

ABSTRACT

A product's country of origin is one of the extrinsic cues that consumers use in product evaluation. There is an ongoing debate concerning the magnitude of the effect, particularly in the presence of other extrinsic and intrinsic product information cues that may facilitate or inhibit reliance on country of origin.

Since importing wristwatches to Thailand especially those from Japan and Switzerland has increased dramatically from year to year, this study investigated the differences in consumer's perception of selected elements (quality, technology sophistication, product features, brand recognition, value, and retailer) between Swiss and Japanese wristwatches.

Sample survey method was used to collect the data. This research applied non-probability technique with judgmental sampling for selecting the sample. A total of 400 sets of questionnaires were distributed to Thai consumers (both male and female above 18 years of age) who were shopping for wristwatches from either Switzerland or Japan, in five areas of Bangkok. Of these, 389 sets were considered as valid and these were used in the analysis.

This study was assessed by using Mann-Whitney U test procedure. The research found differences in consumer's perception of quality, product features, brand recognition, value, and retailer between Switzerland and Japan, whereas, technological sophistication showed no difference. Overall, the study reveals that Thai

consumers have perspective towards wristwatch made in Switzerland as superior to those made in Japan.

The study ended with specific recommendations for marketer of Swiss and Japanese watches. The recommendations, based on the findings, were that the marketers and dealers of Swiss wristwatches should provide special and unique of product designs, various price ranges of wristwatches, develop their products to better serve consumers in the market, organize promotional activities and marketing events from time to time and always keep their product updated and in trend at retail shops. Alternatively, the marketers and dealers of Japanese wristwatches should emphasize product quality more than they did earlier. They should create the product innovation to the market, offer variety of products, maintain good relationships with consumers, and employ advertising campaigns to create brand familiarity and sales promotion to stimulate consumer demand.

