A Study on the Associations of Germany, France and Italy evoked by Direct and Indirect Country of Origin Markers

Een Studie over de Associaties van Duitsland, Frankrijk en Italië opgeroepen door Directe en Indirecte Land van Herkomst Markeerders

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Abstract

For marketers who want to include the county of origin (COO) of the product in their marketing campaigns, it is important to know what the effects of the COO markers are. Although several studies have investigated to COO-effect, none of them was based on the actual content of the evoked associations but only on the categories they belonged to. Therefore, the focus of this research paper is on the differences between the associations evoked by a direct COO marker and an indirect COO marker; a foreign language (FL). 210 Dutch participants were given a questionnaire in which a direct and an indirect COO marker were involved. These markers stimulated them two write down associations about France, Germany and Italy. After all questionnaires were conducted, four students coded the associations into several categories. Data analysis was conducted by using Chi-square tests. The results showed that there are indeed differences in the associations evoked by the direct and the indirect COO marker. For instance, the foreign language evoked more positive associations than the direct COO marker. Besides that, the results showed differences in the associations when a congruent product is mentioned and when no product is mentioned, and differences in the associations evoked by the three COOs. A limitation of the research was that one of the categories, 'characteristics', was too broad. For further research it is recommended to divide this category into more specific categories.

Keywords Country-of-Origin, FL, associations, advertisement

For marketers who want to influence consumers by using the country of origin (COO) of the product in their marketing campaigns, it is important to know what the effects are of the

different kind of COO markers. Is it for example better to use a direct COO marker as 'made in…' or is it better to use an indirect COO marker like a foreign language (FL)? Several studies have investigated the effect of COO markers, however, these studies were not based on the content of the evoked associations but only on the categories of it. This research gives insight into the associations evoked by direct and indirect COO markers of France, Germany and Italy.

When a person is going to buy wine, will this person prefer wine from the United Kingdom or from France? Would this person prefer pizza from Italy or from Germany? People match products to certain countries. For instance, people match the Netherlands with cheese and China with tea (Usunier & Cestre, 2007). These associations are important for marketers. As consumers, for example, we will pay extra for engineering from Germany, food from France or clothes from Italy (Kelly-Holmes, 2005). Many advertisements refer to the COO to make advertisements more attractive for consumers. COO can be described as "the country which a consumer associates with a certain product or brand as being its source, regardless of where the product is actually produced" (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001, p. 27).

Consumers base their purchasing decision on information cues (Samiee, 1987). These information cues can be intrinsic (physical product differences) or extrinsic (e.g. brand, price). The effect of COO is important because consumers use this as an extrinsic cue in purchase decisions. Samiee (1987) defines the COO effect as any influence or bias resulting from COO and/or country of manufacture. Consumer's attitudes towards a country can be positive or negative. If the consumer's attitude towards the COO is positive, then it is likely that the image they have of the product is also positive (Abraham & Patro, 2014).

There are a number of different strategies to communicate the COO (Aichner, 2012). The use of the 'made in…' label is the most frequent and easiest strategy to communicate the COO of a product. However, the question raises how important it is for a consumer to know what country the product is made in (Johansson, 1989). For a country that has many different products and brands at various levels, the COO labeling will commonly be worthless. For countries that have brands with a narrower band of quality variations, the label will indeed be useful, for example Swiss watches.

As mentioned above, the use of FL in an advertisement is another possible strategy (Aichner, 2012). Hornikx and van Meurs (2017) researched FLs in advertising. They examined if associations evoked by an ad with a FL are similar to those evoked by an ad with COO. This

was indeed the case; the associations evoked by FL did not significantly differ from those evoked by COO. Horniks and van Meurs (2017) also examined the persuasive effects of FL ads and COO ads. Three types of ads were used to test the effects: ads with a congruent COO, ads with an incongruent COO and ads with a congruent FL. Their results showed that ads with a congruent FL were as effective as ads with a congruent COO. However, ads with a congruent FL were better liked than ads with a congruent COO. Both ads with congruent products scored better that ads with an incongruent product.

Hornikx and van Meurs (2017) also examined the expectations that FLs operate through the COO effect, the associations that they evoke and the persuasive effects they generate. They found out that consumers' perceptions of FLs depend on their knowledge of COOs and typical products. Another finding was that the associations consumers have with FLs are highly similar to those about COOs.

Another research about the use of FL in language advertising was done by Kelly-Holmes (2000). She points out that the symbolic function of a FL has a greater value than its communication function. In intercultural advertising, language seems to be primarily used for its symbolic value independent of their utility meaning. An example of this is the slogan of German car-maker Audi, 'Vorsprung durch Technik'. Audi made an advertisement with this slogan which they were going to use in the UK. The slogan appeared under de brand name in billboards, print and television advertising. They decided not to translate the slogan because the symbolic value was greater than the utility or communicative meaning. The slogan is identifiable as German and therefore one will think about Germany. Germany has been assigned the role of car-maker/engineer and brewer. Therefore, the slogan is communicated successfully.

All countries have a country image. It is one of many extrinsic cues that may become part of a product's total image (Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop & Mourali, 2005). For example, the image of France and Italy is 'style, design and refinement', whereas Germany's image is related to 'reliability, solidity and quality' (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001). Consumers use the image of a country as a cue for determining product quality (Häubl & Elrod, 1999).

Like Kelly-Holmes (2000), Hornikx, van Meurs and Starren (2008) also examined the symbolic purposes of FLs in advertisements. Associations carried by the FL are transferred to the product that is advertised. For instance, France is associated with charm and style. A product advertised using the French language would therefore also be seen as charming an stylish. The purpose of the study of Hornikx et al. (2008) was to provide insight into the way FL use leads to higher persuasiveness of advertisements. They conducted an experiment in which the participants were exposed to a basic advertisement including a French, German or Spanish

slogan. The participants had to write down the associations that evoked. The results of Hornikx, et al. (2008) showed that the different languages evoked partly different associations. Associations that most frequently evoked at the German language were words such as 'businesslike', 'boring' or 'simple'. For the French language the associations 'beautiful', 'businesslike' and 'elegant' evoked and for the Spanish language the words 'beautiful', 'modern' and 'elegant'. The valence of the associations affected participants' preference for the advertisement. The advertisements with the highest number of positive associations and the lowest number of negative associations were preferred by the participants.

Every COO strategy has its own complexity (Aichner, 2012). Some strategies are quite easy to implement, and some require a certain degree of knowledge about the customers from the respective target market. "The customer's knowledge, perception and stereotypes about certain foreign countries can differ significantly depending on their own nationality and culture" (Aichner, 2012, p. 91). Therefore, familiarity of the consumers with the country is an important aspect to research when examining the COO effect. The results in table 1 (Aichner, 2012, p.92) show all strategies and classifies them with regard to the strategy type (implicit/explicit), and communication complexity.

Table 1.   COO strategies

	Strategy name	Strategy type	Communication complexity
1	'Made in…'	Explicit	Low
2	Quality and origin labels	Explicit	Low
3	COO embedded in the company name	Explicit	Low
4	Typical COO words embedded in the company name	Implicit	Medium
5	Use of the COO language	Implicit	Medium/high
6	Use of famous or stereotypical people from the COO	Implicit	Medium/high
7	Use of COO flags and symbols	Explicit/Implicit	Low/medium
8	Use of typical landscapes or famous buildings from the COO	Implicit	Medium

Usunier and Cestre (2007) researched the associations that consumers make between countries and generic products. Consumers tend to make stereotypical associations between products and countries, also called product ethnicity. "Product ethnicity refers to the stereotypical association of a generic product with a particular COO" (Usunier & Cestre, 2007,

p.36).   These associations are based on the perceptions of a country's expertise and reputation relative to the design, manufacturing, or branding of particular general goods. The study of Usunier and Cestre (2007) showed that consumers are more willing to buy products that are congruent with product ethnicity rather than non-congruent. They also investigated which products consumers match to a certain country. For instance, Germany is mostly associated with cars and beer, Italy with pasta and France with wine.

Although several studies have been carried out on the subject of COO and FL, there is still a gap. Previous studies were only based on ads for specific products and with specific messages. Also, in the study of Hornikx and van Meurs (2017) about the comparison between associations, the associations were only categorized in terms of what they referred to (e.g. product associations, comment about the advertisement), but not in terms of content (e.g. lovely, tasty). Hornikx and van Meurs (2017) recommended further research that should focus on the content of the associations instead of the categories they belong to. To my knowledge, no research has been done on this subject.

Therefore, an experiment will be conducted with the aim to investigate the specific associations evoked by mentioning the COO or using FL in advertising, whereas the COO is the direct marker and the FL the indirect marker. Another goal is to find out whether there is a difference between the associations evoked by COO or FL. The associations of three different countries will be researched: France, Italy and Germany. Usunier and Cestre (2007) explored the matches consumers make between products and countries. The reason for choosing these countries was that these three countries all have a strong stereotypical match with certain products. For these countries, the matches are: Germany and beer, France and wine and Italy and pasta. Germany also had a high match with cars, but beer is chosen so that all the products belong to the food/drinks category.

This research focuses on the associations that COO and FL mention in advertisements evoke. The main research question is:

RQ1: What are the differences between associations evoked by the COO

marker and the FL marker?

Besides this research question, it is also important to find out if there are differences in the associations evoked by the specific version of the questionnaire and the abstract version of the questionnaire.

RQ2: What are the differences between the associations evoked by the specific version of the questionnaire and the abstract version of the questionnaire?

Another relevant question is what the differences were between the associations evoked by the three countries; France, Germany and Italy.

RQ3: What are the differences between the associations evoked by France, Germany and Italy?

All these three research questions have several sub questions.

SQ1: What are the differences in the valence of the associations?

SQ2: What are the differences in the product-relatedness of the associations?

SQ3: What are the differences in the COO-relatedness of the associations?

Method

In order to answer to the research question, an experiment was conducted in which the participants received a specific or an abstract questionnaire with direct and indirect questions about the associations of France, Germany and Italy. Below, the materials, design, participants, instrumentation, procedure and statistical treatment are presented.

Materials

Participants were given a specific version or an abstract version of the questionnaire. The specific version of the questionnaire contained questions in which congruent products were mentioned. The abstract questionnaire contained question without any products mentioned. By doing this it can be examined whether the presence of products influences the associations evoked by the COO markers. Each questionnaire obtained four main questions about three different countries; France, Germany and Italy. These countries were based on the research of Usunier and Cestre (2007). One of the questions was a general question about the associations of France, Germany or Italy. The other question was a question in which a direct COO marker was mentioned, hereafter mentioned as the 'direct question'. The direct question obtained the following COO marker: "a French/German/Italian company wants to…". The third question was a question in which an indirect COO marker was mentioned, hereafter named as the 'indirect question'. The indirect question was presented with a slogan in French, German or Italian. The slogan that was chosen is: enjoy to the max! This slogan fits all three products. The translations of this slogan in French, Italian and German are:

French: *"Profitez au maximum"*
Italian: *"Goditi al Massimo"*
German: *"Genieße biz zum Maximum"*

All three translations were checked by native speakers. The last question was about the familiarity of the participants with the countries on a 7 point Likert-scale.

The questionnaires were pre-tested two times before the actual experiment was conducted. The aim of the first pre-test was to find out if the questions were understandable for the participants. 18 people were asked to fill in the questionnaire of which 9 the specific version and the other 9 the abstract version. The conclusion was that the questions were not clear enough. A second pre-test was held with adjustments on the questions. After that, the conclusion was that the questionnaire was sufficient. The questionnaires of the second pre-test were included in the data set.

Design

The experiment used a mix between a within subject-design and a between subject-design. Each participant only received one questionnaire, but did have to answer questions

about all three countries. The design was a 2 (COO, FL) x 3 (country: France, Germany, Italy) x 2 (product type: abstract, specific) design. The different versions of the questionnaire were all distributed randomly.

Subjects

The participants were 210 Dutch persons. The average age of the participants was 39.93 (SD = 14.18; range: 18 – 75) years old, and of whom 60% was female. Participants could complete the questionnaire online or by a hardcopy version. In total, 54.3% of the participants completed the online version and 45.7% the hardcopy version. The finished educational level of the participants ranged from 'no education finished' to 'university educational level'. Most participants (30.5%) finished their pre-university education. Participants were more familiar with Germany (M = 4.95, SD = 1.42) than with France (M = 4.86, SD = 1.39) and Italy (M = 4.25, SD = 1.58). A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was carried out to compare the effect of familiarity on France, Germany and Italy. There was no significant effect of the familiarity, Wilk's Lambda = .852, F = (2, 2975) = 259, p = .148.

Several analyses were done to find out if there were significant differences between the participants who completed the online or the hardcopy version, and between participants who completed the specific or the abstract version. Two significant differences were found. A Chi-square test showed a significant difference between the educational level of the participants and the online or hardcopy version (χ^2 (2) = 21.42, p = .113). The educational level was divided into 'no education', 'secondary education' and 'higher education'. Participants who finished their secondary education completed relatively more hardcopy versions (61.5%) than online versions (29.8%) and participants who finished their higher education completed relatively more online versions (69.3%) than hardcopy versions (37.5%).

Another Chi-square test showed a significant difference between the amount of students and the online or hardcopy version. Students completed relatively more hardcopy questionnaires (58%) and relatively less online questionnaires (42%) compared to non-students.

Instruments

The questionnaires started with a consent form. After that, an introduction was given. The consent form and the introduction can be found in the appendix 1a and 1b. As already mentioned, all the questionnaires contained a direct question, an indirect question, a question about the general associations with a country and a question about the familiarity with the

countries. All questionnaires, both specific and abstract, had a different order. The order of the questionnaires is shown in table 2 and table 3.

Table 2.   The order of the specific COO questionnaire

1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire	3rd questionnaire
France – indirect marker	France – direct marker	Germany – indirect marker
Germany – direct market	Italy – indirect marker	Italy – direct marker
Italy – general associations	Germany – general associations	France – general associations
Familiarity with the three countries	Familiarity with the three countries	Familiarity with the three countries

Table 3.   The order of the abstract COO questionnaire

1st questionnaire	2nd questionnaire	3rd questionnaire
Germany – direct marker	Italy – indirect marker	Italy – direct marker
France – indirect market	France – direct marker	Germany – indirect marker
Italy – general associations	Germany – general associations	France – general associations
Familiarity with the three countries	Familiarity with the three countries	Familiarity with the three countries

An example of the specific version can be found in appendix 2a and the abstract version in appendix 2b. The first three questions in the questionnaires were all accompanied by 6 lines on which the participants could write down their associations. The fourth question was a 7 point Likert-scale. At the end of all the questionnaires, the participants were asked some general personal questions: gender, age, nationality, mother tongue, highest completed level of education, if he/she was a student at the moment and if they had possible questions about the questionnaire.

Procedure

        This experiment was conducted with 7 students of the International Business Communication pre-master. Questionnaires were only taken into account if the participant was older than 18 years and when its nationality and mother tongue was Dutch. The number of questionnaires eventually not taken into account was six.

        Four of the students analyzed the questionnaires independently. First, they had to categorize all the associations into subcategories and categories. The subcategories emerged from the data. The categories were based on the coding scheme as used in Hornikx et al. (2017). This scheme was held as a guide, therefore the categories were only partly based on this study. Some categories emerged from the data. The categories that were used are: food – drinks –

persons – sports – geography – ambiance – culture-specific – characteristics – nature – feeling – and origin.

Then, the associations were categorized in product-related or not, COO-related or not and in positive, negative or neutral associations. Positive and negative associations show how positively or negatively the activated associations are viewed (Lu, Lord & Yoke, 2015). Based on Hornikx et al. (2007) 'neutral' was added. The research of Lenfle and Midler's (2009) defines product-related as closely associated with products in goods. COO-related is defined as something which creates emotional values associated with heritage and history (Rashid & Barnes, 2018).

After that, two different rounds were held. In the first round the coders had to check on how many categories they agreed separately. In the second round, the coders were given their own codes and the codes assigned by the second coder that differed from their own. They could than choose to stick to their original code, change it to the other coder his code or choose a completely new code. The interrater reliability was measured for all the categories. All of them were above 0.7, except for the 'subcategories' and the 'categories'. The interrater reliability of the variable 'subcategories' was poor: $\kappa = .00$, $p < .001$ and the interrater reliability of the variable 'categories' was moderate: $\kappa = .6$, $p < .001$.

Statistical Treatment

To calculate the interrater reliability of the coders, Cohen's Kappa was used. In order to answer the research questions, the statistical Chi-square test was applied. The Chi-square test is intended to test how likely it is that an observed distribution is due to chance. It measures how well the observed distribution of data fits with the distribution that is expected if the variables are independent.

Results

This study was set up to provide insight into the associations that direct and indirect COO markers evoke. The descriptives, the associations evoked by the COO and FL, the

associations evoked by the specific and the abstract version and the associations evoked by the three different countries will be discussed in this result section.

Descriptives

A total of 2977 associations were evoked. Of these associations, 1350 were evoked by the general question, 863 by the direct question and 764 by the indirect question. Each respondent gave on average 14.2 associations. In this result section, the focus is on the different categories and not on the individual associations. This is due to the fact that there were 1145 number of unique associations given. All associations were given in Dutch, but are here presented in English.

Associations evoked by COO and FL

The first research question was about the difference between the associations evoked by the COO marker and the FL marker. As table 3 shows, there are clear differences in the frequency of the associations evoked by the COO marker. The top three most occurring categories for France is 'characteristics', 'geography' and 'drinks'. For Germany this is 'characteristics', 'drinks' and 'origin' and for Italy 'characteristics', 'culture' and 'food'. Table 4 shows all categories evoked by the county of origin mention, divided into the three different countries.

Table 4.　　　Categories evoked by the COO marker divided into France, Germany and Italy

	France	Germany	Italy	Total
Characteristics	93	131	107	331
Culture	27	21	65	113
Food	30	19	50	99
Geography	31	12	44	87
Drinks	31	38	5	74
Origin	23	24	25	72
Nature	12	7	14	33
Ambiance	5	2	17	24
Feeling	9	0	14	23
Sport	2	0	3	5
Persons	0	0	4	4
Total	482	254	346	865

Table 5 shows the categories evoked by the FL marker. The top three most occurring categories for France are 'characteristics', 'food' and 'culture-specific'. For Germany these are

'characteristics', 'culture-specific' and 'drinks' and for Italy 'characteristics', 'food' and 'origin'.

Table 5.   Categories evoked by the FL marker divided into France, Germany and Italy

	France	Germany	Italy	Total
Characteristics	134	137	94	365
Food	41	19	53	113
Culture-specific	29	24	19	72
Drinks	28	23	4	55
Origin	22	5	20	47
Geography	13	14	19	46
Feeling	9	10	5	24
Ambiance	4	7	12	23
Sport	1	3	5	9
Nature	3	4	1	8
Persons	0	0	2	2
Total	284	246	234	764

Categories

A Chi-square test showed a significant difference between the categories evoked by the direct and the indirect COO markers (χ^2 (10) = 43.77, $p < .001$). The indirect marker evoked relatively more associations about 'food' (14.8%) than the direct marker (11.5%). Besides that, the indirect marker also evoked relatively more associations about 'characteristics' (47.8%) than the direct marker (38.4%). The direct marker evoked relatively more associations about 'geography' (10.1%), 'culture-specifics'(13.1%) and 'nature' (3.8%) than the indirect marker did about 'geography' (6%), 'culture-specifics'(9.4%) and 'nature' (1.0%). The rest of the categories did not show a significant difference.

Valence of the associations

The first sub question was about the valence of the associations. The direct and indirect markers evoked positive, negative and neutral associations. A Chi-square test showed a significant relation between the kind of question (general, direct or indirect) and the valence of the associations (χ^2 (4) = 159.65, $p = <.001$). The indirect question evoked relatively more positive associations (29.8%) than the direct (23.1%) and the general question (10.4%). The general question evoked relatively more negative associations (3.9%) than the direct (0.6%) and the indirect (0.9%) question. The test did not show a significant relation between the negative associations evoked by the direct and the indirect marker. Table 6 shows the amount of positive, negative and neutral associations.

Table 6. Amount and percentages of positive and negative associations evoked by the general, direct and indirect question

	General		Direct		Indirect	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Positive	140[a]	10	199[b]	23	228[c]	30
Negative	53[a]	4	5[b]	1	7[b]	1
Neutral	1157[a]	86	659[b]	76	529[c]	69

Product-relatedness of the associations

To find out if there were differences between the product-relatedness of the associations evoked by the direct and indirect COO marker, another Chi-square test was done. This test did not show a significant difference between the product-related associations evoked by the direct and the indirect question (χ^2 (1) = .47, *p* = .492).

Country of origin-relatedness of the associations

To identify the differences between the COO-relatedness of the associations, again a Chi-square test was used. The Chi-square test did show a significant difference between the COO-relatedness of the associations and the general, direct and indirect question (χ^2 (2) = 84.1, *p* < .001). The general question evoked relatively more COO related associations (48.3%) than the direct (36.7%) and the indirect (28.5%) question. Table 7 shows the amount of COO related associations evoked by the general, direct and indirect questions.

Table 7. Amount and percentages of COO-related associations evoked by the general, direct and indirect question

		General		Direct		Indirect	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
COO-related	Yes	651[a]	48	317[b]	37	218[c]	29
	No	698[a]	52	546[b]	63	546[c]	72

Associations evoked by the abstract and specific questionnaire

Valence of the associations

Participants completed a specific or an abstract version of the questionnaire. A Chi-square test was done to find out if there is a difference in the amount of positive and negative associations evoked by the specific and the abstract version of the questionnaire. The test showed a significant difference between the abstract and specific version and the valence of the associations (χ^2 (2) = 7.97, p = .019). The abstract version of the questionnaire evoked relatively more negative associations (1.3%) than the specific questionnaire (0.7%). The difference in the amount of positive and negative associations evoked by the specific and abstract questionnaire is shown in table 8.

Table 8.   Amount and percentages of positive and negative associations evoked by the two versions

	Specific		Abstract	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Positive	210[a]	26	217[a]	26
Negative	1[a]	< 1	11[b]	1

Product-relatedness

Another Chi-square test was executed to examine if there is a difference in the product-relatedness of the associations evoked by the specific and the abstract version. The Chi-square test did show a significant difference (χ^2 (1) = 25.75, p < .001). The specific questionnaire evoked relatively more product-related associations (71.6%) than the abstract questionnaire (59.7%), see Table 9.

Table 9.   Amount and percentages of product-related associations evoked by the specific and the abstract version

		Specific		Abstract	
		N	(%)	N	(%)
Product-related	Yes	570[a]	72	496[b]	60
	No	226[a]	28	335[b]	40

Country of origin-relatedness

To find out if there is a difference in the amount of COO-related associations evoked by the specific and the abstract questionnaire, again another Chi-square test was conducted. The Chi-square test did show a significant difference between the amount of associations evoked by the specific and the abstract questionnaire (χ^2 (1) = 62.27, $p < .001$). The abstract questionnaire evoked relatively more COO related associations (41.9%) than the specific questionnaire (23.5%), see table 10.

Table 10.   Amount and percentages of COO-related associations evoked by the specific and abstract version

		Specific		Abstract	
		N	(%)	N	(%)
COO-related	Yes	187[a]	24	348[a]	22
	No	609[a]	77	483[b]	58

Associations evoked by the COOs

In every questionnaire, the general associations of France, Germany and Italy were asked. These associations were, as already mentioned, divided into subcategories and categories. For France, the most given subcategories were: bread (11.2%), wine (9.8%) and sightseeing's (8.9%). For Germany these were beer (9.3%), traits (7.7%) and history and sausage (6.2%) and for Italy: cities (11.4%), pasta (9.4%) and climate (7.7%).

The top three categories for France were: characteristics (25.1%), food (19.5%) and geography (15.6%). For Germany these were: characteristics (45.7%), food (13.3%) and drinks and geography (9.3%) and for Italy: food (27.2%), geography (24.3%) and characteristics (20.6%).

Valence of the associations

A Chi-square test showed a significant difference between the valence of the associations evoked by the different countries (χ^2 (4) = 78.20, $p < .001$). The German COO markers evoked relatively more positive associations (27.1%) than the France COO markers (16.9%) and the Italian COO markers (15.1%). However, the German (3.4%) and the France (3.1%) COO markers evoked relatively more negative associations than the Italian (.4%) COO markers, see table 11.

Associations evoked by direct and indirect country of origin markers

Table 11.   Amount and percentages of positive, negative and neutral associations evoked by France, Germany and Italy

	France		Germany		Italy	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Positive	174[a]	17	223[b]	27	170[a]	15
Negative	32[a]	3	28[a]	3	5[b]	< 1
Neutral	823[a]	80	573[b]	70	949[c]	84

Product-relatedness of the associations

To identify the differences in the product-relatedness of the associations, a Chi-square test was conducted. The test showed a significant difference between the product-relatedness of the associations evoked by the different countries (χ^2 (2) = 46.90, p < .001). The Italian (41.1%) and the German (39.4%) COO markers evoked relatively more product-related associations than the France (27.8%) COO markers. Table 12 shows the amount of product-related associations evoked by the COOs.

Table 12.   Amount and percentages of product-related associations evoked by France, Germany and Italy

		France		Germany		Italy	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Product-related	Yes	286[a]	28	325[b]	39	462[b]	41
	No	743[a]	72	499[b]	61	662[b]	59

Country of origin-relatedness

A Chi-square test showed a significant difference between the COO-relatedness of the associations evoked by the different countries (χ^2 (2) = 38.15, p < .001). The Italian COO markers evoked relatively more COO related associations (46.8%) than France (36.8%) and the German (34.1%) COO markers, see table 13.

Associations evoked by direct and indirect country of origin markers

Table 13.		Amount and percentages of COO-related associations evoked by France, Germany and Italy					
		France		Germany		Italy	
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
COO-related	Yes	379[a]	37	281[a]	34	526[b]	47
	No	650[a]	63	543[a]	66	597[b]	53

Conclusion and discussion

This study was conducted to provide insight into the associations of France, Germany and Italy that direct and indirect COO markers evoke. The main focus was on the differences between the associations evoked by the COO marker and the FL marker. This study also focused on the differences between the associations evoked by the specific and the abstract version of the questionnaire and the differences between the associations evoked by the three COOs; France, Germany and Italy.

First, it was aimed to find out what the differences are between the associations evoked by the direct and the indirect COO marker. The analysis showed several differences between the evoked associations. In the first place, there were differences in the categories of the evoked associations. The direct COO marker evoked more associations about 'geography', 'culture-specifics' and 'nature' than the indirect marker. The indirect COO marker evoked more associations about 'food' and 'characteristics'. In the second place, there were also differences in the valence of the associations. The indirect COO marker evoked more positive associations than the direct COO marker. In the third place, the analyses showed a difference in the COO-relatedness of the associations. The direct COO marker evoked more COO-related associations than the indirect COO marker. The product-relatedness of the associations did not differ between the direct and the indirect COO marker. Most of these findings are in contrast with the findings of Hornikx and van Meurs (2017). They reported that there are no significant differences between the kind of associations evoked by the COO and the FL marker. The result of the valence of the associations does correspond to the result of Hornikx and van Meurs (2017) who investigated that ads with a congruent FL were better liked than ads with a congruent COO. The result of the COO-related associations is a bit in contrast with the results of the study of Kelly-Holmes (2000). She researched that when a slogan is identifiable as a specific country, people will think about that country. In this research, the FL evoked more associations that were not COO related.

Secondly, it was aimed to find out if there were differences in the associations evoked by the specific and the abstract version of the questionnaire. By conducting an abstract version of the questionnaire, it could be showed if the presence of a product influences the associations. There were indeed some differences between the associations evoked by the two different versions. As first, the abstract version evoked more negative associations than the specific version of the questionnaire. This means that the product positively influenced the attitude towards the country. Secondly, the specific questionnaire evoked more product-related

associations than the abstract questionnaire. This could be expected, because the abstract version did not mention a product at all. However, 60 per cent of the associations evoked by the abstract version was still product-related. As Usunier and Cestre (2007) researched, consumers tend to make stereotypical associations between products and countries. In this case, the participants also made stereotypical associations and mentioned product and associations related to products when seeing the COO marker. Lastly, the abstract version evoked more COO-related associations than the specific version. When no product was mentioned, more COO-related associations evoked.

As third and last, the goal was to find the differences between the associations evoked by the COOs. Again, there were indeed differences. Most associations of France were about bread, of Germany about beer and of Italy about cities. The German COO marker evoked most positive associations, but at the same time also most negative associations. Of Italy, only less than one per cent of the associations were negative. There were also differences in the product-relatedness and the COO-relatedness of the associations. The German and the Italian COO marker evoked more product-related associations than the French COO marker. Most COO-related associations were evoked by Italy. These findings are in line with findings of other studies (Bannister &Saunders, 2007; Hornikx, van Meurs & Starren, 2008; Usunier and Cestre, 2007). Consumers have different images of countries. For example; the study of Bannister and Saunders (2007) showed that people think German has good quality products and in Italy the appearance of products is better. Horniks et al. (2008) found that consumers gave most associations which were related to the category 'businesslike' for Germany, and for France most associations were related to the category 'beautiful'. Usunier and Cestre (2007) researched that people relate Italy to pasta and France to wine. All these associations were different per country. The result of the difference in the valence of the associations did also correspond to the study of Hornikx et al. (2008) Their study showed that the associations given about France, Germany and Spain were different in valence. For example, Germany evoked more negative associations than France and Spain.

The results of this study do have some limitations. One limitation is that the category of 'characteristics' was too broad. All categories are rather specific, but more than 15 subcategories are categorized as 'characteristics'. A second limitation is that the questions of the online version of the questionnaire were not accompanied by six lines. This allowed the participants to write whole texts instead of words. For the coders, it was difficult to code this. A third limitation is the low interrater reliability of the category 'subcategories'. All four coders gave subcategories to the associations without discussing this in detail. As last, the hardcopy

version was mostly completed by students. Also, participants who finished their secondary education mostly completed the hardcopy version, and participants who finished their higher education the online version.

Implications and further research

The findings have implications for marketers who want to influence consumers by using the COO of the product in their marketing campaigns. As first, the results of the first research question showed that using a FL evokes more positive associations than a direct COO marker. According to Hornikx, van Meurs and Starren (2008) the valence of the associations has an important effect on the preference of an advertisement. Consumers prefer advertisement with the highest number of positive associations and the lowest number of negative associations. Secondly, the specific version evoked more positive associations than the abstract version in which only the COO was mentioned and no product. It is probable that the congruent product evoked positive associations. When the product was left out, the participants only focused on the COO which evoked some negative associations. Sometimes, it could be better to not include a COO at all if consumers have negative associations with it. As third, if a marketer wants to emphasize the COO of the product it is better to include a direct COO marker than a FL. The results showed that the direct COO marker evoked more COO related associations than the FL marker. As last, some countries evoke more product-related associations and some more COO-related associations. For example, France evoked more COO-related associations than product-related associations. If, for example, the qualities of a French product need to be emphasized, it is better to not include a COO marker.

For further research, the associations need to be coded in more specific categories. Because the category 'characteristics' was too broad, every country (at the direct and the indirect question) evoked most associations about the characteristics of it. It could be useful to specify the category 'characteristics' into more detailed categories like 'characteristics of the population' and 'characteristics of the economy'. A second recommendation for further research is that it could be interesting to include products with higher involvement. Josiassen and Assaf (2010) investigated that the COO is less relevant for consumers in a high involvement situation than in a low involvement situation. Therefore, the question raises if the participants of this study would have mentioned more COO related associations when products with high involvement were used in the questionnaire. A last recommendation is to conduct the experiment with participants with more different nationalities. In the research of Kotler and

Gertner (2002) it was mentioned that different persons and groups hold different stereotypes of nations. It could be interesting to see if participants with different nationalities give different associations with different valences.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1A.   Consent form

TOESTEMMINGSVERKLARING

Naam onderzoek: ***Bachelor scriptie-onderzoek***
Verantwoordelijke onderzoeker: *A. de Kroon, K. Hesen, K. Bron, L. Willems, L. Abzach, M. van Hoeve, T. Haak*

Verklaring deelnemer
Ik heb uitleg gekregen over het doel van het onderzoek. Ik heb vragen mogen stellen over het onderzoek. Ik neem vrijwillig aan het onderzoek deel. Ik begrijp dat ik op elk moment tijdens het onderzoek mag stoppen als ik dat wil. Ik begrijp hoe de gegevens van het onderzoek bewaard zullen worden en waarvoor ze gebruikt zullen worden. Ik stem in met deelname aan het onderzoek.

Handtekening:

....Datum:……………………………….......................

Appendix 1B   Introduction

INLEIDING

Beste deelnemer,
Bedankt dat je de tijd neemt om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer <u>5 minuten</u>.

Deze vragenlijst bestaat uit vijf onderdelen. Het laatste onderdeel bevat een aantal achtergrondvragen.

Instructies:
- **Antwoord in het Nederlands**
- **Denk niet te lang en moeilijk na over je antwoorden**
- **Geef aan wat er het eerste bij je opkomt**
- **Er zijn geen foute antwoorden**
- **Geef zo veel mogelijk antwoorden**

Met dit onderzoek hopen we meer inzicht te krijgen in de verwerking van reclame.

Alvast heel erg bedankt voor je deelname.

Met vriendelijke groet,

A. de Kroon, K. Hesen, K. Bron, L. Willems, L. Abzach, M. van Hoeve, T. Haak

Appendix 2A   Example of the specific questionnaire

A. Stel je werkt voor een reclamebureau. Je ontwerpt een advertentie voor een Frans bedrijf dat een nieuwe wijn op de Nederlandse markt wil introduceren. In de advertentie wil je de Franse herkomst van het bedrijf benadrukken.

Hoe zou je deze Franse wijn aanprijzen? Welke woorden zou je bijvoorbeeld gebruiken? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

B. Stel je werkt voor een reclamebureau. Je ontwerpt een advertentie voor een bedrijf dat een nieuwe pasta op de Nederlandse markt wil introduceren. In de Nederlandse advertentie wil je de volgende slogan gebruiken:

"Goditi al massimo"

Wat zou jij nog meer benadrukken in de verder Nederlandstalige advertentie? Welke woorden zou je bijvoorbeeld gebruiken? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

C. Wat komt er bij je op als je aan Duitsland denkt? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk antwoorden op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

D. Hoe bekend ben je met de verschillende landen? Omcirkel wat voor jou van toepassing is.

1. Ik ben bekend met Frankrijk: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

2. Ik ben bekend met Duitsland: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

3. Ik ben bekend met Italië: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

E. Achtergrondvragen

Geslacht: _____

Leeftijd: _____

Nationaliteit: _____

Moedertaal: _____

Hoogst afgeronde opleiding: ☐ Geen
- ☐ VMBO
- ☐ HAVO
- ☐ VWO
- ☐ MBO
- ☐ HBO
- ☐ WO
- ☐ Anders, namelijk: _____

Ben je op dit moment student?   ☐ Ja   ☐ Nee

Eventuele opmerkingen: _____

Bedankt voor je deelname. Mocht je meer informatie willen hebben over (het doel van) dit onderzoek informeer bij je onderzoeker of mail naar: *c.hesen@student.ru.nl*

Annemarie, Katrien, Kaylie, Lisa, Liz, Marit en Tessa

Appendix 2B   Example of the abstract questionnaire

A. Stel je werkt voor een reclamebureau. Je ontwerpt een advertentie voor een Duits bedrijf dat een nieuw product op de Nederlandse markt wil introduceren. In de advertentie wil je de Duitse herkomst van het bedrijf benadrukken.

Hoe zou je dit Duitse product aanprijzen? Welke woorden zou je bijvoorbeeld gebruiken? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

B. Stel je werkt voor een reclamebureau. Je ontwerpt een advertentie voor een Frans bedrijf dat een nieuw product op de Nederlandse markt wil introduceren. In de Nederlandse advertentie wil je een Franse slogan gebruiken.
Wat zou jij nog meer benadrukken in de verder Nederlandstalige advertentie? Welke woorden zou je bijvoorbeeld gebruiken? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

C. Wat komt er bij je op als je aan Italië denkt? *Schrijf zo veel mogelijk antwoorden op.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

D. Hoe bekend ben je met de verschillende landen? Omcirkel wat voor jou van toepassing is.

4. Ik ben bekend met Frankrijk: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

5. Ik ben bekend met Duitsland: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

6. Ik ben bekend met Italië: Onbekend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bekend

E. Achtergrondvragen

Geslacht: _____

Leeftijd: _____

Nationaliteit: _____

Moedertaal: _____

Hoogst afgeronde opleiding: ☐ Geen
- ☐ VMBO
- ☐ HAVO
- ☐ VWO
- ☐ MBO
- ☐ HBO
- ☐ WO
- ☐ Anders, namelijk: _____

Ben je op dit moment student?   ☐ Ja   ☐ Nee

Eventuele opmerkingen: _____

Bedankt voor je deelname,

Annemarie, Katrien, Kaylie, Lisa, Liz, Marit en Tessa

Appendix 3   Statement of own work

Print and sign this Statement of own work form and add it as the last appendix in the final version of the Bachelor's thesis that is submitted as a hard copy to the first supervisor.

Student name: _____

Student number: _____

PLAGIARISM is the presentation by a student of an assignment or piece of work which has in fact been copied in whole or in part from another student's work, or from any other source (e.g. published books or periodicals or material from Internet sites), without due acknowledgement in the text.

DECLARATION: a. I hereby declare that I am familiar with the faculty manual (http://www.ru.nl/stip/english/rules-regulations/fraud-plagiarism/) and with Article 16 "Fraud and plagiarism" in the Education and Examination Regulations for the Bachelor's programma of Communication and Information Studies. b. I also declare that I have only submitted text written in my own words c. I certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation, whether they be books, articles, reports, lecture notes, and any other kind of document, electronic or personal communication.

Signature: _____

Place and date: _____