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Velkommen til det toogtyvende 'Nyhedsbrevet om Forbrugeradfærd'. I dette nummer af Nyhedsbrevet bringes to interessante artikler.

I den første artikel undersøger adjunkt Antonia Erz, Institut for Afsætningsøkonomi, Copenhagen Business School, hvor vidt forbrugerne foretrækker 'brand names', der er lette at udtale, og om forbrugerne desuden har lettere ved at genkalde sig sådanne 'brand names'. Der er tale om en grundig undersøgelse baseret på tre eksperimentelle studier – og med meget interessante resultater!

Den anden artikel handler om 'grøn strøm'. I Danmark kan forbrugerne betale ca. 200 kr. ekstra om året for at få grøn strøm. Men der er stor forskel på forbrugernes holdning til grøn strøm og deres villighed til at betale ekstra for grøn strøm, viser en ph.d. – afhandling af post-doc Yingkui Yang, Institut for Miljø og Erhvervsøkonomi, Syddansk Universitet.

Herudover fortsætter de faste rubrikker om konferencer, publikationer og nyheder naturligvis.

ARTIKLER

Say my name! How the ease with which consumers pronounce brand names affects preferences and memory

*By Antonia Erz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing,
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Introduction

In today's marketplace, consumers are confronted with a multitude of brands to choose from. The name of the brand plays a significant role in helping consumers' decision-making processes. Brand names can be considered the centerpiece of any marketing campaign (Aaker, 2007) and represent a "potential starting point for creating brand personality" (Klink & Athaide, 2012, p. 109). Companies, therefore, need to carefully consider how to name new products and services when introducing them to the market. Extant research has primarily focused on understanding word brand names or semantically meaningful names (e.g., Keller, Heckler, & Houston, 1998; Klink, 2001; Kohli, Harich, & Leuthesser, 2005). However, recent research on sound symbolism has pointed out that there is meaning beyond semantics. Findings suggest that the mere sound of a name can convey meaning (e.g., Klink, 2003; Klink & Athaide, 2012; Klink & Wu, 2014; Lowrey & Shrum, 2007; Yorkston & Menon, 2004).

The present research extends on the notion that there is meaning beyond semantics and aims at systematically investigating the category of non-word brand names, i.e., names that are artificial and do not entail any semantic meaning, such as 'Kodak' or 'Tesa'. We thereby build on fluency theory (for a summary, see Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009) and investigate whether and how phonological fluency, i.e., the ease or difficulty with which a non-word brand name is pronounced, affects consumer preferences and memory. Since non-word brand names offer several advantages, such as being more flexible when positioning a brand, being easier to legally protect, or bearing less risks when introducing them globally, our findings make important contributions to a theoretical and practical understanding of non-word brand names.

Theoretical background

Early research on brand names building on anecdotal evidence has suggested that brand names should be familiar yet distinct; that they should be easy to spell, read and say; be meaningful; be memorable; be legally protectable and easy to introduce globally and locally (Robertson, 1989). When creating new names, marketers can choose from a wide range of potential brand names: Brand names can be common words, which entail no further meaning for the product at hand (e.g., 'Apple', 'BlackBerry'); they can be based on foreign languages, with semantic meaning not instantly visible to consumers (e.g., 'Nivea', 'Xerox'); they can entail parts of common words, partly mixed with artificial letter combinations, emphasizing product functions and benefits (e.g., 'Quies', 'VapoRub'); or they can be non-words, i.e., completely artificial names, entailing no further semantic meaning (e.g., 'Tesa', 'Kodak').

Are brand names that are easy to pronounce better recalled...?



Research investigating suggestive brand names, i.e., names that are based on common words and provide “relevant attribute or benefit information in a particular product context” (Keller et al., 1998, p. 49), such as 'LifeLong Luggage', found that this brand name type can ease initial positioning of a new product. Relating to a relevant function or feature of the product, they help consumers recall those functions and features through the brand name. However, at the same time, suggestive brand names may hinder or even inhibit consumer learning about a new feature of the product that is not part of the brand name (Keller et al., 1998). Incrementally changing an

existing product, adding features, extending a product line or re-positioning an offering in the marketplace might therefore be more difficult if the name is semantically meaningful in relation to one or some functions and features but not in relation to others.

Using non-word brand names, therefore, may provide a fruitful avenue to creating brand names, which bear the advantage of being more flexible, when it comes to filling brands with meaning, i.e., when initially positioning or re-positioning them locally and globally. Recent research on brand names has therefore turned towards investigating names based on their sound, independent from whether they are based on common words or non-words. Findings suggest that certain sounds, such as front and back vowels, are associated with distinct product categories and can symbolize specific attributes of a product (e.g., Lowrey & Shrum, 2007).

Another theory that informs the notion that meaning goes beyond semantics is fluency theory. Fluency theory suggests that the ease or difficulty with which consumers process information affects a wide array of judgments, such as liking, familiarity, or truth (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009; Schwarz, 2004). Thereby, it was generally found that the higher the fluency of a given stimulus – whether it is the font that is easier to read or the name that is easier to pronounce – the more positive the judgment. Investigating phonological fluency, i.e., ease of pronunciation, researchers demonstrated that the easier it is to pronounce last names, the more positively the names and the persons who bear them are judged (Laham, Koval, & Alter, 2012). Another study found that the easier company names and their respective stock exchange abbreviations could be pronounced, the better their performance (Shah & Oppenheimer, 2007). Authors have also investigated under which conditions difficult to process stimuli may evoke positive judgments, based on the assumption that consumers interpret their so-called meta-cognitive experiences, which they draw from the stimulus' fluency, in the light of the consumption context. Song and Schwarz (2009), for example, showed that the difficult-to-pronounce name of a rollercoaster can convey risk but also the positive connotation of adventure, dependent on the consumption context. In sum, findings strongly support the relevance of taking the principles of fluency theory into account when creating brand names that are to increase preferences. Based on a first set of hypotheses, we, therefore, aimed at testing whether fluent non-word brand names, i.e., artificial names that are easy to pronounce, are generally preferred over more difficult to pronounce names.

Past research also suggests that 'good' brand names can aid in recall and recognition, an important factor in building brand equity. Whereas research has generally found that suggestiveness in names aids recognition and recall, non-word brand names have not been systematically researched, and it remains open as to how

pronunciation ease affects correct recognition and recall of this brand name category. Findings from different streams of research are somewhat ambiguous. Investigating an ‘illusion of memory’ effect based on the fluency-familiarity-link, Whittlesea and Williams (1998) found that fluent non-words were highly prone to being falsely recognized, i.e., consumers would falsely think they had seen a name before, even if they did not. Whittlesea and Williams’ (1998) study was not explicitly concerned with a correct recognition effect of previously seen names, but their results suggested that fluent and disfluent non-words, which study participants had seen before, were recognized equally well.

Authors in the areas of linguistic and brand name research (Lerman & Garbarino, 2002; Ozubko & Yonelinas, 2012) generally found that ‘normal’ non-words, i.e., non-words that are pronounceable, support false and correct recognition, since they lack clear semantic meaning. In contrast, Gontijo et al. (2002) found that weird non-words, i.e., those which have a smaller orthographic neighborhood size, were recognized faster and more accurately than normal non-words. They also found that brand names form a word category in themselves, being recognized faster and more accurately than non-words. Based on a second set of hypotheses, we tested novel non-words that were presented as brand names to participants to test whether fluent or less fluent names would be better recognized and recalled under different conditions.

Method and results

In three laboratory experiments, 30 novel non-word brand names, selected after an extensive pre-study and divided into three groups of fluent (e.g., ‘PELLING’), moderately fluent (e.g., ‘WABORS’) and disfluent (e.g., ‘LANTHT’) non-words, were presented to student samples (Danish business school students). In all studies, we controlled for orthographic regularity. Study 1 (N = 76) and study 2 (N = 41) were designed as recognition studies, where we provided participants with different consumption contexts. One group of participants were told to judge potential brand names for cheese that was positioned as an ‘everyday’ product, designed to be consumed on a daily basis, and one group to judge brand names for cheese that was positioned as an ‘exclusive’ product, designed to be consumed only on special occasions (based on Pocheptsova, Labroo, & Dhar, 2010). Study 1 included a control condition where a third group was presented with the stimuli without any consumption context, i.e., participants were asked to judge non-words instead of brand names.

In both studies, participants had to first indicate their preferences for the presented stimuli before testing for recognition. In both studies, we could generally find that easy to pronounce names were preferred over difficult-to-pronounce names, independent from the consumption context. However, the picture was not as clear-cut as

existing research may suggest. Whereas difficult to pronounce names were liked the least throughout the studies, moderately fluent names, i.e., those on a fluency level between easy and difficult to pronounce names, gained in liking when they were judged for an exclusive product consumption context. Study 3 (N = 80), which was designed as a free recall study and where participants had to first indicate their preferences, did not distinguish between consumption contexts; results supported our expectation that easy to pronounce names were preferred over more difficult to pronounce names.

Testing for correct recognition, study 1 demonstrated that when stimuli were presented as context-free non-words (i.e., control condition), correct recognition increased with fluency, challenging results from existing studies, which suggested that fluent and disfluent non-words may be recognized equally well. As expected, accuracy of recognition changed once a product context was added. In particular, when participants were presented with an everyday product context, where the same non-words were presented as potential brand names, both fluent and disfluent stimuli were recognized equally well and better than moderately fluent names. Surprisingly, we found no statistically significant difference between fluency levels in an exclusive product context but a pattern which suggested a decrease of recognition with fluency.

Study 2 sought to replicate the results of the first study with changes being made to the instruction to strengthen the effect of the consumption context. We also extended the distraction task between preference and recognition phase from 10 minutes in the first to 40 minutes in the second study. Importantly, instead of indicating recognition of the stimuli on a list, participants had to indicate recognition on a scale with pairs of brand names, being falsely told that each pair contained one name that resembled a name they had previously seen and a competing name they had never seen before. In fact, they were presented with all 30 stimuli they had seen before; this procedure was chosen to prompt non-analytic processing (Whittlesea & Price, 2001), i.e., to ensure that participants were relying on their fluency experiences instead of systematically analyzing distinct features of the stimuli. Interestingly, the effect of the product context diminished. Instead, the fluency of the competing filler items moderated recognition of the original stimuli. When original brand names were compared to new fluent filler items, fluent names were better recognized than disfluent ones, and disfluent names better than moderately fluent ones. When compared to new disfluent filler item, fluent names were still better recognized than disfluent names, but correct recognition for moderately fluent names increased. The same student sample participated in a second recognition phase approximately four weeks later. The analysis revealed that when original names were compared to a fluent filler name, recognition for fluent and disfluent names dropped but increased for moderately

fluent names. When compared to disfluent filler items, recognition again dropped for original fluent items, but stayed the same for disfluent and moderately fluent names.

Finally, study 3 investigated free recall, where participants had to freely recall 15 names from the same set of stimuli as above and had to assign the correct name to the correct product picture. Half of the participants were told in the training phase, that a recall test would follow and instructed to study the names (high involvement group). The other half of participants were not informed (low involvement group). Results revealed that that only 5.41 percent of the brand names in total could be correctly recalled and correctly assigned to a product picture across both high- and low-involved participants. We therefore both calculated and manually coded the similarity of the recalled items to the original names. As expected, high-involved participants displayed a greater ability to recall similar items than low-involved participants. Whereas fluent names could be recalled the best and moderately fluent names the worst by all participants, high-involved participants had an advantage in correctly recalling disfluent stimuli.

Implications for research and practice

Employing the full range of pronunciation fluency, the present research provides a more complete and fine-grained idea of fluency effects on consumer preferences and memory of non-word brand names. It therefore holds several implications for research on brand names, fluency theory and memory of non-words.

We found throughout the studies that easy to pronounce names were preferred. These results generally support existing findings that have demonstrated a superiority of high fluency. At the same time, they also suggest that moderate fluency increases preferences when applied to brand names for exclusive products, partly supporting work on a preference reversal in different consumption contexts. However, the 'goodness' of a brand name is not only defined by whether it is liked or not, but also whether it aids recognition and recall. Not surprisingly, but not yet fully understood, the effect of fluency on correct recognition changed with product context and when compared to a competing name. Fluency increased correct memory only when fluent non-words were presented without a consumption context, when non-word brand names had to be recognized in comparison to competing names, or when they had to be freely recalled. However, study 1, where disfluent stimuli were recognized equally well, gives reason to assume that a superiority of fluency is not always given in a brand name context. Furthermore, we included moderately fluent items, since to many brand managers, these kinds of names might present the middle way in fulfilling the requirements of a good brand name (i.e., easy-to-say but distinct enough to be

recognized). However, our studies show that particularly this sub-category is prone to nuisances and at disadvantage when it comes to correct recognition and recall – although they displayed higher liking under some conditions. Particularly in a context, where consumers are presented with many competing brands to choose from (e.g., at the point-of-sale), a brand name displaying moderate fluency might lose out against more fluent names.

These findings also call for further research in order to better understand criteria for creating non-word, semantically or sound-related meaningful brand names. First of all, there is need for investigating fluency effects in different product categories. Whereas the present studies used a fast moving consumer good to set the consumption context, other product categories, such as technologically advanced products, may call for more disfluent names. Furthermore, as an extension of study 3, involvement of consumers with certain products or other personal traits may influence their preferences. For example, it was found that highly innovative consumers preferred new brand names for new products, whereas less innovative consumers indicated higher liking for the same new products when they were presented as brand extensions (Klink & Athaide, 2010). Second, the present research does not allow for conclusions on how fluency effects transfer to suggestive brand names or how ease of pronunciation interacts with sounds, which comprises a fruitful avenue for further research. Third, a brand name is not only perceived on a textual level but may be written in different fonts, colors or be presented with a logo added, which all constitute further sources for fluency experiences that may affect preferences and memory. Further research relating to several of those questions will be conducted within the scope of this research project.

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Markedsføring af grøn strøm på det liberaliserede el-marked

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I 2010 har regeringen annonceret en strategisk energiplan, Danmark skal i 2050 være et fossil-frit land. I dag er andelen af energi, der kommer fra vedvarende energikilder på ca. 30 %. Det er derfor vigtigt at få alle parter i samfundet til at støtte denne plan.

Når vedvarende energi skal udbygges, vil det koste ekstra. Det betyder, at forbrugerne vil komme til at betale mere. I dag er der mange elselskaber, som sælger grøn strøm med en el-deklaration. El-forbrugerne kan købe grøn strøm ved at tegne en grøn el-kontrakt, som indeholder en garanti for, at den elektricitet, som de betaler for er frembragt ved hjælp af vedvarende energi som f.eks. vindkraft og/eller vandkraft. El-forbrugerne kan stadig bidrage til forbedring af miljøet ved at tilvælge 'CO2 balance' også selv om de har købt elektricitet, som er frembragt ved hjælp af fossile brændstoffer som kul og olie.

Et vigtigt formål med markedsføring af grøn strøm er at skabe forståelse for og indsigt i produktet blandt mulige købere og naturligvis at fremme købet af produktet. For at kunne gøre dette effektivt, er det nødvendigt at forstå forbrugernes adfærd i forhold til køb af forskellige el-produkter herunder grøn strøm. I ph.d. projektet giver to spørgeskemaundersøgelser af private danske el-forbrugere viden om forbrugernes præferencer og adfærd. Begge undersøgelser består af ca. 1000 respondenter, som afspejler den aktuelle befolkningsstruktur.

Betydningen af forbrugernes holdninger og villighed til at betale for grøn strøm

Ved anvendelse af en 'contingent valuation' metode, er respondenterne blevet spurgt, om de er villige til at betale for grøn strøm. Undersøgelsen er splittet op i to lige store stikprøver. Hver stikprøve har sit eget senarie. Det ene senarie er: 'Hvis de fleste danske husholdninger er villige til at købe grøn strøm'. Det andet senarie er: 'Hvis kun få danske husholdninger er villige til at købe grøn strøm'. Målet var at finde ud af forbrugernes villighed til at betale for grøn strøm.

Undersøgelsen viser, at langt de fleste el-forbrugere er usikre på, om de vil købe grøn strøm i fremtiden. Hovedårsagen er, at de ikke kan se direkte forskel på grøn og ikke-grøn (olie/kul generet) strøm. Forbrugerne var desuden bekymrede over stabiliteten i elforsyningen, hvis den kun kommer fra vedvarende energikilder. Herudover foretrækker forbrugerne grøn strøm, som kommer fra vindkraft

fremfor vandkraft, og de ønsker ikke at tilvælge 'CO2 balance'. I forhold til forbrugernes villighed til at betale ekstra for grøn strøm vil de fleste respondenter gerne betale 5-10 øre mere pr. kWh.

De empiriske analyser viser, at forbrugernes accept af grøn strøm afhænger af (1) de fordele forbrugerne kan se ved produktet, (2) i hvilken grad produktet er i overensstemmelse med forbrugernes opfattelse af at tage ansvar for miljøet (god miljøadfærd), (3) opfattelsen af i hvilken grad den enkelte forbruger har en moralsk forpligtigelse til at bidrage til et bedre miljø, og (4) i hvilken grad den enkelte forbruger mener at hendes/hans adfærd bidrager til et bedre miljø. Det er desuden klart, at forbrugernes accept og villighed til at betale ekstra for grøn strøm stiger, såfremt de véd, at mange andre forbrugere også er villige til at købe grøn strøm.

Der er forskellige forbrugersegmenter

I projektet benyttes en 'diskret valg eksperiment' metode med henblik på at vurdere, hvor attraktive forskellige egenskaber ved grønne el-produkter er. Respondenterne blev bedt om at gennemføre syv opgaver. Hver opgave bestod af tre el-produkter og respondenterne skulle vurdere produktet som helhed, frem for en evaluering af egenskaberne hver for sig. De valgte el-produkters egenskaber er procentandel af vedvarende energi, vedvarende energi kilder, pris pr. kWh, kontaktperiode og el-leverandøren. Resultaterne viser, at forbrugerne generelt fortrækker en høj procentandel af grøn elektricitet, når denne er frembragt ved hjælp af et miks af vedvarende energi kilder, og når købskontrakten løber over en længere periode. Forbrugerne vil helst handle med deres nuværende leverandør.

Grøn strøm



En latent class analyse peger på, at der findes fire forbruger segmenter på el-markedet baseret udefra deres produktvalg. Disse er (1) value seeking consumers, (2) renewable energy preferring consumers, (3)

price sensitive consumers og (4) mixed renewable energy sources preference consumers.

Forbrugers intention om at skifte elselskab er lav - men det er muligt

Et vigtigt formål med liberalisering af el-markedet er at skabe konkurrence, så forbrugerne kan købe det el-produkt, som de helst vil have og benytte det elselskab, som de helst vil handle med. Selv om langt de fleste respondenter véd at de kan skifte elselskab frit, er der kun få, som skifter elselskab og forbrugernes intention om at skifte er generelt meget lav. Undersøgelsen viser, at væsentlige determinanter i forbrugernes beslutning om at skifte el-leverandør er 'relationship management', økonomiske fordele, tilfredshed med nuværende leverandør, og størrelsen af det årlige elforbrug. Konkret blev tre typer af skifteadfærd identificeret blandt respondenterne: 'Loyal forbruger', 'illoyal forbruger' og 'tøvende forbruger'.

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NYHEDER

Pris

Lektor Thyra Uth Thomsen har modtaget den fine DSEB Education Prize 2014. Thyra Uth Thomsen has been selected as winner due to her extraordinary competence in teaching both students and teachers. Since 2014 Thyra has engaged herself in designing fully online courses and she is indeed a first-mover in CBS' strategic commitment to offer online courses. With her extreme focus on quality she has an admirable ability to make things happen. All this helps her to deliver the good results for students as well as faculty.

Medlemskab af tænketank

Professor Torben Hansen er af fødevareminister Dan Jørgensen blevet udpeget som medlem af Måltidstænketanken. Måltidstænketanken skal komme med forslag til, hvordan vi kan styrke og udvikle madkulturen i Danmark.

YDERLIGERE OPLYSNINGER

Adgang til publikationer

Er du interesseret i en eller flere af ovenstående bøger, tidsskriftsartikler og/eller konference-/researchpapirer, kan de bestilles eller lånes på CBS' Bibliotek (adresse: www.cbs.dk/library og Research@CBS).

Gruppens publikationer (fra 1999-) kan findes på samme web-adresse eller på de respektive medlemmers hjemmesider.

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Forskningsgruppens Nyhedsbrev udkommer hvert halve år, men kun i elektronisk form.

Hvis du ikke allerede er tilmeldt, men ønsker at modtage kommende numre af Nyhedsbrevet, bedes du venligst sende os din e-mailadresse med overskriften 'Nyhedsbrev' til følgende e-mailadresse: ffa.marktg@cbs.dk

Eventuel afmelding af Nyhedsbrevet foretages til samme e-mail adresse.