and manufacturing quality): 1 = "bad workmanship"; 7 = "good workmanship"

Product-country typicality (introduced in section 4.1.1.) was operationalized according to Halkias and Diamantopoulos (2020) by measuring four items on a seven-point Likert-type scale (see Table 7). In this regard, the USA (M = 5.67, SD = 0.84) performed significantly better than Switzerland (M = 3.66, SD = 1.49) (with 7 being the highest score), implying that respondents associated the product category athletic footwear significantly more strongly with the USA than with Switzerland. The Cronbach's α for both the USA (α = 0.87) and Switzerland (α = 0.89) indicate that the measurement for product-country typicality was internally consistent.

Table 7: Product-country typicality

Variable	Measurement
Product-country typicality "Associations that consumers make between countries and generic products" (Usunier & Cestre, 2007, p. 32)	4 items on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree"), according to Halkias and Diamantopoulos (2020): • [Product] reflects [country]. • I associate [product] with [country]. • [Product] makes me think of [country]. • There is a strong link between [product] and [country].

Based on the favorable CI and the very high product-country typicality, it was determined that the USA is the more suitable COO compared to Switzerland, meeting all the necessary criteria for conducting the proposed experimental study. Thus, the USA was selected as the product's COO for the main study.

For the purpose of analyzing the brand name and identifying whether respondents associate it with a particular country or product category, two dichotomous (yes-no) questions were asked: *"Does 'Y2K' remind you of any country?"*, and *"Does 'Y2K' remind you of a specific product category?"*. Ideally, respondents should not have any such associations. If respondents chose yes, they had to indicate the country/product category.

According to the results, 87.5% of respondents did not have any name-country associations whatsoever. The few respondents who did associate the name "Y2K" with a specific country, named Japan (2 respondents), China, and the UK. USA was also mentioned in the answers (3 respondents). However, since the vast majority of respondents had no associations, and no clear trend could be identified among the remaining respondents, a name-country association of the brand name could be ruled out based on the pretest.

Regarding the association between brand name and product category, 92.2% of respondents did not have any associations. The remaining respondents gave video games, but also sports, shoes, or sneakers (2 respondents) as answers. Again, considering the high number of non-associative answers, this criterion can also be considered as met. Accordingly, the fictitious brand name "Y2K" should not lead to any bias in the study and showed to be an appropriate choice.

Lastly, in order to determine whether the brand logos are correctly identified and associated (or correctly not associated – depending on the stimuli shown) with their COO, respondents were exposed to the logos one at a time and had to answer the same four dichotomous (yes-no) questions each time: *"Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?"*, *"Are you familiar with this brand?"*, *"Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?"*, and *"Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?"*. Again, if respondents chose yes, they were asked to clarify their answer.

According to the results, none of the US-logos were familiar to respondents, nor did the logos remind respondents of any existing brands. As previously mentioned, this is important so as to avoid effects due to brand equity and familiarity (Dimofte et al., 2008). Additionally, neither logo triggered any clear associations with a specific product category – although it is worth mentioning that 18% of respondents associated one US-logo (*COO-shape / COO-colors*) with food. Specifically, 5 subjects mentioned an association between the logo and either fast food (3 respondents) or peanut butter. These results should not further influence the main study but should still be kept in mind.

Furthermore, all logos were correctly associated (or correctly not associated – depending on the stimuli shown) with the USA. As expected, the logo without any COO-cues (*abstract shape / grayscale color*), which should not evoke any COO associations, was not associated with any country by 88% of the respondents. The remaining 12% had different country associations with the logo (China, India, UAE), none of them being the USA. This is important because in the main study, this logo will serve as the baseline or benchmark against which all other groups will be compared, and therefore should not trigger any links with a COO. Moreover, all logos containing COO-cues – indicating that the product originated in the USA – were clearly identified as such. 100% of respondents correctly associated the *COO-shape / COO-color* logo as well as the *COO-shape / grayscale color* logo with the USA. The final logo (*abstract shape / COO-color*) was correctly linked to the USA by 96.8% of respondents, with one single subject indicating that the logo did not evoke any associations with a country. Overall, the pretest successfully confirmed that the manipulation of the brand logos had the intended effect on respondents.

The main questionnaire and the data collection are presented next.

4.5.2. Questionnaire and data collection

After completing the pretest and analyzing its results, the main questionnaire was developed. This section describes the questionnaire, including its design and method, as well as the sampling procedure.

4.5.2.1. Design and method

As with the pretest, the questionnaire for the experimental study was designed using the online platform *SoSci Survey* (n.d.). Four versions of the questionnaire with identical design, structure, and measures were created, differing only in the stimuli presented: either the online store with the (i) *abstract shape / grayscale color* brand logo, (ii) *abstract shape / COO-color* logo, (iii) *COO-shape / grayscale color* logo, or (iv) *COO-shape / COO-color* logo was displayed (see Appendix A).

Each questionnaire began with a welcome text describing the purpose of the study and the anonymous handling of the data, as well as providing information on how to contact the researcher. Next, the stimulus (i.e., an online store displaying the product, the brand name, and one of the four brand logos) was presented. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. For an example of a full questionnaire, please see Appendix C.

After stimulus exposure, participants answered the questions of the Price Sensitivity Meter (PSM) (Van Westendorp, 1976), which was later used to estimate the consumer's individual WTP. Next, they answered questions regarding the manipulation checks (logo recognition, country image, product-country typicality) and relevant covariates (price sensitivity, consumer cosmopolitanism). Finally, participants were asked to answer the questions of the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) (Zaichkowsky, 1994) in order to assess their product involvement, before ultimately providing their sociodemographic data.

In addition, the questionnaire contained a bogus item (i.e., a question with only one correct answer, which is intended to test respondents' attention) (Meade & Craig, 2012). The current study used the bogus item "I have never brushed my teeth" on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree") – all answers different than one were excluded from the analysis (for more details, see section 5.1.).

The following section illustrates the sampling procedure.

4.5.2.2. Sampling procedure

The recruitment of participants for the study was carried out via a crowdsourcing platform: *Clickworker* (n.d.). Such crowdsourcing platforms provide researchers with the opportunity to upload their questionnaires and compensate participants with a predetermined amount of money for completing the survey (Goodman & Paolacci, 2017).

This method of data collection is particularly advantageous because it facilitates the collection of a large number of respondents in a short time and at relatively low cost. Also, such platforms offer researchers the opportunity to define certain criteria that respondents must meet in order to participate in the survey (e.g., research country, native language, or age). Thus, this option allows researchers to target the population of interest, which increases external validity (Field, 2018). In addition, "the use of crowdsourcing […] is a promising approach to collecting more representative samples" (Behrend et al., 2011, 802), as participants are usually diverse in terms of occupation, education, ethnicity, or age.

However, one potential drawback of online surveys is that participants cannot be supervised and thus tend to be less attentive than subjects in a lab with an experimenter on site (Paolacci et al., 2010). "Participants are not always as diligent in reading and following instructions as experimenters would like them to be. When participants fail to follow instructions, this increases noise and decreases the validity of their data" (Oppenheimer et al., 2009, p. 867). This impairment of data quality may be further exacerbated if respondents receive little money for their participation or are frequently exposed to similar or related surveys (Goodman & Paolacci, 2017).

These drawbacks can be countered by certain measures. For example, impairment of data quality can be minimized by offering fair payment (Lovett et al., 2018) or by including manipulation checks and bogus items (Oppenheimer et al., 2009; Paolacci et al., 2010), as was done in the current study.

Next, the study's results are analyzed and presented.

5. Results

In this chapter, the main results of the experimental study are presented. The data analysis procedure is divided into five steps: (i) sample profile, (ii) constructs' reliability, (iii) manipulation checks, (iv) moderator and covariates, and (v) hypotheses testing (for more details, see SPSS results in Appendix D).

5.1. Sample profile

Before performing the statistical analyses, the sample of 274 respondents had to be cleaned. First, cases with empty cells were removed (5 respondents). Participants who did not match the target group (i.e., non-Austrian participants or participants who have not lived in Austria for at least 5 years) were removed as well (9 respondents). Additionally, participants who failed the attention test, i.e., gave the wrong answer to the bogus item (any number not equal to 1), were also eliminated (11 respondents).

Next, each participant's *Clickworker* (n.d.) identification number was checked. On the platform, each user is assigned a unique identifier. Those who participated in the survey more than once were identified and their additional participation was excluded (2 respondents).

Furthermore, participants who did not correctly associate the brand logo with the USA (except for the baseline group: *abstract shape / grayscale color* brand logo) were eliminated from the sample (9 respondents). Respondents providing inconsistent and intransitive responses for the PSM (i.e., respondents who violated the very cheap < cheap < expensive < very expensive sequence) were also excluded from the analysis (6 respondents). Finally, outliers on the PSM (i.e., mean value ± 3 standard deviations) were also removed from the sample (3 respondents).

This resulted in a final sample size of 229 participants. The sample consisted of 112 women (48.9%), 116 men (50.7%). and 1 gender-diverse person (0.4%), with an age range from 18 to 65 years and an average age of 34.47 years (SD = 10.82).

The highest educational attainment of most respondents was a high school diploma (39.7%), followed by a master's degree (19.2%), a compulsory education degree (17.5%), and a bachelor's degree (16.2%).

Regarding occupation, the majority of respondents were employed (full-time or part-time) (70.3%), while the rest were students (13.5%), self-employed (6.6%), unemployed (3.5%), homemakers (3.1%), retired (1.3%) or in the mandatory military/community service (0.9%). The remaining respondents (0.9%) selected "other" and gave answer such as *parental leave* or *incapacity for work*.

The monthly net income ranged from EUR 0 to EUR 12,000, with an average income of EUR 1,837.34 (SD = 1,295.34).

Next, the demographic variables were compared across the four experimental groups, coded as: 0 = *abstract shape / grayscale color* logo, 1 = *abstract shape / COO-color* logo, 2 = *COO-shape / grayscale color* logo, 3 = *COO-shape / COO-color* logo. For gender, education, and occupation (categorial variables), frequencies and chi-square tests were performed. For income and age (continuous variables), descriptive statistics and a series of analyses of variance (one-way ANOVAs) were applied.

For the purpose of testing gender with a chi-square test, first the category "gender-diverse" had to be filtered out (1 respondent) – otherwise, the assumption of expected frequencies in each cell greater than 5 (and a maximum of 20% < 5 for large tables) would not have been met (Field, 2018). The chi-square test did not find a significant difference of gender across the four groups (χ^2 (3) = 1.47, $p > 0.05$). For age, a one-way ANOVA also revealed no significant difference between the groups (F (3, 225) = 1.34, $p > 0.05$). In terms of income, a one-way ANOVA indicated that this characteristic was homogeneous across all groups as well (F (3, 224) = 2.09, $p > 0.05$).

For the same reasons as for gender, in order to test education with a chi-square test, the category "other" (9 respondents) was filtered out. The results of the test show no significant difference of education across the four experimental groups (χ^2 (12) = 8.13, $p > 0.05$). And finally, regarding occupation, a chi-square test could not be performed as, even after filtering out the category "other", the assumption of expected frequencies in each cell was not met (Field, 2018). Instead, frequencies of occupation were contrasted. In all groups the majority of respondents were employed (Group 0 = 75.5%, Group 1 = 66.7%, Group 1 = 63.6%, Group 3 = 75.4%) or students (Group 0 = 9.4%, Group 1 = 21.7%, Group 1 = 10.9%, Group 3 = 11.5), followed by smaller percentages in the other categories. Although slight differences were found between the treatment groups, these were not likely to have a major impact on the results.

In summary, the demographic characteristics of the four experimental groups did not differ significantly and were therefore comparable.

The next section shows the reliability of the constructs.

5.2. Constructs' reliability

According to Field (2018), construct reliability indicates whether a measure consistently reflects the construct it is measuring, i.e., it reveals whether the responses across different items capturing the same construct produce similar results. In the current study, the reliability of constructs was measured by calculating the Cronbach's alpha (α) (Cronbach, 1951), which is the most common measure of scale reliability. For this reliability measure, "a value of 0.7 to 0.8 is an acceptable value […] and values substantially lower indicate an unreliable scale" (Field, 2018, p. 1045).

Table 8 shows that for all constructs the Cronbach's alpha was above the critical value of 0.7 and the constructs can thus be considered reliable.

Table 8: Cronbach's alpha of constructs

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	N of items
Country Image (Roth & Romeo, 1992)	α = 0.79	4
Product-country Typicality (Halkias & Diamantopoulos, 2020)	α = 0.86	4
Price Sensitivity (Wakefield & Inman, 2003)	α = 0.79	3
Consumer Cosmopolitanism (Riefler et al., 2012)	α = 0.89	12
Product Involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1994)	α = 0.91	10

Next, the manipulation checks are outlined.

5.3. Manipulation checks

To ensure that the treatment (i.e., the manipulation of the IVs *COO-color* and *COO-shape* of the brand logo) had the intended effect, three aspects needed to be examined: (i) participants' logo recognition, (ii) USA's country image (CI), and (iii) product-country typicality. Although these manipulation checks had already been performed in the pretest, it is advisable to safeguard that effect sizes do not differ between experimental groups, as this might influence the experimental effect (Miller & Chapman, 2001).

Logo recognition was mostly ensured by eliminating all respondents of treatment group 1, 2, and 3 who did not correctly associate the brand logo with the USA (9 respondents) (for details, see again section 5.1.). For the baseline group (0 = *abstract shape / grayscale color* brand logo), which ideally should not link the logo to any country, 84.9% of respondents had no country associations with the logo. No clear trend could be identified in the remaining responses, which ranged from China (3 respondents), USA (2 respondents), India, Japan, to Arabia (each 1 respondent). Furthermore, 95.2% of respondents said they had never seen the fictitious logos before, indicating no brand logo familiarity. When comparing the means of brand familiarity across the groups (M_0 = 1.02, M_1 = 1.05, M_2 = 1.05, M_3 = 1.07) with a one-way ANOVA, no significant difference between the four experimental groups was revealed ($F(3, 225) = 0.48$, $p > 0.05$). In addition, 98.3% of respondents confirmed that the logos did not remind them of any other brand, suggesting no similarity with existing brands. Again, no significant differences were found when comparing the groups (M_0 = 1.00, M_1 = 1.00, M_2 = 1.02, M_3 = 1.05) using a one-way ANOVA ($F(3, 225) = 1.88$, $p > 0.05$). Overall, participants were not prejudiced due to familiarity or similarity of the logos. Moreover, each logo was correctly (not) associated with its COO, suggesting no bias in the results due to lack of logo recognition.

Regarding country image (CI), the USA recorded an average value of 5.34 (SD = 0.85) on a scale of 1 to 7. Although this result is slightly lower than that of the pretest (M = 5.81, SD = 0.89), based on the tested sample, USA's image can nonetheless be considered favorable. The average CI across the four experimental groups (M_0 = 5.11, M_1 = 5.38, M_2 = 5.35, M_3 = 5.50) were contrasted by an ANOVA showing no significant differences between groups ($F(3, 225) = 2.15$, $p > 0.05$).

Finally, in terms of product-country typicality, there seems to be a fairly high congruence between the USA and athletic footwear (M = 5.09, SD = 1.05). Although this result is again below that of the pretest (M = 5.67, SD = 0.84), it still represents an acceptable level of product-country typicality for the current study. Once again, the means across the groups (M_0 = 5.04, M_1 = 5.20, M_2 = 5.23, M_3 = 4.89) were compared with a one-way ANOVA, revealing that there was no significant difference between groups (F (3, 225) = 1.32, p > 0.05).

In summary, all manipulation checks worked as intended. In the following section, the moderator variable and covariates are explored.

5.4. Moderator and covariates

The moderator variable (product involvement) as well as the covariates (price sensitivity, consumer cosmopolitanism) were analyzed with descriptive statistics and compared across the four experimental groups through analyses of variances (one-way ANOVAs). As in the previous section, it is expected that the effect size would not differ across groups.

The overall product involvement in the study sample was moderate (M = 4.67, SD = 0.99). A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant difference in terms of product involvement across experimental groups (F (3, 225) = 1.48, p > 0.05; M_0 = 4.52, M_1 = 4.75, M_2 = 4.53, M_3 = 4.84).

Regarding price sensitivity, respondents showed relatively high scores (M = 4.93, SD = 1.29). The average price sensitivity of the respective experimental groups (M_0 = 4.77, M_1 = 4.93, M_2 = 5.00, M_3 = 5.02) did not differ significantly, as shown by the ANOVA results (F (3, 225) = 0.40, p > 0.05).

Finally, Austrian consumers demonstrated a high cosmopolitanism (M = 5.30, SD = 0.98). As for the previous variables, this characteristic was homogeneous across all groups (F (3, 225) = 0.24, p > 0.05; M_0 = 5.28, M_1 = 5.23, M_2 = 5.35, M_3 = 5.36).

Overall, the means and standard deviations of the moderator and the two covariates were very similar across the four experimental groups. Nevertheless, because the covariates might still have an influence on the DV (consumers' WTP), they were included in the main analysis.

Next, the hypotheses of the study are tested.

5.5. Hypotheses testing

An analysis of covariance (factorial ANCOVA) was performed to test the hypotheses of the current study. This statistical analysis was employed as it is suitable to test the effects of categorical variables (experimental groups) on a continuous dependent variable (consumer's WTP). Additionally, it allows for the inclusion of multiple covariates (for more details, see SPSS results in Appendix D).

5.5.1. Assumptions

Before conducting the ANCOVA, several assumptions had to be checked. This is important because "if any of the assumptions are not true (usually referred to as a violation) then the test statistic and p-value will be inaccurate and could lead us to the wrong conclusion" (Field, 2018, p. 324). Following Field's (2018) guidelines, the following assumptions were verified: (i) independence of observations, (ii) no significant outliers, (iii) normally distributed errors, (iv) linear relationships between the covariates and the DV, (v) homogeneity of variance, (vi) independence of covariates, and (vii) homogeneity of regression slopes.

The assumption of independent observations, i.e., no relationship between observations in each group or between groups themselves (Field, 2018), was safeguarded methodologically by excluding participants from the sample who participated in the survey more than once (for details, see again section 5.1.).

Next, it was ensured that no outliers on the price sensitivity meter (PSM) were present. For this purpose, all outliers were previously removed from the study (for details, see again section 5.1.). This was also checked with a box-whiskers plot, which showed no remaining significant outliers in any of the experimental groups.

With regards to normality, it is important that residuals (i.e., errors) in the population are approximately normally distributed within each subpopulation (i.e., across all experimental conditions/groups) (Field, 2018). This was both tested by visual examination of histograms as well as by conducting a Shapiro-Wilk test. Histograms representing the frequency of responses for WTP (DV) were approximately bell-shaped for each experimental group (IV), indicating an approximately normal distribution. Moreover, a Shapiro-Wilk test showed non-significant

results for each subpopulation ($p > 0.05$), confirming that observations in the DV were normally distributed across all levels of the IV.

The assumption of linearity, which describes that covariates should be linearly related to the DV across all experimental groups, was tested through visual inspection. For this, scatterplots plotting the values of each covariate's residuals against the corresponding values of the outcome predicted by our model were created (*zpred vs. zresid*). "The resulting plot shows whether there is a systematic relationship between what comes out of the model (the predicted values) and the errors in the model" (Field, 2018, p. 357). The scatter plots for each experimental group looked similar and showed no sign of a discernible curve, confirming that the relationships between the covariates and the DV were linear in the current study.

Homogeneity of variance (i.e., homoscedasticity) describes that "the variance of the outcome variable [i.e., DV] should be stable at all levels of the predictor variable [i.e., IV]. In other words, as you go through levels of the predictor variable, the variance of the outcome variable should not change" (Field, 2018, p. 333). Homogeneity of variance was both tested visually as well as calculated by a Levene's test of equality of error variances. For visual examination, the same scatterplot as before (*zpred vs. zresid*) was used. The scatterplots of all subpopulations showed no clearly discernible funnel shape and dots were evenly distributed, providing evidence for homogeneity of variance. Additionally, Levene's test did not reject the null hypothesis of equal population variances ($F (3, 225) = 0.80$, $p > 0.05$), revealing that the variances were roughly equal and thus also supporting the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

The assumption of independence of covariates states that all covariates should be completely independent of the treatment effect (i.e., experimental groups) and should not overlap with the effect of the IV (Field, 2018). To test this assumption, a series of univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted using each covariate as DV and the experimental groups as IV. The analyses show that the assumption was met, as results for all variables were non-significant – product involvement ($F (3, 225) = 1.48$, $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .019$), price sensitivity ($F (3, 225) = 0.40$, $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$), consumer cosmopolitanism ($F (3, 225) = 0.24$, $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$), country image ($F (3, 225) = 2.15$, $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .028$), product-country typicality ($F (3, 225) = 1.32$, $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .017$). In addition, the values of partial eta squared (η^2) for all covariates were close to or below 0.02, indicating a negligible effect of the treatment groups on the covariates.

Finally, the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes means that regression lines between each covariate and the outcome (DV) should look similar across each subpopulation (IV) (Field, 2018). This assumption was tested by conducting a custom one-way ANCOVA, using consumers' WTP as DV and the interaction between the experimental groups and each covariate as IVs. The results for all covariates are not significant ($p > 0.05$) and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The assumption of homogeneity of the regression slopes was thus fulfilled.

5.5.2. Hypotheses

For the factorial (two-way) ANCOVA, consumers' WTP was used as dependent variable (DV), logo shape (*abstract shape* vs. *COO-specific shape*) and logo color (*grayscale color* vs. *COO's colors*) were employed as independent variables (IV), and product involvement, price sensitivity, consumer cosmopolitanism, country image, and product-country typicality were included as covariates.

After initially running the ANCOVA with all variables, it was revealed that only two of the covariates had a significant effect on the relationship between the IVs and the DV: price sensitivity ($F (1, 223) = 9.26$, $p = 0.003$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$) and consumer cosmopolitanism ($F (1, 223) = 8.39$, $p = 0.004$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$). The remaining covariates were dropped from the analysis. After rerunning the ANCOVA only with the significant covariates, the overall model was significant ($F (1, 223) = 4.,22$ $p = 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$) and its results were related to the hypotheses as follows.

Regarding H1 – *logos using the (favorable) COO's national colors will generate a higher consumers' WTP than grayscale logos* – the ANCOVA did not yield significant results ($F (1, 223) = 1.67$, $p > 0.05$). After adjusting for control variables, the difference in average WTP between logos with grayscale colors ($M_{Grayscale} = 87.02$, $SD = 30.14$) and logos in COO-specific colors ($M_{COO\text{-}colors} = 91.69$, $SD = 33.47$) was therefore not significant. H1 was thus not supported.

Results for H2 – *logos using (favorable) COO-specific shapes will generate a higher consumers' WTP than abstract shapes* – revealed that consumers' WTP differed significantly across groups ($F (1, 223) = 4.65$, $p = 0.032$). After adjusting for control variables, the mean

WTP of logos with a COO-specific shape ($M_{COO\text{-}shape}$ = 93.83, SD = 31.34) was significantly higher than the mean WTP of logos with an abstract shape ($M_{Abstract}$ = 85.02, SD = 32.12). According to the value of partial eta squared (partial η^2 = .02), the effect size was relatively small (Cohen, 1988). Nevertheless, the results imply that logos using (favorable) COO-specific shapes generated a higher consumers' WTP than logos using abstract shapes. H2 was therefore supported. Post hoc analysis shows that the mean difference between the two groups was EUR 8.84. Plugging the covariates into the linear regression equation and using their mean values, we receive the following result: while respondents exposed to logos with abstract shape had an average WTP of EUR 84.86, those who were exposed to logos with COO-specific shape had a significantly higher average WTP of EUR 93.70.

For the purpose of testing H3 – *logos using both the COO's national colors as well as COO-specific shapes will generate the highest consumers' WTP* – an additional analysis was run. In a one-way ANCOVA, all four experimental groups (0 = abstract shape / grayscale color logo, 1 = abstract shape / COO-color logo, 2 = COO-shape / grayscale color logo, 3 = COO-shape / COO-color logo) were compared individually in order to determine whether group 3 generated the highest WTP. Once again, only price sensitivity and consumer cosmopolitanism were significant covariates. Product involvement, country image (CI) and product-country typicality were therefore excluded from further analysis.

Results show that, even though average WTP in group 3 was the highest (M_0 = 83.85, SD = 28.55; M_1 = 86,06, SD = 35.17; M_2 = 90.07, SD = 31.56; M_3 = 97.22, SD = 31.00), the difference between all groups was not significant ($F(3, 223) = 2.22$, $p > 0.05$). When individually comparing group 3 with the other subpopulations, its WTP was significantly higher only relative to baseline group 0, i.e., the group displaying a grayscale color and an abstract shape ($F(3, 223) = 5.91$, $p = 0.016$, partial η^2 = .026). The comparison with group 1 ($F(3, 223) = 3.67$, $p > 0.05$) and group 2 ($F(3, 223) = 1.58$, $p > 0.05$), however, did not expose significant results. The conclusion can thus be drawn that consumers' WTP for logos using both the COO's national colors as well as COO-specific shapes was not significantly higher than that of all other groups. H3 was thus not supported.

Finally, in order to test H4a – *Product involvement negatively moderates the impact of the COO's national colors on consumers' WTP* – and H4b – *Product involvement negatively moderates the impact of COO-specific shapes on consumers' WTP* – we took as reference the initial factorial (two-way) ANCOVA (the one described for hypotheses 1 and 2). As previously

mentioned, product involvement produced no significant results in the analysis ($F (1, 220) = 0.57$, $p > 0.05$), implying that the level of involvement did not moderate the relationship between the IVs (logo shape and logo color) and the DV (consumers' WTP).

To further test this moderation effect, a standard median split method was applied on the variable product involvement, turning the continuous variable into a dichotomous one (high vs. low involvement). This new variable was then included as a fixed factor into another two-way ANCOVA in order to test the interaction between product involvement and the two IVs. In accordance with the previous analysis, the results showed that neither the interaction with logo shape ($F (1, 219) = 0.85$, $p > 0.05$) nor with logo color ($F (1, 219) = 1.63$, $p > 0.05$) was significant. Both H4a as well as H4b could not be supported – product involvement did not moderate the relationship between consumers' WTP and either logo shape or logo color.

In the next chapter, the discussion and conclusions are outlined.

6. Discussion and conclusions

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study and its implications for both management and theory. Finally, the limitations of the study and possible avenues for future research are identified.

6.1. Discussion

The main objective of this master thesis was to examine the influence of COO-cues (color and shape on brand logos) on consumers' willingness to pay (WTP). Specifically, the current study aimed to identify whether a brand logo – without any other indication of the brand's origin – can be used as an effective strategy for communicating COO information by using the COO's national colors and/or COO-specific shapes.

To answer the study's research question (i.e., *"To what extent do the country-of-origin cues color and shape on brand logos influence consumers' willingness to pay?"),* four hypotheses were developed and empirically tested in an experimental study.

The first hypothesis focused on logo color and examined whether brand logos using the (favorable) COO's national colors generate higher consumers' WTP than grayscale logos. However, the results of this study could not find support for this hypothesis. Logo color did therefore not have the expected effect, as consumers' WTP for brands with logos using the USA's national colors was the same as their WTP for brands displaying grayscale logos. Although the study showed that (i) the USA has a favorable CI and (ii) logo recognition was given (i.e., the logos that indicated the USA as the COO by means of the logo color were correctly recognized by consumers), this cue (i.e., color) did not affect consumers' WTP.

Due to the lack of research in the field of COO mediated by brand logos, it is difficult to classify these findings in the existing literature. Nevertheless, from a COO research perspective, this result does not support previous findings that a favorable CI positively influences consumers' WTP, and that COO-cues consequently act as signals of product quality (Andéhn et al., 2016; Hu & Wang, 2010; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). According to H1, the COO-cue logo color did not cause respondents to transfer positive attributes of the USA onto the product. This lack of transfer of attributes could be due to the fact that logo color is not an

efficient COO-signal. When considering previous findings in brand logo design literature, this conclusion is somewhat consistent with results of Torbarina et al. (2021), who found no evidence in their study that colored logos performed better than grayscale logos in terms of likability or recognizability. However, this contradicts findings by Rashid and Barnes (2018), who claim that colors evoke strong associations with culture and a country, and that they are a powerful tool for brands to convey their heritage and history through the use of certain colors in their logos. Moreover, previous findings by Bottomley and Doyle (2006) as well as Hynes (2009) suggesting that the color of a brand logo by itself gives inherent and immediate value to a brand are also not supported by the current results. An alternative explanation for the findings of H1 is the specific context of the study. Previous research has shown that the studied country and particular product category of an experiment influence the relationship between CI favorability and pricing footprint perceptions (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Tseng & Balabanis, 2011). In any case, more research is needed in this area to better assess the effectiveness of color in brand logos and its role as a COO-cue.

The second hypothesis emphasized logo shape and investigated whether logos using (favorable) COO-specific shapes generate higher consumers' WTP than abstract shapes. The findings of the current study provide support for this hypothesis. More precisely, the average price level of the product using a logo with COO-specific shape exceeded the price level of the control condition (i.e., product using a logo with abstract shape) by 10.4%.

This effect is in line with previous research in the field of brand logo design examining other outcome variables, such as logo recognizability (e.g., Henderson & Cote, 1998; Machado et al., 2015) or logo likability (e.g., Torbarina et al., 2021). Among other things, these studies were able to show that logos with naturalistic shapes (i.e., logos formed from recognizable everyday figures) are recognized more correctly and are generally more popular than logos with abstract shapes. Consistent with this literature, the current thesis extends these studies by revealing that this effect can be employed to communicate a brand's COO and to positively impact consumers' WTP. This finding further supports claims made by Aichner (2014) that logo shape (specifically the use of famous buildings from the COO) creates associations in consumers' minds between the brand's origin and the product and is therefore an efficient strategy for implicit COO communication. Moreover, the results of H2 support the existing COO literature that a product from a COO with a favorable country image is associated with a higher benefit and higher level of product quality (Koschate-Fischer et al. 2012; Pharr, 2005).

The study's third hypothesis examined whether the combination of both COO-cues (i.e., logo color and logo shape suggesting the same COO) increased the overall effect on consumers' WTP. Specifically, H3 stated that logos using both the (favorable) COO's national colors as well as COO-specific shapes would generate the highest consumers' WTP (compared to all other groups). The results of the study could not support this hypothesis, as the logo using both COO-cues only performed better compared to the baseline group (i.e., no COO-cues). Relative to the other two logos, which only use one COO-cue (i.e., either logo color or logo shape), there was no significant difference in consumers' WTP.

This result suggests that although the presence of COO-cues influenced consumers' perceptions of value, the number of COO-cues on the logos did not significantly increase the strength of the effect. Whether the brand logo contained one or two COO-cues was ultimately of no consequence. H3 results therefore contradict previous studies showing that cumulating positive COO information leads to more favorable product evaluations (e.g., Bartikowski et al., 2019; Eng et al., 2016; Siew et al., 2018). Given the results of H1 and H2, one possible explanation for this result is that the increase in consumers' WTP for the logo with both COO-cues (compared to the logo without COO-cues) was driven only by logo shape. While the US-specific colors in the logo played a negligible role, the US-specific shape of the logo was responsible for the increase in WTP. For this reason, the logo with two COO cues (logo shape and logo color) did not lead to higher WTP than the brand logo that used only the COO-specific shape.

Finally, hypothesis 4 addressed the mediation effect of product involvement on the relationship between COO-cues (color and shape of brand logos) and consumers' WTP. The hypothesis stated that product involvement would negatively moderate the influence of (i) COO's national colors and (ii) COO-specific shapes on consumers' WTP. In the current study, this mediation effect could not be demonstrated. The individual level of involvement with the product did not influence the effect of COO-cues on consumers' WTP.

This result is not consistent with a large number of studies in the field of COO, which state that the lower the product involvement, the stronger the effect of COO (e.g., Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 2000; Lee et al., 2005; Prendergast et al., 2010). Although the range of product involvement within the sample was fairly wide (Min = 2.10, Max = 7.00), the current study showed no indication that lowly involved consumers were more sensitive to COO-cues than those more highly involved – nor was the opposite effect found. Product involvement did not

appear to have any effect at all on consumers' WTP. As previously mentioned, this lack of effect could be due to the chosen product category (athletic footwear), as the specific context of a study may influence the relationship between CI favorability and consumers' price perceptions (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Tseng & Balabanis, 2011). In any case, the current thesis was unable to provide any clarity in the general disagreement about the role of product involvement in COO research.

Overall, the findings of this master thesis can be concluded on the basis of the following two statements:

First, it is shown that logo shape communicates COO better than logo color, which is reflected in consumers' WTP. Although a favorable CI of the USA as well as correct logo recognition were present in all experimental groups, the brand logo with US colors did not result in higher WTP, while the brand logo with a US-specific shape did. It can therefore be concluded that the US-specific shape (Statue of Liberty) created stronger associations with the COO than US-specific colors (red, white, and blue). According to previous findings, it can be presumed that this association led to a transfer of favorable characteristics of the USA as well as prior perceptions of the USA's production and marketing strengths onto the product (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Roth & Romeo, 1992). These positive associations in turn had an impact on product evaluation and ultimately on consumers' WTP.

Second, it is demonstrated that one COO-cue in brand logos is sufficient, as additional COO-information in the logo has no significant additional benefit (most likely due to a lack of effect of the use of COO colors in the logo). Both the brand logo with multiple COO-cues (i.e., logo color and logo shape suggesting the same COO) as well as the logo that used only COO-specific shapes generated a significantly higher WTP than the logo with no COO-cues. When compared with each other, however, there was no significant difference. This suggests that while COO-cues in logos generally affect consumers' WTP, there is no indication that combining multiple COO-cues in the logo provides added value.

Next, theoretical implications of the current study are presented.

6.2. Theoretical implications

From a theoretical point of view, the current study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between COO-cues in brand logos (color and shape) on consumers' WTP by drawing on signaling theory (Spence, 1973). Specifically, this thesis empirically investigated whether the implicit COO-cues color and shape in brand logos can effectively communicate a brand's origin and hence increase consumers' WTP. Results of the present research contribute to the existing literature in the following ways.

First, this thesis extends scarce literature in the field of implicit strategies of communicating COO. In practice, a brand's COO is most typically advertised explicitly through legally regulated origin labels or the phrase 'Made in…' (Aichner, 2014). For this reason, prior COO research has mainly focused on explicit COO cues (e.g., Bannister & Saunders, 1978; Chasin & Jaffe, 1980; Ettenson et al., 1988) and little attention has been paid to the role of implicit and legally unregulated COO-strategies, such as brand logos. In order to close this research gap, this paper empirically tested whether brand logos alone can efficiently communicate a brand's origin. Findings suggest that, although not all results were significant, a brand's logo (particularly those with COO-specific shapes) can be an effective strategy to advertise a brand's origin and boost consumers' WTP.

Second, this thesis has contributed to expanding the sparse COO research on price-related responses. As previously established, price effects of COO (particularly WTP) have been largely overlooked in the existing literature (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). Most studies on COO have focused on *softer* outcome variables such as brand evaluations or purchase intentions (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021), even though there is reason to believe that measuring WTP provides researchers with a much more rigorous test of COO effects and actual consumer behavior (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012). On this ground, the current study applied consumers' WTP as outcome variable. Results showed that there is a COO-effect on consumers' WTP – even when the brand's origin is communicated implicitly through the brand logo.

Next, managerial implications are described.

6.3. Managerial implications

In light of the aforementioned results, companies may adjust their marketing strategies and brand logo designs to include origin cues. From a managerial perspective, findings suggest that companies should add favorable COO-cues – particularly COO-specific shapes – to their brand logos.

Indeed, marketing managers should consider that the inclusion of favorable COO-shapes to the brand logo is beneficial for consumers' WTP and allows companies with a favorable COO to implement a price premium strategy – meaning they can generally charge higher amounts for their products and services simply because of their brand's origin. Results of this thesis show that the communication of COO-specific shapes through the logo – without any other indication of the brand's COO – can intertwine a brand with a country and thus influence consumers' decisions and behaviors. Brands whose COO has a favorable country image (CI) should therefore incorporate COO-specific shapes to their brand logo, rather than using neutral logo designs.

This implication is particular important for companies originating from a less favorable COO, as it presents numerous opportunities to employ a foreign branding strategy. While it is legally not allowed to explicitly mention a COO other than the actual brand origin (i.e., origin label, 'Made-in' label) (Aichner, 2014), brand logos are generally legally unregulated. They can therefore be used to suggest foreign origin and mislead customers into believing that a brand actually originates from another country with a more positive CI. "As the use of these elements is usually not legally regulated, there is no need to communicate the company's actual origin" (Aichner, 2014, p. 88). Previous research was able to show that in most cases consumers do not question whether implicitly communicated COO-cues are actually true. Due to the huge amount of information and the variety of information sources flooding consumers' senses, consumers easily develop inaccurate perceptions of brand origin (Magnusson et al., 2011). Consequently, this study indicates that by incorporating COO-specific shapes of other, more favorable countries into their logo, companies can greatly benefit from positive associations customers have with those foreign countries.

In the following section, the study's limitations as well as possible avenues for future research are outlined.

6.4. Limitations and future research

The current study has limitations which may be addressed in future research. The first limitation consists in the generalizability of the results based on the nationality of the study's participants. Consequently, the results are limited to the selected research country (Austria). Indeed, previous research has shown that a person's nationality influences the association between products and countries (e.g., Roth & Romeo, 1992; Usunier & Cestre, 2007). Cultural differences and regional context also influence consumers' WTP due to a brand's origin (Bangsa & Schlegelmilch, 2020). Furthermore, research on color is always influenced by culture, as people might have different color associations depending on cultural context (Madden et al., 2000). Accordingly, people of other nationalities may perceive the USA less/more favorably, have different associations based on COO-specific shapes and colors, or have weaker/stronger reactions to COO-cues in general. Future research may overcome this limitation through conducting studies in different research countries.

Another notable limitation refers to the designs of the brand logos. For both COO-cues (shape and color), only one variation of logo designs was applied. The Statue of Liberty was used as COO-specific shape, and colors of the US flag (including stars and stripes) were used as COO-specific color. The observed effects may not be the same for other shapes and colors, as there are various options to communicate the origin of a brand through a brand logo. For instance, instead of the Statue of Liberty, other famous buildings, typical landscapes, or popular figures from the USA could be used (e.g., Uncle Sam, a bald eagle, the White House, Abraham Lincoln, the Liberty Bell, a cowboy etc.). Likewise, the US colors may be incorporated into the logo in a different way (e.g., without stars and stripes, more subtly, etc.). As shown in previous studies (e.g., Dubberly, 1995; Van Riel & van den Ban, 2001), different designs are likely to evoke different emotions and associations among consumers, and thus may lead to different price levels and consumers' WTP than those found in the current thesis.

Furthermore, the study was limited to brand logos as transmitters of COO-cues. However, as described by Aichner (2014), there are many other implicit and unregulated strategies to communicate a brand's origin. Future research should examine effects of cues such as (i) the country name (or typical COO words) embedded in the brand name, (ii) use of COO language in slogans, (iii) use of famous or stereotypical people from the COO, (iv) or COO-specific shapes and colors on product packaging. As these strategies differ in communication

complexity – meaning that some COO-cues are embedded in the company's aesthetic footprint (such as the brand name or logo), while others are merely mentioned in advertising – varying degrees of impact on consumers' decisions and behaviors can be expected. A comparison between implicit COO strategies may therefore have important implications for theory and management.

Additionally, the study was limited to a single COO (the USA) and only used one product category (athletic footwear), which compromises external validity and generalizability of the current findings. This is problematic because the relationship between CI favorability and pricing footprint perceptions can be influenced by the specific context of a study (Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Tseng & Balabanis, 2011). In order to strengthen the robustness of the results, it would therefore be worthwhile to conduct further studies that include other COOs as well as other product categories.

Finally, only two of the five covariates selected for this study were found to influence consumers' WTP (price sensitivity and consumer cosmopolitanism). Future research could therefore incorporate other consumer predispositions such as consumer ethnocentrism (e.g., Shimp & Sharma, 1987) or xenocentrism (e.g., Kent & Burnight, 1951) to analyze whether they have an impact on the relationship between implicit COO-cues and consumers' WTP. Consumer ethnocentrism, for instance, has been found to negatively affect consumers' purchase intentions of foreign products (Nguyen et al., 2023) and therefore might negatively moderate the relationship between COO and consumers' WTP. Conversely, consumer xenocentrism is expected to (i) positively influence intentions to buy foreign brands and (ii) negatively influence purchase intentions for domestic brands (Diamantopoulos et al., 2019).

In conclusion, this thesis has shown that the use of COO-cues in brand logos (particularly logo shape) can be an effective COO strategy to increase consumers' WTP. These insights are relevant not only to the research fields of COO and brand logo design, but also to companies that may benefit from incorporating COO-cues into their brand logos – either to advertise their own COO or as a foreign branding strategy. Undoubtedly, this study also provides fruitful opportunities for future research to improve the understanding of the role of implicit and legally unregulated COO-cues in influencing consumers' decisions and behaviors.

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Appendices

A: Stimuli

COO colors × COO (concrete) shape:

COO colors × abstract shape:

Grayscale colors × COO (concrete) shape:

Grayscale colors × abstract shape:

B: Prestest

Group 1

Introduction: Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire. The current study focuses on the topic of brand logos and will be conducted at the Department of International Marketing at the University of Vienna. Filling out the questionnaire will take about 5 minutes.

The study is for scientific purposes only and has no commercial intentions.

- It is important that you read the questions carefully and follow the instructions.
- There are no wrong or right answers. We are only interested in your personal opinion.
- There is no time limit for this questionnaire. Please take your time when filling it out.
- This questionnaire is anonymous. All information provided will be kept strictly confidential.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at a01305284@unet.univie.ac.at.

- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

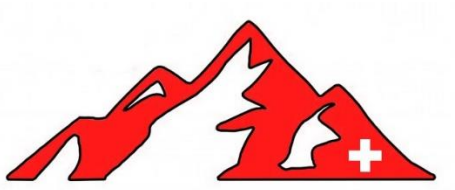
- Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____



- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

Y2K

- Does the brand name “Y2K” remind you of any country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the brand name “Y2K” remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

Please rate US and Swiss products in general regarding the following characteristics:

- Innovativeness (i.e., the use of new technology and engineering advances).

USA								
Not innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Innovative

Switzerland								
Not innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Innovative

- Attractiveness of the design (i.e., appearance, style, colors, and variety).

USA								
Not attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive

Switzerland								
Not attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive

- Prestige (i.e., exclusivity, status, and brand name reputation).

USA								
Low prestige	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High prestige

Switzerland								
Low prestige	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High prestige

- Workmanship (i.e., reliability, durability, craftsmanship, and manufacturing quality).

USA								
Bad workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good workmanship

Switzerland								
Bad workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good workmanship

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
Athletic footwear/sneakers reflect the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Athletic footwear/sneakers reflect Switzerland.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I associate athletic footwear/sneakers with the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I associate athletic footwear / sneakers with Switzerland.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Athletic footwear/sneakers make me think of the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Athletic footwear/sneakers make me think of Switzerland.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a strong link between athletic footwear/ sneakers and the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a strong link between athletic footwear/ sneakers and Switzerland.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- Gender: ( ) Female ( ) Male ( ) Diverse
- Age: _____ Years
- Citizenship: _____
- Occupation:
  - ( ) Employed
  - ( ) Unemployed
  - ( ) Student
  - ( ) Retired
  - ( ) Housemaker
  - ( ) Military / Community Service
  - ( ) Other

Group 2

Introduction: Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire. The current study focuses on the topic of brand logos and will be conducted at the Department of International Marketing at the University of Vienna. Filling out the questionnaire will take about 5 minutes.

The study is for scientific purposes only and has no commercial intentions.

- It is important that you read the questions carefully and follow the instructions.
- There are no wrong or right answers. We are only interested in your personal opinion.
- There is no time limit for this questionnaire. Please take your time when filling it out.
- This questionnaire is anonymous. All information provided will be kept strictly confidential.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at a01305284@unet.univie.ac.at.

- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the logo above remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

Y2K

- Does the brand name “Y2K” remind you of any country?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

- Does the brand name “Y2K” remind you of a specific product category?
  ( ) Yes ( ) No
  If yes, which one? _____

Please rate US and Swiss products in general regarding the following characteristics:

- Innovativeness (i.e., the use of new technology and engineering advances).

USA								
Not innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Innovative

Switzerland								
Not innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Innovative

- Attractiveness of the design (i.e., appearance, style, colors, and variety).

USA								
Not attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive

Switzerland								
Not attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive

- Prestige (i.e., exclusivity, status, and brand name reputation).

USA

Low prestige	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High prestige
Switzerland								
Low prestige	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High prestige

- Workmanship (i.e., reliability, durability, craftsmanship, and manufacturing quality).

USA								
Bad workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good workmanship
Switzerland								
Bad workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good workmanship

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
Athletic footwear/sneakers reflect the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Athletic footwear/sneakers reflect Switzerland.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I associate athletic footwear/sneakers with the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I associate athletic footwear / sneakers with Switzerland.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Athletic footwear/sneakers make me think of the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Athletic footwear/sneakers make me think of Switzerland.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a strong link between athletic footwear/ sneakers and the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a strong link between athletic footwear/ sneakers and Switzerland.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- Gender: ( ) Female ( ) Male ( ) Diverse
- Age: _____ Years
- Citizenship: _____
- Occupation:
  - ( ) Employed
  - ( ) Unemployed
  - ( ) Student
  - ( ) Retired
  - ( ) Housemaker
  - ( ) Military / Community Service
  - ( ) Other

C. Main questionnaire

Example: Condition *COO-colors* × *COO-shape*

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire. The current study is conducted at the Department of International Marketing at the University of Vienna. Filling out the questionnaire will take about 8 minutes.

The study is for scientific purposes only and has no commercial intentions.

- It is important that you read the questions carefully and follow the instructions.
- There are no wrong or right answers. We are only interested in your personal opinion.
- There is no time limit for this questionnaire. Please take your time when filling it out.
- This questionnaire is anonymous. All information provided will be kept strictly confidential.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Name: Felix Reisacher
Email: a01305284@unet.univie.ac.at

Imagine you want to buy athletic footwear from an online store. Please take your time and have a close look at the product below. You will be asked some questions about it afterwards.

Please answer some questions about the product that you have just seen.

At what price would you consider the price of this product so low that you would question its quality?

_____ Euros.

At what price would you consider the product to be a bargain – a great buy for the money?

_____ Euros.

At what price would you consider the product starting to get expensive – not out of the question, but you would need to give some thought to buying it?

_____ Euros.

At what price would you consider this product so expensive that you would not consider buying it?

_____ Euros.

Now, please indicate the likelihood of buying the product shown above, in which 0% = would definitely not buy; 100% = would definitely buy:

0% _____ 100%

Please now observe the following brand logo:

- Do you associate this brand logo with a specific country?
  ( ) No ( ) Yes
  If yes, which one? _____

- Are you familiar with this brand?
  ( ) No ( ) Yes

- Does the logo above remind you of any other brand you know?
  ( ) No ( ) Yes
  If yes, which one? _____

Now, please rate *US-American products* in general regarding the following characteristics:

Innovativeness (i.e., the use of new technology and engineering advances).								
Not innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Innovative
Attractiveness of the design (i.e., appearance, style, colors, and variety).								
No attractive design	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive design
Prestige (i.e., exclusivity, status, and brand name reputation).								
Low prestige	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High prestige
Workmanship (i.e., reliability, durability, craftsmanship, and manufacturing quality).								
Bad workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good workmanship

Next, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Numbers closer to 7 indicate higher agreement, while numbers closer to 1 indicate higher disagreement with the statement)

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
Athletic footwear reflects the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I associate athletic footwear with the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Athletic footwear makes me think of the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a strong link between athletic footwear and the USA.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
I'm willing to make an extra effort to find a low price for athletic footwear.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will change what I had planned to buy in order to take advantage of a lower price for athletic footwear.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am sensitive to differences in the prices for athletic footwear.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have never brushed my teeth.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate your evaluation regarding the following statements.

When buying athletic footwear, I consider the purchase decision as:

not important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	important
not interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	interesting
not relevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	relevant
not exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	exciting
does not mean a lot	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	means a lot
not appealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appealing
not fascinating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fascinating

not valuable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	valuable
not involving	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	involving
not needed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	needed

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
When traveling, I make a conscious effort to get in touch with the local culture and traditions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like having the opportunity to meet people from many different countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like to have contact with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a real interest in other countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Having access to products coming from many different countries is valuable to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The availability of foreign products in the domestic market provides valuable diversity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy being offered a wide range of products coming from various countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Always buying the same local products becomes boring over time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like watching movies from different countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like listening to music of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like trying original dishes from other countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like trying out things that are consumed elsewhere in the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Gender:

( ) female
( ) male
( ) diverse

Age:

_____ years old

Nationality:

( ) Austrian
( ) Other

▽ *Filter*: If (×) Other:
Have you been living in Austria for more than 5 years?

( ) Yes
( ) No

Education:

( ) Compulsory education
( ) High school degree or equivalent

( ) Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BSc)
( ) Master's degree (e.g., MA, MSc, MEd)
( ) Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)
( ) Other (please specify) _____

Occupation:

( ) Employed full-time
( ) Employed part-time
( ) Self-employed
( ) Unemployed
( ) Student
( ) Retired
( ) Homemaker
( ) Military / community service
( ) Other

Net monthly income:

_____ Euros

D: Results

➢ Sample profile analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	229	0	2	,52	,510
Age	229	18	65	34,47	10,816
Education	229	1	6	2,63	1,286
Occupation	229	1	8	1,86	1,552
Income	229	0	12000	1837,34	1295,339
Valid N (listwise)	229				

Gender:

*Gender * Treatment Group Crosstabulation*

Count

		Treatment Group				
		0	1	2	3	Total
Gender	female	26	26	30	30	112
	male	27	34	25	30	116
Total		53	60	55	60	228

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1,470[a]	3	,689
Likelihood Ratio	1,474	3	,688
Linear-by-Linear Association	,233	1	,629
N of Valid Cases	228		

a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 26,04.

Age:

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	34,45	10,725	1,473	31,50	37,41	18	65
1	60	33,08	10,314	1,332	30,42	35,75	18	55
2	55	33,53	9,907	1,336	30,85	36,21	18	63
3	61	36,70	12,005	1,537	33,63	39,78	18	63
Total	229	34,47	10,816	,715	33,06	35,88	18	65

ANOVA

Age

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	468,952	3	156,317	1,342	,261
Within Groups	26204,113	225	116,463		
Total	26673,066	228			

Income:

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	2146,42	1660,998	228,156	1688,59	2604,24	0	12000
1	60	1543,85	1042,337	134,565	1274,59	1813,11	0	3800
2	55	1815,45	1133,356	152,822	1509,07	2121,84	0	5000
3	60	1885,17	1269,246	163,859	1557,29	2213,05	0	7000
Total	228	1839,26	1297,863	85,953	1669,89	2008,63	0	12000

ANOVA

Income

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10393883,245	3	3464627,748	2,086	,103
Within Groups	371976062,488	224	1660607,422		
Total	382369945,732	227			

Education:

*Education * Treatment Group Crosstabulation*

Count

		Treatment Group				Total
		0	1	2	3	
Education	Compulsory education	14	9	8	9	40
	High school diploma (e.g., AHS, HAK, HTL, HBLA)	21	24	19	27	91
	Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BSc)	7	10	12	8	37
	Master's degree (e.g., MA, MSc, MEd)	7	11	12	14	44
	Doctorate degree (e.g., PhD, EdD)	1	2	3	2	8
Total		50	56	54	60	220

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8,128[a]	12	,775
Likelihood Ratio	7,861	12	,796
Linear-by-Linear Association	2,937	1	,087
N of Valid Cases	220		

a. 4 cells (20,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,82.

Occupation:

*Occupation * Treatment Group Crosstabulation*

Count

		Treatment Group				
		0	1	2	3	Total
Occupation	Employed	40	40	35	46	161
	Self-employed	4	3	4	4	15
	Unemployed	2	1	4	1	8
	Student	5	13	6	7	31
	Retired	0	0	2	1	3
	Homemaker	1	2	3	1	7
	Military / community service	1	0	0	1	2
	Other	0	1	1	0	2
Total		53	60	55	61	229

➢ Constructs' reliability

Scale: Country Image (CI)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,789	,794	4

Scale: Product-Country Typicality (PCT)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,875	,875	4

Scale: Price Sensitivity

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,786	,790	3

Scale: Consumer Cosmopolitanism (C-COSMO)

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,886	,888	12

Scale: Product Involvement

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,914	,914	10

➢ Manipulation Checks

Country Association (Group 0)

Frequency Table

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No		45	84,9	84,9
Yes	arabische Länder	1	1,9	86,8
	China	3	5,7	92,5
	Indien	1	1,9	94,3
	Japan	1	1,9	96,2
	USA	2	3,8	100,0
Total		53	100,0	

Brand Familiarity

Frequency Table

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	218	95,2	95,2
Yes	11	4,8	100,0
Total	229	100,0	

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	1,02	,137	,019	,98	1,06	1	2
1	60	1,05	,220	,028	,99	1,11	1	2
2	55	1,05	,229	,031	,99	1,12	1	2
3	61	1,07	,250	,032	1,00	1,13	1	2
Total	229	1,05	,214	,014	1,02	1,08	1	2

ANOVA

Brand familiarity

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,066	3	,022	,479	,697
Within Groups	10,405	225	,046		
Total	10,472	228			

Brand Similarity

Frequency Table

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No		225	98,3	98,3
Yes	Champion	1	,4	98,7
	New Yorker	2	,9	99,6
	Yeezes	1	,4	100,0
Total		229	100,0	

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	1,00	,000	,000	1,00	1,00	1	1
1	60	1,00	,000	,000	1,00	1,00	1	1
2	55	1,02	,135	,018	,98	1,05	1	2
3	61	1,05	,218	,028	,99	1,11	1	2
Total	229	1,02	,131	,009	1,00	1,03	1	2

ANOVA

Brand similarity

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,096	3	,032	1,875	,135
Within Groups	3,834	225	,017		
Total	3,930	228			

Country Image (CI)

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	5,1085	,76036	,10444	4,8989	5,3181	3,25	6,75
1	60	5,3792	,86663	,11188	5,1553	5,6030	3,75	7,00
2	55	5,3455	,82284	,11095	5,1230	5,5679	3,75	7,00
3	61	5,5041	,90426	,11578	5,2725	5,7357	3,50	7,00
Total	229	5,3417	,84960	,05614	5,2311	5,4523	3,25	7,00

ANOVA

Country Image (CI)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4,576	3	1,525	2,145	,095
Within Groups	159,998	225	,711		
Total	164,574	228			

Product-country typicality

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	5,0377	,90325	,12407	4,7888	5,2867	3,25	7,00
1	60	5,2000	,93065	,12015	4,9596	5,4404	3,25	7,00
2	55	5,2318	1,16553	,15716	4,9167	5,5469	3,00	7,00
3	61	4,8934	1,15602	,14801	4,5974	5,1895	3,00	7,00
Total	229	5,0884	1,05006	,06939	4,9517	5,2252	3,00	7,00

ANOVA

Product-country typ.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4,333	3	1,444	1,315	,270
Within Groups	247,064	225	1,098		
Total	251,397	228			

➢ Moderator and Covariates

Product Involvement

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	4,5151	1,07460	,14761	4,2189	4,8113	2,10	7,00
1	60	4,7517	,83615	,10795	4,5357	4,9677	2,50	6,80
2	55	4,5345	,89489	,12067	4,2926	4,7765	2,20	6,40
3	61	4,8377	1,14341	,14640	4,5449	5,1305	2,20	7,00
Total	229	4,6677	,99864	,06599	4,5377	4,7977	2,10	7,00

ANOVA

Product Involvement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4,395	3	1,465	1,478	,221
Within Groups	222,985	225	,991		
Total	227,381	228			

Price Sensitivity

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	4,7736	1,37712	,18916	4,3940	5,1532	1,67	7,00
1	60	4,9333	1,23019	,15882	4,6155	5,2511	1,00	7,00
2	55	5,0000	1,30368	,17579	4,6476	5,3524	1,67	7,00
3	61	5,0164	1,28442	,16445	4,6874	5,3453	2,33	7,00
Total	229	4,9345	1,29216	,08539	4,7662	5,1027	1,00	7,00

ANOVA

Price Sensitivity

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2,018	3	,673	,400	,753
Within Groups	378,667	225	1,683		
Total	380,684	228			

Consumer Cosmopolitanism

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	53	5,2846	,84122	,11555	5,0527	5,5165	3,00	6,67
1	60	5,2250	,92240	,11908	4,9867	5,4633	2,92	6,92
2	55	5,3545	,93709	,12636	5,1012	5,6079	3,25	7,00
3	61	5,3552	1,18046	,15114	5,0529	5,6575	1,42	7,00
Total	229	5,3046	,97944	,06472	5,1771	5,4321	1,42	7,00

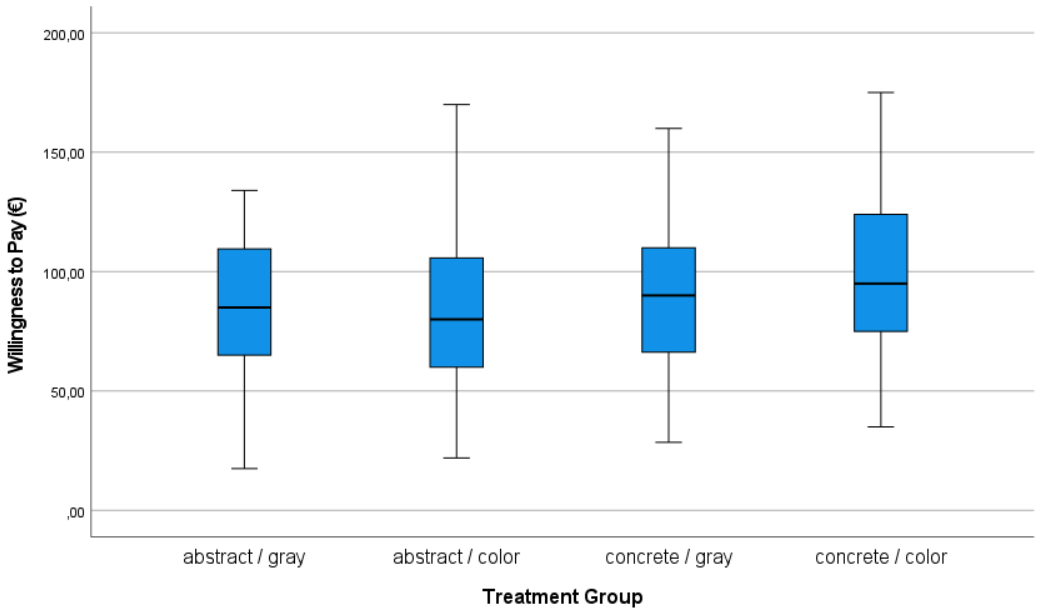
ANOVA

C-COSMO

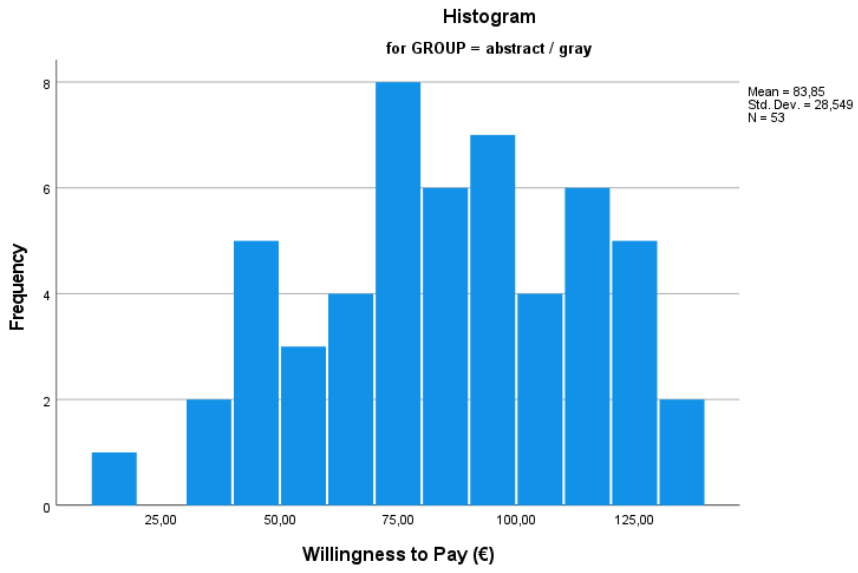
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,695	3	,232	,239	,869
Within Groups	218,026	225	,969		
Total	218,720	228			

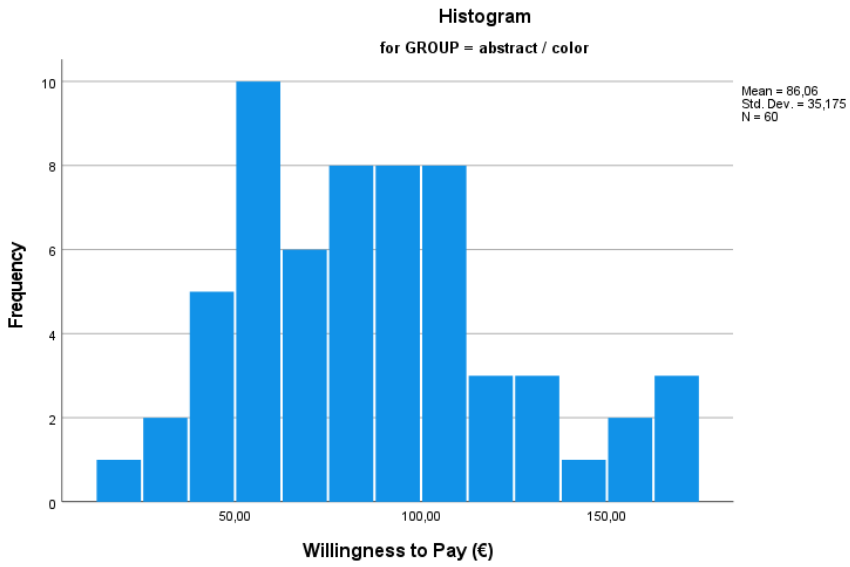
➢ Hypotheses testing

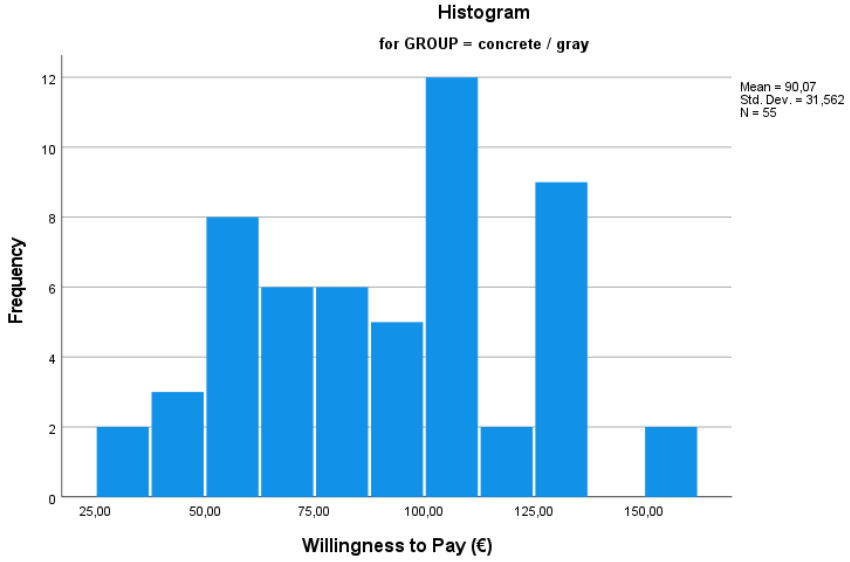
- ***Assumption*: Outliers**

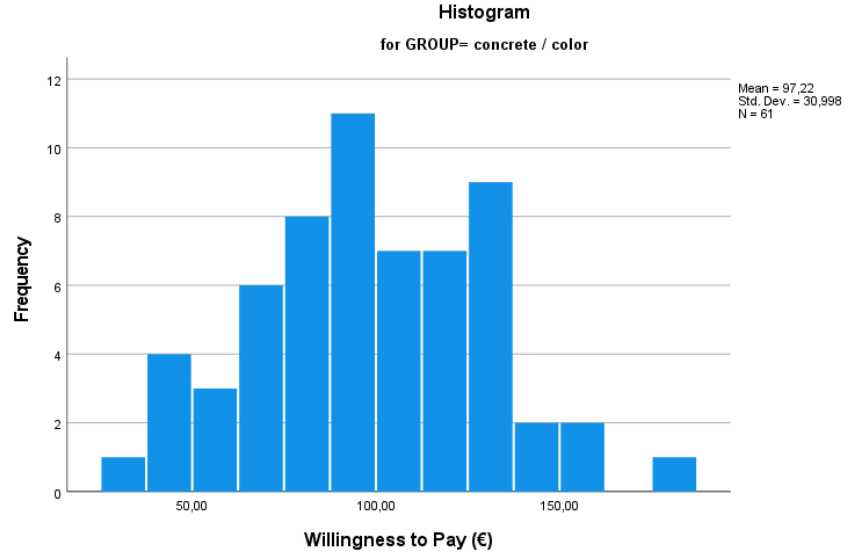


- ***Assumption*: Normality of Errors**




Histogram
for GROUP = abstract / color
Mean = 86,06
Std. Dev. = 35,175
N = 60
Frequency
Willingness to Pay (€)


Histogram
for GROUP = concrete / gray
Mean = 90,07
Std. Dev. = 31,562
N = 55
Frequency
Willingness to Pay (€)


Histogram
for GROUP= concrete / color
Mean = 97,22
Std. Dev. = 30,998
N = 61
Frequency
Willingness to Pay (€)

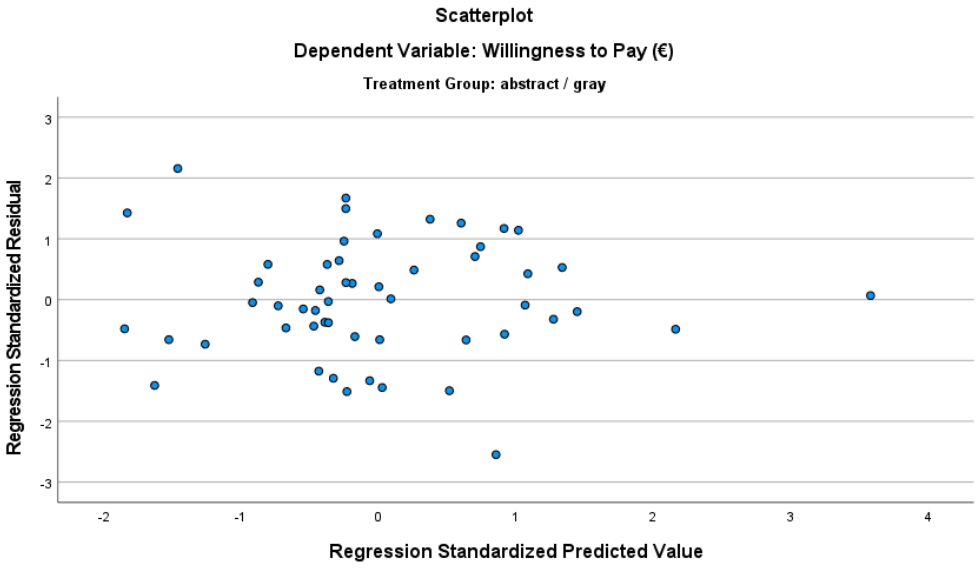
Tests of Normality

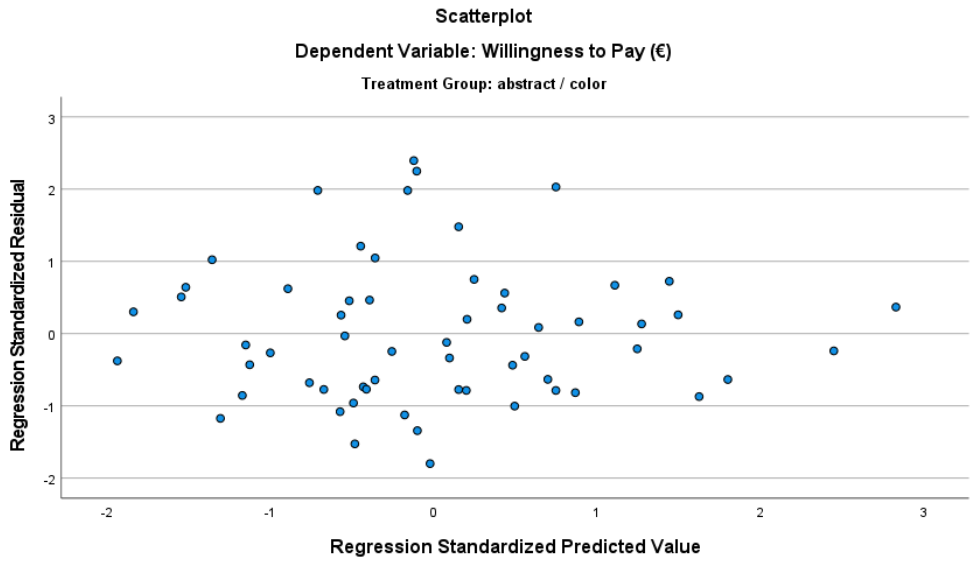
	Treatment Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Willingness to Pay (€)	0	,080	53	,200*	,975	53	,330
	1	,085	60	,200*	,967	60	,101
	2	,084	55	,200*	,981	55	,519
	3	,071	61	,200*	,986	61	,695

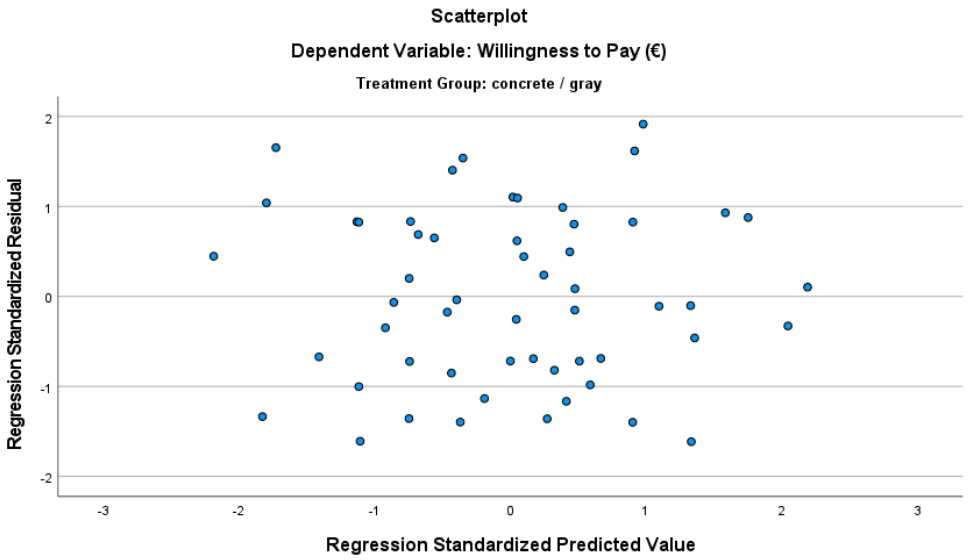
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

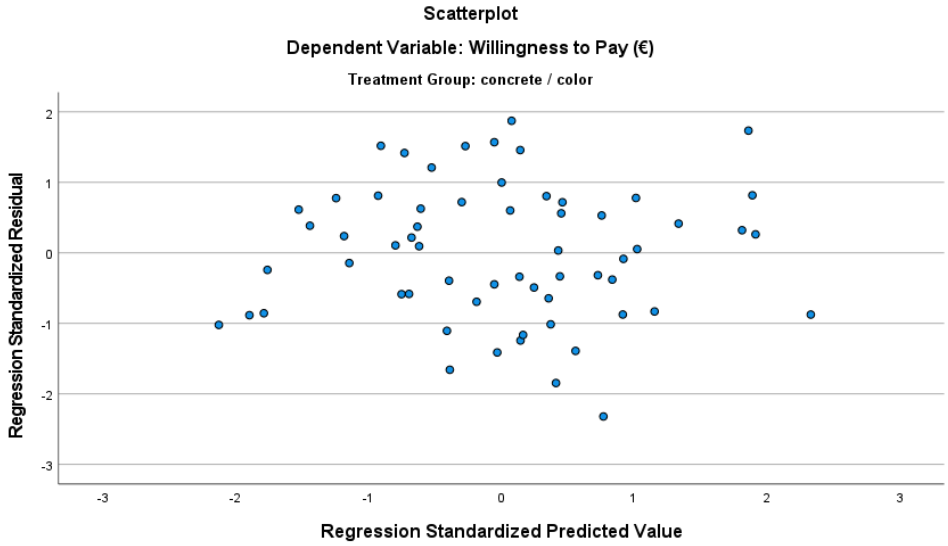
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

- ***Assumption*: Linearity between covariates and DV + homogeneity of variance**









Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Willingness to Pay (€)	Based on Mean	,802	3	225	,494
	Based on Median	,703	3	225	,551
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	,703	3	212,446	,551
	Based on trimmed mean	,787	3	225	,502

- ***Assumption*: Independence of covariates**

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
Treatment Group	0	abstract / gray	53
	1	abstract / color	60
	2	concrete / gray	55
	3	concrete / color	61

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: **Product Involvement**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4,395[a]	3	1,465	1,478	,221	,019
Intercept	4955,263	1	4955,263	5000,032	,000	,957
GROUP	4,395	3	1,465	1,478	,221	,019
Error	222,985	225	,991			
Total	5216,670	229				
Corrected Total	227,381	228				

a. R Squared = ,019 (Adjusted R Squared = ,006)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: **Price Sensitivity**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	2,018[a]	3	,673	,400	,753	,005
Intercept	5548,564	1	5548,564	3296,903	,000	,936
GROUP	2,018	3	,673	,400	,753	,005
Error	378,667	225	1,683			
Total	5956,667	229				
Corrected Total	380,684	228				

a. R Squared = ,005 (Adjusted R Squared = -,008)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: **Consumer Cosmopolitanism (C-COSMO)**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	,695[a]	3	,232	,239	,869	,003
Intercept	6422,205	1	6422,205	6627,640	,000	,967
GROUP	,695	3	,232	,239	,869	,003
Error	218,026	225	,969			
Total	6662,465	229				
Corrected Total	218,720	228				

a. R Squared = ,003 (Adjusted R Squared = -,010)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: **Country Image (CI)**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4,576[a]	3	1,525	2,145	,095	,028
Intercept	6493,760	1	6493,760	9131,965	,000	,976
GROUP	4,576	3	1,525	2,145	,095	,028
Error	159,998	225	,711			
Total	6698,813	229				
Corrected Total	164,574	228				

a. R Squared = ,028 (Adjusted R Squared = ,015)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: **Product-country Typicality (PCT)**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4,333[a]	3	1,444	1,315	,270	,017
Intercept	5914,313	1	5914,313	5386,143	,000	,960
GROUP	4,333	3	1,444	1,315	,270	,017
Error	247,064	225	1,098			
Total	6180,688	229				
Corrected Total	251,397	228				

a. R Squared = ,017 (Adjusted R Squared = ,004)

- ***Assumption*: Homogeneity of regression slopes**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: **Willingness to Pay (€)**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	32801,063[a]	20	1640,053	1,705	,034	,141
Intercept	12145,416	1	12145,416	12,626	,000	,057
GROUP * INV	2099,000	4	524,750	,546	,702	,010
GROUP * PS	8474,353	4	2118,588	2,202	,070	,041
GROUP * CCOSMO	8586,142	4	2146,535	2,232	,067	,041
GROUP * CI	3031,319	4	757,830	,788	,534	,015
GROUP * PCT	5953,851	4	1488,463	1,547	,190	,029
Error	200079,634	208	961,921			
Total	2066601,500	229				
Corrected Total	232880,697	228				

a. R Squared = ,141 (Adjusted R Squared = ,058)

- ***Hypothesis 1 & Hypothesis 2***

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Logo Shape	Logo Color	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
abstract shape	grayscale colors	83,8491	28,54864	53
	COO's colors	86,0583	35,17488	60
	Total	85,0221	32,11554	113
COO-specific shape	grayscale colors	90,0727	31,56158	55
	COO's colors	97,2213	30,99765	61
	Total	93,8319	31,33556	116
Total	grayscale colors	87,0185	30,14265	108
	COO's colors	91,6860	33,46884	121
	Total	89,4847	31,95945	229

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	20148,804[a]	5	4029,761	4,224	,001	,087
Intercept	38780,229	1	38780,229	40,652	,000	,154
PS	8831,265	1	8831,265	9,258	,003	,040
CCOSMO	8004,490	1	8004,490	8,391	,004	,036
Logo_Shape	4432,273	1	4432,273	4,646	,032	,020
Logo_Color	1596,754	1	1596,754	1,674	,197	,007
Logo_Shape * Logo_Color	212,400	1	212,400	,223	,637	,001
Error	212731,893	223	953,955			
Total	2066601,500	229				
Corrected Total	232880,697	228				

a. R Squared = ,087 (Adjusted R Squared = ,066)

Parameter Estimates

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	88,838	13,259	6,700	,000	62,709	114,967	,168
PS	-4,924	1,618	-3,043	,003	-8,113	-1,735	,040
CCOSMO	6,178	2,133	2,897	,004	1,975	10,381	,036
[Logo_Shape=0]	-10,768	5,623	-1,915	,057	-21,849	,313	,016
[Logo_Shape=1]	0[a]	.	.	.	.	.	.
[Logo_Color=0]	-7,225	5,743	-1,258	,210	-18,543	4,093	,007
[Logo_Color=1]	0[a]	.	.	.	.	.	.
[Logo_Shape=0] * [Logo_Color=0]	3,861	8,183	,472	,637	-12,265	19,987	,001
[Logo_Shape=0] * [Logo_Color=1]	0[a]	.	.	.	.	.	.
[Logo_Shape=1] * [Logo_Color=0]	0[a]	.	.	.	.	.	.
[Logo_Shape=1] * [Logo_Color=1]	0[a]	.	.	.	.	.	.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Estimates

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Logo Shape	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
abstract shape	84,862[a]	2,915	79,118	90,607
COO-specific shape	93,699[a]	2,875	88,033	99,365

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Price Sensitivity = 4,9345, Consumer Cosmopolitanism (C-COSMO) = 5,3046.

Pairwise Comparisons

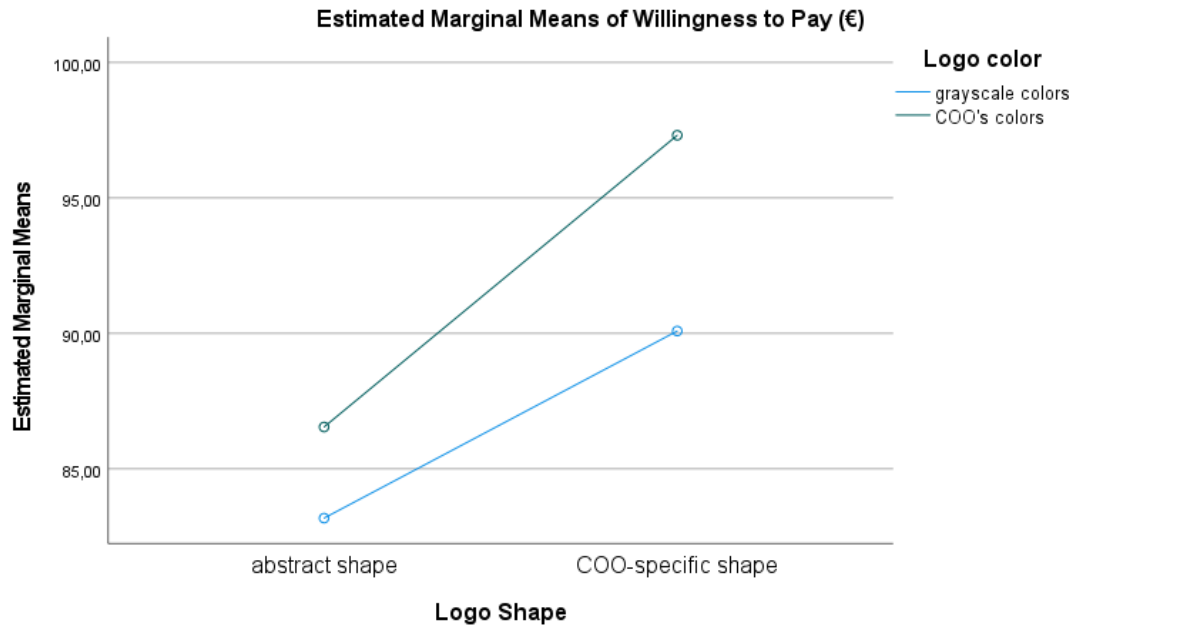
Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

(I) Logo Shape	(J) Logo Shape	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
abstract shape	COO-specific shape	-8,837*	4,100	,032	-16,916	-,758
COO-specific shape	abstract shape	8,837*	4,100	,032	,758	16,916

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Price Sensitivity = 4,9345, Consumer Cosmopolitanism (C-COSMO) = 5,3046

- ***Hypothesis 3***

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Treatment Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
abstract / gray	83,8491	28,54864	53
abstract / color	86,0583	35,17488	60
concrete / gray	90,0727	31,56158	55
concrete / color	97,2213	30,99765	61
Total	89,4847	31,95945	229

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	20148,804[a]	5	4029,761	4,224	,001	,087
Intercept	38780,229	1	38780,229	40,652	,000	,154
PS	8831,265	1	8831,265	9,258	,003	,040
CCOSMO	8004,490	1	8004,490	8,391	,004	,036
GROUP	6353,615	3	2117,872	2,220	,087	,029
Error	212731,893	223	953,955			
Total	2066601,500	229				
Corrected Total	232880,697	228				

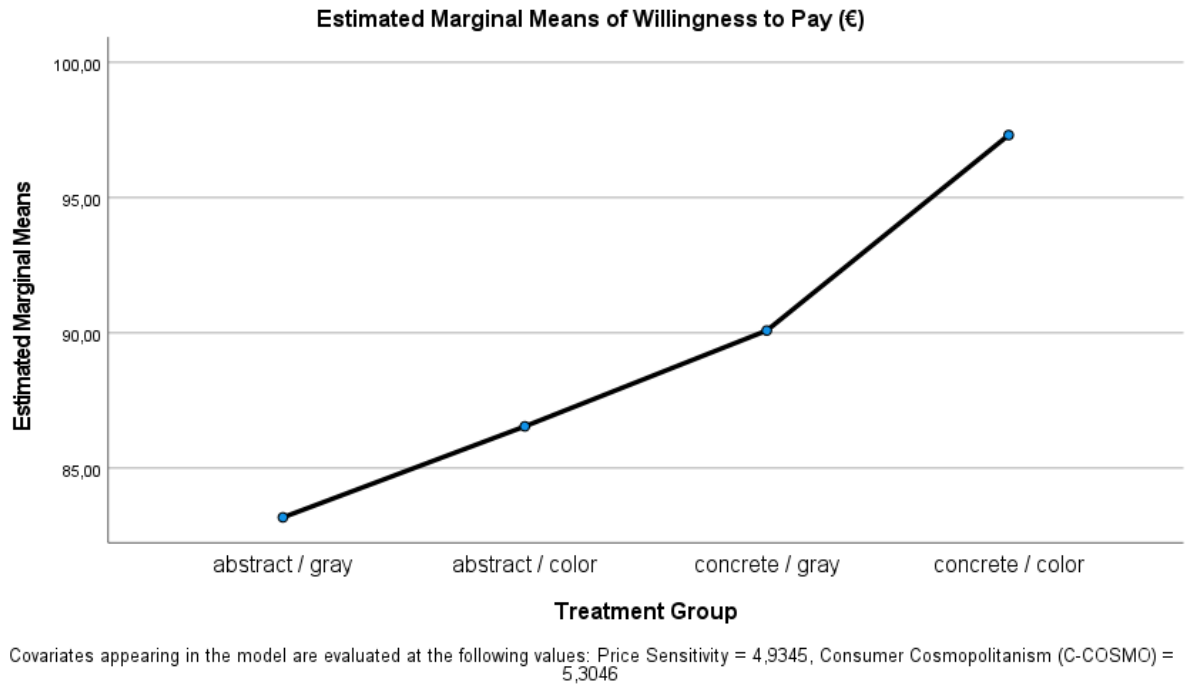
a. R Squared = ,087 (Adjusted R Squared = ,066)

Parameter Estimates

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		Partial Eta Squared
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Intercept	88,838	13,259	6,700	,000	62,709	114,967	,168
PS	-4,924	1,618	-3,043	,003	-8,113	-1,735	,040
CCOSMO	6,178	2,133	2,897	,004	1,975	10,381	,036
[GROUP=0]	-14,132	5,813	-2,431	,016	-25,587	-2,676	,026
[GROUP=1]	-10,768	5,623	-1,915	,057	-21,849	,313	,016
[GROUP=2]	-7,225	5,743	-1,258	,210	-18,543	4,093	,007
[GROUP=3]	0[a]	.	.	.	.	.	.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.



- ***Hypothesis 4a & Hypothesis 4b***

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	22416,752[a]	8	2802,094	2,929	,004	,096
Intercept	12706,312	1	12706,312	13,282	,000	,057
INV	547,540	1	547,540	,572	,450	,003
PS	8250,752	1	8250,752	8,625	,004	,038
CCOSMO	7532,690	1	7532,690	7,874	,005	,035
CI	940,260	1	940,260	,983	,323	,004
PCT	910,790	1	910,790	,952	,330	,004
Logo_Shape	3712,766	1	3712,766	3,881	,050	,017
Logo_Color	925,738	1	925,738	,968	,326	,004
Logo_Shape * Logo_Color	129,551	1	129,551	,135	,713	,001
Error	210463,944	220	956,654			
Total	2066601,500	229				
Corrected Total	232880,697	228				

a. R Squared = ,096 (Adjusted R Squared = ,063)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	24038,261[a]	9	2670,918	2,801	,004	,103
Intercept	39481,143	1	39481,143	41,401	,000	,159
PS	8186,524	1	8186,524	8,585	,004	,038
CCOSMO	6101,165	1	6101,165	6,398	,012	,028
Logo_Shape	4582,135	1	4582,135	4,805	,029	,021
Logo_Color	1312,261	1	1312,261	1,376	,242	,006
Involvement	764,847	1	764,847	,802	,371	,004
Logo_Shape * Logo_Color	309,111	1	309,111	,324	,570	,001
Logo_Shape * Involvement	814,311	1	814,311	,854	,356	,004
Logo_Color * Involvement	1553,614	1	1553,614	1,629	,203	,007
Logo_Shape * Logo_Color * Involvement	743,338	1	743,338	,779	,378	,004
Error	208842,435	219	953,618			
Total	2066601,500	229				
Corrected Total	232880,697	228				

a. R Squared = ,103 (Adjusted R Squared = ,066)

*1. Logo Shape * Product Involvement*

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Logo Shape	Product Involvement	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
abstract shape	low	84,525[a]	4,375	75,902	93,149
	high	84,489[a]	3,965	76,674	92,304
COO-specific shape	low	89,754[a]	4,182	81,513	97,995
	high	97,312[a]	3,997	89,434	105,189

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Price Sensitivity = 4,9345, Consumer Cosmopolitanism (C-COSMO) = 5,3046.

*2. Logo color * Product Involvement*

Dependent Variable: Willingness to Pay (€)

Logo color	Product Involvement	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
grayscale colors	low	87,371[a]	4,308	78,881	95,861
	high	85,848[a]	4,140	77,689	94,008
COO's colors	low	86,909[a]	4,270	78,493	95,324
	high	95,952[a]	3,818	88,427	103,478

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Price Sensitivity = 4,9345, Consumer Cosmopolitanism (C-COSMO) = 5,3046.

Abstract German

Marketingexperten und Wissenschaftler sind sich einig, dass die Kommunikation des Herkunftslandes (COO) einer Marke ein wirkungsvolles Instrument ist, um aus den positiven Länderassoziationen der Verbraucher Kapital zu schlagen und so die Wahrnehmung und das Verhalten der Verbraucher zu beeinflussen. Ein vorteilhaftes COO wird in der Regel durch Ursprungskennzeichnungen oder den Hinweis "Made in..." auf der Produktverpackung hervorgehoben. Es gibt jedoch auch andere implizitere und rechtlich nicht geregelte Strategien, um die Herkunft von Produkten zu kommunizieren, wie z. B. die Einbeziehung von COO-spezifischen Formen und Farben in ein Markenlogo. Obwohl diese Strategien eine Marke eng mit ihrem COO verknüpfen können und eine Vielzahl von Möglichkeiten für „Foreign Branding“ bieten, hat die Forschung diesen COO-Hinweisen in Markenlogos bisher wenig Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Insbesondere ist noch unklar, ob und inwieweit COO-Hinweise in Markenlogos die Zahlungsbereitschaft (WTP) der Verbraucher beeinflussen. Ausgehend von der Signaling-Theorie wird in dieser Arbeit daher der Einfluss von COO-Hinweisen in Markenlogos (Logoform und -farbe) auf die Zahlungsbereitschaft der Verbraucher untersucht. Zu diesem Zweck wurde eine experimentelle Studie mit österreichischen Konsument:innen in einem Between-Subjects-Design durchgeführt. Die Ergebnisse der Studie zeigten, dass das Hinzufügen von COO-spezifischen Formen zum Markenlogo die Zahlungsbereitschaft der Verbraucher erhöhte (im Vergleich zu einem Logo ohne jeglichen Hinweis auf den Ursprung der Marke). Im Gegensatz dazu hatte die Aufnahme der Nationalfarben des COO in das Logo keinen signifikanten Einfluss auf die Zahlungsbereitschaft der Verbraucher. Darüber hinaus hatte die Kombination mehrerer COO-Hinweise (sowohl Logoform als auch Logofarbe) keine zusätzliche Wirkung. Auf der Grundlage dieser Ergebnisse wurden Implikationen für Forschung und Praxis erörtert und Vorschläge für künftige Studien gemacht.