
Synthesizing the Influence of Country of Origin on Consumer Buying Behavior

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Abstract

The particular research paper incorporates with country of origin effects on consumer behavior. It is a review of various researches that has already been conducted in this field over the years. It provides us with the long discussed answer that the country of origin does effect consumer beliefs, perceptions and attitudes. Country's image effect and the possibility of consumer to be ethnocentric, leads into certain biasness for particular products of specific countries, which eventually neutralizes as consumer get involved in their purchases and get to know more about the product. The differences in consumers, based on demographic profile also acts as a factor into varying degree of country of origin effects. The study constitutes of important information for the marketers, who are often in dilemma about the strategy to be adopted for the customers. As because, even though the world is globalized, it still is running carrying in itself various boundaries such as cultural, political and economic environment.

Keywords: Country image; Country of origin; Consumer ethnocentrism; Product knowledge and consumer involvement.

1. Introduction

In the era of rapid globalization it has become eminent for the companies to succeed in the long run and have a larger customer base. (Aboulnasr, 2007). In general terminology, country of origin relates to the particular country in which the product has been generated or the country to which product is associated with and has an identity with. It is referred to as the motherland of a product. Country of origin on a product is profoundly indicated by "made in ..." labels. The practice of using labels can be traced back into the times of ancient Greece, where it was quite common to stamp products with marks or logos and several other origination indicators. In ancient Egypt as well, brick makers used to mark the bricks they made, animals were marked by farmers naming the place of origin. The purpose in order to do so, was to identify and differentiate products. The origin was not only specified for its identification, but it also helped in signaling quality since, during the ancient times countries have been known for their products such as India for its spices, France for its perfumes and wines, China for its herbs, Egypt for its textiles, Australia for pearls etc. Country of origin serves as an indicator of various product

dimensions i.e performance, safety, reliability, quality and durability (Laroche, et al., 2005).

The major turnaround that came into country of origin use (as labels) was after the end of world war one, in 1914. The countries that lost the war (Germany) were made to mark their products with “made in” labels (made in Germany) so that people would easily identify and avoid the products made in those countries. Rather than a label or a brand, Country of origin was more of “Beware Sign”. But the significance which the ‘made in’ labels carried, didn’t worked any bad for the war defeated countries because these very labels came up as a strong marketing tool for the marketers. As a result, ‘Made in Germany’ turned out into a sign of workmanship which was well known for its high quality. Even today, Germany still carries this legacy (cai, 2002). *Then started the era of research into the field, better known as the country of origin labels and their possible effects on consumer behavior.*

1.1 Consumer buying behavior and country of origin effects

Consumer behavior is the study of how individuals, groups and organization select, buy, use and dispose of services, goods, ideas or experiences in order to satisfy their needs and wants. Buying behavior of consumer is a thorough process which starts with the consumer’s stimuli and ends with the response towards the stimuli. The process begins with certain inputs which are processed and then output comes up.

The ambiance as well as the marketing stimuli enter into the minds of the consumer and a set of psychological processes combined with particular attributes of consumer results into decision making processes and decisions to purchase. The job of marketers’ here is to grasp the idea about what happens in consumer consciousness between the arrival of the external stimuli of marketing and their final purchase decisions (Kotler). Hence, consumer buying behavior model is a stimulus response model. In the context of marketing, consumer internal environment are the sources of stimuli (need, tension, anxiety etc.) or their external environment factors such as (advertising, family, friends etc.) Consumer based on these stimulus evaluate, on the basis of his social, cultural and economic backgrounds. In order to evaluate all these alternatives, consumer psychology plays a vital role. Four key psychological processes, namely- perception, motivation, learning, and memory-fundamentally influence consumer response.

The main focus in this research work is on **consumer evaluation** which also includes some part of **consumer pre purchase behavior**. The evaluation process of a consumer constitutes all the steps, starting from the consumer’s contact with a stimulus, obtained information processing and finally reaching on to conclusions about quality of the product, its durability, credibility etc based on all the possible cues available. Before

purchasing any given product, consumer analyses a product on various parameters such as durability, quality, disposal, convenience etc.

Consumers' need for evaluation arises because of the variety of choices available in terms of product or market. More the number of alternatives available, the more complex evaluation process becomes. We assume that consumer is a rational entity in most of the economic theories. Before purchasing a product, a consumer evaluates each and every aspects of the alternatives available, analyses the cost-benefit analysis out of the product, evaluates various constraints and then try to come up with a decision which is the most suitable.

As per the early theories of economics, the preference of consumers' relied upon the assumption that they knew what they were buying. This was true to an extent for an era, because there were limited number of alternatives available to the consumers. With emergence of marketing concepts, increasing competition, development in technology the market is now flooded with products and brands which are available to consumers, thereby making the evaluation process complex. But for a general consumer, it has now literally become impossible to compare various alternatives in the midst of numerous constraints (time, money, effort).

One of the first investigators Cox (1962) developed a model on consumer evaluation process. He said that a product could be viewed as "Array of Cues". These cues are the source for the consumer to make any judgement on the product. Johansson et. al. (1989). These cues are utilized by consumers' in order to make inferences about the quality of a product. It is essential to make inferences because in real life situations process of trial and error is generally not available. Olson (1972) highlighted the fact that, in order to relate the quality of a product, consumer perceives, distinguishes and then makes judgments of cues for the purchase. All because, it is quite difficult for a general consumer to carry out objective product quality testing procedure.

In the consumer evaluation process, when we talk about cues, it is necessary to differentiate between extrinsic and intrinsic cues. In this system, a cue to the quality of product is derived in terms of the degree to which it is extrinsically or intrinsically a part of physical product. For a cue to be called intrinsic, it is the degree of the resultant change which would take place in physical product itself. **Extrinsic cues** are not related to physical product at all, in fact they are hypothetically created to be part of physical product. **Extrinsic cues** include brand, price, name etc. as we all know about the price quality relationship that, "higher the price of a product higher will be the quality". **Now the question arising from the statements is whether Country of origin, is an extrinsic cue or intrinsic cue?**

The answer to the question is that-Country of origin act as the part of labels. They don't have any relation with the physical performance of a product. From the labels, a consumer can only interpret about the conditions under which the product would have been manufactured, and nothing much more than that can be derived about the the physicality of a product. Hence, the factor country of origin is an extrinsic cue. It gives rise to country of origin effect as an extrinsic cue. This particular attribute is referred to as, how customers use country of origin as an extrinsic cue in evaluation and in order to shape their beliefs, perception, attitudes and intentions towards the purchase of a product. The country of origin effect has various aspects, which influences consumer perception at one level, consumer attitude and beliefs on the other. In consequent areas, we will study about these effects in detail.

1.2 Relevance of studying country of origin effects

The concept of country of origin has developed over the years. We already are aware about the fact that it was used as mark of identification and also for signaling quality. Whiskey distillers, during 16th century started to emphasize actual names of brand and throughout 18th century, the concept of brand evolved. During 19th century, in order to enhance the perceived value of their products, producers tried to associate consumer with brand names. During second half of 20th century, globalization expanded rapidly. India and china, which were earlier closed, opened up their economies. The concept of new trade theory (1970'S) made companies from all over the world to join hands, in the race to achieve economies of scale. With a goal to gain advantage in competition, companies started locating the production to their optimal locations (John dunning-LOCATION SPECIFIC ADVANTAGES). Optimal location means those locations where production cost for the company is minimal and they have ease to the accessibility of raw material, man power required for production etc. (Hill & Jain)

Country of origin labels, with all these attributes is found to be irrelevant. The concept of global brands was given by Levitt (1983). He stated that with globalization, a global segment of consumer with similar tastes and preferences is emerging (Global youth segment). Henceforth, there is a need to standardize rather than differentiation. There is a need of Global corporations rather than Multinational corporations, which demands to formulate brands which are global rather than multinational brands. Therefore with the theory propounded by Levitt, country of origin labels and the study into their effects, is found to be irrelevant.

The theory propounded by Levitt applies only for certain category of products and consumers. Even with globalization into effect, the concept seems far too away from reality. The reason being, still there exist a class of consumers, who have this stronghold of attachment, to the place they reside with. This however becomes quite difficult to

achieve in this globalizing world. This is what, is better known as “Paradox of Internationalization”. This very concept is defined by Belk through Newton’s principle “that for every action there is equal and opposite reaction”. The opposite reaction in this case is, the consumers’ inference of globalization as direct threat to their identity and thus they start loving their geographic region more. This factor of attachment propels them to buy more of the locally produced products, as it provides them with reassurance to their identity.

Secondly, customer seek to buy something different with standardization of products and lower costs of production. They want variety but also unique attributes in product. In this case products which have been manufactured in the state can be offered to them as an alternative to the standardized global brands. Two of the major attributes in a regional products are:

- 1) They have a unique point of selling when compared with the global brands.
- 2) They have a status symbol attached with them and are rare specialty goods because special effort has to be made for their purchase.

Thus, it becomes important to study Country of Origin effects on consumers’ process of purchase evaluation. Our next section of study deals with variety of works that has taken place, after realizing the potential of this area and its possible aspects for marketer.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Country of origin has long been studied as a marketing tool since more than 40 years. Schooler (1965) was the first to conduct a study in the area of country of origin. He came up with the theory that Country of origin does affect the opinion of consumers’ when it comes to product. As per Dubin (1978) there are six major constituents to a theory ‘why’, ‘what’, ‘how’, and ‘where’ ‘who’, and ‘when’ in context to consumer. Schooler’s study conducted in (1965) lacked the explanation of ‘how’ element in the theory. This particular limitation in the study opened gates for intensive research in the area of country of origin effects. Veale et.al., in his recent study conducted in (2006) examined the effect of country of origin as an cue, extrinsic in nature. Research studied have been conducted across varioud countries in order to identify the attributes which affect the customer while buying products based on the Country of Origin Bailey & Pineres (1997).This research study proposed that information about country is taken into account by the customers while formulating conclusions about product’s quality. Thus, country of origin emerges as an important extrinsic cue in this case. The usage of this cue by the customer in product evaluation process relies upon his degree of involvement as well as the level of his knowledge about the product. With globalization into effect, there are numerous options available for today’s consumers but with restricted ability to process each and every alternative. In order to formulate quality judgments, when knowledge about a product is quite less, consumer generally tends to rely on extrinsic cues and also wants to escape detailed processing of information. But how does country

of origin leads to quality judgments? Research conducted overtime has dispensed answers to this question as follows.

2.1 Country of origin effects and country image

On the basis of the image of country to which the product belongs to, consumer formulates quality judgments. In an academic paper Nagashima (1970) defines country image as-“it refers to social, economic, technological and political part of each country.” With emergence of multinationals, globalization, various alternatives are available to consumers but with a very limited amount of knowledge, to derive at conclusion for each option. Thus consumers in this case, are likely to depend on the experiences they encountered before with a country or product, for decision making. In order to study about country of origin effects, distinction has to be made between the beliefs of products’ information from a specific country and beliefs about country itself. The former stated refers to the knowledge of a product whereas latter refers to the image of the country. Study on product knowledge will be carried out later on.

Verlegh (2001) described two important components about the image of a country- human and geographic component. Climate and landscape of a country constitutes the geographic component whereas Human component is associated with competence, skill and creativity level of people residing in a country of product origin. Both these attributes if evaluated positively with respect to a country, create evaluation favorable for the product. As for instance, geographic component like temperature, right sunshine leads to evaluation of food products in a positive way. Similarly country with a good landscape makes it a good destination for tourist. Human component on the other hand, makes country ahead in areas like technology and manufacturing. Thus image of the country have direct influence on the product’s perception as well as quality.

Han (1989) concluded that when people are not aware about a product, the image of a country creates a “Halo Effect”. As per (Kotler) Halo effect has been applicable to characterize situations in which evaluation of a single object or an individual on various dimensions is based on evaluation of a single factor. The Halo effect formulates beliefs of a customer about a product. As for instance, if consumer knows that cars made in Germany are known for their durability and the car brand Audi is a German car, in such a case Germany’s image to the world will act as a halo and consumer will accordingly evaluate Audi for its durability. Image effects of a country as a halo construct will rely upon category of the product that is being evaluated. Roth and Romeo (1992) highlighted that country of origin will have positive impact on evaluations of product, when a product country match occurs i.e. the parameters on which the evaluation of country is being done, perfectly describes the attributes a consumer is looking for in a product. As for example- German automobiles maybe evaluated by consumers favorably because of its

reputed image on workmanship but when it comes to German beers, the evaluation may not be favorable by the consumers because in this case the match of product country does not occur. Image of the country also brings in perceptual distortions in the form of stereotypes framed in the country. Stereotyping refers to the tendency of humans over generalization. National stereotyping is a phenomenon, when evaluation by a consumer on a product is done on the basis of degree of development of a country. Lascu and Manrai (1998) stated that evaluation of products were most favorable for countries which were highly developed, moderate for newly industrialized countries and least favorable for developing countries. Kerbouche et al., (2012) in his study found that products from China are sought as old fashioned, cheap and poor in quality by consumers in rest of the world because of its tag of developing country. Batra et al. (2000) carried out a study on consumers of developing country. He too found national stereotyping tendency amongst them. He stated that consumers in developing countries have formulated, generalized status preference for brands which are not local basically from developed countries. Venkatesh & Swamy (1994, p.207) debated that consumers in developing countries today want themselves in, so that they are able to participate in the global consumer community, leading to a take off for many foreign made brands. Nagashima (1970, 1977) used a longitudinal approach to detect the effects of the image of a country. Nagashima's two research study allowed him to draw a significant suggestion that images originated initially, can change overtime. Diamantopoulos, Koschate-Fischer and Oldenkotte (2012) through their study revealed that the customer are willing to pay a higher price for the products from reputed countries.

So image of the country can be enhanced by thorough efforts, innovation and by being quality conscious. As country image has direct effect on consumer perception and affect consumer beliefs, improving upon these areas, in a product dimension may help marketers to gain competitive edge from others.

2.2. Country of origin effects and Consumer Ethnocentrism

Besides image of the country as well as country of origin, directly influences attitudes on the basis of which a consumer tend to become Ethnocentric. The term Ethnocentrism was coined by Shimp and Sharma (1987). As per the theory of Shimp and Sharma (1987, p.280) "From the point of view of ethnocentric consumers, purchasing foreign made products is wrong because, in their minds, it deteriorates domestic economy and causes loss of jobs..."

(Dinnie, 2003), Rezvani et al., (2012) in their research paper mentioned consumer ethnocentrism as the portion of a broader term named patriotism. Huag et.al., in (2009) conducted a study in which he stated that, tendency of consumer being ethnocentric arises out affective essentials of consumer psychology such as Consumer Animosity and Allocentrism. Animosity is meant by an emotional feeling where because of economic,

political and military disruption between the countries, foreign country takes character of an enemy into the minds of consumers. As for instance, American consumer defiance to buy 'Made in Pakistan' products after 9/11 attacks, China's animosity with Japan, French products being protested by New Zealand and American consumers due to France's nuclear tests in south pacific. The other dimension of the consumer psychology that has been studied is allocentrism, which is linked with collectivism. Collectivism refers to the priority given to group goals over goals of individual. Research carried out over time has showcased that, people who are high on collectivism tend to continue their in-group identity and hence are high on ethnocentrism, if their group they belong to is ethnocentric. Results and findings of current study conducted, reveals that there is high interrelation between consumer animosity and ethnocentrism as well as with consumer ethnocentrism and allocentrism. Which means consumers' tendency to be ethnocentric increases without-group animosity and in-group identity. The only major difference is increase in consumer ethnocentrism due to in-group identity, which directly impacts consumer attitudes and they become laggard to buy foreign products but animosity only strengthen this tendency. Animosity is a like taking a backward step by consumer due to out-group threats. Studies further suggested that product quality evaluations by consumer, moderate the effect of consumer animosity on products with negative attributes. Hence, in order to enter consumer domain of preferences, marketers have 'Quality' as a tool in their hand. But differentiating result is that, the effect of consumer ethnocentrism is not controlled by product quality evaluations. So, marketers can modify their symbols to national symbols and may provide focus to the fact that the products wouldn't harm the progress of an economy.

In a study conducted by Verlegh (2001) he used the term home country bias which hinted towards the positive twist in the evaluation and perception of a domestic product when compared with a foreign product. He provided with two aspects on home country bias – one being economic perspective better known as consumer ethnocentrism, which he defined as a notion amongst consumers of a nation that it is wrong or even immoral to purchase foreign goods, because of their strong perspective to prevent domestic economy from deterioration and unemployment. Secondly he also gave a perspective based on socio-psychological, which includes social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982). This theory propounds that every individual associates himself with a specific group. They have an urge to maintain a positive social identity as well as a desire to have a positive self-image which creates positivity in-group bias for them. They determine the group they belong to positively, in terms of superiority and quality. Different countries can be viewed as various groups differentiated on the basis of citizenship and nationality. Similar to a positive in-group inclination towards a small group within a nation, there is belongingness of national identification in people, which develop positive willingness to purchase domestic oriented products amongst individuals. The results of the research

convey that despite the fact that consumer ethnocentrism and national identification have different inspirations but they do have fruitful impact on consumers' tendency to go for home-based product and a negative approach to buy foreign products. Studies have also hinted a strong correlation between national identification and consumer ethnocentrism emphasizing that more strongly a consumer associates himself with a country, the more he will be ethnocentric. Watson & Wright (1999) further in their study examined the consumer concept of ethnocentrism, in a case where consumer is coerced to select amongst foreign products. Their research provided with the fact that, in case when domestic products are not available consumers who are ethnocentric tend to purchase products from countries with similar culture.

Henceforth, these two attributes tendency of consumer and image of the country is what carries in itself country of origin effects. On one hand where country image triggers perceptual distortions such as national stereotypes and halo effect, consumer ethnocentrism leads to inclination towards domestic product on the other. In order to make rational decision for a consumer, it is very significant that he/she should be free from any inclination and misrepresentations. Researchers have provided with evidences that, there are definite moderating variables which offset the effects of such biases on the behavior of consumers.

2.3. Country of origin effects and Product Knowledge

Brucks (1985) defined knowledge about a product as memories and information that are in minds of the people related to a product. Product knowledge can be categorized as:

- 1) Subjective knowledge
- 2) Objective knowledge.

Subjective knowledge is all about the degree of familiarity and set of experiences a consumer has with that of the product. Objective knowledge on the other hand is what a consumer is aware about, like the quality of a product, its attributes and level of performance through various mode of advertisements, public and opinion leaders in the society. Research have suggested that subjective knowledge has considerably greater impact, when it comes to evaluation of a product. Consumers with less subjective knowledge tend for more of objective knowledge. Gradually when consumer's objective knowledge increases with regard to the product, his propensity to utilize information in the form of country of origin, to formulate quality judgments will decline and as a result, there will be small scope of personal biases getting into the consumer evaluation process. Moon (2004) in his research, studied the impact of product knowledge in consumers and consumer ethnocentrism, in utilization of country-of-origin information for their evaluation of product. The conclusions of study revealed consumers with low level of knowledge, due to their paltry ability to process intrinsic cues which were heavily

reliable on their stereotypical information regarding Country of Origin Effects. But when their understanding with respect to product increased, their likelihood to rely on information went down.

2.4 Country of origin effects and Consumer Involvement

Involvement of Consumer attributes to the dimension, in which the consumer engages himself in search of information, processing the information and to an extent, he can advance to seek quality, variety and specialty. Knowledge about a product, plays an essential role in information search behavior which in turn is a significant measure of consumer buying behavior. Lukas, Josiassen & White Well, (2008) came up with a model that PIWCE-Product Involvement Weakens the COO Effect. Canli, Gurhan and Maheswaran in (2000) also stated that country of origin effects incapacitate under high involvement. Bandyopadhyay & Banerjee in 2002 also highlighted that the customers are very keen to know the origin of the product as it is an integral part of their evaluation and purchase decision process.

Knowledge of a product and consumer involvement and are correlated. This is primarily because of two reasons, first of all they both act as variables which are moderating in country of origin effects. Secondly, knowledge of the product works as influencer via consumer involvement. When a consumer is involved highly, his objective knowledge about product increases leading to decrease in his biases with respect to the product.

Consumer's knowledge and level of involvement with a product differs with demographic factors such as gender, age, level of income etc. In upcoming section we will be analyzing these elements.

2.5 Country of origin effects and Demographic Variables

Age, gender, education level, income, etc. refers to the demographic variables of a consumer. These components play a crucial role in consumer's process of evaluation. In his study on young consumers Josiassen (2009) highlighted that, the young consumers are more engaged in buying process than the old ones. Additionally, young consumers have more potential to achieve balance between their ideal and actual selves. Therefore, they do not have country of origin linked as their biasness but they bestow country of origin information as a determinant to keep up with congruency between their actual and ideal selves. Chrysochoidis et al. (2007) found that the level of education and the ethnocentrism are inversely related. Higher the anticipated combination between product and place of origin specificity, higher will be the dependency on country of origin as the source of information. Research study conducted by Schaefer in (1997) examined the influence of demographic variables such as gender, age and socio-economic groups

paving way to the fact that, demography does impacts consumer evaluation on the basis of country of origin but to a very minute extent. He also made inferences that, of all the demographic components, age has the most moderating effect, followed by socio economic groups and gender comprising of neutral effect. So with all these studies aforesaid, we can conclude our analysis as follows.

3. Future Scope of Study

The researcher after taking into consideration the results of the study is of the opinion that an in-depth research should be undertaken on the effects of country of origin on consumer buying behavior. Other parameters which could not be included in this study (product category, status of the economy viz., developing, developed and underdeveloped, xenocentrism, price of the product, quality, and retail format) should be focused upon in order to have a better and cognitive insight into the nitty-gritty of the effects of COO.

4. Conclusions

The aforesaid study unlocks several pages of research history in the arena of country of origin effects. Country of origin is a sophisticated area dealing in the context of the behavior of consumer. Behaviors are uncertain to analyze and predict. Behaviors keeps on changing over a period of time as well as from place to place. This is because of what, underlies the reason to conduct a study of such a vast and inconsistent area. The study carried out above has attempted to unfold different interconnected threads. It has investigated to bring together various concepts in order to bring in a systematic view.

Country of origin is defined by the place where the product has been manufactured or originated, or a place which is related by consumers with the product. It is a cue extrinsic in nature, which is utilized by consumer to reach on judgements about a product. On the basis of country image, consumers frame these judgments. Country image is ascertained as the mental sketch of a country derived in the mind of consumers on the basis of information known about a country's legal, political and cultural environment or on the basis of amplitude of its development in the economy or based on the set of personal experiences they have with country. Country image helps consumer in formulating perceptions. The perceptions framed with respect to that of the product may be negative or positive depending on the information gathered by the consumer about the country. These perceptions vary amongst different product categories. A product will be evaluated favorably if there exists a harmony between the country's specialty and category of product which is being evaluated. However, if there exists a difference between the two, consumers will try to seek for other extrinsic cues such as price, brand and name. But a consumer might not be cognitive always. With so many options available in the market

place, he may depend upon mental shortcuts which may lead to distortions perceptual in nature such as stereotyping, halo effect, etc.

Attitudes of consumer is directly affected by Country of origin towards product based on consumer feeling of animosity or consumer tendency of being allocentric or ethnocentric or sympathy for that country. These propensity of consumers create inclination towards domestic products. On the basis of such tendencies, countries come up with 'buy national campaigns' to formulate a barrier for international trade. As for instance-"In USA, companies try to gain on this concern by highlighting that their product is "made in the U.S.A." As per the made in the USA Foundation (2001), purchasing national "[instills] a pride in the citizens of US about our manufacturing process and our economy" (Verlegh, 2001).

Marketers get to know what implications country of origin labels may have on product with these biases and perceptual distortions. In this context it becomes quite essential to be aware about the fact that, there are factors which control the influences on perceptual distortions and biases. The research study has also presented that as consumer gets more into the purchase process he hunts for more information starts processing it rationally. In the same way, consumers will have more objective knowledge with regard to the product and his tendency to take shortcuts will be reduced. Consumer's involvement and knowledge facet differs from consumer to consumer based on their demography. Through research it has been observed that the modern day customers (youth) are more knowledgeable and involved when compared to old age consumers. Likewise, females often do more of irrational and impulse buying in comparison to males.

Hence, based on the factors stated above the researcher can provide following suggestions to marketers keeping in mind the country of origin labels:-

1. As country of origin effects is mainly a component of globalization process. So the very first suggestion to marketer is to thoroughly analyze the markets globally. Analysis of cross culture is very important. Cross cultural analysis is arbitrating the extent to which consumers' of different countries vary in their culture. Cultural background of a person construct major proportion of the psychology of a consumer. Hence marketers need to understand about a country's culture on following parameters as derived by Hofstede-individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs., feminist. If the marketer feels that consumers are collectivist and have ethnocentrism in them, he may go for brand names, national symbols and should lay importance that product from any point of view is not harmful to their legal, domestic and physical environment. On the other hand, if he feels like consumers have a liking towards foreign products because of their desire for higher status symbol, he can emphasize on brand names of the aspiration country.

2. The demographic profile of consumers should also be analyzed by the marketer. As for instance- If the data accumulated hints that majority of the population is made up of

young, literate and consumers with high income like in India, the marketer may go for formulation of world brands. World brands are for products that are designed, manufactured, packaged and positioned in a similar fashion regardless of the country they are sold into.

3. Marketers should also investigate about the image that has been framed in the minds of targeted consumers about a country. When a favorable image of the country is present, marketer should highlight and emphasize 'made in labels'. When country's image is not favorable marketer may opt not to include country's name with the product, instead he can lay emphasis on foreign branding. Foreign branding is a method of providing foreign brand names to products where regardless of the fact that, product may be associated to one country but its name links it with some other country. This technique is adopted in order to increase the desirability and perceived value of a product when country's image is not favorable.

4. As quality is associated with country of origin, different nations have framed absolute measures of origin to safeguard their consumers from imports which might be harmful. This is termed as homologation of product, where marketer don't have any alternatives but are supposed to highlight country of origin labels due to legal obligations; in such sort of case, marketer may seek help in the form of global branding. A global brand is derived as the worldwide use of a design, symbol, term, name etc. so that the product is distinguished from its competitor. Some of the dominant global brands include McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Sony, Kodak, etc. Perceived 'Globalness' helps in raising sales and tend to decrease the effects of country of origin.

5. It should also be kept in mind that, country of origin can develop a preference not suitable for purchase. A country image with positivity may provide with a helping hand in reaching desired set of consumer but country of origin labels is not an antecedent of gaining competitive advantage. Marketer can only fight through real differentiation in order to reach choice set. Persuasion for purchase comes only through attributes which are real. Therefore, marketers should gradually improve overtime upon real factors like quality, innovativeness, design and creativity in the product.

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