

Full Length Research Paper

The Effects of COO Image on Purchase of Imported Electronics Goods in Tanzania: A Case of SAUT Students of Mwanza Campus

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ABSTRACT: Country of origin (COO) plays an important part in worldwide marketing since it has provided significant market prospects for manufacturing enterprises and countries all over the world. The goal of this study was to look into the effects of COO image on consumers' buying decisions of imported electronic equipment in Tanzania, using SAUT students from the Mwanza campus as an example. The study was guided by four objectives: I to determine students' perceptions of imported consumer goods in relation to their COO image; (ii) to identify students' perceptions of imported consumer goods in relation to their COO image; (iii) to determine students (ii) to determine the effect of students' perceptions of quality associated COO image on their purchase decision of electronic products, (iii) to determine the effect of students' perceptions of brand name/reputation associated COO image on their purchase decision of electronic products, and (iv) to determine the effect of students' perceptions of economic development (country image) associated COO image on their purchase decision of electronic products. The study employed a descriptive research design with a mixed method approach. Data was gathered by a questionnaire distributed to 212 students and an in-depth face-to-face interview with a few selected students. The stratified sampling approach was used to choose the sample of respondents. Data from the survey was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics and presented as a frequency distribution, while data from the interviews was analyzed using theme analysis. According to the findings of the study, the nation of origin was one of the five most important criteria in the purchase of imported electronic devices by SAUT students. According to the survey, SAUT students believe that imported items are of higher quality, more reliable, and last longer than locally manufactured goods, hence they choose them over locally manufactured ones. The survey also discovered that students had a positive opinion of product quality, brand knowledge, and the level of economic growth linked with the COO image, which influenced their buying decision of electronic items from specific nations. The study suggested that advertising campaigns be developed to improve the COO image of imported electronic goods in order to expand their market share and manage the negative consequences connected with the COO image of particular electronic products.

Keywords: Country of origin image, purchase of imported electronics good

INTRODUCTION

According to Cray (2010), because of the advancement of global trade, products created in other nations are now available in the market with a wide choice of possibilities to choose from both domestic and international products. The consumer typically purchases a product based on three factors: the product, the nation of origin of the product, and the price in terms of quality depending on its use in various situations. The Country of Origin effect occurs when customers' separate sales from one country to another. In order to develop an efficient marketing

strategy, the seller must first understand the importance that buyers place on the COO. This is measured by the fact that consumers place it on a product dependent on the country in which it is manufactured, and it is frequently referred to as a fifth marketing element. COOs are used effectively by successful businesses to attain market success, such as Swiss watches, French fragrances, Japanese items, and other electronic products (Kinra, 2016). These days; in the global market, Tanzanian consumers have access to a large number of

local retailers and imported goods. Consumers come to a conclusion about goods derived from their countries of origin and this is known as the result of COO. Many consumers value COO in terms of "Made-in" stickers and in some cases when COO is not profitable, consumers pay more attention to product familiarity. Tanzanian market; there is a large amount of trade imports from Japan, Germany, India, South Korea and China.

What, however, are the COO-related qualities / determinants that influence Tanzanian customer perceptions and unread purchasing decisions? (Lusk, 2016). National origin research has explored a variety of natural environment elements, including indigenous world economic development, brand recognition, and perceived product quality, but these researchers have noticed contradictory results due to cultural and socioeconomic differences (Shahzad, 2014).

Furthermore, with a few exceptions, such as Shahzad (2014) in Pakistan and Sevanandee and Damar-Ladkoo (2018) in Mauritius, the majority of research on the COO effect has been undertaken in industrialized countries. As no study has been undertaken, there is a need to investigate the effect of COO on customer purchasing decisions in Tanzania. As a result, this study covers these information gaps by investigating the effects of COO image on consumers' acquisition decisions of imported Electronics Goods in Tanzania: A case study of students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza Campus.

The overall goal of this study was to look at the effects of the country of origin image on the purchase of imported electronic items in Tanzania: a case study of St. Augustine University of Tanzania students at the Mwanza Campus.

Specific objectives include determining students' perceptions of imported consumer goods in terms of their COO image, determining the effect of students' perceptions of quality associated COO image on their purchase decision of electronic products, determining the effect of students' perceptions of brand name/reputation associated COO image on their purchase decision of electronic products, and determining the effect of students' perceptions of the level of economic development (courage) on their purchase decision of electronic products.

This study is significant in academic research because it is one of the few studies conducted in developing countries, and as a result, there is academic interest in understanding the cognitive abilities and effects of the COO image on various markets, particularly in terms of economic development vision and visual product quality. The study's findings provided a trustworthy source of COO feasibility in establishing the national framework, analyzing research, and determining where future studies could be developed.

The study's participants were rich university students at the SAUT Mwanza Campus. University students are

picked as the representatives of Tanzania's wealthiest customers because they purchase the finest quality electronic items when they receive their grants and have easy access to them and the knowledge they require. This study article was divided into five sections.

Literature review

The concept of country of origin

As a result of the philosophical perspectives of scholars, there are numerous definitions of COO. COO is defined as "a type of general consumer view of items from a specific country, based on their previous perceptions of the nation's strengths, productivity, and limitations" (Romeo, 2012).

COO, on the other hand, is defined as an image, reputation, or belief that producers and customers associate with other products from a specific country. COO is viewed as a mirror of the country since it reflects widespread consumer judgments about the quality of items created in a given country and the atmosphere of that country's people (Johnson, 2016).

According to Maheswaran (2011), COO is the extent to which the engineering environment influences consumer product testing and whether or not associated product buying decisions are influenced. This is the definition that will be used in this investigation. In essence, COO is concerned with the visual buyers they have for a specific product by tying it to the characteristics of the country from which it originates and if the idea might be positive or negative.

Effect of the country of origin

The country of impact refers to customer views of items from a specific country. The outcome of COO is also known as the concept of "made....." and can either benefit or harm a producing country by influencing customer decisions. Indeed, among other factors influencing consumer decision-making for imported goods, such as pricing, advertising, and product image, the effect of COO is seen as a major element influencing consumer decision-making (Johnson, 2016).

According to some academics, the effect of COO has an impact on the process of consumer choice making, particularly as a product test. When consumers link factory-made goods with a production culture and the efficiency of their labor, it is clear that COO has a huge impact. However, other authors argue that the indirect influence of COO on a full evaluation of a labeled product is made with Made in. Recent study, however, has discovered that the effect of COO plays a role in regulating customer perceptions about imported items and consumer purchase behavior (Baker, 2012).

A group object is also produced by the Origin World. Each country focuses on or develops certain talents that enable it to outperform other countries in the production of certain sorts of goods. When the most significant product element corresponded to the country's brand capabilities and technology, the COO effect was positive, and the country represented the category (Johnson, 2016).

Japan, for example, is highly recognized for its electrical goods, Germany for household items, Italy for fashion and building, Switzerland for chocolate, France for wines/perfumes, and China for consumer goods such as cookware and nutritious food. Product categories have become the source of good concepts in consumers' brains, which include their product choices. According to Ahmed (2014), this ideal land quality is frequently not exportable because customers test different items differently with the same COO.

Without current consumer perceptions, consumer attitudes towards COO are not stable but may change over time as other countries develop other strengths in their manufacturing sectors and the same can be seen in their COO image, as it is difficult to gain a good reputation, on the other hand it is easy to lose. This means that companies must be very careful not to damage the reputation of their country when their COO effect is good and try to improve it if it is not good (Damar, 2018).

The concept of consumers' perception and COO image

Consumer viewpoint in advertising relates to consumer awareness, impressions, and perceptions about the business, products, and product. A lot of elements influence customer views, including direct and indirect interactions with others. At the period of the origin country. Clients are more attentive to the image of the COO with this asset notion. Consumers have a different perspective on the world in which the things are manufactured.

The same country can thus be seen differently in other countries as a high and reliable COO while yet being regarded as a low level COO elsewhere. People in developing countries, for example, see developed-country products as "superior" to those from developing countries, and people in developing countries see products from other developing countries as "higher" than locally manufactured products, emphasizing that COO influences customers' attitudes and behavior, but COO's world view also changes over time (Carter, 2017).

According to the researchers' examination of the literature, the country's image plays a vital effect in customers' perceptions of products and products from any specific country. People nowadays don't care where a transaction originates from, let alone what it is, or

whether it is a factory created for a factory that is a complete depiction of all the explanatory, baseless, and informative views about a specific nation. A consumer's purchase behavior and purchasing intentions are influenced by such a perspective of the COO image (Rezvani, 2012).

An emerging image from a country that demonstrates a variation in product quality and differs from the level of product quality found in each country. In their research, they discovered that the apparent quality of the product from Finland was higher than the visual quality level of the product from Mexico or Hungary, implying that people preferred the product based on its origin. Visual quality is the sole or dominant feature of a product and product depends on the intended use such as buying purpose. The visual quality of the COO image is another distinguishing element.

The obvious quality of the product, as well as familiarity with the top global product, has been shown to influence consumer attitudes, preferences, and product choices. The association between product understanding and country of origin is thought to be based on the premise that experts build on how consumers rely on the world — where the decision is made. Indeed, there is a direct relationship between product familiarity and overall product appraisal (Maheswaran, 2011).

In general, a country's level of contribution to consumer product testing is one of the important aspects that might affect consumer purchasing decisions even in poor countries like Tanzania. As a result, the purpose of this study is to look into the relationship between the country from which the customer comes and the decision to buy electronic devices among Tanzanian university students. Three criteria, namely the replacement of a COO image, visual quality, and product information, serve as independent variables in determining their effects on consumer protection decisions (Kotler, 2012).

Empirical literature review

Numerous studies on the effect of COO on customer buying decisions have been conducted, and an overview of recent studies related to this study issue follows.

According to research findings, COO is an external source of information, and customers are more likely to select items based on their quality and reliability based on their country of origin. As a result, the consumer's decisions are influenced by his perceptions and sentiments toward specific countries. In an asset test, what is one of the indicators of the COO image that influences a consumer purchase decision?

After doing their research, researchers such as Larches (2015) reported that the COO and its image had a major impact on consumer rating depending on which product or service was chosen. However, prior studies by Lagerfeld (2014) found that COO's influence on customer

attitudes and decisions was modest, and retailers operating in global marketplaces should not place a premium on product COO in anticipation of increased asset sales.

Banks (2017) also did a thorough investigation into the influence of COO on the attitudes of new Lithuanian customers toward foreign products. Their research revealed that the COO effect had a significant impact on consumers' attitudes on the product. The regulators of the COO effect, which are product knowledge and product involvement, also influenced consumers' attitudes toward the product.

When the authors examined the findings of the art research, they discovered that when respondents rated their attitude about international and consumer transactions, it had no effect on the consumer's opinion toward the product.

Research gap

Many of the COO image-related studies listed in the previous section were conducted in industrialized countries, with the exception of a few in Pakistan and Mauritius, such as Shahzad (2014). Furthermore, the picture of the COO changes customarily from one to the next, and the impacts cannot be enlarged. With the exception of research that provide contentious results, most COO studies do not contain indicators of each associated COO image and do not investigate numerous COO variables at the same time as indicators of multiple data. As a result, this study covers a knowledge vacuum in the literature by investigating the COO's impact on the country's consumer decisions (economic development rate), visual product quality, and product familiarity among Tanzanian consumers: the case of SAUT students in Mwanza.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework below depicts the link between independent and dependent variables, as well as replacement variables.

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual foundation for this investigation. In this review, three (3) independent variables serve as a picture of the country (degree of economic development), visual quality, and product familiarity, while the dependent variables must be established by the buying choice (product test) examined according to the product.

This association is consistent with documentation demonstrating that the COO image influences product testing. Other variables, such as price and cultural values, may have a controlling effect on independent and dependent variables, but this study will not thoroughly assess them.

METHODOLOGY

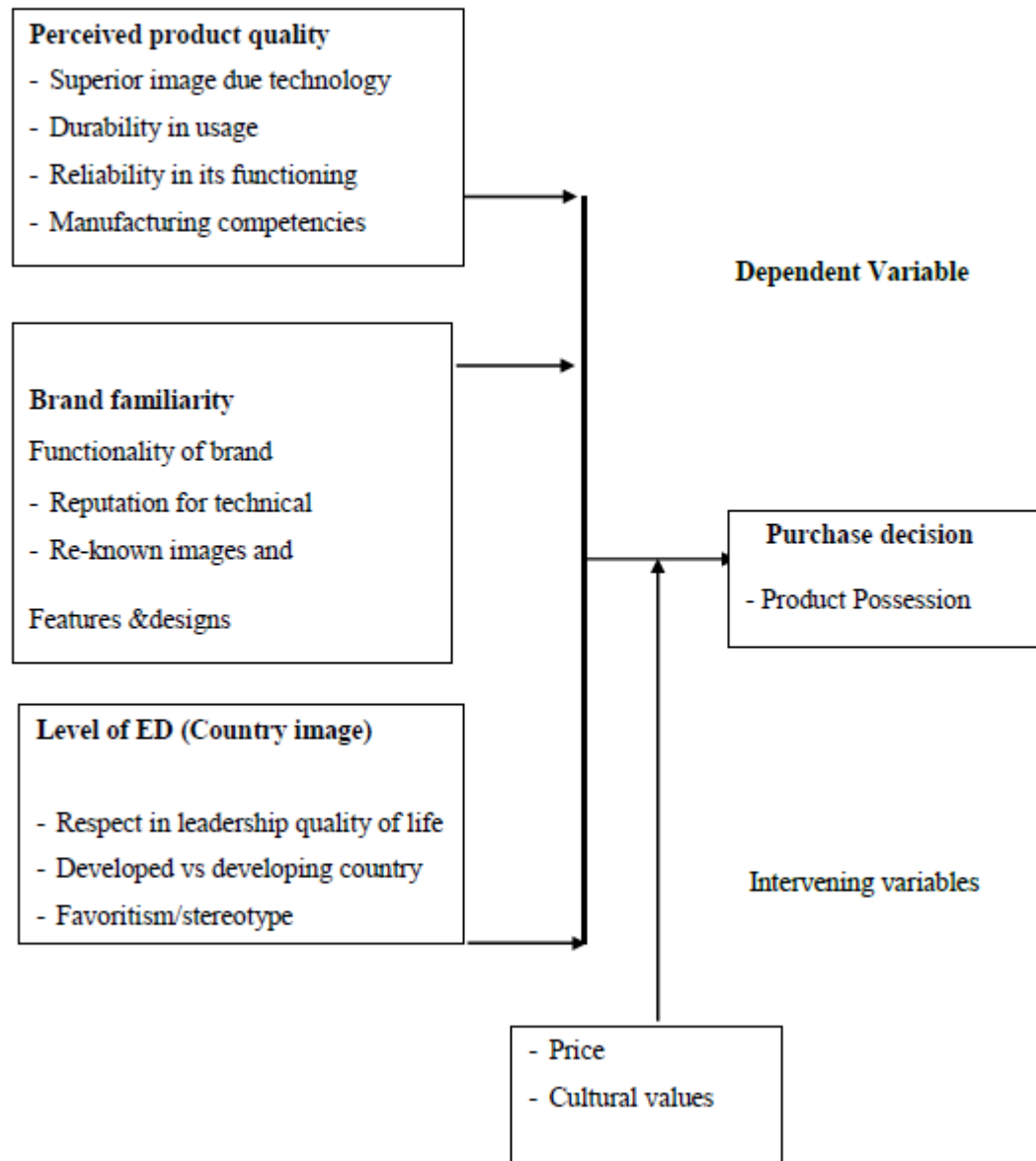
The study is led by University Students on the SAUT Mwanza Campus located in Luchelele Ward, Nyamagana District in Mwanza City. The main economic activities in the city are trade in trade, education, fishing, manufacturing, construction and transportation. The participants in the study were students of SAUT University who are consumers of goods from abroad. From the driver's survey conducted in September 2020, it is estimated that about 30% of SAUT students living in private hostels in neighboring communities buy at least three high-value electronic goods. There are many ways to determine the sample size for a given people. For any formal and credible study, its sample must not be less than 30% of its population, formula method and the like 40% rule. The study selected a statistical table model with 3,600 people, a sample of 350. There are many sampling techniques a researcher can choose from and use. This study used two steps for sampling namely: random sampling and purpose.

Random sample use was also used but gender equality was also considered to obtain broader perspectives representing the target population. The purpose of using this approach according to Kothari (2014) is a simple random sample that works to spread among the various people who need to be included in order to gain public understanding of the subject matter of the COO's flexible image model in consumer purchasing decision.

A total of 320 questionnaires were dispersed to students of St Augustine of Tanzania and 212 were returned complete and use. This outcome in a response rate of 66.7% which is above the recommended response rate of at least 60 percent (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2016). Therefore, the returned questionnaires created sufficient data that ensured valid data analysis for this research. The demographic characteristics of respondents in this study included gender and monthly income. These variables play an important role as the respondents (students) represent the consumer behavior in the university in terms of purchase of imported products.

Questionnaire

Automatic questionnaire and linked questionnaire were used to collect respondent information (SAUT students on Mwanza Campus) in Mwanza city. A list of questions about data collection strategies in which each person is asked to answer a set of specific questions in the pre-arranged manner. Also, a questionnaire is an important, quick and inexpensive way to gather more information about sample beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and reporting behavior (Kothari, 2014). In addition, questionnaires are appropriate when quantitative information is required from a large sample in a short period of time, covering a

Independent Variables**Figure 1:** The conceptual framework

wide area, there is no bias in both cases and this data can be summarized using tables or charts, or mathematically analyzed to answer the research question.

In this study the self-study questionnaire was structured in such a way that it included three research questions. The research gadget consists of four parts, the first part examining the details of the respondents while the other three parts relate to the three research questions: consumer status with consumer goods, product quality of

COO and economic development and ethnocentrism in consumer purchasing objectives. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement using the statements provided using a five-point scale ranging from 1 = "strongly agree" to 5 = "strongly agree" in order to protect the existence or increase of diversity of interest in the study subjects and also to facilitate the collection of form respondents of data that can be statistically analyzed. Few finishers are open to seeking respondent feedback.

In-depth Interviews

A second tool for key data collection is the use of in-depth discussion. An interview involves a link between the interviewer and the interviewee focusing on the topic in question. This includes face-to-face contact where groups meet and involves word-for-word exchanges, which are questions and answers (Kothari, 2014). The simplified interview guide was designed and applied to 7 selected students who purchased at least three imported electrical goods.

According to Creswell (2014); the textual recommendation that the data collection phase should be followed to evaluate data collection instruments with a small group of respondents to the same target audience to measure the authenticity and reliability of devices. The test aircraft test provides the following advantages: Response from respondents regarding their understanding of the questions, the researcher's ability to evaluate pilot research results, and the possibility of the device being modified prior to distribution in the top sample.

Researchers such as Bryman (2018) believe that a pilot study is needed to determine the usefulness and value of a research tool before using it in research. Greener (2018) also pointed out that flight testing is important because it helps to determine the validity of the questionnaire and improves the design and validation of the questionnaire scales. It also ensures that everyone understands the questions in the same way. To address this, a pilot study was conducted on a questionnaire with 10 SAUT students living in wards in Ilmela District.

Feedback and comments from the pilot study in the questionnaire are included in the final version of the research tool and placed on reliability and authenticity testing. In terms of reliability, consistent internal consistency, the questionnaire was assessed by the Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) and overall, Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.783 was found to be less than a minimum of 0.70. The questionnaire is therefore acceptable and reliable enough to be used in the study.

Quantitative data collected despite the use of question papers, pre-tests were organized to ensure that all question papers were completed and included accurate information. The data was then analyzed using simple descriptive statistics with the help of the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) and the details of the results were presented in the form of frequent spreads with percentage tables and methods and general deviations.

In the case of quality data from interviews with participants which is textual information in the form of written notes and scripts was analyzed using mathematical analysis techniques - a research method to automatically translate text data content through a structured process, identifying and classifying textual information by themes, patterns or definitions and

quotes). The result of the thematic analysis was also linked to relevant research objectives to produce a better and more meaningful explanation of the COO image results in consumer purchasing decisions of consumer goods among a SAUT student at Mwanza Campus. The quality of research depends on the construction of research tools and the use of these tools in the field of data collection in the field. MacDonald (2015) recommends two methods or tests namely: legitimacy and integrity. How each test was obtained is described below:

Validity

Validity a level at which research findings can be made public (Kothari, 2014). Every effort has been made to ensure that the data collected is effective and accurate while adhering to all ethical considerations. Since this study is not a mathematical experiment but its purpose is broad sampling, external expertise is obtained through general practice of comparing research evidence with existing literature.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the accuracy of the measuring instrument or the actual process (Creswell, 2014). That is, reliability refers to when a research tool is handled multiple times under the same conditions and produces the same results. In this study, credibility was obtained by first examining a structured questionnaire and a formal interview protocol with ten respondents from individuals with similar audience characteristics to find consistency and accuracy. Participant comments and suggested corrections where appropriate were included in the final version of the questionnaire which was tested using the Cronbach alpha (α) coefficient and in total, Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.783 was found to be in excess of 0.70. The questionnaire is therefore welcome and reliable enough to be used in the field study. Ethical considerations in this study are addressed in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Research at St Augustine University of Tanzania. In addition, the following precautionary measures were used throughout the study:

The researcher went further with the superintendent and then obtained an official letter from the Dean of the Faculty of Business Administration to familiarize himself with the SAUT management at the Malimbe center and the students. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to questioning. Everyone who participated was informed that the study was for educational purposes only and was told that participating in the study was voluntary to ensure anonymity, respondents were not required to provide their qualifications or other form of identification. In addition, respondents were reassured that the study was designed for educational purposes only and that the information

Table 1: Respondents' gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	95	44.8
Female	117	55.2
Total	212	100.0

Source: Field data (2020).

Table 2: Respondents' monthly income.

Monthly income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 200,000	49	23.1
200,001 – 500,000	114	53.8
500,001 -1,000,000	30	14.2
Above 1,000,000	19	9.0
Total	212	100.0

Source: Field data (2020).

Table 3: Consumers' overall perception of imported products.

What comes in consumers' mind? (perception) about imported goods	Yes	
	Count	%
Durable product	30	14.15
Can trust its functionality	49	23.10
Quality product	104	49.05
Reliable product	29	13.7
Total	212	100.0

Source: Field data (2020)

collected was kept confidential. In the aggregation of values, the high levels of expertise in the research process are seen as a way to focus on using the appropriate references and verification of all sources and to avoid copying data or naming data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Gender

The outcomes of the survey in (Table 1) shows that of total respondents (212), 55.2% were female while male respondent constituted 44.8%. These outcomes indicate that the sample was relatively representative as almost equal number of male and female participated in the research.

Respondents' Monthly Income

As shown in (Table 2), 23.1% of the respondents (49) have monthly income of less than 200,000 Tshs, 114 respondents (53.8%) get monthly income of 200,001-500,000, while 30 respondents (14.2%) have monthly income 500,001 -1,000,000 and 19 respondents (9.0%) have monthly of above 1,000,000 Tshs. These outcomes

suggest the majority of respondents (144 or 68.0% of the total) have monthly income 200,001 to 1,000,000 and hence can afford to purchase some imported electronic goods, which are relatively expensive. These findings were collected through questionnaires and interview methods of data collection from various departments including top management, procurement department, accounting department, human resource department, user department and stores department and were presented basing on the research questions and objectives.

The consumers' overall perception of imported products

Table 3; reports respondents' insight of imported goods compared to locally manufactured products. The table shows that 49.05% respondents, excellence of products is what comes to their mind when they are purchasing electronics goods and this is followed by "can trust its functionality" (23.1%), then durability of the product (14.15%) and last but not least is dependability of the product in terms of performing the intended task. These outcomes suggest that overall, students have a positive perception towards imported goods and that perception

makes them prefer to purchase imported goods from confident countries compared to goods that are locally produced. One student made the following remark to highlight that perception:

"In Tanzania, many people think that imported goods are of better quality, one can trust their functionality and they are durable. This kind of perception has been developed in society's mind over period of time because of their experience with local made goods we students carry kind and drives our attitude towards foreign products. You often hear people saying local made products are not as good as those from outside. They sometime prefer imported second hand products over brand new locally manufactured products because of this belief they have." (Interviewee 4).

Another student mentioned.

"I have this thing in mind that products made outside Tanzania are reliable and do not easily spoil. This attitude is because of image people have about the origin of the products. For example, a person goes to the shop and says I want made in England hardware and not made in China. This is to do with people's perception of quality associated with country of origin. When you ask them why, they say the products from that country are better in quality and have a favorable reputation in the market due one getting value for money and they last longer. The electronic goods especially those made in Europe are not cheap but people are to pay high price just to be seen as having an imported item from a particular country It is all to do with perception consumers have in relation to country of origin image."

These two comments suggest perception by students over imported goods is associated with country of origin (COO) image and is one the factors that influence their choice of products in the market place.

The researcher wanted to find out in detail which elements of COO image guide consumers in this instance, university students, to purchase products made from one country instead of other countries. Three variables namely quality of products, brand familiarity and level of economic development associated with COO image were then examined.

Research has shown that the traditional country is one of the three most important factors in selecting imported electricity and two other factors including price and promotion. Respondents also mentioned a number of options such as product level and imported goods. In addition, research has shown that students have a positive view that imported goods compared to the products made here are better quality, more reliable in their performance and longer lasting in their use leading to liking and buying imported goods, the study further reveals that students have different views in the countries where the products are produced or "made in.

They rated higher electrical appliances than those from Japan and Germany higher compared to those from India, Indonesia and Malaysia. They also predict that products from developed countries (such as Japan and Germany) "will be higher than those from countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Such a view of the COO image has an impact on consumer purchasing behavior (Rzvanu, 2012) which means that consumers formulate a product-based or coo image selection.

Conclusion

The research established that consumers with a vision in the COO image influence the selection and purchase of imported goods from different countries. In particular, research found that the perception of product quality, product familiarity and improved economic status in line with the COO image influences the decision of students to purchase electrical goods. Those students with a positive attitude associated with the COO image tend to buy electronic goods connected to developed countries, while others were unfamiliar with COO image purchasing products on the basis of their purchasing power.

The findings of this study indicated crucial concerns concerning the COO image among university students in their decision-making acquisitions, which resulted in international advertisements, since the COO image is highly important in the purchasing choice. To promote more imported goods, marketing managers of imported goods such as electronic equipment should create a promotional campaign that highlights the product's reputation in specific product categories and link those campaigns to you with information on the effects of COO image on customers.

According to the findings of this study, retailers of electronics in Tanzania should collaborate with foreign producers, particularly those in developed countries such as Japan and Germany, who participate in electronic goods to highlight the 'internally labeled label' and approach their market presence with a unanimous market increase in Tanzania. Furthermore, local sellers of imported electronic products or other categories of imported goods might use a summary and conclusion from this study to understand consumer perception related with the COO image and manage the negative consequences associated with the COO image. This can also aid in identifying crucial meanings of the COO image and informing consumers of product categories meant to exploit consumer perception in imported items.

According to the study, the familiarity of the product / name related with the COO picture has a substantial influence on students' purchasing decisions. Commercial managers in Tanzania, in collaboration with the main electronics manufacturing businesses, should execute collaborative and consistent campaigns to reintroduce these items to consumers in order to increase sales in

Tanzania, in addition to rich and educated clients. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of COO image on consumers' purchase decisions of imported electrical goods in Tanzania among SAUT students in Mwanza. Prior to generalization, a comparable study should be replicated at other universities and scaled up. Future research should be conducted on the knowledge and image of manufacturing locations, as these factors influence customer purchasing decisions. Furthermore, additional research should be conducted to provide more information on the effects of COO image on other predictors as well as COO image on product attitude. Because this was a cross-sectional study, a longitudinal investigation is required to see how the association between variables develops over time.

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