The Role of Country-of-Origin (COO) and Brand Effects on Asian Consumers' Apparel Choices in Thailand

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Dedicated to

My father, Mr. Narong Parkvithee and my mother, Mrs. Kanya Parkvithee

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Narissara Parkvithee
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Abstract

A large body of research with regard to country-of-origin (COO) studies indicates that COO cue is a potential factor that affects consumers' product evaluation. There also appear to be considerable number of empirical COO studies that show brand name can play an important role to influence consumers' product evaluation. Previous research suggests that the outcomes of studying COO effect differ depending upon product type and therefore purchase involvement that is evoked by particular product categories seems to be a significant factor that influences consumers' product evaluation. However, the overall information and inferences associated with the investigation of these collective influences of three product cues, namely, purchase involvement, COO and brand name still holds some obscurity due to limited simultaneous attention that these three product evaluation cues have been given in the past. It is therefore expected that by expanding the research to examine the effects of these three cues on consumers' product evaluation would help to enrich the information database which would be highly beneficial for the researchers in the COO area.

In this study, the role of COO and brand effects on consumers' evaluation of apparel products is investigated in an Asian country. The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of Asian consumers in purchase decision-making associated with fashion-clothing product categories. This research examines and compares consumers' perceptions of COO with the particular level of the country's development. The research provides evidence about favorable and unfavorable COO perceptions among clothing purchasers. The effects of the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement are also examined together with their interaction effects on consumers' product evaluation.

A quantitative approach using two surveys was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand. Data were gathered using a sample of Thai consumers since this study intended to clarify how the level of purchase involvement played a potential role to influence COO effects among typical Asian consumers. The investigation was designed to explore the effects on COO and brand on product evaluation based on *high involvement* sub-product categories of apparel, namely, ***suits*** and *low involvement* sub-product

categories of apparel, namely, ***T-shirts***. Data analysis techniques such as multivariate analysis of variance (***MANOVA***), analysis of variance **(*ANOVA*)**, ***t*-test** and ***correlation*** were employed to analyze the data.

It was found that *COO cue* has a greater influence than *brand cue* on consumers' product evaluation for both *high involvement* apparel products and *low involvement* apparel products. Consumers tend to rate the products made in a highly developed country higher and with less regard to other product cues. This finding suggests that for clothing products made in a *highly developed country* firms should employ marketing strategies that emphasize COO information.

Although, *COO cue* appears to be overall more important than *brand cue*, this research found a salient role for brand effect in affecting consumers' evaluation of clothing products made in a *less developed country*. Against a background that many firms move manufacturing to less developed countries in order to reduce their production costs, this study confirms that if they possess a strong brand, the weakness of origin, which is associated with a relative low COO image may be largely alleviated. This counteracting effect was found for both *high involvement* apparel products and *low involvement* apparel items. It is important to note that this study also found that the level of purchase involvement appears to influence consumers' perceptions of COO and in turn COO affects consumers' purchase decision-making. Nevertheless, a strong brand still plays a greater potential role in overcoming the effects of a product made in a country with a relative low COO image as well as the effects of the level of purchase involvement on consumers' purchasing behavior. Consequently, this study suggests that it would be useful for firms or marketing practitioners who plan to shift their production to less developed countries to pay more attention to their "*branding"* strategy.

Declaration

I, Narissara Parkvithee, declare that the DBA thesis entitled *"The Role of Country-of-Origin (COO) and Brand Effects on Asian Consumers' Apparel Choices in Thailand"* is no more than 65,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Narissara Parkvithee — July, 2010

Signature — Date

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Background

Global organizations seeking to rival their competitors in world markets have increasingly been spreading their manufacturing wings across their national boundaries in order to bring strategic advantages to their operations. Often production has migrated to countries that posses comparative advantage in labour, or material or technology. Also as a consequence of globalization, it is not unusual for products to be manufactured in more than one country. This increasing phenomenon of brands made in countries other than from where they are originally domiciled, has given rise to consumers perceiving products of the same brand but made in different countries, differently. The role of country-of-origin (COO) in consumers' choice of products has become increasingly meaningful to marketers and researchers.

Various authors have used different terms to refer to COO. For example, COO has been defined as the country where a firm markets the goods or where the brand is located (Ozsomer & Cavusgil 1991; Al-Sulaiti & Baker 1998). Some authors refer to the COO of the product as "the country-of-manufacture (COM) or country-of-assembly (COA)" (Roger et al. 1994; Saeed 1994; Lee & Schaninger 1996; Al-Sulaiti & Baker 1998; Ahmed et al. 2004; Ashill & Sinha 2004). Others state that the term "made in----" or "manufactured in----" on labels is used to represent the COO of the product (Haubl 1996). Consumers identify many well-known brands with specific countries; thus, COO can also be referred to as country-of-brand (COB) which others might call brand origin (Ashill & Sinha 2004). For example, Sony and Honda products are perceived to be Japanese; Marks and Spencer and Body Shop items are perceived as British. For the purpose of this study, the term COO is used to refer to COM which means where the product is made or produced.

The decision to extend business into a foreign market depends on various considerations such as economic, political, and cultural variables (Nebenzahl & Jaffe

1996). Lower production costs are one of the possible reasons for a firm's strategic move to produce in other countries. While there is now an abundant amount of research in international marketing related to COO effects on consumer behavior (Peterson & Jolibert 1995; Al-Sulaiti & Baker 1998; Papadopoulos & Heslop 2003; Ahmed & d'Astous 2007), little is known about the effects of foreign production on product evaluations (Hui & Zhou 2003). In some situations, it appears that the COO effect function is as an intangible barrier to the penetration of new market places, due to the possible pattern of negative consumer bias toward imported products (Phau & Suntornnond 2006).

There are a considerable number of empirical COO studies in which brand name is a significant factor (Cui 1997; Schlevogt 2000; Ahmed & d'Astous 2004). However, the particular effects of brand and COO cues have received only limited attention (Ashill & Sinha 2004). In addition, consumers' perceptions of COO are impacted by the level of involvement in making purchase decisions and the level of involvement evoked by the category of the product (Ahmed & d'Astous 2004). The inferences of past studies differ depending on whether the product categories are associated with high involvement or low involvement purchase decisions, as well as on the countries that are selected for investigation. Often the results of different research studies have also been contradictory.

Studies investigating three product cues (COO, brand and involvement) have been undertaken in the past. However, previous studies appear to have examined COO and / or brand by investigating their effects on individual products (e.g. the study of Tse and Gorn, 1993; Maheswaran, 1994; Pecotich and Rosenthal, 2001; Ahmed and d'Astous, 2004) or via a comparison of the effects on several products (e.g. the study of Ahmed and d'Astous, 1995; Nebenzahl and Jaffe, 1996; Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell, 2008). Those past studies were particularly lacking with regard to the current study in that researchers did not include *product type* as one of the independent variables in the study's conceptual framework for testing. In past studies limited simultaneous attention has also been paid to these three product evaluation cues, particularly with regard to focusing on the different *levels* of the three product cues. It is expected that this research would help to clarify the role of these three

product evaluation cues and the extent to which they collectively play a potential role in impacting consumers' purchase decision-making.

1.1 Problem Statement

COO effects on consumers' product evaluations have been of interest to researchers and have been investigated over the past 30 years. Nevertheless, little is known about the psychological structure of COO and brand effects on product evaluation in terms of perceived product quality and purchase intentions (Haubl 1996). COO perceptions and brands are inevitably affected by cross-border shifts of production among Asian countries with different level of country's development. Whether a brand can outweigh the effects of COO on product evaluation and whether high equity brand would compensate for the effect of negative COO information is a debatable question.

Past studies indicate that COO image is associated with the perception of the level of country's development. It appears that the higher the perceived level of industrialization of a country, the more positive is the perception of the quality of its workmanship (Li & Monroe 1992), which in turn is reflected in the perceived quality of its products (Iyer & Kalita 1997; Ahmed & d'Astous 2007).

Studies on Asian consumer behavior also raise doubts as to the validity of existing consumer theories that are derived from research in Western cultures because of significant cultural and marketing differences among Asian and Western countries (Ahmed et al. 2004). Existing theories might not be applicable to Asian markets.

Therefore the purpose of this study is to clarify how the three aforementioned product cues with respect to different levels of country's development, brand equity and involvement may influence Asian consumers' product evaluation. This research also seeks to investigate the interaction effects of those three product cues on product evaluation. This study adopts a quantitative approach using two surveys as the basis of an empirical examination. More details of the objective of this research are given in the following section.

1.2 Aims of the Research

1.2.1 *General Aims*

The purpose of this study is to explore attitudes of Asian consumers in purchase decision-making associated with fashion-clothing products made in countries with different levels of *perceived* (economic) development. This study also aims to examine the effects of brand equity and purchase involvement on Asian consumers' product evaluation.

1.2.2 *Specific Aims*

1. (a) To examine the effects of a product's COO from countries with different development levels and brands with different levels of brand equity on Thai consumers' attitudes.

   (b) To explore whether the effect of brand name can outweigh the effects of relatively low COO image on the perceived quality of products and purchase intentions of apparel in Thailand.
2. To identify favorable and unfavorable COO perceptions of products from countries with different levels of development among apparel buyers.
3. To identify the influence of consumer purchase involvement with respect to high involvement apparel products *versus* low involvement apparel products on Thai consumers' product evaluation.
4. To examine the interaction effects of COO, brand and involvement with regard to how they may influence Thai consumers' evaluation of products.

1.3 Contribution to Knowledge

Up to now there has been little attention given to the apparel product category with regard to COO being the cue for low risk and high risk purchase decisions. It is also unknown whether COO effect would occur for apparel products with different levels of purchase involvement in the same way and to the same extent that COO does for other product categories as indicated in past studies.

Limited research involving COO has been conducted in developing countries (Wang, Siu & Hui 2004; Ahmed & d'Astous 2007) and especially in Asian countries. This

study intends to make a contribution by enhancing the knowledge of COO and brand effects on product evaluation by Asian consumers, particularly in the apparel industry.

The study will also attempt to provide theoretical insights into when and how COO information might change in order to become a salient product cue, particularly by incorporating the possible changes in consumers' perceptions because of the varying level of country's development. The research outcome will contribute to knowledge by examining product sub-categories, which relate to high involvement apparel products *versus* low involvement apparel products across selected popular brands. Involvement is generally understood as the extent of *"search"* the consumer is involved before making the purchase decision. This study will provide an understanding of whether COO and brand cues influence Asian consumers' product evaluation in terms of perceived product quality and ultimately their purchase decisions. It is expected that the results of this study will either support or conversely reject the impressions held by Western consumers on the COO cue. The outcome of this study can be used by firms to enhance their marketing strategies, competitiveness, and in avoiding risk when investing in and/or shifting their production to other countries. The results from this study would also contribute to setting strategic marketing directions for local and multinational firms interested in selling fashion-oriented products in Asian countries, especially in Thailand.

1.4 Significance of Research Study

Extant literature on COO may not be applicable to Asian markets. The results of this study are anticipated to be used as a database for justifying appropriate managerial actions to modify marketing strategies in the Asian clothing markets. For example, the information could help marketing managers employ promotional techniques that de-emphasize, downplay or avoid the COO information in order to prevent or reduce any risks if a country's image is unfavorable. Conversely, firms may choose to emphasize COO if the country's image is favorable. In addition, if the results from this study suggest that high equity brands can overcome the effect of COO for some product categories, branding strategies could be employed to supplement competitive advantages for these companies. Furthermore, if the level of country's development influence consumers' product evaluation of fashion-oriented products, the level of

marketing could be adjusted to ensure that it roughly parallels the stage of development. For example, if Thai consumers perceive products made in a developed country more highly than products made in a less developed country, marketers in developed countries might want to promote their country-brand image.

The results of this study would be of interest to multinational corporations which manufacture fashion-oriented products globally and are interested in exporting their manufactured products to countries like Thailand. As the field study will be conducted in Thailand, it is expected that the information from the survey will be helpful to manufacturers, retailers and trading companies in the fashion clothing industry in Thailand. In particular, it could aid companies that attempt to promote Thai fashion brand name apparel and have a scheme to outsource into other countries in Asia in order to improve their production, product quality, product differentiation, brand equity, as well as their competitive advantage.

1.5 Summary

This chapter starts with the background and the research problem in the introduction and is followed by sections on the aims of the research, contribution to knowledge and statement of research significance associated with the present study.

An overview of past studies on Country-of-Origin and related literature are included in Chapter 2. In addition, this chapter contextualizes the fundamental theoretical constructs, establishes and develops a theoretical framework and defines the potential variables. This chapter also provides a framework for the correlation among these variables and proposes research questions to be addressed in Chapter 3.

The research methodology is described in Chapter 4. This chapter specifies the research design, sampling design and data collection process. Country selection, product choice and data analysis techniques are also explained in this chapter.

Chapter 5 includes the findings and the analysis followed by discussions of the results. The conclusion, limitation, and implications for further research are provided in the final chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Evaluation of Products

The most fundamental aspect of consumers' decision-making about the quality of a product is built on a systematic process of *acquiring, evaluating* and *integrating product information or cues* (Ahmed et al. 2004). Yasin and Noor (2007) suggest that information-processing theory implies that consumers' beliefs and evaluations of a product appear when consumers employ product cues as a means to affect their purchase behaviors. A cue is defined as an information stimulus available to the consumers and thus used as a basis for their decisions before consumption (Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000). The cues can be revealed as intrinsic (e.g. taste, design) or extrinsic (e.g. COO, brand, price) (Ahmed et al. 2004). The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic cues is thus based on whether or not a particular trait is inherent in the product or more peripheral in nature. Conventional wisdom suggests that consumers would initially assess intrinsic cues. However, it is rarely so simple. Extrinsic factors commonly play an important determining role in purchasing decisions. In particular, where intrinsic cues are either absent or are difficult to assess, consumers might rely more on extrinsic cues (Schaefer 1997; Ahmed et al. 2004; Insch & McBride 2004).

A number of research studies have explored the effects of COO cue on product evaluation (Hong, Robert & Wyer 1990; Li & Wyer 1994; Maheswaran 1994; Gurhan-Canli & Maheswaran 2000). There is a significant amount of evidence that consumers usually perceive and evaluate the quality of a product with reference to COO. It appears that COO is in fact, a major concern for consumers in terms of product cues. For instance, consumers perceive and believe that the reliable household products such electronic products should be *"Japanese electronics"* (Hong, Robert & Wyer 1989, 1990; Klein, Ettenson & Morris 1998; Gurhan-Canli & Maheswaran 2000). Past studies indicate that a significant proportion of consumers employ COO stereotypes in their process of evaluating the product (Yasin & Noor 2007). To

illustrate, consumers perceive *"German cars"* as excellent and *"Italian pizza"* as superb. Hence, the majority of consumers rely on the "Made-in" label as a means through which they are able to categorize or label products as either superior or inferior. Or, put in another way, consumers use the "Made-in" cue as a way to evaluate the supposed "*superiority*" or "*inferiority*" of a product depending on their perception of the particular country. Brands of products are also assessed in the same way. The brands from a country which has a favorable image may be thought of as reliable and thus preferable to those from countries with a less favorable image. The following section will review the issue of the evaluation of perceived quality and purchase intention of products.

2.0.1 *Evaluation of Perceived Quality and Purchase Intention*

Past COO studies consider consumers' evaluation of the product with reference to two specific terms. These are comprised of perceived quality of product (Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000; Teas & Agarwal 2000) and intention to purchase (Kim & Pysarchik 2000).

Perceived Quality of Product

The definition of the perceived quality of product in the literature seems to vary considerably. In the study of Insch and McBride (2004), the perceived quality of product is defined as the consumers' perceptions of a product's overall excellence or superiority. Insch and McBride (2004) indicate that the perceived quality of product is comprised of two primary determinants. These are design quality and manufacturing quality. Ahmed and d'Astous (2004) differ somewhat by proposing five dimensions which consist of COD, COA or COM, store type, price, and satisfaction assurance. All five elements are said to be influential in the measurement of the perceived quality of the product in their study. Ashill and Sinha (2004) suggest measuring the perceived quality of product in terms of a country's capabilities. Specifically, they suggested that by using "a set of items evaluating the product specific capabilities of the country" it would be possible to measure the perceived quality of a watch product. The set of items were comprised of four dimensions which were excellent engineering and precision, high quality standards and control, well trained workforce, and highly motivated workers. The study of Ahmed and d'Astous (2004) as well as the study of

Insch and McBride (2004) also supported the contention that an *overall perceived product quality* can be measured through consumers' perceptions of *country capabilities*. In addition, Hui and Zhou (2003) conducted a study that employed quality dimensions for high complex or durable goods (electronic products). These quality dimensions were used for measuring the effects of COO. They suggest that those dimensions consist of reliability, workmanship and durability. The study by Ahmed et al (2004) employed COO dimensions which comprised of taste, prestige, and quality. These factors were applied to the measurement of the perceived quality of less complex products such as bread and coffee products.

However, there seems to be no consensus in COO studies as to what quality dimensions should be employed (Li & Dant 1997; Lim & Darley 1997; Hui & Zhou 2003). This implies that the criteria for measuring the perceived quality of product through consumers' perceptions of country capabilities should be based on relevance of the criteria for particular products that are chosen for investigation. Malhotra et al. (2002) suggest that the criteria for measuring the perceived quality needs to be tested for reliability to ensure that they are appropriate and meaningful.

Intention to Purchase

The second aspect of product evaluation is related to purchase intention. Most past studies employed just one item, namely "likely to purchase / unlikely to purchase" as the criterion for measuring the aspect of product evaluation (Chao 1998; Okechuku & Onyemah 1999; Ashill & Sinha 2004; Wang & Chen 2004; Wong, Polonsky & Garma 2008). Ashill and Sinha (2004) indicated that the intention to purchase a product was operationalized as the assessment of the likelihood of purchasing a particular product. The scale that is used for rating an item in past studies is most commonly the *semantic differential technique*. This rating system is a measure of attitudes that are comprised of a series of 7-point rating scales (or 9-point rating scales). It is also commonly known as the "seven-point Likert scale" (Lin & Chen 2006). The system employs bipolar adjectives to anchor the starting point and terminal point of each scale (Zikmund 2003) for measuring the likelihood of purchase.

2.1 Country-of-Origin (COO) Effects

2.1.1 *Significance of COO*

In the market places, COO is one of several factors which are viewed by marketers and researchers as having effects that can influence international competitiveness. Roth and Romeo (1992) point out that COO effects can be referred to clients' stereotypes of one particular country. The country's stereotypes refer to the perceptions of people in one country who have stereotypes and preferences for goods, which belong to another country (Lin & Chen 2006). Therefore, people sometimes refer to COO effects as product country image (Al-Sulaiti & Baker 1998). Srikatanyoo and Gnoth (2002) assert that COO image plays a powerful role in stimulating consumers' beliefs with regard to the product attributes, which in turn affects evaluations of products and brands. Yasin and Noor (2007) report that some researchers describe country image as the general perceptions that consumers associate with the quality of products made in a specific country. Yet, another point of view suggests that country image is perceived as consumers' beliefs about a country's industrialization and national quality standard (Srikatanyoo & Gnoth 2002). The study by Saeed (1994) suggests that COO effect refers to any influences or preferences caused by COO. Given the significance of COO, the following section reviews empirical studies dealing with the perception of COO.

2.1.2 *COO Effects*

The evidence from past research indicates that product evaluation is influenced by COO effects in terms of consumers' purchase intentions for the product or service as well as consumers' perceptions of perceived quality of the product. (Liefeld 1993; Lim, Darley & Summers 1994; Haubl 1996; Lim & Darley 1997; Schaefer 1997; Thakor & Katsanis 1997; Chao 1998; Agrawal & Kamakura 1999; d'Astous & Ahmed 1999; Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000; Pecotich & Rosenthal 2001; Laroche et al. 2002; Ahmed et al. 2004). The results from those studies are often contrasting. While some researchers indicate that COO effects have a discernable effect on product evaluation, there is still considerable debate and contention regarding the exact way the perception of COO influences consumers' intentions to purchase. There are also some researchers who report that COO effects may not, in fact, occur at all. However, Bhaskaran and Sukumaran (2007) suggest that the

contradictory conclusions derived from past studies could be the result of differences of contextual and methodological underpinnings of the studies.

There is no gainsaying that COO effects produce a major influence on a consumer's evaluation of the product (Lin & Chen 2006). The study of Laroche et al. (2002) as well as the study of Agrawal and Kamakura (1999), and d'Astous and Ahmed (1999) report that COO demonstrates a significant impact on consumers' product choice. The evidence from the study of Hong, Robert and Wyer (1989) reveals that consumer's evaluation of the country's product quality is influenced by the COO information. Country image does play a role to impact on consumer's purchase decision as well (Han 1990; Papadopoulos & Heslop 1993). Roth and Romeo (1992) suggest that consumers would have a higher intention to purchase for the product from a country which is perceived as having a rather positive image. Manrai and Manrai (1993) support the perspective that a positive country image would influence consumers to perceive a product as high quality. This perception and the consumers' overall evaluation of goods manufactured in that country, which is perceived positively, can ultimately increase the intention to purchase from consumers. Nonetheless, a few authors propose that in certain cases, a country's positive image in some product categories does not necessarily carry over to other product categories (Ahmed et al. 2004).

COO effects are sometimes referred to as intangible barriers to penetrating new markets due to a pattern of negative consumer bias in relation to imported products. Consumers may often have more negative perceptions of products made in developing countries (Nebenzahl & Jaffe 1996; Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000; Ahmed et al. 2004). Furthermore, it has been claimed that consumers in developed countries prefer their own locally-produced products primarily, followed by goods from other developed countries, and lastly, goods from less developed countries (Okechuku 1994; Ahmed et al. 2004). In summary, based on the above studies, it can be postulated that the COO cue affects product evaluation.

On the other hand, some other past studies reveal the opposite conclusions that COO cue *does not* influence consumers' product choices (Bhaskaran & Sukumaran 2007). This contradiction can be seen from the results of the studies by Lim and Darley

(1997) as well as the study of Lim, Darley and Summers (1994) and Ettenson, Wagner and Gaeth (1988). The findings from these past studies indicate that the contradictory conclusions occurred due to the differences of contextual and methodological underpinnings as suggested by Bhaskaran and Sukumaran (2007). In addition, past studies suggest that the effects of COO on product evaluation would vary depending on product categories (Liefeld 1993; Ahmed & d'Astous 2001; Ahmed et al. 2004) as well as the countries that are selected for investigation.

There has also been some consideration about COO effects when the study includes other cues such as brand and price for investigation. The debate of this issue points out that COO cues might play only a limited role in impacting consumers' perceptions of quality of the particular product (Thakor & Katsanis 1997; Al-Sulaiti & Baker 1998). This is because consumers have to respond to several cues. Thus, the role played by the COO cue might differ in terms of the amount of influence it has on consumers' evaluation of the particular product depending on the category of the product.

Past studies concerned with COO effects have also examined a wide variety of products. Most studies of COO effects have concentrated on the highly complex or durable goods such as automobiles (Maheswaran 1994; Haubl 1996; Ahmed & d'Astous 2001; Josiassen, Lukas & Whitwell 2008) and household electronic products like a portable (digital) cassette players, stereo systems, watches, VCRs and microwave ovens (Nebenzahl & Jaffe 1996; Hui & Zhou 2003; Josiassen, Lukas & Whitwell 2008). Less complex or non-durable goods that have been examined for COO effects include alcoholic beverages (Schaefer 1997; Phau & Suntornnond 2006), food (coffee / bread) products (Ahmed et al. 2004), and T-shirts products (Ahmed & d'Astous 2004). Table 2.1 presents a chronological summary of the product categories used in past studies for the investigation of COO effects.

It must be noted that most COO studies have been conducted in Western countries. There is a paucity of previous research with regard to COO effects that have been conducted in developing countries (Wang, Siu & Hui 2004; Ahmed & d'Astous 2007)

Table 2.1 Summary of a Variety of Product Categories Used for Investigation of COO Effects

Year	Author	Product Type Examined
1993	Tse and Gorn	Stereo system
1994	Maheswaran	Personal computer
1995	Ahmed and d'Astous	Computer systems, fax machines, automobiles, and VCRs
1996	Haubl	Automobile
1996	Nebenzahl and Jaffe	VCRs and microwave oven
1997	Schaefer	Alcoholic beverages (Lager)
1999	Okechuku and Onyemah	Car and television
2001	Ahmed and d'Astous	Automobile
2001	Yagei	Automobile
2001	Pecotich and Rosenthal	Printer
2003	Hui and Zhou	A portable (digital) cassette player
2004	Ahmed et al.	Food (coffee / bread)
2004	Ahmed and d'Astous	T-shirt
2006	Phau and Suntornnond	Alcoholic beverages (Beer)
2006	Lin and Chen	Insurance and catering services
2008	Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell	Car, electronics, watches, electrical household appliances
2008	Wong, Polonsky and Garma	Automobile, digital camera

and particularly in Asian countries (Wong, Polonsky & Garma 2008). The instances of COO research in Asian countries are the studies of Lin and Sternquist (1994) in *Taiwan*, Tse et al. (1996) in *Hong Kong*, Zhang (1996) in *China*, Ahmed et al. (2004) in *Singapore*, Ahmed and d'Astous (2004) in *China*, and Lin and Chen (2006) in *Taiwan*. Table 2.2 presents a summary of past COO studies in various countries.

Table 2.2 Summary of Past COO Studies by Countries

Year	Author	Product Type	Consumer
1994	Maheswaran	Personal computer	USA
1994	Johansson et al.	Tractors	USA
1994	Okechuku	TVs sets and car radio / cassette players	USA, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands
1994	***Lin and Sternquist***	***Sweaters***	***Taiwan***
1995	Ahmed and d'Astous	Computer systems, fax machines, automobiles, and VCRs	Canada
1995	Keown and Casey	Wine	Northern Ireland
1995	Diamantopoulos et al.	Cars	UK and Germany
1996	Haubl	Automobile	North America
1996	***Zhang***	***Shirts, TV sets***	***China***
1996	Nebenzahl and Jaffe	VCRs and microwave oven	USA
1996	***Tse et al.***	***Television***	***Hong Kong***
1997	Schaefer	Alcoholic beverages (Lager)	South-East England
2001	Ahmed and d'Astous	Automobile	North America
2001	Yagei	Automobile	North America
2003	Hui and Zhou	A portable (digital) cassette player	North America
2004	***Ahmed et al.***	***Food (coffee / bread)***	***Singapore***
2004	***Ahmed and d'Astous***	***T-shirt***	***China***
2006	Phau and Suntornnond	Alcoholic beverages (Beer)	Australia
2006	***Lin and Chen***	***Insurance and catering services***	***Taiwan***
2008	Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell	Car, electronics, watches, electrical household appliances	Australia
2008	***Wong, Polonsky and Garma***	***Automobile, digital camera***	***China***

2.1.3 *Determinants of COO Effects on Country's Capabilities*

Literature reveals that many studies employ a varied set of items to measure country image or COO effects. To illustrate, the study of Han and Terpstra (1988) included four dimensions, which comprise advanced technology, prestige, workmanship and economy to measure country image from among fourteen measured items of previous research through factor analysis. Agarwal and Sikri (1996) also developed four dimensions, namely, industry, technology, prestige and price, for measuring the COO effects.

A review of empirical studies suggests that a COO research that concentrates on the functional attributes of highly complex / high technology products or durable goods, the measure of COO effects are generally concerned with dimensions which are related to the functions of the product. These functions may include elements such as quality, design, service, and goodwill. (Roth & Romeo 1992; Chao 1993; Insch & McBride 1998, 2004). Previous studies also point out that most criteria for measuring the COO effects for the products such as automobiles and household electronic products would include quality, workmanship, design and technology.

Other COO studies associated with less complex products or non-durable goods like T-shirts points out that the criteria dimensions that were used for measuring the country perceptions in the study include design and assembly capability of the countries (Ahmed & d'Astous 2004).

An empirical study of insurance and catering services by Lin and Chen (2006) specified "images" of the country as a consumer's overall recognition to COO and perception level of the quality of a specific service. They developed a country image measurement using the seven-point Likert scale that they applied to the set of the following eight dimensions:

(1) economic development level;
(2) political and democratic level;
(3) industrialization level;
(4) living standard;

(5) technology development level;
(6) product quality;
(7) self-confidence level for owning this product;
(8) product reliability.

Martin and Eroglu (1993) suggest that country image or product characteristic should be measured in such a way as to ensure that the researcher is able to provide every questionnaire item with a clear definition, in order to ensure that the measurement tool for COO effects has an effectiveness and reliability for appropriate implementation.

It is, therefore, imperative that researchers assign a set of items which is associated with the product and is appropriate for the product type that is chosen for examination in that study. In addition, the reliability test for that set of criteria items needs to be employed, in order to ensure that those dimensions are appropriate and reliable before implementation, as suggested by Malhotra et al. (2002). The reliability test should be employed in order to ensure that each criterion would consistently capture a specific construct (Wong, Polonsky & Garma 2008).

The next section will review empirical studies that are concerned with the level of country's development and its potential role in COO being employed as a product evaluation cue.

2.2 COO Perceptions in Relation to the Country's Development

There has been some research into consumers' perceptions related to products from developed and less developed countries. Consumers perceive products made in developed countries as superior to products made in undeveloped and developing countries (Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000; O'Cass & Lim 2002; Ahmed & d'Astous 2007). Furthermore, Wong, Polonsky and Garma (2008) suggest that consumers perceive developed countries as superior based on their belief that they have reached a high stage of economic development and technological progress. Based on this generalization, they will infer a particular product from highly industrialized countries will offer a better quality and performance. These perceptions of consumers have led to the inference that consumers perceive differently a particular

product depending on its source. Nebenzahl and Jaffe (1996) also support the view that a country's stage of development affects consumers' evaluation of products. The importance of taking into account aspect of COO has been also empirical by the number of other researchers, including Pisharodi and Parameswaran (1992), Parameswaran and Pisharodi (1994), and Pereira, Hsu and Kundu (2005). Considering these views, the study of the measurement of COO effects would need to examine the characteristics of a country, such as the level of a country's development.

Another important factor that needs to be considered is *"Purchase involvement"* and its potential role as a product evaluation cue. In order to better understand this role, the following section is concerned with the concept and various aspects of purchase involvement.

2.3 Involvement

2.3.1 *Concept of Involvement*

The concept of *involvement* was derived originally from the discipline of social psychology. The concept was first applied to the marketing area in 1965 by Krugman (O'Cass 2000) and then gradually became a component of the potential stream in the research on consumer behavior (Lin & Chen 2006). Research studies indicate that *involvement* can refer to either the understanding or recognition of a particular product by consumers (Lin & Chen 2006). Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1995) suggest that consumer is motivated by individual recognition and product interest. Thus, high involvement towards a particular product would mean that the consumer demonstrates a high *concern* for understanding or recognizing the product. On the other hand, if consumers' consideration is at a significantly lower level, this could be called a low involvement trait. Involvement can be perceived from various aspects.

2.3.2 *Involvement Classification*

According to literature, involvement can be classified according to the different involvement objects. It can be arranged into three categories, namely, ***advertising involvement*** (the response after perceiving advertising information, based on the level of concern for advertising detail by consumer), ***product involvement*** (the consumer's concern with a particular product and its performance), and ***purchase involvement***

(indicated by consumer's activity of buying and purchase-decision making) (Lin & Chen 2006).

2.3.3 *Role of Involvement in Buying Behavior*

Previous research has revealed that consumers will extend their search for further information, when the level of involvement with a product is high (Friedman & Smith 1993). The study of Goldsmith and Emmert (1991) support the view that the product purchase involvement plays a potential role in influencing consumer purchasing behavior. Taking into account that the subject of research in this current study is clothing, it appears important to consider the fashion aspect in purchase involvement.

Characteristic of Fashion Clothing Buying Behavior

Materialism can be viewed as consumers' attachment to owning worldly possessions (Solomon 1996). O'Cass (2004) suggests that utility, appearance, financial worth and ability to convey status, success and prestige are perceived as the potential aspects of possessions for materialists. He also asserts that materialism represents a key variable that contributes to a consumer's purchase involvement with particular products such fashion clothing. It seems that fashion clothing infer different things for different people. O'Cass (2004) stated that people form differing attachments to apparel, and that personal attachment could vary from that of their family or friends in terms of intensity and nature. Fashion clothing sometimes appears to express people's characteristics in society and reflects on how much those people are trendy.

This study intends to examine whether involvement affects consumers' evaluation of products. It would be useful to review empirical COO studies that are associated with the measurement of purchase involvement. This is done in the following section.

2.3.4 *Measurement of Purchase Involvement*

Lin and Chen (2006) suggest that *"involvement"* is best thought of as an abstract moderating factor. For this reason, it is difficult to directly measure involvement. Nonetheless, several measures of involvement have emerged since the concept's introduction to marketing by Krugman and McLuhan (O'Cass 2000). Some studies advise that the indirect measurement of the involvement can be achieved by using

involvement determinant research and post-purchase conclusions. O'Cass (2000) reports that consumer behavior literature has developed the item criteria for measuring involvement. These involvement measures include scales to evaluate involvement with a product class, involvement in general for many types of goods, buying involvement, purchase decision involvement and advertising involvement. Zaichkowsky (1985) made an attempt to broaden the measures by adopting a semantic differential scale and developed a set of scales, namely, personal involvement inventory for measuring the involvement. The study of Chin (2002) inspired by the measurements developed by Zaichkowsky (1985), used ten criteria items through Likert's seven-point scale method for measuring involvement. Lin and Chen(2006) further developed six criteria items for measuring a consumer purchase involvement level from the work of Zaichkowsky (1985) and Chin (2002), employing Likert's seven-point scale method to measure a participant's opinion. The study by Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell (2008) developed three criteria items to measure whether a particular product type was exciting or unexciting, of meaning to the respondent or of no meaning to the respondent, and appealing or unappealing. The three latter criteria have been employed in previous research by Baker, Hunt and Scribner (2002); Berens, Riel and Bruggen (2005) and Tung, Moore and Engelland (2006). The scales that are usually employed in measures are generally based on the pattern of a semantic differential scale or the pattern of Likert scale. The number of items in instruments range from three to thirty three and the points of scale ranged from five to seven (O'Cass 2000).

There seems, however, to be no consensus as to exactly which measurement items should be employed as a standard of measurement with respect to involvement. There still appears to be a vast difference in terms of developing the item criteria for measuring the involvement. A possible explanation for the divergence in the measurement of involvement is that the researchers seek to adapt the measurement methodology to match their study's objective. In effect, research demonstrates that measurement ought to relate to the appropriate variables that define the study.

2.4 COO in Relation to Purchase Involvement

Previous studies associated with the effects of COO on product evaluation have revealed contradictory results and varied outcomes. Past studies suggest that the outcomes differ depending on product categories (Liefeld 1993; Ahmed & d'Astous 2001; Ahmed et al. 2004). The above suggestion refers specifically to the level of purchase involvement, which is evoked by the product type. It is also claimed that purchase decisions are commonly influenced by consumers' perceptions of COO (Ahmed & d'Astous 2004). In addition, there has been a debate in COO research that when the study includes other cues such as brand and price for investigation, COO cue might play only a limited role to influence consumers' perceptions of quality of the particular product (Thakor & Katsanis 1997; Al-Sulaiti & Baker 1998). Therefore, on the basis of the evidence provided from past studies, it is fair to say that those consumers have several cues to be concerned with, and the COO cue might play a varying role. Its influence on consumers' evaluation of the particular product and the effects of COO would vary depending on the category of the product.

The moderating effect of product categories can be discussed in terms of their level of involvement with respect to high involvement product and low involvement product.

2.4.1 *COO in Relation to High Involvement Products*

The use of COO information for product evaluation has traditionally concentrated on high involvement products such as automobiles (Li & Wyer 1994; Al-Sulaiti & Baker 1998; Ahmed et al. 2004) and electronics (Li & Wyer1994; Ahmed et al. 2004). High involvement purchase behavior refers to "a situation where consumers judge a purchase decision to be important enough to engage in extensive information search prior to making a decision" (Schiffman et al. 2005). Hence, high involvement products are regarded as those products that normally entail extended search activity, carry high risk of performance (monetary risk including psychological and social acceptance) and have high unit outlays. Past studies also indicate that consumers appear to have a higher level of the product information search intention in a situation where they consider there to be a high product purchase involvement (Lin & Chen 2006). The results from past studies also support the contention that consumers will aggressively search for related details of the product before assessing that product in

situations where there is a higher product purchase involvement level (Swinyard 1993).

Various studies explore the effects of COO on product evaluation for complex products like automobiles and household electronic products. Findings indicate that for these products, COO is more likely to be important and have a greater influence on consumers' perceptions of the perceived quality of product (Ahmed & d'Astous 1993; Liefeld 1993; Nebenzahl & Jaffe 1996; Piron 2000).

On the other hand, the study of Lim, Darley and Summers (1994) concerning color television products revealed contradictory conclusions. Their study of highly complex products reported that the effects of COO have less strength on actual consumers' choice decisions. Another point of view comes from the study of Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell (2008) which examined highly complex products like cars, electronics, watches, and electrical household appliances. Their study appears to be compatible with the outcome derived from the study of Lim, Darley and Summers (1994). Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell (2008) point out that respondents considered COO cue to be of less importance for their evaluation of the product when involvement was high.

We can, therefore, infer from the results derived from the study of Lim, Darley and Summers (1994) and Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell (2008) that COO plays a less important role when the level of involvement appears to be high.

In conclusion, these studies of COO effects in high involvement products produce contradictory conclusions with regard to the effect of COO on product evaluation of different product categories (Liefeld 1993; Ahmed & d'Astous 2001; Ahmed et al. 2004). This incongruent outcome with respect to the impact of COO on high involvement products may have occurred because the effect of the different level of purchase involvement that was evoked by product categories might also play an important role in affecting consumers' product evaluation.

2.4.2 *COO in Relation to Low Involvement Products*

So far, there has been a paucity of research on the impact of consumers' COO perceptions on low involvement products. Low involvement purchase behavior refers to "a situation where consumers judge a purchase decision to be so unimportant or routine that they engage in little information search prior to making a decision" (Schiffman et al. 2005). Therefore, low involvement products normally are considered as those products that carry lesser search, risk and outlay. The results from past studies also reveal that at a lower purchase involvement level, consumers seem to be reluctant to put more effort into choosing and assessing the product (Swinyard 1993).

The instances of previous studies that are associated with low involvement products include Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) such as alcoholic beverages (Schaefer 1997; Phau & Suntornnond 2006) and food products such as coffee and bread (Ahmed et al. 2004).

A study by Ahmed et al. (2004), based on bread and coffee, reported that COO does play a role when respondents assess low involvement products but its effect is weak. Thakor and Katsanis (1997) and Al-Sulaiti and Baker (1998) suggest that if the COO study includes other extrinsic cues such as price and brand, the COO cue might play only a limited role in terms of its impact on consumers' perceptions of quality of the particular product. Thus, the effects of COO are deemed to be weak for the low involvement product.

In addition, the study by Ahmed et al. (2004) also indicates that brand plays a major role to influence consumers' evaluation of the products. The study of Phau and Suntornnond (2006) add support for study of Ahmed et al. (2004). The results obtained from the study by Phau and Suntornnond (2006) indicate that the COO impact on Australian consumers in beer evaluations was discernable, although its effects appeared to be weak in comparison with other factors. In conclusion, this can imply that COO effects are expected to be weak when the level of involvement appears to be low. However, past studies suggest that the effect of COO on product evaluation does vary depending on product categories (Liefeld 1993; Ahmed & d'Astous 2001; Ahmed et al. 2004). In addition, Ahmed et al. (2004) point out that to

date, there has been a paucity of COO studies on the influence of consumers' perceptions of COO for low involvement products. As a consequence, the role that COO plays in shaping consumers' preferences and intentions to purchase are relatively obscure. Thus, whether a COO effect would occur for low involvement products in the same way and to the same extent that it does for the high involvement products is unknown. The scarcity of findings in this area indicates that further studies with respect to COO effects should be conducted. Through the implementation of more extended studies in low involvement product, specifically less complex or non-durable products, it should become possible to have a more generalizability of findings that yield valid inferences.

Since *"purchase involvement"* as a product evaluation cue influences consumers' purchase-decision making, the direct effects of purchase involvement on product evaluation bring into the possible impacts of COO upon consumers' evaluation of products. With multiple product cues, *"brand"* becomes a potential factor. Therefore, it is useful to review the issues in relation to *"brand"* and consider how *"brand"* is used as a product evaluation cue. Thus, it is of vital importance to include this product evaluation cue in the present study.

2.5 Significance of Brand and Branding

The words "brand" and "branding, which have become pervasive in today's business world, particularly over the past few decades, need to be identified clearly in order to be meaningful.

Brand

A concept of ***Brand*** must be clarified. A brand is the name, logo, trademark, style or symbol that indicates the product and firm. O'Malley (1991) suggests that indeed, the brand is a combination of tangible attributes (logo, visual elements) and intangible attributes (quality, value, consumer benefit, service, delivery, guarantee, promise, belief, etc.), which are quite difficult to grasp and precisely explain. A brand, therefore, includes culture, people and programs in a place that represent products or services and differentiates them from their competitors. A brand is to some extent responsible for creating consumer perceptions and it embeds itself in the consumer's

mind (Simoes & Dibb 2001). Ideally, the brand creates a perception that the product or service is unique and that no other products or services in the market are quite like it. Furthermore, a brand promises to deliver value upon which customers can count in terms of consistency over long periods of time.

Branding

The concept of ***Branding*** is associated with marketing communication such as brand naming, packaging, promotion activities and so on. There are also other writers who call for the adoption of a new term called ***"brand equity"***, which will be discussed in the next section. The purpose of branding is to create a brand in marketing communication. In today's business environment, marketers use branding as a strategic tool to create trust, image, unique understanding of their products or services, strategic awareness and communication for managing consumer perception. Market analysts ordinarily approve of the role of branding becoming a potential trend and being used as a tool for successful companies in the future (Norris 1992).

Nevertheless, branding is not a solution to all marketing problems affecting business. Marketers ought also to be concerned about the possibility of substantial negative impacts of branding like when a particular brand is compelled to be recalled because of toxicity. Nonetheless, it is commonly conceded that the benefits that are generated through branding are likely to outweigh the problems, if the marketers implement the branding in appropriate ways (Rooney 1995). Carlino (1991) suggests that firms should be concerned with the issue of how branding suits the company's strategies. This is a tacit acknowledgement of the fact that there is no one form of branding that would ever suit all companies and products. Individualized decisions will always be required. Finally, Rooney (1995) points out that brand managers are unanimous in stating that it is appropriate to use branding in a way that matches specific products with specific markets. Thus, it is also important for brand manager to communicate effectively the brand information to consumers, so that they would be able to recognize the characteristics of different brands of a product and make their purchase decision more effectively.

Brand and Product Familiarity

Brand familiarity or product familiarity generally refers to the familiarity of consumers with a brand or product type (Josiassen, Lukas & Whitwell 2008). A study by Schaefer (1997) suggests that consumers tend to evaluate the particular product quickly and directly when they are familiar with the brand name or product. As a consequence of their familiarity with the brand's attributes or the product's attributes, consumers will ignore extended information searches. In addition, Cordell (1992) suggests that consumers are less reliant on COO cue for evaluating the particular product when they are familiar with a brand. It is not only the familiarity with brand information but perhaps even more important is the actual experience with a product brand: Studies dealing with those issues are reviewed below.

Brand and Product Experience

Brand or product experiences refer to the experience or expertise that consumer have with a given brand or product type. Tse and Gorn (1993) suggest that direct product experiences could have the impact of encouraging product ratings to improve. The study of Eroglu and Machleit (1989) reports that consumers are more likely to rely on COO to infer product quality if they knew little else regarding the particular product. Maheswaran (1994) also supported the contention of Eroglu's study that expert consumers rely on attribute information when evaluating the particular product like motor cars, whereas novices, or people with little other knowledge about the particular product, are likely to be more reliant on COO cue. However, the study of Schaefer (1997) regarding the personal brand experience and COO effects did not produce the results in the same way as the study of Eroglu (1989) and Maheswaran (1994) suggested.

Brand equity is one of the determinants that may moderate the effects of COO upon product evaluation. It is, therefore, important to review studies concerned with *"brand equity"* and understand how brand equity plays a role in consumers' perceptions of a particular product.

2.6 Brand Equity

Bello and Holbrook (1995) identify brand equity in terms of its appearance where consumers are willing to pay more for the same level of product quality due to the image reputation of the product. That is, the brand equity which is embedded in the product makes it more attractive. Recently, some researchers have refined the definition of brand equity by including a broad set of attributes that guide or control consumers' choices (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000). Yasin and Noor (2007) suggest that indeed, a positioning of the product, with well-established representation and meaningfulness with respect to the brand in consumers' mind, integrates consumers' perceptions regarding equity to the brand name. Thus, the things those consumers are likely to be concerned in relation to a particular brand, will set the value that brand has for its owner. In addition, the situation of customer-based brand equity will occur where the consumers associate themselves with the brand. This familiarity with the brand ensures that the customer carries some favorable strength of the brand, thereby creating unique brand associations in his or her memory (Keller 1993). Preference, intention to purchase and choice behavior of a brand are all indicative of the existence of brand equity (Yasin & Noor 2007).

When consumers make a decision on purchasing, consumers' perceptions of the quality of the brand would be expected to be involved. If the brand recognition in consumers' mind creates a brand differentiation and superiority of the brands, compared with other competitors' brands, a high level of quality perception occurs. The heightened quality perception results in a general increase in value and an increase in the level of brand equity for those brands. As a consequence, consumers' perceptions of the perceived high quality of those brands will impact their choice of product and would guide them to select those brands rather than the competitors' brands. In the market places, the perception of high quality of the brand in consumers' mind could benefit firms by encouraging them to further mark up the price of their branded products. These products that are priced at premium level generate additional revenue and gain greater profit margins for the firms. The addition profit lend themselves for reinvestment in brand equity (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000).

In regards to the measurement of brand equity, Aaker (1991), Kim and Chung (1997) and Hui and Zhou (2003) indicate that the terms of reputation, popularity, and quality could be considered to be primary determinants of brand equity.

Since brand equity is a determinant that affects consumers' perceptions of a particular product, it is of relevance to review how the level of brand equity plays an influencing role in the study of COO. At this juncture, an understanding of the *halo* and *attribution* effects on consumers approach toward product assessment may be instructive.

2.7 Role of Halo Model and Attribute Model on COO Studies

Two different cognitive processes from past studies, ***"halo effect"*** and ***"attribution theory"***, were identified through which COO information that might influence product evaluations (Schaefer 1997; Hui & Zhou 2003; Ahmed et al. 2004). The *halo effect* is a situation in which the perception of a person on a multitude of dimensions is based on the evaluation of just one (or a few) dimensions. The halo effect acts as a magnifier of a belief of people on something or someone that can drive or influence them to easily do something or believe in something. For example, a consumer buys the product because a famous actor or actress uses it. *Attribution theory* is the theory concerned with how people assign causality to situations and form or change their attitudes as a consequence of evaluating their own or other people's behavior (Schiffman et al. 2001). Attribution theory can easily be inferred as self-perception or experiences. For example, a consumer buys the shirt because of its attributes such as its color, the style, or the quality of material (e.g. durable, comfortable).

Past studies suggest that COO information influences consumers' product evaluation in two feasible directions by first, serving as a halo when consumers have little information regarding the particular product or when it is difficult to evaluate a particular product (Han 1989; Nebenzahl, Jaffe & Lampert 1997; Lampert & Jaffe 1998). In this situation, COO information often acts as a halo which will produce widespread effects on all salient product beliefs. Consequently, this is likely to affect the overall perceived quality of a product yielding to product judgment (the halo model) (Hui & Zhou 2003). Alternatively, COO might be just one of the many

attributes considered by consumers in the consumers' product evaluation (the attribute model) (Han 1989; Nebenzahl, Jaffe & Lampert 1997; Lampert & Jaffe 1998). In this situation, the impact on the overall perceived quality of a product ultimately yields to product judgment directly, without any significant changes in salient product beliefs (Hui & Zhou 2003). Undoubtedly, both the halo effect and attribution effect would play significant though varying roles in the way consumers value different brands. It is reasonable to consider that levels of brand equity also moderate perceptions of COO.

2.8 COO in Relation to Brand Equity

An extrinsic cue such as a brand name has become of increasing interest in empirical COO studies. Some past studies reveal that the effects of COO would vary especially when the research included brand name as one of the multiple cues for the empirical COO studies. For example, the study of Ahmed et al. (2004) reports that the effects of COO was weak and brand cue became more important than COO cue. Previous research also discusses the level of brand equity and the influence it has on the process of consumers' perceptions of COO. This in turn has an effect on consumers' evaluation of the particular product. This consideration was also found in the study by Hui and Zhou (2003), which identified that the effects of COO on product evaluation would depend on the level of brand equity. It is a moot point, however, whether COO effect itself could be considered as being an integral component of brand equity.

An explanation of how different consumers could use the COO cue on their evaluation of products of high equity brand and low equity brand is discussed in the next section.

2.8.1 *The Effect of COO on Product Evaluation for High Equity Brands*

High equity brands can be referred to as those that have a high level of brand recognition and recall, while representing strong associations with a set of favorable beliefs in consumers' memories (Keller 1993). Hui and Zhou (2003) suggest that, accordingly, for high equity brands, COO should be just one of the product attributes that consumers would be concerned with. Existing evidence also indicates that

consumers will be inclined to employ COO information in the attributes that they consider (attribution model). This includes the sum of their product attribute knowledge if a country's products are familiar (Han 1989, 1990; Lee, Yun & Lee 2005) or consumers gain experience with a particular product (Nebenzahl, Jaffe & Lampert 1997; Lampert & Jaffe 1998).

2.8.2 *The Effect of COO on Product Evaluation for Low Equity Brands*

Since low equity brands convey little product information, past studies suggest that the halo model should better describe the effects of COO information on product evaluations (Hui & Zhou 2003). Existing evidence indicates that consumers are inclined to employ COO information as a halo rather than as one of the salient attributes when there is little or no product information provided (Han 1989; Nebenzahl, Jaffe & Lampert 1997; Lampert & Jaffe 1998; Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000; Lee, Yun & Lee 2005). Consumers seem to be likely to evaluate the product based on the country's image in areas such as politics, technology and economic development (Lee, Yun & Lee 2005). Han (1990) suggests that consumers employ COO as a "halo" from which to estimate / predict the product' s performance in cases when a country's products not being familiar.

As it is evident from the above review, past studies of COO effects have yielded varied outcomes and inferences. In order to acquire a better insight it is considered useful to review the empirical studies in relation to the determinants such as sample, sample size and methodology that underpinned those studies. This will assist us to analyze and discover where the variations occurred, so we can narrow down the best choices for this study's specific research methodology.

2.9 Sample, Sample Size, and Data Collection in COO Studies

Since the mid 1960s, past studies in COO research employed both student and non-student based samples within a variety of sampling frames. Bhaskaran and Sukumaran (2007) summarized the various sampling frames employed in previous studies and found that the subjects used in COO studies invariably included general consumers

(Hooley, Shipley & Krieger 1988; Lawrence, Marr & Prendergast 1992), various segment of consumers (Wall, Liefeld & Heslop 1991; Usunier 1994), purchasing managers or buyers in industrial markets (Ahmed & d'Astous 1995; Quester, Dzever & Chetty 2000), retail store staff (Thorelli, Lim & Ye 1989; d'Astous & Ahmed 1999), executives of industry and producer organizations (Beverland & Lindgreen 2002), and students (Amine & Shin 2002). There appears to be some concern whether student samples are appropriate to use in the COO studies and whether the research results can be generalized to the general population. Bhaskaran and Sukumaran (2007) argue that using students in samples is inappropriate as the fundamental basis for generalizing findings or making strategic prescriptions. Peterson (2001) was also concerned that the results based on student samples may not be generalized to the wider population. However, some researchers assert that much COO research using meta-analysis points out that there were no different effects in using students as samples to be generalized to consumer samples (Verlegh & Steenkamp 1999). Research evidence, therefore, appears to lean towards the credibility of using students as samples in the studying of COO effects.

With regards to sample size in COO studies, past studies reveal considerable variety in the size of the samples. There have also been a number of differing proposals outlining the rationales behind the determination of the sample size. Lin and Chen (2006) state that the appropriate sample size suggested by Roscoe in 1975 is 30 to 500, which could be employed for a variety of surveys. In addition, evidence from previous studies indicate that the sample size of the COO studies is regarded as being meaningfully measured only once the size of sampling is greater than 260 (Peterson & Jolibert 1995). Notwithstanding, the diverse views on sample sizes to study COO effects, there are a number of existing easy-to-use tables, that have been compiled to enable researchers to effectively calculate the size of sampling (Zikmund 2003). In addition, Zikmund (2003) asserts that most researchers employ existing tables which demonstrate predetermined sample sizes. An example of one of the existing tables for determining sample size is the easy-to-use table of Taro Yamane (Lyman 1993).

In regards to the data collection in COO research, the evidence from past research reveals that most of these studies employed *survey* methods in COO research, whereas

a smaller number of studies applied an experimental design. Table 2.3 presents some of past studies employing these methodologies for collecting the data.

In conclusion, it appears that there is no considerable difference between employing students or non-students for the sample of COO research. In addition, the determination of sample size could be instructed from the suggestions of the previous

Table 2.3 Summary of Data Collection in COO Studies

Year	Author	Data Collection
1993	Tse and Gorn	Survey
1994	Johansson et al.	Survey
1994	Okechuku	Survey
1994	Lin and Sternquist	Experimental Design
1995	Ahmed and d'Astous	Survey
1995	Keown and Casey	Survey
1996	Haubl	Survey
1996	Zhang	Survey
1996	Nebenzahl and Jaffe	Experimental Design
1996	Tse et al.	Survey
1997	Schaefer	Survey
2001	Yagei	Survey
2003	Hui and Zhou	Experimental Design
2004	Ahmed et al.	Survey
2004	Ahmed and d'Astous	Survey
2006	Phau and Suntornnond	Survey
2006	Lin and Chen	Survey
2008	Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell	Survey
2008	Wong, Polonsky and Garma	Survey

studies or could meaningfully employ the "existing easy-to-use tables" as a basis for assigning sample size for the study. If the suggestions from past studies are used as the guidance to develop the particular sample size for a research study, one has to apply caution as prescribed by Bhaskaran and Sukumaran (2007) that the determinants such sample frame, sample size, sample selection, and the methodology of the study could bias the study findings.

It is, therefore, reasonable to believe that regardless of sample size, it is important that researchers are concerned with how to define sample and sample size appropriately. Both the sample and sample size need to be suitable for the research design and methodology of the study. Further, the sample should be representative of the population in order to enable generalized findings and reduce any biased findings or invalid inferences.

Following the review of how the research determinants such as sample, sample size and data collection might affect the COO studies and have potentially led to invalid inferences, the next section discusses the role of demographic determinants. The study looks at the role they play in influencing consumers' perceptions of COO image and consumers' purchase behavior.

2.10 Demographic Effects

Literature suggests that demographics can play a potential role in explaining the impact of COO on consumers' evaluation of particular products. At least three demographic variables have been identified in the literature, namely, *gender*, *education* and *income* (Lawrence, Marr & Prendergast 1992; Good & Huddleston 1995). Other studies also include additional demographics, such as *age* (Smith 1993; Bailey & Pineres 1997; O'Cass 2004).

With regards to *gender*, Hung (1989) indicates that in Western societies, there is no evidence to suggest that gender results in systematic differences when considering COO to evaluate a particular product. However, there are other studies that have reported findings that contradict this. These studies indicate that males and females

have differing attitudes towards foreign goods (Lawrence, Marr & Prendergast 1992; Good & Huddleston 1995; Mittal & Tsiros 1995; Sharma, Shimp & Shin 1995).

In terms of *age*, Bailey and Pineres (1997) and Smith (1993) point out that foreign products are perceived more favorably by older people than by young people. In another study O'Cass (2004) suggests that in fashion clothing, younger people appear to be more involved than older people.

Another influential demographic variable appears to be *education*. Most studies report that respondents with a higher level of education have learned to assess foreign goods more favorably than respondents with lower level of education (Wall, Liefeld & Heslop 1991; Good & Huddleston 1995; Mittal & Tsiros 1995; Sharma, Shimp & Shin 1995).

Finally, the terms of *income*, participants with a higher level of income appear to be more likely to buy foreign products or to evaluate them more favorably in comparison with participants with lower level of income (Han & Terpstra 1988; Good & Huddleston 1995; Sharma, Shimp & Shin 1995; Bailey & Pineres 1997).

2.11 Summary

COO effects have been thoroughly investigated through a number of studies since the mid 1960s. During the initial period of investigation, past studies focused on COO as the only single product cue to influence consumers' product evaluation (e.g. the study of Papadopoulos, Heslop and Beracs, 1989; Han, 1990; Khachaturian and Morganosky, 1990; Zhang, 1996). More recently some studies have included other extrinsic and intrinsic product cues such as brand, product type, price and taste as multiple product cues for investigation. The results of these later studies appear to show that COO effects play a lesser role in influencing consumers' evaluation of products (e.g. the study of Leclerc, Schmitt and Dube, 1994; Nebenzahl and Jaffe, 1996; Hui and Zhou, 2003; Ahmed et al., 2004). However there appears evidence of some contradictions in the conclusions and inferences of these studies depending upon product category and where the research has been conducted. In addition, previous studies to date appear to be relatively scarce in terms of examining the *collective*

effects of the different levels of three product cues (COO, brand and product type) on consumers' product evaluation.

Thus, this research aims to identify how COO, brand and product type influence Thai consumers' product evaluation. The study looks at these three variables both individually and in conjunction with each other. This study also identifies the potential role of the ***Halo Model*** and the ***Attribute Model*** with respect to their influence on Thai consumers in their purchase behavior.

The next chapter will present a conceptual framework of the study as well as the propositions which have been formulated from the review of literature in this chapter.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework and Research Hypotheses

3.0 Introduction

The theoretical framework being proposed for this study will be developed from past research. In particular, the framework will be derived from working on secondary data. The literature review in the previous chapter (chapter 2) is intended to configure this study within the broader context of international production and marketing, integrating the salient extrinsic product cues and specification of potential variables that are necessarily involved in the study. It is also hoped that the literature review has served to indicate and highlight the critical concepts for the current research.

This chapter will start by describing the conceptual model of the study in section 3.1. An explanation of the concept and the relevant variables of the study as well as their relationship will be addressed in this section. Following on from this section, section 3.2 will be dedicated to the formulation of hypotheses for the study that will be presented for testing. The final section of the chapter, section 3.3, will conclude with the theoretical principles that will underpin this study.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

In previous studies, doubts have been raised that for some product categories, strong brands can outweigh or overcome the effect of COO (Nebenzahl & Jaffe 1996). This presents an opportunity to examine whether, with particular regard to less complex products like apparel, brand names have the potential to eclipse the effect of COO.

Two sub-product categories of apparels, ***Suits and T-shirts***, will be examined in this study. The extrinsic cues, which comprise of COO and brand, will be investigated as to how they might impact consumers' perceptions of product quality and ultimately, intention to purchase. A conceptual framework for this study that will be examined is illustrated by Figure 3.1.

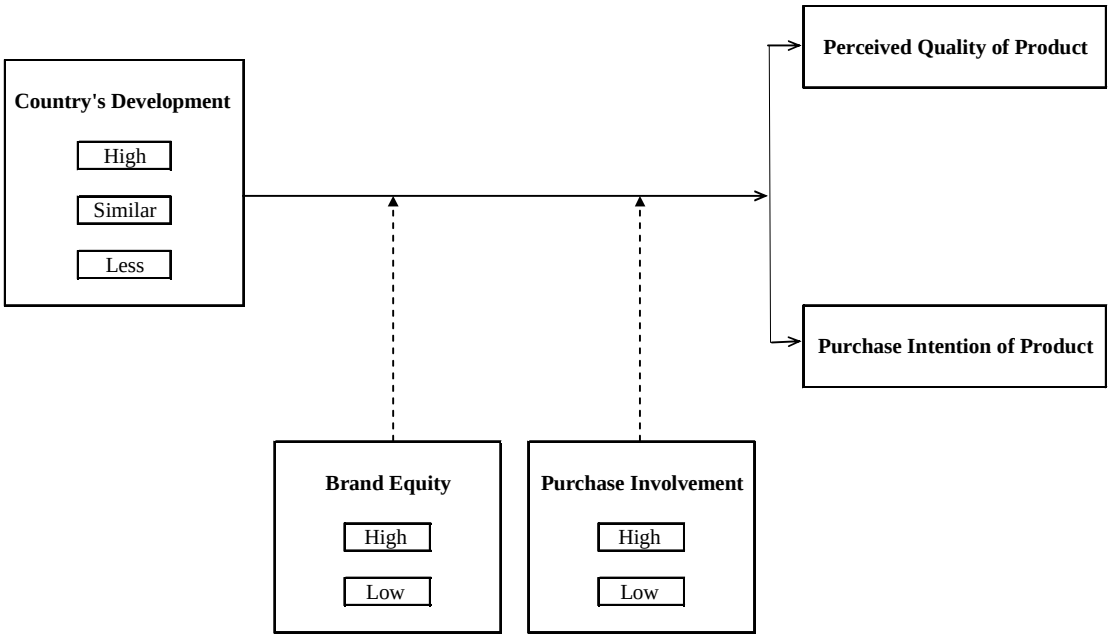

Figure 3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study involves the specification of perceived *quality of product* and *purchase intentions* as dependent variables. It is assumed that these two dependent variables are influenced by the following independent variables:

(1) The source of *"origin"* of each of the products, namely their COO. In this study the *"development"* of the countries is used as a surrogate for COO's credibility
(2) The level of *brand equity* of individual products
(3) The level of *purchase involvement* of consumers in making purchase decisions

The model incorporates two brands, both brands originating from Thailand, each representing ***High equity brand*** and ***Low equity brand*** respectively for ***Suits*** (high purchase involvement) and ***T-shirts*** (low purchase involvement). It is logical to assume that consumers will perceive each of the selected three Asian countries as having different credibility (for being the source of manufactured products) because of their different level of gross domestic product or *"GDP"* (see Table 3.1). The perception of the credibility of each of these countries will be measured relative to

consumers' perceptions of Thailand being the source of COO. The three Asian countries selected are as follows:

(1) Japan (a highly industrialized country with GDP higher than Thailand)
(2) Malaysia (a newly industrialized country with GDP similar to Thailand)
(3) Vietnam (a developing country with GDP lower than Thailand)

Table 3.1 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Asian Countries	**GDP - Per Capita (PPP)** *(Year 2008 est.)*
Japan	$34,200
Malaysia	$15,300
Thailand	$8,500
Vietnam	$2,800

N.B. Source: World Fact Book 2008 (CIA Homepage)

The research will examine how a country's development (using COO as a proxy) might impact on product evaluation in terms of perceived product quality, in regard to country capability perception (Ahmed & d'Astous 2004; Insch & McBride 2004), and purchase intentions. In addition, the study will attempt to find out whether the effect of COO on product evaluation might be moderated by the level of brand equity and product purchase involvement.

The study will also investigate the influence of quality perceptions (Chao 1998; Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000) associated with COO issues on consumer behavior. Two different cognitive processes which consist of the "***halo model***" and the "***attribute model***" were identified by past studies as means through which COO information might impact product evaluation (Jaffe & Nebenzahl 2001; Ahmed & d'Astous 2007).

Literature suggests that the ***halo effect*** (which can be represented as an *iconic* belief of people on something or someone) and the ***attribute effect*** (which can be represented as self-perception) impact country perceptions differently, and across the equity level of the brand (High / Low), to create consumers' perceptions of a country. A consumer's perception of a country may, in turn, ultimately influence the overall perceived product quality evaluation and purchase intention.

For High equity brands, existing evidence indicates that COO would be one of the product attributes considered by consumers when making their product choices. Consumers will be inclined to employ COO information as an "attribute" while selecting a particular product when they are familiar with the country from where the product originated (Han 1989, 1990; Nebenzahl, Jaffe & Lampert 1997; Lampert & Jaffe 1998; Hui & Zhou 2003; Lee, Yun & Lee 2005).

For Low equity brands, past studies suggest that the halo model would better describe the effects of COO information on product evaluations. Consumers are inclined to consider COO information as a "halo" when there is little or no product information provided or are not familiar with a country's products (Han 1989, 1990; Leclerc, Schmitt & Dube 1994; Nebenzahl, Jaffe & Lampert 1997; Lampert & Jaffe 1998; Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000; Hui & Zhou 2003; Lee, Yun & Lee 2005).

The theoretical framework will be tested across different level of brand equity and purchase involvement since the role of the COO cue as a halo or attribution is anticipated to vary depending upon the level of purchase involvement as well. As a consequence, the study will attempt to find out how COO might impact on product evaluation (perceived quality and purchase intention of product) for apparel. This protocol could also be moderated by the level of brand equity and purchase involvement. The expected relationships among the variables of interest are discussed in the next section.

3.2 Hypotheses Formulation

3.2.1 *Research Problem*

The study aims to examine potentially high involvement and low involvement apparel products to find out whether COO and brand will impact on consumers' apparel choice. It was anticipated that the effects for apparel products would occur in the same way and to the same extent that they do for other product categories, as indicated by past studies. This raises the issue of whether the outcome of high and/or low consumer involvement in their buying protocol is moderated by the interaction of unfavorable COO with a strong brand might dilute or overcome the effect of COO on apparel product evaluation. The following hypotheses are formulated for testing the above issues.

3.2.2 *Hypotheses*

3.2.2.1 *The Role of the Three Product Cues as the Main Effect*

As discussed earlier, there has been some research studies of consumers' perceptions related to products from developed and less developed countries. These studies suggest that the stage of country's development affect consumers' attitudes towards product evaluation (Pisharodi & Parameswaran 1992; Parameswaran & Pisharodi 1994; Nebenzahl & Jaffe 1996; Pereira, Hsu & Kundu 2005; Wong, Polonsky & Garma 2008). Past studies also indicate that Western consumers perceive products made in developed countries as superior to products made in undeveloped and developing countries (Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000; O'Cass & Lim 2002). Based on the evidence of previous studies, it appears reasonable to examine whether Asian consumers share the same views as those held by Western consumers. In addition, consumers' perceptions of brand name are also anticipated to influence purchase decisions. Schaefer (1997) argues that consumers tend to evaluate the particular product quickly and directly when their purchasing involvement is associated with a brand familiarity. Furthermore, the study of Goldsmith and Emmert (1991) suggest that the purchase involvement play an important role in influencing consumer buying behavior. Hence, the hypotheses regarding the main effects of the three product cues with respect to the effects of country's development, the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement on product evaluation are formulated as follows:

H1: Thai consumers prefer a clothing product made in a more developed country than one made in a less developed country.

H2: The main effect of the level of brand equity affects Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

H3: The direct effect of the level of purchase involvement of Thai consumers influences their evaluation of clothing products.

3.2.2.2 *The Interaction Effects*

The Interaction Effects between COO and Brand

Past studies reveal strong evidence of the effect of COO when it is the only available product cue. Alternatively, there are a number of recent research studies that have attempted to consider the relative effect of COO and brand effects on product evaluation. For instance, these studies include those of Tse and Gorn (1993) for stereo system products; Nebenzahl and Jaffe (1996) for automobile products; Thakor and Lavack (2003) for motorcycles and stereo system products.

However, previous studies also indicate some contradiction regarding the effects on product evaluation arising from the interaction between COO and brand. Past research evidence shows that a strong brand cannot compensate for the effect of unfavorable COO on product evaluation (e.g. the study of Tse and Gorn, 1993 in stereo system products). In contrast to these studies, there also exists research studies that suggests that a highly regarded brand name can dilute the negative effect of an unfavorable COO image in assessing the product (Eroglu & Machleit 1988; Cordell 1993). For instance, the study by Hui and Zhou (2003) in electronic products indicates that the impact of negative COO on product evaluation tends to be more destructive for low equity brands than high equity brands. Other studies also indicate that brand name exerts a greater influence on product evaluation than does COO (e.g. the study of Leclerc, Schmitt and Dube, 1994).

Based on previous findings, it is a moot point of how the level of brand equity might interact with the level of country's development to influence consumers' product evaluation. It also leads one to consider whether the interaction of an unfavorable

COO with a strong brand might dilute or overcome the effect of COO in evaluating less complex products like fashion clothing. It would also be useful to consider whether the effect could vary across the level of product purchase involvement, as suggested by some researchers (Liefeld 1993; Ahmed & d'Astous 2001, 2004). Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated for testing:

H4: High equity brand can overcome the effects of relatively low COO image on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation.

The Interaction Effects between COO and Purchase Involvement

Up to this point, it has been illustrated that there are potential contradictions between results of studying the effect of COO and Brand on product evaluation and purchase intention. Past studies identify that consumers' perceptions of COO are impacted by the level of involvement in making purchase decisions and the level of involvement evoked by the category of the product (Liefeld 1993; Ahmed & d'Astous 2001, 2004). Previous study regarding the effect of COO on product evaluation for low involvement products such as food indicates that the relationship is generally weak. The evidence derived from that past study in fact suggests that consumers display less concern for product cues such as COO when making purchase decisions for low involvement products like food. The crucial element here appears to be whether or not, when consumers are making a decision, they are dealing with high or low consumer involvement in purchasing of the products. The evidence from the study by Ahmed et al. (2004) shows that consumers consider food products as low involvement products. Based on consumers' unit outlay and extended search activity prior to buying, they are unlikely to pay great attention to the details of products of low involvement. Instead, consumers tend to purchase products which they are familiar with.

On the other hand, there is evidence in the literature indicating that COO has a strong influence on consumer evaluations of product quality for high involvement products such as automobiles and household electronic products (Ahmed & d'Astous 1993; Liefeld 1993; Li & Wyer 1994; Nebenzahl & Jaffe 1996; Piron 2000). Presumably because of this concern, there is some evidence in the automobile industry that COO is generally concealed so as to protect loss of sales (Nebenzahl & Jaffe 1996).

Nevertheless, these issues are far from being resolved definitively. There is still considerable discussion regarding the impact of the interaction effects of COO and product purchase involvement on product evaluation. This is likely to vary across the level of purchase involvement evoked by product categories. It seems to be that the level of purchase involvement moderates the effect of COO on consumers' product evaluation. Hence, this leads to the question of whether the outcome of high and/or low consumer involvement in their apparel buying protocols would occur in the same way and to the same extent as it does for other product categories, as revealed from past research. The following hypothesis is formulated for testing:

H5: The levels of purchase involvement moderate the main effects of COO on product evaluation of apparel products.

The Interaction Effects between Brand and Product Purchase Involvement

The study of Ahmed et al. (2004) in low involvement food products set out to test the hypothesis "H_0: A renowned brand name for a low involvement product will dilute the impact of a negative COO". Ahmed et al. (2004) suggest that this hypothesis can only be partially supported. The study indicated that the low involvement "status" of products in consumers' purchase decisions were of minor importance in decision-making. As a consequence, consumers did not pay high attention to the COO cue associated with the aspect of low involvement. Instead, consumers make their product choices by paying attention to particular brands that they are familiar with. In addition, the above hypothesis raises the question of whether the interaction effects between the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement influence consumers' product evaluation for fashion-clothing products. It also raises the question of how this interaction effect impacts on consumers' evaluation of apparel products that are made across countries that have differences in their level of economic development.

The current study postulates that there would be interaction effects between the level of brand equity and the level of product purchase involvement and that effects would in turn influence consumers' evaluation of apparel products. Thus, the hypothesis formulated to be tested is as follows:

H6: The level of brand equity interacts with the level of purchase involvement and in turn their effects influence Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

The Interaction Effects between COO, Brand and Product Purchase Involvement

As noted earlier, the effects of COO on product evaluation moderated by product category or brand name are varied. Consumers might assess the product in a positive way even though that product is made in a country that is perceived as having less credibility with regard to acceptable product attributes. This could be the case in two possible situations. Firstly, it could occur if consumers perceived that the product belongs to a strong brand (e.g. Eroglu and Machleit, 1988; Cordell, 1993; Leclerc, Schmitt and Dube, 1994). Secondly, it could occur where there is a low consumer involvement in purchasing that product (e.g. Ahmed et al., 2004). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect an interaction between a country's development, brand equity, and product purchase involvement on product evaluation of apparel products. The interaction effects between these three factors could conceivably suggest that the strength of one factor overcome the weakness of other factors. The following hypothesis is therefore being considered as *"Null Hypothesis"* for testing this surmise:

H7: There is no interaction effect between a country's development, brand equity, and consumer's product purchase involvement on consumer's evaluation of apparel products.

3.3 Summary

This chapter identifies the proposed theoretical background of the study and details the dependent and independent constructs involved in the conceptual framework of the study. The expected relationships among the variables of interest, which comprise of the three independent variables, namely, *country's development, brand equity and product purchase involvement* and the two dependent variables, namely, *perceived quality of product and product purchase intention* are described. The hypotheses have been formulated based on the three independent variables and their expected effects on the dependent variables. The findings that emerge from this study are expected to support the conceptual model and provide answers to the research questions. The next

chapter will outline the research methodology of the study and explain how the research will be conducted.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.0 Introduction

The proposed study will be conducted in the capital city of Thailand, Bangkok. The analysis is based on a consumer survey. Most past research associated with the impact of COO on consumers' evaluative reactions to goods and intention to purchase, have employed the survey method (e.g. Wall, Liefeld and Heslop, 1991; Tse and Gorn, 1993; Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu and Hyder, 2000; Pecotich and Rosenthal, 2001; Yagei, 2001; Hui and Zhou, 2003; Ahmed, et al., 2004; Ahmed and d'Astous, 2004; Lin and Chen, 2006; Pappu, Quester and Cooksey, 2006; Phau and Suntornnond, 2006; Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell, 2008). Due to the fact that most survey research is descriptive in nature, the survey method is most usually related with quantitative findings (Zikmund 2003). Zikmund (2003) suggests that an advantage of using the survey method is that it could help to provide a rapid and inexpensive data collection process, generally efficient procedures, and an accurate means of evaluating data about a population. This research study uses a survey method for collecting data encouraged by the fact that past studies in COO research that have also employed ***survey*** method as discussed above (summary of data collection methods is indicated in Table 2.3, p. 31). In addition, data analysis techniques used for the main study of this research employed ***Multivariate Analysis of Variance*** (MANOVA) and ***Analysis of Variance*** (ANOVA). These data analysis methods appear to be compatible with the conceptual framework for this study and are line with methods of analysis used in previous COO studies.

Table 4.1 presents a summary of the choice of research methodologies that were used in COO studies in the past. The evidence from the literature indicates that most COO studies that were associated with COO and brand cues, and therefore relevant to this study, employed ***MANOVA*** analysis. Further explanation with regard to subjects, data collection and data analysis methods are presented in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Table 4.1 Summary of the Choice of Research Methodologies in COO Studies

Year	Authors	Cues Examination	Subjects	Sample Size	Data Collection	Data Analysis
1993	Tse and Gorn	COO and Brand	Students	153	Survey	MANOVA
1996	Nebenzahl and Jaffe	COO and Brand	Students	305	Experiment	ANOVA
1996	Zhang	COO	Non-Students	300	Survey	MANOVA
1997	Schaefer	COO and Brand	Non-Students	320	Survey	Correlation Analysis
2001	Pecotich and Rosenthal	COO, Brand, Quality and Ethnocentrism	Students	87	Survey	MANOVA
2003	Hui and Zhou	COO and Brand	Students	192	Experiment	MANOVA and ANOVA
2004	Ahmed and d'Astous	COO and Other Informational Cues (COD, COA, Store type, Price and Product Satisfaction Assurance)	Non-Students	209	Survey	Conjoint Analysis
2004	Ahmed et al.	COO, Brand and Price	Students and Non-Students	236	Survey	ANOVA and Conjoint Analysis
2004	Wang, Siu and Hui	COO, Brand and Consumers' Decision-Making Styles	Non-Students	431	Survey	MANOVA and Canonical Discriminant Analysis
2006	Pappu, Quester and Cooksey	COO and Brand Equity	Non-Students	672	Survey	MANOVA
2008	Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell	COO, Product Familiarity and Product Involvement	Non-Students	388	Survey	Hierarchical Regression Analysis

This chapter will open by proposing the research design of the study in Section 4.1. A more detailed explanation of the relevant variables introduced in the theoretical framework as well as the measurement of those variables, will be addressed in Section 4.2. Sections 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 provide the justification for product category selection, brand selection, and country selection, respectively. In Section 4.6, the reliability and validity of the study will be addressed. In addition, this section includes an explanation of how the researcher attempts to increase the reliability and validity of the present study, in order to ensure that the research instruments are appropriately used for implementation in the research field. Section 4.7 introduces and outlines the subjects and data collection. This section will identify and describe the procedure of the two stages of the data collection, which consist of an exploratory / pilot survey and a field survey. The questionnaire design for both surveys is described in Section 4.8. Section 4.9 will serve to clarify the data processing and data analysis techniques as well as the risk concern. The final section (4.10) will summarize the research methodology.

4.1 Research Design

An experiment using factorial design will be conducted to test the hypotheses. The use of factorial design in experiments has been evident in several COO studies. This design is conducted to measure the effects of two or more independent variables at various level of concern and allows for interactions between variables, including all possible combinations of the level of the variables that are under investigation (Bordens & Abbott 2002; Malhotra et al. 2002; Montgomery 2005).

Brand equity information (using a Thai fashion brand) and the country's development (using COO as a proxy) will be specified as independent variables. These variables will be examined in terms of the impact, together with their interaction effects, on the dependent variables, namely, product evaluation and purchase intentions across different level of brand equity. ***Suits*** and ***T-shirts*** are being considered for investigation because ***Suits*** commonly involve '***High involvement***' while ***T-shirts*** involve relatively '***Low involvement***' in purchase decisions.

A ***2 x 2 x 3 factorial design*** will be employed to analyze the data. ***Two levels of purchase involvement*** (High involvement apparel product represented by Suits and Low involvement apparel product represented by T-shirts), ***two levels of brand equity*** (High and Low equity, represented by two Thai fashion brands, will be selected from among eight Thai fashion brands by a group of Thai consumers from a pilot-test), and ***three countries with different level of development,*** namely Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam, from where the products originate (COO) will be examined against each of the equity level for each brand. This experiment will consider 12 scenarios, each representing the cumulative effect of the interaction between purchase involvement, brand equity and the development status of the country from where the item originate (COO) as shown in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.2. Each of these scenarios will be specifically examined.

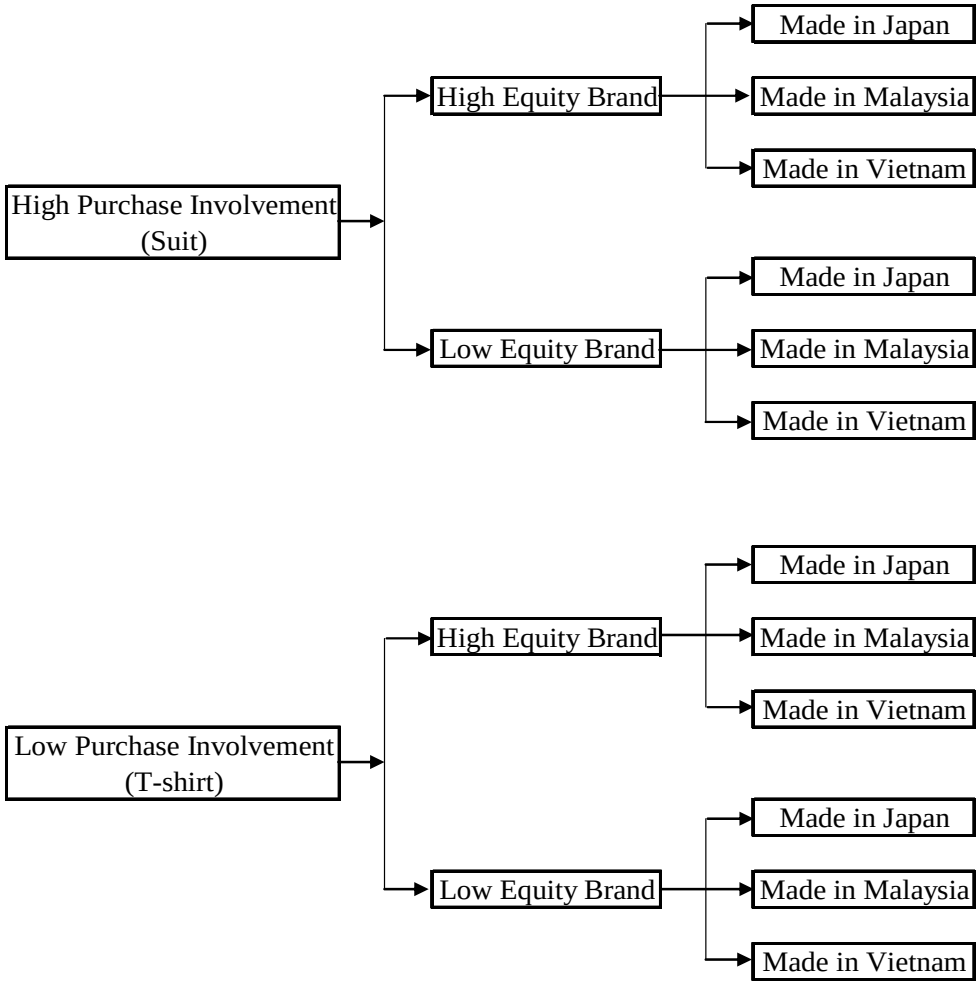

Figure 4.1 Factorial Design for the Study

The above figure is illustrated in the following table:

Table 4.2 Scenarios of Research Design

Treatment	Level of Purchase Involvement	Level of Brand Equity	Country's Development
Scenario 1	High	High Equity	Japan
Scenario 2	High	High Equity	Malaysia
Scenario 3	High	High Equity	Vietnam
Scenario 4	High	Low Equity	Japan
Scenario 5	High	Low Equity	Malaysia
Scenario 6	High	Low Equity	Vietnam
Scenario 7	Low	High Equity	Japan
Scenario 8	Low	High Equity	Malaysia
Scenario 9	Low	High Equity	Vietnam
Scenario 10	Low	Low Equity	Japan
Scenario 11	Low	Low Equity	Malaysia
Scenario 12	Low	Low Equity	Vietnam

The study will use pictures of real fashion apparel as props with descriptions of the apparel (***Suits*** and ***T-shirts***) taken from retailers' catalogues, in order to enhance the external validity – "The ability of an experiment to generalize beyond the experiment data to other subjects or groups in the population under study (Zikmund 2003, p. 287)". It is expected that the high resolution color of the images evoke more credible responses to the survey. The COO information (made in Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam) will be embedded in the list of product attributes. Each respondent will be randomly assigned to one of 12 experimental conditions.

4.2 Variables and Measurements

4.2.1 *Independent Variables*

To ensure that all of the independent variables are properly selected and act as a surrogate for the country's development, brand equity, and purchase involvement credibility, a manipulation check for these independent variables will be employed in a pilot study. The criterion items and scales, which will be adopted from existing COO studies for measuring these three independent variables, are as follows:

Country's Development

Three Asian countries will be measured for their level of development based on three criteria items, namely, the perception of stage of economic level, perception of country image, and perception of quality of manufacturing. The measurements are based on *three* seven-point semantic differential items. These are: extremely underdeveloped / extremely highly developed; very unfavorable / very favorable; and low quality / high quality respectively. The stage of economic level aspect was developed from the criteria of country classification (FTSE 2008) and the dimension for measuring country image or COO effects from the studies of Han and Terpstra (1988) and Lin and Chen(2006). The studies of Chao (1993), Insch and McBride (1998; 2004), Lin and Chen(2006), and Roth and Romeo (1992) also suggest the country image and quality of manufacturing as criteria for measuring the COO effects. The reliability test for these set of criteria items will be employed to ensure that these measures are reliable and that each criteria item would consistently capture a specific construct (Malhotra et al. 2002).

Brand Equity

Eight Thai fashion brands were nominated in a pilot study to identify two Thai fashion brands that specifically represent a high and low equity brand, respectively. All brands share the same brand origin (Thailand) but differ significantly in terms of their reputation, popularity, and quality. Data were gathered using a seven-point scale for *reputation* ranging from "1 = not reputable at all" to "7 = very reputable", for *popularity* ranging from "1 = not popular at all" to "7 = very popular", and for *quality* ranging from "1 = very low quality" to "7 = very high quality". All of these three criteria, thus, reputation, popularity, and quality are considered to be primary determinants of brand equity (Aaker 1991; Hui & Zhou 2003; Kim & Chung 1997).

Level of Purchase Involvement

The purchase involvement for the high and low involvement products (Suits and T-shirts) were measured by three criteria items, namely, monetary risk, social acceptance and extensive information search prior to making a decision through the use of *three* seven-point semantic differential, i.e. low *unit outlay* / high *unit outlay*, low *prestige* / high *prestige* and low *search activity* / high *search activity* respectively.

These measures were developed from the characteristics of involvement purchase behaviors and the study of O'Cass (2004).

4.2.2 *Dependent Variables*

Perceived Quality of Product

The perceived quality of the product was measured in terms of the perception of the capabilities (Ahmed & d'Astous 2004; Ashill & Sinha 2004; Insch & McBride 2004) assessed by the particular country, namely:

(1) Design (using a seven-point semantic differential item: not attractive / attractive)
(2) Workmanship (using a seven-point semantic differential item: not well trained workforce / well trained workforce)
(3) High Quality (using a seven-point semantic differential item: not at all / completely)
(4) Reliability (using a seven-point semantic differential item: not reliable / reliable)

The reliability test was employed in order to ensure that the above each criteria item would consistently capture a specific construct and be appropriate for implementation.

Purchase Intention of Product

This dependent variable represents the likelihood that a particular product will be purchased by a respondent. Respondents were asked to rate each of the products in terms of likelihood of purchase on a seven-point scale ranging from "1 = very unlikely to purchase" to "7 = very likely to purchase".

4.3 Product Category Selection

As mentioned earlier, most studies of COO effects have concentrated on high involvement products while only a few studies have investigated low involvement products. Some products like clothing lend themselves to purchase after high involvement or low involvement. Though, apparel products are not perceived to be a complex product. They could be either a high involvement or a low involvement

product because purchase of apparel carries a level of search activity (extensive information search or lesser search) prior to making a purchased decision (Schiffman et al. 2005), and high or low risk concern depending upon consumers' attitudes, price at point-of-purchase or retail outlet, hedonistic value (Li & Wyer1994), and its value as a symbol of social identity (O'Cass & Lim 2002). If apparel products are associated with high-risk purchase situations, they could become a high involvement product. In contrast, if apparel products are associated with low-risk purchase situations, they could become a low involvement product. For example, suits and T-shirts can be classified as high involvement products and low involvement products, respectively because suits represent high involvement arising out of their high monetary risk and social acceptance. Consequently, consumers engage in a more detailed search before making a decision to purchase a suit. T-shirts on the other hand carry the likelihood of a less thorough search and there is a lower monetary risk compared with suits. It is reasonable to say that T-shirts represent low involvement products. Additionally, T-shirts are technologically simple goods of daily use but they are perceived to vary in terms of the level of fashion orientation (Ahmed & d'Astous 2004).

Fashion clothing are perceived as the products that are particularly conspicuous and status revealing (Schiffman & Kanuk 1994; Wang, Siu & Hui 2004). This study selects branded products of clothing because *branded products* are more salient within *image-based products* than functional products (O'Cass & Lim 2002).

4.4 Brand Selection

Recently, there have been a number of empirical findings associated with COO studies that have employed known brands rather than fictitious brands, in order to enhance the external validity of the study (Hui & Zhou 2003)**.**

It is to be noted that there does not appear to be a global brand that could be considered a low equity brand by Thai consumers, as anecdotally evident from Thai consumer preferences of fashion products like cosmetics, clothes, and sports shoes. Thai consumers perceive global brands, especially US brands of these product types, to be premium branded products with assigned high price. This, in turn, leads to the high level of brand equity embedded into those particular products. In order to

overcome this implicit bias towards Western brands, this study nominated Thai brands from which two brands with relatively differing brand equities can be identified.

The eight Thai fashion brands that were nominated must have both suits and T-shirts with styles available for both menswear and womenswear. The study intends to use unisex brand because it is convenient for the study to provide the questionnaires and avoid any confusions. The eight brands that were selected also had to be well-known to consumers in Thailand. Brands from the leading apparel brand companies suggested by The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Bangkok which comprised of *"Greyhound"*, *"Xact"*, and *"Blue Corner"* (JETRO 2000) were included on the nominated list. In addition, local brand names which received good reviews according to the Thai fashion market (TTIS 2006), namely, *"Kai Boutique"*, *"Jim Thompson"*, *"Jaspal"*, *"AIIZ"*, *and "Chaps"* were selected for inclusion on the list.

A list of eight unisex brands of Thai apparel were pilot tested among a student population to extract two Thai brands that could be classified as low equity brand and high equity brand respectively. These two brands were selected so as to control for the same brand origin: Thailand. Both brands were well recognized and perceived as Thai brands by Thai consumers. However, they differed significantly in terms of reputation, popularity and quality.

4.5 Country Selection

Most past studies involved with COO have been conducted in developed countries in North America and Western Europe (Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000). Little has been done in developing countries. It also appears that there is little understanding about the preference for products from developed economies and from among consumers of Southeast-Asia, and South-Asia (O'Cass & Lim 2002). It is true that many recent and current manufacturers have sought to shift their production to other countries in order to reduce their production costs. Developing countries, especially many countries in Asia, seem to be the targets of this strategic move, undoubtedly influenced by the lower production costs (e.g. lower wage rate, lower raw material costs, and lower transportation costs). Asia is perceived as a growth market in terms

of the size of the market and purchasing power. Hence, understanding the perceptions, behavior and attitudes of Asian consumers would be of great interest for marketers to perceive how these consumers react to products from various sourcing countries (Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000).

Thailand was selected because it is one of the most rapidly developing countries in the region (Chalmers 1997). Thailand's investment booms since 1980 and it is more likely to be a future market and source for value addition for Australian firms (Julian and O'Cass 2002). Moreover, after the economic crisis in 1997, Thailand has increasingly emerged as a potential candidate for multinationals' international expansion (Pananond 2007) and welcomes foreign investment. Thailand was one of East Asian countries' best economic performers in 2002. Thailand covers an area of 198,115 square miles (CIA 2007) and is situated in the centre of continental South East Asia. Increased consumption and investment spending together with a strong increase in exports pushed the GDP (real) growth rate per capita up to 3.60% in 2008 (CIA 2008). In 2008, the Thai population was approximately 65 million. The GDP per capita (Purchasing power parity - PPP) is approximately $8500 (CIA 2008).

According to Hofstede (1991), cultural value dimensions of Thai consumers appear to be perceptibly different from Western consumers. For instance, differences are apparent in the areas of individualism/collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; and Confucian ethics (Wongtada, Leelakuthanit & Singhapakdi 1994). These cultural differences induce Thai consumers to become more brand loyal, and more likely to blame *situations* for *product* failure (Mattila & Patterson 2004).

The reason for the three Asian countries, namely Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam being considered for this perception study of COO was primarily because their stages of development are widely different. FTSE Group (2008) classifies countries into three categories, comprising *Developed*, *Advanced Emerging*, and *Secondary Emerging*. Japan is classified as a developed country with GDP per capita: $34,200 (CIA 2008). Malaysia with GDP per capita of $15,300 (CIA 2008) and Thailand are included in the level of secondary emerging countries. Vietnam with GDP per capita of $2800 (CIA 2008) is excluded from these three categories and is perceived as being at a less developed level than Thailand. The level of development of these three Asian

countries can also be seen from the widely differing GDP per capita (PPP) of each country. The GDP per capita (PPP) is used as a criterion to designate COO with different level of country's development using for this study's investigation as mentioned earlier in Section 3.1. On the other hand the GDP (real) growth rate per capita of Malaysia was up to 5.10% in 2008 which is similar to Thailand's GDP (real) growth rate per capita at 3.60% (CIA 2008). This study excluded Thailand as a representative country where the product is made because the research design designated Thailand as the country for *controlling* the brand origin of the products.

O'Cass and Lim (2002) believe that there are differences in the way consumers from different regions of the world perceive products and brands from different parts of Asia. Western consumers perceive products made in developed countries as superior to products made in undeveloped and developing countries (Ahmed et al. 2004; Jaffe & Martinez 1995; Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu & Hyder 2000; O'Cass & Lim 2002; Okechuku 1994). According to these authors, Western consumers make no distinction in the qualities of products made by developing countries such as Thailand and countries that share borders with Thailand like Malaysia and Vietnam. However, consumers "within" these countries (say in Thailand) perceive products manufactured in each of these bordering countries as superior or inferior depending upon their natural cultural prejudice, superiority / inferiority caused by centuries of shifting level of trust, and migration between neighboring countries. It is to be noted that differences in the markets of these three Asian countries exist willy-nilly due to the factors of culture, history, geography, and political systems. It is expected that the outcomes derived from this study would differ from past studies that investigated perceptions of products from developed countries of the West.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

To enhance the level of internal validity, this study selected the brands which share the same national origin for controlling the impact of brand origin. This was intended to avoid confusion and increase confidence in the results.

As already mentioned, analysis in this study is based on the known brands instead of fictitious brands, in order to establish the external validity of this COO study. To

increase the external validity, a picture of a real product and its descriptions were taken from a retailer's catalogue or magazine. The samples for field survey were *general consumers* selected around the shopping centers. This will be further discussed in the next section. Using *general consumers* as a sample was designed to ensure that the results could be generalized so as to represent the broad population, thus enhancing the external validity of the study.

The study includes an examination of the quality of the research instrument (questionnaire) in order to increase reliability. Specifically, the measures are considered reliable when those measures yield consistent results. The objective here is to strengthen reliability through the use of a pre-test and pilot study. The *"Cronbach's alpha"* was employed as the tool for establishing the construct validity, which is the capability of a measure to stipulate the consistency of empirical evidence with a theory based on the concepts (Zikmund 2003). The Cronbach's alpha helps as a criterion in testing the quality of the tool (Cortina 1993; Lyman 1993).

4.7 Subjects and Data Collection

The investigation comprised of two separate stages, namely, an exploratory survey and a field survey respectively.

Exploratory Survey

In the first stage, an exploratory survey (100 Survey Questionnaires) was conducted to ratify three independent variables, namely, perception of *Country's Development, Product Purchase Involvement* and *Brand Equity* in terms of being high or low.

Zikmund (2003) indicates that the best sampling for a design in which exploratory research is first conducted and then an additional study is subsequently conducted with a probability sampling, is convenience sampling. Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) suggest that there are no different effects in using students as samples in order to generalize to consumer samples in COO studies. Thus, a convenience sample of 100 students studying in the American University Alumni Language Center (AUA), Bangkok, Thailand was recruited to participate in the first stage, the exploratory survey. The study chose AUA students because AUA is a non-profit private language

institute which provides learning instruction to unisex individuals of any age and any occupation. It is, therefore, reasonable to believe that AUA students appear to can be a representative of general consumers and can be regarded as appropriate for generalizing urban population in Bangkok.

Zikmund (2003) advises that there are a number of easy-to-use existing tables that have been compiled to support researchers in the calculation of sample size. The Taro Yamane Table *(see Appendix I)* was used to confirm a reliable sample size of 100 respondents for the exploratory research. This size of sample was derived from the table of Taro Yamane. The information in the table advises that the appropriate number of sample at 90% confidence level with 10% error for generalizing an infinite population should be 100 respondents. For abundant caution, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 120 participants, aged equal or over 18 years in order to account for errors from target subjects (100 respondents) during the data collection procedure.

Field Survey

In the **next** stage of data collection, a field survey was conducted across a sample of 480 consumers around the shopping centre area in Bangkok, Thailand. As discussed earlier with regard to the research design of the study, a ***2 x 2 x 3 factorial design*** was employed to analyze the data of the research study. The study was based on ***two levels of product purchase involvement*** which were High involvement apparel product represented by Suits and Low involvement apparel product represented by T-shirts. There were also ***two levels of brand equity***, namely High and Low equity, represented by two Thai fashion brands. These were selected from among eight Thai fashion brands by a group of Thai consumers from the exploratory survey. Finally, there were ***three levels of a country's development*** represented by Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam. All of the data were examined against each of the equity level for each brand.

The field survey intended to employ a probability sampling. This study was consequent to selecting two brands of bipolar equity level from the exploratory survey in the first stage. The use of ***probability sampling*** – a sample technique in which nonzero probability of choice (Zikmund 2003) – is perceived as more reliable than nonprobability sampling (Neal, Quester & Hawkins 2004). The field survey employed

probability sampling, specifically, ***systematic sampling*** which involves a situation where the researcher employs natural ordering, or sequence of sampling frames and a starting point is chosen by an arbitrary random procedure. To illustrate, the procedure starts the investigation by choosing a simple random sample (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 1999). Following this, the researcher then chooses participants at a preselected interval (Zikmund 2003). Anderson, Sweeney and Williams (1999) suggest that a systematic sampling is normally assumed to have the properties of simple random sampling. The other reasons for choosing the systematic sampling were that it was easy to check, simple to draw samples, unlikely to have larger errors than those in simple random sample, and is of moderate cost.

For the field survey, a sample size of 400 respondents was selected, based on Taro Yamane Table *(see Appendix I)*. This size of sample was selected to get results with 5 percentage points of error, at 95 percent confidence level and infinity (∞) size of population (Lyman 1993). The evidence from previous studies indicates that the size of the samples in COO studies that are deemed to be meaningful are those that have a sample size of more than 260 respondents (Peterson & Jolibert 1995). The final sample size used in this study is 480 respondents, in order to ensure the validity of the study.

The survey was conducted on public property around the shopping centre area in Bangkok. Every 5^{th} person who passed by in the shopping centre area was requested to answer the questionnaire. This process ensured that the respondents chosen represented general consumers and adequately represented the population at large.

Each respondent was randomly assigned to one of 12 experimental conditions. It was expected that the 480 respondents would be equally divided among the 12 combinations of country's development, purchase involvement and level of brand equity. As a consequence, 40 participants were arranged for each of the twelve scenarios. In addition, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 660 adult participants in order to account for errors from the targeted subjects (480 respondents) during the data collection procedure.

4.8 Questionnaire Design

The research design for this study involved the integration of two stages, namely, exploratory survey and field survey. Separate questionnaires were designed for each of these two surveys.

First Stage: Exploratory Survey

The objective of conducting the survey at this stage was to ratify the two independent variables, namely, country's development and purchase involvement. The survey also attempted to explore another independent variable, brand equity, with regard to whether it was high or low. Results were also obtained from a manipulation check. This was achieved by ratifying the country's development variable in order to confirm that the study had appropriately classified the level of development of Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam. In addition, the results derived from ratifying the purchase involvement variable served to determine whether the study had appropriately selected the sub-product category of apparel (Suits or T-shirts) representing high or low involvement products. Finally, the survey identified two Thai fashion clothing brands representing the two levels of brand equity (high and low) from the eight nominated Thai fashion clothing brands. All of the above results with regard to the three independent variables, country's development, purchase involvement, and brand equity were derived from the exploratory survey, and thus, served as the basis for the field survey. Therefore, the questionnaire design reflected the objectives required of the survey at this stage.

The questionnaire for the exploratory survey was designed as a self-administered questionnaire and consisted of three sections. The details of each section are as follows:

Section A: Consumers' Perceptions of Brands. This section had one question item designed to explore the perceptions of Thai consumers regarding the level of brand equity of each of the eight Thai fashion clothing brands. This was based on the following brand equity determinants: *reputation*, *popularity* and *quality*. These three criteria had been drawn from past studies (Aaker 1991; Hui & Zhou 2003; Kim & Chung 1997). The eight nominated Thai fashion clothing brands were assigned the sequence of the brand names that participants responded to as follows:

Brand 1: *Kai Boutique*

Brand 2: *Jim Thompson,*

Brand 3: *Xact*

Brand 4: *Blue Corner*

Brand 5: *Greyhound*

Brand 6: *Jaspal*

Brand 7: *AIIZ*

Brand 8: *Chaps*

The respondents were asked *"Please indicate your perception of the level of brand equity for each of these Thai fashion brands, based on the following brand equity determinants: reputation, popularity and quality"*. Participants were required to evaluate the three criteria for measuring the level of brand equity (reputation, popularity and quality). They did this with reference to a semantic differential scale.

In question 1, the design of the questionnaire is *"Rating Scale"*. A *rating scale* is a measurement task that requires participants to evaluate the magnitude of a characteristic or quality. To do this, participants indicate where an object belongs along a continuum which has been provided to the participants. This provides a quantitative score and enables the evaluation of the strength of the individual attitude. Rating scales have become the most common means of measuring attitudes within marketing research (Zikmund 2003). Thus, the measurement of attitudes in the three above criteria was achieved through the use of the *semantic differential technique*, which is a measure of attitudes that was comprised of a series of 7-point rating scales that employ bipolar adjectives to anchor the starting and terminal of each scale. The other reasons for selecting the semantic differential technique were that they were easy to construct and norms existed for comparison (Zikmund 2003).

The measurement of the total brand equity of each brand was measured from an overall brand equity. This emerged by integrating the scores of each criteria (reputation, popularity and quality) within the specific construct. Previous studies suggest that testing the reliability of all of the criteria which would be integrated to produce the overall characteristic or quality, was essential to perform (Malhotra et al. 2002). Employing the reliability test would ensure that under circumstantial

investigation, each criteria would consistently capture a specific construct (Malhotra et al. 2002).

Section B: Consumers' Perceptions of Purchase Involvement. Question 2, is presented in this section. This question explored the perceptions of Thai consumers regarding the level of purchase involvement for each of the two sub-product categories of the apparel products (Suits and T-shirts). The items which served to determine purchase involvement included monetary risk, social acceptance and extensive information search prior to making a decision. These three criteria were drawn from secondary data.

With regard to question 2, the respondents were asked *"Please indicate your perception of each of the following product involvement attributes when buying a suit and a T-shirt: monetary risk, social acceptance and extent of information searched."* After that, the participants' attitudes were elicited. This was achieved by requiring them to evaluate the three criteria of measuring the level of purchase involvement (monetary risk, social acceptance and extensive information search prior to making a decision). To do this, they indicated their opinion on a seven-point semantic differential scale for suits and T-shirts respectively.

The measurement of the total purchase involvement, based on each sub-product category (suits and T-shirts) was measured. This overall level of involvement emerged by integrating the scores of each criteria (monetary risk, social acceptance and extensive information search prior to making a decision) within the specific construct. Testing the reliability of all of the criteria was carried out, in order to ensure that each criteria is consistently captured a specific construct (Malhotra et al. 2002) and was appropriate to measure the level of purchase involvement.

Section C: Consumers' Perceptions of Country-of-Origin. Four questions, which consist of question 3, question 4, question 5, and question 6, are outlined in this section. The question item 3 explored Thai consumers' perceptions of the level of development of each of the three Countries-of-Origin (Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam). This was achieved through relying on the following criteria: perception of stage of

economic level, perception of country image, and perception of quality of manufacturing / component. These three criteria were developed from past studies.

In regards to question 3, the respondents were asked *"Please evaluate your perception of each of the three countries in accordance with the following attributes"*. Both the previously mentioned attributes and the countries were then listed. The participants were required to evaluate the three criteria, namely, perception of stage of economic level, perception of country image, and perception of quality of manufacturing / component, by indicating their opinion on a seven-point semantic differential scale.

The measurement of the total country's development for each COO (Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam) was then measured. This overall level of development emerged by integrating the scores of each criterion (perception of stage of economic level, perception of country image, and perception of quality of manufacturing / component) for this specific construct. The reliability test for all of the criteria was carried out to assure that each criteria consistently captured a specific construct (Malhotra et al. 2002). The results from running the reliability test enabled the researcher to be confident that the level of development had been appropriately determined.

The objective of formulating question 4, question 5, and question 6 was to provide supplementary evidence to support question item three with regards to the level of development ratification. Question 4, question 5, and question 6 explored the perceptions of Thai consumers regarding the economic development level of each of the three Countries-of-Manufacture (Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam) when compared with Thailand. In the first question, the respondents were asked *"Please indicate how the economic development level of Japan compares with Thailand"*. In question 5 the respondents were asked *"Please indicate how the economic development level of Malaysia compares with Thailand"*. Finally, in question 6 the respondents were asked *"Please indicate how the economic development level of Vietnam compares with Thailand"*. Following this, the participants were required to evaluate the level of economic development by indicating their opinion through choosing one of the three alternative determinant-choices which comprise of higher, similar and lesser.

In summary, the results from the exploratory survey in *"Section A"* were utilized in order to obtain a set of two Thai fashion clothing brands. These two brands could then be used as surrogates for high / low equity brands in the subsequent study (field survey). In addition, the results that derived from *"Section B"* and *"Section C"* were expected to ratify the two independent variables (purchase involvement and country's development) that were linked to the conceptual framework. As such, it was determined that appropriate designations were "suits", representing as high involvement apparel products, and "T-shirts" representing low involvement apparel products. In addition, the study also served to confirm "Japan" as the most highly developed country in comparison with Thailand, "Malaysia" as developed to a similar level as Thailand, and "Vietnam" as less developed in comparison with Thailand. All of the mentioned results in *Section A, B,* and *C* of the exploratory data questionnaire were used as the basis for the next stage of the research.

Second Stage: Field Survey

The main investigation of the study comprised the collection of primary data. The theoretical framework of the research provided insight of the extrinsic cues, namely, COO, brand and involvement. This aim was to explore whether these three extrinsic cues would impact consumers' product evaluation of apparel products. The results derived from investigations in this stage were expected to confirm the hypotheses that were formulated for testing in this study. The survey instrument needed to be easy and convenient for coding the factual data, as well as for employing the data in the analysis and testing of the hypotheses of the study.

A field survey questionnaire was designed to answer each of the twelve experimental conditions. It was felt that twelve versions of the questionnaire (for each experimental situation) were required in order to elicit and receive greater respondents' cooperation. Each respondent was to be presented with one scenario in a self-administered questionnaire. Each of the questionnaires consisted of three parts. A picture of the product was attached to the questionnaire, to enable the participants to examine three salient features, namely, the *sub-product category of apparel* (suits / T-shirts), *brand name* (high equity / low equity), and *COO* (Japan / Malaysia / Vietnam). Different

pictures and a different mix of the three product features in each of questionnaire were indicated the twelve scenarios of the study.

Part I: Consumers' Perceptions of Country Capabilities. Question one explores the Thai consumers favorable or unfavorable perceptions of the countries used in this COO study. Consumers' perceptions were based on the country's capabilities to produce fashion clothing products. Their perceptions were measured on five dimensions, namely, workmanship, product design, durability, reliability, and component quality, achieved by indicating their opinion through *five* seven-point semantic differential items. These items were classified as poor workmanship / excellent workmanship, inferior product design / superior product design, low durability / high durability, not reliable / reliable, poor component quality / excellent component quality respectively.

The most favorable country overall was a measure based on integrating the scores of each criteria (workmanship, product design, durability, reliable, and component quality) of the specific construct. The reliability test for all of the criteria was employed to ensure that each criteria item consistently captured the specific construct (Malhotra et al. 2002)

Part II: Product Evaluation. Eight questions (question items 2-9) were included in this part. Respondents were provided a particular scenario and requested to follow the survey instructions as follows: *"Please observe the picture of this suits (or T-shirts) and answer questions 2-8. Please circle the number which best illustrates your opinion regarding the suits (or T-shirts)'s features"*. After observing the picture and providing the requested information, the respondents were required to answer questions 2 to 8. The respondents were then required to give their opinion on the factors within the standard marketing mix. In other words, they were asked to offer opinions with regards to product, price, place and promotion. This was designed to identify the impact on consumers' clothing choice when they purchase clothing.

Question 2 examined the consumers' perceptions of the quality of the product through the relevant picture of the product that was shown to them. Opinions were elicited based on the criteria of quality of design; quality of workmanship; quality of product;

and product reliability. The respondents were asked *"Please indicate your opinion regarding the suits (or T-shirts) in the above picture"*. The participants were required to evaluate the four criteria items by indicating their opinion through four seven-point semantic differential items which consisted of quality of design (not attractive / attractive), quality of workmanship (poor quality workmanship / high quality workmanship), high quality of product (not at all / completely), and product reliability (not reliable / reliable).

The measurement of the total perceived quality of product was measured based on "an overall perceived product quality", in terms of country capabilities perception. The measurement of country capabilities comprised of four dimensions, namely quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product and product reliability. The aggregate score was arrived at through the combination of the scores of each criteria item (four dimensions as indicated above) for the specific construct. The reliability test for all of the criteria items was employed to ensure that each criteria item consistently captured a specific construct and that appropriate criteria had been used to measure the total perceived quality of product.

Question 3 examined consumers' evaluation of the overall quality of branded products by asking the respondents *"How would you rate the overall quality of the branded product on the above picture?"* The participants were required to evaluate the overall quality of branded product in the picture by indicating their opinion measured on a five-point Likert scale choosing one of the five response alternatives which comprised of excellent, good, fair, poor, and extremely poor. The reason for using this scale is that it is easy to administer and it is popular for measuring attitudes (Zikmund 2003).

Question 4 investigated the likelihood of actual purchase of the particular product by Thai consumers. The respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: *"Please indicate how likely you are to purchase the suits (or T-shirts) in the above picture, if it is available"*. The participants were required to indicate their likelihood of purchase through a seven-point semantic differential item which was centered on the purchase intention of the product (very unlikely to purchase / very likely to purchase).

Question 5, question 6, and question 7 were specified in order to explore the importance of the three factors, namely, product category, place where the product was produced and brand (with regard to consumers' intention to purchase those products). The respondents were asked, "How important to you is "*product category (or product made in, or brand)*?" in regards to question 5, question 6, and question 7, respectively. The participants were required to evaluate the potential of the three independent variable factors (product category, product made in, and brand) by indicating their opinion through the Likert scale, choosing one of the five response alternatives, namely, extremely important, very important, of some importance, of little importance, and of absolutely no importance.

Question 8 was also designed to explore the extent to which the three factors, viz, product category, country-of-origin and brand name were important when consumers intended to purchase apparels (suits / T-shirts). The respondents were asked, "Please provide the appropriate answer that would describe your opinion regarding the following three factors, in terms of its impact on your purchase decision of suits (or T-shirts) ("1 = Extremely important", "2 = Somewhat important", "3 = Slightly important")". The participants were required to select the number 1, 2 or 3 for each of the three independent variable factors (product category, COO and brand name) to indicate the extent of their compromise with each of the following product descriptors.

Question 9, was designed to broaden the information regarding consumers' concerns when they purchase general clothing. The consumers' concerns were directed to the marketing mix factors mentioned earlier: product, price, place, and promotion. With regard to the *product perspective*, the factors that were deemed to affect consumers' clothing choices, and were thus included for rating from the respondents, were quality, brand name, design, fashion, and durability. For the *price perspective*, the factors included were reasonable price compared with quality, variety of price, reasonable price compared with "made-in". For *distribution*, the factors consisted of convenience to buy, the amount of branches or distribution channels, variety of product designs to choose from, and the variety of product designs from various brands available for comparison before making a decision. Finally, for the *promotion perspective*, the relevant factors included advertising (e.g. magazines), marketing activity (e.g. discounts), fashion shows / events, and introducing products via websites / internet.

The respondents were asked "Please indicate "✓" which best illustrated their opinion regarding factors that affected their purchase decision of general clothing. The participants were required to indicate their preferences on a Likert scale consisting of five response alternatives, namely, extremely / very / somewhat / not very / hardly.

Part III: Demographic Information contains classification questions concerning gender (question 10), age group (question 11), level of education (question 12), and occupation (question 13). All of these are personal questions that were deliberately placed towards the end of the questionnaire so that the respondents would not become defensive early. *"Dichotomous"* is a fixed-alternative question type that required the participant to select one of two alternative choices (Zikmund 2003). The remaining questions were *"Determinant-choice questions"*. These are fixed-alternative questions that require the participant to select one response from among multiple alternatives (Zikmund 2003).

In question 10 the participants were asked, *"Please indicate your gender"*. Question 11 asked the respondents their age. The respondents indicated their age group by choosing one of the following multiple alternatives: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and 56 years or over. For question 12, the participants were asked *"What is the highest level of education you have obtained?"* The participants were required to answer the question by choosing one response from among multiple alternatives. These alternatives were: high school graduate, college graduate, completed graduate school, and postgraduate school. In question 13 the respondents were asked, *"Which of the following categories best describes your current position?"* The respondents were required to indicate their occupation by selecting one response from among multiple alternatives, including unemployed / retired, employee, self employed, student, government / state enterprise official, and servant / laborer.

To summarize, the research employed a "field survey questionnaire" which was comprised of three parts: consumers' perceptions of country capabilities, product purchase evaluation, and demographic information. Part I was designed in order to identify the favorable / unfavorable countries regarding their ability to produce

fashion clothing products. Factual findings derived from this part (question 1) were expected to reflect the second specific aim of the research.

Part II is the main investigation of the study. The responses obtained from the respondents in this part were employed to answer the main conceptual framework of the study. A picture and information about it describing the product category, brand, and product's country-of-origin were used to develop the conceptual model. The picture and information about its features represented the three independent variables of the model. Product category information was represented by the independent variable, *"purchase involvement (high / low)"*. Brand information was represented by the independent variable, *"brand equity (high / low)"*. Finally, country of manufacture information was represented by the independent variable, *"country's development (higher / similar / lesser)"*.

Question 2 is designed to derive consumers' overall *"perceived quality of the product"*, which represent the dependent variable "product evaluation". Question 4 is created to obtain the *"purchase intention of product"* from the respondents.

Participant was provided with a cover letter and information to participants that included an invitation to participate; the title of the project, project explanation, general and specific instructions; what the participants gained from participating; how the information / responses recorded participants would be used; what the potential risks of participating in this project were; how this project was conducted; and who was conducting the study. A copy of the cover letter, information to participants, the exploratory data questionnaire and the field survey questionnaire (English versions) are provided in Appendix III, IV, V and VI, respectively. The questionnaires were originally written in English and then translated into Thai, in order to ensure that Thai respondents fully understood the content of the questionnaire and avoided confusion and misunderstanding. The questionnaires were translated back into English so that the researcher could ensure the accuracy and consistency of the questionnaires in comparison with the original. This effective form of translation is known as *"Double-translation"* or *"Back-translation"* (McGorry 2000). The procedure of back-translation has been acknowledged and accepted as one of the most failsafe translation procedures (Marin & Marin 1991) in the survey research. Further, it is known to help

to ensure the equivalence of the research instruments (Harpaz 1996). All of the procedures of translation were verified by independent persons, thereby ensuring the accuracy of content.

Prior to employing the research instrument in the survey, the questionnaires for the two stages of the survey were pre-tested in order to ensure that the questionnaires for both stages (exploratory survey and field survey) were well designed and appropriate to implement for the study.

4.8.1 *Questionnaire Pre-Testing*

Zikmund (2003) suggests that a procedure of questionnaire pre-testing is usually tried out on a basis of choosing a convenient group that seems to bear a likeness to the samples of the study or at least which is not too divergent from the target market. However, this process does not acquire a statistical sample. The pre-testing is undertaken in order to prevent or reduce errors of implementation and to ensure that the questionnaire is easily followed by respondents. In addition, as suggested by Zikmund (2003), the questionnaire should not have any ambiguous or bias enquiries. Malhotra et al. (2002) suggest that the measurement of any variables in the questionnaire should be tested for justifying reliability under pre-testing procedure was also followed. In this study, both stages of the survey were subjected to pre-test.

Pre-Testing Exploratory Survey

Data collection for pre-testing of the exploratory survey was conducted in the capital city of Thailand, Bangkok. As already discussed, some researchers assert that there is no divergent effect in using students as samples to be generalized to consumer samples. Lin and Chen (2006) point out that an appropriate sample size of 30 to 500 respondents can be employed in survey research. Zikmund (2003) indicates that the pre-testing process invokes a significant advantage to the design of the final instrument and further posits that making a mistake with 25 or 50 respondents can help to avoid a major disaster, as it would be with a much larger sample. A pre-test, using a smaller yet similar sample, can serve to identify an invalid research instrument (questionnaire) and enable changes to be made before it is distributed to what could be several hundred individuals. Therefore, based on this caution of previous studies, a

convenience sample of 30 students, currently studying in the AUA Language Center, Bangkok, Thailand was used as respondents for the pre-test of the exploratory survey. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 50 adult respondents in the early November, 2008. A slightly larger sample size was used for the pre-test of the exploratory survey to account for potential sampling errors for mistake, including non-respondents as well as invalid questionnaires like those questionnaires that were not correctly completed. Eventually, 30 valid completed questionnaires were obtained from the pre-test effort.

Pre-Testing Field Survey

Pre-testing of the field survey was also conducted in Bangkok. As indicated earlier, twelve field survey questionnaires were designed, each representing twelve experimental conditions. Three adult students studying in the AUA Language Center, Bangkok, Thailand were randomly selected to respond to each of the scenario. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 60 respondents (five participants for each of the questionnaire versions) in the middle of December, 2008. Five respondents in an augmented sample were recruited to respond to each scenario, in order to account for errors or missing data from target subjects during the pre-testing procedure.

The next section will explain and justify the results of testing the reliability, based on the exploratory data questionnaire and field survey questionnaire as well as testing the reliability of any measurements for both of the surveys.

4.8.2 *Reliability Test*

Reliability refers to the consistency of results. The measures are reliable when those measures yield consistent results including the degree to which measures have the freedom from random error (Zikmund 2003). Employing the reliability test is done for all serious studies to ensure the quality of the studies' research instruments. Therefore, pre-testing is an essential time for checking reliability and required the use of a generally accepted tool, namely Cronbach's alpha.

The raw data from both surveys was tested in order to verify the reliability of the questionnaire and measurement by using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, which is one of the most popular and pervasive statistical tools associated with the use and construction of testing in the research (Cortina 1993). Specifically, the reliability tests were done employing the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software program. Cortina (1993) indicates that the value of alpha coefficients range from 0 to 1 and can be used to describe the reliability of determinants extracted from the format of dichotomous, and scaled or multi-point patterned questionnaires. Dichotomous questionnaires describe the condition where there are enquiries with two easy possible answers such as yes / no. The implication from most recent studies suggests that an alpha value which is *greater than 0.70* is acceptable to be considered as reliable. In addition, past studies also assert that the higher the level of the score value, the more reliable the scale is (Cortina 1993). Following is a description and explication of the results of testing the reliability of the questionnaires and measurement of variables of interest from the exploratory data questionnaire and the field survey questionnaire, respectively.

The Reliability Test for Exploratory Data Questionnaire and Measurements

The procedure for testing the reliability of the exploratory data questionnaire was arranged in four steps as follows:

The reliability of the whole exploratory survey, i.e. every question was tested. The result showed the score of alpha value was 0.85 which being greater than the 0.70 implies that the exploratory data questionnaire was reliable and appropriate for implementing.

The reliability of the measurement of brand equity level with respect to the three criteria, namely, reputation, popularity, and quality was tested. Testing in this step was employed in order to ensure that the three dimension criteria were appropriate to use for measuring the level of brand equity for the study. The results derived from testing all eight brands showed a high aggregate reliability score which was greater than the threshold score criterion for reliability alpha level of 0.70. The alpha value scores indication of the reliability coefficients of the level of brand equity with respect to the three brand characteristics items were as follows: Kai Boutique = 0.91, Jim

Thompson = 0.82, Xact = 0.88, Blue Corner = 0.88, Greyhound = 0.87, Jaspal = 0.87, AIIZ = 0.88, and Chaps = 0.91 (see Table 4.3). The implication of these alpha scores is that the brand characteristics criteria items can be considered reliable. Each criterion was shown to consistently capture the desired construct and therefore the three criteria items that were used for measuring the level of brand equity for each of the nominated brands were reliable.

The reliability of the measurement of level of purchase involvement with the three criteria items of measuring purchase involvement was tested. These three criteria were monetary risk concern, social acceptance, and information search prior to buying. The objective of test was to ensure that these three criteria were an appropriate to indicator of the level of purchase involvement in product involved in this study. The results showed that the alpha value scores of testing the measurement of level of purchase involvement of suits and T-shirts for using the three criteria items had a high level of

Table 4.3 Results of Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of Measuring the Level of Brand Equity

Measures	Kai Boutique *Alpha (∝)*	Jim Thompson *Alpha (∝)*	Xact *Alpha (∝)*	Blue Corner *Alpha (∝)*	Greyhound *Alpha (∝)*	Jaspal *Alpha (∝)*	AIIZ *Alpha (∝)*	Chaps *Alpha (∝)*
Levels of Brand Equity → *Reputation* → *Popularity* → *Quality*	0.91	0.82	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.87	0.88	0.91

reliability, namely, suits = 0.82 and T-shirts = 0.90 (see Table 4.4). These reliability scores were considerably greater than the threshold score criterion (0.70) and hence three dimensions could be considered reliable. It further illustrates that each criteria item was consistently able to capture a specific construct for both suits and T-shirts. Based on the alpha scores, it can be inferred that the three criteria items which comprised of monetary risk concern, social acceptance, and information search prior to buying were reliable and appropriate to employ as measurement of the level of product purchase involvement for this study.

Table 4.4 Results of Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of Measuring the Level of Purchase Involvement

Measures	Suit *Alpha (∝)*	T-shirt *Alpha (∝)*
Levels of Product Involvement → *Monetary risk concern* → *Social acceptance* → *Extensive information search prior to making a decision*	0.82	0.90

Lastly, it was also necessary to ensure that the three dimension criteria, i.e. stage of economic level, country image, and quality of manufacturing were appropriate to measure the level of country's development for this study. The results of the reliability test show that the alpha value scores of testing this measurement have a high score with regard to reliability, namely, Japan was 0.87, Malaysia showed 0.84 and Vietnam revealed a score of 0.84. These scores are presented in Table 4.5. These reliability scores being greater than the score criterion 0.70 indicate that these three dimensions are reliable for the purposes of this study. Since each criteria item was likely to consistently capture the specific construct. The three criteria of stage of economic level, country image, and quality of manufacturing can be regarded as reliable and appropriate to implement for measuring the level of country's development for this study.

Table 4.5 Results of Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of Measuring the Level of Country's Development

Measures	Japan *Alpha (∝)*	Malaysia *Alpha (∝)*	Vietnam *Alpha (∝)*
Levels of Country's Development → *Stage of Economic Level* → *Country Image* → *Quality of Manufacturing*	0.87	0.84	0.84

In conclusion, the exploratory data questionnaire and the measurements of three independent variables of interest which were relevant to the conceptual framework for the study were reliable and appropriate for implementing in the survey. The next section will present the results of reliability related with the field survey questionnaire.

The Reliability Test for Field Survey Questionnaire and Measurements

The field survey questionnaire was tested for examining the reliability of the questionnaire and the measurements of variables of interest that were included in the theoretical framework for the study. The reliability test for the field survey questionnaire proceeded in the following four steps:

Initially, the reliability of the whole questionnaire was tested. The result presented an alpha value of 0.81 which indicates that the field survey questionnaire was reliable and appropriate for using in the survey.

The reliability of the measurement of perception of each country's capabilities in terms of their ability to produce fashion clothing products was next tested. The country's capabilities were rated on five dimensions, namely workmanship, product design, durability, reliable, and component quality. This testing was conducted in order to confirm that the five dimension criteria were appropriate to employ for measuring the country capability in part I of the field survey questionnaire. The results derived from testing identified that all of the countries, Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam, showed a high reliability score which was greater than the score criterion 0.70. The alpha value scores of testing the measurement of the country capabilities with respect to the five criteria showed that Japan scored an alpha level of 0.89, Malaysia, an alpha level score of 0.79, while Vietnam posted an alpha level score of 0.92 as outlined in Table 4.6. The above results reveal that these five dimensions can therefore be considered reliable. As a consequence of reliable alpha scores, each criterion can be considered to consistently capture the specific construct that was appropriate for the current study (Malhotra et al. 2002). This was true for all of the countries in this study. Based on these results, the five criteria which comprised of workmanship, product design, durability, reliable, and component quality could be considered as being reliable and appropriate to use for measuring country capabilities in terms of their production ability. It is reasonable to assume that these constructs and

measurements would ultimately yield reliable results to indicate countries were favorable or unfavorable.

Importantly, the reliability of the measurement of the dependent variable of the study, i.e. the perceived quality of product, was tested. An overall concept of perceived quality of product was measured through the perception of a country's capabilities with respect to four dimensions. These four dimensions comprised of quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product, and product reliability. The objective of testing was to ensure that the four dimension criteria were appropriate to measure the overall perceived quality of product through vis-à-vis the capability of the country that manufacture the product. Alpha values with high scores for reliability were evidenced in this testing. The result of testing the measurement of overall perceived quality of product indicated an alpha level score of 0.91 (see table 4.7) suggesting that these four dimensions were reliable and that each criterion was consistently able to capture a specific construct (Malhotra et al. 2002) for this dependent variable. Based on these findings the four criteria items of quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product, and product reliability could be said to be reliable and appropriate to employ as the measurement of perceived quality of product for this study.

Table 4.6 Results of Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of Measuring Favorable / Unfavorable Countries in Terms of Their Production Ability through "Country Capabilities"

Measures	**Japan** *Alpha (∝)*	**Malaysia** *Alpha (∝)*	**Vietnam** *Alpha (∝)*
Country Capabilities → *Workmanship* → *Product Design* → *Durability* → *Reliable* → *Component Quality*	0.89	0.79	0.92

Table 4.7 Results of Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of Measuring Overall Perceived Quality of Product through "Country Capabilities"

Measures	*Alpha (∝)*
Country Capabilities → *Quality of Design* → *Quality of Workmanship* → *High Quality of Product* → *Product Reliability*	0.91

This dependent variable, namely, product evaluation was the last to be tested for reliability in terms of consumers' perceived quality of product and their intention to purchase the product. Testing of product evaluation included the testing of the four dimensions for measuring perceived quality of product along with a dimension for measuring the purchase intention, i.e. purchase likelihood. This reliability test was employed in order to ensure that the measurement of product evaluation with respect to the above-mentioned five dimension criteria were appropriate to measure product evaluation. The result showed that the alpha value scores of testing this measurement had a suitably high score for reliability. This score was measured at 0.85 as indicated in Table 4.8. This reliability score being more than 0.70 meant that these five dimensions were reliable and each criterion item would consistently capture a specific construct. Based on these findings, the five criteria of quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product, product reliability, and purchase likelihood could be said to be reliable and appropriate to implement for measuring product evaluation in terms of perceived quality of product and purchase intention of product for this study.

In summary, the field survey questionnaire and the measurements of variables of interest which are related to the conceptual framework for the study were deemed to be reliable and appropriate for implementation in the survey.

Table 4.8 Results of Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of Measuring Product Evaluation in Terms of Perceived Quality of Product and Intention to Purchase of Product through "Country Capabilities and Purchase Likelihood"

Measures	*Alpha (∝)*
Product Evaluation **Perceived Quality of Product** Country Capabilities → *Quality of Design* → *Quality of Workmanship* → *High Quality of Product* → *Product Reliability* **Intention to Purchase of Product** → *Purchase Likelihood*	0.85

The next section will be used to outline the data processing for the formal investigation for both of exploratory survey and field survey. In addition, the data analysis techniques that were employed to analyze the data for the study will be presented. The following section clarifies issues related to the risk concern for the study.

4.9 Data Processing and Analysis

4.9.1 *Risk Concern*

The survey was conducted in simple language, among adults only. The questionnaire was non-intrusive and voluntary. No one was forced to participate. The survey did not intrude on the personal space of any of the people concerned, and did not intrude on their private homes or places of work. The survey was conducted in a friendly setting among shoppers around a local shopping centre. Hence, the survey did not involve any physical, psychological, social and legal risk. In addition, the survey was careful not to note the respondents' identities. Finally, once the data was aggregated, all the information became anonymous.

4.9.2 *Data Processing of Formal Investigation*

Exploratory Survey

As indicated in section 4.7, 120 questionnaires were distributed with the objective of collecting at least 100 completed questionnaires. A completed questionnaire in this instance was considered to be one with no missing data in any of the questionnaire items. The survey was conducted in the middle of November, 2008 in the AUA Language Center, Bangkok. A convenience sampling of 120 adult students were recruited to participate around the AUA area. A total of 100 completed questionnaires were retrieved and used in accordance with the determined optimum target amount (100 respondents) for testing.

Field Survey

The field survey was conducted in January 2009 in Bangkok. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed according to a random systematic sampling of 660 adult general consumers around a shopping centre area in Bangkok in order to account for errors from target subjects (480 respondents). The data collection process began with the researcher selecting a starting point at random. After that, every 5^{th} consumer who passed through the shopping centre area was requested to participate in the survey. Each of these respondents was randomly assigned to one of 12 experimental conditions. Consequently, 55 respondents were randomly nominated to answer the survey relating to each of experimental conditions of the twelve scenarios. However, only total of 480 completed questionnaires could be used. Thus, only 40 completed questionnaires per scenario from a total of 480 completed questionnaires were used to collate the survey information.

4.9.3 *Data Analysis Techniques*

The raw data was coded to enable the statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software program. The details of the data analysis techniques that were employed in this study are given below:

Exploratory Survey

Questionnaire Section A involved data relating to the level of brand equity. The study aimed to compare the different levels of brand equity among eight Thai fashion

brands as addressed previously in section 4.8. The format of this questionnaire was designed by using a *rating scale*. Data analysis employed an ***analysis of variance (ANOVA***) and the ***pairwise comparisons of means in ANOVA procedure*** (if the study found differences). This ANOVA analysis technique was undertaken in order to analyze the different levels of brand equity with respect to the three criteria of reputation, popularity, and quality. This method is regarded as an appropriate statistical tool due to the fact that ***One-way ANOVA*** is usually used in the comparison of the means of more than two groups (Zikmund 2003). The results from ANOVA analysis were expected to indicate the differences among eight Thai fashion brands and lead to the identification of two levels of brand equity. The analysis process established which brand among eight Thai brands had the highest mean score and which brand had the lowest mean score. The results were expected to indicate whether those two brands with highest and lowest mean scores were significantly different and appropriate to use as the surrogates for the two levels of brand equity.

Questionnaire Section B was based on data related to the level of purchase involvement. This section used a *rating scale*. Ratifying the level of purchase involvement between suits and T-shirts was done by employing ***t-test*** analysis method and the ***Levene's Test*** in *t-test* procedure. Zikmund (2003) suggests that the *t*-test method is appropriate to be used for finding the difference of means for two independent samples or groups.

Questionnaire Section C concerned data associated with the level of each country's development using a *rating scale*. The analysis in this section employed ***One-way ANOVA*** and the ***pairwise comparisons of means in ANOVA procedure*** for question 3 to find out the differences among the three countries (Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam) and ratify the level of each country's development. As mentioned previously in section 4.8, questions 4 to 6 were designed as supplementary evidence to support the ratification of the level of each country's development. Questionnaire formatting was designed by using *alternative determinant-choices*. Thus, it was the study's intention to only use the significant results with respect to the ratification of the level of country's development from ANOVA analysis to report in the following chapter (Results and Discussions).

Field Survey

Questionnaire Part I involved data related to the identification of favorable / unfavorable COO and was achieved through the measurement of perceptions of each country's capabilities. This part employed a *rating scale* for measuring consumers' attitudes. The data analysis technique used in this part included ***One-way ANOVA*** with the ***pairwise comparisons of means in ANOVA procedure***.

Questionnaire, Part II consisted of the main investigation of the study and involved questions 2 and 4 as indicated in section 4.8. Data from responses to the two questions related to perceived quality of product and intention to purchase for the product using *rating scales*. Data analysis techniques that were used included ***One-way ANOVA*** and the ***pairwise comparisons of means in ANOVA procedure***, ***t-test*** and the ***Levene's test*** in *t-test* procedure, ***Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)***, ***Multiple linear regression*** and ***correlation***. Multivariate statistical analysis method allows the study to examine more than one variables at the same time related to their effects (Zikmund 2003). MANOVA is one of the multivariate statistical analysis methods and was employed in this part to analyze the data involved with the main study of this research. MANOVA was employed as a statistical tool for analyzing the data and testing the hypotheses. This statistical technique is used for providing a simultaneous significance test of the mean difference among groups for two or more dependent variables (Zikmund 2003). MANOVA has commonly been used as a statistical tool where there is a need to manipulate several independent variables concurrently. The strength of MANOVA as a measurement devise is that it allows one to detect the main effect of individual independent variables while also providing data pertaining to the interaction effect among different independent variables in an experimental situation (Hair et al. 1995; Tabachnick & Fidell 2001).

As explained in section 4.8, question 3, and questions 5 to 9 were designed as supplementary questions. It was expected that the investigation might obtain a range of information that could be used to support the study. The results derived from all these supplementary questions were not expected to answer the study's hypotheses. In regards to the data analysis techniques for these questions, the data in question 3 was a reflection of the perception of consumers towards the overall quality of branded product based on the picture in the questionnaire using *rating scales*. The Data

analysis technique employed in this part was ***One-way ANOVA*** including the ***pairwise comparisons of means in ANOVA procedure***.

Data relating to the attitude of consumers towards the degree of importance with respect to the three factors of product category, product made in, and brand were obtained from questions 5 to 7. These questions employed *a rating scale* for measuring consumers' attitudes. The analysis technique on this data included ***One-way ANOVA*** and the ***pairwise comparisons of means in ANOVA procedure***.

Data from question 8 involved the opinion of consumers about their purchase decisions. This was predicated on three factors, which consisted of product category; country of manufacture and brand. A *ranking scale* was custom designed for this question such that the analysis could employ ***Frequency***, ***Percentage*** and the ***test for homogeneity chi-square test*** in order to obtain the significant results.

Questionnaire 9, which covered data associated with consumers' opinions with respect to the factors that would affect purchase decision on general clothing, used *a rating scale* measure. The data was analyzed and indicated by the ***Multiple linear regression*** or ***Correlation coefficient*** method.

The questionnaire in Part III captured the demographic information of the respondents. Specifically, data with respect to gender, age, education, and occupation using *Dichotomous or Simplified scaling* and *Alternative Determinant-choices was captured.* Since the demographic effects were expected to have a relationship with the effects of COO in influencing consumers' evaluation of products, the study employed ***correlation*** to describe this relationship.

Hypothesis Testing

The procedure of hypothesis testing normally starts through the creation of a tentative assumption, which is called the *null hypothesis* (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 1999; Zikmund 2003) and related to a population parameter. This tentative assumption is assigned the symbol H_0. Subsequently, another hypothesis is determined that is stated in order to contrast with the null hypothesis. The latter hypothesis is called the *alternative hypothesis*. The alternative hypothesis is assigned the symbol H_1 (e.g.

Zikmund, 2003) or written as H_a (e.g. Anderson, Sweeney and Williams, 1999). Usually, there will be some standardized criteria or rule that facilitates the determination of whether the result is probable or improbable. The approach that is commonly used for making the decision as to whether a null hypothesis (H_0) should be rejected or the alternative hypothesis (H_a) accepted is based on the criteria of *significant level* or *alpha level* (α) (Zikmund 2003). It is also generally based on a probability which is called a "*p*-value" (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 1999).

Anderson, Sweeney and Williams (1999) suggest that if the *p*-value < α, it can be concluded that H_0 should be rejected. They also assert that this rule can be employed for all hypothesis testing.

Overall, there is a considerable amount of research that ultimately reveals a pervasive use of the three levels of alpha value criteria. These three alpha levels are alpha level (α) at 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10. The alpha level (α) at 0.01 is the strongest or most significant level among those three alpha levels (α). Weinberg and Abramowitz (2002) suggest that alpha level (α) greater than 0.10 should be considered of being of insufficient level of strength to employ at a significant level. Therefore, this study adopted the alpha level criteria from past research by employing the significant levels at level 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10. These levels were used for determining the statistical results with significance in order to yield reliable conclusions that could be extrapolated to the population. It was decided that the null hypotheses (H_0) in this study were to be rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) accepted if the significant value was less than 0.10.

4.10 Summary

In this chapter the research details the survey method used for the collecting the data. This study was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand and recruited Thai consumers to participate in the investigation. This chapter discusses the factorial design employed in the study. In addition, all of the relevant variables within the conceptual framework of the study have been explained in this chapter including the methods used in the measurement of those variables of interest. The questionnaire design for the exploratory survey and field survey were also presented in this chapter including the

details of the pre-testing processes undertaken for both surveys and the reliability tests for the questionnaire items that justified the measurements. The results of the testing for reliability showed that all of questionnaires and measurements had high level of alpha value and therefore passed the test of reliability. The implication of this is that the research instruments (questionnaires) for this study were reliable and appropriate for implementation. Data obtained from the surveys were analyzed by using SPSS and data analysis for the main study was analyzed by employing MANOVA, t-test, One-way ANOVA, Multiple linear regression and correlation.

The next chapter, chapter 5 will include the presentation of the results of the study. The results derived from analyzing the data in chapter 5 will also be discussed.

Chapter 5

Results and Discussions

5.0 Introduction

Data analysis and the results from both surveys of the study will be presented in this chapter. The chapter provides some discussions which relate to the areas of some parts of the results in order to clarify or give a basis for possible explanations for why the results reveal what they do.

This chapter begins with a presentation of the results from the *exploratory survey* in section 5.1. This section includes the data analysis and the results of identifying two Thai fashion clothing brands with high and low brand equity levels respectively. The results of ratifying the levels of purchase involvement as well as the levels of country's development will also be included in this section. A summary of findings from the exploratory survey concludes this section. The next section, section 5.2, indicates the data analysis and the results from the *field survey*. An explanation of the sample characteristics from the survey are contained here. This section includes the results of favorable or unfavorable COO perceptions of Thai consumers and the hypothesis setting as well as the MANOVA results of the main study. Specifically, the results obtained from MANOVA analysis are based upon the main effects of the level of *country's development* including the moderating effects of *brand equity*, *purchase involvement* and the interaction effects between these three factors on consumers' product evaluation. Furthermore, the section presents the role of marketing mix factors on consumers' decision making on preference of general clothing. In addition, explorations of demographic effects are included in this section. Section 5.3 includes the concluding remarks of the findings of the field survey.

5.1 Results From Exploratory Survey

Data analysis and the results derived from investigations based on the first stage of the survey are described below.

5.1.1 *Identification of Brand Equity*

As mentioned earlier, in this research study consumers were required to identify two Thai fashion clothing brands as being either high or low equity brands. This categorization served as the basis for part of the exploratory survey. The statistical method of ***One-way ANOVA*** was used to compare the different levels of brand equity among eight Thai fashion clothing brands**.**

The results obtained from ***One-way ANOVA*** are indicated in the descriptive results. The mean score for each dimension of brand equity, namely, reputation, popularity and quality was determined for each of the eight brands including an overall rating of the brand's equity. The following table (Table 5.1) illustrates the above mentioned data.

In Table 5.1, the One-way ANOVA analysis technique was employed in order to identify two brands among eight Thai fashion clothing brands that indicated a statistically significant difference in overall brand equity and also differed significantly in terms of the three dimensions of brand equity (reputation, popularity and quality). This analysis identified the brands that had the highest and the lowest mean scores for each dimension. Effectively, eight Thai fashion clothing brands were compared in terms of their level of brand equity through mean rating. A total of 100 respondents was asked to assess the level of brand equity through the three dimension criteria (reputation, popularity, and quality) using a seven-point semantic scale. The mean score results for each dimension that are indicated in Table 5.1 were derived from an average of the summation of the rating scores that was indicated by each participant for that dimension. The overall measure of brand equity is the average of the summation of the mean score in each dimension.

Based on the results in Table 5.1, the study found that there were differences among eight Thai fashion clothing brands between groups of each dimension of brand equity with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01. As a result, further analysis with respect to the testing of pairwise comparisons of means in the ANOVA procedure were subsequently employed (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 1999). This analysis needed to be used in order to study which pairs were different.

Table 5.1 Mean Rating of Brand Equity Dimensions of Thai Fashion Clothing

Measures *Brand Equity*	**Kai Boutique** *Mean*	**Jim Thompson** *Mean*	**Xact** *Mean*	**Blue Corner** *Mean*	**Greyhound** *Mean*	**Jaspal** *Mean*	**AIIZ** *Mean*	**Chaps** *Mean*	**Significance**	**F-value**
Reputation	5.25	6.00	6.42	5.45	6.43	6.10	4.04	5.70	0.000***	127.110
Popularity	5.35	4.98	5.29	5.32	6.43	6.03	4.10	5.58	0.000***	74.332
Quality	5.40	6.35	5.55	5.42	6.39	5.30	4.18	5.68	0.000***	83.003
Overall	5.33	5.78	5.75	5.40	*6.42*	5.81	*4.11*	5.65	0.000***	174.650

*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

Before checking the pairwise comparisons of means, it was necessary to test ***the homogeneity of variances*** to observe the variance of data in order to choose which method of testing of the pairwise comparisons of means should be employed. If the study found that there was no difference of the variance of data, the researcher would employ ***Fisher's LSD*** (Fisher's least significant difference: LSD) or ***Scheffe*** methods to check where the differences occurred. In contrast, if the study found that there was difference of the variance of data, ***Tamhane's T2*** method would be used to conduct statistical comparisons between pairs of means. The Researcher defined the hypotheses for testing the variance of data as follows.

H_0: There is no difference of variance of data between groups
H_a: There is difference of variance of data between at least two groups

As stated earlier in chapter 4 (p.82), the null hypothesis (H_0) in this study was to be rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) accepted if the significant value was less than 0.10. Please note that for the other sections where the ANOVA test has been used and the process required subsequent analysis of testing the pairwise comparison of means, this study has not repeated the description of the process. It was deemed unnecessary to give an additional explanation of the criterion for testing homogeneity of variance and the choice of method that the study employed to test the pairwise comparisons of means as above. After reporting ANOVA results and finding the statistical results of the differences between groups, the study employs further analysis by briefly reporting and showing the evidence of the results in the following section.

The results of testing the homogeneity of variances for each group of brand equity dimension are shown in Table 5.1.1. The Levene Statistic Results show the statistically significant results in each of dimension of brand equity (Accept H_a and Reject H_0). These statistically significant results demonstrate that there was difference in the variance of data. Thus, it is reasonable that the study select Tamhane's T2 method in order to conduct further analysis to test the pairwise comparisons of means.

Table 5.1.1 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Brand Equity Dimensions

Test of Homogeneity of Variances		
	Levene Statistic	**Significance**
Reputation	15.994	0.000***
Popularity	17.706	0.000***
Quality	11.728	0.000***
Overall	18.623	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

The results derived from Tamhane's T2 method are used to make the pairwise comparisons of means among eight Thai Fashion Clothing Brands *(See Appendix II)*. Each table shows the pairwise comparisons of means with respect to the dimensions of brand equity *(Reputation, Popularity, Quality and Overall)*. The results in each table indicate which pairs have the statistical mean differences through the use of the symbol of '*'. SPSS manipulated every pair of variables by observing the difference between pairs and automatically calculated the mean difference as reported in each table. Based on the Tamhane's T2 analysis, the study found that the maximum mean differences in every dimension of brand equity appear to be the pairwise comparisons of mean between brand Greyhound and AIIZ as shown in Table 5.1.2.

Table 5.1.2 Pairwise Comparisons of Means between Greyhound and AIIZ

Multiple Comparisons Test (Tamhane's T2)

	Greyhound	**AIIZ**	**Mean Difference**	**Significance**
Reputation	6.43	4.04	2.39	0.000***
Popularity	6.43	4.10	2.33	0.000***
Quality	6.39	4.18	2.21	0.000***
Overall	6.42	4.11	2.31	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

Based on the ANOVA results in Table 5.1 and subsequent analysis (Tamhane's T2), it can be inferred that for the dimension of *reputation* of brand equity, Greyhound has the highest statistically significant mean difference score at 6.43 ($F = 127.110$, $p <$

0.01). On the other hand, AIIZ appears to have the lowest statistically significant mean difference score at 4.04 ($F = 127.110$, $p < 0.01$).

Greyhound also recorded the highest statistically significant mean difference score at 6.43 for the *popularity* of brand equity among the Thai clothing. At the other end of the scale, the lowest statistically significant mean difference score was that for AIIZ with the mean score 4.10 ($F = 74.332$, $p < 0.01$).

For the *quality* dimension of brand equity, Greyhound also had the highest statistically significant mean difference score at 6.39, whereas, the lowest statistically significant mean difference score belonged to AIIZ with the mean score equal to 4.18 ($F = 83.003$, $p < 0.01$).

Not surprisingly the highest mean overall brand equity score was achieved by ***Greyhound*** and the lowest mean overall brand equity score was that for ***AIIZ*** at the mean score 6.42 and 4.11 respectively ($F = 174.650$, $p < 0.01$) as reported in Table 5.1.

As a consequence of consumer rating of brand equity dimensions, ***"Greyhound"*** and ***"AIIZ"*** can safely be nominated as surrogates for two Thai fashion clothing brands that represent high and low equity brands respectively. It has also been conclusively shown that ***"Greyhound"*** and ***"AIIZ"*** brands are significantly different statistically in terms of overall brand equity. Based on these findings, the study was able to use the brand ***"Greyhound"*** as a surrogate for the *high equity brand* and employ the ***"AIIZ"*** brand as a surrogate for the *low equity brand* for the *field survey* in the subsequent investigation.

The next section will present the analysis designed to ratify whether the study has been appropriately designed in terms of its ability to define the levels of consumer purchase involvement.

5.1.2 *Ratification of Purchase Involvement*

The study will examine if purchase involvement as a cue can be expected to exert an influence on product evaluation. The relationship between the two levels of purchase involvement is anticipated to moderate the effects of COO on consumers' perceptions of the quality of product and purchase intention. This study identified high purchase involvement apparel products as represented by suits and low purchase involvement apparel product as represented by T-shirts. In order to confirm that the study has been appropriately designed with respect to the levels of purchase involvement for the research, ratification of the levels of purchase involvement was carried out by using the ***t-test*** analysis technique. The study compared the different levels of purchase involvement in terms of each of the three dimensions of purchase involvement, namely monetary risk, social acceptance, and information search prior to making a decision for their preference of a suit and a T-shirt. The results of the measure of purchase involvement across the three dimensions for suits and T-shirts are indicated in the following two tables *(Table 5.2 and 5.2.1).*

Table 5.2 presents an *Independent-Samples T Test* analysis. *Levene's Test* in this table helped to ascertain whether there were differences of means between *Suits* and *T-shirts*. The column item *"Levene's Test for Equality of Variances"* in Table 5.2 shows that the value of variances for each of the dimensions of purchase involvement had statistically significant results with the alpha level of 0.05 (confidence level at 95%). This significant result represented *"Equal variances not assumed"*, which means there were differences of variances among each group of purchase involvement dimensions. Thus, p-value in each dimension of purchase involvement in Table 5.2 was chosen from the bottom p-value in the column "Sig. (2-tailed)".

As can be seen from the statistically significant results shown in the column "Sig. (2-tailed)" in Table 5.2, these significant results were brought to use for confirming in Table 5.2.1 that there were differences of means between *Suits* and *T-shirts* in every dimension of purchase involvement.

Table 5.2 Independent-Samples T Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Monetary risk concern	Equal variances assumed	51.081	0.000	17.541	198	0.000	1.94	0.111	1.722	2.158
	Equal variances not assumed			17.541	130.311	0.000	1.94	0.111	1.721	2.159
Social acceptance	Equal variances assumed	28.851	0.000	9.891	198	0.000	1.14	0.115	0.913	1.367
	Equal variances not assumed			9.891	137.449	0.000	1.14	0.115	0.912	1.368
Extensive info search prior to buy	Equal variances assumed	53.409	0.000	13.764	198	0.000	1.77	0.129	1.516	2.024
	Equal variances not assumed			13.764	147.564	0.000	1.77	0.129	1.516	2.024
Overall	Equal variances assumed	61.07	0.000	20.804	198	0.000	1.6167	0.07771	1.46343	1.76991
	Equal variances not assumed			20.804	122.155	0.000	1.6167	0.07771	1.46284	1.77049

The following table *(Table 5.2.1)* continues summarizing and reporting the results of comparisons of mean ratings in each dimension of purchase involvement between *suits* and *T-shirts*.

Table 5.2.1 Measures of Purchase Involvement

Measures *Product Involvement*	**Suit** *Mean*	**T-shirt** *Mean*	**Significance**	***t*-value**
Monetary risk	6.03	4.09	0.000***	17.541
Social acceptance	5.33	4.19	0.000***	9.891
Extensive search	6.00	4.23	0.000***	13.764
Overall	5.79	4.17	0.000***	20.804

*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

Table 5.2.1 presents the results obtained from 100 student respondents who were asked to indicate their expression of the levels of their involvement through the three dimension criteria (monetary risk, social acceptance, and information search prior to making a decision) via a seven-point semantic scale. The mean rating scores indicated in the above table are derived from the *t-test* analysis using SPSS program. The mean score results for each dimension was determined from an average of the summation of the rating score given by each respondent for that dimension. The overall level of purchase involvement was derived from an average of the summation of each mean score in each dimension.

The results in Table 5.2.1 reveal that ***suits*** has a greater mean score than ***T-shirts*** of overall purchase involvement and across all three dimensions of purchase involvement. The difference between overall purchase involvement level and across each of the purchase involvement dimension for suits and T-shirts were different to a statistically significant alpha level of 0.01. We can then logically conclude that ***suit*** is regarded as a *high purchase involvement product* and ***T-shirt*** is considered as a *low purchase involvement product.*

With regards to the *monetary risk* dimension, the results of the mean difference between suits and T-shirts revealed that suits had a greater statistically significant mean difference score at 6.03 ($t = 17.541$, $p < 0.01$) than T-shirts with the statistically significant mean difference score of 4.09 ($t = 17.541$, $p < 0.01$) as shown in the above table.

The results of the mean difference between suits and T-shirts with respect to the *social acceptance* dimension indicated that suits had a greater statistically significant mean difference score at 5.33 ($t = 9.891$, $p < 0.01$) than T-shirts with the statistically significant mean difference score of 4.19 ($t = 9.891$, $p < 0.01$).

The results of mean difference for *information search prior to purchase* between suits and T-shirts revealed that suits had a greater statistically significant mean difference score than T-shirts with the statistically significant mean difference score of 6.00 and 4.23 respectively ($t = 13.764$, $p < 0.01$).

The mean difference for the *overall purchase involvement* between suits and T-shirts as illustrated in Table 5.2 points out that suits had a greater statistically significant mean difference score equal to 5.79 ($t = 20.804$, $p < 0.01$) than T-shirts, which had a statistically significant mean difference score of 4.17 ($t = 20.804$, $p < 0.01$).

The ratification of levels of purchase involvement clearly indicate that suits had a greater mean difference score than T-shirts in terms of overall purchase involvement and in all three dimensions of measuring the levels of purchase involvement. These mean difference scores are based on statistically significant results at the significant alpha level of 0.01. As a consequence, ***suits*** and ***T-shirts*** were appropriately designated for using as surrogates of *high purchase involvement* and *low purchase involvement* products respectively for the study.

The following section will justify that the study has appropriately assigned three countries which effectively represent the level of country's development for the study.

5.1.3 *Ratification of Level of Country's Development*

This research intended to study the main effect of COO on product evaluation. The investigation anticipated that the effect could vary depending on consumers' perceptions of the level of development for each COO. The study set out to explore how perceptions of different levels of development of each COO played a potential role in influencing product evaluation of Thai fashion clothing brands. The study planned to designate Japan as a country with a higher development level compared with Thailand. In addition, this study designated Malaysia and Vietnam as countries of similar and lesser levels of development respectively in comparison with Thailand.

In order to ensure that the study was appropriately configured with respect to the level of each country's development for implementation in the field survey, the measurement of consumers' perceptions of the countries' levels of development was undertaken. The criteria that were employed to measure these levels of development were the *stage of economic development*, *country image*, and *quality of manufacturing*. One-way ANOVA was employed to confirm that the results derived from measuring each country's level of development indicated statistically significant differences in the overall level of development and the three dimensions that were employed to measure the level of the countries' development.

One hundred participants were requested to record their perception of the levels of country's development. The participants indicated their scores with respect to the three dimension criterion (stage of economic development, country image, and quality of manufacturing). The questionnaire employed a seven-point semantic scale for measuring the levels of country's development by asking each respondent to rate the score. The mean score results for each dimension were calculated from scores that was indicated by each participant for that dimension criterion. In addition, an overall level of country's development was also calculated by summing the mean scores from each dimension criterion.

Table 5.3 indicates the average rating of the economic level, country image and quality of production of each of the three countries as well as overall perception of the country's development.

Table 5.3 Mean Rating of Three COOs with respect to Dimensions of Measuring Each Country's Development

Measures *Development*	**Japan** *Mean*	**Malaysia** *Mean*	**Vietnam** *Mean*	**Significance**	**F-value**
Economic Level	6.15	5.37	3.93	0.000***	195.625
Country Image	6.11	5.29	4.07	0.000***	169.268
Quality	6.09	5.26	3.79	0.000***	226.334
Overall	6.12	5.31	3.93	0.000***	428.317

*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

The results in Table 5.3 are derived from ANOVA analysis. The study found that there were statistically significant differences among three COOs with different levels of economic development in terms of each dimension of the country's development with the significant alpha level of 0.01. Thus, the test of homogeneity of variances and the pairwise comparisons of means were subsequently undertaken in order to check which pairs were different.

The Levene Statistical Results in the test of homogeneity of variances in Table 5.3.1 reveals the statistically significant results for each dimension of the country's development. These results confirm that the variances of the data in each of the country's development dimensions were different. Hence, the study chose Tamhane's T2 method to test the pairwise comparisons of means.

Table 5.3.1 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Country's Development Dimensions

Test of Homogeneity of Variances		
	Levene Statistic	**Significance**
Economic level	5.131	0.006***
Country image	4.161	0.017**
Quality of Manufacturing	5.977	0.003***
Overall	2.638	0.073*

* Statistically Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

The following tables (Table 5.3.2, 5.3.3 and 5.3.4) show the results of *Tamhane's T2* analysis with respect to the pairwise comparisons of means between *Japan and Malaysia*; *Malaysia and Vietnam*; and *Japan and Vietnam*, respectively. The comparisons of means between the two COOs in each table were observed in terms of the three dimensions of country's development *(stage of economic development, country image and quality of manufacturing).*

Table 5.3.2 Pairwise Comparisons of Means between Japan and Malaysia

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

	Japan	Malaysia	Mean Difference	Significance
Economic level	6.15	5.37	0.78	0.000***
Country image	6.11	5.29	0.82	0.000***
Quality of Manufacturing	6.09	5.26	0.83	0.000***
Overall	6.12	5.31	0.81	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

Table 5.3.3 Pairwise Comparisons of Means between Malaysia and Vietnam

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

	Malaysia	Vietnam	Mean Difference	Significance
Economic level	5.37	3.93	1.44	0.000***
Country image	5.29	4.07	1.22	0.000***
Quality of Manufacturing	5.26	3.79	1.47	0.000***
Overall	5.31	3.93	1.38	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

Table 5.3.4 Pairwise Comparisons of Means between Japan and Vietnam

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

	Japan	Vietnam	Mean Difference	Significance
Economic level	6.15	3.93	2.22	0.000***
Country image	6.11	4.07	2.04	0.000***
Quality of Manufacturing	6.09	3.79	2.3	0.000***
Overall	6.12	3.93	2.19	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

According to the above results based on the application of Tamhane's T2 method, the study found that Japan has a greater mean difference than Malaysia in every aspect of the country's development dimensions with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01 *(See Table 5.3.2)*. Additionally, the study found that Malaysia has a greater mean difference than Vietnam while Japan has a greater mean difference than Vietnam in each dimension of the country's development. These results are derived from analysis based on the statistically significant results at the significant alpha level of 0.01 *(See Table 5.3.3 and 5.3.4, respectively)*.

As was evident from *ANOVA* results in Table 5.3 and *Tamhane's T2* results in Table 5.3.2, 5.3.3 and 5.3.4, it can be inferred that there were significant differences among the three COOs with respect to each country's development dimension. In addition, those results indicate that there also were significant differences between the country pairings of *Japan and Malaysia*; *Malaysia and Vietnam*; and *Japan and Vietnam*. As a result, the summary of mean rating of Thai consumers with respect to the countries' level of development in Table 5.3 can be considered reliable evidence and can be used as the basis for ratifying the levels of each country's development as suggested in the following sections.

The results in Table 5.3 with regard to the *stage of economic development* show that Japan had the highest statistically significant mean difference score at 6.15. Malaysia recorded the next highest score with statistically significant mean difference score of 5.37. The lowest statistically significant mean difference score belonged to Vietnam with a score of 3.93. These results indicate that there are significant mean differences between Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam with regard to the dimension of stage of economic development at the significant alpha level of 0.01, F = 195.625. These results can be interpreted to indicate that consumers perceive Japan to have a high level of economic development in comparison with Malaysia and Vietnam. In addition, the mean difference between pairs indicate that Malaysia is also significantly different from Vietnam with mean difference score between pairs at 1.44 (5.37 – 3.93). From this outcome, we can infer that consumers perceived that Malaysia has a higher level of economic development than Vietnam.

Table 5.3 indicates that Japan also had the highest statistically significant mean difference score of *country image* at 6.11. Malaysia was perceived as having the next highest country image with the statistically significant mean difference score of 5.29. The country with the lowest country image appeared to be Vietnam with the statistically significant mean difference score of 4.07. These mean difference scores are based on the statistically significant results at the significant alpha level of 0.01, F = 169.268. From these results it can be concluded that there were significant differences in perceptions of country image among three COOs (Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam). The results show that Thai consumers perceived country image towards each country differently. These results reveal that the country image of Japan was significantly different to Malaysia and Vietnam with mean difference scores between pairs equal to 0.82 (6.11 – 5.29) and 2.04 (6.11 – 4.07) respectively. Consumers perceived that Japan had a higher positive country image than Malaysia and Vietnam. Moreover, the mean difference between pairs illustrates that Malaysia also differed significantly in comparison with Vietnam with a mean difference score between pairs equal to 1.22 (5.29 – 4.07). Consumers perceived that Malaysia had a better country image compared with Vietnam.

Table 5.3 also indicates the mean difference among the three countries with respect to *quality of manufacturing*. The study found that there were significant differences in consumers' perceptions of the quality of manufacturing among the three COOs, namely, Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam. These results indicate that Japan has the highest statistically significant mean difference score with respect to manufacturing quality with a score of 6.09. Malaysia was perceived as having a lesser mean difference score than Japan with the statistically significant mean difference score of 5.26. The lowest perception of manufacturing quality among the three countries appeared to belong to Vietnam with the statistically significant mean difference score of 3.79. These results for the perceptions of quality of manufacturing for each of the three countries are derived from analysis based on the statistically significant results at the significant alpha level of 0.01, F = 226.334. Based on these results, it can be concluded that Thai consumers' perceptions towards these countries' quality of manufacturing indicate that Japan was significantly different to Malaysia and Vietnam with mean difference scores between pairs equal to 0.83 (6.09 – 5.26) and 2.30 (6.09 – 3.79) respectively. Furthermore, the mean difference between pairs indicate that

Malaysia was differed significantly from Vietnam with a mean difference score between pairs equal to 1.47 (5.26 – 3.79). These results suggest that Thai consumers perceive that Japan as having a higher quality of manufacturing capability than Malaysia and Vietnam. In addition, Thai consumers also perceive Malaysia as having a better quality of manufacturing calibre than Vietnam.

Table 5.3 also illustrates that the mean difference among the three countries in terms of their overall development is significant since the significant alpha level is equal to 0.01, F = 428.317. It appears that Japan has the highest statistically significant mean difference score at 6.12. Malaysia was perceived as less developed than Japan with the statistically significant mean difference score of 5.31 and Vietnam has the lowest perceived level of development with the statistically significant mean difference score of 3.93 as shown in Table 5.3. These results suggest that the perceptions of overall development are significantly different for Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

Thai consumers' perception of countries' overall development reveal that Japan differed significantly from Malaysia and Vietnam with mean difference scores between pairs equal to 0.81 (6.12 – 5.31) and 2.19 (6.12 – 3.93) respectively. Moreover, the mean difference between pairs of these countries illustrates that Malaysia also differed significantly from Vietnam with a mean difference score between pairs equal to 1.38 (5.31 – 3.93). It seems therefore that Thai consumers perceive Japan as having a higher overall development level than Malaysia and Vietnam. In addition, Thai consumers also perceive that Malaysia has a greater overall level of development than Vietnam.

In conclusion, the analysis in this section with respect to the ratification of consumers' perception levels of each country's development reinforces the assertion that the study has appropriately defined three countries as COOs with different perceived level of development for the study. All three of the countries showed evidence to have statistically significant differences at a significant alpha level 0.01 in terms of overall development. The significant difference was also evident in the case of all three of the dimensions used for measuring the level of country's development, namely, the stage of economic development, country image, and quality of manufacturing. The results indicate that Japan was perceived to have a higher level of development than Malaysia

and Vietnam. In addition, Malaysia was perceived to have a higher level of development than Vietnam as well. Therefore, the study will designate Japan as representative of a country with a higher level of development when compared with Thailand. Malaysia and Vietnam will be designated as countries representative of being perceived as having a similar and lesser level of development respectively, when compared with Thailand.

5.1.4 *Summary of Findings in Exploratory Survey*

The results of the exploratory survey have effectively led to the identification of two Thai fashion clothing brands with different level of brand equity. It emerged that ***"Greyhound"*** brand can be appropriately used as a surrogate for *high equity brand*, whereas, the ***"AIIZ"*** brand can reasonably be used as a surrogate for *low equity brand* in the study. Furthermore, the results of ratifying the level of purchase involvement indicate that the study has appropriately designated ***"suits"*** as a surrogate for a *high purchase involvement product*, whereas, ***"T-shirts"*** are appropriately designated as representative for a *low purchase involvement product.* In addition, the perceptions of levels of country's development were also ratified. The findings indicate all of three countries, namely Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam, were significantly different in terms of consumers' perception of their levels of development. As expected the survey findings indicate that Japan has a higher perceived level of development than Malaysia and Vietnam. In addition, Malaysia is perceived as having a higher level of development than Vietnam as well. This evidence lends credence to the assertion that the study has appropriately designated Japan as representative of a country of high economic development compared with Thailand. Additionally, Malaysia and Vietnam have been appropriately designated as representative of countries with similar and lesser levels of development respectively in comparison with Thailand.

In summary, the findings in the exploratory survey with respect to the two levels of brand equity (*Greyhound* and *AIIZ*), the two levels of purchase involvement (*suits* and *T-shirts*), and the three countries with different levels of country's development (*Japan*, *Malaysia* and *Vietnam*) appear to be well qualified for use in the subsequent survey (field survey). The results obtained from the field survey will be presented in the next section.

5.2 Results from Field Survey

In this section, data analysis of the field survey will be presented comprising of the analysis of sample characteristics, analysis of favorable / unfavorable COO variables and the results of the analyses.

5.2.1 *Sample Characteristics*

The report in this section is based on the demographic information obtained from the field survey questionnaire. The study was populated by 480 respondents. The demographic characteristics of the respondents which respect to gender, age, education and occupation are indicated in Table 5.4.

Out of the 480 respondents who participated in the field survey, 313 (65.21%) were females and 167 (34.79%) were males. Two major respondent groups in the sample were those aged between 36 and 45 years old (36.46% of total respondents) and between 26 and 35 years (32.92% of total respondents) respectively. The rest of the respondents were between 18 years and 25 years, 46 years and 55 years, and 56 years up, which represented to 15.21%, 11.04%, and 4.38% respectively of the sample size.

Table 5.4 Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Respondents characteristics		Frequency (n = 480)	Percent
Gender	Female	313	65.21
	Male	167	34.79
Age	18-25 years	73	15.21
	26-35 years	158	32.92
	36-45 years	175	36.46
	46-55 years	53	11.04
	56 years up	21	4.38
Education	High school graduate	11	2.29
	College graduate	47	9.79
	Completed graduate school	359	74.79
	Postgraduate school	63	13.13
occupation	Unemployed / Retired	5	1.04
	Student	22	4.58
	Servant / Labor	31	6.46
	Government / State enterprise official	90	18.75
	Employee	177	36.88
	Self employed	155	32.29

With regard to their education, most participants involved in this study had completed graduate school comprising of 74.79% of total respondents. Around 13.13% of respondents had completed postgraduate education. While a lower number of respondents had lower education level, namely, completing either college (9.79%) or high school (2.29%).

Majority of the respondents were gainfully employed, whereas the others appeared to be looking for work or unemployed. Employees accounted for 36.88% of total respondents while the next largest segment of the sample was made up of those who were self employed, government / state enterprise officials, or servant / labor and comprised 32.29%, 18.75%, and 6.46% of total respondents respectively. A small proportion of the total respondents were students (4.58%) and unemployed / retired accounted for 1.04% of the sample.

Section 5.2.2 discusses the analysis and results of consumers' perceptions of country capabilities. The field survey sought to identify favorable / unfavorable perceptions of COO of Thai consumers' perception with respect to Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Data analysis and the results derived from the field survey will be reported in the following section.

5.2.2 *Favorable or Unfavorable COO*

This section will report the descriptive results derived from exploring the attitude of Thai consumers. The survey investigated the perceptions of Thai consumers of the ability of three countries, namely, Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam to produce fashion clothing. Five criteria dimensions were used to measure country capabilities in terms of quality of manufacturing. These dimensions of capabilities included workmanship, product design, durability, reliability, and component quality. Respondents were asked to rate each dimension via a seven-point semantic scale (score 1 to 7, 1 represented the lowest degree of perception and 7 represented the highest degree of perception). The results of participants' perception of each dimension capability are presented in the form of a "*mean score*". The mean score for each dimension capability is derived from an average of the summation of the scores that each respondent gave for that dimension. The mean score obtained for each dimension

capability construct was summed for each country. In addition, an average of the sum of the mean score of each dimension capability was calculated in order to present a country's overall capability in terms of quality of manufacturing of each country. An assumption is made here that each dimension of manufacturing quality is perceived as having equal weight. The overall results will point out which countries are likely to be favorable / unfavorable COO in terms of quality of manufacturing from Thai consumers' perspective. The data analysis technique employed in this section the one-way ANOVA and the results are indicated in Table 5.5.

The results shown in Table 5.5 are the mean rating of Thai consumers' perceptions with respect to the criteria dimension of the capabilities of the country's manufacturing quality (workmanship, product design, durability, reliability, and component quality). These dimensions forming the overall country capability is used for measuring perceptions of country capabilities in terms of its quality of manufacturing. The One-way ANOVA analysis identified that there were significant differences in consumers' perceptions of country capabilities of Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam with respect to each group of dimensions for the country capabilities.

Table 5.5 Mean Rating of Consumers' Perceptions with respect to Three COOs in Their Ability to Produce the Products

Measures Country Capability	**Japan** *(Mean)*	**Malaysia** *(Mean)*	**Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**Significance**	**F-value**
Workmanship	5.39	4.47	4.02	0.000***	174.584
Product Design	5.46	4.26	3.83	0.000***	277.559
Durability	5.11	4.32	3.94	0.000***	132.902
Reliable	5.33	4.28	3.86	0.000***	197.019
Quality	5.21	4.42	4.04	0.000***	127.544
Overall	5.30	4.35	3.94	0.000***	259.874

*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

Once the study found the significant differences between each group of dimensions for the capabilities among the three COOs from the ANOVA analysis, the test of homogeneity of variances and the pairwise comparisons of means were continually conducted to observe the differences between pairs of countries. The Levene

Statistical Results in this procedure helped to indicate which method should be further employed to ascertain the differences between pairs. The results in Table 5.5.1 show the statistically significant results in most groups of dimensions for country capabilities.

Table 5.5.1 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Country Capability Dimensions

Test of Homogeneity of Variances		
	Levene Statistic	**Significance**
Workmanship	1.050	0.350
Product Design	9.784	0.000***
Durability	3.026	0.049**
Reliable	15.088	0.000***
Quality	3.715	0.025**
Overall	13.072	0.000***

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Based on the above evidence, it can be inferred that the variances of the data in most of the groups according to the country capability dimensions were different. Thus, the test of Tamhane's T2 was further undertaken to check whether there were differences between pairs of countries *(See Table 5.5.2, 5.5.3 and 5.5.4).*

Table 5.5.2 Pairwise Comparisons of Means between Japan and Malaysia

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

	Japan	**Malaysia**	**Mean Difference**	**Significance**
Workmanship	5.39	4.47	0.92	0.000***
Product Design	5.46	4.26	1.20	0.000***
Durability	5.11	4.32	0.79	0.000***
Reliable	5.33	4.28	1.05	0.000***
Quality	5.21	4.42	0.79	0.000***
Overall	5.30	4.35	0.95	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Table 5.5.3 Pairwise Comparisons of Means between Malaysia and Vietnam

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

	Malaysia	Vietnam	Mean Difference	Significance
Workmanship	4.47	4.02	0.45	0.000***
Product Design	4.26	3.83	0.43	0.000***
Durability	4.32	3.94	0.38	0.000***
Reliable	4.28	3.86	0.42	0.000***
Quality	4.42	4.04	0.38	0.000***
Overall	4.35	3.94	0.41	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

Table 5.5.4 Pairwise Comparisons of Means between Japan and Vietnam

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

	Japan	Vietnam	Mean Difference	Significance
Workmanship	5.39	4.02	1.37	0.000***
Product Design	5.46	3.83	1.63	0.000***
Durability	5.11	3.94	1.17	0.000***
Reliable	5.33	3.86	1.47	0.000***
Quality	5.21	4.04	1.17	0.000***
Overall	5.30	3.94	1.36	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

Based on the Tamhane's T2 results, the study found that Japan has a greater mean difference than Malaysia in every aspect of country capability dimensions with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01 *(See Table 5.5.2).* Malaysia appears to have a greater mean difference than Vietnam with regard to the measurement of country capabilities *(See Table 5.5.3).* These results are derived from analysis based on the statistically significant results at the significant alpha level of 0.01. This study also found that according to Thai consumers' evaluations of Japan, there is a greater mean difference than Vietnam in each dimension of country capabilities. These results were thus able to serve as the basis of analysis with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01 *(See Table 5.5.4).*

Therefore, the above evidence from *ANOVA* and *Tamhane's T2* results ascertain that there were significant differences among the three COOs with respect to each country's development dimension. Thai consumers perceive the country capabilities of Japan differently to Malaysia and Vietnam and also perceive Malaysia differently to Vietnam. As a consequence, the summary of mean rating of Thai consumers with respect to country capabilities in Table 5.5 is reliable to conclude that Japan has a greater mean score for every dimension, including the overall mean score, in comparison with Malaysia and Vietnam. The comparison results of mean scores among three COOs reveal the significant results at F = 174.584, $p < 0.01$ for workmanship, F = 277.559, $p < 0.01$ for product design, F = 132.902, $p < 0.01$ for durability, F = 197.019, $p < 0.01$ for reliability, F = 127.544, $p < 0.01$ for component quality, and F = 259.874, $p < 0.01$ for overall country capabilities.

These results suggest that Thai consumers appear to perceive products with COO that has a higher perceived level of development more favorably than products with COO that has a lower perceived level of development. These results, derived from conducting the survey in an Asian country such as Thailand are consistent with results from past studies conducted in Western countries (e.g. Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu and Hyder, 2000; O'Cass and Lim, 2002).

5.2.3 General Results

In this section, the results refer to the supplementary questions (question 3 and questions 5 to 9) in part II of the field survey questionnaire. The results in this section are classified and reported in four tables (Table 5.6, 5.7, 5.8. and 5.9), which relate to each of the concerns addressed in the supplementary questions. The discussion starts with the general results of consumers' perception of country's development and overall quality of branded product.

5.2.3.1 General Results with respect to Consumers' Perceptions of Country's Development and Overall Quality of Branded Product.

The results in this section are related to question 3 in part II of field survey questionnaire. Respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of a particular

branded clothing item on a Likert scale (score 1 = extremely poor, score 2 = poor, score 3 = fair, score 4 = good, and score 5 = excellent). Each respondent was randomly given one of 12 questionnaire versions of the twelve scenarios, each representing a high or low brand equity item from country Japan, Malaysia or Vietnam illustrated in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.2. Each scenario was completed by a total 40 participants. The mean rating of overall quality of the specific branded clothing item, therefore, was derived from an average of the sum of the rating score of each respondent (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 Mean Rating of Overall Quality of Branded Products with respect to Brand Equity and COO

	Suits						T-shirts				
Overall Quality of Products	Japan *(Mean)*	Malaysia *(Mean)*	Vietnam *(Mean)*	Sig.	F-value	Overall Quality of Products	Japan *(Mean)*	Malaysia *(Mean)*	Vietnam *(Mean)*	Sig.	F-value
High Equity Brand	3.85	3.58	3.55	0.045**	3.180	High Equity Brand	3.80	3.53	3.25	0.000***	9.345
Low Equity Brand	3.63	3.45	3.35	0.146	1.955	Low Equity Brand	3.65	3.48	3.35	0.125	2.118

* Statistically Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

As can be seen from ANOVA results in the above table, the results show that there are significant differences in the perceived overall quality of high equity branded products that are made in Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam, with respect to suits and T-shirts. These results are based on the statistically significant alpha level of 0.05 for suits and alpha level of 0.01 for T-shirts. Thus, the pairwise comparisons of means were subsequently undertaken. In addition, the results in the above table also indicate that there are no significant differences among low equity branded products that are made in the three COOs with respect to the perceived overall quality of products. As a result, there is no further analysis to conduct for the low equity branded products for suits or T-shirts.

The following table *(Table 5.6.1*) indicates the results of the test of homogeneity of variances for each group under observation. The Levene Statistic Results and p-value

in this table determined the further analysis method that would be employed to ascertain the differences between pairs. For this table, none of the groups showed statistically significant results. This means variances of data for each group were not apparent.

Table 5.6.1 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Each Group of Branded Products

Test of Homogeneity of Variances		
	Levene Statistic	**Significance**
Suits - High Equity Brand	0.226	0.798
Suits - Low Equity Brand	0.165	0.848
T-shirts - High Equity Brand	1.670	0.193
T-shirts - Low Equity Brand	1.414	0.247

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Based on the evidence in Table 5.6.1, the study employed LSD method to check the pairwise comparisons of means for the overall quality of branded products. The following tables *(Table 5.6.2, 5.6.3 and 5.6.4)* indicate the results in terms of the differences between pairs that are derived from LSD analysis.

Table 5.6.2 Pairwise Comparisons of Means of High Equity Branded Products Made in Japan and Malaysia

Multiple Comparisons (LSD)

	Suits					T-shirts			
Overall Quality of Products	**Japan** *(Mean)*	**Malaysia** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference**	**Sig.**	**Overall Quality of Products**	**Japan** *(Mean)*	**Malaysia** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference**	**Sig.**
High Equity Brand	3.85	3.58	0.27	0.039**	High Equity Brand	3.80	3.53	0.27	0.033***

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Table 5.6.3 Pairwise Comparisons of Means of High Equity Branded Products Made in Malaysia and Vietnam

Multiple Comparisons (LSD)

	Suits					T-shirts			
Overall Quality of Products	Malaysia *(Mean)*	Vietnam *(Mean)*	Mean Difference	Sig.	Overall Quality of Products	Malaysia *(Mean)*	Vietnam *(Mean)*	Mean Difference	Sig.
High Equity Brand	3.58	3.55	0.03	0.850	High Equity Brand	3.53	3.25	0.28	0.033**

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Table 5.6.4 Pairwise Comparisons of Means of High Equity Branded Products Made in Japan and Vietnam

Multiple Comparisons (LSD)

	Suits					T-shirts			
Overall Quality of Products	Japan *(Mean)*	Vietnam *(Mean)*	Mean Difference	Sig.	Overall Quality of Products	Japan *(Mean)*	Vietnam *(Mean)*	Mean Difference	Sig.
High Equity Brand	3.85	3.55	0.30	0.025**	High Equity Brand	3.80	3.25	0.55	0.000***

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Based on the pairwise comparisons of means (LSD) results, the study found that the overall perceived quality of high equity branded products made in Japan were significantly different from high equity branded products made in Malaysia for suits and T-shirts. These results were different with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.05 for both suits and T-shirts *(See Table 5.6.2).* For the pairwise comparisons of means between high equity branded products made in Malaysia and Vietnam, the results only revealed significant differences among the products made in Malaysia and

Vietnam for T-shirts *(See Table 5.6.3).* These results were derived from analysis based on the statistically significant results at the significant alpha level of 0.05. Table 5.5.4 indicates the results of pairwise comparisons of means between high equity branded products made in Japan and Vietnam for suits and T-shirts. The results demonstrate that there are significant differences in perceptions between pairs of high equity branded products for both suits and T-shirts that are made in Japan and Vietnam with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.05 for suits and alpha level of 0.01 for T-shirts.

Based on the above results, the study *still cannot conclude* that Thai consumers perceived clothing products with both levels of brand equity that were made in Japan as preferable and as having a better quality than clothing goods produced in Malaysia and Vietnam. This is because the results that are derived from ANOVA and pairwise comparisons of means did not indicate the statistically significant results for both levels of brand equity clothing products that were made in countries with different levels of development. The results show the significant results for some observed cases (e.g. significant results in high equity branded T-shirts). However, these results point out those Thai consumers' perceptions of overall quality of branded clothing products might have interfered with the strength or weakness of one of the three product cues (COO, brand and product type) that were being examined.

As indicated earlier in chapter 4, p. 81, the study did not necessarily expect to receive specific information from general results *(All of the results in Section 5.2.3)* that could be used for answering the research questions. All of the substantial analyses with respect to the study's hypotheses were to be derived from the following main study. Nevertheless, some of the evidence that was obtained in the part of general results of this research might be useful to support the main study or for use as a database for future research.

5.2.3.2 *General Results with respect to the Three Product Cues*

This section presents the perceived importance of the three product cues, namely, product category, COO and brand (Table 5.7 and 5.8). Question 5 to 7 of the survey asked respondents to indicate how important they considered the three product cues as indicators of product quality on a Likert scale (score 1 = extremely important, score 2

= very important, score 3 = of some importance, score 4 = of little importance, and score 5 = of absolutely no importance). The mean rating of overall importance with respect to each product cue was derived from an average of the sum of the score of each participant for the particular product cue. Table 5.7 shows the results that were derived from ANOVA analysis. The results indicate that there were statistically significant differences with the alpha level of 0.01 of overall importance among COO, brand and product category cues. Therefore, the test of homogeneity of variances was conducted to check the variances of data in order to select the method for studying the pairwise comparisons between pairs of product cues. The results of testing the variances of data are shown in the following table *(See Table 5.7.1).*

Table 5.7 Mean Rating of Overall Importance Regarding Three Product Cues

Product Cues	COO *(Mean)*	Brand *(Mean)*	Product Category *(Mean)*	Significance	F-value
Overall Importance	2.99	2.75	2.82	0.001***	7.093

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Table 5.7.1 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Overall Importance of Product Cues

Test of Homogeneity of Variances		
	Levene Statistic	Significance
Overall Importance	10.82	0.000***

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

The Levene Statistic Results and p-value in Table 5.7.1 indicated that there were differences in the variance of data with respect to overall importance. This result was derived with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01. This evidence helped to determine the further analysis method that was employed, namely, *Tamhane's T2* was used to check the pairwise comparisons of means of overall importance among the

three product cues. The results of subsequent analysis are indicated in the following tables *(Table 5.7.2, 5.7.3 and 5.7.4).*

Table 5.7.2 Pairwise Comparisons of Means of Overall Importance between COO and Brand

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

Product Cues	**COO** *(Mean)*	**Brand** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference** *(Mean)*	**Significance**
Overall Importance	2.99	2.75	0.24	0.001***

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Table 5.7.3 Pairwise Comparisons of Means of Overall Importance between Brand and Product Category

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

Product Cues	**Product Category** *(Mean)*	**Brand** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference** *(Mean)*	**Significance**
Overall Importance	2.82	2.75	0.07	0.585

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Table 5.7.4 Pairwise Comparisons of Means of Overall Importance between COO and Product Category

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

Product Cues	**COO** *(Mean)*	**Product Category** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference** *(Mean)*	**Significance**
Overall Importance	2.99	2.82	0.17	0.034**

** Statistically Significant (p < .05)

Based on Tamhane's T2 results of pairwise comparisons of means, the study found significant mean differences with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01 for the pairs of COO and brand *(See Table 5.7.2)*. Significant differences in overall importance between pairs were also found in the case of pairwise comparison of means between COO and product category. These results were derived with the statistically significant results based on the alpha level of 0.05 *(See Table 5.7.4)*. The observation of the comparisons between the pairs of brand and product category revealed no statistically significant mean differences with respect to overall importance *(See Table 5.7.3)*.

The results that were derived from the test of comparisons of means identified that Thai consumers perceived COO cue has a greater overall importance than brand and product category cues. These results indicate that there is no significant difference of means of overall importance between brand and product category cues. Based on these results, it seems to be that Thai consumers consider COO to be a more important product cue when they make their purchase decisions. However, this study cannot conclude that Thai consumers consider COO cue as the first priority, and product category and brand as the second and last priorities as indicated in ANOVA results in Table 5.7 when they evaluate the clothing products. This is because the analysis did not receive the significant results of pairwise comparisons of means in every pair among the three product cues.

Nevertheless, researcher was curious to study the attitudes of Thai consumers especially when they gave their opinions focusing on individual product cues. It was particularly interesting to observe which cues would be the first, second and last priorities to affect their purchase decisions. Thus, the next ranking analysis with respect to the three product cues was undertaken to obtain the results that might help to shed light on this issue. This ranking analysis was in accordance with question item 8 in the field survey questionnaire.

The results derived responses to supplementary question item 8 in part II of the field survey questionnaire from this analysis are shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Rank Order of Product Cues Affecting Purchase Decision

Product Cues	Rank No.1		Rank No.2		Rank No.3	
	Frequency	*Percentage*	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Country-of-Origin (COO)	270	56.3	106	22.1	104	21.6
Brand	130	27.1	200	41.6	150	31.3
Product Category	80	16.6	174	36.3	226	47.1

Respondents were asked to rank the order of the three product cues in order to measure which cues were the major or minor determinants that influenced Thai consumers' evaluation of fashion clothing products. The survey participants were asked to rank the product cues (number 1 = extremely important, number 2 = somewhat important, number 3 = slightly important). The percentage of the numerical count of participants who ranked number 1 or 2 or 3 for each product cue is indicated in Table 5.8. This outcome suggests that the cue that affected Thai consumers most in making purchase decisions (Rank No.1) seems likely to be *COO* (56.3% compared with the other two product cues). Rank No.2 was revealed to possibly be the *brand* (41.6% compared with the other two product cues) and Rank No.3 appeared to be the *product category* (47.1% compared with the other two product cues). However, these results needed to be tested by employing further analysis in order to check whether they were based on the statistically significant results.

Therefore, *the Test for Homogeneity Chi-Square Test* was undertaken to ascertain whether the results in Table 5.8 were reliable and based on the statistically significant results. The researcher defined the hypotheses for testing the homogeneity of data as the follows.

H_0: There is no difference of data between groups
H_a: There is difference of data between groups

The following tables *(Table 5.8.1 and 5.8.2)* were derived from *the Test for Homogeneity Chi-Square Test.*

Table 5.8.1 Crosstabulation of Product Cues and Ranking Comparisons

		Rank Order Comparisons			Total
		Rank No.1 *(Frequency)*	**Rank No.2** *(Frequency)*	**Rank No.3** *(Frequency)*	
Product Cues	*COO*	270	106	104	480
	Brand	130	200	150	480
	Product category	80	174	226	480
Total		480	480	480	1440

Table 5.8.2 Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	198.150[a]	4	0.000***
Likelihood Ratio	195.963	4	0.000***
Linear-by-Linear Association	151.994	1	0.000***
N of Valid Cases	1440		

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

The *Pearson Chi-Square* in Table 5.8.2 shows the significant results with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01, p-value = 0.000 (Reject H_0, Accept H_a). This outcome ascertains that there was significant difference with regard to the data between groups. Thus, the data of rank order in Table 5.8 and 5.8.1 are reliable. It can thus be concluded that the cue that affected Thai consumers most in making purchase decisions (Rank No.1) is *COO*, followed by the Rank No.2, which is the *brand* cue. Rank No.3 belonged to the *product category*. However, these results only indicate Thai consumers' opinions when they focused on individual product cues as the important factors that affect their purchase decisions. This outcome has not yet identified how those product cues play a role to influence Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products. The study used this outcome as supplementary information, which was able to be used to support the main study.

5.2.3.3 The Role of Marketing Mix Factors on Consumers' Decision Making on General Clothing

This section is the last part of the *General Results*. Table 5.9 indicates the results of responses to question 9 in part II of the field survey questionnaire. The questionnaire asked the respondents to consider four factors of the promotion mix, namely, product, price, distribution and promotion and assess their impact on consumers' purchase decision of clothing product over a Likert scale (score 1 = extremely, score 2 = very, score 3 = somewhat, score 4 = not very, and score 5 = hardly). The mean rating of the overall score with respect to those factors were derived from an average of the sum of respondents' scores for each factor.

Table 5.9 Mean Rating of Factors Affecting Consumers' Purchase Decisions of General Clothing

Promotion Mix	Factors affect on consumers'clothing choice	Mean
PRODUCT	Quality	4.19
	Brand name	3.54
	Design	4.18
	Fashion	3.90
	Durability	4.08
PRICE	Reasonable price compare with quality	4.23
	Variety of price	4.00
	Reasonable price compare with "Made-in" country	3.75
	Price when compare with the other brands	3.83
PLACE / DISTRIBUTION	Convenience to buy	3.98
	Many branches or distribution channels	3.86
	Variety of Product designs for choosing	4.05
	Variety of Product designs form various brands available for comparing before making a decision	3.84
PROMOTION	Advertising (e.g. magazines)	3.64
	Marketing activities (e.g. discount)	3.97
	Fashion shows / Events	3.33
	Introducing products via website / internet	3.30

Table 5.9 demonstrates the descriptive results with respect to the factors that might affect Thai consumers' purchase decisions of clothing products. These results were not significant. In order to receive the significant results and examine which factors could be used as predictors of purchase intention, the *Multiple Linear Regression* was subsequently conducted. The researcher defined the hypotheses to check whether all of the determinants (independent variables) would influence the purchase intention (dependent variable) and could be used as predictors of purchase intentions. These hypotheses are indicated below.

H_0: No independent variables can be used as predictors of purchase intention.

H_a: Some independent variables can be used as predictors of purchase intention.

The study tested H_a. If the results derived from *Multiple Linear Regression* were indicative of significant results, the test would reject H_0 and accept H_a. The study would then continue testing to determine which independent variables were appropriate to use as predictors of purchase intentions. The following table *(Table 5.9.1)* presents the results that were obtained from this analysis.

Table 5.9.1 Multiple Linear Regression

ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.155	17	1.068	0.884	0.593(a)
	Residual	558.093	462	1.208		
	Total	576.248	479			

a Predictors: (Constant), b9.pro4, b9.prod1, b9.pla3, b9.prod2, b9.pri4, b9.prod4, b9.pri1, b9.pla2, b9.pri3, b9.pro2, b9.prod5, b9.prod3, b9.pri2, b9.pro1, b9.pla4, b9.pla1, b9.pro3

b Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

The results in the above table show insignificant results. This outcome means that none of the independent variables can be used as predictors of purchase intentions. Therefore, there was no requirement to continue testing for which independent variables would be appropriate to use as predictors of purchase intentions.

However, the researcher still expected that there should be some relation between determinants, which might affect Thai consumers' purchase decisions of clothing products, and purchase intentions. As a consequence, the researcher employed *Correlation Coefficient* method for further analysis in order to observe the relation between *factors* that might affect consumers' purchase decisions and *purchase intentions.* Table 5.9.2 demonstrates the results that were derived from this analysis method.

Table 5.9.2 Correlation Coefficient

Factors affect on consumers'clothing choice	Purchase Intention	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Quality	-0.004	0.933
Brandname	0.016	0.719
Design	-0.036	0.436
Fashion	-0.015	0.746
Durability	0.009	0.841
Reasonable price compare with quality	-0.067	0.143
Variety of price	0.060	0.191
Reasonable price compare with "Made-in " Country	0.071	0.120
Price when compare with the other brands	0.092	0.045**
Convenience to buy	0.009	0.843
Many branches or distribution channels	0.011	0.805
Variety of Product designs for choosing	-0.006	0.901
Variety of Product designs form various brands available for comparing before making a decision	-0.023	0.614
Advertising (e.g. magazines)	0.017	0.708
Marketing activities (e.g. discount)	0.012	0.795
Fashion show/Events	0.062	0.173
Introducing products via website/internet	0.053	0.247

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

The results in Table 5.9.2 point out that the factor which has an impact on purchase intention, is *"Price when compare with the other brands"*. This result was obtained with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.05. This outcome suggests that the factor *"Price when compare with the other brands"* appears to be of significant concern for Thai consumers when they are making apparel choices. Thus future research may wish to include *"price"* as one of the product cues in subsequent studies.

In summary, the results of the field survey with respect to favorable or unfavorable COO suggest that Thai consumers regard clothing products made in a country with a higher level of development to be preferable to a product from a country with a lower level of development, regardless of the clothing's brand equity level.

Arising out of this finding, the *general results section* found that Thai consumers identified COO cue as the most important cue that affected their purchase decisions. Brand and product categories were identified as the second and third most important considerations in terms of product cues that affect purchase decisions. These results refer to the case where Thai consumers gave their opinions when they were considering and focusing on individual product cues. The role of those three product cues in terms of how they play their roles to influence Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing product has not yet been shown in this general results section. In addition, the results for the overall importance of product cues in Thai consumers' minds did not reveal the results to be similar to the results of rank order of product cues that might affect purchase decisions. Thus, the study needed to undertake further analysis before being able to make definitive overall conclusions in this study.

The last part of the analysis with respect to the factors that might affect Thai consumers' purchase decision of clothing products in the *general results section* was reported. The results suggest that the factor *"Price when compare with the other brands"* appears to dominate Thai consumers' perceptions of a promotion mix of clothing that could persuade them to give certain clothing items their preferences.

These general results may not be viewed as sufficiently conclusive to respond to the study's hypotheses as expected. However, these results are indicative of Thai consumers' broad inclination and could form a basis for future research which incorporates a more robust data analysis. It is also the study's intention to use general results as the information that might be able to support the main study.

5.2.4 *Main Study Results*

The results of the main study were derived from the participants' responses to the field survey questions 2 and 4 in part II of the questionnaire. The study examined the

effects of the three independent variables or three product cues, namely COO, brand, and purchase involvement on consumers' perceived quality of product and purchase intentions. Respondents were required to respond to one of twelve scenarios by seeing an assigned picture and indicating their opinions with respect to the dimensions of perceived quality of product in the picture and a likelihood of purchasing that particular product. This data was examined by employing Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) using the SPSS program.

The results from the main study are intended to examine hypotheses. Those hypotheses are predicated on the assumption of the interaction of the three independent variables (country's development, brand equity, and purchase involvement) with the two dependent variables (perceived quality of product and purchase intention). This study specifically enunciates the hypotheses in order to examine the main effects of three product cues on product evaluation as well as the interaction effects among the three product cues on product evaluation. The summary of those hypotheses are presented in the following section.

5.2.4.1 Hypotheses Setting for Main Study Testing

This section will summarize the hypotheses for the study including identifying the hypotheses setting for testing which was explained before in Section 4.9.3, p. 82. This section will thereafter describe the criteria for testing the hypotheses. The following hypotheses include paragraph the *null hypothesis (H_0)* and the *alternative hypothesis (H_a)*.

H1: Thai consumers prefer a clothing product made in a more developed country than one made in a less developed country.

> *H_0: Thai consumers do not prefer a clothing product made in a more developed country than one made in a less developed country.*
> *H_a: Thai consumers prefer a clothing product made in a more developed country than one made in a less developed country.*

H2: The main effect of the level of brand equity affects Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

H_0: The level of brand equity has no direct effect to affect Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

H_a: The main effect of the level of brand equity affects Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

H3: The direct effect of the level of purchase involvement of Thai consumers influences their evaluation of clothing products.

H_0: The direct effect of the level of purchase involvement of Thai consumers has no influences their evaluation of clothing products.

H_a: The direct effect of the level of purchase involvement of Thai consumers influences their evaluation of clothing products.

H4: High equity brand can overcome the effects of relatively low COO image on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation.

H_0: High equity brand cannot overcome the effects of relatively low COO image on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation.

H_a: High equity brand can overcome the effects of relatively low COO image on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation.

H5: The levels of purchase involvement moderate the main effects of COO on product evaluation of apparel products.

H_0: The main effects of COO on product evaluation of apparel products are not moderated by the levels of purchase involvement.

H_a: The levels of purchase involvement moderate the main effects of COO on product evaluation of apparel products.

H6: The level of brand equity interacts with the level of purchase involvement and in turn their effects influence Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

H_0: The level of brand equity does not interact with the level of purchase involvement in affecting Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

H_a: The level of brand equity interacts with the level of purchase involvement and in turn their effects influence Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

H7: There is no interaction effect between a country's development, brand equity, and consumer's product purchase involvement on consumer's evaluation of apparel products.

H_0: There is no interaction effect between a country's development, brand equity, and consumer's product purchase involvement on consumer's evaluation of apparel products.
H_a: There is an interaction effect between a country's development, brand equity, and consumer's product purchase involvement on consumer's evaluation of apparel products.

This study observes a standardized criterion for either of the results rejecting or accepting the hypothesis. This decision is based on the significant level (alpha level: α) and *p*-value. If *p*-value < α, null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. The study employs significant levels of 0.01, 0.05 and 0.10 for determining the statistical results and inferring the reliability of the results. It is the intention of the study intends to prove alternative hypothesis (H_a). It is possible that the entire null hypotheses (H_0) for the main study will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) will be accepted if the significant value is less than 0.10. As a consequence, if the results in any following result tables for the main study yield significant results with *p*-value < 0.01, 0.05, or 0.10, in can be concluded from this analysis that the study accepts the hypothesis (H_a).

5.2.4.2 Overall MANOVA Results for Main Study

The study employed MANOVA as a statistical analysis technique to examine the data from the main study. As noted earlier, the study intended to examine the three product cues, which consist of COO, brand, and purchase involvement (or product category). This research focuses on the effects of three independent variables (level of country's development (D), level of brand equity (BE), and level of purchase involvement (PI))

and their interaction effects on two dependent variables, namely, perceived quality of product and purchase intention of product. These combined effects can be illustrated as follows:

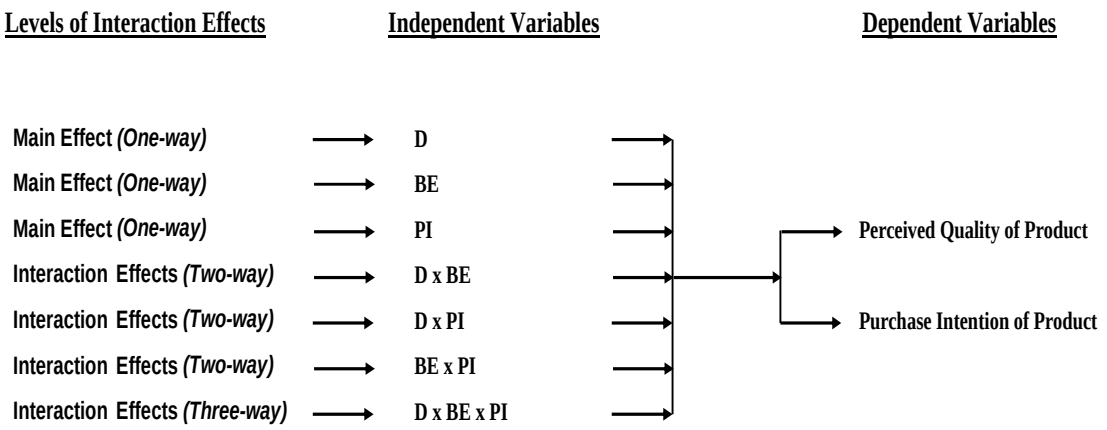

Figure 5.1 Relationships of Independent Variables on Dependent Variables.

This section reports the overall MANOVA results derived from the main study. The MANOVA results in the following table *(Table 5.10)* indicate the overall impact of three independent variables *(D, BE* and *PI)* and their interaction effects on two dependent variables *(perceived quality of product* and *purchase intention of product).* The moderating effects of the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement can also be seen from the interaction effects in the MANOVA results. All of the significant results in the MANOVA analysis are based on the statistically significant alpha levels of 0.01, 0.05 and 0.10. The result report starts with the overall results of the main effects and is followed by the overall results of the interaction effects. The responses to the study's hypotheses are included in this section. Some observations in the MANOVA analysis led to the need to employ further analysis in order to answer the study's hypotheses. Thus, further analysis, explanation and discussion are provided in Sections 5.2.4.3 for the main effects and Section 5.2.4.4 for the interaction effects.

Table 5.10 MANOVA Results of the Effect of Contextual Variables on Perceived Quality and Purchase Intention

	Variables	Quality of Design	Quality of Workmanship	Quality of Product	Product Reliability	Purchase Intention
Row 1	**Country's Development (D)**	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Row 2	**Brand Equity (BE)**	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.004***
Row 3	**Product Involvement (PI)**	0.007***	0.027**	0.003***	0.003***	0.016**
Row 4	**D x BE**	0.049**	0.042**	0.055*	0.054*	0.012**
Row 5	**D x PI**	0.136	0.054*	0.018**	0.876	0.054*
Row 6	**BE x PI**	0.060*	0.279	0.051*	0.229	0.009***
Row 7	**D x BE x PI**	0.536	0.060*	0.026**	0.798	0.016**

* Statistically significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

Overall MANOVA Results of Main Effects

Table 5.10 indicates MANOVA results that are derived from the analysis of the main study. It appears that all the main effects with respect to the level of country's development (D), the level of brand equity (BE) and the level of purchase involvement (PI) impact on consumers' evaluation of clothing products. These results are evinced by the statistically significant results in every dimension of product evaluation *(See Row 1 to 3).* Based on this outcome, we can respond to the study's hypotheses with respect to the hypotheses of main effects (H2 and H3) by accepting that they are true. We can state that *"the main effect of the level of brand equity affects Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products"* as well as *"the direct effect of the level of purchase involvement of Thai consumers influences their evaluation of clothing products".*

However, another hypothesis of the main effect (H1), which stated that *"Thai consumers prefer a clothing product made in a more developed country than one made in a less developed country"* cannot be responded to at this stage. Subsequent analysis is required for proving the hypothesis H1. Further explanation and discussion with respect to all of the main effects are indicated in the following section *(Section 5.2.4.3).*

Overall MANOVA Results of Interaction Effects

MANOVA shows some statistically significant results with respect to the interaction effects among the three independent variables (factor D, BE and PI). As can be seen from Row 4 to 7 in Table 5.10, this study found some significant results showed in the interaction effects of three-way *(Row 7)* and two-way *(Row 4 to 6).* With respect to the interaction effects (three-way), we found that the interaction effects between factors D, BE and PI occur and in turn influence consumers' evaluation of clothing products. The results in Table 5.10 show two significant results with statistically significant alpha level of 0.05 for the dimensions of Quality of Product and Purchase Intention. Another significant result emerged at the statistically significant alpha level of 0.10 for the dimension of Quality of Workmanship *(See Row 7).* With regard to the interaction effects (two-way), this study found that factor BE interacts with factor PI affecting consumers' product evaluation for the dimensions of Quality of Design, Quality of Product and Purchase Intention with the statistically significant alpha levels

of 0.10, 0.10 and 0.01 respectively *(See Row 6).* We also found that *factors D and PI* as well as *factors D and BE* can interact in affecting consumers' perception of quality and purchase intention of clothing products. These results are evinced by the three significant results with respect to the dimensions of Quality of Workmanship, Quality of Product and Purchase Intention for the combined effects of factor D and PI. These significant results are based on the statistically significant alpha levels of 0.10, 0.05, and 0.10 respectively *(See Row 5).* For the combined effects of D and BE, the significant results appear in every aspect of product evaluation dimensions with the statistical alpha levels of 0.05 and 0.10 as indicated in Row 4, Table 5.10. Based on this outcome, it is reasonable to state that the three factors with respect to the level of country's development (D), the level of brand equity (BE) and the level of purchase involvement (PI) can interact in affecting Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products. Therefore, this outcome demonstrates support for H_a*: There is an interaction effect between a country's development, brand equity, and consumer's product purchase involvement on consumer's evaluation of apparel products.* As a result, hypothesis H7 which states that *"There is no interaction effect between a country's development, brand equity, and consumer's product purchase involvement on consumer's evaluation of apparel products"* should be rejected. It is reasonable to respond hypothesis H7 as rejected because this study found some significant interaction effects among the three independent variables with respect to factors D, BE and PI.

MANOVA results indicate a number of significant results with respect to the interaction effects of D by BE *(See Row 4 and 7).* This study looked at the interaction effects of D by BE in the interaction among the factors D, BE and PI (three-way). It was found that there were two significant results with statistically significant alpha level of 0.05 for the dimensions of Quality of Product and Purchase Intention. Also revealed was another significant result at the statistical alpha level of 0.10 for the dimension of Quality of Workmanship. In addition, there also appears a significant interaction between factors D and BE (two-way). The interaction effects in turn affect consumers' perceptions of quality of product and purchase intention in accordance with the five dimensions of product evaluation, as indicated in Table 5.10. The results show that these statistically significant results exist across all dimensions of consumers' product evaluation. With respect to the dimensions of quality of design,

quality of workmanship and purchase intention, the significant results are derived with reliability at the significant level of 0.05. The results of the other two dimensions of product evaluation, namely, quality of product and quality of reliability are obtained with the statistical reliability at the significant level of 0.10 as indicated in Table 5.10.

Based on these results, it is reasonable to state that the interaction effects between the level of country's development and the level of brand equity occur. The level of brand equity (BE) appears to moderate the main effect of COO (country's development) on Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products. However, this outcome still cannot answer the study's hypothesis with respect to the hypothesis H4, which stated that *"High equity brand can overcome the effects of relatively low COO image on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation"*. Thus, further analysis is employed in order to prove the hypothesis H4. More explanation and discussion are provided in the following section *(Section 5.2.4.4).*

The results obtained from MANOVA also suggest that the interaction effects of factors D and PI occur for clothing products. MANOVA shows some significant results with respect to the interaction effects of D by PI *(See Row 5 and 7).* We observed the interaction effects of D by PI in the interaction among the factors D, BE and PI (three-way). This research found two significant results with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.05 for the dimensions of Quality of Product and Purchase Intention. This study also found significant results at the alpha level of 0.10 of significance for the dimension of Quality of Workmanship. This study also found the interaction effects of D by PI in the interaction effects (two-way) between factors D and PI. This outcome is evinced by the two significant results with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.10 for the dimensions of Quality of Workmanship and Purchase Intention. This outcome is also supported by the significant result at the significant alpha level of 0.05 for the dimension of Quality of Product. Based on the above results, there appears to emerge some evidence supporting the impact of COO (country's development) on product evaluation as moderated by the level of purchase involvement. Thus, the hypothesis H5, which stated that *"The levels of purchase involvement moderate the main effects of COO on product evaluation of apparel products"*, is supported. Further discussion with respect to the role and relation

between country's development and the level of purchase of involvement is indicated in the following section *(Section 5.2.4.4).*

MANOVA results also present some significant results for the interaction effects between factors BE and PI. Two significant results were found at the significant alpha level of 0.10 for the dimensions of Quality of Design and Quality of Product. The dimension of Purchase Intention is also significant at the 0.01 level of significance. This outcome suggests that the interaction effects between the two moderating factors with respect to the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement occur and impact on product evaluation. Thus, this outcome appears to support hypothesis H6. This hypothesis stated that *"H6: The level of brand equity interacts with the level of purchase involvement and in turn their effects influence Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products"*. Further discussion with respect to the example cases of the interaction effects between BE and PI is demonstrated in the following section *(Section 5.2.4.4).*

The abovementioned results with respect to the overall MANOVA results are the main study of this research. Most of results that are derived from the MANOVA analysis provide responses for the study's hypotheses. However, some hypotheses with regard to hypothesis H1 and H4 have not been proved. Further analyses are required in order to be able to answer the study's hypotheses. In addition, more details of explanation and discussion with respect to the main effects and the interaction effects are provided in Sections 5.2.4.3 and 5.2.4.4, respectively below.

5.2.4.3 Main Effects

The overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10 present the results of main effects (one-way) with respect to the main effects of the levels of country's development (D), the levels of brand equity (BE), and the levels of purchase involvement (PI) on consumers' product evaluation. This product evaluation was based on the perceived quality of the product and the purchase intention for the fashion-clothing products.

The Main Effect of the Level of Country's Development (D) on Product Evaluation

We note that the levels of country's development (D) have an effect on the five dimensions of consumers' product evaluation with the statistically significant results at *p*-value less than 0.01 for each dimension. The five dimensions of product evaluation include quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product, quality of reliability and purchase intention. From these results it can be concluded that the levels of country's development (D) has a significant impact on Thai consumers' perceptions of perceived quality of product and purchase intention of product for fashion-clothing goods.

However, these results still do not clarify hypothesis H1, which states that *"Thai consumers prefer a clothing product made in a more developed country than one made in a less developed country"*. Consequently, an additional statistical analysis technique was employed in order to test hypothesis H1. One-way ANOVA was used to analyze and identify whether there is a significant difference between varying levels of country's development in terms of their effects on consumers' perception of quality of product and purchase intention of product for fashion-clothing goods. The results of the hypothesis test are illustrated in Table 5.11.

The data presented in Table 5.11 indicates the ANOVA results of the mean rating of Thai consumers' perceptions of the different levels of each of the three countries' development on their product evaluations for suits and T-shirts. The results show that there are significant differences in the means among the three countries with different levels of development with respect to suits and T-shirts. These results are based on the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01 for both clothing products. Hence, the pairwise comparisons of means were subsequently employed.

Initially, the test of homogeneity of variances for each group of dimensions of product evalaution was conducted. The results derived from this test are presented in the following tables *(Table 5.11.1 and 5.11.2*). The Levene Statistic Results and p-values in these tables suggest further analysis be undertaken in order to check the differences between pairs. Most of the Levene results for suits and T-shirts revealed significant results *(See Table 5.11.1 and 5.11.2*).

Table 5.11 Mean Rating of Consumers' Perceptions with respect to Three COOs on Their Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Suit					T-shirt				
	Japan *(Mean)*	**Malaysia** *(Mean)*	**Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**Significance**	**F-value**	**Japan** *(Mean)*	**Malaysia** *(Mean)*	**Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**Significance**	**F-value**
Quality of Design	5.13	4.44	3.88	0.000***	28.234	5.14	4.06	3.49	0.000***	54.470
Quality of Workmanship	5.01	4.58	3.93	0.000***	25.110	5.11	4.18	3.64	0.000***	43.296
Quality of Product	4.91	4.45	4.14	0.000***	14.293	4.95	4.21	3.61	0.000***	43.376
Product Reliability	5.28	4.46	3.80	0.000***	43.002	5.08	4.16	3.51	0.000***	57.141
Purchase Intention	5.06	4.43	4.15	0.000***	19.195	5.01	4.35	3.64	0.000***	36.793

*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

Table 5.11.1 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Suits

Test of Homogeneity of Variances		
	Levene Statistic	**Significance**
Quality of Design	3.605	0.029**
Quality of Workmanship	5.856	0.003***
Quality of Product	1.058	0.349
Product Reliability	3.558	0.030**
Purchase Intention	0.884	0.415

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Table 5.11.2 Test of Homogeneity of Variances for T-shirts

Test of Homogeneity of Variances		
	Levene Statistic	**Significance**
Quality of Design	5.734	0.004***
Quality of Workmanship	4.503	0.012**
Quality of Product	2.162	0.117
Product Reliability	5.237	0.006***
Purchase Intention	5.572	0.004***

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)
** Statistically Significant (p < .05)
*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Table 5.11.3 Pairwise Comparisons between Products made in Japan and Malaysia

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	**Suit**				**T-shirt**			
	Japan *(Mean)*	**Malaysia** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference**	**Sig.**	**Japan** *(Mean)*	**Malaysia** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference**	**Sig.**
Quality of Design	5.13	4.44	0.69	0.000***	5.14	4.06	1.08	0.000***
Quality of Workmanship	5.01	4.58	0.43	0.016**	5.11	4.18	0.93	0.000***
Quality of Product	4.91	4.45	0.46	0.005***	4.95	4.21	0.74	0.000***
Product Reliability	5.28	4.46	0.82	0.000***	5.08	4.16	0.92	0.000***
Purchase Intention	5.06	4.43	0.63	0.000***	5.01	4.35	0.66	0.000***

* Statistically Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

Table 5.11.4 Pairwise Comparisons between Products made in Malaysia and Vietnam

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Suit				T-shirt			
	Malaysia *(Mean)*	**Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference**	**Sig.**	**Malaysia** *(Mean)*	**Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference**	**Sig.**
Quality of Design	4.44	3.88	0.56	0.003***	4.06	3.49	0.57	0.002***
Quality of Workmanship	4.58	3.93	0.65	0.000***	4.18	3.64	0.54	0.006***
Quality of Product	4.45	4.14	0.31	0.107	4.21	3.61	0.60	0.000***
Product Reliability	4.46	3.80	0.66	0.000***	4.16	3.51	0.65	0.000***
Purchase Intention	4.43	4.15	0.28	0.196	4.35	3.64	0.71	0.000***

* Statistically Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

Table 5.11.5 Pairwise Comparisons between Products made in Japan and Vietnam

Multiple Comparisons (Tamhane's T2)

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Suit				T-shirt			
	Japan *(Mean)*	**Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference**	**Sig.**	**Japan** *(Mean)*	**Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**Mean Difference**	**Sig.**
Quality of Design	5.13	3.88	1.25	0.000***	5.14	3.49	1.65	0.000***
Quality of Workmanship	5.01	3.93	1.08	0.740	5.11	3.64	1.47	0.000***
Quality of Product	4.91	4.14	0.77	0.000***	4.95	3.61	1.34	0.000***
Product Reliability	5.28	3.80	1.48	0.000***	5.08	3.51	1.57	0.000***
Purchase Intention	5.06	4.15	0.91	0.000***	5.01	3.64	1.37	0.000***

* Statistically Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically Significant ($p < .01$)

The majority of significant results in Table 5.11.1 and 5.11.2 indicate that there were differences in the variances for each group. Therefore, Tamhane's T2 was subsequently employed for comparing the differences between pairs. The results obtained from this method are demonstrated in the above tables *(Table 5.11.3, 5.11.4 and 5.11.5).*

Based on the pairwise comparisons of means (Tamhane's T2) results, the study found that Thai consumers prefer clothing products made in Japan in comparison with the products made in Malaysia with the statistically significant results in every dimension of product evaluation for suits and T-shirts *(See Table 5.11.3).* This study also found that Thai consumers perceive clothing products made in Malaysia more favorable than products made in Vietnam. It thus focus that Thai consumers prefer the products made in Japan more than those made in Vietnam. These results were derived on the basis of statistically significant results for every dimension of product evaluation for T-shirts *(See Table 5.11.4 and 5.11.5).* With regard to the results of suits made in Malaysia compared with the products made in Vietnam and the comparisons of suits made in Japan and Vietnam, most of the results produced were significant *(See Table 5.11.4 and 5.11.5).* These significant results in some dimensions of product evaluation for suits in the comparisons of both countries in Table 5.11.4 and 5.11.5 reveal partial support. This illustrates partial support for the claim that suits made in Malaysia are perceived to be of better quality than suits made in Vietnam. The same conclusions can be drawn in the case of the comparison of clothing product made in Japan and Vietnam.

According to the ANOVA and Tamhane's T2 results above, it appears that Thai consumers perceive products made in a more highly developed country to be of a better quality and are more likely to purchase these products than ones that are made in a less developed country. It can also be stated that Thai consumers assess products made in Japan with a higher mean score than products made in Malaysia and Vietnam for all the evaluation dimensions of suits and T-shirts. Moreover, it appears that Thai consumers prefer suits and T-shirts made in Malaysia rather than the suits and T-shirts made in Vietnam. We can therefore reasonably conclude that Thai consumers prefer a clothing product made in a more developed country than in a less developed country. This phenomenon suggests that the increased levels of purchase involvement (e.g.

high purchase involvement product represented by suits) might influence consumers' perceptions of COO with regard to their evaluation of clothing products. It is noteworthy that the above results did not indicate the significant results for every dimension of product evaluation for suits in terms of the comparison of the countries in which the products are made. Based on the above phenomenon that are derived from the analysis in this part, this research examined the role of the levels of purchase involvement in the other parts of observations in order to study how this product cue would affect Thai consumers' clothing choices.

Previous studies (e.g. Bhaskaran and Sukumaran, 2007; Lim and Darley, 1997) have identified that COO effects might or might not affect consumers' product evaluation. However, the results obtained from this study appear to be in line with the majority of past studies which have been published since the mid 1960s, which suggest that COO cues have an effect on consumers' evaluation of products (Al-Sulaiti & Baker 1998). Further, the results from this study also show evidence that the level of a country's development affect Thai consumers in their evaluation of products. The product preferences of Thai consumers reveal that Thai consumers consider products made in more developed countries as superior to products made in lesser developed countries. These outcomes appear to be consistent with a number of contemporary studies conducted in Western countries. Based on this evidence, therefore, the current study suggests that the level of a country's development or the stage of economic development also plays a potential role in exerting an influence on Thai consumers' product evaluation.

The Main Effects of the Level of Brand Equity (BE) on Product Evaluation

The overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10 suggest that the level of brand equity (BE) influences consumers' product evaluation in terms of their perception of the quality of the product and their purchase intentions towards the product. This result is evidenced by the statistically significant results of alpha level 0.01 as indicated in Table 5.10 for the five dimensions of product evaluation, which consist of quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product, quality of reliability, and purchase intention. The above results suggest that it is reasonable to support H2, which states *"The main effect of the level of brand equity affects Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products"*. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that there is a considerable effect of the level of

brand equity (BE) on Thai consumers' perceptions of the quality of the product and their purchase intentions towards the product for fashion-clothing.

Nevertheless, the overall MANOVA results with respect to the main effect of the level of brand equity (BE) on product evaluation are not sufficient to clarify what role is played by the different levels of brand equity in terms of their influence on consumers' product evaluation. The study did not set the hypothesis for this concern. However, the role of the different levels of brand equity impact on product evaluation would be advantage for this research. Therefore, the study employed ***t-test analysis*** including ***Levene's Test*** as the subsequent data analysis techniques for investigating the role of the different levels of brand equity.

Tables 5.12, 5.12.1, and 5.12.2 indicate the results derived from *t-test* analysis and *Levene's Test* with regard to the results of confirming the differences of means between the two levels of brand equity (high / low) in each dimension of product evaluation for suits and T-shirts. The study employed the brand *"Greyhound"* as a surrogate for high equity brand products and the brand *"AIIZ"* as a surrogate for low equity brand products. The results derived from those analyses are shown in the following tables.

An independent-Samples T Test analysis in Table 5.12 and 5.12.1 reveals the results of *Levene's Test*. This test helped to ascertain whether there were differences of means between *High Equity Brand* and *Low Equity Brand* for suits *(Table 5.12)* and T-shirts *(Table 5.12.1).* The column item *"Levene's Test for Equality of Variances"* in those tables indicates the value of variances for each of the dimensions of product evaluation. They show whether they had statistically significant results with the alpha level of 0.05 at confidence level of 95%. If the results are significant, this represents *"Equal variances not assumed"*, which means there are differences of variances for that group dimension of product evaluation. Thus, p-value in that dimension of product evaluation was chosen from the bottom p-value in the column "Sig. (2-tailed)". In contrast, if the result is insignificant, this represents *"Equal variances*

Table 5.12 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Suits)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.289	0.591	1.051	238	0.295	0.16	0.151	-0.139	0.455
	Equal variances not assumed			1.051	237.332	0.295	0.16	0.151	-0.139	0.455
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.561	0.455	2.126	238	0.035	0.29	0.137	0.021	0.562
	Equal variances not assumed			2.126	237.652	0.035	0.29	0.137	0.021	0.562
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	1.511	0.220	1.733	238	0.084	0.22	0.125	-0.030	0.463
	Equal variances not assumed			1.733	235.710	0.084	0.22	0.125	-0.030	0.463
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.299	0.585	1.940	238	0.054	0.29	0.150	-0.005	0.588
	Equal variances not assumed			1.940	237.622	0.054	0.29	0.150	-0.005	0.588
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.487	0.486	0.188	238	0.851	0.03	0.133	-0.236	0.286
	Equal variances not assumed			0.188	236.463	0.851	0.03	0.133	-0.236	0.286

Table 5.12.1 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for T-shirts)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	1.197	0.275	3.290	238	0.001	0.51	0.155	0.204	0.813
	Equal variances not assumed			3.290	233.931	0.001	0.51	0.155	0.204	0.813
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	2.975	0.086	3.233	238	0.001	0.48	0.15	0.189	0.778
	Equal variances not assumed			3.233	233.607	0.001	0.48	0.15	0.189	0.778
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	2.007	0.158	4.023	238	0.000	0.53	0.133	0.272	0.794
	Equal variances not assumed			4.023	227.064	0.000	0.53	0.133	0.272	0.795
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.955	0.329	3.521	238	0.001	0.5	0.142	0.220	0.780
	Equal variances not assumed			3.521	233.496	0.001	0.5	0.142	0.220	0.780
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	1.031	0.311	3.305	238	0.001	0.48	0.146	0.195	0.771
	Equal variances not assumed			3.305	232.567	0.001	0.48	0.146	0.195	0.771

Table 5.12.2 Mean Rating of Product Evaluation with respect to Two Levels of Brand Equity

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Suit				T-shirt			
	Greyhound *(Mean)*	**AIIZ** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**	**Greyhound** *(Mean)*	**AIIZ** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**
Quality of Design	4.56	4.40	1.051	0.295	4.48	3.98	3.290	0.001***
Quality of Workmanship	4.65	4.36	2.126	0.035**	4.55	4.07	3.233	0.001***
Quality of Product	4.61	4.39	1.733	0.084*	4.53	3.99	4.023	0.000***
Product Reliability	4.66	4.37	1.940	0.054*	4.50	4.00	3.521	0.001***
Purchase Intention	4.56	4.53	0.188	0.851	4.58	4.09	3.305	0.001***

* Statistically significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

assumed", which means there are no differences of variances for that group dimension of product evaluation. Thus, p-value in that dimension of product evaluation was chosen from the upper p-value in the column "Sig. (2-tailed)". Please note that in other sections where these tests have been undertaken, the decision has been made not to replicate this explanation.

As can be seen from the statistically significant results shown in the column "Sig. (2-tailed)" in Tables 5.12 and 5.12.1, these results were put to use for confirming in Table 5.12.2 that there were differences of means between *High Equity Brand* and *Low Equity Brand* for *T-shirts* in every dimension of product evaluation. With regard to *Suits*, there appear to be some significant results particularly in the dimensions of *Quality of Workmanship, Quality of Product* and *Product reliability.*

The above table *(Table 5.12.2)* continues summarizing and reporting the results of comparisons of mean ratings in each dimension of product evaluation between *High Equity Brand* and *Low Equity Brand* for *suits* and *T-shirts*.

As was evident from the MANOVA results, the level of brand equity has a significant impact on Thai consumers' product evaluation. However, the overall results do not illustrate how *different* level of brand equity would affect Thai consumers on product evaluation for fashion-clothing product. The results in Table 5.12.2, which were obtained by using *t-test* data analysis technique and the *Levene's Test*, clarify whether varying levels of brand equity influence Thai consumers' perceptions with regard to their product evaluation of fashion-clothing and to what extent. The results point out that Thai consumers perceive high equity brand products as being of better quality for each of the quality dimensions. These results give evidence to the obvious that the likelihood of consumers purchasing high equity brands of T-shirts is more than the likelihood of purchasing low equity brands of T-shirts. These results yield the statistically significant results with alpha level of 0.01 as indicated in Table 5.12.2

However, the results of the analysis suggest that consumers' perceptions were somewhat different for suits. Statistically significant outcomes were observed on only three dimensions of the consumers' product evaluation, namely, quality of workmanship, quality of product and product reliability. This result was reliable with

the significant results being alpha level of 0.05 for the quality of workmanship dimension and the alpha level of 0.10 each for product quality and product reliability dimensions *(Table 5.12.2).* Hence, the study can conclude that Thai consumers perceive high equity brand products to have a better quality of workmanship, quality of product and product reliability than low equity brands but not for the dimensions of quality of design. There is also evidence from the results that high equity brands of suits do not evoke a greater purchase intention than low equity brands of suits.

The above results suggest that it is reasonable to support the statement of observation with respect to the role of the levels of brand equity on Thai consumers' product evaluation. This states that *"Thai consumers evaluate high equity clothing products as better quality (and with greater purchase inclination) than the low equity clothing products"* in the case of T-shirts. However, the outcome in Table 5.12.2 offers only partial support for the above statement in the case of suits.

There have been some suggestions (e.g. Ahmed et al., 2004; Schaefer, 1997) that consumers appear to evaluate particular products in a quick and direct way based on their perception of a product when they are familiar with the brand name. There have also been some discussions (e.g. Yasin and Noor, 2007; Simoes and Dibb, 2001; Keller, 1993) that the brand name in consumers' minds integrates the perception of consumers regarding equity to the brand name. It may be summarized that consumers might perceive high equity branded products as having a high level of quality. However, whether high equity branded products are regarded as being ones with higher quality embedded in that product could vary depending on various factors. These factors could include the product categories and environmental circumstances (e.g. when other extrinsic or intrinsic cues are involved in the product perception including the product evaluation procedure). Such results obtained from this study provide partial support to the study's observation with respect to the different levels of brand equity as mentioned above for the case of suits. Consequently, the implication with regard to the main effect of the level of brand equity on product evaluation needs to remain product specific.

It is noted that the results obtained from the analysis in this part also provide evidence with respect to the role of purchase involvement. This part of analysis indicates levels

of purchase involvement might affect consumers' perceptions of COO in terms of their evaluation of clothing products. As can be seen from the above results in Table 5.12.2, when the level of purchase involvement is high, there are very few significant differences between high and low equity brands. In addition, the results also indicate that when the level of purchase involvement is low there are many significant differences between high and low equity brands. Based on this outcome, this research needs to further investigate what role the levels of purchase involvement plays in influencing Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products in the other parts of analysis in this study.

The above analysis indicates the results derived from observing the different levels of brand equity affect Thai consumers' product evaluation in each individual clothing product. Next, this study observed the strength of each level of brand equity by comparing both clothing products within the same brand with a focus on how they would affect Thai consumers' clothing choices. The following tables *(Table 5.12.3, 5.12.4 and 5.12.5)* demonstrate the results of this investigation.

The results in the following three tables are derived from ***t-test*** analysis procedure and the ***Levene's Test.*** These tests were designed to indicate whether there were differences of means between the two levels of purchase involvement within the same brand. The summary of the above analyses is demonstrated in Table 5.12.5. This study found the differences of means between suits and T-shirts in every dimension of product evaluation for low level of brand equity (represented by AIIZ). There were no significant results indicating the differences of means between suits and T-shirts in any dimension of product evaluation for high level of brand equity (represented by Greyhound). These results were analyzed based on the statistically significant alpha levels of 0.01, 0.05 and 0.10 as indicated in Table 5.12.5. This outcome suggests that the strength of high equity brand embedded in the products can induce Thai consumers to perceive those products as being of high quality. Thai consumers evaluate quality of clothing products and appear to purchase the products because of their familiarity and trust in high equity brands regardless of the levels of purchase involvement. As can be seen from the results in Table 5.12.5, Thai consumers do not perceive suits and T-shirts as being different with regard to high equity brands. However, the levels of involvement appear to affect Thai consumers' clothing choices

Table 5.12.3 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for High Equity Brand)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.200	0.655	0.516	238	0.606	0.08	0.145	-0.211	0.361
	Equal variances not assumed			0.516	237.917	0.606	0.08	0.145	-0.211	0.361
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.207	0.650	0.731	238	0.465	0.10	0.137	-0.169	0.369
	Equal variances not assumed			0.731	237.765	0.465	0.10	0.137	-0.169	0.369
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	1.728	0.190	0.671	238	0.503	0.08	0.124	-0.161	0.328
	Equal variances not assumed			0.671	235.059	0.503	0.08	0.124	-0.161	0.328
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	1.533	0.217	1.133	238	0.258	0.16	0.140	-0.117	0.434
	Equal variances not assumed			1.133	235.099	0.258	0.16	0.140	-0.117	0.434
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.112	0.738	-0.127	238	0.899	-0.02	0.131	-0.275	0.241
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.127	237.254	0.899	-0.02	0.131	-0.275	0.241

Table 5.12.4 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Low Equity Brand)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.042	0.839	2.663	238	0.008	0.43	0.160	0.111	0.739
	Equal variances not assumed			2.663	237.123	0.008	0.43	0.160	0.111	0.739
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	2.200	0.139	1.945	238	0.053	0.29	0.150	-0.004	0.587
	Equal variances not assumed			1.945	234.019	0.053	0.29	0.150	-0.004	0.587
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	1.812	0.180	3.002	238	0.003	0.40	0.133	0.137	0.663
	Equal variances not assumed			3.002	228.254	0.003	0.40	0.133	0.137	0.663
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.476	0.491	2.405	238	0.017	0.37	0.152	0.066	0.667
	Equal variances not assumed			2.405	237.968	0.017	0.37	0.152	0.066	0.667
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.507	0.477	2.989	238	0.003	0.44	0.148	0.151	0.733
	Equal variances not assumed			2.989	234.124	0.003	0.44	0.148	0.151	0.733

Table 5.12.5 Comparisons of the Two Levels of Involvement within the Same Brand

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Greyhound				AIIZ			
	Suits *(Mean)*	**T-shirts** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**	**Suits** *(Mean)*	**T-shirts** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**
Quality of Design	4.56	4.48	0.516	0.606	4.40	3.98	2.663	0.008***
Quality of Workmanship	4.65	4.55	0.731	0.465	4.36	4.07	1.945	0.053*
Quality of Product	4.61	4.53	0.671	0.503	4.39	3.99	3.002	0.003***
Product Reliability	4.66	4.50	1.133	0.258	4.37	4.00	2.405	0.017**
Purchase Intention	4.56	4.58	-0.127	0.899	4.53	4.09	2.989	0.003***

* Statistically significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

for low equity brands. Consumers perceive quality and purchase intention of products differently. Therefore, it is essential to conduct additional analysis with regard to the other product cue, which is the levels of product involvement, and examine how this product cue would affect consumers' product evaluations.

The following section will discuss the results of one-way interaction effects with regard to the main effect of the levels of product purchase involvement (PI) on consumers' product evaluation.

The Main Effect of the Level of Purchase Involvement (PI) on Product Evaluation

The overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10 identify that the main effect of the level of purchase involvement affecting Thai consumers' product evaluation. The overall MANOVA results are statistically significant in the case of the main effect of product purchase involvement on consumer's evaluation of fashion-clothing products. These significant results are evident in the dimensions of quality of design, quality of product, and quality of reliability with the alpha level of 0.01. In addition, other significant results at the alpha level of 0.05 emerge for the dimensions of quality of workmanship and purchase intention.

From the results, it can be inferred that Thai consumers' perceptions and evaluation of fashion-clothing products are influenced by the levels of their purchase involvement. This implication is based on the statistically significant results in Table 5.10. Thus, the study rejects H_0. As a result, the hypothesis H3 which states that *"The direct effect of the level of purchase involvement of Thai consumers influences their evaluation of clothing products"* is supported.

There have been a number of COO studies identifying the fact that consumers are motivated in their product evaluation by their individual recognition of the product and their product interest. There is no gainsaying that the level of product purchase involvement, which is evoked by the product type, plays the role of a catalyst and in turn it affects consumers' evaluations of a particular product. Not surprisingly, the outcomes derived from past COO studies yield varied conclusions. The current study points out that the main effect of the level of purchase involvement is to exert an

influence on consumers' evaluation of particular products. This occurs in terms of the perceived quality of the product and the purchase intention of the product. The above conclusion is revealed in the case of single cue (purchase involvement), which directly affects consumers evaluation of a particular product. This conclusion seems to be sufficient to answer and describe the results with respect to the study's hypotheses H3 as indicated in the above study's implication. However, this section has not explained yet how varying level of purchase involvement affect consumers' product evaluation. Further discussion regarding this concern will be identified in subsequent sections later, when reporting on interaction effects.

In summary, the main effects of the three independent variables, namely the level of a country's development, the level of brand equity, and the level of purchase involvement on Thai consumers' product evaluation of fashion-clothing product are reported and discussed as above. The examination of those analyses focuses on the effect of each single cue. The study has investigated whether and how these cues play their roles to affect Thai consumers' product evaluation of fashion-clothing products. Beyond focusing on the main effects of each single cue on product evaluation, the present study also aims to examine the interaction effects between all of the independent variables (D, BE, and PI). This is essential because in the reality of the purchasing environment, consumers perceive the quality of the particular product and ultimately make the purchase decision based upon a collection of determinants. In other words, the study intends to examine the phenomenon of the three product cues (COO, brand, and product type) and their effects on product evaluation. In this way, the study focuses on each of the three product cues as not only individual or single product cues but as a collective or multiple product cues.

The next section will present and discuss the results of the interaction effects between the multiple product cues. To illustrate, this study observed the interaction effects of the level of a country's development (D) and the level of brand equity (BE) as well as the interaction effects of the level of a country's development (D) and the level of purchase involvement (PI). The interaction effects between the level of brand equity (BE) and the level of purchase involvement (PI) including the interaction effects among these three product cues (D, BE and PI) were also investigated. The afore-mentioned interaction effects were observed to identify whether they impacted on

product evaluation. The analysis of these interaction effects on consumers' product evaluation are reported in the overall MANOVA results as mentioned above. Further discussions with respect to these interaction effects are given in the following section.

5.2.4.4 *Interaction Effects*

The overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10 indicate the results of interaction effects on Thai consumers' product evaluation in terms of their perceptions of perceived quality of product and purchase intention of product for the fashion-clothing. The interaction effects in the overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10 refer to the interaction effects among the three independent variables with respect to the interaction effects of D x BE, D x PI, BE x PI and D x BE x PI.

The Interaction Effects between D and BE on Product Evaluation

This study found that there are interaction effects between the varying levels of country's development and the different levels of brand equity and these interaction effects in turn influence Thai consumers' evaluation of fashion-clothing products. This outcome is evidenced by the statistically significant results shown in the overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10 as reported above with respect to the interaction effects. Based on this outcome, this research still cannot answer the hypothesis H4. A more thorough explanation is given below.

In section 5.2.4.3, we observed from the direct effect with respect to the main effect of the levels of brand equity on product evaluation, that the level of brand equity directly affects consumers' product evaluation. In addition, as a consequence of main effect of brand equity on product evaluation, it appears that Thai consumers showed higher preferences for products with high level of equity brand more preferable than the particular product with low level of equity brand for both suits and T-shirts. However, the direct effect of high equity brand on consumers' product evaluation appeared to have less influence when the study observed this main effect on high purchase involvement apparel products. Furthermore, this study found that different levels of brand equity have interaction effects with varying levels of country's development and in turn these effects appear to influence consumers' product evaluation as be reported in the above mention. Hence, the levels of brand equity appear to moderate

the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation. However, the MANOVA analysis has not yet clarified the potential role of the levels of brand equity how they play to moderate the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation. In addition, the overall MANOVA results have also not yet proved the hypothesis H4, which states that *"High equity brand can overcome the effects of relatively low COO image on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation"*.

Therefore, this study employed further analyses to examine the role of the levels of brand equity in moderating the main effects of COO on product evaluation. This study observed the possible cases of D and BE affecting consumers' evaluation of clothing products by using *t-test* analysis. The observation focused on whether the effect of one treatment differs at different levels of the other treatment. Within this observation, the study investigated whether the strength of one factor could overcome the weakness of another factor on consumers' evaluation of clothing products. This investigation appears to show the case that was in accordance with the hypothesis H4 as below:

Case 1: ***High BE – Low Image COO*** Vs Low BE – Low Image COO

The results derived from *Case 1* are expected to answer the hypothesis H4. This research has stated earlier that the analyses in this study are employed in order to respond to the research's objectives, conceptual framework and hypotheses. Analyzing and reporting are organized in accordance with the relevant areas of concern stated above. Nevertheless, it is the author's intention to report the other case *(Case 2)* that reveals the possibility of showing the situation that the strength of one factor could alleviate the weakness of another factor on consumers' evaluation of clothing products. Case 2 is indicated as follows:

Case 2: ***Low BE – High Image COO*** Vs Low BE – Low Image COO

Further information with regard to the above two cases is presented in the analysis for those cases.

Case 1: High BE – Low Image COO Vs Low BE – Low Image COO

The aim of observing this case is to answer the hypothesis H4. It was found previously that the interaction effects of D and BE occurred in the MANOVA results. Thus, the levels of brand equity moderate the effects of COO on product evaluation. This effect would induce consumers to perceive quality and purchase intention of the comparison products in case 1 differently. In this case COO was controlled by using the same country (COO with a relative low COO image) in order to observe consumers' evaluation of products when the level of brand equity was changed. Therefore, this case examined the comparison of clothing between a *high equity brand product (Greyhound) made in COO with a relative low COO image (Vietnam)* and a *low equity brand product (AIIZ) made in COO with a relative low COO image (Vietnam)* for suits and T-shirts. The results derived from this observation are indicated below in Table 5.13, 5.13.1, 5.13.2. These results are obtained from the *Levene's Test* and *t-test* analysis for suits and T-shirts.

The results in the following two tables *(Table 5.13 and 5.13.1)* with respect to the *Levene's Test* point out the *p*-value for the summary of results of *t*-test in table 5.13.2. The results in Table 5.13.2 show the mean rating of consumers' evaluation of clothing with respect to the moderating effects of the different levels of brand equity (high / low) affecting COO effects on consumers' product evaluation. The results in Table 5.13.2 indicate that Thai consumers perceived the high equity brand product made in the country with a relatively low COO image as being of better quality. The results also indicate that consumers would be more likely to purchase this item (T-shirts) than low equity brand product made in the same country, i.e. with low COO. These results of the dimensions of quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product, product reliability, and purchase intention were significant with the alpha level of 0.01. This outcome suggests that high equity brands can overcome the effects of COO with a relatively low COO image on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation. Therefore, it is valid to state that the hypothesis H4 is true in the case of T-shirts.

From the above outcome, the moderating effects of the level of brand equity on the main effect of low COO image on consumers' product evaluation and their interaction effects can be explained. This reaction is described with *"high equity brand"* moderating the effects of *a relatively low COO image of the country* on consumers'

Table 5.13 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Suits)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.091	0.763	1.673	78	0.098	0.35	0.209	-0.067	0.767
	Equal variances not assumed			1.673	77.071	0.098	0.35	0.209	-0.067	0.767
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.772	0.382	1.617	78	0.110	0.35	0.216	-0.081	0.781
	Equal variances not assumed			1.617	75.202	0.110	0.35	0.216	-0.081	0.781
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	7.352	0.008	1.090	78	0.279	0.22	0.206	-0.186	0.636
	Equal variances not assumed			1.090	71.211	0.279	0.22	0.206	-0.187	0.637
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.002	0.969	2.331	78	0.022	0.50	0.215	0.073	0.927
	Equal variances not assumed			2.331	77.759	0.022	0.50	0.215	0.073	0.927
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	1.357	0.248	0.000	78	1.000	0.00	0.215	-0.428	0.428
	Equal variances not assumed			0.000	77.465	1.000	0.00	0.215	-0.428	0.428

Table 5.13.1 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for T-shirts)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.014	0.906	3.875	78	0.000	0.93	0.239	0.45	1.400
	Equal variances not assumed			3.875	77.989	0.000	0.93	0.239	0.45	1.400
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	1.272	0.263	4.485	78	0.000	1.03	0.229	0.57	1.480
	Equal variances not assumed			4.485	76.143	0.000	1.03	0.229	0.57	1.480
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.134	0.715	6.012	78	0.000	1.08	0.179	0.719	1.431
	Equal variances not assumed			6.012	77.997	0.000	1.08	0.179	0.719	1.431
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.420	0.519	3.884	78	0.000	0.82	0.212	0.402	1.248
	Equal variances not assumed			3.884	76.792	0.000	0.82	0.212	0.402	1.248
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	1.031	0.313	4.872	78	0.000	1.13	0.231	0.665	1.585
	Equal variances not assumed			4.872	75.962	0.000	1.13	0.231	0.665	1.585

Table 5.13.2 The Levels of Brand Equity (BE) Moderate the Effects of COO with a Relative Low COO Image on Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Suit				T-shirt			
	Greyhound - Vietnam *(Mean)*	**AIIZ - Vietnam** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**	**Greyhound - Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**AIIZ - Vietnam** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**
Quality of Design	4.05	3.70	1.673	0.098*	3.95	3.03	3.875	0.000***
Quality of Workmanship	4.10	3.75	1.617	0.110	4.15	3.13	4.485	0.000***
Quality of Product	4.25	4.03	1.090	0.279	4.15	3.08	6.012	0.000***
Product Reliability	4.05	3.55	2.331	0.022**	3.93	3.10	3.884	0.000***
Purchase Intention	4.15	4.15	0.000	1.000	4.20	3.08	4.872	0.000***

* Statistical Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistical Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistical Significant ($p < .01$)

product evaluation. The moderating effects demonstrates that the high equity brand induces consumers to perceive that product has a better quality and renders it to be more likely purchased than the low equity brand. Moreover, the high equity brand overcomes a relatively low COO image of the country affecting consumers' overall evaluation of particular product by inducing consumers to rely much less on the country with a relatively low COO image. As a consequence, the interaction effects of the high equity brand and the country with a relatively low COO image reveal that the high equity brand can overcome the effects of country with a relatively low COO image on consumers' product evaluation. This effect in turn has an implication on consumers' evaluation of the particular product. Keller (1993) suggests that consumers perceive and recognize a high equity brand as a set of favorable beliefs in consumers' memories. High equity brand increases a value-added to the particular product and makes the consumers feel familiar with the product. Consumers feel encouraged to repurchase that product because of its strong brand name that makes them count on and be familiar or experienced with the product. As a result, when consumers evaluate the particular product with the high level of equity brand, COO plays the role as just one of the products attributes that is considered by consumers in their product evaluation (the attribute model). In this situation, the effects of COO directly impact on the overall perceived quality of a product and ultimately purchase intention of the product without any significant changes in other product beliefs. It is therefore reasonable to say that the effects of country with a relatively low COO image on consumer evaluation of product are weak when consumers are familiar with a strong branded product and they (consumers) take lesser reliance on the relatively low COO image.

This study also seeks to explain the irony of consumers' perception of the low equity brand products made in the country with a relatively low COO image as a lesser quality of product with a reduced likelihood of purchasing the item when compared with the high equity brand that is made in the same origin. This phenomenon occurs because consumers perceive a low equity brand product as an unfamiliar product and it conveys little purchase encouragement. Undoubtedly consumers are inclined to employ COO information as a halo rather than as one of defining product attributes. It appears that consumers evaluate the product based on the country's image of stage of economic development. In this study, it is obvious that consumers are more reliant on

their attitudes or beliefs towards the country's COO image. From this study it seems that when consumers judge a particular product in the negative way arising from a low COO cue, they inevitably extrapolate this judgment on all their salient product beliefs.

In regards to the results in Table 15.3.2 with respect to the moderating effects of the different levels of brand equity on COO effects for suits, the study found that Thai consumers perceived the high brand equity product made in the country with a relatively low COO image as better quality than the low brand equity product made in the same country-of-origin. These results are demonstrated by the dimension of quality of design emerging with statistically significant level of 0.10 and the dimension of product reliability with the significance equal to the level of 0.05 as indicated in Table 5.13.2.

The results obtained in the case of suits are partially supported by the hypothesis H4 because the results show two significant results with respect to the two dimensions of product evaluation. It can therefore be inferred that the different levels of brand equity moderate the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation. In addition in the case of suits, the high level of brand equity can overcome the effects of country with a relatively low COO image on product evaluation but only in terms of the dimensions of quality of design and product reliability. This irony that occurs in the purchase of suits might be explained with the level of consumer's purchase involvement with a particular product type. This intriguing concern will be discussed later.

In conclusion, the MANOVA results and the outcome in Table 5.13.2 indicate that there is an interaction effect of the level of country's development and the level of brand equity and in turn their effects influence the consumers' product evaluation in every dimension of clothing products. The levels of brand equity apparently moderate the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation. The moderating effects of the level of brand equity can be seen from the results of T-shirts in Table 5.13.2. These results indicate that Thai consumers would prefer the high equity brand products made in a country with a relative low COO image and evaluate them as being of better quality. Consumers would be more likely to purchase these products than the low equity brand products made in a similar location. These results appear to be

compatible with the results derived from the evidence from past study. The previous study of Ahmed et al. (2004) of food products reports that the impact of COO on product evaluation was weak and brand cue became more important than COO cue. Nevertheless, the study of Hui and Zhou (2003) in portable (digital) cassette player suggest that the effects of COO on consumers' evaluation of the particular product could be varied depending on the level of brand equity. As can be seen from *Case 1* that brand name is more influential than COO and that the high equity brand can overcome the effects of country with a relatively low COO image in the case of T-shirts in every dimension aspects of product evaluation, but only in terms of the two dimensions of product evaluation, which comprise of quality of design and product reliability in the case of suits. It is therefore reasonable to believe that high equity brand moderates the effects of COO with a relative low COO image on product evaluation of clothing. However, the strength of the effects of high equity brand in overcoming the effects of low COO image on product evaluation seems to depend on the level of purchase involvement.

As can be seen from the results in Table 5.13.2, the investigation was done comparing the different levels of brand equity in affecting the effect of low COO image on product evaluation for each individual clothing product (suits and T-shirts). Further, this study compared each clothing product by looking at whether Greyhound suits made in Vietnam are different to Greyhound T-shirts made in Vietnam. The following tables *(Table 5.13.3, 5.13.4 and 5.13.5)* demonstrate the results of the above mentioned observation.

The results in the following three tables are derived from *t-test* analysis. Within this analysis, the *Levene's Test* in Table 5.13.3 and 5.13.4 point out the p-values that were indicated in the summary table in Table 5.13.5. This table shows the results with respect to the comparisons of suits and T-shirts that were made in a COO with a relatively low COO image under the same brand. This study found that Thai consumers perceived suits made in Vietnam differently from T-shirts made in the same source for low equity brand products *(AIIZ).* This outcome is obtained with the statistically significant results in every dimension of product evaluation as indicated in Table 5.13.5.

Table 5.13.3 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for High Equity Brand Product Made in Low COO Image Country)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.148	0.701	0.437	78	0.664	0.10	0.229	-0.356	0.556
	Equal variances not assumed			0.437	77.583	0.664	0.10	0.229	-0.356	0.556
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.145	0.704	-0.207	78	0.836	-0.05	0.241	-0.53	0.430
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.207	77.884	0.836	-0.05	0.241	-0.53	0.430
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	3.868	0.053	0.477	78	0.635	0.10	0.210	-0.317	0.517
	Equal variances not assumed			0.477	72.765	0.635	0.10	0.210	-0.318	0.518
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.227	0.635	0.596	78	0.553	0.13	0.210	-0.293	0.543
	Equal variances not assumed			0.596	77.169	0.553	0.13	0.210	-0.293	0.543
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.199	0.657	-0.211	78	0.833	-0.05	0.237	-0.521	0.421
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.211	77.129	0.833	-0.05	0.237	-0.522	0.422

Table 5.13.4 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Low Equity Brand Product Made in Low COO Image Country)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.713	0.401	3.071	78	0.003	0.68	0.220	0.237	1.113
	Equal variances not assumed			3.071	75.189	0.003	0.68	0.220	0.237	1.113
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.011	0.917	3.089	78	0.003	0.63	0.202	0.222	1.028
	Equal variances not assumed			3.089	77.548	0.003	0.63	0.202	0.222	1.028
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.341	0.561	5.430	78	0.000	0.95	0.175	0.602	1.298
	Equal variances not assumed			5.430	77.889	0.000	0.95	0.175	0.602	1.298
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.019	0.891	2.073	78	0.041	0.45	0.217	0.018	0.882
	Equal variances not assumed			2.073	77.534	0.041	0.45	0.217	0.018	0.882
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.297	0.587	5.154	78	0.000	1.08	0.209	0.660	1.490
	Equal variances not assumed			5.154	77.953	0.000	1.08	0.209	0.660	1.490

Table 5.13.5 Comparisons of the Two Levels of Involvement within the Same Brand and Made in the Same COO

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Greyhound - Vietnam				AIIZ - Vietnam			
	Suits *(Mean)*	**T-shirts** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**	**Suits** *(Mean)*	**T-shirts** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**
Quality of Design	4.05	3.95	0.437	0.664	3.70	3.03	3.071	0.003***
Quality of Workmanship	4.10	4.15	-0.207	0.836	3.75	3.13	3.089	0.003***
Quality of Product	4.25	4.15	0.477	0.635	4.03	3.08	5.430	0.000***
Product Reliability	4.05	3.93	0.596	0.553	3.55	3.10	2.073	0.041**
Purchase Intention	4.15	4.20	-0.211	0.833	4.15	3.08	5.154	0.000***

* Statistically significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

With regard to suits and T-shirts made in Vietnam under a high equity brand *(Greyhound)*, the results reveal that they were not different. This conclusion can be seen from the insignificant results that emerged in every aspect of product evaluation as shown in Table 5.13.5.

Based on these results, it appears that the strength of high equity brand can induce Thai consumers to perceive suits and T-shirts as being not different even though they are made in a country with a relatively low COO image. Such a strong brand can help to alleviate the effects of low COO image on consumers' perceptions of products by influencing Thai consumers to be less reliant on their perception of a low COO image. This effect leads Thai consumers to perceive suits and T-shirts as being not different under the strong brand. It appears that this outcome is possible to support the above results, which indicate that high equity brands can overcome the effects of COO with a relative low COO image on product evaluation for clothing products *(suits and T-shirts).*

Next, *Case 2* was observed. This case also revealed that the strength of one factor might alleviate the weakness of another factor on consumers' evaluation of clothing products for the interaction effects between factors D and BE. This research reports the results of observing case 2 as follows:

Case 2: Low BE – High Image COO Vs Low BE – Low Image COO

The level of brand equity was controlled for this case in order to observe the movement of the level of country's development. This observation compared *low equity brand clothing (AIIZ) made in high image country (Japan)* with *the same brand product made in low image country (Vietnam)* for suits and T-shirts. The results derived from this observation are shown in the following tables *(Table 5.13.6, 5.13.7 and 5.13.8).*

The *p*-values in Table 5.13.8 are obtained from the *Levene's Test* in Table 5.13.6 and Table 5.13.7. The summary results from *t*-test analysis in Table 5.13.8 indicate that Thai consumers perceive suits under AIIZ brand name made in Japan and Vietnam differently. The same outcome appears to be seen in the case of T-shirts. Thai consumers perceive the quality of suits and T-shirts more highly and also

Table 5.13.6 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Suits)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	1.228	0.271	6.261	78	0.000	1.400	0.224	0.955	1.845
	Equal variances not assumed			6.261	74.383	0.000	1.400	0.224	0.954	1.846
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	1.154	0.286	5.099	78	0.000	1.100	0.216	0.671	1.529
	Equal variances not assumed			5.099	75.356	0.000	1.100	0.216	0.670	1.530
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	5.078	0.027	3.745	78	0.000	0.725	0.194	0.340	1.110
	Equal variances not assumed			3.745	74.578	0.000	0.725	0.194	0.339	1.111
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.000	0.984	7.240	78	0.000	1.550	0.214	1.124	1.976
	Equal variances not assumed			7.240	77.792	0.000	1.550	0.214	1.124	1.976
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	1.223	0.272	3.989	78	0.000	0.925	0.232	0.463	1.387
	Equal variances not assumed			3.989	74.684	0.000	0.925	0.232	0.463	1.387

Table 5.13.7 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for T-shirts)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	2.750	0.101	9.559	78	0.000	2.050	0.214	1.623	2.477
	Equal variances not assumed			9.559	73.285	0.000	2.050	0.214	1.623	2.477
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.869	0.354	10.306	78	0.000	2.000	0.194	1.614	2.386
	Equal variances not assumed			10.306	75.804	0.000	2.000	0.194	1.613	2.387
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.476	0.492	9.775	78	0.000	1.825	0.187	1.453	2.197
	Equal variances not assumed			9.775	77.391	0.000	1.825	0.187	1.453	2.197
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	2.854	0.095	8.905	78	0.000	1.775	0.199	1.378	2.172
	Equal variances not assumed			8.905	72.407	0.000	1.775	0.199	1.378	2.172
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	2.820	0.097	10.236	78	0.000	2.000	0.195	1.611	2.389
	Equal variances not assumed			10.236	75.861	0.000	2.000	0.195	1.611	2.389

Table 5.13.8 The Strength of High COO Image with Low Equity Brand Affects on Consumers' Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	**Suit**				**T-shirt**			
	AIIZ ***Japan*** *(Mean)*	AIIZ ***Vietnam*** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**	AIIZ ***Japan*** *(Mean)*	AIIZ ***Vietnam*** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**
Quality of Design	5.10	3.70	6.261	0.000***	5.08	3.03	9.559	0.000***
Quality of Workmanship	4.85	3.75	5.099	0.000***	5.13	3.13	10.306	0.000***
Quality of Product	4.75	4.03	3.745	0.000***	4.90	3.08	9.775	0.000***
Product Reliability	5.10	3.55	7.240	0.000***	4.88	3.10	8.905	0.000***
Purchase Intention	5.08	4.15	3.989	0.000***	5.08	3.08	10.236	0.000***

* Statistical Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistical Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistical Significant ($p < .01$)

demonstrated a stronger intention to purchase AIIZ brand products made in Japan than the same brand product made in Vietnam. These results were derived at the significant alpha level of 0.01 in every dimension of product evaluation. This outcome suggests that the strength of a high level of country's development (high COO image) can help to alleviate the effects of the weakness of low equity brand. This reaction affects consumers' product evaluations by inducing Thai consumers to perceive those products in a positive way. Thai consumers believe those low equity brand products made in highly developed countries still maintain good quality and are more likely to purchase for both suits and T-shirts. As this can be clearly seen by comparing the observed case with the case of same products but made in a different location (made in country with a relative low COO image).

The above investigation was observed for each comparison treatment for each individual clothing product (suits and T-shirts). The results derived in the summary table *(Table 5.13.8)* raise the intriguing questions whether AIIZ suits made in Japan are different to AIIZ T-shirts made in the same source. The results in that table also raise another question, namely whether Thai consumers perceive AIIZ suits made in Vietnam differently to AIIZ T-shirts made in the same location. Thus, this research continued observing the intriguing issues mentioned above. The results derived from this observation are indicated in the following tables *(Table 5.13.9, 5.13.10 and 5.13.11).*

The *Levene's Test* in Table 5.13.9 and 5.13.10 suggests the *p*-values in the summary table *(Table 5.13.11).* With regard to the case of AIIZ clothing products made in Japan in Table 5.13.11, the results indicate that there are no significant results revealed in any of the dimensions of product evaluation between suits and T-shirts. These results mean that suits and T-shirts are not perceived differently. With respect to the case of suits and T-shirts under the AIIZ brand name made in Vietnam, the results in that table indicate the significant results in every dimension of product evaluation. The significant results with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01 are revealed for the dimensions of Quality of Design, Quality of Workmanship, Quality of Product and Purchase Intention. For the dimension of Product reliability, the results were derived at the statistically significant alpha level of 0.05 as

Table 5.13.9 Independent-Samples T Test (For AIIZ - Japan)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	3.637	0.060	0.114	78	0.909	0.025	0.218	-0.410	0.460
	Equal variances not assumed			0.114	72.329	0.909	0.025	0.218	-0.410	0.460
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	3.527	0.064	-1.322	78	0.190	-0.275	0.208	-0.689	0.139
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.322	72.423	0.190	-0.275	0.208	-0.690	0.140
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.995	0.322	-0.734	78	0.465	-0.150	0.204	-0.557	0.257
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.734	77.365	0.465	-0.150	0.204	-0.557	0.257
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	2.575	0.113	1.148	78	0.255	0.225	0.196	-0.165	0.615
	Equal variances not assumed			1.148	73.278	0.255	0.225	0.196	-0.166	0.616
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	4.184	0.044	0.000	78	1.000	0.000	0.220	-0.438	0.438
	Equal variances not assumed			0.000	69.740	1.000	0.000	0.220	-0.439	0.439

Table 5.13.10 Independent-Samples T Test (For AIIZ - Vietnam)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.713	0.401	3.071	78	0.003	0.675	0.220	0.237	1.113
	Equal variances not assumed			3.071	75.189	0.003	0.675	0.220	0.237	1.113
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.011	0.917	3.089	78	0.003	0.625	0.202	0.222	1.028
	Equal variances not assumed			3.089	77.548	0.003	0.625	0.202	0.222	1.028
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.341	0.561	5.430	78	0.000	0.950	0.175	0.602	1.298
	Equal variances not assumed			5.430	77.889	0.000	0.950	0.175	0.602	1.298
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.019	0.891	2.073	78	0.041	0.450	0.217	0.018	0.882
	Equal variances not assumed			2.073	77.543	0.041	0.450	0.217	0.018	0.882
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.297	0.587	5.154	78	0.000	1.075	0.209	0.660	1.490
	Equal variances not assumed			5.154	77.953	0.000	1.075	0.209	0.660	1.490

Table 5.13.11 Comparisons of the Two Levels of Involvement within the Same Brand and Made in the Same Country

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	**AIIZ-Japan**				**AIIZ-Vietnam**			
	Suit *(Mean)*	***T-shirt*** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**	***Suit*** *(Mean)*	***T-shirt*** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**
Quality of Design	5.10	5.08	0.114	0.909	3.70	3.03	3.071	0.003***
Quality of Workmanship	4.85	5.13	-1.322	0.190	3.75	3.13	3.089	0.003***
Quality of Product	4.75	4.90	-0.734	0.465	4.03	3.08	5.430	0.000***
Product Reliability	5.10	4.88	1.148	0.255	3.55	3.10	2.073	0.041**
Purchase Intention	5.08	5.08	0.000	1.000	4.15	3.08	5.154	0.000***

* Statistically significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

demonstrated in Table 5.13.11. These results mean Thai consumers perceive suits and T-shirts under AIIZ brand made in Vietnam differently.

Based on the results in Table 5.13.11, this outcome suggests that the strength of high COO image can induce Thai consumers to perceive suits and T-shirts as being not different even though they are made under the low equity brand name. Thai consumers might purchase the products because of their reputation or because they are from a reliable source. This possibility can be seen from the previous observation *(See results in Table 5.13.8).* Therefore, it is possible to suggest that a high COO image can overcome the effects of low equity brand on consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

Up to this point, it has been found that the strength of one factor helps to alleviate the weakness of another factor on consumers' evaluation of clothing products in the case of factors ***level of country's development (D)*** and ***the level of brand equity (BE)***. This reaction can be seen from the above two cases *(Case 1 and Case 2)*. In addition, we found the interesting phenomenon emerged from those two cases. This phenomenon appears as a "trade-off" between the effects of factors *level of country's development (D)* and *the level of brand equity (BE)* in terms of their influence on consumers' product evaluation. To illustrate, this study found that *high equity brand* can overcome the effects of COO with a relative low COO image on Thai consumers' product evaluation. In addition, this research also found that *high COO image* can help to alleviate the effects of low equity brand on Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that the trade-off between the level of country's development and the level of brand equity exerts a clear influence on consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

Next, this study examined the trade-off between factors D and BE, namely whether Thai consumers perceive high equity brand clothing that is made in a country with a relatively low COO image as being different from the low equity brand clothing that is made in a country with a relatively high COO image as indicated below in Case 3.

Case 3: ***High BE – Low Image COO*** Vs ***Low BE – High Image COO***

The observation in Case 3 looked at the difference between Greyhound clothing made in Vietnam and AIIZ clothing made in Japan for suits and T-shirts. The results derived from this observation are indicated in the following tables *(Table 5.13.12, 5.13.13 and 5.13.14).* Table 5.13.14 is the summary results of this observation. The *p*-values in this table are obtained from the *Levene's Test* in Table 5.13.12 and Table 5.13.13. The summary results from *t*-test analysis in Table 5.13.14 indicate that Thai consumers perceive *Greyhound clothing made in Vietnam* as being different from *AIIZ clothing made in Japan* for both suits and T-shirts. These results were statistically significant in every dimension of product evaluation for suits and T-shirts as indicated in Table 5.13.14. Based on these significant results, it is reasonable to believe that suits and T-shirts that are made in varying countries *(Japan or Vietnam)* differ in terms of consumers' perceptions of quality and in terms of their purchase intention for these products. These effects are in turn to affect consumers' perceptions of the products under the different levels of brand equity *(Greyhound or AIIZ)* with regard to their evaluation of clothing products.

The above observation was investigated for each level of product purchase involvement *(suits and T-shirts).* Further, this study subsequently observed the comparison of each level of product purchase involvement concerning whether *Greyhound suits made in Vietnam* were regarded as different from *Greyhound T-shirts made in the same country*. This research also observed the difference between *AIIZ suits made in Japan* and *AIIZ T-shirts made in the same source.* The results derived from these comparisons between the two different levels of product purchase involvement *(suits and T-shirts)* are demonstrated in the following tables *(Table 5.13.15, 5.13.16 and 5.13.17).*

Table 5.13.17 indicates the results of the differences between suits and T-shirts under brand *Greyhound made in Vietnam* and brand *AIIZ made in Japan.* The *p*-values in this table are derived from the *Levene's Test* in Table 5.13.15 and 5.13.16. The summary results in Table 5.13.17 indicate that no significant results were revealed for any dimensions of product evaluation for Greyhound suits and T-shirts made in Vietnam. The same results emerged for suits and T-shirts under the AIIZ brand name made in Japan. These results suggest that Thai consumers perceive suits and T-shirts

Table 5.13.12 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Suits)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.564	0.455	-4.485	78	0.000	-1.050	0.234	-1.516	-0.584
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.485	77.009	0.000	-1.050	0.234	-1.516	-0.584
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.020	0.887	-3.181	78	0.002	-0.750	0.236	-1.219	-0.281
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.181	77.997	0.002	-0.750	0.236	-1.219	-0.281
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.385	0.537	-2.222	78	0.029	-0.500	0.225	-0.948	-0.052
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.222	77.208	0.029	-0.500	0.225	-0.948	-0.052
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.003	0.956	-4.773	78	0.000	-1.050	0.220	-1.488	-0.612
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.773	77.999	0.000	-1.050	0.220	-1.488	-0.612
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.025	0.876	-3.854	78	0.000	-0.920	0.240	-1.403	-0.447
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.854	76.706	0.000	-0.920	0.240	-1.403	-0.447

Table 5.13.13 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for T-shirts)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	2.334	0.131	-5.285	78	0.000	-1.130	0.213	-1.549	-0.701
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.285	73.674	0.000	-1.130	0.213	-1.549	-0.701
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	4.379	0.040	-4.555	78	0.000	-0.970	0.214	-1.401	-0.549
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.555	70.839	0.000	-0.970	0.214	-1.402	-0.548
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.129	0.720	-4.005	78	0.000	-0.750	0.187	-1.123	-0.377
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.005	77.476	0.000	-0.750	0.187	-1.123	-0.377
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	1.228	0.271	-5.147	78	0.000	-0.950	0.185	-1.317	-0.583
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.147	76.099	0.000	-0.950	0.185	-1.318	-0.582
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	6.272	0.014	-4.040	78	0.000	-0.880	0.217	-1.306	-0.444
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.040	70.637	0.000	-0.880	0.217	-1.307	-0.443

Table 5.13.14 Trade-Off between Factors Level of Development and Level of Brand Equity Affect on Consumers' Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Suit				T-shirt			
	Greyhound - Vietnam *(Mean)*	**AIIZ - Japan** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**	**Greyhound - Vietnam** *(Mean)*	**AIIZ - Japan** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**
Quality of Design	4.05	5.10	-4.485	0.000***	3.95	5.08	-5.285	0.000***
Quality of Workmanship	4.10	4.85	-3.181	0.002***	4.15	5.13	-4.555	0.000***
Quality of Product	4.25	4.75	-2.222	0.029**	4.15	4.90	-4.005	0.000***
Product Reliability	4.05	5.10	-4.773	0.000***	3.93	4.88	-5.147	0.000***
Purchase Intention	4.15	5.08	-3.854	0.000***	4.20	5.08	-4.040	0.000***

* Statistically significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

as being not different in terms of whether they are made under brand Greyhound in Vietnam or brand AIIZ in Japan.

Based on the summary results in Table 5.13.17, this outcome suggests that the strength of a high equity brand can overcome the effects of low COO image by inducing Thai consumers to perceive suits and T-shirts as being not different. The strength of high equity brand helps to induce Thai consumers to have less reliance on the weakness factor with respect to the low COO image. In addition, there appears to be a trade-off based on the above observation. To illustrate, this study also found that the strength of high COO image can overcome the effects of low equity brand on consumers' evaluation of clothing products by helping those products to be perceived similarly.

Based on the summary results in Table 5.13.17 and the previous results with respect to Case 1 and 2, it is apparent that those outcomes suggest that the strength of one factor helps to alleviate the weakness of another factor in terms of consumers' evaluation of clothing products. Relevant factors appear to be the level of country's development and the level of brand equity.

To sum up the above section with respect to the interaction effects of the level of country's development (D) and the level of brand equity (BE) on product evaluation, the section extends the explanation with respect to the MANOVA results of the main study. The outcome in MANOVA results indicates that there is an interaction effect between the level of country's development and the level of brand equity. This effect in turn influences consumers' evaluation of clothing products in every dimension of product evaluation. In addition, the MANOVA results point out that the levels of brand equity moderate the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation. However, those results still do not prove the study's hypothesis with respect to the hypothesis H4. Thus, further analyses were employed in order to respond to the study's hypothesis. While employing the further analysis, other interesting issues arose. These issues are dealt with immediately below in this research. These extra observations are in accordance with examining factors D and BE and whether the strength of one factor alleviates the weakness of another factor on consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

Table 5.13.15 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Greyhound - Vietnam)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.148	0.701	0.437	78	0.664	0.100	0.229	-0.356	0.556
	Equal variances not assumed			0.437	77.583	0.664	0.100	0.229	-0.356	0.556
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.145	0.704	-0.207	78	0.836	-0.050	0.241	-0.530	0.430
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.207	77.884	0.836	-0.050	0.241	-0.530	0.430
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	3.868	0.053	0.477	78	0.635	0.100	0.210	-0.317	0.517
	Equal variances not assumed			0.477	72.765	0.635	0.100	0.210	-0.318	0.518
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.227	0.635	0.596	78	0.553	0.130	0.210	-0.293	0.543
	Equal variances not assumed			0.596	77.169	0.553	0.130	0.210	-0.293	0.543
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.199	0.657	-0.211	78	0.833	-0.050	0.237	-0.521	0.421
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.211	77.129	0.833	-0.050	0.237	-0.522	0.422

Table 5.13.16 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for AIIZ - Japan)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	3.637	0.060	0.114	78	0.909	0.020	0.218	-0.410	0.460
	Equal variances not assumed			0.114	72.329	0.909	0.020	0.218	-0.410	0.460
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	3.527	0.064	-1.322	78	0.190	-0.280	0.208	-0.689	0.139
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.322	72.423	0.190	-0.280	0.208	-0.690	0.140
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.995	0.322	-0.734	78	0.465	-0.150	0.204	-0.557	0.257
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.734	77.365	0.465	-0.150	0.204	-0.557	0.257
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	2.575	0.113	1.148	78	0.255	0.220	0.196	-0.165	0.615
	Equal variances not assumed			1.148	73.278	0.255	0.220	0.196	-0.166	0.616
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	4.184	0.044	0.000	78	1.000	0.000	0.220	-0.438	0.438
	Equal variances not assumed			0.000	69.740	1.000	0.000	0.220	-0.439	0.439

Table 5.13.17 The Strength of High Equity Brand and the Strength of High COO Image Affect Consumers' Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Greyhound - Vietnam				AIIZ - Japan			
	Suits *(Mean)*	**T-shirts** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**	**Suits** *(Mean)*	**T-shirts** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Significance**
Quality of Design	4.05	3.95	0.437	0.664	5.10	5.08	0.114	0.909
Quality of Workmanship	4.10	4.15	-0.207	0.836	4.85	5.13	-1.322	0.190
Quality of Product	4.25	4.15	0.477	0.635	4.75	4.90	-0.734	0.465
Product Reliability	4.05	3.93	0.596	0.553	5.10	4.88	1.148	0.255
Purchase Intention	4.15	4.20	-0.211	0.833	5.08	5.08	0.000	1.000

* Statistical Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistical Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistical Significant ($p < .01$)

The results obtained from this further analysis indicate that *"High equity brand can overcome the effects of COO with a relatively low COO image on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation"*. These results appear to support the hypothesis H4 for T-shirts whereas partial support is provided in the case of suits. This outcome raises the intriguing question of the role of the level of consumer's purchase involvement with a particular product type when factors D and BE are observed for suits and T-shirts. However, this intriguing concern will be discussed later.

The results obtained from the further analyses also indicate that *"High COO image can overcome the effects of low equity brand on Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation"*. As a consequence, it is reasonable to state that the strength of one factor alleviates the weakness of another factor on consumers' evaluation of clothing products in accordance with the factors D and BE.

In addition, these results appear to suggest that there is the *"trade-off"* between ***high equity brand with low COO image*** and ***low equity brand with high COO image*** with respect to the influence exerted on Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

Following on from the report of interaction effects of factors D and BE, the results of interaction effects of the level of country's development (D) and the level of purchase involvement (PI) are reported in the next section.

The Interaction Effects between D and PI on Product Evaluation

The overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10 point out that there is an interaction effect between the level of country's development and the level of purchase involvement. These interaction effects in turn impact Thai consumers' evaluation of fashion-clothing products. This study found that the impact of COO (country's development) on product evaluation is moderated by the level of purchase involvement. These results are evidenced by the statistically significant results as indicated above in reporting the overall MANOVA results with respect to the interaction effects. Based on this outcome the hypothesis H5, which stated that *"The levels of purchase involvement moderate the main effects of COO on product evaluation of apparel products"*, is supported. Nonetheless, the overall MANOVA results do not clarify the role and relation between the main effect of country's

development and the impact of purchase involvement on product evaluation. This study still does not know how the level of purchase involvement moderates the effects of COO on product evaluation. Therefore, it is essential to study this issue even though no assumptions were set with regard to this relationship. A more complete explanation of why the relationship between factors D and PI needs to be further investigated is given below.

In the earlier results of the main effect of purchase involvement on product evaluation, the study found that the level of purchase involvement influences consumers' product evaluation. This study also identified that there was an interaction effect between the level of country's development and the level of purchase involvement and in turn these effects influence consumers' product evaluation. In addition, the analysis of the interaction effects between the level of country's development and the level of brand equity raises an intriguing issue. This issue is whether the level of purchase involvement or product type plays a moderating role on the effects of COO impact on consumers' evaluation of suits. Based on these findings, it is reasonable to examine the relationship between the level of purchase involvement and the level of country's development in terms of how the level of purchase involvement moderates the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation for fashion-clothing products. However, the analyses up to this section have not provided information for clarifying this issue. Thus, it may be worth the while to do further analysis in order to clarify this concern. Accordingly, a correlation analysis technique was employed to find out the relationship between the level of country's development and the level of purchase involvement in impacting consumers' product evaluation. The results obtained from the correlation analysis are shown in the following table *(Table 5.14).*

This study employed correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the level of country's development and the level of purchase involvement on product evaluation. Two levels of purchase involvement, which comprised of a high purchase involvement product using *"suits"* as a surrogate and a low purchase involvement product using *"T-shirts"* as a surrogate for the current study were investigated and compared. The purpose of the analysis was to find out the relationship between the levels of purchase involvement that were evoked by product type and the effects of COO on consumers' evaluation of product in terms of the five dimensions which

consist of quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product, product reliability and purchase intention. The SPSS program was employed to examine how consumers perceive quality of product and evaluate the product when the COO changed from a developed economy like Japan to a developing economy as Malaysia like Thailand and finally to Vietnam that represents country less developed than Thailand. The symbol of "+" and "-" in the results tabulation only represent the direction of consumers' perceptions in each quality dimension and purchase intention. If the results indicate the symbol "+", it means that consumers evaluate the product for that dimension in the positive way. On the other hand, the results that indicate the symbol "-" can be interpreted as consumers evaluating the product for that dimension in the negative way.

Table 5.14 Correlation of Country's Development (D) and Consumer Involvement (PI) in Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	**Country's Development**	
	Suit	**T-shirt**
Quality of Design	-0.439***	-0.541***
Quality of Workmanship	-0.424***	-0.508***
Quality of Product	-0.322***	-0.512***
Product Reliability	-0.529***	-0.562***
Purchase Intention	-0.365***	-0.465***

*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

As evidenced in the correlation analysis (Table 5.14), Thai consumers' assessment of the quality of both suits and T-shirts became increasingly negative as consumers perceived the COO being shifted from Japan to Malaysia and lastly to Vietnam. This same characteristic of increasing negative inclination to buy the product was observed as the COO changed from Japan to Malaysia and finally to Vietnam.

These results imply that Thai consumers prefer clothing made in more developed country than the product made in less developed country. Moreover, these outcomes also explain the relationship between the levels of purchase involvement and consumers' evaluation of product in terms of the moderating effects of the levels of

purchase involvement on the effects of COO impact on consumers' product evaluation. The study found that when consumers evaluate products that are associated with high purchase involvement like suits, consumers appear to be more meticulous in their consideration of the product by placing greater reliance on COO information. Inevitably, it appears that consumers' perceptions of COO information influence their evaluation of the product. This consumer characteristic explains why Thai consumers perceive the suits to be of lesser quality. Accordingly, this consumer characteristic also explains why they are less likely to purchase the item when they perceived the COO of suits changing from a more developed country to a less developed country. These perceptions appear to look worse than that for T-shirts. This is because suits, which were used as the surrogate for high involvement products, entail extended search activity and carry high risk of performance such as monetary risk and social acceptance more than low involvement products like T-shirts.

Based on these findings, the study can infer that the level of purchase involvement influence consumers' product evaluation. High level of purchase involvement increases consumers' inclination to pay more attention and to be more informed about that product. This study can also infer that the levels of purchase involvement moderate the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation. The high level of purchase involvement induces consumers to have more reliance on COO information when they evaluate the product. The implication of this outcome can be seen from the results obtained from the current study. When consumers evaluate the high purchase involvement product like suits, they are apparently more reliant on a country with relatively low COO image information (when the COO is changing from a more developed country to a less developed country) and in turn their perception of a relatively low COO image affects their evaluation of clothing products in a negative way.

The analysis of correlation as demonstrated above enables answers to be found for the intriguing issue that emerged from the previous analysis of the interaction effects between the level of country's development and the level of brand equity. To illustrate, the earlier results obtained from that part of the analysis revealed that there are only two significant results, namely, the dimensions of quality of design and product reliability in the case of suits (see Table 5.13.2). In this study, the high purchase

involvement product like suits induces consumers to increase reliance on COO information and in turn the effects of COO perception impact on product evaluation. Such consumers are aware of financial risk concern that can always be related with the high purchase involvement product. Thus, consumers appear to pay more attention, be more careful, and use more extended search information when they are making decisions concerning high purchase involvement products. As a result, the high equity brand cannot overcome the effects of COO on product evaluation in every aspect of product evaluation's dimensions for the high purchase involvement product. However, high equity brand in the case of fashion-clothing product for suits can help to decrease the effects of negative image COO by leading consumers to still perceive the product in a positive way especially in terms of quality of design and product reliability. Therefore, this outcome appears to indicate that the level of purchase involvement or product type plays a moderating role on the effects of COO impact on consumers' evaluation of suits.

In conclusion, the results derived from the correlation analysis suggest that COO plays a potential role and has a greater influence on consumers' evaluation of clothing products when the level of purchase involvement appears to be high. In other words, consumers appear to more reliance on COO information when they are evaluating high involvement apparel products. In contrast, the correlation analysis suggests that COO effects appear to be weak when consumers are dealing with low involvement apparel products.

The following section discusses the interaction effects between the level of brand equity (BE) and the level of purchase involvement (PI).

The Interaction Effects between BE and PI on Product Evaluation

With regard to the overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10, the multivariate results listed in the table reveal three statistically significant results of the interaction effects of BE x PI. These three significant results comprise of the two dimensions of perceived quality of product (quality of design and quality of product) with statistically significant alpha level of 0.10. The dimension of purchase intention with alpha level of 0.01 is also a significant result. These results indicate that there is an interaction effect between the level of brand equity and the level of purchase

involvement. These interaction effects in turn impact on consumers' evaluation of fashion-clothing products. Thus, this outcome supports hypothesis H6, which states that *"The level of brand equity interacts with the level of purchase involvement and in turn their effects influence Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products"*.

At this stage, it is apparent that there is an interaction effect between the two moderating factors with respect to the level of brand equity (BE) and the level of purchase involvement (PI) and their impact on consumers' product evaluation. The examples of the interaction effects between BE and PI are subsequently given in this section. Zikmund (2003) suggests that *"If the effect of one treatment differs at various levels of the other treatment, interaction occurs"*. Thus, the example cases given are related to the two observations' impact on product evaluation. In the first observation, this study looked at different levels of purchase involvement that were evoked by product type whereas the second observation focused on the various levels of brand equity. These examples were observed in accordance with each COOs *(Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam)*. These two cases are illustrated as set out below.

Case 1: ***Suits*** – AIIZ	VS	***T-shirt*** – AIIZ
Case 2: T-shirt – ***Greyhound***	VS	T-shirt – ***AIIZ***

This study observed the above two example cases with regard to the combined effects between factors BE and PI and their impact on consumers' evaluation of clothing products. The observation focused on the effect of one treatment and whether it differs at different levels of the other treatment by using *t-test* analysis. This analysis is employed in order to find out the difference between means of compared cases. Further information with regard to the above two cases is presented in each case analysis below.

Case 1: *Suits* – AIIZ VS *T-shirt* – AIIZ

Earlier analysis with respect to MANOVA found that the interaction effects between BE and PI occurred. There appeared to be a differential effect on consumers in terms of their perception of quality and purchase intention with respect to the products in case 1. In case 1, BE was controlled through using the same brand *(AIIZ)* in order to observe consumers' evaluation of products at a various level of PI *(High / Low)*.

Therefore, this case examined the comparison between ***suits of brand AIIZ*** and ***T-shirts under the same brand*** for the products that were made in the same country with respect to the three COOs *(Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam).* The results derived from this observation are indicated in the following tables *(Table 5.15, 5.15.1, 5.15.2, and 5.15.3).* These results are obtained from the *Levene's Test* and *t-test* analysis for each country-of-origin.

The results derived from the *Levene's Test* in the following three tables *(Table 5.15, 5.15.1 and 5.15.2)* indicate the *p*-value for the summary results that were involved with the *t*-test analysis in table 5.15.3. The summary results in Table 5.15.3 indicate the results of Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products with respect to the comparison of clothing products between the different levels of purchase involvement under the same brand and origin source. The results in that table indicate that Thai consumers perceived the high purchase involvement clothing made under the low equity brand as better quality and were more likely to purchase than for low purchase involvement clothing made under the same brand for those products that were made in Vietnam. These tests revealed the significant results for the dimensions of Quality of Design, Quality of Workmanship, Quality of Product and Purchase Intention with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01. Another dimension with respect to Product Reliability is significant based on the level alpha of 0.05. This outcome suggests that Thai consumers perceived clothing products made in a country with low COO image under low equity brand differently according to their levels of purchase involvement.

Another comparison was made with respect to the case of products made in Malaysia. The relevant table indicates that the significant results emerged for the all dimensions of product evaluation except the dimension of Purchase Intention. There were no significant results apparent in the case of products made in Japan. This outcome suggests that the combined effects between factors BE and PI appear to play a much greater role in clothing products that are made in less developed countries in terms of their impact on consumers' product evaluation. This study continued investigating case 2 and the results derived from this case are presented in the following section.

Case 2: T-shirt – *Greyhound* VS T-shirt – *AIIZ*

The observation in this case also examines the combined effects of factors BE and PI

Table 5.15 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Japan)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	3.637	0.060	0.114	78	0.909	0.025	0.218	-0.410	0.460
	Equal variances not assumed			0.114	72.329	0.909	0.025	0.218	-0.410	0.460
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	3.527	0.064	-1.322	78	0.190	-0.275	0.208	-0.689	0.139
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.322	72.423	0.190	-0.275	0.208	-0.690	0.140
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.995	0.322	-0.734	78	0.465	-0.150	0.204	-0.557	0.257
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.734	77.365	0.465	-0.150	0.204	-0.557	0.257
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	2.575	0.113	1.148	78	0.255	0.225	0.196	-0.165	0.615
	Equal variances not assumed			1.148	73.278	0.255	0.225	0.196	-0.166	0.616
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	4.184	0.044	0.000	78	1.000	0.000	0.220	-0.438	0.438
	Equal variances not assumed			0.000	69.740	1.000	0.000	0.220	-0.439	0.439

Table 5.15.1 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Malaysia)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	2.878	0.094	2.402	78	0.019	0.575	0.239	0.098	1.052
	Equal variances not assumed			2.402	75.016	0.019	0.575	0.239	0.098	1.052
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.244	0.623	2.264	78	0.026	0.525	0.232	0.063	0.987
	Equal variances not assumed			2.264	78.000	0.026	0.525	0.232	0.063	0.987
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.510	0.477	1.981	78	0.051	0.400	0.202	-0.002	0.802
	Equal variances not assumed			1.981	77.997	0.051	0.400	0.202	-0.002	0.802
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	1.469	0.229	1.801	78	0.076	0.425	0.236	-0.045	0.895
	Equal variances not assumed			1.801	77.185	0.076	0.425	0.236	-0.045	0.895
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.123	0.727	1.182	78	0.241	0.250	0.211	-0.171	0.671
	Equal variances not assumed			1.182	77.856	0.241	0.250	0.211	-0.171	0.671

Table 5.15.2 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Vietnam)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.713	0.401	3.071	78	0.003	0.675	0.220	0.237	1.113
	Equal variances not assumed			3.071	75.189	0.003	0.675	0.220	0.237	1.113
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.011	0.917	3.089	78	0.003	0.625	0.202	0.222	1.028
	Equal variances not assumed			3.089	77.548	0.003	0.625	0.202	0.222	1.028
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.341	0.561	5.430	78	0.000	0.950	0.175	0.602	1.298
	Equal variances not assumed			5.430	77.889	0.000	0.950	0.175	0.602	1.298
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.019	0.891	2.073	78	0.041	0.450	0.217	0.018	0.882
	Equal variances not assumed			2.073	77.534	0.041	0.450	0.217	0.018	0.882
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.297	0.587	5.154	78	0.000	1.075	0.209	0.660	1.490
	Equal variances not assumed			5.154	77.953	0.000	1.075	0.209	0.660	1.490

Table 5.15.3 Consumers' Evaluation of Comparing Clothing Products between Various Levels of Purchase Involvement under the Same Brand and Source

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Japan				Malaysia				Vietnam			
	***Suit* AIIZ** *(Mean)*	***T-shirt* AIIZ** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**	***Suit* AIIZ** *(Mean)*	***T-shirt* AIIZ** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**	***Suit* AIIZ** *(Mean)*	***T-shirt* AIIZ** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**
Quality of Design	5.10	5.08	0.114	0.909	4.40	3.83	2.402	0.019**	3.70	3.03	3.071	0.003***
Quality of Workmanship	4.85	5.13	-1.322	0.190	4.47	3.95	2.264	0.026**	3.75	3.13	3.089	0.003***
Quality of Product	4.75	4.90	-0.734	0.465	4.40	4.00	1.981	0.051*	4.03	3.08	5.430	0.000***
Product Reliability	5.10	4.88	1.148	0.255	4.45	4.03	1.801	0.076*	3.55	3.10	2.073	0.041**
Purchase Intention	5.08	5.08	0.000	1.000	4.38	4.13	1.182	0.241	4.15	3.08	5.154	0.000***

* Statistical Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistical Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistical Significant ($p < .01$)

by focusing on the effect of one treatment and whether it differs at different levels of the other treatment. This case controlled PI by using the same product type *(T-shirts)* in order to look at the different levels of BE *(High / Low)*, and how this would effect consumers' perceptions in terms of their comparison of products. The investigation with respect to the comparison of consumers' perceptions of clothing between ***T-shirts of brand Greyhound*** and ***T-shirts of brand AIIZ*** were observed. The study examined this case for the products that were made in each of the COOs, namely Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam. The results obtained from this observation are indicated in the following tables *(Table 5.15.4, 5.15.5, 5.15.6, and 5.15.7).* Table 5.15.4, 5.15.5 and 5.15.6 demonstrate the results derived from *Levene's Test* in the procedure of *t-test* analysis for each country-of-origin. The summary of the results identifying whether the comparison cases were different are presented in Table 5.15.6. These results were derived from *t-test* analysis.

With regard to the summary results in Table 5.15.7, the *p*-values indicated in that table are derived from the *Levene's Test* in Table 5.15.4, 5.15.5 and 5.15.6. The results in Table 5.15.7 show the significant results with the statistically significant alpha level of 0.01 for all of dimensions of product evaluation for the comparison of clothing products that were made in Vietnam. In the case of clothing products that were made in Malaysia, the significant results emerged for the dimensions of product evaluation except the dimension of *"Product Reliability"*. These significant results are based on the alpha level of 0.05 of significance. In addition, there was only one significant result which occurred for the dimension of *"Product Reliability"* for the case of clothing products that were made in Vietnam.. This significant result is evinced at the statistically significant alpha level of 0.05. Based on these results, it appears that the combined effects between factors BE and PI play a powerful role in influencing consumers' product evaluation for clothing products that are made in the less economically developed country. This outcome can be seen from the significant results obtained in every dimension of product evaluation in the case of the comparison of products made in Vietnam. This outcome suggests that Thai consumers perceived T-shirts made in a country with low COO image *(Vietnam)* as different in accordance with the levels of brand equity.

Table 5.15.4 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Japan)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	3.567	0.063	0.594	78	0.554	0.125	0.211	-0.294	0.544
	Equal variances not assumed			0.594	74.214	0.555	0.125	0.211	-0.295	0.545
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	2.121	0.149	-0.128	78	0.899	-0.025	0.196	-0.415	0.365
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.128	75.360	0.899	-0.025	0.196	-0.416	0.366
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.502	0.481	0.530	78	0.598	0.100	0.189	-0.276	0.476
	Equal variances not assumed			0.530	77.674	0.598	0.100	0.189	-0.276	0.476
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	1.642	0.204	2.143	78	0.035	0.400	0.187	0.028	0.772
	Equal variances not assumed			2.143	75.640	0.035	0.400	0.187	0.028	0.772
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	4.397	0.039	-0.605	78	0.547	-0.125	0.207	-0.537	0.287
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.605	73.173	0.547	-0.125	0.207	-0.537	0.287

Table 5.15.5 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Malaysia)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.122	0.728	2.342	78	0.022	0.475	0.203	0.071	0.879
	Equal variances not assumed			2.342	76.983	0.022	0.475	0.203	0.071	0.879
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.006	0.938	2.019	78	0.047	0.450	0.223	0.006	0.894
	Equal variances not assumed			2.019	77.488	0.047	0.450	0.223	0.006	0.894
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.587	0.446	2.102	78	0.039	0.425	0.202	0.022	0.828
	Equal variances not assumed			2.102	77.999	0.039	0.425	0.202	0.022	0.828
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.563	0.455	1.386	78	0.170	0.275	0.198	-0.120	0.670
	Equal variances not assumed			1.386	72.698	0.170	0.275	0.198	-0.120	0.670
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.013	0.908	2.219	78	0.029	0.450	0.203	0.046	0.854
	Equal variances not assumed			2.219	76.623	0.029	0.450	0.203	0.046	0.854

Table 5.15.6 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Vietnam)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.014	0.906	3.875	78	0.000	0.925	0.239	0.450	1.400
	Equal variances not assumed			3.875	77.989	0.000	0.925	0.239	0.450	1.400
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	1.272	0.263	4.485	78	0.000	1.025	0.229	0.570	1.480
	Equal variances not assumed			4.485	76.143	0.000	1.025	0.229	0.570	1.480
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.134	0.715	6.012	78	0.000	1.075	0.179	0.719	1.431
	Equal variances not assumed			6.012	77.997	0.000	1.075	0.179	0.719	1.431
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.420	0.519	3.884	78	0.000	0.825	0.212	0.402	1.248
	Equal variances not assumed			3.884	76.792	0.000	0.825	0.212	0.402	1.248
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	1.031	0.313	4.872	78	0.000	1.125	0.231	0.665	1.585
	Equal variances not assumed			4.872	75.962	0.000	1.125	0.231	0.665	1.585

Table 5.15.7 Consumers' Evaluation of Comparing Clothing Products between Various Levels of Brand Equity under the Same Product Type and Source

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	Japan				Malaysia				Vietnam			
	T-shirt *Greyhound* *(Mean)*	T-shirt *AIIZ* *(Mean)*	*t* -value	Sig.	T-shirt *Greyhound* *(Mean)*	T-shirt *AIIZ* *(Mean)*	*t* -value	Sig.	T-shirt *Greyhound* *(Mean)*	T-shirt *AIIZ* *(Mean)*	*t* -value	Sig.
Quality of Design	5.20	5.08	0.594	0.554	4.30	3.83	2.342	0.022**	3.95	3.03	3.875	0.000***
Quality of Workmanship	5.10	5.13	-0.128	0.899	4.40	3.95	2.019	0.047**	4.15	3.13	4.485	0.000***
Quality of Product	5.00	4.90	0.530	0.598	4.43	4.00	2.102	0.039**	4.15	3.08	6.012	0.000***
Product Reliability	5.28	4.88	2.143	0.035**	4.30	4.03	1.386	0.170	3.93	3.10	3.884	0.000***
Purchase Intention	4.95	5.08	-0.605	0.547	4.58	4.13	2.219	0.029**	4.20	3.08	4.872	0.000***

* Statistical Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistical Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistical Significant ($p < .01$)

To sum up, the results derived from Case 1 and 2 suggest that Thai consumers perceive products differently especially in the case of the products that are made in Vietnam. Thai consumers' perceptions of the comparison of products that are made in Malaysia also appear to differ but not in every dimension of product evaluation. With regard to the comparison of products that are made in Japan, Thai consumers perceived no difference between products in case 1. In case 2 differences were apparent but only for one dimension of product evaluation. This outcome suggests that the combined effects of factors BE and PI play a more significant role in influencing consumers' product evaluation of clothing products that are made in the country with a relative lower economic development level. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that when Thai consumers perceived clothing products made in the country with a higher level of economic development, they appear to believe and trust in the product's quality. A high level of a country's development induces consumers to believe in and place more reliance on high technology and manufacturing effectiveness. Ultimately, consumers appear to ignore or become less reliant on the combined effects of factors BE and PI that might influence their evaluation of clothing. In contrast, when Thai consumers perceive products that are made in a country with a relatively low COO image, the combined effects of factors BE and PI appear to strongly impact consumers' product evaluation.

The next section presents a further discussion and examples with respect to the interaction effects among the three factors (D, BE and PI) based on the overall MANOVA results as indicated above.

The Interaction Effects between D, BE and PI on Product Evaluation

Previously, the study reported the overall MANOVA results in Table 5.10 with regard to the results of interaction effects among the three factors, which were comprised of the level of country's development (D), the level of brand equity (BE), and the level of purchase involvement (PI). This study found that there were interaction effects among the level of country's development (D), the level of brand equity (BE), and the level of purchase involvement (PI) on Thai consumers' product evaluation. Next, this research gives the examples of observing the interaction effects that are associated with D x BE x PI. The observation looked at whether consumers perceive quality and purchase intention of the products differently when those products involve with the

interaction effects of the three factors D x BE x PI. These examples are given in the three cases as indicated below.

Case 1: T-shirt – AIIZ – ***Japan***
Case 2: T-shirt – ***Greyhound*** – Vietnam
Case 3: ***Suit*** – AIIZ – Vietnam

Among the three factors of D x BE x PI, the study controlled two weak factors and examined the strength of one interested factor by observing the movement of the different levels of interested factor. As can be seen from the above cases, this study looked at the strength of D, BE and PI for case 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Thus, the observation focused on the movement of the different levels of each interested factor for each case. This research conducted comparisons of the above cases in order to observe the movement of the interested factor. The comparison of each case made it possible to easily notice whether the strength of one factor was able to alleviate the effects of the other weak factors on consumers' evaluation of clothing products. The cases that were used for comparison purposes are indicated as follows:

Case 1: T-shirt – AIIZ – ***Japan***	VS	T-shirt – AIIZ – ***Vietnam***
Case 2: T-shirt – ***Greyhound*** – Vietnam	VS	T-shirt – ***AIIZ*** – Vietnam
Case 3: ***Suit*** – AIIZ – Vietnam	VS	***T-shirt*** – AIIZ – Vietnam

The results of *t-test* analysis and *Levene's Test* derived from observing the above three cases are demonstrated in the following tables *(Table 5.16, 5.16.1, 5.16.2* and *5.16.3).* These results indicate whether there are differences of means between the three comparison cases as mentioned above. Based on the results in those four tables, this study found the differences of means between those three comparison cases with the statistically significant results as reported in Table 5.16, 5.16.1 and 5.16.2 for case 1, case 2 and case 3, respectively. The Levene's Test in these tables provide the p-values that would be brought to use in the summary results table *(Table 5.16.3).* Based on Levene's Test from these three tables, the results of testing the differences of means for those three comparison cases and reported in Table 5.16.3.

Table 5.16 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Case 1)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	2.750	0.101	9.559	78	0.000	2.050	0.214	1.623	2.477
	Equal variances not assumed			9.559	73.285	0.000	2.050	0.214	1.623	2.477
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.869	0.354	10.306	78	0.000	2.000	0.194	1.614	2.386
	Equal variances not assumed			10.306	75.804	0.000	2.000	0.194	1.613	2.387
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.476	0.492	9.775	78	0.000	1.825	0.187	1.453	2.197
	Equal variances not assumed			9.775	77.391	0.000	1.825	0.187	1.453	2.197
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	2.854	0.095	8.905	78	0.000	1.775	0.199	1.378	2.172
	Equal variances not assumed			8.905	72.407	0.000	1.775	0.199	1.378	2.172
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	2.820	0.097	10.236	78	0.000	2.000	0.195	1.611	2.389
	Equal variances not assumed			10.236	75.861	0.000	2.000	0.195	1.611	2.389

Table 5.16.1 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Case 2)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.014	0.906	3.875	78	0.000	0.925	0.239	0.450	1.400
	Equal variances not assumed			3.875	77.989	0.000	0.925	0.239	0.450	1.400
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	1.272	0.263	4.485	78	0.000	1.025	0.229	0.570	1.480
	Equal variances not assumed			4.485	76.143	0.000	1.025	0.229	0.570	1.480
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.134	0.715	6.012	78	0.000	1.075	0.179	0.719	1.431
	Equal variances not assumed			6.012	77.997	0.000	1.075	0.179	0.719	1.431
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.420	0.519	3.884	78	0.000	0.825	0.212	0.402	1.248
	Equal variances not assumed			3.884	76.792	0.000	0.825	0.212	0.402	1.248
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	1.031	0.313	4.872	78	0.000	1.125	0.231	0.665	1.585
	Equal variances not assumed			4.872	75.962	0.000	1.125	0.231	0.665	1.585

Table 5.16.2 Independent-Samples T Test (Levene's Test for Case 3)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Quality of Design	Equal variances assumed	0.713	0.401	3.071	78	0.003	0.675	0.220	0.237	1.113
	Equal variances not assumed			3.071	75.189	0.003	0.675	0.220	0.237	1.113
Quality of Workmanship	Equal variances assumed	0.011	0.917	3.089	78	0.003	0.625	0.202	0.222	1.028
	Equal variances not assumed			3.089	77.548	0.003	0.625	0.202	0.222	1.028
Quality of Product	Equal variances assumed	0.341	0.561	5.430	78	0.000	0.950	0.175	0.602	1.298
	Equal variances not assumed			5.430	77.889	0.000	0.950	0.175	0.602	1.298
Product Reliability	Equal variances assumed	0.019	0.891	2.073	78	0.041	0.450	0.217	0.018	0.882
	Equal variances not assumed			2.073	77.534	0.041	0.450	0.217	0.018	0.882
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	0.297	0.587	5.154	78	0.000	1.075	0.209	0.660	1.490
	Equal variances not assumed			5.154	77.953	0.000	1.075	0.209	0.660	1.490

Table 5.16.3 Mean Rating of Difference Comparison Cases with respect to the Combined Effects of DxBExPI on Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation *(Dimensions)*	**Case 1**				**Case 2**				**Case 3**			
	T-shirt AIIZ ***Japan*** *(Mean)*	T-shirt AIIZ ***Vietnam*** *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**	T-shirt ***Greyhound*** Vietnam *(Mean)*	T-shirt ***AIIZ*** Vietnam *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**	***Suit*** AIIZ Vietnam *(Mean)*	***T-shirt*** AIIZ Vietnam *(Mean)*	***t*-value**	**Sig.**
Quality of Design	5.08	3.03	9.559	0.000***	3.95	3.03	3.875	0.000***	3.70	3.03	3.071	0.003***
Quality of Workmanship	5.13	3.13	10.306	0.000***	4.15	3.13	4.485	0.000***	3.75	3.13	3.089	0.003***
Quality of Product	4.90	3.08	9.775	0.000***	4.15	3.08	6.012	0.000***	4.03	3.08	5.430	0.000***
Product Reliability	4.88	3.10	8.905	0.000***	3.93	3.10	3.884	0.000***	3.55	3.10	2.073	0.041**
Purchase Intention	5.08	3.08	10.236	0.000***	4.20	3.08	4.872	0.000***	4.15	3.08	5.154	0.000***

* Statistical Significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistical Significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistical Significant ($p < .01$)

The results with respect to case 1 in Table 5.16.3 reveal the differences of means between *T-shirt-AIIZ-**Japan*** and *T-shirt-AIIZ-**Vietnam*** in every dimension of product evaluation with the statistically significant results of alpha level of 0.01. *T-shirt-AIIZ-**Japan*** appears to be perceived by Thai consumers as being of greater quality and generating more positive purchase intention than *T-shirt-AIIZ-**Vietnam***. This outcome suggests that the strength of a high level of country's development can alleviate other factors' weaknesses. This effect is in turn to affect Thai consumers' evaluation of products by inducing them to perceive products as being of high quality when compared with the other case where all factors appear to be weak.

With regard to the other two cases *(Case 2 and 3),* Thai consumers perceived *T-shirt-**Greyhound**-Vietnam* (case 2) and ***Suit**-AIIZ-Vietnam (case 3)* as being of better quality and thus generating a greater likelihood of purchase than in comparison with case 2 and 3, respectively. These results are evinced with the statistically significant results as indicated in Table 5.16.3. Therefore, it appears that the strength of a high level of brand equity as well as the strength of a high level of purchase involvement can also alleviate the effects of the other two factors' weaknesses in terms of their impact on product evaluation.

Based on the above results, the combined effects between the three independent variables (factors D, BE and PI) suggest that the strength of one factor could well overcome the weakness of another factor on consumers' product evaluation.

In summary, the main study analysis indicates the overall MANOVA results with respect to the main effects of three independent variables (D, BE and PI) and their interaction effects in terms of their impact on product evaluation. This study found that the main effects of the level of country's development (D), the level of brand equity (BE) and the level of purchase involvement have an impact on consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

This research also found that there is an interaction effect among the three factors (D, BE and PI). It was found that the level of country's development (D) interacts with the level of brand equity (BE) and in turn influences consumers' product evaluation of clothing. The level of brand equity appears to moderate the effects of COO on product

evaluation. The same tendency appears to occur in the case of the interaction effects between the level of country's development (D) and the level of purchase involvement (PI). The MANOVA results indicate that the interaction effects among factors D and PI occur and the level of purchase involvement appears to moderate the effects of COO on product evaluation. In addition, this study found that the moderating factor BE and the moderating factor PI also have interaction effect in terms of the consumers' evaluation of apparel.

Based on the MANOVA results of the main study, this research can answer all of the study's hypotheses except the hypotheses H1 and H4. Therefore, further analyses were employed in order to respond to the two remaining unanswered hypotheses.

The results derived from employing further analysis for proving the hypothesis H1 indicate that Thai consumers prefer a clothing product made in a more developed country than in a less developed country. This outcome appears to support H1. However, this analysis found that the level of purchase involvement might influence consumers' perceptions of COO with regard to their evaluation of clothing products. Based on this outcome, this research later examined the role of the level of purchase involvement and the relation among the level of country's development and the level of purchase involvement with regard to the impact on product evaluation.

With regard to the further analysis that was conducted in order to answer the hypothesis H4, it was found that this hypothesis is true. High equity brand can overcome the effects of COO with a relative low COO image with respect to Thai consumers' clothing product evaluation. This outcome is presented in greater detail with respect to the interaction effects between D and BE on product evaluation above in Section 5.2.4.4. However, the results in this analysis also highlighted the intriguing concern with respect to the role of the level of purchase involvement. This concern will be examined later. According to further analysis in this part of the analysis, this study conducted extra observation by investigating the "*trade-off*" between the combined effects of factors D and BE. It was found that the trade-off among those two factors had an impact on consumers' evaluation of clothing products.

Beyond the hypotheses setting for this research, some hypotheses that would correspond to the results that emerged from the analyses were not outlined (e.g. *"trade-off"* among the combined effects of D and BE and their impact on product evaluation as mentioned above). Nevertheless, this study intends to do further analysis and present additional discussion for some of the issues that are related to each of the study's hypothesis. Thus, this study employed further analysis to examine the role of the different levels of brand equity on product evaluation in the above section *(Section 5.2.4.4).* This research also gave the examples for the cases of the combined effects between factors BE and PI as well as the interaction effects among the three product cues and their impact on product evaluation. In addition, the further analysis of identifying the relationship between the level of country's development (D) and the level of purchase involvement (PI) was undertaken. The outcome derived from this analysis can be used to explain the intriguing issues with regard to the role of the level of purchase involvement that emerged from some part of the analyses in the main study.

Up to this point, the analyses with respect to the main study have been done. The results derived from the main study have responded to all of the hypotheses. Since the literature suggests that demographic determinants can play a role in describing the COO effects on consumers' evaluation of particular products, this study investigated the demographics in order to generate extra knowledge related to this research.

5.2.5 *Demographic Effects*

In this section, the study examined relationship between demographic factors with respect to *gender, age, education,* and *occupation* and the impact of COO on product evaluation. The results of the correlation analysis employed for this investigation are presented in Table 5.17.

The results shown in Table 5.17 present the relationship between the *demographic factors* of gender, age, education and occupation with *consumers' perceptions of COO on the five dimensions of product evaluation*, which comprise of quality of design, quality of workmanship, quality of product, product reliability and purchase intention.

Table 5.17 Correlation of Demographic Effects on Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation	Gender			Age			Education			Occupation		
(Dimensions)	Japan	Malaysia	Vietnam	Japan	Malaysia	Vietnam	Japan	Malaysia	Vietnam	Japan	Malaysia	Vietnam
Quality of Design	-0.214**	-0.130	-0.107	-0.166**	-0.055	-0.018	0.163**	0.053	0.129	0.297***	0.154*	0.099
Quality of Workmanship	-0.160**	-0.123	-0.127	-0.166**	-0.156**	-0.013	0.258***	0.163**	0.113	0.191**	0.15*	0.019
Quality of Product	-0.246***	-0.162**	-0.042	-0.199**	-0.109	-0.035	0.283***	0.152*	0.070	0.196**	0.093	0.088
Product Relaibility	-0.241***	-0.183**	-0.090	-0.090	-0.081	-0.026	0.234***	0.052	0.069	0.268***	0.143*	0.100
Purchase Intention	-0.246***	-0.126	-0.049	-0.215**	-0.151*	-0.031	0.238***	0.112	0.121	0.242***	0.098	0.068

* Statistically significant ($p < .10$)
** Statistically significant ($p < .05$)
*** Statistically significant ($p < .01$)

This study intended to examine how demographic factors play a role in describing the COO effects on Thai consumers' perception of particular products. This examination was done in light of countries that have different levels of development and with regard to the five dimensions of product evaluation when the ranges of each demographic factor are changing. It is to be noted that the symbols of "+" and "-" only represent the direction of the change in demographic values when the ranges of each demographic factor are changed.

The factor *"gender"* is specified as "1" = female; "2" = male. Similarly, the factor *"age"* is specified as "1" = 18-25 years; "2" = 26-36 years; "3" = 36-45 years; "4" = 46-55 years; and "5" = 56 years up. *"Education"* is designated as "1" = High school graduate; "2" = College graduate; "3" = Completed graduate school; "4" = Postgraduate school. *"Occupation"* is similarly classified as "1" = Unemployed / Retired; "2" = Student; "3" = Servant / Labor; "4" = Government / State enterprise official; "5" = Employee; "6" = Self employed. The occupation classification is considered to be an indirect measure of income of respondents for the current study. The income of respondent presumably increases on the progressive occupation scales as anecdotally observed in Thailand.

Table 5.17 shows evidence of female Thai consumers preferring the fashion-clothing products made in more developed country over products made in less developed country. As is evident from the correlation results in Table 5.17, female Thai consumers perceive particular products made in Japan favorably than those made in Malaysia and Vietnam in terms of the five dimensions of product evaluation. In fact, the results of the correlation analysis suggest the significant correlations for every dimension of product evaluation of products made in Japan. On the other hand, there are only two significant correlations in terms of quality of product and product reliability dimensions for Malaysia and no significant correlations for Vietnam. Past studies indicate that gender implicitly has a difference of attitude towards foreign products (Lawrence, Marr & Prendergast 1992; Good & Huddleston 1995; Mittal & Tsiros 1995; Sharma, Shimp & Shin 1995).

Table 5.17 further indicates that younger Thai consumers preferred products made in a more developed country than the product made in a less developed country. These

results appear to be compatible with the study of O'Cass (2004) that asserts that younger respondents are more likely to be involved than older respondents in the choice of fashion-clothing product.

There is also evidence in Table 5.17 that Thai consumers with higher education perceive the product made in more developed countries was more favorable than the product made in less developed countries. Past research also indicates that Thai consumers with high education are more likely to prefer the product made in developed country or highly industrialized country. One possible reason for this result appears to be because educated Thai consumers are more likely to have a chance to travel aboard and experience purchase of foreign products (Ahmed & d'Astous 2007).

Again Table 5.17 demonstrates that Thai consumers who were employed and have more income appear to prefer the products made in more developed countries than the product made in less developed countries. These results are also compatible with the previous studies. Past research findings indicate that Thai consumers with higher income express a positive attitude towards more developed country or highly industrialized country. In addition, Thai consumers with higher income probably feel familiar with and more likely to purchase foreign products. (Ahmed & d'Astous 2007)

5.3 Summary

The current study conducted an exploratory survey followed by a field survey. The exploratory survey identified variables which contributed to defining the theoretical framework of the study. Notably, the variables identified as independent variables for the final survey include the level of country's development, the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement.

The findings from the field survey suggest that Thai consumers are more likely to favor the product made in a more developed country over the products made in a less developed country. The study proposed seven hypotheses in accordance with the study's theoretical framework and the outcomes derived from the hypothesis testing are as follows:

Hypothesis H1 – Accept

Hypothesis H2 – Accept

Hypothesis H3 – Accept

Hypothesis H4 – Accept

Hypothesis H5 – Accept

Hypothesis H6 – Accept

Hypothesis H7 – Reject

The correlation analysis of the demographic factors with the dependent variables identified that gender, age, education and occupation influence the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation.

The next chapter will provide a conclusion of the findings obtained from the research investigation as well as summarize the current study.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.0 Summary of Study's Findings

The results obtained from the current study are reported in chapter 5. In this chapter, the study summarizes the findings from the two surveys, namely, exploratory survey and field survey.

6.0.1 *Summary of Exploratory Survey Findings*

The objective of conducting an exploratory survey is (a) to identify two Thai fashion-clothing brands with different levels of brand equity, (b) to ratify the two levels of product purchase involvement and (c) to confirm the three countries with different levels of country development for using in a subsequent survey.

The identification of two levels of brand equity suggest that the ***"Greyhound"*** brand appears to qualify as a surrogate for *high equity brand*, whereas, the ***"AIIZ"*** brand appears as an appropriate surrogate for *low equity brand*.

The results of ratifying the two levels of product purchase involvement indicate that ***"suits"*** and ***"T-shirts"*** are appropriately designated as surrogates for *high involvement* and *low involvement* products, respectively.

The findings of confirming the three countries, namely, Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam with different level of country development appear to be appropriately designated for used in the field survey. The results indicate that there was a significant difference between Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam in terms of consumers' perceptions of their level of development. ***Japan*** is considered as representative of a country with a *higher level of development* compared with Thailand and ***Malaysia*** and ***Vietnam,*** representative of countries with *similar* and *lesser levels of development* respectively in comparison with Thailand.

The results from the exploratory survey with respect to the two levels of brand equity, the two levels of purchase involvement and the three countries with different levels of country development, emerged as statistically significant. Thus, it is reasonable to use these results in the field investigation as representative of the three independent variables included in the theoretical framework.

6.0.2 *Summary of Field Survey Findings*

In this section, the study summarizes the results derived from the field survey with respect to ***Thai consumers' favorable or unfavorable COO***, ***general results*** with regard to the three product cues (COO, brand and product type), the role of marketing mix factors on consumers' decision making for general clothing and ***the findings of main study.*** The summary of the aforementioned results are as follows:

Favorable or Unfavorable COO

The study sought to identify favorable or unfavorable perceptions of COO with respect to Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam. The results of Thai consumers' perceptions of country capabilities help to clarify this concern. The findings suggest that Thai consumers appear to perceive clothing products made in a country perceived as having a high level of development as more favorably than clothing products made in a country perceived as having a lower level of development. This outcome appears to be consistent with past studies conducted in Western countries.

General Results

The *General Results* with respect to the overall importance of the three product cues (COO, brand and product type) and the ranking of factors in terms of importance among these three product cues that affect consumers' product evaluation appear to be different. The ranking results show that when Thai consumers were focusing on individual product cues, they appear to identify COO, brand and product type cues as the most, second most and third most important, respectively. With regard to the results of the overall importance of these three product cues, this study found that COO is perceived as a more important cue in affecting consumers' product evaluation than brand or product type. However, due to the insignificant results of the comparison between brand and product type that were derived from the analysis, it

cannot be asserted that brand cue is perceived as being of lesser importance than product type cue. Based on the above results, this different outcome means that it is not possible to make an absolute conclusion with regard to the importance of these three product cues. However, the outcome in this part of the study was used as supplementary information for the main study.

The *General Results* with respect to the role of marketing mix factors on consumers' decision making for general clothing suggest that ***Price*** influences Thai consumers' evaluation of clothing products to such an extent that it could persuade them to give certain clothing items their preferences.

Main Study

The study draws a conclusion from the main study in examining the effects of COO, brand and product type on consumers' product evaluation. This study observed a relationship of ***independent variables***, namely, the level of country's development, the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement on ***dependent variables***, namely, perceived quality and purchase intention of products. This study considers the perceived quality and purchase intention of products in terms of five dimensions of product evaluation, namely, *quality of design*, *quality of workmanship*, *quality of product*, *product reliability* and *purchase intention*.

The results of the relationship among the independent variables are indicated in terms of their combined effects on product evaluation. To illustrate, this study examines the effects of the independent variables under the following seven investigative *situations:*

(1) The main effect of the level of country's development on perceived quality and purchase intention of products.
(2) The main effect of the level of brand equity on perceived quality and purchase intention of products.
(3) The main effect of the level of product purchase involvement on perceived quality and purchase intention of products.
(4) The interaction effect of the level of country's development and the level of brand equity on perceived quality and purchase intention of products.

(5) The interaction effect of the level of country's development and the level of product purchase involvement on perceived quality and purchase intention of products.
(6) The interaction effect of the level of brand equity and the level of product purchase involvement on perceived quality and purchase intention of products.
(7) The interaction effects of the level of country's development, the level of brand equity and the level of product purchase involvement on perceived quality and purchase intention of products.

From situation 1, we observe that the level of a country's development affects consumers' product evaluation. Closer observation of situation 1 in this study found that Thai consumers appear to favor a clothing product made in a more developed country than in a less developed country. This observation also found that the level of purchase involvement might affect consumers' perceptions of COO with regard to their evaluation of clothing products.

In situation 2, it appears that the level of brand equity influence consumers' evaluation of particular products. Careful examination of situation 2 indicate that Thai consumers appear to prefer and evaluate the high equity branded product with higher regard and are more likely to purchase than the low equity branded product. This result obviously conforms to the findings of Tse and Gorn (1993) which indicate that the product with well-known brand names are more likely to be favorable than those with less well-known brand names. However, this study noted an inclination that the effect of high equity brand on product evaluation with respect to clothing seems to be weak when the level of purchase involvement is increased. Nevertheless, a high equity brand still appears to help to improve the perception of the overall quality of clothing products (both suits and T-shirts) and is more likely to result in a purchase. This conclusion is evidenced by significant results for all dimensions of product evaluation for T-shirts and some significant results for suits.

In addition, an additional observation comparing the different levels of purchase involvement for the same brand found that Thai consumers perceive suits and T-shirts under the low equity brand as being different whereas they perceive those of the high equity brand as not being different. The strength of high equity brand embedded in the

products can lead consumers to perceive both products in the same way. Quality of suits and T-shirts appear not to be different in consumers' perceptions toward the products because consumers are familiar with and trust the high equity brand. However, the different levels of purchase involvement appear to impact Thai consumers' clothing choices for low equity brands.

Similarly in situation 3, the results from our study indicate that the level of purchase involvement affects the perception of consumers' product evaluation.

With respect to the interaction effects of the level of country's development and the level of brand equity on perceived quality and purchase intention of products *(situation 4)*, the research found that the interaction effects of these two variables influence consumers' product evaluation. The level of brand equity appears to moderate the effects of COO on product evaluation. Closer observation indicates that high equity brands can overcome the effects of being made in a country with a relatively low COO image on product evaluation for low involvement products, and this effect appears even stronger when compared with high involvement products. This research found that the effect of a high equity brand in overcoming the effects of being made in a country with a relatively low COO image on consumers' evaluation of products seems to be weak when consumers' purchase involvement with clothing products is greater. However, the effects of a high equity brand still appear to alleviate the negative effects of COO image. This evidence is compatible with the results derived from situation 2 with respect to the observation of the decreased impact of a high equity brand when the level of product purchase involvement is increased.

In addition, this study conducted an additional observation and found that there is a ***"trade-off"*** between the combined effects of the level of country's development and the level of brand equity in terms of the impact on consumers' evaluation of clothing products. This finding suggests that a ***high equity brand*** can overcome the effects of a ***country with a relatively low COO image*** with respect to the impact on product evaluation for both suits and T-shirts. It was found that the significant results emerged for every dimension of product evaluation for T-shirts whereas some significant results were found for product evaluation dimensions of suits. Another aspect to the "*trade-off*" between factors *D* and *BE* is that a ***high COO image*** can help to alleviate

the effects of a ***low equity brand*** on consumers' evaluation of clothing products. This outcome applies to both suits and T-shirts. This outcome is also derived with significant results obtained in every dimension of product evaluation for suits and T-shirts. Based on these results, it is reasonable to state that ***"high COO image"*** appears to play an influential role that is greater than for a ***"high equity brand***" in terms of overcoming the weakness of the other factors on product evaluation. This conclusion can be seen in the significant results obtained for every dimension of product evaluation with respect to the strength of *"high COO image"* as mentioned above. Based on the above outcome, it is possible to infer that the *"COO"* cue seems to be a more important product cue more than *"brand"* in terms of affecting consumers' evaluation of clothing. Furthermore, it was also found that consumers did not perceive suits and T-shirts differently when those products were made in a less developed country under a strong brand. The same holds true in the case of those products made in a highly developed country but under a low equity brand. This outcome helps to confirm the strength of high equity brand as well as the strength of a strong COO image. The strength of these factors induces consumers to perceive suits and T-shirts similarly because they trust and appear rely on the benefits of these factors. Consumers might purchase suits and T-shirts because of the perceived strong brand or a highly regarded image of the country-of-origin.

The results of the interaction effects between the level of country's development and the level of purchase involvement on perceived quality and purchase intention of products *(situation 5)* indicated that this interaction did in fact occur. The level of purchase involvement that was evoked by product type appears to moderate the effects of COO on product evaluation. Closer observation was undertaken by employing a correlation analysis in order to examine the relationship between the level of purchase involvement and consumers' COO perceptions. The results indicate that there is a correlation between *the level of purchase involvement* and *the effects of COO on consumers' product evaluation*. High purchase involvement products appear to increase consumers' greater reliance on COO information than low involvement products. These findings conform to the findings of past research which indicate that the impact of negative image COO information are greater for high involvement products than for low involvement products (Batra et al. 2000; Kinra 2006). It is

therefore reasonable to assert that the level of purchase involvement moderates the effects of COO on product evaluation.

The level of brand equity interacts with the level of purchase involvement *(situation 6)*, and this in turn affects consumers' product evaluation. This research also found that the combined effects between the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement appear to exert a strong impact on consumers' evaluation of fashion-clothing. This was the case when consumers considered the products made in a country with a lower level of economic development. This phenomenon can be explained by stating that when consumers consider clothing products made in a less developed country, they appear to extend their search to other product cues in order to bring additional information together with product origin in order to make a purchase decision. However, the impact of the combined effects between the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement appear to have less strength when consumers evaluate clothing products made in a country with a high level of development. COO information induces consumers to consider factors such as high technology and manufacturing effectiveness. Consequently, consumers appear to place their trust in high COO image as they perceive those products as being of high quality. They tend to ignore or rely less on other product cues.

This study observed that there are interaction effects between the level of country's development, the level of brand equity and the level of purchase involvement *(situation 7).* The examples of these combined effects with respect to this situation suggest that the weakness of one factor (e.g. COO image) could well be overcome by the strength of another factor (e.g. high equity brand) on consumers' evaluation of clothing.

In conclusion, the current study found that Thai consumers appear to favor clothing products made in a more highly developed country more than those made in a less developed country. This outcome was derived from the main study and is compatible with the results of identifying favorable or unfavorable COO that was derived from the field survey.

This study also found that the *"COO"* cue has a greater influence than *"brand"* cue on consumers' evaluation of fashion-clothing products for both high involvement apparel products and low involvement apparel products. This outcome can be seen from the above analyses with respect to the overall importance between COO and brand cues including the ranking of important product cues in *"General Results"*. This outcome is also apparent in the analysis of situation 4 with regard to the combined effects of factors D and BE with respect to the "*trade-off*" observation described in *"Main Study Results"*. It was noted that this conclusion referred to the case when consumers consider the products made in a *highly developed country*. It was found that consumers appear to evaluate those products more highly regard and are more likely to purchase regardless of other product cues (e.g. low brand equity). The same inclination of the strength of the effect of high COO image was also found in the analysis with respect to the combined effects between factors BE and PI on product evaluation. This combined effect appears to exert less influence on the clothing products that are made in a highly developed country. Consumers' perceptions of the quality of products and purchase intentions with respect to clothing that was made in a highly developed country do not appear to differ for suits and T-shirts.

With regard to consumers' perceptions of clothing products made in a *less developed country*, this study found that *"brand cue"* becomes much more important. It has a greater influence than *"COO cue"* on consumers' evaluation of products for both high involvement apparel products and low involvement apparel products. This inference refers to when consumers evaluate clothing products made in a *less developed country*. However, the effects of strong brand appear to have less strength when consumers evaluate high purchase involvement apparel products. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence in this study to state that a high equity brand can still help to alleviate the negative effects of COO on consumers' evaluation of high purchase involvement apparel. From this outcome, it is reasonable to infer that the negative effects of COO image might not be able to play a potential role in influencing consumers' evaluation of high equity branded products for any product categories.

Most studies of COO effects have paid attention to high involvement products. Although there are some COO researches that have examined low involvement

products, the knowledge obtained by investigating the effects of the level of purchase involvement influencing on consumers' product evaluation are still somewhat obscure and yield contradictory inferences. For instance, a number of past studies such as the study by Ahmed and d'Astous (1993), Liefeld (1993), Li and Wyer (1994), Piron (2000) on high involvement products indicate that COO has a strong influence on consumers' product evaluation. Whereas, the study by Darley and Summers (1994) on high involvement products indicate that COO effects appear to be of less concern. As a result, there have been no absolute conclusions yet with respect to the role of the level of purchase involvement. There is also a paucity of past COO studies that focus and directly clarify this indecisiveness by comparing the level of purchase involvement that affects consumers' product evaluation. This study intends to clarify this concern by examining apparel products and investigating how the level of purchase involvement, which is evoked by two sub-product categories of apparels, influence consumers' product evaluation.

This study infers that COO effects exert a greater influence on consumers' evaluation of products for high levels of purchase involvement, whereas COO effects appear to be of less concern when there is a low level of purchase involvement. Consumers appear to have a greater reliance on COO information when they are considering high involvement apparel. Clearly, this research indicates that consumers are less reliant on COO information when they are making a purchase decision with respect to low involvement apparel products.

It was suggested that a number of past research studies on high purchase involvement products revealed that COO cue is more important than brand cue and brand name could not help to overcome the negative effects of COO image. This present study reveals a contradictory result particularly in the case when consumers consider clothing products made in a less developed country. This outcome could lead researchers to realize the importance of a strong brand and should investigate how this knowledge could be used advantageously in influencing consumers' perception of COO. This result may also increase the confidence of high involvement product producers such as automobile companies and household electronic firms in shifting or outsourcing their productions to countries with relatively low COO image. Nevertheless, this study warns that the decreasing inclination of the potential role of

COO effects for any product categories will only occur when the products with a high level of brand equity. Undoubtedly, firms should pay more attention to build their strong brand names.

6.1 Implications

The results obtained from the present study point out Thai consumers would prefer the product made in a more developed country than the product made in a less developed country. Thus, it is reasonable to assert from the findings of this study that *the level of country's development affects Thai consumers' evaluation of a particular product*. This study also indicates that the strength of high COO image can help clothing products that are made under a low equity brand by overcoming their weak effects on consumers' product evaluation.

Based on the above outcomes, it can be implied that developed countries or highly industrialized countries (e.g. Japan) that plan to launch new / unfamiliar products or sell their manufactured products (especially fashion-clothing) in other countries such as Thailand should emphasize their marketing strategies based on COO information. Furthermore, past evidence indicates that consumers more readily accept new products that are made in countries with a favorable COO image (Lampert & Jaffe 1998; Chen & Pereira 1999). In addition, Bhaskaran and Sukumaran (2007) suggest that identification with a favourable COO image could gain greater advantage to the firms and as such enables firms to adopt premium pricing strategies. As in past research, this study also suggests that emphasizing marketing strategies on COO information can be done by building *"country-specific"* marketing strategies (e.g. specific COO on the product label).

Past studies indicate that the COO cue affects consumers' perceptions. However, the impact of COO seems to decrease in strength for consumers' realistic choice procedure (Lim & Darley 1997). As can be seen from the actual environmental circumstances of purchasing, consumers appear to be involved with multiple product cues (e.g. COO, brand, price, warranty) rather than a single product cue (e.g. COO). The results obtained from the current study with respect to the overcoming-effect of high equity brands on low COO image in affecting consumers' product evaluation

seem to support the above outcome from past studies. This present study found that a negative effect of country with a relatively low COO image seems to be weak when consumers consider a particular product with a strong brand. Thus, we can reasonably conclude that *strong brand can overcome the effects of country with a relatively low COO image on product evaluation*. This conclusion appears to be consistent with the studies of Eroglu and Machleit (1989), Cordell (1993), Leclers, Schmitt and Dube (1994) and Hui and Zhou (2003). However, the above conclusion should be interpreted with care. This is because the present study found that the high equity brand's likelihood of being able to overcome the negative effects of country with a relatively low COO image seems to have less strength when consumers' purchase involvement increases. We can, therefore, reasonably infer that *strong brands can help to alleviate the effects of a product originating from a country with a relatively low COO image on product evaluation. However, the degree of alleviation could be weak for high involvement products.*

Based on the current study's findings, strong fashion-clothing brands in the Thailand market produced in foreign countries with relative low COO image are likely to have less harmful effects on Thai consumers' perceptions and their purchase decision-making. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that firms from less developed countries (e.g. Vietnam) or for the firms that plan to outsource from negative image locations should compensate the negative COO effects by focusing on a *"branding"* strategy. This suggestion would be useful for the managers or marketing practitioners who particularly intend to market fashion-clothing products in Thailand.

Past research suggests that strong brand can create unique brand associations in consumers' minds (Keller 1993). As a result, consumers recognize products with a strong brand and are more likely to be familiar with or count on those particular products than others. This facet of a product appears to reasonably explain the results derived from the main study why strong brands can overcome the negative COO effects on consumers' product evaluation. Pappu, Quester and Cooksey (2006) indicate that the negative effects of COO image can impact upon the equity of brand, whereas the current study argues that high equity brand can overcome the negative effects of COO image on consumers' product evaluation. This debate appears to reasonably explain the results of the main study (e.g. the results of situation 4) that

seem to show the powerful influence of the level of purchase involvement. To illustrate, the above-mentioned theoretical implication with regard to the negative effects of country with a relatively low COO image in consumers' purchase behavior can be overcome by strong brands. However, the effects of strong brand appear to have less strength when the degree of purchase involvement level is increased. This phenomenon occurs due to high involvement products increasing consumers' greater reliance on COO information. In addition, the effects of the level of brand equity and the level of involvement themselves affect each other.

Based on the concepts discussed above, the managerial implication for firms that plan to market fashion-clothing products in countries such as Thailand should first consider their product positions. Firms should be concerned with the choice of what kinds of products that they plan to market, the level of consumer involvement that would be associated with their products, the brands that their products bear in the specific markets, and weigh up how the origin of their products would be associated in the minds of their target market.

To sum up, the evidence from this study suggests that *"COO"* cue exerts a greater influence on consumers' evaluation of fashion-clothing products than *"brand"* cue. This inference refers to consumers' evaluation of clothing products made in a highly developed country. Thus, this research suggests that marketing strategies should be set up to ensure that it roughly parallels the stage of economic development (e.g. emphasize on COO information).

This study found that *COO cue* is more important than *brand cue.* High COO image appears to induce consumers to evaluate clothing products as highly regard and they are more likely to purchase regardless other product cues. However, in the world markets today producers constantly seeks means of reducing their production costs. Outsourcing or shifting their manufacturing to less developed countries remains a popular solution as discussed in *"Background"* and *"Problem Statement"* of this research. Therefore, this study also focused on consumers' perceptions of clothing products made in a less developed country. It was found that high equity brand clothing products made in a less developed country affects consumers' product evaluation. It appears that the strength of a high equity brand can overcome the effects

of COO with a relative low country image. Although its strength decreases for high involvement products, high equity brands are still able to overcome the effects of negative information of COO. This phenomenon of a counteracting effect of high equity brand on negative information about COO for high and low involvement apparel seems to emerge as an important inclination. It suggests that the importance of a strong brand can help to alleviate the effects of a relative low COO image *regardless of the level of purchase involvement*. Thus, this outcome could be of considerable importance.

To further explain, the evidence from this study appears to provide a strong reason for firms to pay genuinely more attention in realizing the importance of *strong brand* and concentrate on a *"branding"* strategy to achieve a competitive advantage. As the market becomes more globalize and the products become more standardized, COO effects might play an important role, possibly a potentially damaging role to impact on consumers' product evaluation. Instead, high equity brands will have a greater potential to enable firms to create greater product differentiation. Consumers appear to view the high equity branded products in a positive way, even when produced in a negative image source. As a result, it would to be a good opportunity and with greater benefits for firms to pay more attention with greater consideration to the *"branding"* strategy.

6.2 Study Limitations

The study's intent was to only focus upon the three factors (COO, brand, and product type) and control the other factors that were not involved in the investigation. As a result, the research design for this study did not include *"price"* as a factor that might influence the effects of COO on product evaluation. Moreover, past studies indicate that nationalism and ethnocentrism affect COO effects, especially since consumers view domestic products as more favorable than the foreign products, followed by products made in more developed countries and developing countries respectively (Okechuku 1994). This research was designed to control *"brand origin"* by choosing the existing brands that have the same brand origin (Thailand) but made in the different source locations. This practice of controlling the *"brand origin"* helped the

current study to administer the field research in Thailand without any bias of nationalism and ethnocentrism.

Furthermore, the current study did not employ any qualitative data analysis or use real products in the survey because of a limited research budget. As a result, it could be possible that the information derived from the survey did not provide some critical insights in more detail in the context of preparing marketing strategies. For examples, the differences between 'hands on' close examination compared with viewing a photo of the products being surveyed, the lack of opportunity for all the survey respondents to seek further information about the products in question, the lack of their opportunity to compare with other products not provided as samples, the psychological state of the respondents not in the immediate state of mind and with objective to purchase at that time. Qualitative data survey could be more involved with the accurate nature of studying the research process and sufficiently satisfying for the researchers or marketers that require more information not only quantitative data but also qualitative data for their research studies. Qualitative data can help firms to provide information to facilitate the development of a competitive marketing strategy.

The methodology of this study employed a factorial design to analyze the collected data. The survey collected the information of suits and T-shirts separately in order to allow respondents to have an independent view towards a particular product and thus avoid the bias between branded products. The current study subsequently compared both products from separate questionnaires to find out how the level of purchase involvement that was evoked by the product category, which could influence the effects of COO on product evaluation. Past studies indicate that the differences of contextual and methodological underpinnings of the research yield contradictory conclusions (Bhaskaran & Sukumaran 2007). Therefore collecting data of different products simultaneously could potentially increase the intensity of comparison of the different level of purchase involvement triggered by product type and how they affect the COO effects on product evaluation. Thus, if future research designs are to simultaneously collect the data for both particular products together in the same questionnaire, the methodology should employ a factorial in randomized complete

block design (RCBD). This study did not employ the RCBD method because of being restrained by a limited research budget.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The studies of COO effects when conducted in different countries and cultures could yield varied outcomes (Watson & Wright 2000; Balabanis, Mueller & Melewar 2002). Future research, examining multiple product cues such as COO, brand, and product type could consider focusing on different products, different brands, and conducted in other Asian countries. Using a diverse group of subjects by conducting research in different countries could help generalize the outcomes and inferences made from this study.

Environmental circumstances of purchasing reality invariably confront consumers' evaluation of particular products prior to making a purchase decision. Consumers are more involved with considering multiple product cues (e.g. COO, brand, product type, taste, quality, color) than a single product cue (e.g. COO) on their product evaluations. Past studies indicate that price is a factor to reckon with and can potentially play a greater role than country's image and quality of product in influencing consumers' product evaluation (Wall, Liefeld & Heslop 1991; Ahmed et al. 2004). A country's world economic standing, its trade strength and local economics may influence the price cue variable. Price is often a major product evaluation cue and invariably affects consumers when they are making purchase decisions. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that price cues should be included in the investigation for future studies. Including price as one of multiple cues in future COO research, would enhance the benefits of COO studies.

Appendix I

Taro Yamane Table at Confident Level 95 % Classified by the Level of Error

No. of Population (N)	No. of Sample (n) at Level Error (e)					
	± 1%	± 2%	± 3%	± 4%	± 5%	± 10%
500	*	*	*	*	222	83
1,000	*	*	*	385	286	91
1,500	*	*	638	441	316	94
2,000	*	*	714	476	333	95
2,500	*	1,250	769	500	345	96
3,000	*	1,364	811	517	353	97
3,500	*	1,458	843	530	359	97
4,000	*	1,538	870	541	364	98
4,500	*	1,607	891	549	367	98
5,000	*	1,667	909	556	370	98
6,000	*	1,765	938	566	375	98
7,000	*	1,842	959	574	378	99
8,000	*	1,905	976	580	381	99
9,000	*	1,957	989	584	383	99
10,000	5,000	2,000	1,000	588	385	99
15,000	6,000	2,143	1,034	600	390	99
20,000	6,667	2,222	1,053	606	392	100
25,000	7,143	2,273	1,064	610	394	100
50,000	8,333	2,381	1,087	617	397	100
100,000	9,091	2,439	1,099	621	398	100
∞	10,000	2,500	1,111	625	400	100

Notes: " * " means calculation of reliable sample size could not be found

Appendix II

Multiple Comparisons Test (Tamhane's T2)

Reputation

Brand	*Mean*	Kai Boutique	Jim Thompson	Xact	Blue Corner	Greyhound	Jaspal	AIIZ	Chaps
		5.25	6.00	6.42	5.45	6.43	6.10	4.04	5.70
Kai Boutique	5.25	-	-0.75***	-1.17***	-0.20	-1.18***	-0.85***	1.21***	-0.45***
Jim Thompson	6.00	0.75***	-	-0.42***	0.55***	-0.43***	-0.10	1.96***	0.30*
Xact	6.42	1.17***	0.42***	-	0.97***	-0.01	0.32***	2.38***	0.72***
Blue Corner	5.45	0.20	-0.55***	-0.97***	-	-0.98***	-0.65***	1.41***	-0.25
Greyhound	6.43	1.18***	0.43***	0.01	0.98***	-	0.33***	2.39***	0.73***
Jaspal	6.10	0.85***	0.10	-0.32***	0.65***	-0.33***	-	2.06***	0.40***
AIIZ	4.04	-1.21***	-1.96***	-2.38***	-1.41***	-2.39***	-2.06***	-	-1.66***
Chaps	5.70	0.45***	-0.30*	-0.72***	0.25	-0.73***	-0.40***	1.66***	-

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)

** Statistically Significant (p < .05)

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Multiple Comparisons Test (Tamhane's T2)

Popularity

Brand	*Mean*	Kai Boutique	Jim Thompson	Xact	Blue Corner	Greyhound	Jaspal	AIIZ	Chaps
		5.35	4.98	5.29	5.32	6.43	6.03	4.10	5.58
Kai Boutique	5.35	-	0.37**	0.06	0.03	-1.08***	-0.68***	1.25***	-0.23
Jim Thompson	4.98	-0.37**	-	-0.31	-0.34*	-1.45***	-1.05***	0.88***	-0.60***
Xact	5.29	-0.06	0.31	-	-0.03	-1.14***	-0.74***	1.19***	-0.29
Blue Corner	5.32	-0.03	0.34*	0.03	-	-1.11***	-0.71***	1.22***	-0.26
Greyhound	6.43	1.08***	1.45***	1.14***	1.11***	-	0.40***	2.33***	0.85***
Jaspal	6.03	0.68***	1.05***	0.74***	0.71***	-0.40***	-	1.93***	0.45***
AIIZ	4.10	-1.25***	-0.88***	-1.19***	-1.22***	-2.33***	-1.93***	-	-1.48***
Chaps	5.58	0.23	0.60***	0.29	0.26	-0.85***	-0.45***	1.48***	-

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)

** Statistically Significant (p < .05)

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Multiple Comparisons Test (Tamhane's T2)

Quality

Brand	*Mean*	Kai Boutique	Jim Thompson	Xact	Blue Corner	Greyhound	Jaspal	AIIZ	Chaps
		5.40	6.35	5.55	5.42	6.39	5.30	4.18	5.68
Kai Boutique	5.40	-	-0.99***	-0.15	-0.02	-0.95***	0.10	1.22***	-0.28
Jim Thompson	6.35	0.99***	-	0.84***	0.97***	0.04	1.09***	2.21***	0.71***
Xact	5.55	0.15	-0.84***	-	0.13	-0.80***	0.25*	1.37***	-0.13
Blue Corner	5.42	0.02	-0.97***	-0.13	-	-0.93***	0.12	1.24***	-0.26
Greyhound	6.39	0.95***	-0.04	0.80***	0.93***	-	1.05***	2.17***	0.67***
Jaspal	5.30	-0.10	-1.09***	-0.25*	-0.12	-1.05***	-	1.12***	-0.38***
AIIZ	4.18	-1.22***	-2.21***	-1.37***	-1.24***	-2.17***	-1.12***	-	-1.50***
Chaps	5.68	0.28	-0.71***	0.13	0.26	-0.67***	0.38***	1.50***	-

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)

** Statistically Significant (p < .05)

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Multiple Comparisons Test (Tamhane's T2)

Overall

Brand	*Mean*	Kai Boutique	Jim Thompson	Xact	Blue Corner	Greyhound	Jaspal	AIIZ	Chaps
		5.33	5.78	5.75	5.40	6.42	5.81	4.11	5.65
Kai Boutique	5.33	-	-0.46***	-0.42***	-0.06	-1.07***	-0.48***	1.23***	-0.32**
Jim Thompson	5.78	0.46***	-	0.04	0.39***	-0.61***	-0.02	1.68***	0.14
Xact	5.75	0.42***	-0.04	-	0.36***	-0.65***	-0.06	1.65***	0.10
Blue Corner	5.40	0.06	-0.39***	-0.36***	-	-1.01***	-0.41***	1.29***	-0.26
Greyhound	6.42	1.07***	0.61***	0.65***	1.01***	-	0.59***	2.30***	0.75***
Jaspal	5.81	0.48***	0.02	0.06	0.41***	-0.59***	-	1.70***	0.16
AIIZ	4.11	-1.23***	-1.68***	-1.65***	-1.29***	-2.30***	-1.70***	-	-1.55***
Chaps	5.65	0.32**	-0.14	-0.10	0.26	-0.75***	-0.16	1.55***	-

* Statistically Significant (p < .10)

** Statistically Significant (p < .05)

*** Statistically Significant (p < .01)

Appendix III

Questionnaire Cover Letter

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am currently carrying out research for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) through Victoria Graduate School of Business, Faculty of Business and Law at Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia supervised by Dr. Mario Miranda. Currently, I am conducting a research regarding Country-of-Origin (COO) and Brand Effects issues including consumer behaviour in Thailand. The specific aims of the project are as follows:

(1) To examine the effects of COO (with different level of country's development) and brand with different level of brand equity together with their interaction on the perceived quality of product and purchase intentions of products on Asian consumers' apparel choices in Thailand.
(2) To identify favorable and unfavorable COO (with different level of country's development) perceptions among Asian consumers of apparel.
(3) To identify different perceptions of the effect of COO (with different level of country's development) on high involvement apparel products versus low involvement apparel products across the selected brands.

I would like to invite you to participate in this project. The questionnaire will ask you about perceptions of the different level of country development, which are used as a surrogate for country-of-origin (COO) credibility, and brand equity effects on product evaluation in terms of perceived quality of product and purchase intention of product with different level of brand equity and different level of product involvement. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes. The information you provide will be

extremely useful for the current project. It is expected to be applied to modify marketing strategies in the Asian clothing market.

This research is conducted for academic purpose only. Your participation is entirely voluntary. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence and anonymous.

I would like to thank you for your time to assist and participate in the survey. Any queries about the project, please contact my supervisor: Dr. Mario J. Miranda, School of Applied Economics, Faculty of Business and Law, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne City, MC 8001 Australia, Ph: 61 3 99195004, Fax: 61 3 99194888, Email: Mario.Miranda@vu.edu.au. If you have queries about your participation in this project may be directed to Narissara.Parkvithee@live.vu.edu.au. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 phone (03) 9919 4781.

Yours Sincerely,

Ms. Narissara Parkvithee
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Appendix IV

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled ***"The Role of Country-of-Origin (COO) and Brand Effects on Asian Consumers' Apparel Choices in Thailand"***.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher, Ms. Narissara Parkvithee, as part of a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) study at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr. Mario J. Miranda from Faculty of Business and Law.

Project explanation

The aim of the project is to explore the attitudes of Asian consumers in purchase decision-making associated with fashion-clothing product categories. This is achieved by examining and comparing consumers' perceptions of the different level of country development, which are used as a surrogate for country-of-origin (COO) credibility, and brand equity effects on product evaluation in terms of perceived quality of product and purchase intention of product with different level of brand equity and different level of product involvement. Existing consumer theories might not be applicable to Asian markets. The results of this research are anticipated to be used as a database for justifying appropriate managerial actions to modify marketing strategies in the Asian clothing market.

What will I be asked to do?

We would appreciate your completion of the questionnaire as reliably as possible. The questionnaire will ask you about perceptions of the different level of country

development, which are used as a surrogate for country-of-origin (COO) credibility, and brand equity effects on product evaluation in terms of perceived quality of product and purchase intention of product with different level of brand equity and different level of product involvement. The survey might take you around 15 minutes to complete.

What will I gain from participating?

This research is conducted for academic purpose only. Your participation is entirely voluntary. There is no any payment of participants proposed. We thank for your time to assist us and participate in the survey.

How will the information I give be used?

The survey will not note the respondent's identity and the data will be aggregated, all the information will be anonymous. The information you provide will be extremely useful for the current project. It is expected to be applied to modify marketing strategies in the Asian clothing market.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There are no potential risks of participating in this project. The questionnaire is non-intrusive and voluntary. No one will be forced to participate. The survey will not intrude any personal space of people and will not intrude private home or place of work. The survey will be conducted in a friendly setting among shoppers around the shopping centre. Hence, the survey will not involve any physical, psychological, social and legal risk. In addition, the survey will not note the respondent's identity and the data will be aggregated, all the information will be anonymous.

How will this project be conducted?

The methodology for this project proposes quantitative approach using a survey technique. Questionnaire will be employed as a research instrument. The research will be conducted in Bangkok, Thailand.

Who is conducting the study?

Principal Researcher: Dr. Mario J. Miranda

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Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Principal Researcher listed above. If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 phone (03) 9919 4781.

Appendix V

Exploratory Data Questionnaire

Please circle the number which best describes your answer.

For example; from left to right (1-7), the scale intervals are interpreted as "1 = extremely not reputable", "2 = very not reputable", "3 = slightly not reputable", "4 = both not reputable & reputable", "5 = slightly reputable", "6 = very reputable", "7 = extremely reputable".

SECTION A: Consumers' Perceptions of Brands

1. Please indicate your perception of the *levels of brand equity* of each of these Thai fashion brands, on the following brand equity determinants, namely, reputation, popularity and quality:

Brand 1: ***Kai Boutique***

(a) Reputation

Not Reputable at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Reputable

(b) Popularity

Not Popular at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Popular

(c) Quality

Very Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Quality

Brand 2: ***Jim Thompson***

(a) Reputation

Not Reputable at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Reputable

(b) Popularity

Not Popular at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Popular

(c) Quality

Very Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Quality

Brand 3: ***Xact***

(a) Reputation

Not Reputable at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Reputable

(b) Popularity

Not Popular at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Popular

(c) Quality

Very Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Quality

Brand 4: ***Blue Corner***

(a) Reputation

Not Reputable at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Reputable

(b) Popularity

Not Popular at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Popular

(c) Quality

Very Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Quality

Brand 5: ***Greyhound***

(a) Reputation

Not Reputable at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Reputable

(b) Popularity

Not Popular at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Popular

(c) Quality

Very Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Quality

Brand 6: ***Jaspal***

(a) Reputation

Not Reputable at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Reputable

(b) Popularity

Not Popular at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Popular

(c) Quality

Very Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Quality

Brand 7: ***AIIZ***

(a) Reputation

Not Reputable at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Reputable

(b) Popularity

Not Popular at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Popular

(c) Quality

Very Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Quality

Brand 8: ***Chaps***

(a) Reputation

Not Reputable at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Reputable

(b) Popularity

Not Popular at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Popular

(c) Quality

Very Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very High Quality

SECTION B: Consumers' Perceptions of Product Involvement

2. Please indicate your perception of the each of the product involvement attributes, namely, monetary risk, social acceptance and extent of information searched, when buying a suit and a T-shirt:

Suit

(a) Monetary risk concern

Low Unit Outlay 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Unit Outlay

(b) Social acceptance

Low Prestige 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Prestige

(c) Extensive information search prior to making a decision

Low Extended Search Activity 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Extended Search Activity

T-Shirt

(a) Monetary risk concern

Low Unit Outlay 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Unit Outlay

(b) Social acceptance

Low Prestige 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Prestige

(c) Extensive information search prior to making a decision

Low Extended Search Activity 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Extended Search Activity

SECTION C: Consumers' Perceptions of Country-of-Origin

3. Please evaluate your perceptions of the each of these countries on the following attributes:

Japan

(a) Perception of stage of economic level

Extremely Underdeveloped 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely Highly Developed

(b) Perception of country image

Very Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Favorable

(c) Perception of quality of manufacturing / component in Japan

Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Quality

Malaysia

(a) Perception of stage of economic level

Extremely Underdeveloped 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely Highly Developed

(b) Perception of country image

Very Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Favorable

(c) Perception of quality of manufacturing / component in Malaysia

Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Quality

Vietnam

(a) Perception of stage of economic level

Extremely Underdeveloped 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely Highly Developed

(b) Perception of country image

Very Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Favorable

(c) Perception of quality of manufacturing / component in Vietnam

Low Quality 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Quality

4. Please indicated how the economic development level of Japan compares with Thailand.

☐ High ☐ Similar ☐ Less

5. Please indicated how the economic development level of Malaysia compares with Thailand.

☐ High ☐ Similar ☐ Less

6. Please indicated how the economic development level of Vietnam compares with Thailand.

☐ High ☐ Similar ☐ Less

Appendix VI

Field Survey Questionnaire (Scenario 1)

Please circle the number which best describes your answer.

For example; from left to right (1-7), the scale intervals are interpreted as "1 = extremely low durability", "2 = very low durability", "3 = slightly low durability", "4 = both high and low durability", "5 = slightly high durability", "6 = very high durability", "7 = extremely high durability".

Part I: Consumers' Perceptions of Country Capabilities

1. Please indicate your perception of the each of these countries regarding their ability to produce fashion clothing products on the following attributes.

----------*Japan*----------

Quality of Manufacturing in Japan

Poor Workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Excellent Workmanship
Inferior Product Design	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Superior Product Design
Low Durability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 High Durability
Not Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Reliable
Poor Component Quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Excellent Component Quality

----------*Malaysia*----------

Quality of Manufacturing in Malaysia

Poor Workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Excellent Workmanship
Inferior Product Design	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Superior Product Design
Low Durability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 High Durability
Not Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Reliable
Poor Component Quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Excellent Component Quality

----------*Vietnam*----------

Quality of Manufacturing in Vietnam

Poor Workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Excellent Workmanship
Inferior Product Design	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Superior Product Design
Low Durability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 High Durability
Not Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Reliable
Poor Component Quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Excellent Component Quality

Part II: Product Evaluation

Please observe the picture of this suit and answer questions 2 - 8.

Please circle the number which best illustrates your opinion regarding the suit's features.

Suits – Features

Brand: **Greyhound**

Product Made In: **Japan**

Consumers' Perceptions of Quality of Product

2. Please indicate your opinion regarding the suit in the above picture

(1) Quality of Design

Not Attractive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Attractive

(2) Quality of Workmanship

Poor Quality Workmanship 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Quality Workmanship

(3) High Quality of Product

Not At All 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely

(4) Product Reliability

Not Reliable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Reliable

3. How would you rate the overall quality of branded product on the above picture?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Extremely poor

Likelihood of Purchase of Particular Product

4. Please indicate how likely are you to purchase the suit in the above picture if it is available.

Very Unlikely to Purchase 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Likely to Purchase

5. How important to you is "product category (suit)"?

☐ Extremely important ☐ Very importance

☐ Of some importance ☐ Of little importance

☐ Of absolutely no importance

6. How important to you is "product made in"?

☐ Extremely important ☐ Very importance

☐ Of some importance ☐ Of little importance

☐ Of absolutely no importance

7. How important to you is the "brand"?

☐ Extremely important ☐ Very importance

☐ Of some importance ☐ Of little importance

☐ Of absolutely no importance

8. Please rank order a number that would describe your opinion regarding the following three factors which affect your purchase decision on suit ("1 = Extremely important", "2 = Somewhat important", "3 = Slightly important")

__ Product category (suit)

__ Country-of-Origin (made in)

__ Brand name

9. Please indicate the symbol "✓" which best illustrates your opinion regarding factors in the following table that affect your purchase decision on general clothing.

Factors effect on consumers' clothing choice	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Hardly
PRODUCT					
- Quality					
- Brand name					
- Design					
- Fashion					
- Durability					
PRICE					
- Reasonable price compare with quality					
- Variety of Price					
- Reasonable price compare with "Made-in" country					
- Price when compare with the other brands					
Distribution					
- Convenience to buy					
- Many branches or distribution channels					
- Variety of Product Design for choosing					
- Variety of Product Design from various brands available for comparing before making a decision					
PROMOTION					
- Advertising (e.g. magazines)					
- Marketing Activities (e.g. discount)					
- Fashion Shows / Events					
- Introducing products via website / internet					

Part III: Demographic Information

10. Please indicate your gender

☐ Female ☐ Male

11. Please indicate your age group

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26–35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56 or over

12. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

☐ High school graduate ☐ College graduate

☐ Completed graduate school ☐ Postgraduate school

13. Which of the following categories best describes your current position?

☐ Unemployed / Retired ☐ Employee

☐ Self employed ☐ Student

☐ Government / State Enterprise Official ☐ Servant / Labor

Thank you very much for your cooperation in completing this survey

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