

Chapter 11

Understanding the Relationship Between Culture and Sensory Marketing in Developing Strategies and Opportunities in Emerging Economies: A Cross–Cultural Study

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ABSTRACT

Global strategy requires an understanding of various international cultural differences and their impact on organisations success or failure. Organisations adopt different strategies to succeed in a diverse cultural environment. Sensory marketing strategy plays a critical role in understanding the culture and formulating a successful strategy. Sensory marketing is the process that affects customers' senses, perceptions, judgment, and behaviour. It is critical for policymakers to understand

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the impact of sensory marketing on consumer buying practices across cultures, including emerging economies. This study serves as a backdrop of strategic development in emerging economies with a focus on the visual and tactile factors of the sensory marketing. Adopting Hofstede's (2001) cultural framework, this chapter has three major objectives. Based on literature review, firstly, it presents a cross-cultural analysis of the consumer sensory processing between the developed economies and emerging economy, Saudi Arabia. Secondly, it aims to evaluate the culture impacts on consumer behaviour's purchase intentions in relation to the sensory factor such as touch and vision. Thirdly, it attempts to identify the role of consumer sensory factors in buying decision across the culture. According to the findings, the literature supports the universality of behaviour patterns of multisensory interaction between touch and vision. This universality applies at both theoretical and operational levels.

INTRODUCTION

Sensory-dominance occurs when information obtained via one sense (i.e., vision) dominates information obtained via other senses (i.e., touch), which leads to the consumer deciding whether it is more important to evaluate a certain product by, for example, touch or vision (Krishna & Morrin, 2008; Krishna, Elder, & Caldara, 2010; Balaji, Raghavan & Jha, 2011). For marketers, it is essential to understand the consumer's dimensions of sensory processing in order to gain insights into consumer's buying behaviour. Therefore, companies are increasingly using sensory marketing techniques in their marketing strategies (Krishna, 2011).

The products and services experiences may be promoted better if the organisations can understand and rely on sensory perceptions and preferences of their consumers. Thus the companies can develop sensory strategies for promoting services, products and brands in the emerging markets. In order to create a sensory signature, the organisations need to apply of sensory tactile branding. Sensory tactile branding is defined as a unique tactile feedback, by which certain brands have its own identity and emotional connection in order to be recognised by uni/multisensory inputs (Lindstrom, 2008. For instance, Kellogg's cornflake is designed at a certain crunch level to offer a special feel inside the mouth that consumers would immediately recognise it is Kellogg's. Similarly, Cadillac worked on a tactile sensory signature project in order to deliver a unique tactile feel which provides both comfort and luxury that customers would be able to identify the "Cadillac feel" among other car brands in order to establish brand loyalty (Lindstrom, 2005). In response to globalisation, and the meeting the needs of different cultures, previously generally accepted concepts and ideas are being re-examined. As a result, traditional mass markets are slowly disappearing, and are being replaced by markets and products better able to cater

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