

The Influence of Selected Marketing Strategies on the Brand Favorability: A Special Reference to the Yemeni Market

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to determine the role of marketing strategies in brand favorability. It is a primary data research where data was collected through questionnaire. For analyzing purpose, AMOS and SPSS software have been used. A convenient sampling method was applied to select the respondents. The EFA is applied to construct the study dimensions. The validity and reliability were testing using the CFA outcomes. To test the hypotheses, the Structural Equation Modeling was used. The study found that, there is a positive and direct impact between distribution strategy, labeling strategy, advertising strategy, and brand favorability. Theoretically, the results can be used as a start point for making deep research in the same area. Practically, the results provide marketing managers with many suggestions for improving marketing strategies. The study results are limited only to the consumers in, small geographic area, Ibb town, Yemen.

Keywords: Key words: Brand Favorability, Distribution Strategy, Labeling Strategy, Advertising Strategy, EFA, CFA, SEM

1. Introduction

In the era of severe competition, increased brand favorability is an essential goal for companies to increase their market share, revenue, and customers. Today customers demand is changed according to the change in the competition. Enhancing Brand favorability is a base stone of this competition. According to Gupta et al. (2020a), "brand favorability directly and positively influences brand competitiveness in addition to building brand value". More so, the global competition led to a reduction in the product life cycle. This made more emphasis on companies to follow appropriate marketing strategies in order to enhance the favorability of their brands. According to Gupta et al. (2020b), it is important to investigate the consumer favorability toward branded and unbranded products. According to literature, favorability can be viewed as a feature, benefits, associations, or characteristics that determine the consumer attitude toward the brand (Dacin & Smith, 1994; Dillon et al., 1986; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010; Keller, 2003; Mahajan & Wind, 2002).

Marketing strategies play a crucial role to direct and manage the consumers' behavior. Many studies discussed the relation between marketing strategies and brand favorability. Yusheng and Ibrahim (2018) confirmed the essential role of branding strategy in a highly competitive market. In addition, distribution strategy is another factor for enhancing brand favorability. In the same quest, Yoo et al. (2000) confirmed that intensive distribution increases consumer favorability as a result of time-saving, place utility, and reduction of sacrifices. Also, labelling strategy plays a crucial role in forming the consumers' perception toward the brand favorability (Wright, 2010).

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According to Juni and Gross (2008), the label plays a critical role in distinguishing one product from another at point of sale, especially with wide choices in branded products. In the same quest, Gialitakis and Chryssochoidis (2006) mentioned that manufacturers use many executions to differentiate their packs; these include colors, graphics, pictures, symbols, etc.

Still very few studies explore the relationship between marketing strategies and brand favorability in general and specifically in the Yemeni market. However, we found much literature about marketing strategies and consumer attitude but mostly are in developed countries' context. The authors of the present study are failed to find a study on overall marketing, affecting brand favorability among Yemeni consumers.

In contrast with previous studies, this study is an empirical study from the Yemeni consumers' perspective. This paper aims at investigating the relation between selected marketing strategies and consumer attitude toward brand favorability. We investigated many marketing strategies that may affect Yemeni consumers toward brand favorability like Intensive Distribution, Product Innovation, Customer Value-Based Pricing, and Labeling. The study provides researchers, marketers, and managers with an important glance about factors affecting consumers' brand favorability in the Yemeni market. The research into consumer behavior is still in its infancy stage in the Yemeni market. Therefore, this paper entirely based on consumer behavior aspects.

This article is structured as follows. Section two presents literature review. Section three provides the research hypotheses and model. Section four describes the research methodology, section five discusses the results, and section six gives the implications of the study. Section seven concludes, section eight presents implications and section nine give the limitations of the research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Brand Favorability

Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2010) mentioned that successful brand positioning is standing on two pillars "differentiation and favorability". The differentiation is related to the product, where the favorability is related to consumer perception toward the brand (Mahajan & Wind, 2002). According to Dacin and Smith (1994), brand favorability means, "The brand must be accompanied by positive associations". Favorability degree determines whether the consumers have a positive associations/ characteristics toward the brand (Dacin & Smith, 1994; Dillon et al., 1986; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010; Keller, 2003; Mahajan & Wind, 2002). In addition, Keller (2003) concluded that customers perceived the brand as favorable when its features/ benefits meet their needs and want. According to Virutamasen et al. (2015) "brand association includes connecting images and symbols with a specific brand or its benefits. Furthermore, Keller (2003) determined two sources of consumer favorability for a particular brand: brand image and brand identity. Brand image is about consumer perception toward a brand, whereas, brand identity is about the brand association (Keller, 2003).

2.2. Distribution

According to Yoo et al. (2000), distribution strategy is effective when products are distributed in large numbers in the market. For increasing favorability level, companies may distribute selectively or exclusively rather than intensively (Yoo et al., 2000). However, consumers may be more satisfied when products are available intensively because saving time and efforts (Ferris, Oliver & de Kluyver, 1989). According to Smith (1992), distribution strategy increases consumer satisfaction as a result of time-saving, place utility, and reduction of sacrifices. According to Burnett (2008), companies like Timex and Conca-Cola have achieved success depending on their distribution strategy. Moliner et al. (2007) confirmed that "customer perceive the high-quality products from high advertising spending, high price, good store image, and high intensive distribution". In contrast with selective distribution, intensive distribution is used to sell products in as many outlets as possible; such a strategy is fit for convenience goods (Tanner, 2012).

2.3. Branding

Saeed, et. al. (2013) mentioned, "Labeling influences the consumer buying behavior, but there are some other factors also, which influence the consumer buying behavior". Wright (2010) mentioned that " Faced with the arrays of product choices at the point of sale the effective use of labeling will help to support the advertised claims". Davies and Wright, (1994) confirmed that labeling plays an important role in differentiating one product from another, especially the consumers are faced many alternative branded processed products. In the same quest, Borin et al. (2010) confirmed that, more labeling information may lead to misleading the consumers, where he found that " From over 450 foods sampled survey, 79 per cent of labels and 79 per cent of advertisements were classified as unacceptable". Similarly, the Consumer's Association in 1988, as cited in (Borin et al., 2010),stated, consumers may be confused over brand claims.

2.4. Advertising

Belch and Belch (2013) stated, "Advertising creativity is both original and appropriate". Belch and Belch (2012) stated, "The manner in which an advertising message is planned and executed can often lead to the ultimate success or failure of a product/ brand". Many studies found that advertising strategy could affect positively of the success of a product or a brand. Miller (1991) found that, advertising strategy has a positive influence on the purchasing intentions, brand preference, and persuasiveness. In addition, Campbell (2011) concluded, "the world's most valuable brands receive positive financial impacts due to great advertising creativity". Similarly, Sheinin et al. (2011) found that advertising strategy had a positive influence on attitude toward both short and long-term recall as well as the brand differentiation. While a study by Anderson (2004) indicates, "creative advertising for the Apple iPod broke through the clutter and generated positive publicity for the product".

3. Study Hypotheses and Model

This study is exploratory. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to construct dimensions of this study. Based on the outcome of the EFA, the conceptual study framework was developed, as shown in figure 1.

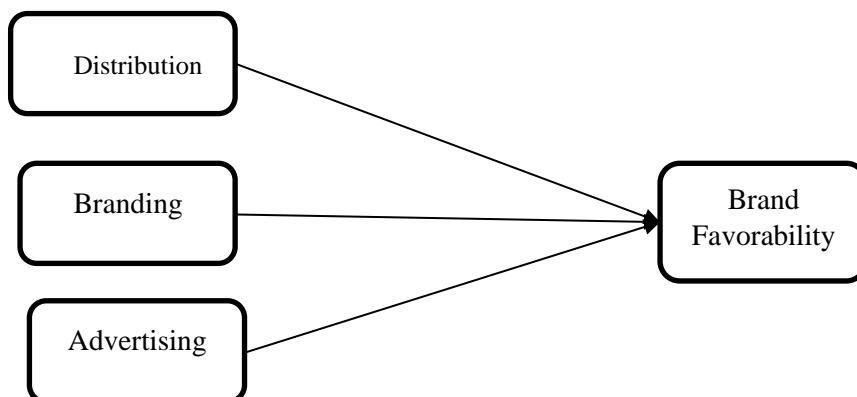


Figure 1. Conceptual model

According to the above figure, there are three main hypotheses as to the following:

H01: The distribution strategy has no impact on the brand favorability.

H02: The branding strategy has no impact on the brand favorability.

H03: The advertising strategy has no impact on the brand favorability.

4. Research Methodology

This study aims to test the relationship between distribution strategy, branding strategy, advertising strategy, and brand favorability, in the context of convenience goods, in the Yemeni market. The factor analysis was applied to construct the variables of this study (Malhotra, 2007). A convenient sampling method was applied to select the participants who located in Ibb town, Yemen. In total, 600 respondents, only 488 responses were selected for further analysis. The data was analyzed using the SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 20.0 software. The hypotheses are tested using structural equation modelling (SEM). The reliability and validity are tested using the outcomes of CFA.

5. Results and Discussions

5.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a powerful statistical tool to combine a set of items to measure the same construct (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). Since the items of this study are self-constructed, the factor analysis was used to construct the related factors. In addition, EFA with CFA were used to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

Pre EFA, the sample size is taken into consideration as well as the relationship between the variables (Malhotra, 2007). Therefore, KMO and Bartlett's test (Table 1) is applied.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.911
	Approx. Chi-Square	13582.675
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	210
	Sig.	0.000

The KMO test is applied to test the sampling adequacy for running the EFA (Barrett et al., 2011). According to Leech et al. (2005), the KMO value should be larger than 0.50 for sampling adequacy. According to table 1, the KMO value is 0.911. Therefore, the sample size of this study is adequate for running the EFA. Besides (Table 1) reveals that Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is 0.000. Therefore, the correlation matrix is significantly different from an identity matrix.

The rotated component matrix is used to show how close the relationship between the questions in variables (Sagala et al., 2014). High loadings indicate a close relationship. Table 2 contains the rotated component matrix results; there are four factors; named favorability, distribution, advertising, and branding.

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix

	Rotated Component Matrix ^a			
	Component			
	Favorability Degree	Distribution	Advertising	Branding
FavD42	.768			
FavD41	.746			
FavD40	.736			
FavD43	.688			
FavD44	.648			
FavD38	.618			
FavD39	.596			
PD27		.811		
PD28		.760		
PD26		.704		
PD29		.574		
PD30		.504		
PC24			.776	
PC23			.734	
PC25			.684	
PC22			.591	
PC21			.426	
PA9				.731
PA10				.701
PA8				.690
PA11				.563

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Equamax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Favorability factor contains seven items with loadings ranged from 0.768 to 0.596. Distribution factor contains five items with loadings ranged from 0.811 to 0.504. Advertising factor contains five items with loadings ranged from 0.776 to 0.426. Branding factor contains four items with loadings ranged from 0.731 to 0.563.

According to table 3, the four constructed factors explained 53.787 of the total variance. The first factor explains about 17.656 % of the variance. The second, third and fourth factors represent 13.232 %, 12.173 %, and 10.725% respectively.

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.603	31.443	31.443	6.603	31.443	31.443	3.708	17.656	17.656
2	1.710	8.143	39.586	1.710	8.143	39.586	2.779	13.232	30.888
3	1.520	7.239	46.825	1.520	7.239	46.825	2.556	12.173	43.061
4	1.462	6.961	53.787	1.462	6.961	53.787	2.252	10.725	53.787

5.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

According to Suhr (2006) confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is "a statistical technique used to verify the factor structure of a set of observed variables. It allows the researcher to test the hypothesis that a relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs exists". The factor loadings shown in EFA (table 2) were consistently confirmed in CFA (figure 2).

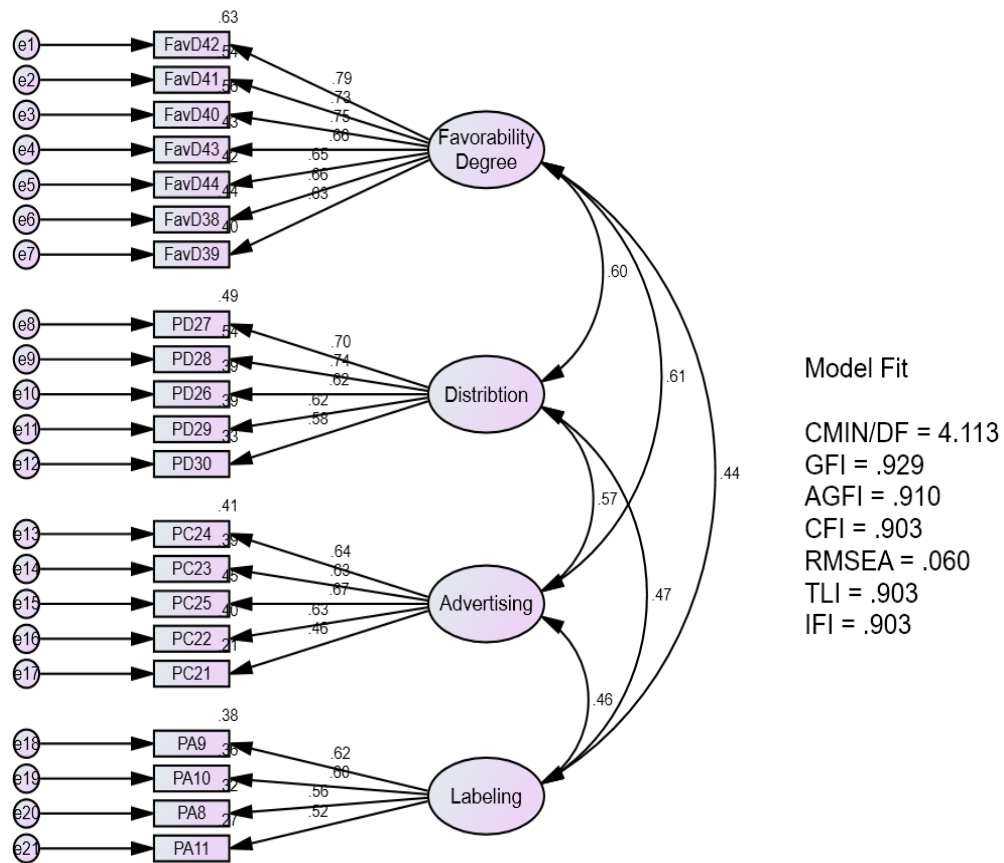


Figure 2. CFA

The overall statistics of the CFA measurement model were as follows CMIN/DF = 4.113, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), TLI, IFI, were 0.929, 0.910, 0.903, 0.060, 0.903, and 0.903, respectively. These statistical values indicate a good and reasonable model fit.

5.3. Reliability and Validity

Joppe (2000) defined reliability as "The extent to which results are consistent over time, and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability, and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable". Whereas, Golafshani (2003) defined validity as "whether the means of measurement are accurate and whether they measure what they are intended to measure".

5.4. Construct validity

Hair et al. (2010) suggested two methods for testing construct validity; convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity assumes that items that are indicators of a specific construct should share a high proportion of variance in common (Golafshani, 2003). The AVE was used to test the convergent method. The rule of thumb is that AVE values of 0.5 or higher indicate a good convergent validity (Hair et al. 2010). In addition, discriminant validity refers to the extent to which constructs are distinct (Kemp et al., 2012). It is proved by comparing Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) with AVE for each construct (Kemp et al., 2012). MSV

is the square of inter-correlation between two constructs (factors). If MSV is less than AVE, the discriminant validity is confirmed (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Vareiables	CR	AVE	MSV
Advertising	0.749	0.578	0.377
Favorability Degree	0.873	0.500	0.377
Distribution	0.800	0.547	0.373
Labeling	0.778	0.546	0.221

Table 5. Factor correlation matrix with the square root of the EVA

MaxR(H)	Advertising	Favorability Degree	Distribution	Labeling
0.761	0.615			
0.881	0.614	0.705		
0.813	0.598	0.611	0.669	
0.682	0.470	0.467	0.450	0.588

5.5. Hypotheses Testing and Interpretation

The hypotheses and structural model were evaluated after attaining a well-validated measurement model. The model fit is reliable and valid satisfactory where CMIN/DF is 4.112, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) is 0.925, AGFI is 0.905, CFI is 0.902, RMSEA is 0.062, and IFI is .903. Therefore, the structural model analyzed is fit where all the Goodness of fit statistics were acceptable.

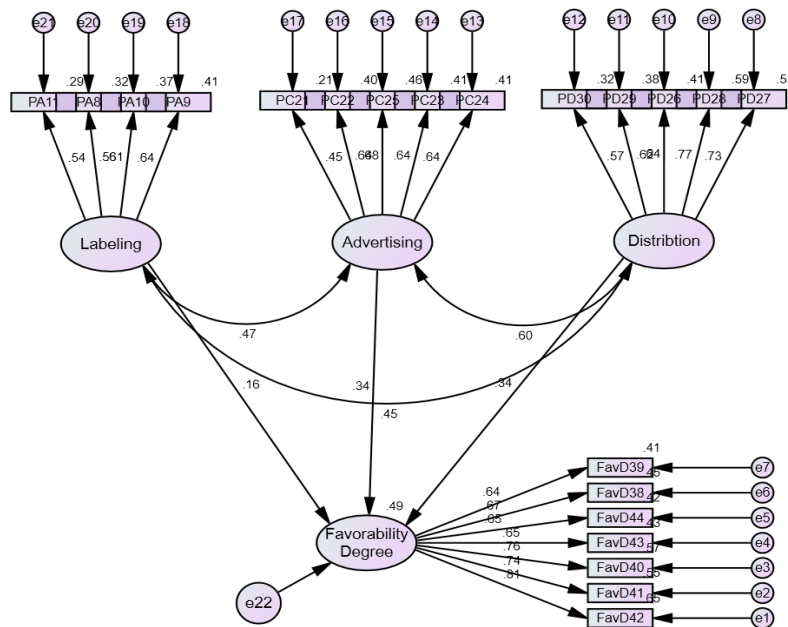


Figure 3. SEM

The relationship between variables is evaluated using structural equation modelling (SEM). The SEM determined the selected marketing strategies (labeling, Advertising, and distribution) as exogenous variables. These exogenous variables are matching to one endogenous variable (brand favorability).

The results show that all the hypotheses, suggested in this study, are supported. H01 shows a direct impact of distribution strategy on brand favorability ($\beta = 0.467$, $t = 10.02$, $p = .000$). The β value = 0.467 indicates that distribution strategy affects the dependent variable brand favorability by about 46 per cent. Therefore, a 1 per cent increase in distribution strategy will result in a 46 per cent improvement in brand favorability. The t-value ($t = 10.02$) and p-value ($p = 0.000$) reveal the positive and direct relationship between distribution strategy and brand favorability.

Second hypothesis, the impact of labeling strategy on brand favorability, was also supported ($\beta = 0.195$, $t = 5.002$, $p = 0.000$). The β -value 0.195 indicates that labeling strategy influences the dependent variable brand favorability by about 19 per cent. Therefore, a 1 per cent increase in labeling strategy would result in a 19 per cent improvement in brand favorability. The t-value ($t = 5.002$) and p-value ($p = 0.000$) also indicate the positive and direct relationship between labeling strategy and brand favorability.

The third hypothesis, the impact of advertising strategy on brand favorability, was also supported ($\beta = 0.445$, $t = 9.339$, $p = 0.000$). The β -value 0.445 indicates that advertising strategy influences the dependent variable brand favorability by about 44 per cent. Therefore, a 1 per cent increase in advertising strategy would result in a 44 per cent improvement in brand favorability. The t-value ($t = 9.339$) and p-value ($p = 0.000$) also indicate the positive and direct relationship between advertising strategy and brand favorability.

The R^2 (0.487) indicates that, overall, the independent variables, distribution strategy, labeling strategy, and advertising strategy predicted the dependent variable brand favorability by 48.7 per cent (Table 6). Therefore, the error variance of brand favorability is approximately 52.3 per cent of the total variance.

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing Results

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)							
	Path		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Decision
Favorability Degree	<---	Distribution	0.467	0.047	10.02	***	Reject
Favorability Degree	<---	Labeling	0.195	0.039	5.002	***	Reject
Favorability Degree	<---	Advertising	0.445	0.048	9.339	***	Reject
	R^2			0.487			

6. Discussion

The study found a positive and significant relation between distribution strategy and brand favorability. This finding is in line with Ferris et al. (1989), Smith (2000), and Moliner et al. (2007) who found that effective distribution strategy led to enhancing consumers' favorability due to saving time, efforts, place utility, and reduction of sacrifices.

Furthermore, the study revealed a positive and significant relationship between labelling strategy and brand differentiation. In the same quest, Talebnejad et al. (2019) found that illustrate some color and shape attributes play a significant role in the perception of Iranian consumers toward selecting a brand. Furthermore, Gulzira and Han (2019) mentioned that labeling is a psychological factor that shapes consumer's behavior and their decision. They found a positive and significant relation between labeling strategy and brand favorability.

Also, the study found that advertising strategy has a positive and direct impact on brand favorability. This result is consistent with the results of Belch and Belch (2012), who found that advertising message, may lead to the failure or success of a product or a brand. Furthermore, this finding is consistent with findings of Sheinin et al. (2011) who found that effective advertising strategy has a positive impact on consumer attitude and brand favorability.

7. Conclusion

The study investigated many marketing strategies that may affect Yemeni consumers toward brand favorability like distribution strategy, labeling strategy, and advertising strategy. The study provides researchers,

marketers, and managers with an important glance about factors affecting consumers' brand favorability in the Yemeni market. A convenient sampling method was applied to select the participants who located in Ibb town, Yemen. In total, 600 respondents, only 488 responses were selected for further analysis after the initial data cleaning and screening. The study found that distribution strategy, labeling strategy, and advertising strategy have a significant and positive impact on the brand favorability. Theoretically, this study supported by previous studies in the same field. In addition, the findings of this study will benefit the researchers in emerging markets like Yemeni market. Practically, this study provides marketers and manufactures of convenience goods, in Yemeni market, the essential factors affecting the consumers toward brand favorability.

8. Study Implications

Theoretically, the results will add to previous findings on the marketing strategies and its impact on brand favorability. This study is a start point for Yemeni researchers to do more investigation in the same field. In addition, the questionnaire of this study is valid and reliable; therefore, academicians can use it for the similar studies.

Practically, based on the findings, the researcher proposes the following contributions for marketers, manufacturer, and researchers. Manufactures should make more effort to promoting labelling and pricing strategies. We suggest crucial elements, for improving labelling strategy, like using appropriate images, symbols, clear instructions and information. In addition, the study model predicts only 48.7 percent of the variance of brand favorability; we suggest that researchers do more research on the factors affecting brand favorability. Also, the questionnaire of this study is valid and reliable, and it can be used for similar studies. The study provides an evidence from low-income country. Various studies pointed out that there is a need to examine different issues in emerging and low-income countries (e.g., Al Maqtari et al., 2020, Farhan et al., 2020; Hashed & Almaqtari, 2020). Accordingly the present study provides an insight that similar studies could be conducted in different other emerging and low-income countries contexts.

9. Limitations

The convenience sampling method was used for collecting data, which has many limitations like lack of findings generalization. Future studies can use other sampling methods like judgmental sampling and random simple sampling methods. The second limitation is that the study model interprets only about 48.7 % of the total variance of brand favorability; we consider this as a research gap for future studies. . In addition, future studies can expand the geographical area of respondents. Furthermore, future studies can investigate why consumer prefer some specific brands to other brands of the same product.

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