

## **COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN'S IMAGE AND CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study assessed the impact of country of origin image on consumers' buying behavior using demand for clothing materials among undergraduates in the tertiary institutions in Ekiti State as case study. A sample of 364 students which include 158 and 206 male and female respectively are selected among the four tertiary institutions in Ekiti State and structured questionnaire is used to elicit information from them on their perceptions about country of origin influence on the clothing materials they patronize. Country of origin image is captured by product previous knowledge, internal feature, industrialization and technical knowledge. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics especially regression and ANOVA are applied to analyze the data collected and the results show that country of origin image has significant impact on consumers buying behavior of clothing materials among undergraduates. The results further show that country of origin image can influence consumer-buying behavior of clothing materials significantly. The findings speak volume of the inefficiency in the textile industry in Nigeria. This account for the high dependency of Nigerians on imported clothing materials and as such consumers are highly vulnerable to manipulations of the foreign producers. It is recommended that, government and other stakeholders in the textile industry and other related manufacturing industry should come up with appropriate policies to revive and revamp the Nigerian ailing manufacturing sector especially the textile industry through aggressive investment and provision of necessary infrastructure that can aid speedy recovery of the industry from its present comatose state.

**Key Words:** *Country-of-Origin-Image, Consumer-Buying-Behavior, Clothing materials*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization has made international trade to increase made in different countries products are available in the market and now customers have the wide variety of choices to select the products from domestic and foreign products across all nations in the world. This phenomenon makes the study of consumer attitude more important (Netemeyer et al., 1991). For any product, its characteristics, design and attributes are all important. When customers differentiate the products from products of one country from other, this phenomena is called Country-of-Origin effect. For making successful marketing strategy, it is essential for the marketer to know the extent of importance consumers attached to country of origin despite the fact that it is considered as the fifth element of marketing (Baker and Ballington, 2002).

Over the years researchers on marketing strategy have shown that successful firms make good use of country of origin to get success in the market (Kinra, 2006) e.g. Swiss watches and Japanese Electronic products are its examples. Country of origin is mostly used in combination with other extrinsic cues as well as with intrinsic product cues. Country of origin effect is not static and it keeps on changing with time. Darling and Wood (1990) studies proves the country of origin dynamic nature has a great influence on marketing strategy and hence affects significantly products patronage. There are certain factors which determine the important of country of origin. These factors includes brand name (Jo et al, 2003), Consumer home country (Okechuku and Onyemah, 1999), country of ownership of company (Thekor & Lavack, 2003). Country of origin effect is product specific and depends on the technology, familiarity, degree of availability and ethnocentrism (Han, 1990). Country of origin image is related to only product image but not overall image of the country (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Chung et al. (2009) argues that people while purchasing food and other items are very sensitive to extrinsic information which makes country of origin phenomena an important concept to be studied. In addition empirical information about the relationship between buying behavior and country of origin has been argued to

be important for marketers in import dependent country like Nigeria (Ogenyi, 2012 ). This among others makes this study vital for marketing stakeholders in Nigeria.

However, country of origin image which comprise of attributes such as Products' Internal Features, Country-of-origin's Technical Knowledge, Consumers' Previous Knowledge, Country-of-origin's Degree of Industrialization. Have diverse influence on consumers buying behavior for products especially the clothing material. However, there relative effects remains largely controversial and hence there has been lack of consensus on the relative influence of these attributes an which one of them influences buying behavior of consumers most. There have been some researches around consumer buying behavior and country of origin image especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when globalization has expanded the scope of international trade. Again these researches are few on Nigeria but there are hosts of them on foreign countries especially developing countries that are also import dependent like Nigeria.

Consequently, this study hopes to contribute to the existing literatures by investigating the impacts of country of origin image on buying behaviors of clothing materials among the undergraduates of higher institutions in Ekiti State

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Parts and Vida (2011), The Effects of Consumer Cosmopolitanism on Purchase Behaviour of Foreign versus Domestic Products the measurement model is examined using a data set of 261 adult consumers and tested via structural equation modeling. The study results confirm the strong total effect of consumer cosmopolitanism in purchase behaviour and indicate a strong direct effect of this phenomenon on the behavioural out country-of-manufacture come. The more cosmopolitan consumers' have a stronger tendency to buy foreign rather than local products.

Ivan (2010), his paper aims to examine the differences in consumers' attitudes towards domestic and foreign retailers in Croatia. The empirical analysis is based on data obtained from consumer survey. The data were analyzed using t-test, chi-square test and ANOVA. The results show that consumers perceive domestic retailers as being similar to foreign retailers on three out of four store attribute factors. Cluster analysis produced three consumer segments: (i) consumers who prefer domestic retailers (28%); (ii) consumers who prefer foreign retailers (17%); and (iii) indifferent consumers (55%). The significant differences across segments exist in retail patronage, but not in consumer spending behaviour and the attitudes towards buying Croatian-made products. It may be concluded that consumers' attitudes towards domestic and foreign retailers might predict retail patronage behaviour.

Long and Chun (2006), the purpose of this study is to explore the influence of the Country-of-origin image, product knowledge and product involvement on consumer purchase decision. Taiwan, China and the USA were the three countries selected for research into the Country-of-origin, insurance and catering services. Structured questionnaires and convenience sampling were used. Samples were collected from consumers in the Taipei area. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed with convenience sampling method, and 369 effective samples were collected, the effective rate being 92.25 percent. Stepwise regression analysis was adapted to test hypothesis. The main findings were listed as follows: the Country-of-origin image, product knowledge and product involvement all have a significantly positive effect on consumer purchase decision; the Country-of-origin image has a significantly positive effect on consumer purchase decisions under different product involvement; and product knowledge has significantly positive effect on consumer purchase decisions under different product involvement.

Nyitor (2010), the objective of the study was to assess the effect that Country-of-origin and price have on efficacy of advertisements for a product. He employed experimental study ascertained the influence of Country-of-origin and price on advertisement efficacy involving an African population sample. Six hundred female and male undergraduates (with mean age = 23.02; SD= 3.2 years) were randomly drawn from a large university, to view a product advertisement that uniquely manipulated Country-of-origin and price for a fictitious brand of insecticide named Antsiest. Data analysis was done using one-way analysis of variance. It was found that individually and collectively, Country-of-origin and price did affect advertisement efficacy significantly. It was concluded that advertisers need to consider product's country of-origin and product's price when developing successful advertisement campaigns. Beyond advertisements, country of-origin and price also matter to buyers and consumers of products.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

**Research Design**

This study employs a descriptive survey research design which will describe the influence of Country-of-origin (image, belief and integrity) have on consumers' buying behaviour among undergraduates of Ekiti State University. It is a descriptive research because it enables researcher to collect firsthand information from respondents. This study shall rely majorly on primary data. The required data were collected from students of the selected tertiary institutions in Ekiti State (Ekiti State University, Federal University, Oye Ekiti, Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti, College of Education, Ikere Ekiti and College of Health and Technology, Ijero Ekiti). This study make use of 5 – point Likert Scaled questionnaire adapted from the work of Pavinee (2011) to gather data from the respondents'. The independent variables are belief, image and integrity while the dependent variable is consumers buying behaviour (proxy by repeat purchase behaviour).

**Population of the Study**

The population of this study was made up of all the 26, 611 students from selected institutions in Ekiti State as shown on Table 1.

**Table 1: Population Distribution Table**

ITEM NO.	INSTITUTION	POPULATION
1	Federal University, Oye – Ekiti	2,306
2	Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti	13, 783
3	Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti	12, 262
4	College of Education, Ikere Ekiti	7,660
5	College of Health and Science Technology, Ijero Ekiti	2,600
<b>Total</b>		26,611

Source: Author's Review, 2011

**Sample and Sampling Techniques**

A sample size of 394 were selected for this study. This number shall be gotten by applying the statistical formulae formulated by Yamane (1967), on the total population of the study.

The formulae is stated as follows

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n=anticipated total sample size

N= Population size

E= error term (0.05)

Therefore the total sample size was calculated as:

$$n = \frac{26,611}{1 + 26,611(0.05)^2}$$

n= 394

From the above calculation, the sample size of the study is 394 respondents.

**Sampling Technique**

This study adopts stratified random sampling technique in selecting the participating students of selected institutions because not all students of the population have an equal chance of selection. The sample was grouped into strata base on the population of each selected institution.

$$n^* = \frac{n N^1}{N}$$

Where n\* = sample for each selected institution, n= total study sample, N<sup>1</sup> = Population of each selected institution, N = Population size.

Hence, the total sample computed as:

**Table 2: Stratified Sample of each Selected Institution**

S/No	Ekiti State Ministries	Sample/Ministry	Respondents
1.	Federal University, Oye – Ekiti	394*2306/26,611	34
2.	Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti	394*13,783/26,611	204
3.	Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti	394*12,262/26,611	182

4.	College of Education, Ikere Ekiti	394*7,660/26,611	113
5.	College of Health and Science Technology, Ijero Ekiti	394*2600/26,611	39
Total			394

Source: Author's Review, 2016

**Reliability of Research Instrument**

The construct reliability and internal consistency of the instrument was determined through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The Cronbach Alpha value for the study is 0.876 which is within the acceptable range of  $\geq 0.7$ , relying on the postulations of Delone and Mclean (2003).

**Validity of Research Instrument**

The questionnaire that was used to gather primary data needed for the study was validated through content and face validity. The validity was to ensure that the instrument measured what it is purported to measure. To ensure the content validity of the questionnaire used to assess each constructs, all items regarding the measurement of constructs were adapted from previous studies and carefully rewarded to fit the clothing industry.

**Model Specification**

Leveraging on Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1980) and Consumer behavior theory by Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2008), the relationship between the buying behavior and country of origin is expressed in tandem with model of Angahar and Alematu (2014). This model appears not to have been tested with Nigeria experience and consequently the model is stated thus:

$$CBB = \alpha + \beta_1 (IF) + \beta_2 (TN) + \beta_3 (CPN) + \beta_4 (IND) + e \dots\dots\dots 3$$

Where, CBB is Consumers' Buying Behaviour, IF is Products' Internal Features, TN is Country-of-origin's Technical Knowledge, CPN is Consumers' Previous Knowledge, IND is Country-of origin's Degree of Industrialization.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze various data sourced for this study, the descriptive statistics include: Frequency Table and Simple Bar Charts. For the purpose of data analysis multiple regression analysis was employed.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Response Rate**

From the output of statistical estimation undertaken, there was 8% non response rate. That is, 8% of the entire respondents (20 out of 394) dully completed this section of the research instrument. Going by the volume of response rate (92%), it can be concluded that the chosen sample were appropriate for the study. Thus, it shows clearly that the method of instrument administration (employing student leaders of various campuses as research assistant for the purpose of questionnaire administration) was good enough for the study.

**Respondents' Description**

From Table 4.1, there were more females respondents covered in this study (57%) compared to their male counterparts (43%). However, the difference is not significant enough to suggest that the distribution has capacity to skew the result of the study's findings. The implication of this is that, the study is expected to generate balanced information from two groups. Of worthy note on this outcome is the study of Ogundipe (2016), which suggests that female students are more fashion conscious than their males' counterparts. Though, the author went further to describe female students' flair for fashion as an offshoot of their interactions with the male students, to the extent that male students are even considered the source of financial inspiration (more importantly with less privileged female students) for their female counterparts. The fact that this study has a fairly evenly distributed respondents in males and females respondents will further assist in determining the students; category that are more fashion conscious as well as predict what impacts their choice of fashion outfits.

Also, the sampled respondents were 26%, 23%, 20%, 16% and 15% (Table 4.1) distributed according to their preference for products from the following countries-of-origin respectively: France (Givenchy), Italy (Gucci), Paris (Louis Vuitton), Spain (Zara) and United Kingdom (Mark and Spencer). These categories of designers as well as countries-of-origin were chosen in line with the finding of Amine (2008), which suggests that, tertiary institution students prefer more of products originating from these countries (more importantly, where the

consumers are from developing nations). Evaluating these percentage distributions, it can be concluded that, there appears to be a moderate variation between students' preference for each of the country's brand.

The country with the highest frequency (France) has 26%, whereas, the one with the least frequency (United Kingdom) has 15%. Interviewing the respondents on why minority went for products from the United Kingdom (UK), it was discovered that financial constraints (considering the exorbitant pricing of UK products occasioned by unfavourable exchange rate) necessitated their aspersion for UK products in recent time. The need for this interview was centered on observations during questionnaire administration, where students who were seen wearing UK brands declined their preference for the brand. These distributions therefore could not be said to be the reflection of consumers' preference, but a desire influenced by financial status.

Majority of the sampled respondents as shown in Table 4.1 were from Faculty of the Social Sciences (22%), followed by Faculty of Arts (16%) and Agric (15%). Faculty of Management Sciences has 14%, Science 11%, Engineering 8%, Education 6% and Law 5%. A cursory look at these percentage distributions suggests that there were more students from the Faculty of Agric than all other faculties. This is a bit worrisome, because, a careful examination of the anticipated sample distribution anticipates otherwise. The result gotten from this can be ascribed to the use of students as research assistants, a factor that may affect even distribution of research instruments. This however further suggests that the students used could have skewed the distribution of research instruments to their Faculties majorly. This menace would have been corrected if student leaders were chosen per Faculties, instead of institutional distribution. Of course, the choice of this method would have meant more expenses. However, this might not affect data output significantly, considering the fact that students are expected to exhibit homogeneous features, more importantly if they are selected from the same environment and or are exposed to the same environmental variables.

Table 3 equally depicts that majority of the sampled respondents were in 200 Level/OND II/Year II (28%) followed by 300 Level/HND I/Year III (22%), and 100 Level/OND I/Year I (21%). 400 and 500 Levels accounted for the least number of respondents (15% and 13% respectively). These distributions are not strange to the study, since institutions covered includes the College of Education and Polytechnics, where their academic programme terminates at Year III and HND II respectively. Only the University system has few of her programmes running for greater than or equal 5 years (Engineering, Law and Medicine).

**Table 4.3: Respondents' Distribution by Demographic Characteristics**

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Valid	MALE	158	43.41
	FEMALE	206	56.59
	Total	364	100.0
Valid	FRANCE/GIVENCHY	95	26.1
	ITALY/GUCCI	83	22.8
	PARIS/LOUIS VUITTON	73	20.1
	SPAIN/ZARA	57	15.7
	UK/MARK & SPENCER	56	15.4
	Total	364	100.0
Valid	MGT	53	14.6
	SOC SC	83	22.8
	SCIENCE	43	11.8
	AGRIC	55	15.1
	ARTS	59	16.2
	ENGINEERING	30	8.2
	EDUCATION	22	6.0
	LAW	19	5.2
	Total	364	100.0
Valid	100L	76	20.9

200L	103	28.3
300L	80	22.0
400L	55	15.1
500L	50	13.7
Total	364	100.0

Source: Output of Author's Data Analysis (2017)

**Discussion of Findings**

Based on country-of-origin's classification of Angahar and Alematu (2014), products' internal features, country's technical knowledge, consumers' previous knowledge and country's industrialization status were used as proxies for country-of-origin's image. From Table 4.3, it was found that collectively, all the proxies of the independent variable, country-of-origin's image exhibits a coefficient of multiple correlation and determination (R and R<sup>2</sup>) values of 0.682 and 0.459 respectively. Relying on the classification of Oyesiku (1995), the value of R = 0.682 implies a positive and high correlation between consumers' buying behaviour and country-of-origin's image. The implication of this is that, as country-of-origin's image improves, consumers' buying behaviour will equally improve. Determining the degree of change to be expected as a result of unit change in country-of-origin's image, R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.459 indicates that country-of-origin's image will only account for 45.9% change in consumers' buying behaviour. From this study, variables other than country-of-origin's image were seen as being accountable for the remaining 54.1% change in consumers' buying behaviour of clothing materials among students of tertiary institutions in Ekiti State.

Comparing this with the existing position in literature, this result, though varies in values of R and R<sup>2</sup>, it is still in line with previous authors' position on the expected relationship between country-of-origin's image and consumers' buying behaviour of clothing materials. Such studies include Ogundipe (2016), Vesela and Zich (2015) and Ghosh and Datta (2012). This shows that consistently and up till recently, researchers are of the opinion that manufacturers of clothing materials should pay adequate attention to country-of-origin's image while making efforts towards producing clothing materials meant for students market.

Assessing the explanatory variables (proxies of country-of-origin's image), Table 4.2 shows that, country-of-origin's technical knowledge is of more significance to students while choosing clothing materials, going by the t value of 4.041. Though, Angahar and Alematu (2014) felt it does not take the place of variable of the first order in predicting consumers' buying behaviour, but the fact that the previous study was carried out in developed nation compared to the current study being carried out in developing nation, where Nigeria depends mainly on imported fabrics could necessitate this divergence of result. Products' internal feature was ranked second amongst variables of the country-of-origin's image at t value of 2.754.

A careful observation of Table 4.2 revealed that all the four proxies of country-of-origin's image were significant, but, only two exhibits positive relationships while two also exhibits negative relationship. The two proxies of country-of-origin's image that exhibits negative relationships are consumers' previous knowledge of the product and country-of-origin's degree of industrialization at t values of -5.970 and -8.362 respectively. This implies that the duo have negative impact on consumers' buying behaviour. This negates the position of theory anyway, but, it is worthy to note that majority of previous studies reviewed were conducted in developed economy, where clothing materials were manufactured locally, unlike the Nigerian economy which is import dependent.

This little dissimilarity has the capacity of affecting output of results of findings. In an import dependent economy, where locally manufacturers are involved in pirating clothing goods to arrest consumers' interest, consumers who had suffered from this tendency by buying substandard clothing materials claimed to have originated from foreign countries are likely to be negatively influenced by previous products' experience. Also, when a country's degree of industrialization is high, it has the tendency of improving quality standards and class, thus attaching premiums to pricing and for an economy in recession, the fact that quality has lead to price increase by way of higher industrialization may affect consumers' buying behaviour negatively.

Summarily, the relationship between the proxies of country-of-origin's image and consumers' buying behaviour can be expressed as:

$$CBB = 4.042 + 0.393IF + 1.035TN - 0.899CPN - 0.697IND + 0.26154.....(1)$$

**Table 4. Regression Coefficients of Country-of-origin's Image and Consumers' Buying Behaviour**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.042	.087		46.538	.000
INTERNAL FEATURES	.128	.046	.393	2.754	.006
TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE	.283	.070	1.035	4.041	.000
PRODUCT PREV KNOWLEDGE	-.278	.047	-.899	-5.970	.000
INDUSTRIALISATION	-.242	.029	-.697	-8.362	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Source: Output of Author's Data Analysis (2017)

**Table 5: Model Summary of Country-of-origin's Image and Consumers' Buying Behaviour**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.682 <sup>a</sup>	.465	.459	.26154

a. Predictors: (Constant), INDUSTRIALISATION, PRODUCT PREV KNOWLEDGE, INTERNAL FEATURES, TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Source: Output of Author's Data Analysis (2017)

**Hypotheses Testing**

Arising from the results of analysis on individual variables, the three hypotheses formulated were tested as indicated in the ANOVA Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11. The choice of ANOVA was occasioned by the size of sampled respondents.

**Hypothesis:** *Country-of-origin's image has no significant effect on consumers' buying behaviour among undergraduates in Ekiti State*

As revealed in Table 6, F-statistics calculated value is 77.769 significant at 1% and 5% level of significance. This is higher than the residual value of 24.488 and as such, the null hypothesis is rejected. Meaning, country-of-origin's image has significant effect on buying behaviour of clothing materials among undergraduates in Ekiti State.

**Table 6: ANOVA Table for Test of Hypothesis I**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	21.278	4	5.320	77.769	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	24.488	358	.068		
Total	45.767	362			

a. Dependent Variable: CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

b. Predictors: (Constant), INDUSTRIALISATION, PRODUCT PREV KNOWLEDGE, INTERNAL FEATURES, TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Source: Output of Author's Data Analysis (2017)

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the results of data analysis, it is evident that all the three variables used in measuring possible of countries-of-origin's influence (image, belief and integrity) adapted from the theoretical postulations of Angahar and Alematu (2014) were found significant as they affects clothing buying behaviour among undergraduates in Ekiti State. This result is in line with the findings of Shazhad (2014) though the study was more on image and beliefs but the results showed that country of origin image and beliefs play significant role in consumer buying behaviour especially for a developing economy.

Notwithstanding, the findings especially on image is contrary to the conclusion from the study if Javed (2013) who investigated the Pakistani economy and discovered that country of origin image might not play significant role in determining the buying behavior of fabrics in Pakistan but play dominant role in buying behavior of electronics and cosmetics. The reason for this might not be unconnected with the fact that Pakistan fabrics are largely patronized locally since they are one of the leading fabrics producers in the Asian axis. This difference in result is expected because unlike Pakistan, Nigerian textile industry that could create a good image for the locally made fabrics have been in comatose since the Nigerian economy became deregulated in 1985. The influx of foreign clothing materials and depreciation in productive capacity due to the neglect of the industry as a result of more attention given to the oil sector at the expense of the manufacturing sector further compounded the woes of the textile industries (Ogenyi, 2010). Within the last two and a half decades about 70% of the entire textile manufacturing firms in Nigeria have folded up (NBS, 2014, MAN, 2015). This singular reason has made the teeming clothing materials consumers in Nigeria to be completely subservient to imported clothing materials that are consistently being manipulated to attract the attentions of Nigerians depending on the country of origin.

Findings from this research work have also shown that clothing materials buying behavior are more positively affected by the level of attractiveness than the level of industrialization of the country of origin. The implication of this is that clothing consumers are less concerned about how industrialized the country of origin of a clothing material is so far the cloth is a foreign product and attractive. This goes in line with the position of Ogenyi (2010) that Nigerian consumers are much more concern with extrinsic value of a product than the intrinsic value which determines the quality of the product. However, the Yi Chai (2004) argued that this might not be the case for all categories of products. According to him consumers might prefer the intrinsic value of electronic gadgets than the extrinsic value but since the focus of this study is on clothing materials that is more outwardly displayed than electronics, hence attractiveness might be of more significance importance to buying behavior of consumers.

The study concluded that, firms that are export based, that is, companies that export their products to developing economy like Nigeria, must pay adequate attention to what consumers sees them as (in terms of image). The image of a particular country is a significant determinant of consumers' patronage and by extension, firms that are operating within the national territory also contributes to country's image because they are the ones producing items that outsiders will see and rank their nation of domicile.

The inefficiency in the real sector of the Nigerian economy has again been brought to the fore by the findings from this research work. The neglect of the manufacturing sector since the discovery of oil is the beginning of the problem of the Nigerian textile industry that supposed to bring about less dependent on foreign clothing materials. The problem of the textile industry was compounded when the country adopted economic deregulation without increased investment in the textile industry. This rendered the industry competitively weak as the influx of imported clothing materials increase as a result of excessive opening of the Nigerian economy to outside world.

- (i) Countries should empower agencies whose responsibilities are to monitor products' quality and standard (more importantly products that are produced for exportation into other countries) such that they will always ensure that sub-standard products are not in any way exported from their countries. This is to ensure that countries don't encourage negative national integrity across national boundaries.
- (ii) Firms that are resident in countries that are sophisticatedly industrialized should ensure that clothing materials being exported to developing nations are of competitive pricing.

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