Low-Price Toys from Germany and High-Tech Cars from China? Exploring the Lead Market Dimension of Country Image

Developing markets continue to play a growing role in the world economy. Traditionally, research assumes that companies from developing markets are facing negative country-of-origin effects. The country-of-origin effect describes the influence of the country-of-origin image on consumer perceptions of this country’s products. While established research has identified various factors influencing the relation between country-of-origin image and product perception, e.g., product category and consumer characteristics, country-specific influencing factors remain scarcely researched. Building upon the Lead Market Theory, the goal of this thesis is to investigate the role of a country’s Lead Market category, e.g., cost leader or technology leader, in perceptions of this country’s products. To this end, a consumer experiment shall be designed and conducted. Specifically, this thesis shall find out whether the image of a country is perceived consistently by consumers across different Lead Market dimensions or whether the formation of country image depends on individual Lead Market dimensions. Finally, explicit managerial implications should map out adequate international marketing instruments to overcome negative country-of-origin effects.

Type: Literature review and experiment

Advisor: Sergej von Janda

Literature:


In Search for Theory: The Modularity of Innovations as a Driver of Success in Emerging Markets

The modular design of product- and service offerings is an increasingly widespread approach in emerging markets. So-called "freemium" services, modular infotainment systems, or platform-based car designs are just some examples out of many. It is the aim of this thesis to explore the drivers behind a modular innovation design from both a firm and customer perspective and to derive theoretical explanations for the success of this approach from the application of a Grounded Theory Approach to data from expert interviews with innovation managers from emerging markets as well as existing literature and cases from practice.

**Type:** Expert interviews and applied grounded theory

**Advisor:** Sergej von Janda

**Literature:**


# The Digitalization of Marketing in Emerging Markets

The commercial use of the internet and the rise of digital marketing began almost three decades ago. Today, practitioners and scholars highlight the increasing relevance of digital marketing channels and customer relations worldwide – also in emerging economies in Africa, Latin America, or India. Digital technologies such as the Internet of Things, Smart Products, or Artificial Intelligence promise significant potential to transform consumers’ lives in emerging economies when they become available to the masses. As emerging economies are fundamentally different from developed markets, it is important to understand the particular challenges and opportunities for firms in the digitalization of marketing in emerging market environments. Hence, it is the aim of this thesis to identify the antecedents and consequences of digital marketing in emerging economies from a firm perspective, building on a comprehensive literature review and data from expert interviews. Implications with regard to the challenges and opportunities of digital marketing in emerging economies shall be provided for academia and practice.

**Type:** Literature review and expert interviews

**Advisor:** Sergej von Janda

**Literature:**

