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Brand Awareness and Brand Popularity: A Malaysian Perspective

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to shed light on the nature of the relationship between brand awareness and brand popularity, in the context of a relatively small township in Malaysia, namely Bukit Baru. After a pilot study involving convenience sampling, face-to-face survey questionnaires were randomly distributed regarding biscuit-based snack foods. The questions focused on six companies, three of which were Malaysian, with two being American and one British. The results suggest that local brand popularity, local brand awareness and perceived local brand popularity are jointly associated with perceived foreign brand popularity. Furthermore, support is found for a causal and direct relationship between foreign brand awareness and foreign brand popularity. However, no support is found for a causal and indirect relationship between local brand awareness and foreign brand popularity. Moreover, no support is found for a causal and indirect relationship between local brand popularity and foreign brand popularity. The evidence gathered may be of use to scholars and practitioners, especially international marketers, regarding the popularity of various relevant brands and associated products in foreign markets. In particular, this article may be of interest to foreign snack food companies concerned to both explore and exploit the potential of the Malaysian snack food market.

Keywords: Brand, awareness, popularity, snack, survey, local, transnational

1. Introduction

International marketers are increasingly preoccupied with helping transnational companies to establish footholds in foreign markets and to build market share in the relevant countries (Buckley et al., 1998; Blomsterno et al., 2006; Kwon et al., 1993; Root, 1998). Indeed, brands are vitally important to the success of such companies because they are associated with names and other symbolic representations that affect the thinking of prospective or actual consumers, in ways that make the relevant products more attractive (Giribaldi, 2003; Kapferer, 1998; Keller, 1998).

Brand awareness is highly significant in this regard, being fundamentally connected with basic knowledge, recall and recognition of the relevant brands (Hellofs & Jacobson, 1999; Homburg et al., 2010; Hoyer & Brown, 1990; Kapferer, 2012; Thanh, 2012; Yuan & Jang, 2007).

Brand popularity is another very important criterion for international marketers to bear in mind. Brand popularity may be understood as brand authority with consumers (Kapferer, 2012) and the degree of interest shown by consumers towards the brands in question as opposed to rival brands (Aghdaie & Honari, 2014).

Additionally, it is clear that foreign brand awareness should not be taken for granted by multinational companies (Vida & Fairhurst, 1999; Voss & Tansuhaj, 1999). Also, the level of perceived foreign brand popularity should not be assumed to be relatively high by multinational companies (Han & Terpstra, 1988).

Furthermore, sensitivity by international marketers to cultural factors, particularly those operating at the local or country-level, is important (Rawwas, 2001; Singhapakdi et al., 1999; Waller & Fam, 2000; Yoo et al., 2002).

However, it is unclear from the literature which factors generally influence the awareness and perceived popularity of foreign brands. Having said this, regarding brand awareness, Keller et al. (1998) indicate that brand name is one of the factors facilitating the development of brand awareness.

Also, regarding brand popularity, another relevant factor that has been posited and studied extensively by researchers in recent years, concerns the image of the country of origin (Kim & Chung, 1997; Kim, 1995; Kinra, 2006; Lucy, 1996; Sena, 2007; Yasin et al., 2007).

Food, particularly snack food, is felt to be a particularly interesting product to do market research on, because there are various cultural norms involved in eating, which differ from one country to another (Alden et al., 1999; Alden et al., 2006; Cleveland & Laroche, 2007; Cleveland & Papadopoulos, 2011; Eckhardt & Houston, 2002; Sternquist, 1998).

1.1. Usefully, Society for Nutrition Education (2010) notes that:

“A snack is composed of solid food(s), including those typically eaten with a utensil (with or without a beverage) that occurs between habitual meal occasions for the individual, is not a substitute for a meal and provides substantially fewer calories than would be consumed in a typical meal” (p. 33). This arguably serves as a practical guideline in identifying what types of foods should be recognised as ‘snacks’.

Moreover, natives of a country may or may not have an interest in eating foreign variants of locally made food (Kaplinsky, 1981; Knight et al., 2008; Kumar, 2014; Insch & Florek, 2009). Given the intriguing complexity of this phenomenon, it is considered efficacious to explore pertinent reasons, especially with regard to snack foods.

2. Literature Evaluation

Brand awareness acts as a strong signal of product quality and supplier commitment (Hoyer & Brown, 1990; Laroche, Kim & Zhou, 1996; MacDonald & Sharp, 2000). Furthermore, brand awareness may indicate longstanding reliability, wide acceptance and prestige on the part of the relevant companies (Aaker, 1991; Hoyer & Brown, 1990).

Consumers may use brand awareness as a purchase decision heuristic (Hoyer and Brown, 1990; MacDonald and Sharp, 2000). As such, there might be a connection between brand awareness and other observable aspects of consumer and brand behavior (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012).

Brand awareness plays an important role regarding purchase intention because consumers tend to buy a familiar and well known product (Keller, 1993; Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Brand awareness can help consumers to recognise a brand from a product category and make purchase decisions (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Also, brand awareness has a great influence on product selections and can be a prior consideration base in a product category (Hoyer & Brown, 1990).

Put simply, brand awareness may drive purchase intentions of consumers, because of the effect of the relevant brand familiarity and associated comfort in the minds of consumers.

A product with a high level of brand awareness will receive higher consumer preferences because it has higher market share and quality evaluation (Dodds et al., 1991; Grewal et al., 1998).

Furthermore, it is suggested, *inter alia*, that brand awareness is likely to have a positive influence on quality perceptions (Chi et al., 2009; Oh, 2000).

Crucially, the conclusions of Ozretic-Dosen et al. (2007) draw attention to the sample in question only consisting of one group of consumers and dealing with only one food product category. This naturally limits the generalisability of the results. Such comments are highly pertinent to this study because of its necessarily small-scale nature.

Berthon, Pitt & Campbell (2009) suggest that while brand consistency is an attractive feature, it is even more important that brands remain relevant. This suggests that high levels of brand awareness may not translate to high levels of brand popularity. On the other hand, it might be reasonably expected that low levels of brand popularity are associated with low levels of brand awareness, since there are a relatively small number of users of the product or indeed products in question.

Nielsen Global Snacking Report (2014) suggests significant gender differences, when it comes to snack food consumption. Indeed, the same document notes that: "Globally, women drive snacking consumption more than men" (p. 7).

This suggests that gender differences may influence both brand awareness and brand popularity.

Raj (1985) finds a significant relationship between brand popularity and brand loyalty, also understanding 'brand popularity' to be identical to 'brand user share'. In the present context, 'brand user share' may be more simply understood as the relevant market share in terms of users, accounted for by a particular brand.

Furthermore, Raj (1985) states, "...it is clear that there is a positive relation between a brand's user share and its loyalty franchise" (p. 57). This indicates that increased levels of foreign brand awareness are associated with increased levels of perceived foreign brand popularity, as measured by greater levels of customer loyalty.

Therefore, on the one hand, rising levels of foreign brand awareness might be expected to be associated with rising levels of perceived foreign brand popularity.

However, on the other hand, it is possible that falling levels of local brand awareness are associated with rising levels of foreign brand popularity.

One would contend that this might be due to weakening local brand images in the minds of potential consumers, leading to them being less likely to go through with purchasing locally branded products (Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2011).

This situation could then be exacerbated if they see comparable products with foreign branding as being increasingly more attractive, and therefore form an increasingly strong brand image regarding these products.

Additionally, it is possible that falling levels of local brand popularity are associated with rising levels of foreign brand popularity. This will be particularly evident when market shares of locally branded products fall, whilst market shares of similar products with foreign branding rise (Kim, 1995; Kim, 1997).

Before considering other relevant factors, such as purchasing power and government legislation, this would suggest that the level of perceived foreign brand popularity is functionally dependent on local brand awareness, foreign brand awareness, and local brand popularity (see Figure 1 below).

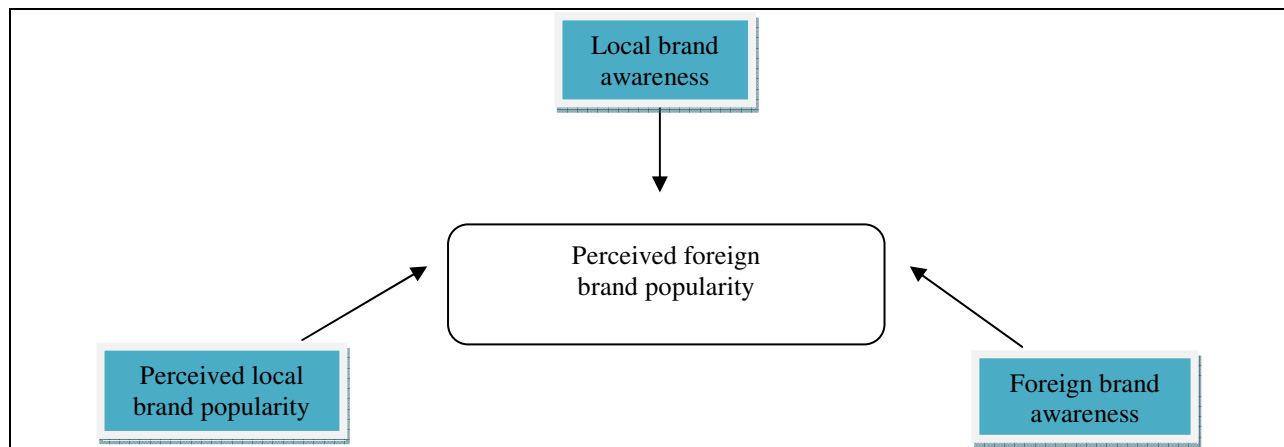


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

The research problem therefore concerns developing greater understanding of the factors that generally influence the level of perceived popularity of foreign snack food brands.

Manley (2011) notes that biscuits "...are all made with flour...and all have low moisture content and thereby long shelf life if protected from moisture and oxygen in the atmosphere" (p.1).

Furthermore, Manley (2011) also notes that: "The word 'biscuit' includes items also known as crackers, ...cookies and wafers" (p. 1). The previous two points jointly provide a useful benchmark regarding what sorts of food products constitute biscuits.

As such, it was firstly determined that the study would aim to explore the extent to which local brand awareness, foreign brand awareness and local brand popularity are associated with the level of perceived popularity of foreign biscuit brands.

It was then decided to choose Malaysia as the country in which to do the relevant research and, within it, the township of Bukit Baru. Moreover, three large Malaysian companies that sell biscuit-based snack foods in Malaysia were selected, namely Munchy's, Mondelez and Global Premium Resources. Furthermore, three large Western companies that sell their biscuit-based snack food products in Malaysia were selected, namely Nabisco (US), McVities (UK) and Quaker (US). Crucially, in light of the resource and scope limitations of the relevant project, a quantitative approach to the study was considered to be optimal (Creswell, 2013).

4. Quantitative Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following specific research questions (R1, R2 and R3), null hypotheses (H1₀, H2₀, H3₀, H4₀, H5₀) and alternative hypotheses (H1_A, H2_A, H3_A, H4_A, H5_A) have been formulated in light of the preceding discussion:

R1: What is the relationship between the level of foreign brand awareness and the level of perceived foreign brand popularity?

H1₀: There is not a positive and statistically significant relationship between the level of foreign brand awareness and the level of perceived foreign brand popularity

H1_A: There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the level of foreign brand awareness and the level of perceived foreign brand popularity

H2₀: There is not a positive and statistically significant relationship between the level of foreign brand awareness and the level of perceived foreign brand popularity, regarding females only

H2_A: There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the level of foreign brand awareness and the level of perceived foreign brand popularity, regarding females only

H3₀: There is not a positive and statistically significant relationship between the level of foreign brand awareness and the level of perceived foreign brand popularity, regarding males only

H3_A: There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the level of foreign brand awareness and the level of perceived brand popularity, regarding males only

R2: Is there any significant difference between the level of foreign brand awareness for females and that for males?

H4₀: There is no difference between the mean level of foreign brand awareness for females and the mean level of foreign brand awareness for males

H4_A: There is a difference between the mean level of foreign brand awareness for females and the mean level of foreign brand awareness for males

R3: Is there any significant difference between the level of perceived foreign brand popularity for females and that for males?

H5₀: There is no difference between the mean level of perceived foreign brand popularity for females and the mean level of perceived foreign brand popularity for males

H5_A: There is a difference between the mean level of perceived foreign brand popularity for females and the mean level of perceived foreign brand popularity for males

R4: Is there an inverse relationship between local brand awareness and foreign brand popularity?

H6₀: The correlation coefficient for local brand awareness with respect to foreign brand popularity is not both negative and statistically significant

H6_A: The correlation coefficient for local brand awareness with respect to foreign brand popularity is both negative and statistically significant

R5: Is there an inverse relationship between local brand popularity and foreign brand popularity?

H7₀: The correlation coefficient for local brand popularity with respect to foreign brand popularity is not both negative and statistically significant

H7_A: The correlation coefficient for local brand popularity with respect to foreign brand popularity is both negative and statistically significant

5. Population

The population of Bukit Baru has been estimated to be currently 55, 656 (MBendi, 2016).

6. Sampling Size

The literature indicates that the larger the sample size, the higher is the rate of inclusion, and the greater the diversity of the research, clearly a very important aspect in this research (Kumar, 2011). This makes the research more representative of a bigger proportion of the population.

Considering the z-score associated with the confidence levels of 90%, which is 1.645, along with the concepts of standard deviation and margin of error, one calculated a suitable sample size as follows:

Sample Size = $(Z\text{-score})^2 * StdDev * (1 - StdDev) / (\text{margin of error})^2$.

Therefore, taking confidence level of 90%, 0.5 standard deviation and margin error of +/- 5%, Sample Size = $(Z\text{-score})^2 * StdDev * (1 - StdDev) / (\text{margin of error})^2$

= $((1.645)^2 * .5(.5)) / (.05)^2$

= $(2.7 * .25) / .0025$

= $.675 / .0025 = 270$

7. Ethical Guidelines

Prior to the collection of data, it is important to consider relevant ethical guidelines (Hunt et al., 1984; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Patel et al., 2003).

For this study, a central issue was therefore that of obtaining informed consent (Bradburn et al., 2004; Sin, 2005). The primary research involved face-to-face interviews in two popular and local shopping malls (Jusco Melaka Shopping Centre and Melaka Mall, both based in Bukit Baru).

Firstly, potential participants were given sufficient information to allow them to decide whether or not they wanted to take part in a research study. In particular, inter alia, it was made clear to every participant what the nature of the study is, that every effort will be made to preserve anonymity and confidentiality (necessarily within the framework of relevant state and national legislation), and that they were under no obligation to take part in the study.

Secondly, potential participants were asked to sign a suitably detailed consent form, which included the full title of the project and the researcher's contact details.

8. Data Collection

Primary data in this research was collected from respondents through administering questionnaires to them (Cooper, Donald and Schindler, 2001). To begin with, the relevant views and opinions of a small number of respondents were collected using the convenience sampling method. A relatively simple yet structured questionnaire instrument was used for this purpose.

Relative to other sampling methods, convenience sampling is relatively fast to conduct, relatively inexpensive and the subjects are readily available (Creswell, 2013).

Clearly, however, one key criticism regarding convenience sampling is that of sampling bias and that the sample is not representative of the entire population. This suggests the increased risk of obtained skewed results (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012).

Another key criticism of convenience sampling is the implied limitation in generalisability and inference making about the entire population. Since the sample is not representative of the population, the results of the study cannot speak for the entire population. This will therefore lead to low external validity of the study (Ferber, 1977).

Moreover, random sampling may not be that important or indeed possible (Lynch, 1982). Furthermore, it may also be possible to increase the external validity of a study based on convenience sampling, with reference to other studies (Winer, 1999). Having said this, probability sampling allows for the use of tests of hypothesis, which aids in the generalisability of the results, a most desirable feature.

On balance, it was therefore felt eminently appropriate to conduct probability sampling for the main study, with convenience sampling being used to ensure the suitability and relevance of the questions used. Based on the review of results from the pilot study, which was deemed successful, two further questions were added to the relevant questionnaire as it then stood. Afterwards, the requisite number of finalised questionnaires were randomly distributed in the two relevant shopping malls (Jusco Melaka Shopping Mall and Melaka Mall).

Secondary data has been used in order to provide theoretical support (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005). In particular, it is helpful as a catalyst for generating research insights. Additionally, with regard to the relevant primary research, it serves to provide an objective

lens through which to evaluate the resultant findings, in order to ascertain whether the research is successful or not (Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

Last but not least, data was collected in accordance with generally accepted principles of "...beneficence, respect for human dignity and justice" (Pilot & Hungler, 1999).

9. Instrument Description and Validation

Closed-ended questionnaires were used in the research to collect quantitative data (Myers, 2009). The relevant design was in accordance with a 5-point Likert scale (Allen & Seaman, 2007).

Table 1 below illustrates the nature of the relevant scale, with 'N/A' also being used if respondents did not know about a particular area.

1	Not at all
2	A little bit
3	A moderate amount
4	A great deal
5	Very, very, much

Table 1: Likert Scale Main Categories

Both internal and external validation have been addressed in this study. Specifically, data was validated by ensuring that respondents are Malaysian and come from Bukit Baru. To ensure external validation, cross-checking of previous results in the field was also undertaken.

Strong internal validity was upheld in the study by testing that the research had reliable measures of independent and dependent variables, and by seeking to ensure that there was reasonable theoretical justification for causally linking the independent variables to the dependent variables (Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

10. Coding Details, Preliminary Results Tables and Initial Commentary

Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 below serve to operationalise aspects of the construct instrument (namely survey questionnaire) intended to address the relevant research questions and relevant hypotheses.

Survey Questions	Variables
H, J,	Local brand awareness
E, F, N, O	Perceived local brand popularity
I, K	Foreign brand awareness
E, G, M, P	Perceived foreign brand popularity

Table 2: Survey Questions and Variables

RQ	Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
1	1	Foreign brand awareness	Perceived foreign brand popularity
1	2	Foreign brand awareness (females only)	Perceived foreign brand popularity (females only)
1	3	Foreign brand awareness (males only)	Perceived foreign brand popularity (males only)
2	4	N/A	N/A
3	5	N/A	N/A
4	6	Local brand awareness	Perceived foreign brand popularity
5	7	Perceived local brand popularity	Perceived foreign brand popularity

Table 3: Research Questions (RQs), Hypothesis Numbers, Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

It should be noted in Table 3 above that Hypotheses 4 and 5, respectively regarding research questions 2 and 3, concern the calculation of T-statistics.

Survey Questions	Independent Variables
I, K	Foreign brand awareness
I, K	Foreign brand awareness (females only)
I, K	Foreign brand awareness (males only)
H, J	Local brand awareness
E, F, N, O	Perceived local brand popularity

Table 4: Survey Questions and Independent Variables

Survey Question Number	Dependent Variables
E, G, M, P	Perceived foreign brand popularity
E, G, M, P	Perceived foreign brand popularity (females only)
E, G, M, P	Perceived foreign brand popularity (males only)

Table 5: Survey Questions and Dependent Variables

Questions A-D concerned audit issues, covering age, gender, nationality and place of residence, respectively. 51% of respondents (138) were male and 49% of respondents (132) were female. All respondents were over 18, Malaysian and from the Bukit Baru area.

If the respondent ticked or circled 'N/A' for any question, this was assigned the value 'O', otherwise the value assigned to each question ranged from '1' to '5', matching the significance of the relevant number.

Question E asked respondents: "How much do you generally like snack foods?"

Question F asked respondents: "How much do you generally like locally branded snack food products?"

Question G asked respondents: "How much do you generally like foreign branded snack food products?"

Question H asked respondents: "To what extent do you like snack food products made by Malaysian companies because of the following features?" It considered taste, texture, shape, size, colour, ingredients, packaging and price, along with 'other' features (which the respondent needed to specify, if applicable).

Question I asked respondents: "To what extent do you like snack food products made by non-Malaysian companies because of the following features?" It used the same features as in Question H.

Question J asked respondents: "To what extent do you believe Malaysian snack food companies have an excellent public image?"

Question K asked respondents: "To what extent do you believe non-Malaysian snack food companies have an excellent public image?"

Question L asked respondents: "To what extent do you believe non-Malaysian snack food companies have an excellent public image?" Choc Chip Cookies (Mondelez), Oat Krunch Crackers (Munchy's) and Cookies (Global Premium Resources) were the products chosen.

Question M asked respondents: "How much do you like the following foreign branded biscuit products?" Oatmeal Cookies (Quaker), Oreo Cookies (Nabisco) and Digestive Cookies (McVities) were the products chosen.

Question N asked respondents: "To what extent do you prefer similar locally made products to the following biscuit products?" It used the same products as in Question M.

Question O asked respondents: "To what extent do you think that the following Malaysian companies have an excellent public image?" It used the same companies as in Question L.

Question P asked respondents: "To what extent do you think that the following foreign companies have an excellent public image?" It used the same companies as in Question M.

Figure 2 below shows the key features associated with snack food products as queried in Questions H and I.

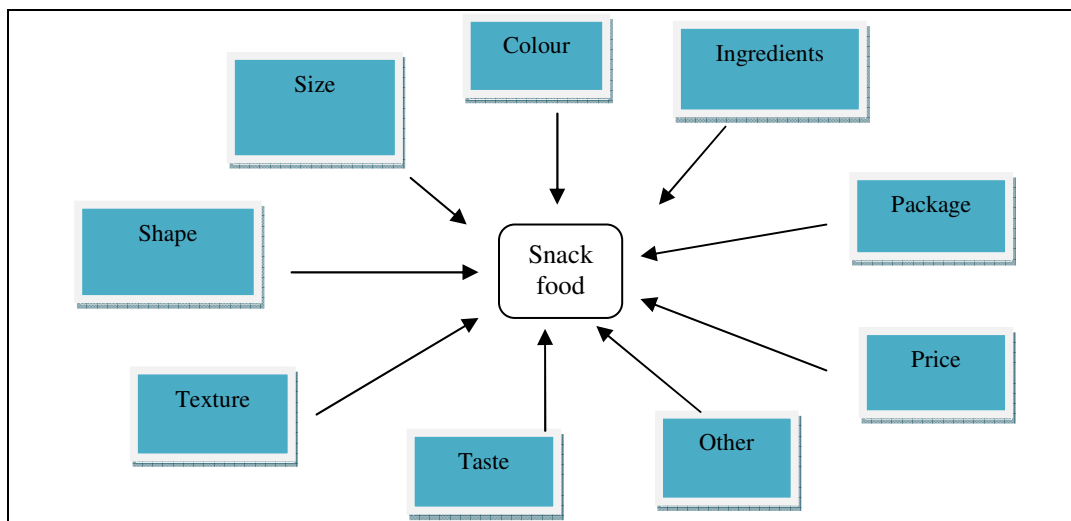


Figure 2: Key snack food product features

Regarding the combined gender survey results (see Table 6 below), the second aspect of question (p), concerning the US transnational company Nabisco, had the highest mean response level at 3.84. Moreover, the ninth aspect of question (h), concerning 'Other', had the lowest mean response level at 0.12.

Furthermore, the third aspect of question (o), concerning the Malaysian company Global Premium Resources, had the highest variance, 3.22. Additionally, the ninth aspect of question (h), concerning 'Other', had the lowest variance, 0.14.

Question	Mean	Variance
(e)	2.63	0.71
(f)	2.12	0.74
(g)	2.70	0.72
(h) (1)	2.92	2.13
(h) (2)	2.71	2.02
(h) (3)	1.73	0.94
(h) (4)	2.22	1.53
(h) (5)	2.14	1.62
(h) (6)	2.33	2.41
(h) (7)	2.12	1.41
(h) (8)	3.54	2.72
(h) (9)	0.12	0.14
(i) (1)	3.41	2.73
(i) (2)	3.10	2.33
(i) (3)	2.01	1.62
(i) (4)	2.53	1.81
(i) (5)	2.74	2.54
(i) (6)	2.73	3.12
(i) (7)	2.72	2.24
(i) (8)	2.31	1.61
(i) (9)	0.64	2.51
(j)	2.63	0.52
(k)	3.53	0.52
(l) (1)	2.90	2.51
(l) (2)	2.92	2.52
(l) (3)	2.84	3.13
(m) (1)	2.81	2.63
(m) (2)	2.44	2.52
(m) (3)	2.43	2.71
(n) (1)	2.32	3.14
(n) (2)	1.80	2.43
(n) (3)	2.13	2.82
(o) (1)	2.41	2.23
(o) (2)	2.74	2.21
(o) (3)	2.51	3.22
(p) (1)	3.42	0.71
(p) (2)	3.84	0.81
(p) (3)	2.90	1.43

Table 6: Key Summary Statistics/Questionnaire Responses (Combined Gender)

Regarding the masculine gender survey results (see Table 7 below), the first aspect of question (p), concerning the US transnational company Quaker, had the highest mean response level at 3.81. Moreover, the ninth aspect of question (h), concerning 'Other', had the lowest mean response level at 0.20.

Furthermore, the first aspect of question (n), concerning Oatmeal Cookies (Quaker), had the highest variance, 5.51. Additionally, the first aspect of question (p), concerning the US transnational company Quaker, had the lowest variance, 0.20.

Question	Mean	Variance
(e)	2.44	0.81
(f)	2.02	1.02
(g)	2.63	1.32
(h) (1)	2.21	3.21
(h) (2)	1.80	2.24
(h) (3)	1.20	0.72
(h) (4)	1.81	1.73
(h) (5)	2.23	3.22
(h) (6)	2.42	4.34
(h) (7)	2.01	2.53
(h) (8)	2.80	4.73
(h) (9)	0.20	0.22
(i) (1)	2.44	3.33
(i) (2)	2.23	2.71
(i) (3)	1.62	1.81
(i) (4)	2.22	2.72
(i) (5)	2.44	3.82
(i) (6)	2.61	4.31
(i) (7)	2.03	2.54
(i) (8)	2.01	2.53
(i) (9)	1.20	4.72
(j)	2.43	0.31
(k)	3.23	0.71
(l) (1)	1.62	0.82
(l) (2)	1.64	0.83
(l) (3)	1.41	0.33
(m) (1)	2.01	3.51
(m) (2)	1.84	2.72
(m) (3)	2.22	2.70
(n) (1)	2.03	5.51
(n) (2)	1.41	2.80
(n) (3)	1.62	3.30
(o) (1)	1.23	0.21
(o) (2)	1.82	0.72
(o) (3)	1.42	0.30
(p) (1)	3.81	0.20
(p) (2)	3.40	0.82
(p) (3)	3.61	0.34

Table 7: Key Summary Statistics/Questionnaire Responses (Masculine Gender)

Regarding the feminine gender survey results (see Table 8 below), the first aspect of question (i), concerning 'Taste', had the highest mean response level at 4.41.

Moreover, the ninth aspect of question (h), concerning 'Other', had the lowest mean response level at 0.02. Furthermore, the third aspect of question (o), concerning the Malaysian company Global Premium Resources, had the highest variance, 3.84.

Additionally, the ninth aspect of question (h), concerning 'Other', had the lowest variance, 0.01.

Question	Mean	Variance
(e)	2.80	0.71
(f)	2.21	0.71
(g)	2.81	0.23
(h) (1)	3.62	0.34
(h) (2)	3.63	0.30
(h) (3)	2.21	0.72
(h) (4)	2.61	1.33
(h) (5)	2.00	0.50
(h) (6)	2.21	1.21
(h) (7)	2.24	0.71
(h) (8)	4.24	0.24
(h) (9)	0.02	0.02
(i) (1)	4.41	0.31
(i) (2)	4.01	0.53
(i) (3)	2.43	1.31
(i) (4)	2.82	1.23
(i) (5)	3.01	1.52
(i) (6)	2.84	2.74
(i) (7)	3.40	1.34
(i) (8)	2.61	0.81
(i) (9)	0.02	0.01
(j)	2.82	0.72
(k)	3.83	0.23
(l) (1)	4.23	0.71
(l) (2)	4.22	0.73
(l) (3)	4.24	1.71
(m) (1)	3.61	0.82
(m) (2)	3.00	2.04
(m) (3)	2.61	3.33
(n) (1)	2.61	1.30
(n) (2)	2.24	2.20
(n) (3)	2.64	2.31
(o) (1)	3.63	1.31
(o) (2)	3.63	2.32
(o) (3)	3.61	3.84
(p) (1)	3.00	1.03
(p) (2)	4.22	0.73
(p) (3)	2.21	1.72

Table 8: Key Summary Statistics/Questionnaire Responses (Feminine Gender)

11. Further Results Tables and Discussion

Questions	Crombach's Alpha Coefficient	Variable name
H, J	0.90	LBA
E, F, N, O	0.80	PLBP
I, K,	0.89	FBA
E, G, M, P	0.74	PFBP
E-P (12 questions)	0.94	SUM
LBA = Local Brand Awareness PLBL = Perceived Local Brand Popularity FBA = Foreign Brand Awareness PFBP = Perceived Local Brand Popularity SUM = all variables		

Table 9: Reliability Analysis

According to Nunally (1978), if Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7, the relevant construct is reliable and therefore internally valid.

Since in Table 9 above, Cronbach's alpha for each variable, along with the sum of the variables, is greater than 0.7, this indicates that the variables are internally valid. In particular, given the Cronbach's alpha of 0.94, the questionnaire instrument used for this research is also considered to be highly reliable and internally valid.

Hypothesis Number	Independent Variable Mean Level	Dependent Variable Mean Level	T-statistic	Pearson coefficient	Critical T-value	Null Hypothesis Rejected?
1	1.96	1.15	11.74	0.58	1.97	Yes
2	2.25	1.21	15.06	0.79	1.98	Yes
3	1.68	1.09	7.27	0.53	1.98	Yes
6	1.71	1.15	8.28	0.45	1.97	Yes
7	0.58	1.15	16.57	0.71	1.97	Yes

Table 10: Hypothesis Testing (excluding nos. 4 and 5)

It should be noted regarding Table 10 above that all the relevant p-values were less than 0.00001.

Mean level of foreign brand awareness for males	Mean level of foreign brand awareness for females	T-statistic	Critical T-value	Null Hypothesis Rejected?
1.68	2.25	-1.18	1.98	No

Table 11: Hypothesis Testing (no. 4)

Mean level of perceived foreign brand popularity for males	Mean level of perceived foreign brand popularity for females	T-statistic	Critical T-value	Null Hypothesis Rejected?
1.09	1.21	-0.71	1.98	No

Table 12: Hypothesis Testing (no. 5)

It is found that the fitted model is: $Y = 0.66 + (-0.33) X1 + (0.31) X2 + (0.75) X3$			
R-Square:	0.61	F-Statistic:	3.10
Mean:	-0.01	Variance:	0.03
Critical value of F-distribution (5% level):			3.03
Y = Perceived level of foreign brand popularity X1 = Local Brand Awareness X2 = Foreign Brand Awareness X3 = Perceived Local Brand Popularity			

Table 13: Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 13 above indicates that the joint contribution of local brand awareness, foreign brand awareness and perceived local brand popularity to the variance of perceived foreign brand popularity is statistically significant at the 5% level. This strongly suggests, as postulated, that perceived foreign brand popularity is in some sense dependent upon local brand awareness, foreign brand awareness and perceived local brand popularity.

As expected, the fitted coefficient of local brand awareness is negative. Moreover, also as expected, the fitted coefficient of foreign brand awareness is positive. However, it is considered incongruous that the fitted coefficient of perceived local brand popularity is positive.

This is because, other things being equal, it indicates that higher levels of perceived local brand popularity are associated with higher levels of perceived foreign brand popularity.

Moreover, of the seven hypotheses considered (see Tables 10, 11 and 12), three alternative hypotheses were accepted, concerning hypotheses 1, 2 and 3.

Regarding hypotheses 6 and 7 (see Table 10), it is noted with interest that the Pearson Coefficient is positive and statistically significant in both cases. This is because it might reasonably be expected in the first instance that if local brand awareness increases, this is likely to be associated with a decrease in perceived foreign brand popularity.

Indeed, it might also be reasonably expected in the first instance that if local brand popularity increases, this is likely to be associated with a decrease in the level of perceived foreign brand popularity.

Furthermore, regarding hypotheses 4 and 5 (see Tables 11 and 12), no statistically significant differences were found in the mean levels of both foreign brand awareness and perceived foreign brand popularity for the relevant sample of males and females.

12. Limitations

As with the work of Ozretic-Dosen et al. (2007), the sample in question only deals with one food product category. Therefore, the relevant research findings cannot be generalised across all food product categories in Bukit Baru. Moreover, for ethical reasons, it was

not felt appropriate to include children and young people in the questionnaire survey. This also limits the usefulness of the results, especially when bearing in mind how significant children's consumption of snack foods such as biscuits might be (Jahns et al., 2001). Also, only two questions in the brand awareness and brand popularity survey at the heart of this study allowed for open responses. Although this was done in order to ensure that the time and effort expended in data collection was compatible with the highly circumscribed scope of the research, it remains a material and limiting factor.

13. Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that there is a causal relationship between local brand awareness, foreign brand awareness, perceived local brand popularity, on the one hand, and perceived foreign brand popularity, on the other hand.

In particular, evidence is found concerning the combined ability of local brand awareness, foreign brand awareness and perceived local brand popularity to both explain and influence perceived foreign brand popularity. In view of the lack of any supporting theory, there is a distinct possibility that the observed co-variation in question is incidental.

Moreover, one wishes to stress that there is significant evidence of a causal relationship between foreign brand awareness and perceived foreign brand popularity, whether for both genders combined or for either gender.

Additionally, the literature provides some evidence of external validity (Aghdaie & Honari, 2014; Ozretic-Dosen et al., 2007). In particular, both sets of researchers employed similar methodologies, partly or primarily reliant on 5-point Likert Scales. Moreover, both research pieces found that brand awareness is positively associated with brand popularity.

However, a positive correlation was also found between local brand awareness and perceived foreign brand popularity, as well as between perceived local brand popularity and perceived foreign brand popularity. Although these findings are ostensibly problematic, it is worth reminding oneself that correlation does not imply causation.

Other factors may be driving local brand awareness and perceived local brand popularity, without respect to perceived foreign brand popularity. For example, it is likely that a major influence on both local brand awareness and perceived local brand popularity is income (Roper, 2009).

It is also instructive to note that despite the relevant fitted multiple linear regression equation yielding a statistically significant F-Value, this is not conclusive of an actual linear relationship. On this point, it is important to bear in mind that the F-Value in question (3.10) is not considerably greater than the relevant critical F-Value (3.03).

Moreover, it has already been suggested earlier in this paper that purchasing power and government legislation, inter alia, may serve to influence perceived foreign brand popularity. Indeed, the literature also lends support to this possibility (Vateesatokit, 2003; Zhou & Hui, 2003).

Nonetheless, the strong link found between foreign brand awareness and perceived foreign brand popularity lends further support to international marketing efforts to raise brand awareness in order to lay stronger and more durable foundations for increased present and future perceived levels of foreign brand popularity.

14. Suggestions for future study

It would be helpful for future research in this area, whether quantitative or qualitative, to focus more on the wider factors serving to explain the interrelationships between local brand awareness, foreign brand awareness, perceived local brand popularity and perceived foreign brand popularity.

As already indicated, one specific area in which further relevant research might wish to focus concerns further discernment of the impact of purchasing power and government legislation on both brand awareness and brand popularity, whether local or foreign.

Furthermore, a brand is both a mental construct (Burmam et al., 2009; Fitzsimmons et al., 2008; Stern et al., 2001) and a cultural phenomenon (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Moore, 2003; Tsai, 2005).

Therefore, another specific area in which further exploratory work might usefully proceed involves exploring ways in which individual differences and cultural variations jointly serve to inform associations with products, and thereby inform the resultant branding process.

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