



EFFECTS OF PRODUCT IMAGE ON CONSUMER'S PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION PROCESSES

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The specific objectives of the study were to investigate (1) at purchase, the effects of product image on consumers' perceptions of product performance and expectations for future performance and the price consumers were willing to pay for the product and (2) after consumption, the effects of product image on consumers' perceptions of after-wash performance and their satisfaction.

The experimental design was used to determine whether cause-and-effect relationships exist between the treatment variables and the dependent variables. A 2 x 2 between-subjects factorial design, with two levels of product image (high and low) and two levels of after-wash performance (poor and good), was developed. This design resulted in four experimental groups. One hundred twenty university students were recruited and randomly assigned to one of the four experimental groups, 30 for each group. Participants received sample sweat shirts (new and used) in simulated purchase and consumption stages and answered questionnaires.

Results showed that product image significantly and positively influenced participants' perceptions of performance at purchase, expectations for future performance, and price willing to pay. When effects of product image on perceptions after product consumption were examined, results showed that, when product performance was good, product image had a significant and positive influence on perceptions of product performance and satisfaction. When product performance was poor, a significant and negative influence was found on satisfaction. The high product image actually damaged participants' satisfaction with the product.