

IMPORTANCE OF PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES IN SUCCESSFUL BRANDING OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to establish the importance of specific product attributes in the successful branding of fresh fruits and vegetables (FFV). The population of study consisted of 213 commercial farmers of FFV in Kiambu County. The study adopted stratified random sampling in which 140 farmers were sampled from the seven sub-counties in Kiambu County. The study adopted a descriptive cross sectional survey design. Data was collected using a semi structured questionnaire and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that among the seven identified product attributes; longer shelf life had the highest contribution followed by special taste/colour while unique place of origin had the least contribution followed by special medical value. It was observed that since the branding of FFV had low adoption, the average contribution of the attributes to successful branding of FFV was low. The generalizability of the study findings was limited by the limited number of respondent farmers engaging in branding of FFV and lack of corroborative secondary data. The study recommends that farmers should establish available attributes for their products and utilize them in the branding of FFV as a means of adding value to their products. The government should identify and protect special product attributes of the FFV grown in various parts of the country and avail them to only farmers from these areas for branding purposes. Future studies should focus on product attributes of other fresh agricultural products and also target other counties with differing social economic and climatic conditions. A study should be done to establish why branding of FFV has low adoption despite availability of requisite product attributes. A study with collaborative secondary evidence would increase objectivity in the collected data. The study recommends exporting of branded FFV to Europe, Asian and USA markets to boost social economic status of FFV farmers in Kiambu County and Kenya in general.

Keywords: Product attributes, Commercial farmers, Fresh fruits and vegetables

INTRODUCTION

As noted by Aaker (2003), the continued fragmentation of mass markets has created multiple consumer offerings that require continuous identity clarification and modification. Marketers undertake differentiation through product branding. The theory of branding postulates that producers will strive to offer products with superior attributes to gain market dominance. These attributes signal the quality and characteristics of products as well as the characteristics of consumers (Meads and Sharma, 2008).

Kotler and Keller (2009) described branding as a means of helping consumers identify a product by giving it a name and using other brand elements that create mental structures that organize their knowledge about the product. According to Wood (2000), the term brand has been highly conceptualized and its theory is evolving continuously. This makes it difficult to have one generally accepted definition of a brand. By combining product-plus and owners' perspectives, Kotler and Keller (2009) present a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design or a combination of them, intended to identify products of one seller and differentiate them from those of competition.

Aaker (2003) further observes that it is difficult to build strong brands because of both internal and external pressures which confront a marketer. These pressures demand extra effort on the part of the producer to convince consumers of the superiority of their products over competition. This effort is even more difficult for fresh fruits and vegetables (FFV) which as noted by Cook (2013) lack year round supply of quality products and also require specialized handling due to their perishability. Trienekens (2011) observes that for most fresh food products, there is limited differentiation and branding of the products at farm level despite the availability of numerous product differentiating attributes.

Gwin and Gwin (2003) postulated that each product is a bundle of attributes and that consumers have preferences for characteristics of specific products. The products' attributes theory avers that rather than comparing products themselves, consumers' choice is based on the characteristics (or attributes) of brands. The model explains that individual choice is a process of choosing bundles of product attributes inherent in goods and services. Attributes can be classified as either hard-attributes or soft-attributes.

Gwin and Gwin (2003) present hard-attributes as objective and measurable, and have to do principally with the functioning and performance of a product; for example, strength, speed, weight, and price. Hard attributes which are also referred to as tangible attributes can include such product characteristics as size, color, weight, volume, smell, taste, touch, quantity, or material composition. Soft-Attributes are subjective and emotional. They are described using words like attractive, young; sporty, pleasant, and feminine, and cannot be quantified or measured by objective means. Hard-Attributes define the product's abilities, performances, and reliability. The Soft-Attributes define the product's user-experience, character, look, and feel. Any good product must balance both hard and soft attributes.

Crawford (1997), states that the initial decision of a producer is whether to brand or not or not to brand. The author notes that historically, most unprocessed agricultural products have been sold unbranded and that agricultural products are frequently marketed as commodities wherein particular grade bands of a product from one source is considered identical to that from another source. By their nature, fresh fruits and vegetables are commodities. A fresh fruit or vegetable is one which is marketed in the form in which it was harvested without any processing or preservation beforehand either "by freezing, canning, pickling, salting, drying, or any other means" (Random House Webster College Dictionary with CD-Rom). These products are largely considered as commodities.

Keller (2000) reported that a commodity is a product presumably so basic that it cannot be physically differentiated in the minds of consumers. He suggests that the key success factor in branding commodities is that consumers have to become convinced that all the product offerings in the category are not the same and that meaningful differences exist.

Connolly and McDermott (2009) noted that successful differentiation for agricultural products just like any other product should be based upon genuine differences. If the products being branded are essentially similar to other products, or the buyers cannot be convinced of their superiority over other products, then the firm seeking to brand needs to adopt a broader perspective and look at the entire experience it offers potential buyers and search for a distinct differentiating factor.

The concept of firm performance relates to the manner in which a firm's resources are used to achieve its overall objectives. Kinyua-Njuguna (2013) presents firm performance as the actual output of an

organization measured against its intended outputs. Product branding is demanding in terms of time, efforts and financial resources. Both financial and non-financial parameters are used to measure firm performance arising from branding. Product output, price premium, profitability and satisfaction were the performance measures adopted for this study since as established by Ailawadi, Lehmann and Neslin (2002), they are easy to assign and are consistent with the focus of business executives.

Kiambu County consists of twelve administrative sub counties namely Kiambu, Kikuyu, Limuru, Lari, Githunguri, Thika, Ruiru, Juja, Kiambaa, Kabete, Gatundu North and Gatundu South. The County has a wide agro-ecological zone ranging from the cold climate of the upper highlands of Limuru and Lari to the relatively dry and warm climate of the lower parts of Ruiru, Thika and Gatundu enabling the county to produce tropical FFV such as bananas and mangoes as well as temperate ones such as peaches and plums. Horticulture is widely practiced in the county in both small scale units and large farms. In 2010, FFV farming in the County covered 26,407 hectares equivalent to three percent of total area under FFV in Kenya. FFV earned the County Kshs. 12.92 billion equivalent to 5.7 percent of the crops' total earnings in Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2011).

The choice of a product attribute to form the basis of branding a fresh fruit or vegetable will depend on the opportunity it presents for creating a tangible difference for the product. To achieve the aspired increase in productivity, commercialization, and competitiveness of agricultural commodities, the strategy adopted by the Kenyan Government is to transform small holder agriculture from subsistence to an innovative, commercially oriented and modern sector. This entails engaging in such value addition activities as product processing, branding, quality certification and farm level quality improvements (Ministry of Agriculture, 2012). To supplement these initiatives by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MOALF), there is need to determine the extent to which product attributes contribute to the successful branding of fresh fruits and vegetable.

Various shortcomings were noted in the reviewed studies which render them inadequate in establishing the contribution of product attributes to the successful branding of fresh fruits and vegetables in Kiambu County. The study by Hauser and Urban (1979) was not product specific and focused on establishing the importance of product attributes in determining consumer utility functions. A study by Muthukrishnan and Kardes (2001) focused on establishing the

conditions under which persistent product attributes occur and how consumers form preferences for attributes or other aspects of products and brands. On their part Gwin and Gwin (2003) aimed at establishing how product's attributes model helped managers to understand the strategic implications of positioning decisions. The cited studies were conducted under different social economic and regulatory conditions compared to Kenya and were *location variant*. They were also not related to horticultural products.

To bridge the identified gaps, the current study simultaneously considered different categories of product attributes and their contribution to the successful branding of fresh fruits and vegetables in Kiambu County. The study addressed the following research question: what is the influence of product attributes on the successful branding of fresh fruits and vegetables in Kiambu County?

Review of Related Literature

The subject matter of this paper was to determine whether there are product attribute related opportunities for the branding of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (FFV). Crawford (1997), states that the initial decision of a producer is whether to brand or not. The author notes that historically, most unprocessed agricultural products have been sold unbranded and that agricultural products are frequently marketed as commodities wherein particular grade bands of a product from one source is considered identical to that from another source. As an illustration, the author claims that Blue Mountain Arabica Coffee from Kenya is a perfect substitute for Blue Mountain Arabica Coffee from Colombia, and vice versa. Similarly, the same grade of Broken Orange Pekoe (B.O.P.) tea from Sri Lanka and from India is a ready substitute for one another. Trienekens (2011) holds a similar position and observes that for most fresh food products, there is limited differentiation and branding of the products at farm level despite the availability of numerous product differentiating attributes.

Keller (2000) noted that a commodity is a product presumably so basic that it cannot be physically differentiated in the minds of consumers. He suggests that the key success factor in branding commodities is that consumers have to become convinced that all the product offerings in the category are not the same and that meaningful differences exist. The basis for successful branding of commodity products is to convince consumers that a product is not a commodity and actually varies appreciably in quality. Keller (2000) notes that what distinguishes a brand from its unbranded commodity counterparts is the sum total of consumers' perceptions and feelings about the

product's attributes and how they perform; the brand name and what it stands for; and the company associated with the brand and what it stands for. Product attributes are the usual criteria by which a consumer will make a buying decision. Hard-Attributes define the product's "infrastructure" – abilities, performances, and reliability. The Soft-Attributes define the product's user-experience, character, looks and feel. The balance between the two is different in different products, but any good product must consider them both in totally separate and different manners.

Connolly and McDermott (2009) assert that today's agricultural producers face the increased challenge of determining how to differentiate their offerings, so that their products are perceived and awarded premium status and price in the consumers' minds. They further note that successful differentiation for agricultural products just like any other product should be based upon genuine differences. However, Trienekens (2011) observes that for most fresh food products, there is limited differentiation and branding of the products at farm level despite the availability of numerous product differentiating attributes. The farmers therefore don't benefit from the value addition acquired through branding. However, due to increased competition, agricultural producers have started adopting branding as a value adding activity (Beverland, 2007).

In differentiation, the physical product need not change since differentiation is due to buyers perceiving a difference in a product (McEwen, 2000). The causes of product differences may either be the functional aspects of products, how they are distributed and marketed or who buys them. Major sources of product differentiation include quality, functional features or design, ignorance of buyers' regarding essential characteristics and qualities of products, sales promotion activities especially advertising, and availability. McEwen (2000) further notes that successful product differentiation moves a product from competing primarily on price basis to competing on non-price factors. Together with facilitating the charging of a price premium, differentiation also adds higher value to a firm's products by making consumers less sensitive to all aspects of a competitor's offerings.

Branding has been described by Kotler and Keller (2009) as a means of helping consumers identify a product by giving it a name and using other brand elements that create mental structures that organize their knowledge about the product. Hess and Bitterman (2008) present brand identity as a mechanism for communicating and shaping public perception of a brand while Hedning, Knudtzen and Bjerre (2009) observe that companies build and manage brand

identity to express an exact set of values, capabilities, and unique sales propositions for the product.

Brand identity is the face of a company or organization and is often the first connection between the brand and its target audience. Effective visual brand identity is achieved by the consistent use of particular visual elements to create distinction such as specific fonts, colors, and graphic elements. It is observed that a good brand identity should be uniquely identifiable, simple enough to be instantly recognizable, culturally relevant and easily reproduced. Further, the identity should use shape and colour to enhance recognition and emotional response, stand the test of time and not date itself quickly, and also have a hidden element or meaning that demands attention. Visual identity as presented by Hedging et al. (2009) is an effective vehicle for demonstrating the distinctiveness of the observable features of a brand.

Brands have been classified on the basis of ownership, market area/geographic coverage, number of products and use by owners of the brand. Poudel (2012) identifies manufacturer's and distributor or middleman's brands on the basis of ownership; local, private and national brands on the bases of area/geographic coverage; family and individual brands on the bases of number of products, and primary and secondary brands on the bases of ownership. Guha (2011) classifies brands depending on the nature of their names. Descriptive brands have names that describe a key benefit or aspect associated with the products and services; person-based brands are identified by the names of owners, partners or key individuals; associative brands use fabricated words that do not normally have meaning in this context, and then uses promotion to forge them into an identity; geographic brand names use local or regional folklore to create a local feel for the product or service or use words to provide a patriotic appeal. Geographic names are used to create an exotic image while alpha-numeric brand names involve the combination of letters and numbers to describe a product.

Geographical indicators guarantee a minimum level of organoleptic attributes to a fresh fruit and vegetable brand. Point of origin branding provides a relatively simple way for farmers to differentiate and add value to their special product attributes arising from their unique place of origin. Halprin (2006) presents eco-labeling as a way of signifying products that meet environmental and/or social standards. Eco-labeling can serve to promote and educate consumers about locally, sustainable or family farm grown foods. On his part, Pearson (2003) noted that some of the attributes sought by consumers such as taste in fresh fruits

fluctuates and are hidden from them at the time of purchase and therefore, a branding is relevant for fruits to reassure consumers of their quality. Consumer satisfaction in fruits was found by Poole and Baron (1996) to be vested in quality attributes that cannot be identified before consumption. The consumer is tends to be unable to distinguish between products from different sources and therefore relies heavily on past experience in deciding which fruit to buy.

As regards variability of quality attributes, Pay et al. (1996) in their study noted that where a producer has a low level of control over product variability and the intrinsic cue is revealed, no label/brand will be necessary. Where there is low control over variability of quality attributes of a product, and the important intrinsic cues are hidden, the level of labelling/branding is high. Products in this category are mostly fruits. For these products, taste was the most important product attribute.

The availability of special product features and properties due to their geographical origin presents opportunities to brand the product on the basis of their geographical place of origin (Willoughby 2004 & Cook 1990). Botonaki (2006) highlights the usefulness of quality assurance schemes to the consumers in the establishment of "quality" which has been accepted as an important ingredient of marketing that offers producers a great opportunity to differentiate themselves in the market and add value to their products. Botonaki (2006) further notes that a place of origin is considered a special property and, the name of many products and the text on the packaging often refers to the region of origin as a way of helping consumers to make the connection between "regional" and/or "authentic", "healthy", "natural" and "exotic" products. According to Thode and Maskulka (1998), where certain crops and livestock are grown, bred or manufactured makes a huge difference to price and perceived quality. Branding FFV can also be based on product's nutritional value. Gonzalez Diaz, et al. (2002) observes that due to the importance consumers are now attaching to nutritional and health values in foods, marketers of FFV are creating brands for these products based on these two attributes.

Aaker (2002) identified product attributes used to brand a certain product to include: high quality, durability, reliability and a premium price. He further noted the importance of using product attributes in branding since attributes are important to the purchase decisions and use experiences. In regard to benefits of product attributes, Aaker (2002) noted that customers are more comfortable talking about attributes than about less tangible benefits. Attributes reassure

managers that customers will evaluate brands using a logical models whereby strong product-attribute associations potentially provide a source of advantage to a brand's ability to respond to changing markets and also provide functional benefits and sometime emotional benefits for customers. Product related attribute can create a value proposition by offering something extra or offering something better.

Kardes (2001) identified what he referred to as an extreme form of attribute preference that involved the tendency of consumers to favor persistently an attribute or a set of attributes to the exclusion of other equally relevant or even more relevant attributes. He further established that the persistent preference for attributes partially explains how consumer bond with a brand.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To establish the associations among product attributes and successful branding of FFV, a descriptive cross sectional survey design was adopted. This design facilitated establishment of and description of relationships among variables (Kothari, 2004). It was

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$
 where *n* is sample size, *N* is the population size, and *e* is the error term (0.05). Using *N* = 213 in the formula, the resulting sample size (*n*) is 140 farmers.

The data was collected using a semi structured questionnaire through the direct interrogation method (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). The questionnaire was administered directly to the respondents through the assistance of Agricultural Extension Officers (AEO) who were recruited as research assistants due to their close association with the farmers. The extension officers offer's advice and other related services to the farmers in their normal day to day activities.

The study variables were operationalized and measured using direct measures and 4 point rating scales ranging from 1=Not important to 4=Very important; 1=Not strong to 4=Very strong; 1=Not at all to 4=Great extent. Data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi-square, linear regression and correlation analysis). Stepwise regression was used to bring out the individual effects in the form: $Y_1 = a_0 + b_1X_1 + e_1$; for effect of product attributes on successful branding of FFV.

RESULTS

Data values were collected from 140 farmers spread in seven sub-counties in Kiambu County. The 140 questionnaires were successfully filled and found suitable for further analysis resulting in a response rate of 100%. This compared favourably with a similar

cross sectional since it was conducted once to pick the parameters of a phenomenon at a specific time with an aim of accurately capturing the characteristics of the population relating to what, where, how and when of a research topic (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

The study population had 213 commercial farmers. The population consisted of individual farmers (male & female), women groups, resident groups, cooperatives, limited liability companies and government departments growing between one and three crops in farms ranging between 5.5 to 0.125 acres. They engaged in farming activities to generate income. This study adopted stratified random sampling which allowed for making of probability based confidence estimates of various parameters (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The key target was the owners or managers of commercial FFV farms. From the target population, the farmers were stratified into seven sub-counties and a proportionate sample drawn relative to the size of each. To determine the sample size, a formula proposed by Israel (2009) was applied as follows:

study conducted among farmers by Bremmer et al. (2002) which had a response rate of 86.5%.

The study sought to establish the reliability of the research instrument by computing the Cronbach's alpha coefficient in regard to the elements in the study variables. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients indicated reliability level of the instrument at 0.7364. The level was above the acceptable minimum value of 0.50 (Cronbach, 1951) and above the recommended value of 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The internal consistency of measures used was considered to have adequately measured the relevant variables.

Product Attributes and Successful Branding

Product attributes attract customer's attention and are a basis for branding practices. To establish the effect of these attributes on successful branding of FFV in Kiambu County, the respondents were asked to mention the importance of various attributes in motivating consumers' preference for their products. The identified attributes were: they have longer shelf life; have higher nutritional value; they have a unique place of origin; they have special taste/colour; they have medical value; use unique production method and they mature faster. Their responses on importance of the attributes in successful branding of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables are summarized in Table 1 below.

According to the results presented in Table 1, seven product attributes were mentioned as those that influenced consumer preference for FFV products. The product attributes with the highest mean scores were longer shelf life (mean score= 3.26, CV= 33.31), special taste/colour (mean score= 2.81, CV= 36.51) and higher nutritional value (mean score = 2.55, CV= 42.90). The attributes rated highest in contributing to successful branding of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables are those the consumer is able to confirm such as colour/taste, shelf life and maturing period while the attributes that were more difficult to confirm such as production method, health value and place of origin were considered less important in contributing to successful branding of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.

Summary on Performance of Commercial Farmers

The constructs used to measure performance of branded fresh fruits and vegetable products were price, volume, profitability and satisfaction achieved by the respondent farmers. Table 2 contains a summary of the individual indicators of the achieved performance. Table 2 shows low overall average levels of performance of branded Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (mean score=1.77, CV=44.11). Farmer satisfaction recorded the highest performance (mean score=2.72, CV=22.77) implying that on average, farmers were

satisfied with their branding initiatives. Price premium had the lowest performance (mean score=1.25, CV= 39.41) which indicated that the branded products were not earning the expected price premiums.

At an individual performance construct level, own products earned higher prices than competitor non-branded products from within and outside the county. Majority of the respondent farmers engaging in branding practices indicated that they earned a premium price. Their numbers had increased progressively over the last three years. The results further revealed that even though in the minority, there was an increasing number of both small and large scale FFV farmers engaging in and benefiting from branding of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The commercial farmers attributing profitability to branding of fresh fruits and vegetables increased progressively over the three previous years. Results on the extent to which the respondent farmers were satisfied with the achieved price, volume and profitability from their branded FFV products revealed average levels of satisfaction with the three indicators. However, volume harvested and price earned from branded FFV had slightly higher levels of satisfaction than profitability.

Table 1: Product attributes and successful branding of fresh fruits and vegetables

Importance of attribute	N	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	CV (%)
They have longer shelf life	133	3.26	1.09	33.31
Have higher nutritional value	132	2.55	1.09	42.90
Have a unique place of origin	126	2.10	1.20	56.95
They have special taste/colour	135	2.81	1.03	36.51
They have medical value	126	2.05	1.23	59.76
Use unique production method	134	2.09	1.22	58.52
They mature faster	129	2.35	1.12	48.41
Overall Average Score	132	2.459	1.139	48.051

Source: Primary data.

Table 2: Summary on performance of branded fresh fruits and vegetables

Overall summary of performance of farmers	N	Mean score	Standard Dev.	CV (%)
Price premium	99	1.25	0.493	39.41
Sales Volume	126	1.59	1.089	68.62
Profitability	124	1.51	0.917	60.68
Satisfaction	140	2.72	0.619	22.77
Overall average score	-	1.77	0.780	44.11

Source: Primary data.

Implications of the Study

The results indicate an overall low adoption of branding of fresh fruits and vegetable products despite the availability of requisite product attributes. Longer shelf life and special taste/colour had the highest contribution to successful branding of FFV. The low

levels of branding resulted in weak brand differentiation and therefore low motivation for consumers to pay a premium for any specific brands. The low prices resulted in low profitability. To attract premium prices and improve on financial performance the available attributes should be utilized to develop

brands that clearly differentiate FFV products and remove them from the commodity classification. With the low adoption of branding FFV products, only a few farmers benefited from differentiating their products based on the available product attributes.

The policy makers in the agricultural sector should exploit the available FFV product attributes to encourage more farmers to brand their products. The results further revealed that when considered jointly, product attributes contributed significantly to branding of FFV. The farmers should adopt the most prominent product attribute(s) in branding their products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to commercial FFV farmers and the government. Foremost, the study has established that even though branding influences the performance of FFV products, only a minority of the farmers utilize available product attributes to brand their FFV. It is recommended that all farmers should consider utilizing the available product attributes to differentiate their FFV products through branding. Investing in branding by FFV farmers is justified by the expected improvement in financial performance.

To achieve the aspirations in Kenya's Vision 2030, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries has identified product branding among other initiatives as one of the targeted value addition initiatives. The findings of this study confirm that branding has significant influence on the performance of FFV. It is recommended that for the country to achieve the stated aspirations farmers should be encouraged to exploit the available product benefits to brand their FFV and achieve clear brand differentiation. The ministry should set up the requisite infrastructure and provide the facilitation and resources required to enlighten and support farmers in their branding initiatives. Qualified personnel on branding and marketing in general should be availed to enhance farmers' branding initiatives.

This study established that product attributes can be utilized to successfully brand FFV products. The study focused only on FFV among all other agricultural products offered to the market in their fresh unprocessed form. To expand the scope of the study, future research should cover product attributes of other fresh agricultural products. The study considered seven constructs in the independent and four constructs in the dependent variable. The variables and constructs were not exhaustive and it is possible to extend the number of variables and constructs to expand the study's scope and level of generalization.

The study population was limited to Kiambu County which has unique characteristics that favour the commercialization of the FFV sub-sector of the horticultural sector. While the findings of the study provide useful insight into the interrelationship among the study variables, the unique characteristics of the county may limit the extent of generalization to other counties. This calls for an extension of the study to other counties with differing social economic and climatic conditions to confirm the established relationships in the current study.

The findings of the study revealed that only a small proportion of the farmers utilize the available product attributes to brand their FFV products. This limited the number of respondents who comprehensively contributed to most of the issues regarding utilization of product attributes for branding purposes. To get an in depth expose of the subject matter, a study targeting only farmers undertaking branding practices would be preferred. The study recommends to Kiambu County Farmers, Kiambu County Government and other FFV exporters to Europe, USA and other foreign markets to export branded FFV to boost the social economic status of their farmers and also generate foreign exchange for the country.

The present study adopted a descriptive cross sectional survey design which involved collecting data once at a specific time. The study also relied on the data provided by the respondents to evaluate the contribution of different product attributes to successful branding of FFV products. Branding takes time to generate results. A time series design would enable the gathering of continuous data to demonstrate the application of product attributes in branding and the effect of branding throughout the life cycle of the product. A study should be designed to collect collaborative secondary data to confirm the self-reported data provided by the respondents. This would reduce the subjectivity in the provided data and strengthen the reliability of the study findings.

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