

STORE BRANDS Vs FOREIGN BRANDS
The importance of branding for local brands in emerging markets

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Purpose:

To investigate which aspects of foreign brands are more attractive to local consumers in order to propose actions that local brands could use to improve their branding image in order to maintain a competitive edge in the market.

Background:

Studies reveal that the image associated with country of origin plays a significant role in consumers' perceptions of products. Consumer behaviour literature indicates that consumers use country of origin labels to infer product quality. Japanese workmanship, Swedish design and French Fashion have become world famous. Most of the studies in Fashion about country of origin have focused mostly in North America and Europe. In fashion, local brands in emerging markets struggle to stay relevant in their own countries while foreign brands arrive and "colonize" such markets. China is an example of a previous emerging market which is now a mature economy. In China, many local fashion brands have been overtaken by foreign brands, but in a few cases other have managed to maintain a good image locally and even expand internationally. Therefore, lessons learned from understanding consumer behaviour in China could be applied in new emerging markets such as Africa.

Conclusions:

This study will collect and analyse data from consumers in a previously emerging market to inform fashion brands in a newly emerging market. It is expected that particular characteristics of foreign brands will be those which are most highly valued by consumers and (possibly) adopted by local brands to improve the quality and performance of their image and products.