

With three experiments, the authors examine the notion that foreign branding—the strategy of pronouncing or spelling a brand name in a foreign language—triggers cultural stereotypes and influences product perceptions and attitudes. Choosing French brands as one specific case, Experiment 1 shows that the French pronunciation of a brand name affects the perceived hedonism of the products, attitudes toward the brand, and attitudes toward the brand name. Experiment 2 shows that congruent country-of-origin information, added to French branding, does not result in more hedonic perceptions; incongruence, however, diminishes the effect. In Experiment 3, an actual product taste test is performed. Despite the presence of direct sensory experience, consumer perceptions of a product change as a result of French branding.

Foreign Branding and Its Effects on Product Perceptions and Attitudes

What do Klarbrunn waters, Giorgio di St. Angelo designer wear, and Haagen Dazs ice cream have in common? All three are successful brands, and all are not what they seem. Klarbrunn is not the clear mountain-spring mineral water from the German Alps that its brand name suggests; it is American water bottled in Wisconsin. Giorgio di St. Angelo designer wear is not the latest fashion from Milan but the product of U.S. designer Martin Price. And Haagen Dazs is not Danish or Hungarian ice cream; it is American ice cream made by Pillsbury, with headquarters in Minneapolis.

To what degree the success of these and other brands (e.g., Egoiste fragrance, Freusen Gladje ice cream, Alizé liquor, Yoplait yogurt) has been influenced by their foreign brand names is difficult to determine. Yet, for most products—in particular, experiential products such as mineral water, apparel, and ice cream—a name can make substantial contributions to a brand's equity (Aaker 1991; Charman 1988).

Brand equity has been defined in terms of the differential effect—the "added value"—that brand knowledge has on consumers' responses to the marketing of a brand (Aaker

1991; Farquhar 1989; Keller 1993). Brand knowledge consists of two dimensions: brand awareness (i.e., brand recall and recognition) and brand image (i.e., the perceptions of a brand as reflected by a network of brand associations in consumer memory) (Keller 1993). Thus, from a strategic perspective, the desirability of a brand name can be judged along two dimensions: (1) the inherent ease with which the name can be encoded into, retained in, and retrieved from memory and (2) the extent to which the name supports or enhances the strategic positioning of the product (Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis 1986; Robertson 1989).

Foreign branding—the strategy of spelling or pronouncing a brand name in a foreign language—seems to be targeted primarily toward influencing the brand image dimension of brand equity. Whereas foreign-sounding brand names such as Klarbrunn, Giorgio di St. Angelo, and Haagen Dazs may be relatively unfamiliar, hard to pronounce, and perhaps less memorable than names derived from the English language, they nonetheless may carry positive associations that affect how consumers perceive and evaluate the products. Klarbrunn, for example, may remind consumers of the high quality standards applied to most German products, and Giorgio di St. Angelo may bring to mind images of high-style Italian fashion.

Indeed, numerous studies in psychology have demonstrated the existence of stereotypes and their influence on the perception and evaluation of individual behaviors (Eagly et al. 1991; Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky 1992; Gardner 1973; Katz 1981). National and cultural stereotypes are broad, consensually shared beliefs and judgments related to a country, its citizens, and their culture (Peabody

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1985; Taylor and Moghaddam 1987). Like other stereotypes, they should influence the perception and judgment of any object, including consumer products, that are associated with a certain country or culture.

Consider, for example, the stereotype of France, the French, and French culture. The concept of "Frenchness" brings to mind a rich network of associations related to aesthetic sensitivity, refined taste, and sensory pleasure and, in some instances, elegance, flair, and sophistication—beliefs that create a unified image of Frenchness as the culture of hedonism (Peabody 1985; Peyrefitte 1976; Pitts 1963). Yet, hedonism-utilitarianism is not only a basic dimension of culture; it is also a crucial factor in product perceptions (Batra and Ahtola 1990; Holbrook and Hirschmann 1982). Certain products, often called hedonic products, typically are judged in terms of how much pleasure they provide, whereas so-called utilitarian products are judged in terms of how well they function. Therefore, one would expect that products associated with France or Frenchness should be perceived to be more hedonic than products that lack this association.

Focusing on French brands, we report three experiments to test the effects of foreign branding on product perceptions and evaluations. As a preliminary step, Experiment 1 was undertaken to demonstrate a foreign-branding effect. The following two experiments form the core of our research. In Experiment 2, we examine the joint impact of foreign branding and country-of-origin information. This enables us to address the issue of congruence of brand associations (Keller 1993), that is, how consumers perceive and evaluate products whose country of origin is congruent or incongruent with the country image evoked by the brand name. Finally, in Experiment 3, we investigate whether foreign-branding effects occur only when consumers have little or no direct experience with the product or whether foreign brand names also affect product perceptions when consumers have direct experience with a product.

EXPERIMENT 1: DOES FOREIGN BRANDING AFFECT BRAND IMAGE?

Lecterc, Schmitt, and Dubé-Rioux (1989) studied the effects of a French or English pronunciation of a brand name on the perception of "hybrid products," which possess a balance of hedonic and utilitarian features (i.e., shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, and body lotion). The brands were perceived as more hedonic when the name was pronounced in French than when it was pronounced in English. However, these results must be considered preliminary because the foreign-branding effect was demonstrated on only one paper-and-pencil variable, for only one product category (beauty aid products), and in a within-subject design that may have accentuated the effect.

In Experiment 1, subjects judged six products—two products with primarily utilitarian features, two products with primarily hedonic features, and two hybrids. Because products typically have been viewed as a linear combination of features to which brands contribute, one should expect that French names generate more hedonic brand associations and be perceived as more hedonic than brands with English names. In turn, brand attitudes and brand name attitudes,

conceptualized as general positive or negative evaluations of a product (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) or brand name, should be determined by the fit between the name and product category (Aaker and Keller 1990). Park, Milberg, and Lawson (1991) show a brand with functional associations to be evaluated more positively for extensions that are oriented toward product functions, whereas an image brand was more appropriate for prestige products. Thus, a French name with hedonic associations should provide a better perceptual fit for hedonic products than an English name and result in more positive brand attitudes. For utilitarian products, on the other hand, a product with a French brand name should be liked less than a product with an English brand name because of a poorer fit between the features triggered by the cultural stereotype and the product features. For hybrid products, which have a relative balance between hedonic and utilitarian features, French and English names should lead to equally positive brand attitudes.¹

Method

Forty undergraduates were asked to form impressions of six products whose brand names they heard on a tape. In a pretest, 20 business school students had rated 18 products on two 7-point scales measuring the degree to which the product possessed utilitarian and hedonic features (1 = not at all; 7 = very much). The two hedonic products selected (fragrance and nail polish) had low ratings on the utilitarian scale (both $M_s < 3.1$) but high ratings on the hedonic scale ($M_s > 5.4$). The two utilitarian products (foil wrap and gasoline) had high ratings on the utilitarian scale ($M_s > 6.6$) and low ratings on the hedonic scale ($M_s < 1.5$). The two hybrids (hair shampoo, deodorant) had relatively high ratings on both scales ($M_s > 6.0$ and $M_s > 3.9$, respectively).

French branding was manipulated as a between-subjects factor. Subjects listened to either English or French pronunciations of the same fictitious brand names. Following the syntactic and phonetic rules of the English and French languages, the six brand names (Varner, Randal, Massin, Rimor, Orman, and Lorient) were acceptable in both languages; they were pronounced by a bilingual person. The order of presentation of the six brand names was identical for all subjects, but their association with the six product categories was different across subjects to make sure that possible effects were not caused by the association of a particular name with a particular product category. In other words, the order of the six products was different for different subjects.

Subjects first listened to the brand name and then were shown a card with the product category listed while they heard the brand name two more times. Subjects were exposed to the names three times so they would have sufficient opportunity to process it (Krugman 1972). After-

¹Batra and Ahtola (1990) find two factors for product attitudes: a hedonic and a utilitarian factor. Therefore, we included an equal number of hedonic (e.g., pleasant-unpleasant), utilitarian (e.g., useless-useful), and general attitude scales (e.g., dislike-like). However, a factor analysis performed on the nine attitude scales revealed a solution that was clearly unidimensional. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 6.46 (explaining 72% of the variance, with all variables loading $> .7$), followed by factors with eigenvalues of only .86 and .42.

Table 1
MEAN RATINGS ON DEPENDENT VARIABLES OF
EXPERIMENT AS A FUNCTION OF PRONUNCIATION OF
THE BRAND NAME AND PRODUCT TYPE

Type of Product	Pronunciation of Brand Name	
	English	French
	Perceived hedonism measure	
Utilitarian	2.81	3.33
Hybrid	3.55	4.11
Hedonic	4.25	5.38
	Feature difference scores	
Utilitarian	-2.23	-1.5
Hybrid	-1.4	-1.94
Hedonic	-5.75	.833
	Attitude toward the brand	
Utilitarian	4.31	4.17
Hybrid	4.82	4.61
Hedonic	3.88	4.99
	Attitude toward the brand name	
Utilitarian	3.55	2.92
Hybrid	3.75	3.83
Hedonic	3.25	4.97

wards, subjects provided a one-minute "testimonial," in which they were encouraged to "talk about anything that comes to mind—positive or negative things—that are related to the usage of this specific brand." Subjects' responses were recorded and transcribed, and a feature analysis was performed to assess the type of associations generated in the two experimental conditions. Each piece of information in subjects' responses was categorized by two coders (intercoder reliability = .88) as (1) a feature related to the utilitarian product category or (2) a feature related to the hedonic product category. A difference score (number of hedonic minus number of utilitarian features) was computed for each subject.

After providing testimonials for all six products, subjects rated each product on the following scales: (1) a brand name attitude scale ("How much do you like the brand name for this product category?" [1=not at all; 7=very much]), (2) nine semantic-differential brand attitude scales, which were summed to calculate an overall attitude measure ($\alpha = .95$), and (3) a utilitarianism/hedonism scale (1 = definitely utilitarian; 7 = definitely hedonic).

Results and Discussion

A 2 (pronunciation) \times 3 (product type) ANOVA conducted on the utilitarianism/hedonism scale revealed a main effect of product type ($F[2, 64] = 11.85, p < .001$), which served as a manipulation check, a main effect of pronunciation ($F[1, 32] = 11.43, p < .01$), and no significant interaction. Hedonic products were rated significantly more hedonic than hybrid products ($ps < .01$), and hybrid products were rated as more hedonic than utilitarian products ($ps < .05$). As seen in Table 1, products were perceived as more hedonic when the brand name was pronounced in French versus English ($M = 8.55$ versus $M = 7.07$).

Moreover, a 2 \times 3 ANOVA conducted on the coded features difference score revealed significant main effects for

pronunciation ($F[2,72] = 15.41, p < .001$) and product type ($F[1,36] = 7.85, p < .01$). The interaction was not significant ($p > .5$). As Table 1 shows, for all three product types, more hedonic (and/or less utilitarian) features were elicited when the brand name was pronounced in French than when it was pronounced in English ($M = -.287$ versus $M = -1.40$). This suggests that the cultural stereotypes triggered by the French names change the cognitive representation of the product and the level of fit between brand characteristics and product category characteristics.²

Finally, a 2 \times 3 ANOVA conducted on brand attitudes revealed a significant interaction of pronunciation and type of product ($F[2, 58] = 5.14, p < .01$). When the name was pronounced in French rather than English, attitudes toward the brand were significantly more positive for hedonic products ($p < .05$). Brand attitudes for utilitarian products, on the other hand, though in the predicted direction, did not differ significantly. Also, as predicted, brand attitudes for hybrid products did not differ significantly (see Table 1). Finally, a 2 \times 3 ANOVA, performed on attitudes toward the brand names, revealed an interaction of pronunciation with product type ($F[2,64] = 6.23, p < .01$). As predicted, hedonic products were liked better when the brand name was pronounced in French than English ($p < .05$). An opposite, borderline significant effect was observed for utilitarian products ($p < .10$) and there was no difference for hybrid products (see Table 1).

In sum, the results of Experiment 1 show that product perceptions and evaluations change as a function of whether the brand name is pronounced in French or English. In terms of brand perceptions, French names produce a more hedonic perception than English names. Predictions for attitudes toward the brands and brand names were confirmed only partially. French names were preferred over English names for hedonic products, and hedonic products were more positively evaluated when they had French names as opposed to English names. Also, attitudes did not differ significantly for hybrid products. But for utilitarian products we observe a weak detrimental effect of French names on attitudes toward the brand names and only a directional effect for attitudes toward the brands. Thus, French names seem to contribute more positive brand equity to hedonic products but not significantly diminish equity for utilitarian products.

EXPERIMENT 2: DOES FOREIGN BRANDING INTERACT WITH COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN INFORMATION?

In Experiment 2, we investigate consumers' perceptions and evaluations when they were presented with both foreign branding and country-of-origin information compared with situations in which only one or none of the two types of information was present.

²A qualitative analysis of the protocols further supported the main effect of foreign branding across all product types. Subjects attached hedonic features to all foreign-branded products, including utilitarian products (e.g., "a gas station where the pumps are green and yellow and the service is probably friendly"). However, the brand names influenced not only subjects' perceptions of features but also their inferences about product image, usage situations, user types, packaging, distribution outlets, and price.

Country-of-origin effects have been documented extensively in the marketing literature (Bilkey and Nes 1982; Erickson, Johansson, and Chao 1984; Han 1989; Hastak and Hong 1991; Hong and Wyer 1989, 1990; Johansson, Douglas, and Nonaka 1985). In general, a product is evaluated more positively when consumers are informed that it has been manufactured in a country known for high-quality products compared with a country known for low-quality products. As is the case for foreign branding, country images triggered by "made in" labels may not only trigger inferences about quality but also access shared beliefs about national ideology, geography, population, and race and about citizens' lifestyles, religious beliefs, and world view (Kelman 1965). Therefore, country of origin and foreign branding should influence consumer responses in a similar manner. That is, consumers should have positive attitudes toward hedonic products produced in France, and the presence of "made in France" alone should produce a more hedonic perception of the product. However, how do consumers respond when there is congruence or incongruence between the brand associations activated by foreign branding and those activated by country of origin? Congruence is the extent to which a brand association shares content and meaning with another brand association (Keller 1993). According to Keller (1993), incongruent brand associations result in less cohesive and more diffuse brand images. Thus, incongruent associations resulting from a mismatch between the name and "made in" label should result in less hedonic perceptions than French-sounding brand names or "made in France" labels alone, and, as a result, brand attitudes should be less positive. Conversely, congruent associations should produce more hedonic perceptions and more positive brand attitudes unless the name and "made in" label convey merely redundant information.³

A new set of products was pretested and selected as hedonic, utilitarian, and hybrid products. French branding was manipulated via the spelling of the names (e.g., Rimor/Rimoré). Subjects were presented with print advertisements containing a picture of the product and brief copy.

Method

Subjects and design. Students ($n = 184$) enrolled in two marketing classes rated nine advertisements, following a 3 (made in France, made in the U.S.A., no country-of-origin information) \times 3 (French spelling, English spelling, no brand name) \times 3 (product type) factorial design. "Country of origin" and "foreign branding" were between-subjects factors; "type of product" was a within-subjects variable. The ad presentation order was randomized across subjects. The responses of 7 subjects whose native language was not English were discarded.

Products and stimuli. As in Experiment 1, stimuli (two utilitarian, two hedonic, and two hybrid products) were selected on the basis of a pretest. "Calculator" and "laundry detergent"—the utilitarian products selected for the actual study—had high ratings on the 7-point utilitarian scale (M

$= 6.18$ and $M = 6.48$, respectively) but low ratings on the hedonic scale ($M = 2.33$ and $M = 2.21$, respectively). "Crystal glassware" and "stuffed animal toys"—the hedonic products—had low ratings on the utilitarian scale ($M = 2.08$ and $M = 1.90$) but high ratings on the hedonic scale ($M = 5.63$ and $M = 6.90$). "Cars" and "sunglasses"—the hybrids—had relatively high ratings on both the utilitarian ($M = 5.14$ and $M = 4.24$) and hedonic scales ($M = 5.03$ and $M = 4.24$).

Each ad consisted of a black and white picture or graphical display of the product. Underneath the pictorial part of the ad was a brief slogan accompanied by the product category. Except in the control condition, the brand name and/or country-of-origin information was provided in addition to the copy line. The following slogans were shown underneath the pictorial display of each product: "A New Addition" (for calculators), "Just Add Water" (for detergent), "The Difference Is Clear" (for glassware), "Start Your Own Zoo" (for toys), "Going my Way?" (for cars), and "Get a New Perspective" (for sunglasses).

Experimental conditions. French branding was manipulated by slightly changing the spelling of the names and adding or canceling accents. In a no-brand-name condition, subjects saw the ads without the names. Twelve novel brand names were pretested. Half of the 28 subjects rated 6 of the 12 brand names with their intended French spelling and the other 6 brand names with the intended U.S. spelling. The other half of the subjects received the reverse language version of each brand name. Those selected as "French" brand names for the study were identified as foreign names by 75% of the respondents, and 75% of those who identified them as foreign indicated that the language was French. Brand names selected as "U.S. brand names" were identified by less than 20% of respondents as foreign. The names included in the experiment, in their respective U.S./French versions, are Rimor/Rimoré, Corle/Corlé, Nortic/Nortique, Acqu/Acque, Dapon/Dapône, and Mathis/Mathisé.

To manipulate country-of-origin information, subjects judged either ads that stated at the bottom of the ad "imported from France" or "produced in the U.S.A" or ads that contained no information about the country of origin of the product.

Procedure and dependent variables. Subjects were told that the researchers were interested in copy testing the ads in terms of the impressions and images they conveyed. They were asked to evaluate each ad on the following dependent measures: (1) attitude toward the ad (four 9-point scales with the endpoints "very good"–"very bad," "very negative"–"very positive," "very unpleasant"–"very pleasant," "like very much"–"do not like at all"); (2) attitude toward the brand using the same scales and endpoints; (3) overall quality ("poor quality"–"excellent quality"); (4) purchase intention ("not at all likely"–"very likely"); and (5) utilitarianism and hedonism of the product ("not at all"–"very much").

In contrast to Experiment 1, utilitarianism/hedonism was measured on two independent scales to allow for the possibility that the scales could constitute two independent dimensions. The correlation computed between the two scales

³The postulated effect on brand attitude can be moderated further by product type, producing a potential three-way interaction; however, using the brand equity framework, we are not able to make precise predictions about the nature of this interaction.

across all products was substantial and highly significant ($r = .57$, respectively, all $ps < .001$). Therefore, like the utilitarianism/hedonism measure and the coded features difference score used in Experiment 1, utilitarianism/hedonism was treated as a unidimensional scale (1 = utilitarian; 7 = hedonistic). Moreover, the four "attitude toward the ad" responses were added to form an overall measure, and the four "attitude toward the product" items and the purchase intention measure were combined to form an overall attitude toward the product scale (for both, $\alpha > .92$). Finally, ratings were averaged across products within each category (hedonic, utilitarian, hybrid).

Two variables were of primary interest in the study: utilitarianism/hedonism and brand attitudes. Neither spelling nor country of origin should affect attitudes toward the ad because the ads themselves were not manipulated to be "hedonic," "utilitarian," or "hybrid"; the measure was included for consistency with the cover story. Also, the most common dependent variable of country-of-origin research, quality, was included for exploratory purposes only. Finally, to avoid demand effects, brand name attitudes were not measured in Experiment 2 because, within the context of an advertising study, they may have drawn subjects' attention to the names.

Results

Separate 3 (country of origin) \times 3 (spelling) \times 3 (product type) ANOVAs were conducted on the four dependent variables: attitude toward the ads, brand attitudes, quality, and the utilitarianism/hedonism scale. Main effects of "product type" emerged for each of the four measures (all $ps < .001$). Overall, hedonic products were rated more positively with respect to attitudes toward advertisements in which these products appeared and with respect to brand attitudes and quality perception. The significant differences on the utilitarianism/hedonism scale were used as a manipulation check. Hedonic products received the highest ratings in terms of hedonism ($M = 6.78$), followed by hybrid products ($M = 4.89$) and utilitarian products ($M = 2.80$). All differences were highly significant (all $ps < .001$). Country of origin and brand spelling did not affect attitudes toward the ads and quality as a main effect or in any of the interactions. This result is not surprising, considering that previous country-of-origin research frequently contrasts developed countries with less developed ones, whereas in the present study, both the United States and France are Western industrialized nations that produce products of similar quality.

On the utilitarianism/hedonism measure, the interaction of brand spelling and country of origin was significant ($F[4, 168] = 3.40, p < .05$). The means in Table 2 suggest that country of origin and foreign branding function similarly when they are the single cues. Replicating Experiment 1, a French brand name alone produced a more hedonic perception than an English brand name alone ($M = 5.11$ versus $M = 4.56, p < .05$). A French brand name alone also produced a more hedonic perception compared with the no-brand-name condition ($M = 5.11$ versus $M = 4.44, p < .05$). Hedonic perceptions of a product with an English name, however, did not differ from hedonic perceptions of a product with no brand name ($p > .5$). In addition, ads that contained

Table 2
MEAN RATINGS ON PERCEIVED HEDONISM AS A FUNCTION
OF BRAND NAME SPELLING AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
INFORMATION

Brand Name Spelling	Country-of-Origin Information		
	No Information	USA	France
No brand name	4.44	4.88	5.29
English	4.56	4.83	4.76
French	5.11	4.69	4.88

"made in France" were rated as more hedonic than the baseline/no country-of-origin condition ($M = 5.29$ versus $M = 4.44, p < .05$). The difference between "made in France" and "made in the U.S.A." ($M = 5.29$ versus $M = 4.88$) and the difference between products "made in the U.S.A." ($M = 4.88$) and the baseline condition ($M = 4.44$) approached significance ($p = .11$ and $p = .10$, respectively).

Did incongruent cues reduce the effect that we observed for foreign branding when the latter was presented as a single cue? It does not seem so. Products advertised as "made in France" but with an English brand name ($M = 4.76$) were judged to be significantly less hedonic than products advertised as "made in France" without a brand name ($M = 5.29; p < .05$). Similarly, brands with French spelling but "made in the U.S.A." ($M = 4.69$) were judged to be less hedonic than brands with French spelling whose country of origin was not provided ($M = 5.11; p < .05$). Thus, products associated with Frenchness seem to lose their hedonic edge when other information is present in the ad that results in incongruent associations.

Is congruency a significant advantage? Surprisingly, it is not. Ads with both French brand names and "made in France" were only borderline significantly different in terms of perceptions of hedonism from advertisements with "made in France" alone ($M = 4.88$ versus $5.29, p = .08$) and did not differ significantly from the French brand name alone ($M = 4.88$ versus $5.11, p > .25$). Congruent ads also did not differ from the incongruent conditions discussed previously ($ps > .35$).

On attitudes toward the brand, a significant interaction of brand spelling and product type was revealed ($F[4, 338] = 2.50, p < .05$). Surprisingly, country of origin did not influence brand attitudes. Subsequent tests indicated that brand attitudes for both the utilitarian and hybrid product categories did not significantly differ for French, English, and no brand names. However, attitudes toward hedonic products were more positive for brands whose names were spelled in French than when no brand name was present ($M = 6.20$ versus $M = 5.70, p < .05$). There were no significant differences between names spelled in English and no brand name present ($M = 5.98$ versus $M = 5.70$). The difference in attitudes between French and English brand names did not reach significance ($p > .25$).

Discussion

As in Experiment 1, we show that hedonic perception of a product can be enhanced by giving it a French rather than an English name. Also, an English name does not seem to

trigger any distinct hedonic/utilitarian associations because it did not differ in hedonic perceptions from the baseline condition. Turning to country-of-origin effects, though a product "made in France" enhanced perceptions of hedonism above the baseline condition, it was not rated as more hedonic than a product "made in the U.S.A.," which itself was not perceived differently than the baseline condition.

Thus, compared with foreign branding, country-of-origin information may be a less differentiated cue for hedonic perceptions. This may be because foreign branding and country of origin trigger different associations. For example, when hearing or reading a French name, subjects may concentrate on the mellifluous qualities of the French language and infer that the product possesses hedonic qualities. Conversely, a country-of-origin cue may trigger a more diversified set of associations. For example, part of the associations triggered by a country-of-origin cue may be the types of goods produced by the particular country. In the case of France, like the United States, these goods may not all be hedonic products but also may include some utilitarian products. In other words, consumers may have stored in memory certain associations related to the French language in terms of hedonism—associations that could be different from and stronger than associations stored for "made in" information. This potential difference in the cohesiveness and/or strength of hedonic associations triggered by foreign branding and country-of-origin information also may explain the results of the congruence and incongruence conditions. That is, we may have observed, for example, in the French congruence condition, no enhancement of the perceptions of hedonism and, directionally, even a deterioration because foreign branding and country-of-origin information are not entirely congruent. To test this post hoc explanation, researchers in the future should incorporate cognitive response measures to determine which stereotypical associations result from country images and which ones from foreign branding.

Finally, as in Experiment 1, brand attitudes for hedonic products were influenced by the presence of a French brand name; attitudes toward hedonic products were significantly higher than the baseline condition for French brand names and directionally higher than the English brand names. Country of origin, however, did not affect attitudes toward the brand. As suggested by Mandler (1982), attitudes may require the integration of one's associations to the many different aspects of the product and be more cognitively demanding than perceptual judgments. As a result, they may be influenced primarily by strong, unambiguous cues. Recall that our results on perceived hedonism suggest that French names may be more likely to possess exclusive associations with hedonism than the country of France. This may explain why the effect on attitudes was more pronounced for foreign branding than for country-of-origin information.

EXPERIMENT 3: CAN FOREIGN BRANDING AFFECT PERCEPTIONS AFTER PRODUCT TRIALS?

Does foreign branding affect product perceptions only when consumers lack direct experience with the product, or does it also influence product perceptions after a product

trial? From an information theoretic perspective (McGuire 1976), products consist of intrinsic cues (e.g., taste, design, fit) and extrinsic cues (e.g., price, brand name, warranties). Intrinsic cues typically have a greater effect on consumer judgments than extrinsic cues (Olson and Jacoby 1972). Also, direct experiences have been shown to result in more stable attitudes that are more predictive of behavior than indirect experiences (Fazio and Zanna 1981). On the other hand, even direct sensory experience may be ambiguous, that is, subject to multiple interpretations (Ha and Hoch 1989). For example, advertising claims have been shown to influence quality judgments by affecting the encoding of product experience of ambiguous stimuli such as polo shirts (Hoch and Ha 1986). In Experiment 3, we test the effect of a French-sounding versus an English-sounding brand name on perceptions and evaluations in the presence and absence of direct, sensory experience with the product.

Method

Forty-two subjects were assigned randomly to the four cells according to a 2 (French/English) \times 2 (taste test/no taste test) between-subjects experimental design. The data of five subjects whose native language was not English were discarded. As in Experiment 1, subjects first listened to the French or English pronunciation of the brand name, "Orman," a brand of yogurt. According to a pretest, yogurt qualified as a hybrid ($M = 4.5$ on the utilitarian scale; $M = 5.6$ on the hedonistic scale) and thus a potentially ambiguous product, open to be construed in terms of hedonism or utilitarianism. Half the subjects tasted the product; the other half rated the product without tasting it. Specific attributes related to hedonism and utilitarianism were selected as relevant perceptual scales. The items related to hedonic qualities included "pleasantly sweet," "palatable," "delicious," and "creamy"; the utilitarian scales included "healthy," "energetic," "wholesome," and "nutritious." Subjects provided their ratings on 7-point scales (1 = not at all; 7 = very much). In addition, subjects provided ratings of their brand name attitudes.

Results and Discussion

No significant effect of foreign pronunciation or product experience was observed on brand name attitudes ($ps > .15$), replicating the null effects on this measure for hybrid products in Experiment 1. A factor analysis performed on the perceptual scales revealed two factors with eigenvalues of 4.2 and 1.6, which explained 72% of the variance. After varimax rotation, the hedonic items had high loadings on factor 1 (all $> .68$) and low loadings on factor 2 (all $< .32$). Reverse loadings were obtained for all the utilitarian items except "energetic" ($> .89$ on factor 1; $< .23$ on factor 2). "Energetic" had substantial loadings ($> .34$) on both factors. The first factor was interpreted as a hedonic factor. The second factor was interpreted as a specific utilitarian factor that measures the utilitarian dimension of health concern. To take into account the total factor structure and, in particular, the role of "energetic," subsequent analyses were performed on subjects' factor scores. A 2 \times 2 ANOVA performed on the factor scores of the hedonism factor revealed a borderline significant main effects for the taste test condi-

tion ($F[1,33] = 2.78, p = .10$) and for pronunciation ($F[1,33] = 3.54, p < .10$). The interaction was not significant ($F < 1$). Independent of whether subjects tasted the product, it was rated as more hedonic when the name was pronounced in French than in English ($M = .29$ versus $M = -.30$, respectively). In addition, the product was rated as more hedonic when subjects tasted it than when they did not ($M = .29$ versus $M = -.27$, respectively), which suggests that the product was more hedonic than subjects had expected. Nonetheless, the French pronunciation further contributed to the hedonic image even when a sensory cue had been provided.

A 2×2 ANOVA performed on the specific utilitarianism factor revealed a significant interaction ($F[1, 33] = 4.20, p < .05$) and no main effects (both F s < 1). When no taste information was provided, the product was rated as more utilitarian for English rather than French pronunciation ($M = .52$ versus $M = -.35$; $F[1,33] = 3.67, p < .07$). In the taste test condition, the difference was not significant ($p > .22$).

Experiment 3 replicates our previous findings: When there was no taste test, a French brand name generated higher ratings on the hedonic dimension and lower ratings on the utilitarian dimension. Moreover, French-sounding brand names affected product perceptions and evaluations even after a taste test but only on the hedonic dimension. The lack of a difference on the utilitarian factor after the taste test suggests that naming affects the utilitarian perceptions less than the hedonic perceptions. Perhaps utilitarian perceptions are less ambiguous than hedonic judgments (Hoch and Ha 1986). Alternatively, utilitarian perceptions, especially those related to health concerns, may be more involving and induce more attention to central cues such as taste rather than peripheral cues such as brand names (Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983).

Experiment 3 also indicates that hedonism and utilitarianism can be perceived as two independent dimensions. The type of mental representation of the concepts "utilitarianism" and "hedonism" thus may depend on the level of specificity of measurement (Johnson and Fornell 1987). Utilitarianism/hedonism may be seen as perceptual poles unless they are linked, as they were in Experiment 3, to specific pleasurable experiences or specific functional benefits.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Choosing French brands as a specific case, the three experiments demonstrate that foreign branding can be an effective means of influencing consumers' perceptions and attitudes. First, effects of foreign branding are shown for brand names pronounced and spelled in a foreign language. Second, French branding influences consumers' perceptions of a product's hedonism under conditions of both indirect and direct experience with the product. Third, Experiment 2 demonstrates that foreign branding as a single cue is sufficient for changing hedonic perceptions. In fact, foreign branding in conjunction with country-of-origin information may diminish, or even counteract, the influence of foreign branding. Finally, with respect to attitudes, French brand names are an asset primarily for hedonic products and more effective in this respect than country-of-origin information.

One possible limitation of our studies is that foreign branding was operationalized exclusively as French branding. Therefore, to generalize the findings presented here and provide further support to the general phenomenon of foreign branding, further research should employ other languages associated with the same cultural dimensions (perhaps Spanish for hedonic characteristics and German for utilitarian characteristics). Other general dimensions that are relevant for product positioning also should be investigated. For example, extroversion/introversion (Eysenck 1953), an important dimension in personality research, may be a dimension that is associated with various cultures and nations (e.g., South Americans are extroverted, Asians are introverted) and therefore could affect a "brand's personality" (Plummer 1984/85) via these associations.

Another possible limitation of our studies is that, in Experiment 1 and in some of the ads in Experiment 2, foreign branding was practically the only cue on which subjects could rely, and it was repeated three times in Experiment 1. As a result, the name may have attracted more attention than would be the case in real-life situations and may have resulted in demand effects. On the other hand, the foreign-branding effect was replicated in Experiment 3 with one only auditory presentation. Furthermore, if the results of Experiment 1 were due to demand effects, one might have expected a significant order effect, which was not found. Moreover, consumer decisions about the products we employed in Experiment 1 (e.g., fragrance, foil wrap, nail polish) are often based on the brand name alone, and ads for detergent, glassware, and sunglasses often show only the product. In summary, although it is difficult to rule out a demand effects explanation, especially in Experiment 1, we believe it unlikely that our results are entirely due to such effects.

Research on foreign branding should explore further how foreign branding is integrated with other product information. Recent research has shown that country-of-origin cues may serve as heuristics when there is no other or too much information, but it is processed like any other attribute when the right amount of information is presented (Erickson, Johansson, and Chao 1984; Han 1989; Hong and Wyer 1990; Johansson, Douglas, and Nohaka 1985). Researchers should investigate whether foreign branding functions in a similar way.

Further research also should investigate how consumers process and combine information from two different "branding" cues. For example, researchers could examine whether, as suggested previously, different types of "branding" information such as foreign branding and country of origin trigger different associations that may be more or less congruent with one another. In addition, our results emphasize the need to understand what is driving the weights assigned to one cue versus another on product perceptions or evaluations. In other words, is foreign branding always a stronger cue than country of origin, as our results seem to suggest, or are there factors that are likely to influence the relative strength of these cues?

In terms of managerial applications, our studies suggest that foreign branding may be a subtle way to position or reposition a product. In fact, foreign branding may be a more flexible and effective means than country-of-origin informa-

tion because brand names can be changed more easily and are typically more salient than "made in" information. However, in a global environment with fewer trade barriers and increasing opportunities for direct foreign investment, one must ask to what degree consumers' brand perceptions are affected by the practice of multinational companies, which often have their suppliers in one country, manufacturing and production in another, and marketing in yet another.

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