

Brand Preferences in Saudi Arabia: Explorative Study in Jeddah

Authors : Badr Alharbi

Abstract : There is significant debate on the evolution of retail marketing as an economy matures. In penetrating new markets, global brands are efficient in establishing a presence and replacing less effective competitors by engaging in superior advertising, pricing and sometimes quality. However, national brands adapt over time and may either partner with global brands in distribution and services or directly compete more efficiently in the new, open market. This explorative study investigates brand preferences in Saudi Arabia. As a conservative society, which is nevertheless highly commercialised, Saudi Arabia markets could be fragmenting with consumer preferences and rejections based on country of origin, globalisation, or perhaps regionalisation. To investigate this, an online survey was distributed to Saudis in Jeddah to gather data on their preferences for travel, technology, clothes and accessories, eating out, vehicles, and influential brands. The results from 710 valid responses were that there are distinct regional and national brand preferences among the young Saudi men who contributed to the survey. Apart from a preference for Saudi food providers, airline preferences were the United Emirates, holiday preferences were Europe, study and work preferences were the United States, hotel preferences were United States-based, car preferences were Japanese, and clothing preferences were United States-based. The results were broadly in line with international research findings; however, the study participants varied from Arab research findings by describing themselves as innovative in their purchase selections, rarely loyal (exception of Apple products) and continually seeking new brand experiences. This survey contributes to an understanding of evolving Saudi consumer preferences.

Keywords : Saudi marketing, globalisation, country of origin, brand preferences

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