



Shaping your Product for Success in Emerging African Economies: A Gendered Study in the SME Industry in Mauritius

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Abstract

This paper explores how product shapes influence consumers' attitudes towards products interest and purchase from a gendered perspective in the SME industry in Mauritius. It also investigates upon the dual-effect relationship that may exist between prior brand gender perceptions and product shapes. The paper follows an exploratory research approach and uses both primary and secondary data. Responses are collected from 70 consumers using quota sampling whereby equal amounts of men and women were involved and multiple empirical tests (eta test, independent sample t-test and Pearson Correlation test) are carried out to investigate on the impact of product shapes on consumer attitudes in Mauritius. The findings indicate that product shapes help in product identification, repeat purchase, product recall and in attracting consumers' attention. The study also revealed that people pair round shaped products with femininity, angular shaped products with masculinity and spherical shaped products with no gender. Furthermore, it was noted that a prior brand gender perception has no impact on product shape. These findings serve as the building blocks for SMEs in Mauritius to provide the right product shape to the specific target market. It also serves as a guideline on how SMEs can be more competitive after the Covid-19 pandemic in order to re-launch their business and gain profits. This paper is, as far as it's known, the first to investigate on product shapes' impact on consumers' attitudes in the SME industry in Mauritius. The study aims to find out how SMEs can be more competitive in the post Covid-19 Mauritian market by focusing on the product shape to add to their competitive advantage.

Keywords: Product Shapes, Gender Marketing, Small and Medium Businesses, Marketing Strategy.



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