



CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MADE PRODUCTS; IN THE CASE OF SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract: *This study will be undertaken to investigate factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards domestic and foreign made products (textiles, cloth and shoes) with particular reference to consumers in Srikakulam town. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in attempt to gain an understanding of the research problems. A sample including 388 randomly selected consumers were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. Implications for traders, governments and local manufacturers are also discussed. The study provides insights with respect to consumers' preference of locally-products to foreign-made ones.*

Keywords: Domestic products, foreign made products, Country of Origin, consumer attitude

I. INTRODUCTION

With the world becoming a single market, globalization has had a major contribution in enabling the organizations worldwide to step out of the restricted domestic markets and to set up their operations across the globe with confidence (Solomon, Marshal, & Stuart, 2008). The importance of consumer attitudes towards products and classes of products in determining purchase behavior is well established. It is believed that the consumers' behavior from a particular country regarding to goods and services produced in that country is considered as a key determinant of the economic growth and development of a nation (Kotler, 2003).

Increased travel and education as well as improvements in communications such as the global-spanning television networks and the internet have also contributed to a convergence of tastes and preferences in a number of product

categories around the world. This has motivated consumers in developing countries to demand the same quality of goods available to their counterparts in developed countries (Saffu & Walker, 2006). With this increased globalization, it has become increasingly important to understand how consumers from different countries evaluate products of different origin.

Existing literature supports the view that consumers have distinct preferences for local or international brands or – more specifically – brands from particular countries. Consumers in developed countries tend to prefer their own countries' products (Hong & Wyer, 1989; Papadopoulos et al., 1990; Usunier, 1993) – a phenomenon that is labeled consumer nationalism. Moreover, the perception – from the perspective of consumers in developed countries – is that products from developing countries are often of low or variable quality (Andaleeb, 1995). Nevertheless, many

consumers in developed countries buy non-local brands, and there are much country of origin studies to support the notion that the knowledge consumers have of a product's country-of-origin is an important influence on their choice behavior (Andaleeb, 1995; Chawla et al., 1995).

According to Bhaskaran and Sukumaran, (2007), the way consumers judge products is influenced by the products' country of origin. In other words, the country of origin of products has a strong influence on ethnocentrism. The term country of origin refers to the impact that product manufactured in some specific countries has on consumer purchasing behavior. Over the years, the phenomenon of country of origin (COO) has become known to both marketing academics and practitioners that consumers differentiate products from different origins, as this has effect on them. Among countries underdeveloped, in economically, the choice for domestic products is likely to be weaker (Cordell, 1992).

In the last fifteen to twenty years of Indian's history, there has been a sharp increase in the number of locally produced products and services coming in to the market, ranging from electronic goods like television and computers, to durable products and services like automobiles, cosmetic goods and companies dealing in all forms of services including financing, information technology, advertising etc. Although most of these goods and services are of commendable quality, both technologically and in terms of appeal, but there are still a small presence of these goods and services in the Indian market in terms of consumer demand. The limited amount of literature suggests that at least some of those in developing countries share the same perceptions as those from developed countries and assume that products from developing countries are of low quality.

Consumer in India is also changing its responses because of globalization, and technology advancement. Obviously, consumer perception toward countries, cultures and their products keeps on changing therefore the issue is still interesting and important to academics and practitioners in the fields of international marketing and consumer behavior (Josiassen & Harzing, 2008). In addition, most studies have been conducted in large industrialized countries where a range of domestic alternatives or brands are available.

Furthermore, analyses of changes in consumption patterns and consumption trends due to the changes of demographic and socioeconomic factors (particularly income changes) are very important and applicable for policy modeling purposes. Having an accurate analysis and good estimates of demand for local products helps projection of the future development of the sector in the country.

The present study aims to investigate factors influencing the attitude of Indians towards imported products consumption as well as to examine the factors driving to marketing of these foreign products. Having an accurate analysis and good estimates of demand for local products helps projection of the future development of the sector in India. The purpose of the research is to find reasons behind why most consumers in Ethiopia prefer foreign products to the locally made ones and also how the manufacturing firms can market their locally made products for domestic consumption.

II. OBJECTIVES

- to assess consumer preferences for product in terms of country of origin
- to determine the extent to which price and qualities influence

consumer for purchase decision on shoes, clothing, and textiles products

- to determine the quality attributes of product (quality, variety, fashionability, durability, and comfortability) valued by consumers to purchase local or imported products
- to investigate the source of information for consumer to purchase local or imported products
- To find out which demographic and personal characteristics have significant associations with the consumers' purchasing behavior.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Country of Origin Effects

The country of origin effect has been defined as “the positive and negative influence that a product’s country of manufacture may have on consumers’ decision making processes or subsequent behavior (Josiassen&Harzing, 2008). Country-of-origin can be defined as “the picture, the reputation, and the stereotype that businessmen and consumers attach to products or brands of a specific country. This image is created by such variables as representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history, and traditions.

The literature on country-of-origin effects is quite rich and covers the topic from different perspectives in different countries. Some studies have shown that country of origin also has symbolic and emotional meaning to consumers, and it plays an important role along with other

attributes such as quality and reliability in shaping consumers attitudes toward products. Moreover, attitudes and perceptions of consumers toward brands and products will depend on categories, for instance, electronic goods from Italy may be perceived as a poor quality but Italian clothing would be perceived as fashionable and high quality (Josiassen&Harzing, 2008).

The term country of origin refers to the impact that product manufactured in some specific countries has on consumer purchasing behavior. Over the years, the phenomenon of country of origin (COO) has become known to both marketing academics and practitioners that consumers differentiate products from different origins, as this has effect on them. Among countries underdeveloped, in economically, the choice for domestic products is likely to be weaker (Opoku&Akorli, 2009). In many instances, consumers from the communist countries and central Europe have preference for locally made products (Ettenson, 1993). In addition, it was found that price was comparatively not as much of significance as country of origin among people from Russian, Hungary and Poland. Several antecedents of country-of-origin image have been identified to explain the differences in country-of-origin evaluations and can be categorized as being either individual-based dimensions or country-based dimensions. Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) tested two country-based antecedents, namely the country’s level of economic development and its participation in multinational production arrangements. These studies have revealed only the differences in national economic development have an effect on subject’s country-of-origin image and product evaluations.

According to Maheswaran (1994), the way consumers judge products is influenced by the products’ country of origin. In other words, the

country of origin of products has a strong influence on ethnocentrism. Consumers' attitude to foreign products may be positive or negative depending on which country it is coming from. Consumers tend to have stereotypical ideas about products and people of other countries and real product evaluation are almost always influenced by country stereotyping (Josiassen&Harzing, 2008).

3.2 Cultural, social and personal factors

Cultural, social and personal factors are always considered to be the major forces influencing consumers' buying behavior (Kotler&Keller, 2006). An understanding of such factors helps businesses at tailoring products that meet consumers' needs and wants. Among important influences on consumer buying behavior (culture, subculture, and social class) 'culture is the fundamental determinant of a person's wants and behavior (Kotler& Keller, 2006). These distinctive buying patterns and preferences among social classes are significantly determined by occupation, income, wealth, education etc. Consumers can shift up and down the social strata but the extent of this mobility depends much on how rigid the social stratification is in a given society (Kotler& Keller, 2006).

3.3 Social status

Authors have stressed that consumers may prefer global brands because of associations of higher prestige (Steenkamp et. al., 2003). Global brands may have a higher prestige than local brands due to their relative scarcity and higher price. Furthermore, global brands may also stand for cosmopolitanism. Some consumers prefer global brands because they enhance their self-image as being cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and modern. Conversely, local brands tend to be targeted and positioned based on a deep cultural understanding

and therefore create "a sustainable unique value and offer the symbolism of authenticity and prestige". Still, consumers have been found to have no intrinsic preference for global brands ((Hansen, 2005).

3.4 Cultural Influence

Culture has a significantly powerful influence on consumers' views with regards to any product. Consumption choice can be understood with recognition of cultural backgrounds of people. These exist to satisfy the needs of people within a particular society. Culture is a base for our values, behavior, beliefs, priorities and certain perceptions towards different products. All these distinctiveness create the values of what the consumer represents and the way of consumer's actions in today's society (Kardes et al., 2008; Solomon, 1996). The uniqueness of culture among group of people influences the behavior of consumers. Loose modification of this conduct may cause inefficient marketing.

3.5 Social Influence

Many people in today's world are influencing the consumer's buying behavior. In relation to cultural factors, several social factors affect consumer's behavior which comprises of the family, reference groups, status and social roles (Tarokh, Sheykhani, & Branch, 2015). Reference groups incorporate all groups that have any impact (direct or indirect) influencing control on a person's beliefs or actions. Again, reference groups are persuading people to new actions and manners, affect their beliefs, values and self-recognition, and make certain need for correspondence that may influence their choice of product or brand.

3.6 Friends and family

Reference groups include groups or people whom one can look up for guidance and ask for opinion. These are important source of influencing the brand purchases. Reference group include friends and family who influence ones buying decisions due to special skills, knowledge, personality. If a friend had a bad experience with a product, it is more likely that one will refrain from buying it (Tarokh, Sheykhan, & Branch, 2015). However, many studies found out that, knowledge that consumers obtain through direct personal experience will be perceived to be more trustworthy than information from other communications. This results in more strongly held beliefs (Swaminathan et al., 2001).

3.7 Personal Factors

Another factor which has an influence on consumer's buying behavior includes personal characteristics such as age, life cycle, economic and occupational conditions. As people grow, their desires and needs changes alongside. In today's competitive environment, marketers are often targeting products for similar age groups (Hansen, 2005). Consumers within the same age group tend to have similarities in their buying behavior as the experienced related understanding of events and development (Solomon et al., 2008). Again differences in behavior between age groups influence attitudes towards specific categories of products or brand loyalty status with a change (Kotler, 2002). However, many households differ from the traditional life cycle and are targeted differently by marketers. Occupation of the individual affects one's consumer behavior. Identifying customers' target groups based on their occupation offers companies the possibility of designing and tailoring the product according to customers' needs. Occupation also defines the level

of personal income, which influences the preference of brands and interest in certain services (Kotler, 2002).

3.8 Psychological influence

In addition to cultural, personal and social influence discussed above, there is psychological factor. This normally involves elements such as motivation, learning, belief, attitudes and perception are influencing the buying behavior (Hansen, 2005). As an individual characteristic, motivation portrays one's action or behavior. Tension crops up when there is a need for something important. However motivation necessitates an individual by effectively pressing him or her to take action in order to reach the desired goal and decrease the tension. If the need is strong enough it drives the person towards the realization of the need and becomes a motivation. In order to carry out consumer analysis or marketing strategies psychologists have created several theories concerning motivation (Josiassen&Harzing, 2008).

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out to determine factors that influence consumers' buying behavior, their preferences, attitudes, needs and wants towards local versus imported products. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey research seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitude, behavior or values. The reason for using this design is that it enables to describe the current consumers' buying behavior, their preferences, attitudes, needs and wants towards local versus imported products. This research is both explanatory and descriptive. It is explanatory in the sense that the problem is

examined with an aim of establishing the casual relationships between variables and it qualifies as descriptive since it sought to portray the phenomenon through describing events, situations and processes. The target population consisted of consumers and traders of shoes, clothing, and textiles. Considering the purposes of this study, representative samples were selected. The selection of customers was done by using probability sampling technique. A convenient sample respondent of consumers of each product was used. Stratified random sampling was applied in selecting people who would be included in the sample. Since these of shoes, clothing, and textiles products may consist of diverse set of age groups (different stages in their live), the respondents divided into several age groups as. In doing so, equal number of respondents was chosen from each age group as a sample size. The questionnaire was prepared based on the literature review and by making some adaptations from prior researches. Separate questionnaires were developed for both consumers and traders of shoes, clothing and textiles. The self-administered questionnaire contained two sections.

Section one will included demographics of respondents such as gender, age, education, position, service years, income and marital status. Section two contained the major variables of the study in order to understand consumers' behavior, their attitudes, and preferences of products. The measures were developed based on literature and empirical studies conducted in the topic. The questionnaire included closed ended questions of Likert scale type. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). More specifically, descriptive statistics such as frequency table, percentage and mean score analysis was used to analyze the variables of interest.

V. ANALYSIS

The data was collected through structured questionnaire. A total of 390 questionnaires were distributed, out of which only 33 were incomplete. Thus, 357 questionnaires were accurately responded, giving a response rate of 91.53%.

Table 1: Consumer Behavior towards Locally Made and imported across the three products

	Shoes		clothing		textiles	
	F	P	F	P	F	P
I prefer strongly local brand	55	14.1	55	14.1	78	20.0
I prefer local brand	70	17.9	41	10.5	87	22.3
I prefer both local and foreign brand	170	43.6	97	24.9	111	28.5
I prefer foreign brand	62	15.9	64	42.1	81	20.8

➤ **Consumer preference towards Shoes products**

Concerning consumer preference towards shoes products table 1 shows that 43.6 percent of respondents prefer both local and foreign brand shoes products, 17.9% of respondents prefer local brand, 15.9 percent of respondents prefer foreign brand, 14.1 percent of respondents prefer strongly local brand.

Thus, it was obvious that consumers have most preference for both local and foreign brands but with which the majority of respondents preferring foreign brands. This gives the signal that indeed there are factors that influence these people to purchase imported shoes instead of the locally made ones.

➤ **Consumer preference on Clothing products**

Table 1 shows that 42.1 percent of respondents prefer foreign clothing products, while 24.9 percent of respondents prefer both local and foreign brand, 14.1 percent of respondents strongly prefer local brand, and 10.5 percent of respondents prefer local brand. Thus, it was obvious that imported clothing products clearly dominated the respondents' choice and their attitude towards local products is, therefore, negative.

➤ **Consumer preference on Textiles products**

It was indicated from the survey that 28.5 percent of respondents prefer both local and foreign brand 22.3 percent of respondents prefer local brand, 20.8 percent of respondents prefer foreign brand, 20.0 percent of respondents prefer strongly local textiles products. Thus, regarding textiles products, it was obvious that both local and foreign brand clearly dominated the respondents' choice. However, the majority of respondents preferred local textiles products.

In summary, consumers have preference for both local and foreign brands but with which the majority of respondents preferring foreign brands. In conclusion, consumers have preference for foreign clothing and shoes products both local and foreign brands but with which the majority of respondents preferring foreign brands. The result suggests low demand for local shoes and clothing products. The result is consistent with previous research. For instance, in a study conducted in Nigeria by Agbonifoh and Elimimian (1999) the results showed that products from the technologically more advanced countries were viewed more positively by nationals of developing countries, than those from the technologically less advanced countries.

In addition, to strengthen findings respondents were also asked to describe country of origin preference in order of importance. Table 2 presents the result.

Table2 : Country of Origin Preference

	F	P
Domestic products	110	28.2
Imported Foreign products from developed countries	247	63.3
Imported foreign products from less developed countries	-	-

Regarding the preferences of domestic versus foreign products, consumers had a favorable bias towards Imported Foreign products from developed countries (63.3%); while 28.2 percent of respondents prefer domestic products. However, none of the respondents prefer imported foreign products from less developed countries.

Their attitude towards shoes, clothing, and textiles products made in India products is, therefore, unfavorable. The result is consistent with previous research that suggests that customers prefer western to domestic products. Consumers in developing countries tend to prefer imported foreign products (Usunier, 1993). Kaynak, Kucukemiroglu, and Hyder(2000)also found that Bangladeshi consumers significantly preferred western-made products, though there were differences in their perceptions across product classes as well as degree of suitability of sourcing countries. The result is however, inconsistent with previous research, such as Jaffe and Martinez (1995) who explain that consumers prefer products from their own countries first, followed by products from other developed countries before considering those from other countries. Results from this study indicate that country-of-origin can be a very important factor in a developing country like India. The result that respondents did not prefer imported foreign products from less developed countries is in line with the view that consumers in developed countries is that products from developing

countries are often of low or variable quality (Andaleeb, 1995). The extant empirical literature from developed countries suggests that consumers in those countries tend to prefer products from developed countries to those from less developed countries (Jaffe & Martinez, 1995).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis of desk study and respondents' responses the following conclusions are drawn.

1. Majority of the consumers' judgment of products is often influenced by the products' country of origin. It was indicated from the survey that respondents consider the country of origin before they purchase products. More specifically, concerning consumer preference towards shoes products majority of respondents prefer both local and foreign brand shoes products, while regarding cloth products respondents prefer foreign clothing products. Concerning consumer preference towards textiles it was obvious that both local and foreign cloth dominated the respondents' choice. In conclusion, consumers have preference for foreign clothing and shoes products of both local and foreign brands but with which the majority of respondents preferring foreign brands. The results

suggests that consumers had a favorable bias towards imported foreign products from developed countries

2. The majority of respondents replied that price and quality influence a lot and often, respectively on their purchase decision of products. Further, the results found out that majority of consumers would go for the international brands if an international brand and a national brand are priced same, suggesting that that a country of origin is more important than price and other product attributes.
3. Descriptive analysis revealed that imported products provided with better quality, fashionability, durability, variety and comfortability than domestic shoes. Consumers tend to rate the quality, fashionability, durability, variety and comfortability of foreign products more than domestic products and influence more on their choice highly. On the other hand, fashion, durability and quality were the main product features related to the consumers' preference for purchase of the domestic products. In conclusion, variety, fashion, and quality, were the main product features related to the consumers' preference for purchase of the foreign products. Regarding the preferences of domestic versus foreign products, consumers had a favorable bias towards foreign products.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The results suggest consumers have low demand for local shoes and clothing products which could provide useful

feedback to management of the local companies for their strategic decisions. Thus, it becomes important for management of local companies to be innovative in their approach to meeting customer requirement. In addition, the government should strategically help local firms to compete with quality products at affordable price by way of instituting subsidies and incentives to encourage them.

- It is apparent from the present study that the managers of local companies and decision makers should improve the quality of products that make the most significant contributions on customer satisfaction. In this regard, managers should examine customers' responses to the product attributes and factors examined in this study. An understanding of such factors helps businesses at tailoring products that meet consumers' needs and wants. It is also suggested that local companies should pay attention and making preference to improve the image of local products by separating the image portion of country of origin which affect consumer choice.
- The results pointed out that consumer distinguishes foreign products with attributes such as variety, fashion, and quality considering the fact that they are from developed countries. Thus, local companies must be encouraged to improve upon the quality of the goods and services they produce so as fully compete with the international firms to raise the confidence level of local consumers and to also enable them fully compete with the international

firms. This could be achieved by undertaking innovative activities to boost production by focusing on quality and improving the packaging of their products

- The finding of this study also implies local companies should design appropriate strategies through each of the significant factors highlighted.
- The present study findings suggest that positive word of mouth can play important role in the promotion of the product and develop positive image in the society. Local companies should focus on intensive advertisement. In addition, in order to make the promotion more effective they should coordinate efforts to achieve national brand recognition through seminars and exhibitions featuring high-quality products. Besides, consumers should be well informed on the positive impact of consuming locally made products. T
- Since the study showed that consumption of products was significantly dependent on demographic and socioeconomic household characteristics, it implies that the management of local companies should pay more attention to the socio-economic factor that influences buyer's behavior such as income, education, and occupation circumstances. Local companies should design appropriate strategies through each of the significant factors highlighted

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