

MASTER'S THESIS

Brand naming practices in China: an exploratory research into brand naming porcess of companies in Guanzhou and Shanghai

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Brand Naming Practices in China:
An Exploratory Research into Brand Naming Process
of Companies in Guangzhou and Shanghai

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ABSTRACT

Though universal brand naming guidelines have been developed and tested in the Western countries such as American and Britain, their applicability in the Chinese cultural environment has been queried. Specifically, the brand naming process of Chinese companies has not been explored. Through an extensive review of the previous brand naming literature, this research adopts the stepwise approach to examine the possible influence of cultural values on brand naming. Based on the conceptual framework developed from the relevant Chinese brand naming studies, in-depth personal interviews were conducted with managers from consumer product manufacturers in Guangzhou and Shanghai. For the purpose of developing a tentative Chinese brand naming theory, the grounded theory approach is applied in order to discover the relevant variables and the possible links between them. Besides, the case study method was adopted by this thesis as reporting mode.

The analysis of the 12 cases selected for this research shows that Chinese managers choose their brand names most likely through a four-step procedure: creating candidate brand names, screening candidate brand names, choosing brand names and applying for registration. The evidence of this thesis shows that Yuarn of the Chinese cultural value orientations and Chinese managers' belief in marketing influence their brand naming behavior to a great extent. Besides, the transcripts reveal possible links between brand naming practice and Chinese cultural values such as luck, situation-orientation, respect for authorities, face, past-time orientation, continuity, harmony with others and the doctrine of the mean principle. Moreover, it is revealed that the mangers' brand naming decisions relate to the internal element such as product features and external factors such as industry nature, government control and legal system, target market level in the transitional China market. In brief, under the influence of the socio-cultural environment, brand naming in China is different from that in Western countries. These results support and add new knowledge to the previous brand naming studies, and suggest the inadequacy of applying Western brand naming theory in China. As a conclusion, a tentative model on Chinese brand naming practice is proposed and suggestions for brand naming in the China marketing environment are provided.

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