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Perception of Customers towards Saudi and International Quality Marks and Products: An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the perception of customers in Saudi Arabia towards Saudi quality mark and to identify the customers' evaluation of both Saudi and international quality marks and products. For that purpose, 481 questionnaires were distributed online and 479 questionnaires were found usable for analysis. The largest groups of respondents were males, Saudi nationals, hold bachelor degrees, work for the government and residents of the Western region. The study revealed that the vast majority of customers in Saudi Arabia are uncertain if they have had a positive experience concerning products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark and hence they are uncertain if they would recommend others to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark and are uncertain if they can recognize Saudi quality mark logo. Customers also do not have high trust to the certification process of SASO and they lack enough information about Saudi quality mark. Moreover, customers' satisfaction about Saudi quality mark is not high as compared to other international quality marks. When performed, T-test indicates a statistically significant variation in the perception of customers related to nationality and gender in terms of awareness and satisfactions where female and non-Saudis respondents were found to be more positive towards Saudi quality mark. ANOVA indicated differences in the levels of awareness about Saudi quality mark in educational, occupation and region of residency. On that regard, it was found that respondents with bachelor or higher degrees along with residents of the Southern region are also more positive than others. Customers in Saudi Arabia evaluated products from Germany, Japan, USA, UK, France and Italy as of excellent quality, respectively; while Switzerland, South Korea and Brazil as of good quality, respectively; nevertheless, UAE, Saudi Arabia, India and China products were evaluated as being of reasonable quality, respectively as well. Finally, the study includes some practical and constructive recommendations.

Keywords: perception, customers, SASO, quality mark, country of origin, international, products, Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

Quality plays a major role in customers' decision making as they choose a particular product or service, and it has become increasingly difficult to make such decisions, as a wider variety of products and services has become more accessible. In addition, quality is a determining factor in relation to customer satisfaction. Therefore, organizations have made considerable progress in the last few decades towards increasing quality. Hence, products can be distinguished by many characteristics. One of those characteristics is the quality of a product, whereby organizations seek to prove that their products have a high quality or other positive features. The quality of products is shaped by both intrinsic quality and extrinsic quality. Extrinsic quality can be achieved by obtaining a certification mark. High competitions in markets and globalization have created a need for quality certification of products and services to ensure customer satisfaction and business continuity in the markets. Moreover, quality certification marks and conformity assessments are very important elements for importers and exporters, as both quality certification marks and conformity assessments play key roles in facilitating access to countries. Thus, quality certification marks and conformity of assessment certificates are considered as passports, allowing products to access markets. Meanwhile, the quality certification mark and conformity of assessment might also be used to facilitate trade barriers or create such barriers. Customers have greater confidence in buying an organization's products when they have a respectable quality mark. Thus, acquiring a quality mark for an organization's products would lead to an increase in customers' satisfaction and trust, as well as to an increase

into organization's sales and reputation. Moreover, it would improve the products in general. If customers, however, are unaware of those quality certification marks, then the organization's endeavor will be wasted, since they are improving their products in response to customers' demands. Customers may be unable to recognize those quality marks due to a lack of marketing campaigns from either the organization who gained the quality marks or the certifiers' organizations, known as certification bodies.

Saudi Arabia is among the top 20 export and import markets in the world (Saudi Embassy, 2014). The weight of all products imported by Saudi market during the years of 2011 to 2013 was more than 220 thousand tons, which cost more than 170 billion riyals (Saudi Center of Statistics & information, 2014). Thus, Saudi Arabian market has been attracting high quality products from international manufacturers, which has put some pressure on Saudi manufacturers to increase their quality standards to meet international standards without compromising price in order to gain a competitive advantage. The majority of Saudi Arabian manufacturers have been improving the quality of their products by implementing Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO) standards and obtaining SASO quality certification marks to compete in the market. Furthermore, this is being done in order to be perceived by customers as having products that are of a good quality. In return, importers tend to import products that have conformity assessment in order to comply with regulations. Importers usually import products that have a quality mark to compete with others' products and to gain greater market share. Hence, this study aims to explore customers' perception towards Saudi quality mark and international quality marks, and to identify customers' evaluation of Saudi quality mark and international quality marks.

2. Problem Statement

There is very little work attempting to explore customers' perception towards quality certification marks. Within this context, the purpose of the study is to explore perception of customers in Saudi Arabia towards both Saudi and international quality marks. In addition, the study will identify customers' evaluation of the products of some leading industrial countries along with Saudi Arabia.

3. Significance of the Study

This study is of considerable importance, especially for organizations that have either obtained quality marks for their products or those that are considering certifying their products. Thus, the study will help organizations to know how customers perceive both Saudi and international quality marks. Furthermore, the study is considered important for the following reasons:

1. As far as the researcher is aware, this study is the first to investigate customers' perceptions in Saudi Arabia towards Saudi and international marks. As a result, its findings will be a valid contribution to the fields of quality and marketing.
2. The study may pave the way for other studies to be conducted regarding Saudi and international quality marks.
3. The study identifies customers' evaluation of Saudi and international quality marks.
4. The contributions made by this study could be of significant interest to scholars and management practitioners.
5. The study concludes with recommendations that could help enhance customers' perceptions of quality marks in Saudi Arabia.

4. Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the perception of customers in Saudi Arabia regarding Saudi and international quality marks. The study also aims to develop an understanding of whether or not quality marks influence customers' decisions and explore whether or not customers feel that quality marks are valuable and useful when purchasing products. Moreover, the objectives of this study are related to the research problem, which involves determining customers' perceptions in Saudi Arabia regarding Saudi and international quality marks, and are as follows:

1. To explore the perception of customers in Saudi Arabia towards Saudi quality mark and to other international quality marks.
2. To identify the customers evaluation in Saudi Arabia of some leading international products along with Saudi products.

5. Limitations of the Study

The following are the limitations that have been identified concerning this study:

1. The questionnaire was limited to customers in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the results of this study can only be generalized to customers in Saudi Arabia.

2. The questionnaire was limited to customers in Saudi Arabia who use the Internet, since the questionnaire was disseminated online. It was too difficult to distribute the questionnaire by mail because not all customers in Saudi Arabia have a mailing address. Moreover, the process of sending and receiving mail via post would have been excessively time consuming.

3. The respondents were mostly from the Western region (52.4 %), it would be of added value if the respondents were distributed between Saudi Arabia regions. However, it is noteworthy that the major regions in Saudi Arabia are respectively the Western, Central, Eastern, Southern, and Northern regions.

6. Literature Review

6.1 Introduction

The Oxford English Dictionary (2015) defines quality as "the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something". Quality means setting an excellence standard that organizations can follow as a benchmark in order to compare products to it, regardless of who sets those standards, whether they are governmental standards or provided by a private organization. However, some researchers have gone further in defining quality, such as Abdullah et al. (2009) who pointed out that "quality in the final analsis is about openness, integrity, and accountability to customers, regulators and the socitey at large". While Kadasah and Alkhedran (2014) considered the definition to include interrelated meanings such as fitness for use, conformity to specifications and free of defects. However, quality should be satisfying customers' needs by either exceeding or meeting the best standards in the market. Christensena et al. (2003) found that US consumers perceive manufacturer brand names to be superior in terms of quality, and food safety attributes compared to food retailer, organic and natural beef brands. Federal and local governments in the USA are viewed as the most trusted organizations to certify food safety for beef products. Meanwhile, consumers in the UK indicated that the private sector is more trusted than public sector to make food safety certifications. US consumers are undecided as to which specific organization is trusted the most to provide certifications for characteristics other than food safety. Dimara and Skuras (2003) conducted a study that aimed to examine consumer attitudes towards certification, geographic association and traceability. The study revealed that the importance of certification, geographic association and traceability as extrinsic quality cues varies among consumers and thus the use of such quality cues targets the highly-educated, single consumer that does not spend time to receive information from the media. Further, certification is a very important quality cue that highly influences the decision to purchase the product increases if the consumer has higher education. Moreover, Anderson (2004) found that respondents viewed environmental certification as a favorable product attribute and that there was a strong preference for the certified origin wood over non-certified wood. Another example of the importance of certification, Nilsson (2005) found that US consumers are willing to pay for certification. However, the willingness to pay is significantly different between the latent classes. Radas et al. (2008) found that there was a strong preference for certification by government departments. Moreover, their study found significant differences in terms of preferred certifiers between different consumer segments. Romanowska (2009) found that respondents prefered certified to uncertified eggs, and the government was the preferred certifier. Singh and Sharma (2013) found differences to exist in the levels of awareness concerning quality marks in educational qualification and place of living. Further, the levels of awareness among respondents varied according to their occupation. The result indicates that occupation, educational qualification and place of living significantly affect the customer preference. Quality has become an essential element in our daily lives. Thus, the quality concept has been discussed in a wide range of scholarly works and in each and every industry, either privately or governmentally. Organizations can improve product quality by gaining certification marks, as demand for a product tends to be based on the quality of products that producers provide. Moreover, quality has become an approach used to gain a competitive advantage through meeting customers' demands, which may increase customer satisfaction. Porter clarifies that organizations aim to differentiate their products by brand name, quality, design, or technology (Wheelen & Hunger, 2012).

6.2 Certification Mark

According to Lanham Act, certification marks is defined as "any word, name, symbol, or device, or any combination used by a person other than its owner, or which its owner has a bona fide intention to permit a person other than the owner to use in commerce and files an application to register on the principal register established by this chapter, to certify regional or other origin, material, mode of manufacture, quality, accuracy, or other characteristics of such person's goods or services or that the work or labor on the goods or services was

performed by members of a union or other organization" (Cornell University Law School, 2015). The UK Intellectual Property Office (2014) defines a certification mark as "a mark indicating that the goods and services in connection with which it is used are certified by the certifier of the mark in respect of origin, material, and mode of manufacture of goods or performance of services, quality, accuracy or other characteristics". Moreover, Takahashi (2012) defines certification marks as "such marks that are used or intended to be used in order to differentiate goods or services that are certified in terms of the place of origin, raw materials, production method, or the provision, quality, accuracy, or any other feature of services form other goods or services that have not been certified". The International Trade Associate (2014) defines a certification mark as a mark that "certifies the nature or origin of the goods or services to which it has been applied. This includes, for example, region or location of origin, materials of construction, method or mode of manufacture or provision, quality assurance, accuracy of the goods or services or any definable characteristic of the goods or services. It can also certify manufacture or provision of services by members of a union or other organization to certain standards." It is clear from the preceding definitions that most certification marks are mainly used for products. A product can be certified in terms of origin, materials, mode of manufacture, quality, accuracy, or other characteristics, whereas a service provider can obtain a performance of the service certificate. Certifying a service is still a bit fuzzy in practice, since services are intangible in nature, and it is therefore impossible to affix a certification mark to services. However, a service provider may state that his services have been certified by a certifier. Certification marks offer evidence that a product conforms to certifier's standards, and that the product has a certain characteristic, whether it is with regards to quality, safety, health, food, or environmental requirements. Therefore, certification bodies devise standards for products and services provided by producers and service providers. If these standards are met, then the certification body licenses a mark to the product or service provider to indicate compliance. In terms of certification mark types, there are six classifications; origin, materials, mode of manufacturer of goods, performance of goods or services, quality and accuracy (Intertek, 2015).

6.3 Quality Certification Mark

A quality certification mark indicates that the product in question has met quality standards. For instance, to gain the Intertek quality certification mark involves completing of up to five tests that measure specific attributes of quality, and a manufacturer must have their product tested and validated for at least one of the five attributes to gain this mark for their product. These five tests are; durability, functionality, life cycle, usability and workmanship. The quality mark is legal evidence that the products are successfully tested and met the requirements of the targeted quality mark. To customers, the quality certification mark conveys a message that the manufactures do care about their needs, safety, health and satisfactions. Hence, it provides customers an assurance of safety, quality and reliability. Further, quality certification mark aimed to protect customers, since the main purpose of quality certification mark is to protect customers from fraudulent practice. Certification marks may lead customers to buy products or services based on the fact that the products or services have been certified. Thus, customers depend on quality certification marks to simplify their choices (Mustapha et al., 2009). Grunert (2002) points out that enhancing quality expectations is believed to determine customer satisfaction. Thereafter, the probability of repeated purchases increases. Taylor (1958) has identified four objectives that organizations aim to achieve when certifying their products or services. These are; to overcome buyer resistance to new product, to reverse a declining demand trend, to aid members in securing wider distribution and to give third party endorsement to performance claims.

Obtaining quality certification marks would improve a product's quality, enhance an organization's sales, and offer an opportunity for exporting and importing products. Furthermore, certification marks play a pivotal role in protecting customers' heath, especially in the food sector. Finally, certification marks would satisfy customers. More specifically, the advantages of obtaining a quality certification mark are listed below (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization, 2015; Takahashi, 2012):

1. To comply with laws and regulations.
2. To mark excellence among products and prevent commercial fraud.
3. To acquires customers' satisfaction and trust.
4. To increases organization sales, this might lead to an increased market share.
5. To supports trade infrastructures for importing agreements.
6. To supports product development and improvement.
7. To qualifies the institution for local and international quality awards.
8. To facilitates the entry of products through custom ports.

9. To facilitates export.
10. To promotes the institution's name and reputation.
11. To serves the international economy and increases competition in local and foreign markets.

Quality certification marks help in the removal of any technical obstacles that may prevent trade (import and export). They can increase trade between countries. Furthermore, they can prevent deceptive practices by verifying manufacturers' claims. Finally, since quality certification marks are considered as extrinsic cues in relation to quality, they have a powerful effect on perceived quality and customers' perception.

6.4 Saudi Quality Mark

The organization in charge of developing product specifications and standards is Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO). It also certifies factories and firms to Saudi Quality Mark or ISO 9001 or any other quality management systems. According to SASO 2014 annual report, the organization has issued 28,259 standards since its establishment in addition to the adaptation of other international standards. Since 1985, Saudi government provides SASO with the rights to certify products to either Saudi standards or any other international standards. On that regards SASO has two roles; developing standards and auditing firms to standards or product specifications. Figure 1 and Figure 2 show factories that obtained Saudi quality mark as per sector and as per country, respectively.

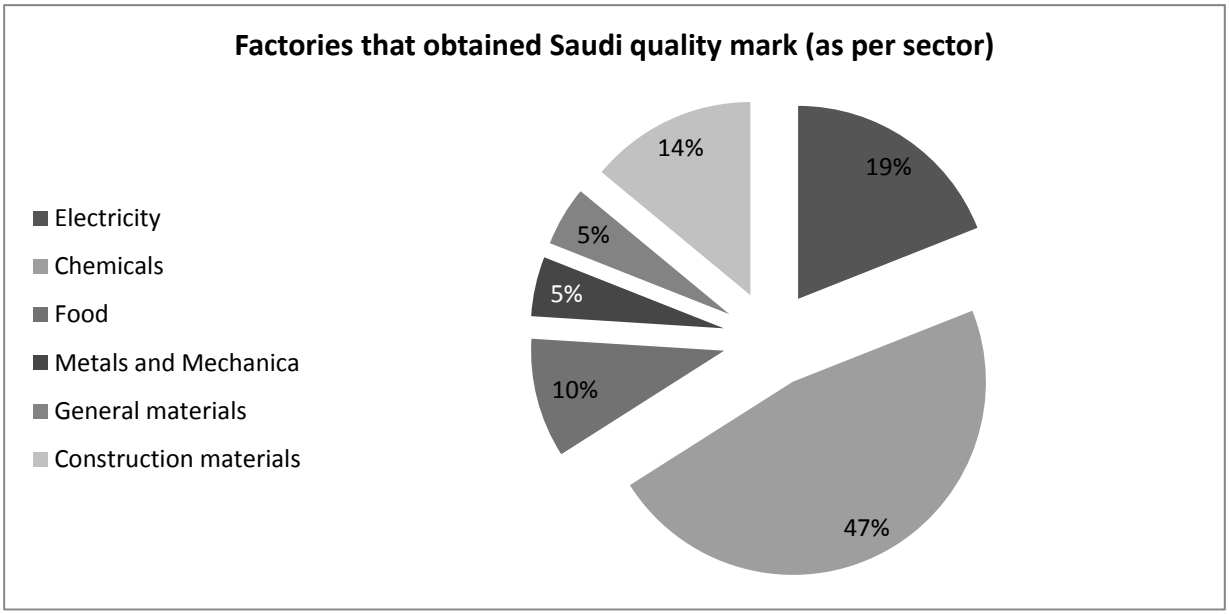

Figure 1. Factories that obtained a Saudi quality mark (as per sector)

Source: Data were obtained from: SASO (2014) Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization Annual Report.

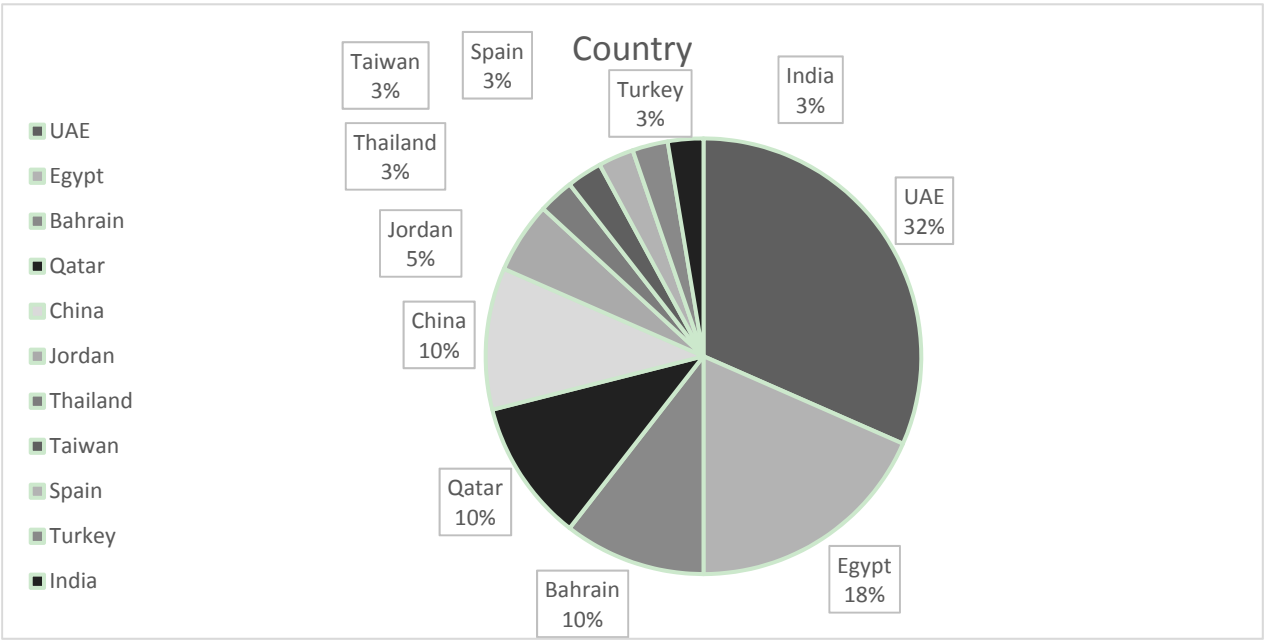

Figure 2. Factories that obtained Saudi quality mark (as per country)

Source: Data were obtained from: SASO (2014) Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization Annual Report.

According to article 3 of SASO regulation, in order for an organization to obtain Saudi quality mark, the organization must meet certain requirements, as follows:

1. Existence of Saudi standards or technical regulations for the product.
2. The product produced by the organization complies with the relevant Saudi standards or technical regulations.
3. The organization shall present a separate application for each product to obtain a license to use the mark, and it shall fill in the forms prepared by SASO for this purpose and present the quality manual followed by the organization for those products requiring the mark.
4. The organization has sufficient testing facilities, or the organization shall have tests performed at one of the accredited labs, to ensure the maintenance of the quality of the product in accordance with the quality manual.
5. The organization has a department responsible for quality control regarding its production.
6. The organization makes available to SASO (or its representative) all necessary facilities when inspections are performed and provides all the required information, including the methods of application of quality control and the actual records of production and quality, if requested, at any time.
7. Organizations whose activity is food or agricultural production shall meet the requirements of ISO 22000 (management systems for food safety), including the requirements of Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP).
8. The organization pledges that all information is correct.

If the above conditions are met, manufacturers are eligible to affix SASO quality mark to their products. However, the manufacturers must agree to ensure that the products continue to be manufactured according to SASO standards. Thereafter, SASO shall conduct periodic inspections to verify manufacturers' compliance, and when SASO discovers a product that does not comply with the standards, they are authorized to hold the shipments until the product complies with the standards or SASO mark will be removed from the products.

6.5 International Quality Marks

In the international arena, there are several international quality marks. They certify their local manufacturers along with foreign companies to their quality mark. ISO product specifications and standards are also certified worldwide. Underwriters Laboratories (UL) is an American worldwide safety consulting and certification company that was founded in 1894. In 2014, a total of 22 billion UL marks appear in the marketplace where

583,400 inspections visited were conducted, and 69,759 products were certified (Underwriters Laboratories, 2015). Customers around the world rely on UL certification mark since it has a robust reputation in terms of safety standards. Therefore, UL certification is often the first choice for manufacturers willing to have products tested and certified as meeting safety and quality standards. UL has 31 different categories of certification marks that are dedicated to verifying manufacturers' claims. Another important quality mark is CE, which is an abbreviation of Conformité Européenne, meaning "European Conformity," and the EC mark was formerly used. CE is a mandatory conformity mark for certain products sold within the European Economic Area (EEA) since 1985. CE marking is a key indicator of a product's compliance with EU legislation and enables the free movement of products within the European market. By affixing the CE mark to a product, a manufacturer declares it is their sole responsibility to conform to all the legal requirements for achieving a CE mark. Therefore, it ensures validity for that product to be sold throughout the EEA (the 27 member states of the EU and the EFTA countries of Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein), as well as Turkey. This also applies to products made in third countries that are sold in the EEA and Turkey. However, not all products must bear the CE mark. Only those product categories subject to specific directives provided by the CE are required to be marked (CE Marking, 2015). In addition, TÜV Rheinland (Technical Inspections Organization) is a global provider of technical, safety, and quality certification that was founded in 1872. TÜV Rheinland quality certification mark indicates that the manufacturers' products have met applicable quality standards.

6.6 Country of Origin and Quality Certification Mark

Samiee (1994) defines the country of origin effect as "the influence or bias that customers may have resulting from the country of origin of the product or service or its associated products" (Oyeniyi, 2009). This influence or bias may result from previous experience, knowledge, religion, or word of mouth. Country of origin is an extrinsic cue and usually communicated as "manufactured in" or "made in" followed by the country's name, which might have a certain reputation. For instance, Gaedeke (1977) found that U.S made products were perceived as being of higher quality than products made in various less developed countries (Patterson & Tai, 1991). Patterson and Tai (1991) have pointed out that customers tend to generalize their attitudes and opinions across a wide range of products from a given country. Dzever and Quester (1999) observed that a country of origin and its perceived quality can impact future purchasing decisions (Khan & Ahmed, 2012). Furthermore, it has a considerable influence on the perception of a product's quality (cited in Bilkey, 1982). Subsequently, the country of origin is used by customers as a criterion for evaluating products and making purchasing decisions (Hong & Wyer, 1990; Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994; Oyeniyi, 2009). As we know, many organizations have transferred their manufacturing to China, Egypt, or other countries that have an intensive labor force, to gain a competitive advantage, whereby they can reduce their overhead costs and labor costs. Hence, customers will likely purchase an organization's products as long as the organization has maintained the quality standards through obtaining quality certification marks or by adapting to more rigorous quality standards. Thus, even if the products have been manufactured in China or India, as long as those multinational organizations have control over their products and imposed certain quality standards, customers will buy the products. Elliott and Cameron (1994) found that respondents rated country of origin as significantly less important as a choice determinant than a product's quality and price.

7. Research Methodology

This current study is an exploratory research that is particularly valuable for clarifying our understanding of the problem. A questionnaire was developed for the purpose of collecting data on customers' perceptions with regards to Saudi and international quality marks and products. The questionnaire consists of three parts. Part one asks about demographic characteristics, such as nationality, age, gender, educational qualification, occupation and region of residency. Part two was designed to explore customers' perception regarding the Saudi quality mark. For that purpose, a five-point Likert scale is used, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Likert scale perception of customers means

Statement	Mean
Strongly disagree	From 1 to l.79
Disagree	From 1.80 to 2.59
Uncertain	From 2.60 to 3.39
Agree	From 3.40 to 4.19
Strongly agree	From 4.20 to 5

Strongly agree=5, Agree=4, Uncertain= 3, Disagree= 2, Strongly Disagree= 1.

Part three aimed to identify customers' evaluations of both Saudi and international quality products. Customers were asked to evaluate the quality of products that are manufactured in the following countries: United Arab Emirates, USA, China, Germany, France, United Kingdom, South Korea, Japan, India, Italy, Switzerland Brazil and Saudi Arabia. Those countries are the top exporters to Saudi Arabia, except the United Arab Emirates. A five-point Likert scale was used, as shown in the below Table 2, in order to determine the beginning and end of each statement based on Likert scale.

Table 2. Likert scale of customers evaluation means

Statement	Mean
Very Poor	From 1 to l.79
Poor	From 1.80 to 2.59
Reasonable	From 2.60 to 3.39
Good	From 3.40 to 4.19
Excellent	From 4.20 to 5

Excellent =5, Good =4, Reasonable = 3, Poor = 2, Very Poor = 1.

Before distributing the questionnaires to customers in Saudi Arabia, a focus group was held with a group of customers to improve the questionnaire structure. Afterward, a pilot test was conducted in order to adopt questions that are most understandable to respondents, and to enhance the validity of this study. Hence, a revised copy of the questionnaire was created to evade any misunderstanding.

The questionnaire link was disseminated online by posting the link in twitter and Whats App, and by sending the survey out via emails. The questionnaire takes approximately 8-10 minutes to complete and data collection period lasted about one week. Data were collected from 481 sample respondents, of which 479 responses were found to be usable for analysis, which forms the basis of this study. Data were collected from this survey have been analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20. Descriptive statistics are used to present data clearly and simply. They enabled the analysis of the demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, occupation, education level, region of residency, and nationality. The validity of this study was increased, since a pilot test was conducted with 10 respondents before distributing the questionnaire online. The reliability of data obtained from respondents of the two dimensions and 26 questions were tested to verify the suitability of the research data. For that purpose, Alpha Cronbach's coefficient was used to test the research reliability; results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Data reliability

Dimension	No of items	Alpha Cronbach's coefficient
Perception of customers in Saudi Arabia towards Saudi quality mark	11	0.88
Perception of customers in Saudi Arabia towards International Quality mark	15	0.75
Overall reliability	26	0.86

As the overall value of Alpha Cronbach's coefficient reaches 0.86, this indicates that data that were obtained from respondents to explore the participants' perceptions regarding Saudi Arabian and international quality marks were high. This high figure provides sufficient evidence for the reliability of data needed to achieve research objectives.

A t-test was carried out to examine if there were significant differences in the perception of customers regarding Saudi quality mark based on nationality and gender because they include only two factors. On the other hand when there are more than two factors, an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was conducted to examine if there were significant differences related to age, educational level, occupation, and region of residency with respect to the perception of customers. Furthers, the Least Square Differences (LSD) test is used to analyze ANOVA results to determine the orders of the factors in ANOVA results.

8. Research Findings

8.1 Sample Demographic Profile

For this part, the participants (n= 479) were asked to provide information about themselves. Thereafter, the

demographic characteristics analysis was performed to present demographic data, such as nationality, age, gender, educational, occupation, and region of residency. Results are shown in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4. Sample distribution according to nationality, age and gender

Sample distribution according to nationality	Frequency	Percent %
Saudi	461	96.2
Non –Saudi	18	3.8
Total	479	100%
Sample distribution according to age		
Less than 25 years	56	11.7
25 to less than 40 years	290	60.5
41 to less than 56 years	117	24.4
+ 57 years	16	3.3
Total	479	100%
Sample distribution according to gender	Frequency	Percent %
Male	394	82.3
Female	85	17.7
Total	479	100%

Table 4 shows that the majority of participants 96.2% were Saudi nationals, and 3.8% were non-Saudi. Moreover, the sample distribution according to age reveals that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 - 40 (60.5%), while 11.7% of respondents were less than 25 years old, whereas 24.4% were 41-56 years old, and 3.3% of respondents were over 57 years old. The third part of the table displayed the sample distribution according to gender which shows male respondents represented the majority with 82.3% of the total participants, whereas female respondents comprised 17.7% of the total participants. The distribution of respondents according to their nationality does not signify any trend however; it may reflect the exposure of Saudi nationals to the questionnaire because of the nationality of the researchers. More than 70% of respondents are less than 40 years old which may reflect this group interests in the use of internet more than older groups in the country. On the other hand, more than 82% of the samples were male participants. This might be a reasonable conclusion since the researcher's contacted mainly male participants to answer this questionnaire.

Table 5. Sample distribution according to educational level, occupation and regions

Sample distribution according to educational level	Frequency	Percent %
High school or less	86	18.0
Associate degree	78	16.3
Bachelor degree	236	49.3
Master degree or higher	79	16.4
Total	479	100%
Sample distribution according to occupation	Frequency	Percent %
Unemployed	40	8.4
Student	56	11.7
Private Sector Employee	142	29.6
Government Sector Employee	209	43.6
Businessman	32	6.7
Total	479	100%
Sample distribution according to region of residency	Frequency	Percent %
Southern Region	27	5.6
Eastern Region	76	15.9
Western Region	251	52.4
Central Region	109	22.8
Northern Region	16	3.3
Total	479	100%

In Table 5, the sample distribution according to educational level indicates that the Bachelor's degree holders had the highest percentage 49.3%, followed by those with high school or less 18%, followed by those with a master's degree or higher 16.4%, and finally the associate degree holders 16.3%. Thus it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents were highly educated 65.8%. Also, it can be seen that the government sector employees had the highest percentage 43.6%, followed by the private sector employees 29.6%, then by unemployed respondents represented 8.4%, and by students 11.7%, and finally business people 6.7%. There figures may reflect the reality in the society about the distribution of the people in general where the government is the largest employer in the country. Finally, the table shows that the Western region respondents comprised the majority with 52.4%, whereas the Central region respondents made up 22.8% of the respondents, followed by the Eastern region with 15.9%, while the Southern region respondents represented 5.6%, and the Northern region respondents represented 3.3% of the respondents. Hence, it can be concluded that for the majority of the participants their region of residency was the Western region, which may be understandable since the Western region is considered as the largest region in terms of population and also the existence of the researchers is in the Western region.

8.2 Perception of Customers towards Saudi Quality Mark

This section explores answers of respondents regarding their perception towards Saudi quality mark; results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Perception of customers in Saudi Arabia

Rank	Statements	Average Mean	Standard Deviation
1	My concern to focus on a product's quality mark will be increasing when the product's is very expensive	3.42	1.20
2	I can recognize Saudi quality mark logo	3.39	1.09
3	I prefer to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	3.32	1.10
4	I prefer products that are certified by Saudi quality mark than products are not certified by Saudi quality mark	3.16	1.13
5	Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers	3.15	1.04
6	I trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization)	3.12	1.08
7	I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	3.00	1.04
8	I always recommend others to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	2.80	1.11
9	Have you ever encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark	2.47	0.99
Overall average mean		3.09	0.06

From Table 6, it can be noted that the overall average mean value of perception of customers regarding Saudi quality mark is equal to 3.09 compiled with a standard deviation of 0.06, which indicates that the majority of the sample is standing at the middle, which means some customers have positive perceptions whereas others have negative perceptions regarding the Saudi quality mark. When respondents were asked to assess their perceptions regarding the statement, "My concern to focus on a product's quality mark will be increasing when the product is very expensive," the results in Table 6 show the overall average mean value of sample responses reached 3.42 with a standard deviation of 1.20. This indicates that customers agreed that their degree of focus on a product's quality mark would increase when the product is very expensive. Hence, customers tend to focus on the quality mark of any product depending on the product's price. On the other hand, when customers were asked to offer their opinion concerning the statement, "I can recognize the Saudi quality mark logo," the results in Table 6 reveal that the overall average mean of the sample's responses reached 3.39 with a standard deviation of 1.09. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of customers tend to be in the middle about their opinion on their recognition of Saudi quality mark logo. This also indicated that the respondents were uncertain if they could recognize Saudi quality mark logo or not.

8.3 Customer Satisfaction and Evaluation of Saudi Quality Mark

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction, evaluation and the availability of information about Saudi quality mark along with a comparison with the international quality marks; results in Table 7.

Table 7. Customers satisfaction and availability of information about Saudi quality mark

Statement	Average Mean	Standard Deviation
I am totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark	2.69	1.12
I feel there is enough information about Saudi quality mark	2.13	1.05
Evaluation of quality of products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	3.23	1.03
Evaluation of quality of products that are certified by Saudi quality mark to the quality of products that are certified by the international quality mark	3.12	1.09

Table 7 shows that the average mean value of the sample responses was 2.69 with a standard deviation of 1.12 of the first aspect while the average mean value of the second point was 2.13 with a standard deviation of 1.05. Hence, it cannot be concluded from the figures of the two points that the majority of customers are satisfied nor dissatisfied with the Saudi quality mark and that they do not have enough information about Saudi quality mark. When asked about their evaluation of Saudi quality mark, the average mean was 3.23 with a standard deviation of 1.03, which indicates that the customers' evaluation of the quality of products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark was not high. Moreover, participants were asked to compare the quality of products that were certified by Saudi quality mark to the quality of products that were certified by international quality mark. The mean value reached 3.12 with a standard deviation of 1.09, which indicates the customers' evaluation in this regard was not high as well. All four figures included in Table 7 conclude that satisfaction of customers towards Saudi quality mark was not high.

8.4 Evaluation of Products of Different Countries

This section includes the evaluation of customers in Saudi Arabia to products that are manufactured in some 13 countries. Results are depicted in Table 8.

Table 8. Customers' evaluation of different countries

Rank	Evaluation of the quality of products that are manufactured form the following countries	Average mean	Standard deviation
1	Germany	4.78	0.60
2	Japan	4.74	0.60
3	USA	4.43	0.77
4	United Kingdom	4.39	0.82
5	France	4.34	0.81
6	Italy	4.22	0.82
7	Switzerland	4.12	0.95
8	South Korea	3.87	0.86
9	Brazil	3.45	0.86
10	United Arab Emirates	3.26	1.02
11	Saudi Arabia	3.07	1.04
12	India	3.06	0.97
13	China	2.61	1.14
Overall average mean		3.87	0.44

Table 8 shows that Germany came first followed by Japan then USA, the United Kingdom, France and Italy. All of which may be considered of "Excellent" quality since the values of their means exceed 4.2 (see Table 2). The second group of countries that customers considered their level of quality to be "Good" includes Switzerland, South Korea and Brazil, respectively; all of which have means between 3.40 and 4.19. Finally, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, India and China are evaluated by respondents as being of "Reasonable" quality since their means values came between 2.60 and 3.39.

8.5 Testing Significant Differences

In this part of the data analysis, the study focus was to test if there were significant differences between customers' perceptions regarding Saudi quality mark according to demographic variables; nationality, gender, educational qualification, occupation, and region of residency. The t-test was used to test for variations related to nationality and gender because they are two elements, while ANOVA analysis of variances was used to test for

variations related to age, education level, occupation, and region of residency since they include more than two groups. Results of the both T-tests and ANOVA tests are displayed in Appendices from A to H.

8.5.1 T-Test according to Nationality

Appendix (A) reveals that there are statistically significant variations between in the perception of customers related to nationality in terms of the following statements:

- I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark
- Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers
- I feel there is enough information about Saudi quality mark
- I am totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark

As it can be seen in Appendix (A) that the significant differences are to the side of non-Saudi, which means that the non-Saudi customers' have a positive experience about the products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark, and they believe that Saudi quality marks seem to be focused on what's best for customers. Moreover, they feel that there is enough information about Saudi quality mark. In addition, they are totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark. Nevertheless, because of the small number of respondents as being non-Saudi (18), we may not be able to generalize with high degree of confidence on this regard. One the other hand, as can be seen in table 17, the Saudis were not satisfied with the Saudi quality mark. Furthermore, they do not feel that there is enough information about the Saudi quality mark.

8.5.2 T-Test according to Gender

Appendix (B) depicted the results of the T-test regarding the gender issue in the study. T-test indicates a statistically significant variation in the perception of customers related to gender in terms of the following statements:

- I trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization).
- I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark.
- Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers.
- Have you ever encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark?
- I feel there is enough information about Saudi quality mark.

It is notable in Appendix (B) that the significant differences are on the side of the females, which mean that the females have more knowledge about the Saudi quality mark than the males, and indicates that females in Saudi Arabia have more insights into Saudi quality standards. Further, females in Saudi Arabia believe that Saudi quality mark seem to be focused on what's best for them, and they trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO. Moreover, the females have a positive experience about products that have been certified by SASO. Finally, they have encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark.

8.5.3 ANOVA Test according to Educational Level

The ANOVA test was used to examine if there were significant differences in the perception of customers regarding Saudi quality mark according to education level. The results in Appendix (C) reveal that there was only one significant variation in the perception of customers with regard to their feelings related to the availability of information about the Saudi quality mark, which means that education level affected customers' feelings in this regard. To examine the significance of these variations according to education level, the Least Square Difference (LSD) method was used, as shown in Appendix (D). It was noted that there was a statistically significant difference regarding the perception of customers with regards to the Saudi quality mark between customers with high school or less, and both customers with Bachelor's degrees and Master's degrees or higher, positive on the side of customers with high school or less. Furthermore, there was a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between customers with associate degree, and customers with Master's degrees or higher, positive on the side of associate degree. Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference between Bachelor's degree holders and those with a Master's degree or higher, on the side of the Bachelor's degree.

8.5.4 ANOVA Test according to Occupation

The ANOVA test was used to examine if there were significant differences in the perception of customers regarding Saudi quality mark according to occupation. The results in Appendix (E) reveal that there was only one significant difference with regards to their feelings toward the availability of information about the Saudi

quality mark, which indicates that occupation had an effect on customers' feelings in this regard. Furthers, to examine the significance of these differences according to occupation, the LSD method was used, as shown in Appendix (F). Moreover, it was noted that there is a statistically significant difference between customers' perceptions regarding the availability of information about Saudi quality related to occupation between unemployed individuals and students, private sector employees, and government sector employees, positive on the side of unemployed respondents.

8.5.5 ANOVA Test according to Region of Residency

The ANOVA test was used to examine if there were significant differences in the perception of customers regarding Saudi quality mark according to region of residency. The results in Appendix (G) reveal that there were significant differences in the perception of customers with regard to the following statements:

- I trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization).
- I prefer to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark.
- I always recommend others to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark.
- I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark.
- Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers.
- I prefer products that are certified by Saudi quality mark than products are not certified by Saudi quality mark.
- Have you ever encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark?
- I am totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark.

To examine where these differences were positive, the multiple comparisons difference test was used by implementing the Least Square Difference (LSD) method, as shown in Appendix (H). The results show that there was a statistically significant difference in the perception of customers with regard to Saudi quality mark between those who reside in the Southern region and those who reside in the Central region, positive on the side of the Southern region. Furthermore, there was a significant difference between the Western region and the Central region residents, positive on the side of the Eastern region. Moreover, there was a significant difference between the Western region residents and the Central region residents. Therefore, it can be concluded that all differences are positive on the side of the Southern, Eastern, and Western region customers, as compared with Central region residents.

9. Discussion

Tis current study was conducted to explore perception of customers in Saudi Arabia with regards to Saudi quality mark, and to identify the customer's evaluations in Saudi Arabia with regards to the Saudi and some leading international products. The overall findings indicated that the perception in Saudi Arabia with regards to Saudi quality mark, and their evaluation of the Saudi quality mark, fell into uncertain category (mean= 2.60-3.39). This means that customers in Saudi Arabia felt skeptical towards SASO, since SASO has a feeble reputation associated with limited resources and capabilities in relation to investigating products and services. Thus, SASO is not very well known to the customers in Saudi Arabia, and it seems that there is a major gap between the customers and the SASO. Therefore, SASO needs to seriously and urgently evaluate their efforts with regards to communication with the public. Furthermore, SASO needs to recruit the best experts in the market and provide the required resources to conduct the necessary tests, which would help them to achieve their vision and mission in order to keep the Saudi economy growing. On the other hand, Saudi Consumer Protection Association has made no efforts in this area, as if it does not exist. The customers in Saudi Arabia evaluated German products, Japanese products, American products, United Kingdom products, French products and Italian products as excellent products with regards to quality. This result suggests that the customers in Saudi Arabia tend to perceived products from developed centuries as excellent quality, where manufacturing processes are much cleaner for the environment, product safety standards are very high, and customers protection laws are in place to protect human health. German products, Japanese products, American products, United Kingdom products, French products, and Italian products have been evaluated as excellent products, which mean that those countries are at the top in terms of international quality marks. This result is supported by a study that was conducted by Ahmed and d'Astous (2001) who concluded that highly industrialized countries such as Japan, USA, UK, and Germany are highly evaluated in terms of product quality as compared to newly industrialized countries, such as China, Korea, and Indonesia (cited in Oyeniyi, 2009). Furthermore, several studies have indicated that customers

have a bias in favor of products from developed centuries, such as the USA, European countries, and Japan (Chinen et al., 2000; Huddleston et al., 2001; Hsieh, 2004; Oyeniyi, 2009). Gurhancanli and Maheswaran (2000b) found that products from Japan elicit favorable perceptions as being of a high quality (Oyeniyi, 2009).

Customers in Saudi Arabia evaluated UAE products, Saudi Arabian products, Indian products, and Chinese products as being of a reasonable quality. This may be driven by low prices and inferior product quality, combined with low product safety. Sarwar et al. (2013) have pointed out that the reputation of products made in China still needs to go a long way to earn customers' confidence, as their reputation is not very positive in terms of product quality. Furthermore, these researchers found that product quality is one of the most important concerns when buying Chinese products. This result suggests that local manufacturers need to improve their products in terms of quality to make them superior while still offering them at competitive prices. The study is limited by several factors that should be considered in future research. In this study the questionnaire was limited to customers in Saudi Arabia who use the Internet, since the questionnaire was disseminated online, and it would be of added value to expand the sample as well as if the respondents were distributed between Saudi Arabia regions.

10. Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Manufacturers and factories in Saudi Arabia may consider obtaining other internationally recognized quality marks especially those belong to the prominent countries such as Germany, Japan, the USA and the UK in order to benefit from the great image and reputation they have among customers in the country.

2. Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO) should make efforts to enhance and improve customers' perceptions regarding Saudi quality mark in order to gain customers' satisfaction and trust, which would direct customers towards purchasing local products that have been certified by the SASO. Thereafter, more local manufacturers would seek to certify their products through the SASO. This objective can be achieved by conducting a marketing campaign via different mediums (television, radio, and online hubs such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) using a variety of advertisements.

3. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry along with Chambers of Commerce in Saudi Arabia may encourage manufacturers of the world successful brands to open factories in the country through the foreign direct investment scheme so that they can benefit from the reputation of their names worldwide. Such manufacturers may export some of their products to the region countries.

4. SASO needs to raise quality awareness among customers and local manufacturers, since they are aiming to place Saudi Arabian products and services at an international, advanced level. SASO can raise quality awareness by hosting educational quality events and conducting workshops with organizations and universities. In addition, information can be shared with customers using the Internet, through blogs and social media.

5. SASO should urge organizations to obtain Saudi quality mark by implementing a marketing strategy. They have to explain that products cannot be exported without having undergone a conformity assessment or receiving a quality certification mark.

11. Further Studies

There is a need to conduct a study on The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) quality mark. GCC is not as active as it is meant to be, and the GCC was established to form one entity of standardization within the Gulf Cooperation Council, such as the CE mark. However, current efforts to promote the GCC standards are insufficient. Hence, the GCC council needs to make major efforts to develop and create a reputation for the GCC mark among citizens. Furthermore, it needs to create uniform standards and one quality mark to give products better access between GCC and others countries.

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Appendixes

Appendix (A). T-test results of perception of customers towards Saudi quality mark according to nationality

Statement	Nationality				T-test statistics	Degree of freedom	P-value
	Saudi mean	SD	Non –Saudi Mean	SD			
My concern to focus on a product's quality mark will be increasing when the product's is very expensive	3.41	1.20	3.83	1.34	-1.48		0.14
I can recognize the Saudi quality mark logo	3.38	1.09	3.67	0.97	-1.09		0.28
I prefer to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	3.31	1.10	3.39	1.04	-0.29		0.77
I prefer products that are certified by Saudi quality mark than products are not certified by Saudi quality mark	3.17	1.14	3.06	0.87	0.42		0.68
Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers	3.12	1.04	3.83	0.62	-2.87**		0.004
I trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization)	3.11	1.09	3.56	0.62	-1.74	477	0.08
I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	2.97	1.03	3.89	0.76	-3.76**		0.00
I always recommend others to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	2.78	1.12	3.28	0.75	-1.86		0.06
Have you ever encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark	2.46	0.99	2.67	1.03	-0.88		0.38
I am totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark	2.67	1.13	3.22	0.73	-2.04*		0.04
I feel there is enough information about Saudi quality mark	2.11	1.04	2.61	1.15	-2.0*		0.05

** Difference is significant at the (0.01) significant level.

*Difference is significant at the (0.05) significant level.

Appendix (B). T-test results of perception of customers towards Saudi quality mark according to gender

Statement	Gender Male (394)		Female (85)		T-test statistics	Degree of freedom	P-value
	Mean	SD	mean	SD			
My concern to focus on a product's quality mark will be increasing when the product's is very expensive	3.45	1.20	3.31	1.22	0.98		0.33
I can recognize the Saudi quality mark logo	3.38	1.11	3.45	0.95	-0.51		0.61
I prefer to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	3.29	1.12	3.42	1.03	-1.00		0.32
I prefer products that are certified by Saudi quality mark than products are not certified by Saudi quality mark	3.18	1.16	3.09	0.98	0.64		0.53
Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers	3.10	1.04	3.38	1.01	-2.22*		0.03
I trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization)	3.06	1.10	3.44	0.98	-2.96**	477	0.003
I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	2.94	1.03	3.28	1.02	-2.79**		0.006
I always recommend others to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	2.77	1.13	2.94	1.03	-1.30		0.20
Have you ever encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark	2.42	1.0	2.66	0.92	-2.00*		0.05
I am totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark	2.65	1.13	2.88	1.06	-1.72		0.09
I feel there is enough information about Saudi quality mark	2.08	1.03	2.36	1.11	-2.29*		0.02

** indicated that the difference is significant at the (0.01) significant level

*indicated that the difference is significant at the (0.05) significant level.

Appendix (C). Results of analysis of variances (ANOVA) with regards to educational level

Statements	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
I can recognize the Saudi quality mark logo	Between groups	3.127	3	1.042		
	Within groups	559.086	475	1.177	0.89	0.45
	Total	562.213	478			
I trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization)	Between groups	4.162	3	1.387		
	Within groups	553.570	475	1.165	1.19	0.31
	Total	557.733	478			
I prefer to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	3.276	3	1.092		
	Within groups	576.123	475	1.213	0.90	0.44
	Total	579.399	478			
I always recommend others to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	1.453	3	0.484		
	Within groups	589.307	475	1.241	0.39	0.76
	Total	590.760	478			
I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	2.548	3	0.849		
	Within groups	511.452	475	1.077	0.789	0.50
	Total	514.00	478			
Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers	Between groups	2.416	3	0.805		
	Within groups	512.761	475	1.079	0.746	0.53
	Total	515.177	478			
I prefer products that are certified by Saudi quality mark than products are not certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	3.822	3	1.274		
	Within groups	606.149	475	1.276	0.998	0.39
	Total	609.971	478			
Have you ever encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark	Between groups	1.560	3	0.520		
	Within groups	469.622	475	0.989	0.526	0.67
	Total	471.182	478			
My concern to focus on a product's quality mark will be increasing when the product's is very expensive	Between groups	0.199	3	0.066		
	Within groups	690.615	475	1.454	0.046	0.99
	Total	690.814	478			
I feel there is enough information about Saudi quality mark	Between groups	12.751	3	4.250		
	Within groups	511.224	475	1.076	3.95**	0.01
	Total	523.975	478			
I am totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark	Between groups	2.674	3	0.891		
	Within groups	601.213	475	1.266	0.704	0.55
	Total	603.887	478			

** indicated the difference is significant at the (0.01) significant level.

*indicated that the difference is significant at the (0.05) significant level.

Appendix (D). Least square difference (LSD) multiple comparisons to examine perception of customers regarding Saudi quality mark according to education level

Education level	Sample size	Mean	Mean difference Higher school or less	Associate degree	Bachelor degree	Master degree or higher
High school or less	86	2.38	-	0.19	0.27*	0.55*
Associate degree	78	2.19	-0.19	-	0.08	0.36*
Bachelor degree	236	2.11	-0.27*	-0.08	-	0.28*
Master degree	79	1.84	-0.55*	-0.36*	-0.28*	-

** indicated the difference is significant at the (0.01) significant level.

*indicated that the difference is significant at the (0.05) significant level.

Appendix (E). Results of analysis of variances (ANOVA) with regards to occupation

Statement	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
I can recognize the Saudi quality mark logo	Between groups	6.863	4	1.716	1.46	0.21
	Within groups	555.350	474	1.172		
	Total	562.213	478			
I trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization)	Between groups	3.713	4	0.928	0.794	0.53
	Within groups	554.020	474	1.169		
	Total	557.733	478			
I prefer to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	1.716	4	0.429	0.352	0.84
	Within groups	577.683	474	1.219		
	Total	579.399	478			
I always recommend others to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	3.969	4	0.992	0.801	0.53
	Within groups	586.791	474	1.238		
	Total	590.760	478			
I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	7.969	4	1.992	1.87	0.12
	Within groups	506.031	474	1.068		
	Total	514.000	478			
Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers	Between groups	5.075	4	1.269	1.18	0.32
	Within groups	510.102	474	1.076		
	Total	515.177	478			
I prefer products that are certified by Saudi quality mark than products are not certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	4.572	4	1.143	0.895	0.47
	Within groups	605.399	474	1.277		
	Total	609.971	478			
Have you ever encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark	Between groups	1.943	4	0.486	0.491	0.74
	Within groups	469.239	474	0.990		
	Total	471.182	478			
My concern to focus on a product's quality mark will be increasing when the product's is very expensive	Between groups	3.713	4	0.928	0.64	0.63
	Within groups	687.101	474	1.450		
	Total	690.814	478			
I feel there is enough information about Saudi quality mark	Between groups	15.193	4	3.798	3.54**	0.01
	Within groups	508.782	474	1.073		
	Total	523.975	478			
I am totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark	Between groups	7.074	4	1.769	1.41	0.23
	Within groups	596.813	474	1.259		
	Total	603.887	478			

** indicated the difference is significant at the (0.01) significant level.

*indicated that the difference is significant at the (0.05) significant level.

Appendix (F). Least square difference (LSD) multiple comparisons to multiple comparisons to examine perception of customers regarding the availability of information about Saudi quality mark according to occupation

Occupation	Sample size	Mean	Mean difference by occupation				
			unemployed	student	Private sector employee	Government sector employee	businessman
Unemployed	40	2.70	-	0.700*	0.63*	0.62*	0.48
Student	56	2.00	-0.700*	-	-0.07	-0.08	-0.22
Private sector employee	142	2.07	-0.63*	0.07	-	-0.011	-0.15
Government sector employee	209	2.08	-0.62*	0.08	0.011	-	-0.14
Businessman	32	2.22	-0.48	0.22	0.15	0.14	-

*indicated that the difference is significant at the (0.05) significant level.

Appendix (G). Results of the analysis of variances (ANOVA) with regards to region of residency

Statements	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
I can recognize the Saudi quality mark logo	Between groups	4.374	4	1.094		
	Within groups	557.837	474	1.177	0.930	0.45
	Total	562.213	478			
I trust the certification process of Saudi quality mark by SASO (Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization)	Between groups	14.165	4	3.541		
	Within groups	543.568	474	1.147	3.09*	0.02
	Total	557.733	478			
I prefer to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	23.253	4	5.813		
	Within groups	556.146	474	1.173	4.96**	0.001
	Total	579.399	478			
I always recommend others to purchase products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	28.114	4	7.029		
	Within groups	562.645	474	1.187	5.92**	0.00
	Total	590.760	478			
I have a positive experience about products that have been certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	10.149	4	2.537		
	Within groups	503.851	474	1.063	2.39*	0.05
	Total	514.00	478			
Saudi quality mark seems to be focused on what's best for customers	Between groups	12.519	4	3.130		
	Within groups	502.658	474	1.060	2.95*	0.02
	Total	515.177	478			
I prefer products that are certified by Saudi quality mark than products are not certified by Saudi quality mark	Between groups	14.038	4	3.510		
	Within groups	595.933	474	1.257	2.79*	0.03
	Total	609.971	478			
Have you ever encountered a problem that had left you to search for the best quality mark	Between groups	15.334	4	3.833		
	Within groups	455.848	474	0.962	3.99**	0.003
	Total	471.182	478			
My concern to focus on a product's quality mark will be increasing when the product's is very expensive	Between groups	1.718	4	0.430		
	Within groups	689.096	474	1.454	0.30	0.88
	Total	690.814	478			
I feel there is enough information about Saudi quality mark	Between groups	8.336	4	2.084		
	Within groups	515.639	474	1.088	1.916	0.11
	Total	523.975	478			
I am totally satisfied with Saudi quality mark	Between groups	15.451	4	3.863		
	Within groups	588.436	474	1.241	3.11*	0.02
	Total	603.887	478			
Overall	Between groups	8.197	4	2.049		
	Within groups	247.226	474	0.522	3.93**	0.004
	Total	255.423	478			

** indicated the difference is significant at the (0.01) significant level.

*indicated that the difference is significant at the (0.05) significant level.

Appendix (H). Least square difference (LSD) multiple comparisons to examine perception of customers regarding Saudi quality mark related to region of residency

Region of residency	Sample size	Mean	Mean difference by region of residency				
			Southern region	Eastern region	Western region	Central region	Northern region
Southern Region	27	3.07	-	0.08	0.01	0.31*	0.38
Western Region	251	3.06	-0.01	0.06	-	0.30*	0.36
Eastern Region	76	3.00	-0.08	-	-0.06	0.23*	0.30
Central Region	109	2.76	-0.31*	-0.23*	-0.30*	-	0.07
Northern Region	16	2.69	-0.38	-0.30	-0.36	-0.07	-

*indicated that the difference is significant at the (0.05) significant level.

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