

REVERSE RELATIONSHIP OF ORIGIN IMAGE AND THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF TERROIR PRODUCTS

RELACIÓN INVERSA ENTRE LA IMAGEN DE ORIGEN Y EL VALOR PERCIBIDO DE LOS PRODUCTOS DEL TERROIR

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Abstract

Based on cognitive consistency theory, this study investigates the reverse effect between product evaluation and origin image in the context of terroir food products. Data were collected in Switzerland from a sample of 161 swiss consumer and PLS-SEM approach using SmartPLS4 was performed to test the research model. Findings reveal that perceived value exerts a positive influence on the cognitive image of the terroir of origin. Results also confirm a positive effect of perceived value on satisfaction as well as a direct link between satisfaction and cognitive origin image. From a managerial perspective, the study underscores the need for marketers and regional authorities to reinforce quality cues to build strong place identities through food products. Ultimately, the results provide strategic place-branding implications by demonstrating how valuable local food can shape and elevate the reputation of places in both domestic and international markets.

Keywords: Terroir Food, Place Origin, Perceived Value, Cognitive Consistency Theory.

Resumo

Basado en la teoría de la consistencia cognitiva, este estudio investiga el efecto inverso entre la evaluación del producto y la imagen de origen en el contexto de los productos alimenticios de terroir. Los datos se recopilaron en Suiza de una muestra de 161 consumidores suizos y se aplicó un enfoque PLS-SEM utilizando SmartPLS4 para probar el modelo de investigación. Los hallazgos revelan que el valor percibido ejerce una influencia positiva en la imagen cognitiva del terroir de origen. Los resultados también confirman un efecto positivo del valor percibido en la satisfacción, así como un vínculo directo entre la satisfacción y la imagen cognitiva de origen. Desde una perspectiva gerencial, el estudio subraya la necesidad de que los profesionales del marketing y las autoridades regionales refuercen las señales de calidad para construir identidades de lugar sólidas a través de los productos alimenticios. En última instancia, los resultados proporcionan implicaciones estratégicas para la marca de lugar al demostrar cómo los alimentos locales valiosos pueden moldear y elevar la reputación de los lugares tanto en los mercados nacionales como internacionales.



Palabras clave: Productos Locales, Origen Geográfico, Valor Percibido, Teoría de la Coherencia Cognitiva.

1 INTRODUCTION

Food products have a geographical origin because they are by nature land-based (Luykx *et al.*, 2008). In a particular way, terroir foods products are rooted in the natural features linked to the geographical aspects of the place (climate, topography, soil...), human elements like ancestral receipts and old know-how, and temporal element such as terroir history (Charters *et al.*, 2017; Batat, 2021). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers have shown a renewed interest in foods that are closely associated with their place of origin (Ertus & Bonescu, 2024; Kaswengi *et al.*, 2024). It is a way of reviving these products and making them, as stated by Bérard *et al.* (2004, p.595), a "living heritage". For the hypermodern consumer who is nostalgic for the past and looking for authentic products (Aubert, 2006, Zindy *et al.*, 2017), reference to local and subnational roots represents guarantees of being a natural and healthy product with superior taste and freshness (Merle and Piotrowski, 2012).

Agri-food goods's origin image, where provenance is not only an indicator of quality but also invokes emotional and symbolic connotations for consumers, may have a critical role in determining perceived value (Barrionuevo *et al.*, 2019; Zhou & Gao, 2024 ; Mar Serrano-Arcos *et al.*, 2025). Previous studies reinforce that positive origin image perceptions affect quality perceptions and a favorable national image serves as a "halo" to enhance the perceived quality of products (Xu *et al.*, 2013; Thøgersen *et al.*, 2017). The halo effect rests on the doubtful assumption that customers actually know the origins of the brands when forming opinions or making decisions (Samiee *et al.*, 2005). However, with the actual global commerce expansion, customers could encounter foreign goods even when they are unfamiliar with the products' origin (Lee *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, there may be problems with the widespread perception of research that suggests that origin image influences product beliefs in one direction only (Lee, 2016; Escandon-Barbosa & Rialp-Criado, 2019). Furthermore, there is still little research directly connecting perceived value to a nation's image (Vijaranakorn and Shannon, 2017) and it is still uncertain if a reverse origin effect is plausible (Lee *et al.*, 2016) . Based on

the cognitive consistency theory (Festinger, 1957), this study aims to investigate the impact of perceived value on the origin image of the terroir food product based in order to determine whether consumers are able to develop mental schemas for that particular terroir throughout the product evaluation.

This study could be an answer to the call of academics such as Lee *et al.* (2016) and Escandon-Barbosa & Rialp-Criado (2019) to broaden the literature on country image analysis of food products and to better understand the opposing effect of image that is the effect of the product on nation image. This study could be useful to regional actor of under-recognized terroirs to strengthen their regional branding through terroir food valorization.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Terroir food: A “visiting cards” for the little homeland (Delfosse, 2012)

A terroir food production is based on a heritage of knowledge and a know-how created collectively and enriched over time by local actors (Charter *et al.*, 2017). According to terroir notion, place and product are inextricably linked and interdependent (Castello, 2021). These goods are part of the "Awakening of the Provinces" (Thiesse, 1991, cited in Delfosse, 2012, p.64) since they spread the name of the little homeland throughout the country and therefore confirming its existence (Delfosse, 2012; p.64). Thus, terroir product is an “expression of the place” (Spielmann et Charters, 2013, p.311) and a translation of the people and the knowledge they hold about how best to work within their wider ecology (West, 2022). For example, wines from certain terroirs are seen to have unique personalities because of the location of grape cultivation and the way local producers interpreted historical traditions (Charters *et al.*, 2017)

In international marketplaces, these goods are known for their capacity to give regions a distinctive image in demarcation strategy (Fort & Couderc, 2001). Indeed, regional specialties and dishes function as “specific sensory window” (Telfer and Hashimoto, 2003, p. 158) on the culture, history and people of a place. These foods can lend their symbolic capacities to articulate place/destination identity (Lin *et al.*, 2011). The quality and condition of the product become an integral part of the overall brand image of the place from which it originates (Frochot, 2003). Berg and Sevón (2014) assert

that local food and culinary heritage are commonly exploited in place branding. Food and cuisine in its various forms have been used to make cities seem like appealing travel destinations, innovative business places, and energetic hubs for investors (Berg and Sevón, 2014). French, Italian, Thai, Mexican, and Russian cuisines are examples of how distinctive local, regional, national, and ethnic cuisines are employed to enhance the identity of bigger regions and nations (Lucarelli and Berg, 2011; Berg and Sevón, 2014). Riviezzo *et al.* (2017) validate the potential of terroir as a weapon of competitiveness for regional wines, particularly on international markets given its ability to improve a place's reputation. Thus, regions maintain their international positions and place-brand images through geographical markers such as Protected Designation of Origin PDOs and Protected Geographical Indication PGIs which allow them to promote and protect the designations of their high-quality agricultural and food products (Berg and Sevón, 2014).

2.2 Cognitive consistence theory

According to the cognitive consistence theory (Festinger, 1957), people have a desire to maintain consistency among their propositional beliefs. Elements of cognitive consistency are cognitifs constituents with propositional content (Gawronski & Strack, 2004). Conceptually, propositional ideas involve mentally represented statements about conditions of things that are judged as true or false by the individual (Gawronski & Brannon, 2019). The theory asserts that people are affected by the structure of their cognitions, specifically the cognitions' consistency or inconsistency (Prince, 2020). Discrepancy among cognitions produces psychological strain or discomfort (Awa & Nwuche, 2010). Thus, people feel more confident in their opinions and ideas when their thoughts are constant (Prince, 2020).

From the perspective of Cognitive Consistency Theory (Festinger, 1957), when consumers positively evaluate a terroir product, where place and product are inextricably linked and interdependent (Castello, 2021), they may produce a favorable overall image of the terroir consistent with his assessment. Thus, a evaluation of the product based on the taste, authenticity, quality and price could be a driver that shapes, updates, or even reverses existing terroir impressions

2.3 Hypothesis development

Perceived value or consumer value has long been seen as a source of competitive advantage and a crucial component of marketing success (Slack *et al.*, 2020). Consumer value represents a critical driver of purchase decisions (Wang, 2015) and is commonly defined as “the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given” (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 14).

The image concept is defined in marketing as a mental schemata including “all impressions, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, ideas, experiences, knowledge, feelings, emotions and associations” towards an object (Papadopoulos *et al.*, 2018, p.745). Country image was defined by Martin and Eroglu (1993, p.193) as “the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country”. Place origin image have been classified into two categories: the "macro country image" or "country aspect" and the "micro country image" or "product aspect" (Vijaranakorn and Shannon, 2017). Macro country image encompasses all aspects of a country, including its culture, political climate, history, people, economic and technological development while micro country image stresses the image of products that are "made in" specific countries (Vijaranakorn and Shannon, 2017; Hamzaoui and Merunka, 2006). Nevertheless, the macro country-image notion was neglected during the preceding nearly 50 years of country image studies (Vijaranakorn and Shannon, 2017).

Tarabashkina *et al.*, (2024) have claimed that there are three interrelated levels of geographic place origin: country of origin COO, region of origin ROO and terroir of origin. Compared to ROO, terroir is associated with a more constrained and narrow geographic area (Charters *et al.*, 2017). Previous studies frequently place origin into the “country level” (Tarabashkina *et al.*, 2024). However, the efficacy of more specialized location branding techniques, such as region-of-origin (ROO) (van Ittersum *et al.*, 2003) and terroir of origin (Spielmann & Charters, 2013), is comparatively less well understood (Tarabashkina *et al.*, 2024). That’s why, In this study, we will consider the regional and terroir image of origin.

Earlier research have conceptualized country image by cognitive and affective components (Häubl, 1996; Orbaiz and Papadopoulos, 2003). The cognitive component includes customers' beliefs about a specific country, in terms of its levels of economic development, living standards, industrialization, technical advances, and so on (Wang *et al.*

al., 2012). The affective component describes a consumer's emotional evaluation towards a country and its inhabitants (Wang *et al.*, 2012). As we adopted the Cognitive Consistency Theory for the current study, we will only consider the cognitive origin image as the cognitive component. Several tourist studies have showed that buyers with good product attitudes express improved perceptions towards the product's COO (Elliot *et al.* 2010; Lee and Lockshin 2012). Another study coming from Magnusson *et al.* (2014) also finds that brand violation might lead to a worsening of the brand's COO. Lee *et al.* (2016) have found that for Chinese consumers, beliefs about Australian wine have a positive influence on Australia's image as wine 'country of origin. Therefore, we posited that:

H1: Perceived value of terroir food have a positive influence on the Terroir of origin cognitive image

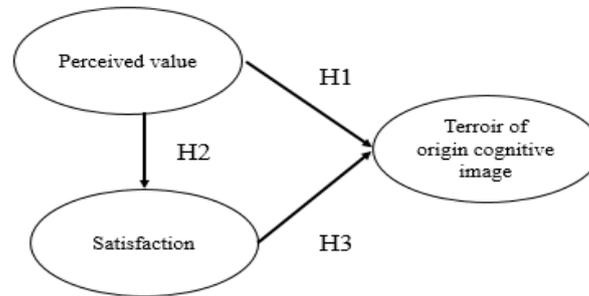
"Product satisfaction is the feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing the perception of a product's performance with one's expectations" (Demirgüneş, 2015, p.213). In the literature, it is widely supported that perceived value is a primary precursor of satisfaction (Spreng, 1993; Vanhamme, 2002, Vieira (2013)). In this sense, Eggert and Ulaga (2002) derive the relationship between perceived value and satisfaction from Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action, according to which "cognitive variables are mediated by affective variables to produce cognitive outcomes" (Eggert and Ulaga 2002, p.111). The direct and positive effect of perceived value on satisfaction was also reported by Konuk (2018) in the context of restaurants specializing in organic food. Thus, we advanced the following:

H2: Perceived value of terroir food have a positive influence on satisfaction

Chon (1990) presents a conceptual model of the interrelationship between destination image and tourist behavior. He posits that the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction resulting from the evaluation process can further reinforce the tourist's overall image of the destination. De Nisco *et al.* (2015) considered country image as a consequence rather than an antecedent of tourist satisfaction. Through a sample of 317 smartphone users, Kim and Cho (2015) prove that the original image is both an antecedent and a consequence of satisfaction. Therefore, the following is posited:

H3: Satisfaction have a positive influence on terroir of origin cognitive image

In light of the above, we propose the following research model:

Figure 1*Research model*

2 METHODOLOGY

Data collection occurred in Switzerland through self-administered questionnaire. In total, a 161 of questionnaires were deemed for the analysis. Sample characteristics are presented in table 1 :

Table 1*Sample description (N=161)*

Criteria		Number	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	67	41,6
	Female	94	58,4
Age	Under 25	49	30.4
	Between 25 and 44	51	31.7
	Between 45 and 64	55	34.2
	65 and over	6	3.7
Level of education	Primary	1	0.6
	Secondary	41	25.5
	University	119	73.9

.For model estimation, we employe (PLS-SEM) approach using SmartPLS4. The latter demonstrates greater tolerance for non-normal data distributions, limited sample sizes, and high model complexity (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Measurement scales was adopted from existing litterature (see table 2). For all measures, responses we used a 5-point Likert scale (1="Strongly disagree"; 5="Strongly agree").

Table 2*Measurment scale*

Construct	Items	Source
Perceived value (PV)	Terroir food products offer good value for money. Terroir food products are considered a good buy. Compared to what I have to sacrifice, the overall ability of terroir products to meet my needs is high.	Papista <i>et al</i> (2018)
Terroir cognitive image (IMGC)	My perception of the origin of the product I consumed is that it comes from a place: Competent. Trustworthy. Technologically advanced. Successful.	Häubl (1996).
Satisfaction (SAT)	I am satisfied with my decision to buy this type of food. I am happy to buy this type of food. My choice to buy this food was wise.	Konuk (2018)

3 RESULTS**3.1 Scales's quality**

To assess internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were assessed. All Cronbach alphas were higher than the 0.7 restriction (Hair *et al*, 2021). To evaluate convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) were examined. AVE values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming a hight convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Table 3*The psychometric quality of scales*

Construct	Items	loading	AVE	Cronbach Alpha
Perceived value (PV)	VG1	0.746	0.637	0.745
	VG2	0.847		
	VG3	0.821		
Terroir cognitive image IMGC	IMGC1	0.891	0.705	0,864
	IMGC2	0.720		
	IMGC3	0.820		
	IMGC	0.926		
Satisfaction SAT	SAT1	0.889	0.771	0,817
	SAT2	0.906		
	SAT3	0.837		

Discriminant validity was evaluated through the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell et Larker, 1981). Table 3 show that every construct's AVE exceed its squared correlations, confirming the discriminant validity.

Table 4

Discriminant validity based on Fornell & Larcker (1981)

	IMGC	SAT	PV
IMGC	0.837		
SAT	0.302	0.860	
PV	0.206	0.545	0.768

3.2 Hypothesis test and structural model evaluation

The significance of the structural coefficients for each path was calculated using a bootstrapping procedure with 500 subsamples. The Q^2 value of 0.327 is greater than 0 and demonstrates the predictive relevance of the model (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

Path analysis, results show that perceived value has a positive influence on the cognitive origin image ($\beta = 0.186$, $t = 2.158$, $p = 0.031$). Thus, H1 is supported. Perceived value has a positive influence on Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.437$, $t = 6.118$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore H2 is supported. Finally, analysis demonstrated that Satisfaction has a positive impact on the cognitive origin image ($\beta = 0.220$, $t = 2.230$, $p = 0.026$). Thus, H3 is supported.

Table 5

Hypothesis testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
PV -> IMGC	0.186	0.187	0.086	2.158	0.031
PV -> SAT	0.437	0.440	0.071	6.118	0.000
SAT -> IMGC	0.220	0.220	0.099	2.230	0.026

3.3 Discussion and study implications

Results have shown that perceived value of terroir food have a positive influence on the terroir of origin cognitive image, which is consistent with many previous studies

in tourism field (Elliot *et al.* 2010; Lee and Lockshin 2012 ; Lee *et al.*, (2016). This result give support to the perspective of Cognitive Consistency Theory (Festinger, 1957) involving that when a consumer believe that the prouct have a good value, he could produce a coherent assessment of the region's image by attributing to it an image of success, competence, technological mastery, and integrity. This implies that when swiss consumer form a favorable opinion of a local product, such as PDO cheeses, artisanal chocolates, oils, or imported goods with a local flair, it directly affects how he views the location of origin. This study contributes to the existing littrature by confirming the opposite sense of direction between between origin image and product evaluation. Marketers and regional managers in Switzerland must highlight the quality and authenticity of their food products through geographical markers such as PDOs and PGIs in both domestic and foreign markets to create a favorable impression on the little nation (Delfosse, 2012) in the minds of consumers. In adition, marketing managers of foreign products exported to Switzerland should realize that if swiss consumers already have some knowledge of the terroir of origin of their product, this impression may even be strengthened or altered. through the evaluation that the consumer could make. This requires serious work on their part to showcase their product offering in general, particularly in terms of quality, certification, and originality. The results acknowledge the positive effect of the perceived value on consumer satisfaction wich corrobates prior reserach (Vieira, 2013 ; Konuk, 2018). Finding have also shown a positive and direct link between consumer satisfaction and their cognitive evaluation of the origin of the terroir food product. This result converges with the findings of Kim and Cho's research (2015) and De Nisco *et al.* (2015) and Chon (1990) in the touristic context. Thus, when an swiss consumers experiences satisfaction from consuming a terroir product from another country or region, they might form an image of competence and success on that place. Therefore, marketers of regional swiss product or regional foreign product are called to make continuous improvement in satisfaction level by aligning the final product with the promise communicated through the packaging, the price, and the overall product presentation in the swiss market. The study's findings propose strategic place branding slots for local authorties by showing how they can create a diffrenciate place identity and a positive reputation of their origin throught valuable local food. Local governments and businesses should cooperate to create integrated marketing strategies meant to link the overall perception of the terroir nation to the perceptions of the product.

4 CONCLUSION, LIMITS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the cognitive consistency theory, this study provides an in-depth understanding of the formation of origin image in the context of terroir food. Despite this work's contributions, several limits remain. When conceptualizing image of the origin, this study is limited to the cognitive image. Future research should examine the effect of perceived value on origin image by introducing the affective dimension. Besides, this study uses perceived value in its simplistic version. It would be recommended to replicate the model by considering the multidimensionality of perceived value according to Holbrook (1999).

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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