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Title of the Thesis: COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND ITS IMPACT ON
BRAND PERCEPTION AND EQUITY: A
STUDY OF SELECT PRODUCTS

Abstract

In the present market scenario, brand equity and perception are the factors that form the core and major objective to achieve for the companies. The biggest challenge for the marketers is to develop positive experience of the consumer with the products/service in order to maximise the benefit. One factor that needs to be added to support this is country of origin (COO) which plays an equally important role in forming the image of the brand and creating value among the consumers. So the purpose of this research is to study the impact of country of origin on the brand perception and equity. The two product categories have been chosen for the research study- mobile phones and automobile (passenger cars). The objective of this research is to understand the effect of country of origin on brand perception and equity for the selected product categories.

Conclusion

Country of origin was found to have a significant positive effect on all the four dimensions of brand equity (Brand Loyalty, Perceived Quality, Brand Association, and Brand Awareness) for both the product categories- mobile phones and automobile (passenger cars). For the product category of mobile phones, country of origin has the maximum effect on brand association, whereas for automobiles, country of origin has the maximum effect on brand awareness. As for the mobile phones brand association contributes the most in the formation of brand equity, whereas for automobile, the dimension that affects the most is brand loyalty.

Recommendations

Brand awareness has an important role to play in the creation of brand equity- strong brands in mature category may have this from before but for brands starting out or in mid-range need to accelerate the building of brand awareness with the consumer. Marketing managers should

concentrate their efforts for building brand loyalty which, if increased, will contribute positively to their firm's brand equity. If there will be brand loyalty among the customer then brand recall is an easy job. This is the ability of the customer to retrieve the brand memory when certain product is given as a cue. The marketers should take various steps for building brand recall in the minds of the customer by different branding strategies.

Brand category is found to be important for the measurement of brand equity. Different dimensions contribute in different ways to the industries and are not uniform. For the brand managers in automobiles and mobile phones, this study should serve as a base on the country of origin that should be focused on to strengthen the brand equity. For ultimately, increased brand equity means better choice probability for consumers, which is a way for the profitability and further increases the sale of the product.