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HOW YOUNG ADULTS IN AN EMERGING MARKET LOOK AT 'COOL'

Abstract:

Increased globalization, has made it imperative for marketers to understand consumers in different parts of the world. The growing youth segment in many emerging markets is a key target for many marketers. 'Cool' stands high on the desirability scale amongst youth in many countries and may be used as a heuristic to make purchase decisions. This study provides insights into the features that make things cool for young adults in middle class urban India. It highlights the paradoxical character of cool. Cool goes beyond attractive, trendy and classy to encompass innovativeness, uniqueness and confidence. High-technology, innovative products are considered the most cool. Being cool is important to this set of consumers. Being straightforward and being oneself are behaviours considered to be cool. The desire for uniqueness is not about rebelling and breaking off from the mainstream, but rather about seeking appreciation within the existing framework. The desire to 'do one's own thing' combined with the premium this group places on the consumption of experience-adventure and enjoyment- offers rich opportunities for brand positioning and advertising. Though this consumer segment has considerable exposure through various media to western culture and celebrities, Indian sportsperson and movie stars are its cool role models. The study findings also have relevance for marketers operating in or entering other emerging markets.

Keywords:

Cool, Young Adults, Emerging Markets, India, Aspirational Value, Celebrities

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