

# The impact of brand name characteristics on creating brand perception

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**University of Zagreb**  
**Faculty of Economics & Business**  
**Master's degree in business in "Marketing"**

**The impact of brand name characteristics on creating brand  
perception**

**Master's thesis**

**Marko Čukman**

**Zagreb, September, 2022**

**University of Zagreb**  
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**The impact of brand name characteristics on creating brand  
perception**

**Master's thesis**

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**Zagreb, September, 2022**

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## ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

The everchanging world requires brand names which will not fade into insignificance the in a short period of time. Brand names had become a tool more important than ever when it comes to brand recognition as well as the general acceptance and perception of a both new and old brands. In order to approach a consumer who is frequently bombarded with brands from every possible perspective it is of utmost importance that the name of a brand is something that on its own shares a certain message. Because of that, brands have started to focus more and more attention on the name perception and the naming principles which are rooted in the basic linguistics of languages. By implementing certain principles companies are able to influence the decision-making process of the consumer and in that way become more successful. For the world in which people buy things because they want them, and not need them, the perception a brand name shares to the consumers, as well as the perception a consumer is developing towards the brand is very significant for a long coexistence of a brand and the consumer. The empirical part of this paper is focused on the testing of theoretical background in the real world in order to empirically prove the importance of implementation of basic branding principles in the brand naming process.

**Keywords: linguistics in brand naming, sound symbolism, alpha-numeric brand names, genericization, brand perception**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose and goals of the thesis

Historically a brand name had not always been the most important element of the company and its products, but as the time passed, the importance of branding and creating a trusted and recognized brand name had become more and more relevant. Consumer will look for a branded product because a logo, or a brand name will act as a guarantee that the product will satisfy the need consumer has. Because of that, the need of having a quality brand name had become more important than ever. Companies are investing significant efforts into creating a memorable brand name for their products and services which will motivate the consumer to buy them repeatedly. Because of that emerging importance, more focus than ever had been put onto the process of brand naming and education of the people who create those names.

Linguistics and its rules are perceived as very important when it comes to brand naming. The name a certain product carries has an incredible power over both the product and the consumer who might buy it. Sometimes name is the most important element in the buyer decision making process. For example, Prozac is said to be one of the most memorable drug names on the market, its name is short and aggressive, “Pro” part is positive, whereas the “Z” states its efficacy (Erich, 1995). Brands that have a name that is symbolic in a way, such as Prozac, gives marketers a powerful set of tools to distinguish the brand from the competition (Klink, 2000).

The main purpose of this thesis is to provide an insight into the importance of awareness about the impact of the linguistics to the process of brand naming as well as on the each and every company and their ability to impact the perception their customers create about them through the brand name. To support the theoretical part, an empirical research had been conducted. The main contribution of this thesis is the improved understanding of the importance of the linguistics and their role in the brand name creation in the modern world.

## 1.2 Sources and methods of data collection

To complete this master's thesis both secondary and primary data had been collected. For the theoretical part of the thesis secondary data had been retrieved from books, scientific journals, articles, and websites which provide an access to databases containing relevant academic literature, as well as from the databases of the Faculty of Economics and Business in Zagreb. Primary data for the thesis had been collected using an online survey among respondents from Croatia and other European countries. Results of the survey provide an insight into the relevance of the theoretical background related to the practices when it comes to brand naming. Through the research a number of different models of brand naming had been tested and in that way supported the theoretical framework of the topic. Questionnaire was divided into two parts, of which first concerns the impact of linguistic practices on the perception of luxury and basic brand names, and the second part was dedicated to alpha-numeric brand names and their adequacy for a certain product.

## 1.3 Structure of the thesis

Structure of this thesis is divided into five main chapters. Following the introduction, the second chapter, is the section which defines and elaborates on the linguistic aspect and some of the most relevant concepts in brand naming. Concepts such as sound and phonetic symbolism, genericization and alpha-numeric brand naming will be explained with a goal of understanding the linguistic background of the brand naming process. Third chapter focus on the connection between brand naming and the customer perception which comes as a consequence of certain brand naming strategies, as well as connecting the idea of a brand logo with the brand perception which plays a very important role in building overall brand image and equity. Forth chapter is dedicated to the empirical research which had been conducted in order to test whether do certain linguistic practices impact the perception developed by the consumer. In that chapter the objectives and research methodology are set, as well as the results and discussion on the findings. The last part of the thesis will give the conclusion where the main insights and findings of it are summed up.



## 2. LINGUISTICS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BRAND NAMING

### 2.1 Defining linguistics and their relevance for brand naming process

Languages are made out of two key elements: consonants and vowels. Vowel pronunciation requires only movement of air within the mouth, whereas the pronunciation of consonants requires a significant movement of the muscles within the oral cavity (Pathak, Calvert & Lim, 2020). Name is perceived as a very simple thing, a label. But there is much more to that set of letters and numbers than just a label. By giving a name to a thing that had not been named before is like giving it a completely new life. Having a thing which is called Cadbury's Instant Potato, and then calling it Cadbury's Smash, is like giving a new life to the product. Names that someone came up with are all around us. Television programmes, books and even people who decided to give themselves a new chance by changing their name, such as Marilyn Monroe (Collins, 1977).

A need for a quality brand name had started in the 1890s, before that there had been no need for a quality brand name as well as there had been no advertising with consistent patterns. Manufacturers were operating in the local markets and their products did not leave the region or the country because of which they did not need a brand name or a brand image (Kohli & Labahn, 1995). Brand name is perceived as the information about a brand that has the highest number of views. Brand name is a basis for brand awareness as well as communication. A good name will improve the desired brand image and will help manipulate other features such as logos, signs, music, imagery etc. (Semiene & Kamarauskaite 2014).

When creating a brand name, two principles called Juliet and Joyce had been identified. First one, Juliet is associated with the Shakespeare's line in the story of Romeo and Juliet, "that which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet". Juliet principle is explained as that the verbal form 'rose' does not matter, but what matters is what we have come to associate with the form that had determined the name (Collins, 1977). Simplified, the name will not be evaluated on the first connotation or on the way it sounds, but in accordance with the principles customers were taught by the marketing communication (Riezebos, Kis & Kootstra, 2003). For example, if we took a sandwich, a cardigan or wellingtons, each of those

things had been named after a person who has a specific association with the product in question. Possibly if the history played out a bit different we would eat cardigans, wear sandwiches on our feet and have Wellingtons knitted for us (Collins, 1977). On the other hand, we have the Joyce principle, which had been named after James Joyce, an English writer who in his book named *Finnegans Wake* had a lot put on phonetic symbolism as opposed to words when it comes to communication. Joyce principle had been explained as when the phonetic symbolism or simple sounds of a word give it a meaning (Collins, 1977, Vanden Bergh, Collins, Schultz & Adler, 1984). For example, in the name Boeing 7-0-7, the sound 'O' symbolises something large, in the same way the sound 'i' in car Tigr (Opel, Vauxhall) symbolises something small (Riezebos *et al.*, 2003).

For a brand name there are two basic dimensions it should be judged by in order to define whether it is strategically desirable. Firstly, the ability of a name to be easily encoded, retained and retrieved from a person's memory, and second one being the extent to which the name satisfies the market position a product has (Robertson, 1992). One of the interesting elements when it comes to brand names, according to the research conducted by the US scientists' states that the importance of brand names differs according to the environment in which they are located, to be more precise, digital or physical one. What is more, brand names will have a greater impact on the decision-making process when they are in physical stores. When it comes to the online environment, the 'value' of a brand name decreases. A significant decrease is expected in the field of functional products such as computers and similar digital machines since the features are available to everyone and people are able to compare them. On the contrary, in the fashion industry, the brand name will still hold its importance because of the perception customers have of a specific brand (Degeratu, Rangaswamy & Wu, 2000). As a part of the purchasing process a brand name awareness will have a significant impact on the outcome. Customer that had already been familiar with a certain brand name will feel more comfortable in a moment the decision has to be made. Customers will rarely opt for an unknown brand, especially when it comes to high involvement, high price item like a car or a TV. A strong brand name will impact the consumers process of deciding. In case of a vehicle, it is complex to evaluate the car quality, which further emphasizes on the importance of a quality brand name. According to the research, a brand name of the product is the most

important aspect when it comes to a high involvement product purchases (Baltas & Saridakis, 2010).

## 2.2 Characteristics of a brand name that impact the consumer

Certain factors exist which are, according to the researchers, relevant for the process of choosing a good brand name – memorability, meaningfulness, likeability, transferability, adaptability, protectability and suggestiveness (Argo, Popa & Smith, 2010; Lee & Baack, 2014).

When talking about brand name characteristics, simplicity is often considered as a very desirable one. Consumers have a limited attention towards brands, which means that if a brand is simpler the chance of it being remembered is larger. What is more, a simple name will be a lot easier to get encoded into the memory and consequently learned. Interesting part is the fact that consumers will oftentimes simplify brand names in order for them to be more memorable. Popular examples could be Chevrolet becoming Chevy, Pan American Airlines becoming Pan Am, and even Coca Cola becoming Coke. After simplicity, brand name should be distinctive. Some examples of the distinctive names could be Apple, Xerox or Kodak. For people it will be easier to remember the distinctive name since their attention will be grabbed by the novel and unusual brand name, as well as the fact that the curiosity of the consumer will be aroused because of a new name. Furthermore, a name should be meaningful and reflect the benefit a consumer will receive. Budget Rent-a Car vs Avis or Metrecal diet food vs Slender. Next, a brand name should have a verbal or sound associate to the group of products it is representing. Names such as Craftsman for tools and Coin for financial services represent desirable characteristic that will impact the brand recall. Also, sometimes brands can incorporate onomatopoeias such as in examples of Woof n'Chirp pet stores or Cap n'Crunch cereals. After that, a brand name should create a mental image in the head of the consumer. Brand names such as Dove, Mustang or Apple create a clear visual image compared to brands such as Pledge, Tempo or Bold. Lastly, names should be emotional. Brand names such as Opium, Joy or Caress could create an emotional connection with the customer and in that way impact the purchasing decision or general brand memory (Robertson, 1992).

Individuals will spontaneously, and without any intention associate certain speech sounds with certain features of a product. From a brand name one can conclude a number of things about the brand. Whether the brand is sweet or bitter, luxury or basic, big or small or even masculine or feminine. Use of neuro-informed brand naming strategy can significantly help with the process of gaining a competitive advantage in an international market where linguistic diversity is a common occurrence. Brands that have managed to become more competitive due to their specific names are Abba, Absolut Vodka, Volvo and IKEA (Pathak *et al.*, 2020). Significance of brand names is important in the markets where the difference between the nature and quality of products in question is insignificant, as well as in the markets where brand image has a great importance. In the markets where brand is very important, such as the detergent and cigarette markets, the company is selling the image, and not only the product (Collins, 1977). Different industry requires different norms when it comes to branding and the need for a quality brand name and image. According to BBDO, brand parity is higher when it comes to products like paper towels or soup, compared to cigarettes, coffee or beer where the brand image is the most important element (Kohli *et al.*, 1995).

Lastly, in linguistics there are three types of obstruents. First type are stops, they can be voiced and voiceless – k & g, p & b, t & d. Second type are fricatives, also voiced and voiceless – s & z, ʃ & ʒ, θ & ð, f & v. And lastly, there are affricatives - tʃ & dʒ. Voiced obstruent pronunciation is perceived as a difficult operation since it requires significant aerodynamic activities as well as control over muscles. Because of that the words that contain voiced obstruent are often perceived as negative, dirty or sneaky. What is more, some world languages do not even have voiced obstruents. When talking about voiced obstruents, it is important to mention a study which used the names of characters from a popular show called Pokémon. After the analysis of the character names, researchers have realized that ones who have voiced obstruents in their names are perceived as larger, heavier or stronger. People will associate names which contain voiced obstruents as the ones naming a large or dangerous animal, or an item significant in size (Pathak *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, stops are perceived as a part of obstruents and voiced variation of them in a brand name will elicit a larger, slower and heavier perception of the product or brand image (Klink, 2000). Lastly, it had been proven

that consumers are willing to pay more for the products that satisfy the relationship between the symbolism of a brand name and attributes the product carries. Additionally, since sound symbolism can recognize implicit and explicit behaviour of a consumer it is important for the name creators to include sounds such as s, m, l, and e which have been proven to motivate the consumer to spend more (Pathak *et al.*, 2020).

### 2.3 The importance of phonetic and sound symbolism in brand naming

The idea and model of sound symbolism has existed for a longer period, but the academic approach has largely neglected to investigate the application and concept of sound symbolism in marketing (Klink, 2000).

Sound symbolism in brand naming can be defined as the creation of product expectations in the consumer mind solely from the way in which a brand name had been created (Pathak *et al.*, 2020). Sound symbolism can be described as a process in which the elements and sounds of a word can provide some signals on what the word means. Phonemes are basic units we are using in order to communicate, and they can sometimes, even on their own give some evidence about their meaning or about the meaning of a word they are located in (Pathak, Calvert & Lim, 2017). The source for symbolism in the brand names can be found across various languages. In the research conducted in 1978 and 1984 researchers have proven that words which are either diminutives or represent 'smallness' have a disproportionate number of consonants and/or vowels as well as a high acoustic frequency. Examples could be 'teeny' (English), 'chico' (Spanish) or 'petit' (French). However, the words used for large objects use vowels and consonants of low acoustic frequency. 'Humongous' (English), 'gordo' (Spanish) or 'grand' (French) (Klink, 2000).

Brand names can have two types of meaning, denotative, where the brand name designates the product or service category, or connotative where the name suggests key attributes or benefits of a product. In the modern capitalist market, a brand name has a lot more power and provides significantly larger amounts of equity in case it in some way suggests the category in which a product or a service is located. American U-Haul suggests hauling things by yourself and Nescafe has an obvious connection with coffee. On the other hand,

connotative is significantly more indirect and not all consumers will consciously understand the meaning a brand has. Detergent Tide has a clear connection with tidal wave and relates it to the power a given detergent has, the relation between the wave and the detergent will not be understood by all customers. Also, connotative meaning is not always related to the source of a brand name, such as with Tide, but also on the ways the name had been exploited or advertised during the period brand had been on the market. Dollar or Budget will not directly be related to a rent a car, but due to the exploitation of the brand as the time went by, people are aware of a meaning the name has. Sometimes even the country of origin can be a source of the connotation, in the example of Swatch, where the connotation is derived from the country of origin, Switzerland (Usunier & Shaner 2002)

Having in mind the fact that all of the possible words have been created from vowels and consonants, their importance and relevance mustn't be neglected. Vowels can be divided into two groups, front and back. It refers to the highest point of the tongue during pronunciation. For words such a bee, hit, or hate the highest position of the tongue is in the front, whereas with back vowels such as put, home or food, the tongue gets to the highest position in the back of the mouth. Research had shown that brand names which contain front vowels are perceived as smaller, lighter (opposed to darker) milder, softer etc. On the contrary back vowel names were presented as masculine, darker, thicker, heavier etc. (Klink, 2000).

When talking about consonants, there are two distinctive dimensions which had been investigated – stops vs. fricatives and voiced vs. voiceless (concerning both fricatives and stops). The research had concluded that brands with fricatives in their names are softer than brand names which contained stops. The important thing to mention here is that the difference is not significant. When it comes to the voiced vs. voiceless stops, brands that contain voiceless stops are perceived as smaller, faster and lighter as well as more feminine compared to the ones that contained voiced stops. Lastly, regarding fricatives, brands with voiceless fricatives are perceived as faster, softer and more feminine, but there is no significant difference when it comes to communicating weight (Klink, 2000). A single letter can also have an impact on the perception of a brand name, or even a name in general. A research made in order to define whether do modelled words “mil” and “mal” have any symbolic meaning and whether it is possible to draw any conclusions regarding the size of a

table solely from the given three letter words. Around 80% percent of the answers connected “mal” with a large table and “mil” with a small table. Letter “a” compared to letters “e” or “i” will elicit a larger perception of the product or brand in question (Sapir, 1929).

In order to understand further how sound symbolism as well as phonetic symbolism works one has to go back to the period in which he/she had been a child. According to the research, phonemes /m/, /b/ and /d/ are frequently present in the words one had acquired as a child, whereas phonemes sh - /ʃ/ or th - /θ/ and t - /ð/ are more often present in late acquired words. This is important because the words that consist of such phonemes have a deeper and stronger links to one’s subjective experiences and emotions. Words such as mama, papa or ball use early acquired phonemes which are a lot easier to articulate for a child, than words such as power or ban. Words that consist of early acquired phonemes are often the ones that will elicit a clear mental image, compared to a more complex ones from the late acquired phonemes. Not only that, but words that consist of early acquired phonemes are coded differently and because of that are easier to process and retrieve from the mind. Because of that most of the words that are easy to overcome as a child have a number of early acquired phonemes – cat, pig, Barbie, Mickey...). Compared to the ones that are more complex and will rarely be acquired by a child – ancestor or snarl (Pathak *et al.*, 2017)

Table 1 shows the phonemes and their age of acquisition. If we compare the names of child products such as Barbie or Mickey Mouse, it is visible that there is a correlation among the usage of phonemes in brand names.

**Table 1 - Phonemes and their respective Age of Acquisition**

AoAs	Literature on Age of Acquisition of phonemes						
	Wellman <i>et al.</i> (1931)	Poole (1934)	Templin (1957)	Olmsted (1971)	Prather <i>et al.</i> (1975)	Smit <i>et al.</i> , (1990)	Dodd <i>et al.</i> , (2003)
Phonemes acquired first (below 3 years of age)	m, n, b, f, w, h	m, p, b, w, h	M, n, ɲ, p, f, w, b	-	M, n, ɲ, p, h	M, n, p, b, d, w	P, b, t, d, k, g, m, n, ɲ, f, v, s, z, h (below 3.5 years)
Phonemes acquired last (above 6 years of age)	ɲ, θ, ð, ʒ, dʒ	θ, s, z, r	ð, z, ʒ, dʒ	ɲ, ð, ʒ, tʒ, dʒ	v, h, z, dʒ	ɲ, s, z, r	θ, ð
% of age group	75	100	75	50	75	NA	90

% age group refers to the percentile of children of an age group required in deciding the acquisition of phoneme

Source: Pathak *et al.*, 2017.

What is very important to understand is the frequency of early acquired phonemes when it comes to 100 top brand names in the world. Late-acquired phonemes comprise only a small percentage of 3,4%, and early acquired ones comprise 35,6% of brand names. Further extension of that is the usage of early vs. late phonemes in everyday language (Pathak *et al.*, 2017).

Because of the tendency of people to use early acquired phonemes more frequently, compared to the late-acquired ones there is a relation between the frequency of the early phonemes and late phonemes in both people and brand naming. Table 2 shows the prevailing number of early-acquired phonemes in the Lexicon. Phonemes “n” or “m” are far more common compared to phonemes such as “su” or “th” (Pathak *et al.*, 2017).

**Table 2 - Frequency of phonemes in Lexicon**

Phonemes with IPA symbols	Sound as in the keyword (in bold )	Total	Words	Percentage of phoneme in dictionary (%)	Frequency rank of phoneme
ʒ (LAP)	treasure	334	334	0,07	24
θ (LAP)	think	1.602	1.591	0.33	22
ð (LAP)	then	596	593	0.12	23
n (EAP)	near	31.934	27.020	6.48	3
m (EAP)	my	14.823	13.988	3.01	10
p (EAP)	pop	15.553	14.569	3.16	9

LAP stands for late-acquired phoneme, EAP for early-acquired phoneme, Frequency rank of phoneme, 1 is the most frequent, and 24 is the least frequent. Total, for number of occurrences of the phoneme in dictionary, and Words for the number of words in which phoneme is found in dictionary.

Source: Pathak *et al.*, 2017.

When talking about luxury products which always have a model of their own, symbolism sphere is not an exception. Since luxury products are reserved to those in higher socio-economic class they keep a certain distance from the average consumer. Purchasing luxury good is not an everyday thing because of which the consumer will invest a significant amount of time in order to conduct a research for the purchase (Klink, 2000). Because of democratization of luxury, the use of sound symbolism in the luxury segment is in today’s world very salient (Pathak, Clavert & Velasco, 2017). A study concerning the length of brand names stated that they range from monosyllabic to multisyllabic, Ford to A-me-ri-can Express. For regular brands the stress in pronunciation is located on the penultimate syllable or the ante-penultimate syllable. Unless one starts to consider luxury goods. When it comes to



luxury companies, the stress is on the ultimate syllable. One of the explanations could be the fact that most of the luxury brands origin from Europe, which gives them a distinctive sounding name (Klink, 2000).

## 2.4 Use of numbers and their relevance for brand naming

Initial beliefs and perceptions about a brand are derived from the brand name. Brand names that contain letters and numbers are called alpha-numeric brand names. Names that contain both letters and numbers are perceived as non-traditional presentation of brand names and they have a specific impact on the consumer (Feng, Wang & Rui, 2019). When it comes to purely numbers and their meaning, according to a number of studies done by both mathematicians and marketing experts, smaller numbers such as 1, 2 or 3 were defined as simple and weak, whereas those over 3 were perceived as smooth, powerful or complex. Even numbers are smooth and feminine, whereas odd ones were lucky and powerful. Not all types of products are appropriate to have an alpha-numeric brand name, according to the research, products such as lingerie, baby clothes, non-technical or traditional products are not the best examples for using alpha-numeric brand names. Whereas products such as work or sports clothes as well as technical and modern products will often be named using alpha-numeric brand names in order to attract the desired set of customers (Pavia & Costa, 1993).

Alpha-numeric brand name can contain one or more numbers, in both digital (e.g., “3”) and written form (e.g., “three”). What is more, alpha-numeric brand names can include mixtures of letters and numbers such as WD-40, and words and numbers (e.g., Formula 409), or even a name where number is in a completely written form – Saks Fifth Avenue. Lastly, sometimes alpha-numeric brands can be used to help the consumer to identify the model, such as the case of Mazda RX-7 (Pavia *et al.*, 1993). Numbers can have an impact on the consumer of which companies are aware and will use that in order to market and sell their products. According to the research, products whose names include larger numbers will be more favourable in the minds of a consumer compared to the products that have small numbers. People will prefer larger numbers because they believe it will transfer onto the products (Feng *et al.*, 2019). What is more, the research conducted at the University of Utah, states that larger numbers used in the brand name share the idea of a product with significant

complexity, sophistication, precision as well as the fact that a product is more recent (Pavia *et al.*, 1993). In 2010, research proved that people would prefer a printer that has a larger number in its name (HP 530) compared to the one that has a smaller number (HP 210) (Feng *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, sometimes companies do not structure the numeric brand names in a certain order which gives an opportunity to the marketers to mislead the consumer. According to a research in conducted in 1996, most of the computer monitors has a 13-inch screen, but some producers put a number 14 in the model's name in order to mislead the consumer thinking the screen is larger than it really measured (Gunasti & Ross, 2010).

Alpha-numeric brand name classification divides them into two different categories depending on their dimensions. First one is alignability which refers to the ability or disability to compare differences in the characteristics or attributes. To be precise, brand names in general are not alignable, it is not possible to define the qualitative nature of brands such as Ford Mustang or Focus, but when talking about alpha-numeric brands, they have a lot more comparable attributes. Examples could be taken from the automotive industry, BMW 325, 328 or 330. There are clear attributes on which one can evaluate a certain model. Alpha-numeric names are mostly monotonically increasing or decreasing, they are rarely non-monotonic. When brand names are non-monotonic they have a specific purpose which customers understand. Oftentimes they are referring to the codes used in clothing industry, such as Levi's codes for jeans (501, 505 etc.) in this case consumers do not have an intention to buy a higher numbered one, but they chose among the models for the one that suits them the best. We can divide the alignability of alpha-numeric names in three groups. First one being the group in which the products follow an increasing sequence which links to overall attributes of a product. Second one being names that follow a descending sequence, and the third category are the brands that are monotonic, but consumer preferences do not follow monotonicity, as well as brands that are nonaligned and use truly nonmonotonic brand names (Gunasti *et al.*, 2010).

Second type according to the dimension division is the linkage of the brand name to one or more specific attributes of a brand. For example, Pentium IV processors are more advanced than Pentium III processors, or AMD32 chips have 32 bits, compared to AMD64 which have 64 bits. On such occasions alpha-numeric brands can help one to decide about a product in a

category with which it is not familiar. On the other hand, sometimes it is not that simple to understand the differences with help from numbers in a brand name. Canon A530 has no clear superiority over A460 digital camera, or Nokia phones where a higher number does not indicate a better or newer model, which makes it very complicated for a consumer to understand the line-up of products (Gunasti *et al.*, 2010). Secondly, the research showed that the impact of number magnitude is more significant when the product in question is one which asks for high involvement, versus the ones with low involvement where the impact is less significant (Feng *et al.*, 2019).

When looking at a brand name, one of the most visible elements of an alpha-numeric brand name is the digit a name has. Using numbers in sequence impacted the idea of a product location in the product line as well as highlighting the extensions. One of the examples which were mentioned in the research conducted in 1993 concerns car producer Audi which had a model named Audi 5000, but when it became outdated they replaced it with a model named 100, which made the consumers think it was a lesser product, only because of the number used for naming. Second one is Saab which went from 900 to 9000, because of that people expected a better car (Pavia *et al.*, 1993). Alpha-numeric brands can sometimes be very complex when it comes to their legal nature. When your name is having only 2 or 3 letters/numbers, it is very easy to find a corresponding one even within your own industry. This is especially relevant when it comes to the automotive industry. Nissan had more than a few encounters with name theft accusations, with Audi for the Q brand name, Audi uses it for their SUV line-up, whereas Nissan for their Infinity brand models. Also, with BMW for the letter Z, BMW has Z4, and Nissan has Z line-up of cars. Lastly, with Mercedes ML350 and BMW M3 because of Nissan M35 name (Gunasti *et al.*, 2010).

Lastly, luxury goods have to be mentioned because of the fact that when it comes to them all the laid rules are not applied. Luxury goods have a different model of alpha-numeric brand names. Brands such as Chanel N°5 or Lincoln Leader No.1 have a smaller number in their brand names, which impacts their quality, values and exclusivity. What is more, scarcity is a crucial factor when it comes to luxury goods. Small numbers in a name can express the scarcity of a good (Feng *et al.*, 2019). For luxury or hedonic products research has shown that lower numbers elicit better feelings among consumers (Gunasti *et al.*, 2010). Research

conducted in 2010 proved that when it comes to luxury goods consumers will prefer buying the ones that have a smaller number in their name because of the scarcity factor. People were led to believe that the product which has a smaller number in its name is more limited and scarcer compared to the one which has a larger number (Feng *et al.*, 2019). What is more, in certain cases it is not appropriate to use alpha-numeric brand names because they could lead to diminishing sales. Luxury cars whose goal is the comfort of the passengers will not use alpha-numeric brand names because of the fact that they will not reach the desired impact among the consumers. Alpha-numeric names when it comes to cars will be used for sports or high-performance cars as well as from luxury cars whose emphasize is on the performance (Gunasti *et al.*, 2010).

## 2.5 The importance of genericization for brand perception

A brand name is one of the most common forms related to linguistics which we can find in every international language in the world. Names have a very important role in the modern culture where capitalism is prevailing, they appear not only on screens we are watching, but also on a number of other everyday things such as clothing, food and even in the communication one person has with the other (Clankie, 2013). A brand name can be one of the companies most valuable assets, sometimes the long-term success of a brand can depend on the appropriate choice branding process for a brand name (Klink, 2003)

There are four main differences between the brand name and other types of names such as toponyms. Firstly, each brand names has been registered and has left a track dating back to the moment in which the brand first appeared in the market, and consequently into the language. Secondly, by following the process of registration, a brand name is by the law under the ownership of a certain business entity or a person. It protects the owner from the infringement of the brand by people who try to make a similar brand or product using the given name. Thirdly, deviation in the names such as the personal ones are often times considered as not so appropriate, and that they do not follow the rules of language. On the other hand, when it comes to brand naming, situation is a bit different, for brand names it is completely appropriate that they are misspelled, or that they do not follow the rules of language. Lastly, brand names are in general considered, in a linguistic sense as adjectives,

compared to the usual names which are nouns. For example, Kleenex tissues, Kleenex in this case is perceived as an adjective (Clankie, 2000).

Genericization can be explained as the process through which a brand name stops referencing to only a particular product from a particular brand, but to a generic from in which it represents the whole category of products and is used on a frequent basis. Some of the examples could be Xerox, Google search engine, Velcro or Walkman. Companies invest very significant amounts of money in creating and managing the brand. Genericization is a very complex desire which many companies are afraid of, but at the same time they want it to happen more than anything. Having a product that every person knows about, even to the level in which competitors use the same name can be a great thing (Clankie, 2013). According to the research conducted in 1999, by Clankie, there are four main criteria used to identify brand names that went through the process of genericization. First one relates to the names that were used for a product that had not been created before, and because of the new product, the names became a synonym for the given product class. Products such as rollerblades or post-it-notes were the first products in the given category which is why their names become a generic term for all the similar products. Second group concerns the length of a name. The idea had been that if one of the best-selling brands in a certain category has a name shorter than other competitors its name will become generic for the whole group of competitor products. A name that is shorter will be easier to pronounce and because of that for consumers will be easier to get used to it. What is also important to mention is the ease of pronunciation and articulation of the brand name compared to the rest of the product names in the given group. For example, it is far easier to pronounce 'Velcro' compared to the class name which is 'hook and loop fastener'. The results showed that genericized brand has less words, syllables or morphemes than the corresponding noun which is used to name the whole class. Third is the need for the ellipsis of the common noun in order for the generic brand name change. Lastly, there is a specific situation in which a brand name can become a generic term. Comparing brand names Chanel and Rollerblades. Chanel brand name is connected to a great number of different products which makes it very complex for consumers to decide what can Chanel name be genericized for, on the contrary, when someone says Rollerblades, only one thing can cross one's mind. The brand name leads directly to the product in mind. It is important to note that sometimes the genericization is

history based, even though Levi's at the moment is producing a great number of different products, historically they are based on only one, jeans (Clankie, 2000).

The aforementioned types of genericization are a part of a Type 1 genericization changes which are considered as intra-class, since they are used for products which are often competing against each other. On the other hand, there is a second type which happens across different classes. Some of the more popular examples are Oreo and Spam. Spam is a type of canned cooked pork which for a fact genericized to both Types 1 and 2. Type 1 form refers to the fact that all canned meat is called Spam, but more interestingly is the fact that the genericization of Spam canned meat led to using of the word Spam for junk e-mails. This type of genericization has happened because people have related the low quality, cheap and unhealthy can of meat with the mails that came even though unwanted. Second example is Oreo, which in American English had been used as derogatory term for an African American whose behaviour is too similar to one of a Caucasian (Clankie, 2000). Google is without a doubt one of the best examples of genericization, and the interesting thing is the fact that the ease through which Google became a generic name is possibly one of the reasons for its success. In the moment Google became popular it had satisfied all the criteria relevant for the genericization to happen, but in this case it happened a lot earlier than expected. Back in the beginnings of searching the internet, Yahoo had been the main competitor Google had. In the terms of genericization, Yahoo never had a chance to become a generic term. For the process of genericization it is important that the word has no other meanings aside from the one which the company assigned it to<sup>1</sup>. Genericization can tell us that the best brand name is the one where the name is associates with the core business or a product of a company. A name that holds no information on what a company does is not considered a particularly good one. Making a relation between the product or a company name to the usage of a product is a great but often overlooked strategy (Clankie, 2013).

As a consequence of genericization the genericide is the last step which can occur to a brand name. Genericide can be considered as a consequence of an inability of the trademark owner

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<sup>1</sup> Yahoo is a person who is a bit silly or unsophisticated in English slang (Clankie, 2000).

to protect the ownership over the name, so it becomes available to all the competitors (Cova, 2014).

One of the main problems when it comes to genericide is that it is not universally accepted as existing, in the marketing world, it is believed that if a brand name is used daily for different purposes that a brand is successful, but on the contrary, lawyers fear that it might significantly decrease the value of a brand. Genericization and genericide concerns have started over thirty years ago, when John Murphy who is the founder of Interbrand, stated that trademarks should be used as adjectives, and not as names. The clearest examples are two slogans for Wrangler jeans. First one being “Get into Wrangler jeans now!”, and the second one “Get into Wranglers now!” second one is the definition of genericization which in the end leads to the elimination of legal protection and to genericide (Cova, 2014).

Trademark is protected by the law and no competitor is allowed to use it. The problem arises because the process of genericization may lead to the loss of the patent or the trademark which consequently leads to a number of problems. By losing the patent, all of the competitors are able to use the name which you have built and established in order to market their products. By marketing products under the now generic brand name there is a potential that the consumers will buy a competing product instead of the original and think that the quality or price of the product which they believe is the original one had changed. That in the long run leads to the diminishing sales of the original product and the loss of customer trust. Thermos is one of the brands that lost the trademark which led to a number of competitors taking the name Thermos and putting it onto their products (Walsh, 2013). There are some more occasions in which genericization really led to the elimination of the legal protection of a brand. A popular example is Monopoly, which in 1983 had been declared a generic brand because a great number of people used the word “monopoly” while referring to the games of a similar character to the real Monopoly. Similar examples can include Kleenex or Gummi Bears which all have created a product category because of which they went through genericization. The problem arises when the legal protection is lost, and all of the competitors are able to produce under the same name, even though the quality of the product is lower. If all vacuums are Hoovers and all soft drinks are Colas, why would one pay more for the real products (Cova, 2014).

Xerox, a brand of copy machines, is probably one of the most popular genericization examples. In 2003 it put out a campaign whose goal was to warn people about genericization and the dangers of it. The campaign stated: “When you say ‘Xerox’ in the same way as you say ‘aspirin’, you’re giving us a headache” and in 2007, “When you use ‘Xerox’ In the same way that you use ‘zipper’, you’re leaving our brand protection wide open”. Nowadays companies try to educate all the shareholders of the brand about the dangers of the genericide. Heavily genericized companies such as Jacuzzi Brands Inc. motivates the dealers and customers to let them know about any unauthorised use (Cova, 2014).

Even though genericization and genericide have a significant impact on the brand as well as on each individual which communicates by using a generic name, according to the experts, only 5% of brands are affected by genericide, and they are mostly old brands such as Escalator, Nylon, Trampoline (Cova, 2014), or even brands such as Yo-yo, Cola, Brassiere and Linoleum (Walsh, 2013). In the marketing sense, genericization is a positive thing. Having consumers ask for a certain group of products by using the name of one of the brands is a way of defining how successful a brand is. Contrary to the common marketer opinion, there are some cases in which genericization created a problem for the company. In the example of Bic, the disposable lighter company, they were very powerful, and had a great number of sales outlets until the Chinese competitor came and started taking over their customers. People would ask for a Bic, but they would be offered a Chinese variation of the lighter, and they would accept it. This can be explained in a number of ways, starting with the fact that they had high market share due to their omnipresence on the market, and not the quality of their products, or the preference of the customers (Cova, 2014).

In 2006, Google wanted to take legal action against Meriam Webster dictionary for incorporating the word googling as a definition of action in which one uses the company’s engine to search the web (Cova, 2014). Second case is Elliott vs. Google Inc. where Chris Gillespie bought 763 different domains which included term google in it. He owned domains such as googledisney.com or googlebarackobama.net, explaining it that google had become a generic term and that it is allowed to be done. Google took Elliott to the trial which led to the transfer of all domains to the Google Inc. due to the fact that Elliott did not manage to legally prove that Google is a generic term (Brown, 2018; Elliott v. Google Inc, 2017).



Marketers, even though not overly concerned with genericization have developed strategies which try to avoid high level of genericization. Two major ones are: ranges of products and brand contents. Having a range of products instead of only one product can be the best way to alleviate the risk of genericization because the brand will be associated with a number of products instead of only with one. The interesting thing is the statement of the director of Heinz, the ketchup producer, they have developed a number of other products with the goal of avoiding genericization of their main product, ketchup. Sometime during the 21<sup>st</sup> century things have drastically changed. Historically brands have been fighting against genericization, Xerox, Heinz, Monopoly etc. but in 2009 when Microsoft launched Bing things have started to change. During the launch of the new search engine, Bing, Steve Balmer stated that he would like to soon be able to 'Bing' a new restaurant' when going out at night. The goal of his statement was to start the genericization of the new product. It unfortunately did not end well, but this can be perceived as a very important moment for the genericization, as well as the beginning for embracing it instead of fighting against it (Cova, 2014).

### 3. BRAND PERCEPTION AND THE ROLE OF THE BRAND NAME IN IT

#### 3.1 Definition and characteristics of brand perception

Brand equity is explained as the value that a brand name adds to a certain product and is one of the most important and relevant elements of a brand. Equity carries two components, behavioural and perceptual. Being a part of brand equity, brand perception can be defined as all the associations and beliefs which consumers have about a specific brand, as well as the value that consumers add to the brand name, symbols and personality (Foroudi, Jin, Gupta, Foroudi & Kitchen, 2018). Brand perception is considered as a multi-dimensional element. Perception is symbolic, cognitive, experimental, and emotional. Furthermore, perception can be divided into three types which affect the brand. Firstly, brand experience which defines the experience a consumer has with the brand, secondly, brand affect which is the emotional part of the relationship between the consumer and the brand, and lastly, brand trust, concerning the trust a buyer has towards a brand during the purchasing process (Aslam, Ham & Farhat, 2017). A perception towards a certain brand can be influenced by providing information through marketing and advertising activities Whether that is talking about the superior general features of a certain brand, or to eliminate potentially negative acquired attributes of the product (Aaker & Keller, 1990). Brand image is an extension of brand perception, since it is an antecedent of the brand associations which one keeps in its memory (Keller, 1993).

Brand perception can be divided into six groups, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, brand fondness, brand image and product country image. Brand perception can be perceived as the added value which consumer gives to the brand name, symbols and personality. An important element of brand perception is the management of it which allows it to be positioned in the desired location in the market as well as in consumers' minds. Brand association is concerned with the intangible characteristics, distinctiveness, innovation and prestige of a brand. Perceived quality is mainly related to the beliefs, judgements as well as perceptions about the quality of the product. The level of perceived quality will have a significant impact on both the brand perception and the overall success of the brand. Next, brand awareness which is defined as the presence of the brand in the minds of the consumers,

the level of awareness is proportional to the size of the overall perception of the brand. Awareness can be created through a brand name, packaging, location, or other similar elements. In order to differentiate the brand from the competition and to differentiate the brand in the minds of the consumers, it is important to invest into the brand image. Brand image can have a significant impact on the success of the brand in the market. Furthermore, brand fondness is an emotional element of brand perception, and it impacts the emotional side of the consumer which impacts the decision-making process in order to persuade the consumer to make a purchase. Lastly, when it comes to different elements of the brand perception, there is a product country image which has a surprisingly large role in the perception of the consumer. Sometimes the consumer will decide on the purchase depending on the country of origin of the product, since there are certain features of a product which can be heavily impacted by its origin (Foroudi *et al.*, 2018).

### 3.2 Linguistics as a part of brand perception creation

Brand names will often find their roots in linguistics, what is more, an amount of their brand equity is connected to the local spelling and meaning. Brand of small retail outlets named 7-Eleven has managed to share the important message about their working hours to their customers. This concrete example is a great solution when it comes to impacting brand perception through a brand name. A problem could arise in the moment the company decides to leave their native market and to approach a market in which English is not the main language. In case people do not understand what the name means, it leads to the need of the company to change their marketing strategies and approach (Usunier *et al.*, 2002). Brand name can be perceived as an extrinsic cue which forms consumers perception of risk when deciding on the purchase. Favourable brand name can impact the level of perceived risk a customer feels toward a product (Sharma & Garg, 2016). Companies will try to impact the consumers perception in order to capitalize on the brand they have created through marketing and other communication channels. This is especially evident when talking about the luxury market. Haagen-Dazs is a premium ice cream brand from Bronx, USA. Consumers after being asked about the origin of the brand oftentimes state that they believe that it is of European origin. Haagen-Dazs will often be perceived as of higher quality due to the linguistic components of its brand name, to be more precise, the foreign connotation of its brand name.

Similar story is with a mineral water made by Carlsberg named Vincy Noveu, or Matsui a UK brand bearing a Japanese sounding name (Pathak *et al.*, 2017).

One of the industries where the perception of products is very dependent on the brand name is the food and beverage industry. According to a research, many brands will do their best to construct names that sound as much pure and pristine as possible in order to impact the brand perception which will consumers create about the product. A very important element of brand name when it comes to the perception and impact on the consumer preferences is the fluency of the name. Names which are easier to pronounce will leave a better impact on the consumer compared to the ones which are harder to pronounce. Food additives which have a disfluent name will be regarded as more dangerous ones, as well as pharmaceuticals which are perceived as riskier in case they have names which are harder to pronounce. In case of water, its purity and quality perception are directly related to the name of the brand. The fluency of a brand name will affect the perception and will give consumer an idea of whether that bottle fits its lifestyle and preferences. In the research made in the bottled water sphere, customers in general had a more positive perception towards water whose name had been more fluent (Cho, 2018). The study had showed that even a small thing about a brand name such as fluency can have a significant impact on the perception of the branded product by the customer. Name fluency had an impact on the water purity as well as on water taste. Minor differences in the phonetic structure of a brand name can have a significant impact on the overall perception. Brand names were chosen with a goal to share a certain set of information about the brand, strength, favourability, uniqueness or consistency (Wänke, Herrmann & Schaffner, 2007).

Brand perception can be derived directly from the brand name, according to a research where 124 artificial brand names have been tested. Only difference between the names had been in the phonetic dimension (fricatives vs. stops vs back vowels). The goal had been to see whether the participants are able to differentiate certain elements of a product solely from the brand name. Results have proven that the name of a brand has a significant impact on the perception from a customer, brands containing front vowel sounds were perceived as smaller, milder, softer, thinner prettier etc. compared to the brands that contained back vowel sounds (Roche, Shrum & Lowrey 2015).

In the research in which main focus had been ski hotels, and their brand names it had been concluded that the names of the hotels had affected the perception, and in a significant way. What is more, even when the additional information about the hotel had been introduced the name still had a significant impact on the perception towards a certain hotel. In the end, the perception of the hotel had been partly built on the name which the hotel carries, and the associations related to it, and partly on the features the hotel really offers (Wänke *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, brand recall and brand recognition have an effect on the brand perception. What is more, perceived quality is closely related to the brand perception because of its impact on the opinion created about the product (Foroudi *et al.*, 2018). A recurring assumption when it comes to the research on the brand naming and the impact of brand name on the perception is that the name and symbols, images and feelings which are related to it have a more significant impact on the brand and its differentiation from the competition compared to the products and their characteristics (Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias, 2001).

### 3.3 Positive perception and proneness to purchase

Brand name is perceived as an indication of certain features of the products as well as it is useful for the consumer to position the product in right bracket. Consumer can have a different perception of the brand quality depending on the name which is associated to a certain product. The different perception of the brand name can be further explored after the elements of price as well as of quality are brought into the equation. When experiencing a lack of information about a certain product the consumer will turn their perception onto a combination of price, brand name as well as quality in order to determine the worth of the product (Forsythe, 1991).

The congruity theory states that the individual will evaluate an object in accordance with the existing frame of reference. Which means that a consumer will compare a product on brand name/price/quality level with other products that in his mind are competitors to the one in the process of evaluation. In accordance with the congruity theory, the relationship between the perception of price and brand name of a product is to a significant degree affected by

characteristics of the product such as prestige or enhanced self-concept, especially for fashion conscious consumers. The consistency in the price difference between brand names and private brands, even though sometimes prices can be equal, is in accordance with the congruity theory, and its idea of existing frame of reference a consumer has. A brand name will increase the perceived value of a product through completely subjective characteristics. Consumer will oftentimes be aware of the fact that a brand name will not provide a higher quality but will be willing to pay a higher price due to other factors which impact the item since consumers conduct purchases for different number of reasons, of which not all are due to utilitarian functions of the product, but also due to personal or social reasons (Forsythe, 1991).

In the research conducted in 2018 which regarded the impact of a brand name on proneness to purchase bottled water the results showed that people will be significantly more prone to purchase a water whose name they perceive as more fluent compared to the water whose names is more complex to overcome (Cho, 2018). Furthermore, the impact of brand name on the perception of garment quality had still not been investigated enough. Some researchers found that the name had a certain amount of impact on the perception when it comes to the buyers who were fashion conscious, but not among the general population (Forsythe, 1991). When it comes to the naming with a goal of certain perception from the customer, a very interesting segment is the energy drinks market. In the energy drink market, the trend is to have a negative brand name. In this case a negative brand names are the ones people cannot easily pass by without noticing, they are easily distinguishable which makes them easy to remember. According to the research people will firstly notice the negative names, after that positive, and in the end neutral ones. Negative names increase the curiosity of the consumer to that level that he/she does not consume a particular drink for its taste, but for the brand (Manolică, Mititiuc & Roman, 2018).

Results of a research which had a goal of understanding the semantic configuration of names had concluded that there are three options possible. Firstly, 'normal' words, ones such as tide or secret, nonwords which give a possibility of deducted meaning such as Duracell and non-words which have no intrinsic meaning, such as Yahoo. As a next step, researchers have discussed whether the name should indicate certain information about the product, such as

Duracell gives certain hint about the product, or should it be like Gillette, where there is no possibility of relating the name to a product. As a further extension of the research, the one based on the fMRI of the brain showed that names which give hints at the benefits of a product will trigger a significantly larger brain response compared to the names which do not have indicators. Brand names which have a possibility of deducted meaning will elicit a strongest emotional response. Brand names which contained normal words were processed in the conscious and rational way, have a perceptual disadvantage compared to the ones that give a hint about the product (Hillenbrand, Alcauter, Cervantes & Barrios, 2013).

A brand which contains phonetic sound repetition will be evaluated more favourably as well as it will create a more positive effect when it is spoken out loud, compared to being it read silently. What is more, according to a study, a brand name will be evaluated in the most positive way if it contains phonetic sound repetition and when it is spoken out loud. If we eliminate the process of it being spoken out loud, and focus on the repetition, there is also a difference in the evaluation of brand between a non-repetitive and a repetitive brand (Argo *et al.*, 2010). Morphemic combinations when it comes to brand names will allow the brand to give more information to the consumer compared to the normal words (Hillenbrand *et al.*, 2013).

Sound 'S' is the most common fricative among popular brand names and is far more common compared to the 'TH' sound which is the least used fricative among popular brand names. According to the research, customers perceive the brand names with fricative 'S' as the one for which they would be willing to pay more. What is more, it had been proven that the frequency of the 'S' among popular brand names is not a coincidence (Pogacar, Kouril, Carpenter & Kellaris, 2018). Furthermore, the attention of a customer towards a brand name, as well as the process of evaluation of a brand name will differ according to the type of the product in question as well as the level of involvement a customer has with a certain product (Lee *et al.*, 2014).

### 3.4 Interrelatedness of brand name and logo design with brand perception

Logo is without a doubt perceived as one of the most important elements of the brands visual identity. Logo will impact on the brand awareness as well as on the recognition. Furthermore,

people will perceive a brand more sincere if the logo is natural, elaborate round and coherent (Seimiene & Kamarauskaite 2014). Logo is an element of the company or a product in the market, one of the communication channels for the company, as well as a distinguishing element through which a company differentiates itself from the competition. (Avram, 2019). Logo is an asset of the company on which vast amounts of money are spent in order to promote it as successfully as possible. Logos appear all around us, they are on the television, packaging or products. (Henderson & Cote, 1998).

Some logos are designed with purely visual context in mind, such as Apple, Nike or Vodafone, throughout their existence in the business world people have started to recognize the logo even without any text which would indicate the brand name. On the other hand, there are some brands whose logo is their brand name. Some of the best examples when it comes to the integration of the name in the logo is Federal Express, or shortly, FedEx and Carrefour. Even though most of the attention when looking at the FedEx logo is in the area between d and E, the moment when people become aware of the arrow between E and x, their whole focus shifts into that area. Similar thing is with Carrefour logo. In the beginning eyes focus on coloured areas, red and blue. The moment people become aware of the fact that there is a letter C in the logo, the focus shifts predominantly in the white area where the newly discovered letter is located. This phenomenon is called bistable perception. What is specific about the bistable perception, especially when it comes to Carrefour logo, you cannot see both the C and rest of the logo, but only one element at a time (Martinez, 2012).

*Picture 1 - FedEx and Carrefour logo*



Source: [www.fedex.com](http://www.fedex.com), [www.carrefour.com](http://www.carrefour.com) [10<sup>th</sup> of August 2022]

In order to differentiate the brand and gain a competitive advantage over the competition, a brand logo will be used to create brand associations and to build emotions and feelings



towards a brand (Rio *et al.*, 2001). Logos and their recognition are very important in stores because they will increase the speed of decision making since a familiar logo will give a certain level of safety for the consumer. Logos are considered as the most important element of in store recognition aid, giving the customer information about the product from the overall perception of the brand. Logo design has a significant impact on the company, and sometimes the failure of the company can be attributed to the inappropriate choice of logo (Henderson *et al.*, 1998).

By dividing the logo to simple elements such as colour and shape it can be said that they both have a very significant impact on the perception of the customers. Whether the logo uses lines, circles, spirals or rectangles it will impact the perceived personality of the brand and will create a certain image in the mind of a consumer. What is more, colours such as yellow, orange or purple will make the brand be perceived as more exciting and thrilling, whereas white, blue or red will be perceived as more serious (Munawaroh, 2015). As a further extension of the importance of shapes when it comes to logo building, symmetrical logos are in general beneficial to the brand and its value. On the other hand, brands which are exciting, but have a symmetrical logo have lower consumer valuations compared to the ones with asymmetrical logo. What is more, the researchers have found that brands which are perceived as exciting are not always the ones who have asymmetrical logo and imply that the managers were possibly unaware of the positive effects of asymmetrical logos. According to the research, Mountain Dew logo matches the personality of the brand, since they are exciting and asymmetrical, Shell can be perceived as unexciting, as well as it has a symmetrical logo. MTV has an exciting personality, but a quite a symmetrical logo, which by the research should be a bit more asymmetrical. Lastly, Kleenex which has a very asymmetrical logo, but does not have an exciting personality. The most important thing for a logo is to be consistent with the brand personality. A symmetrical logo is suggested to the companies which are not perceived as exciting, whereas the asymmetrical one is for companies which have an exciting personality (Stamatogiannakis, Luffarelli & Zang, 2020).

When a consumer turns to yellow pages to look at the unknown supplier for a certain product, there are no additional information about the supplier aside from the logo, and potentially a brand name, which makes the customer choose the supplier according to the two given

elements the supplier had created which further emphasizes the importance of developing a quality logo and brand name (Henderson *et al.*, 1998).

## 4. THE RESEARCH ON THE BRAND PERCEPTION ACCORDING TO THE USAGE OF SPECIFIC LINGUISTIC AND BRANDING CHARACTERISTICS

### 4.1 Subject and research objectives

Very competitive today's market is forcing producers to start focusing on every small detail when it comes to branding and marketing of a certain product. Even the smallest advantage of a perception developed by the consumer can translate into a significant one in the market (Hillenbrand *et al.*, 2013). In order to create an advantage which results in brand success, importance lays in the development of a brand name as well as brand mark, since the brand meaning is shared through those two elements (Klink 2003). A well created brand name is a very valuable asset to the company which can create a significant impact on the brand awareness (Pogacar *et al.*, 2018). Because of all the previous statements, the importance of brand name for both new and old companies is not something to ignore. The purpose of this research is to show the importance of choosing the right name for the product, not only appropriate for the group, but also linguistically suitable. What is more, the goal is to show whether does the brand name familiarity impact the perception or a brand name, as well as the impact of different linguistic practices and their relevance for brand name perception. Furthermore, when it comes to the alpha-numeric brand names, the goal is to define whether there is different impact of brand name on the consumer perception depending on the product category, and lastly, how will consumer react to the number of digits in a brand name for different categories of products.

Additionally, in order to support goals and objectives of this research, hypotheses had been defined. Through the hypotheses the results of the research will be presented as well as interpreted.

**H1** - Consumers are willing to pay more and feel better when consuming/owning brand names which are more familiar to them.

**H2** - Using back & stressed vowels and more syllables impacts the perceived luxuriousness of a brand.

**H3** - Consumers will rate the fit of alpha-numeric brand name as better in case of products that are related to technology, chemistry or of powerful nature.

**H4** - For products that are not in the technology, chemistry or powerful nature category, customers will prefer names with less digits in alpha-numeric brand name.

## 4.2 Research methodology

The research had been conducted through an online questionnaire which had been distributed through social media such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as through online forums. The questionnaire had been on English language only. All the participants were introduced to the purpose of the survey, as well as with the guarantee of anonymity. A copy of the survey titled – “The impact of brand name characteristics on brand perception” can be found at the end of the thesis, in the Appendix. Results had been analysed using Microsoft Excel.

Sample consisted of 111 respondents - 102 from Croatia and 9 from other European countries. This is one of very few research projects conducted on the topic of linguistics in brand naming where the vast majority of the respondents were of Croatian origin. Because of that it can be perceived as a very useful tool which could help understand the way Croatian consumers perceive brands and brand names.

The questionnaire comprised of 28 questions, divided into three parts. First part had 4 questions and concerned demographic characteristics of the participants. The participants were asked to give some basic information through which it would be possible to differentiate and interpret the received results with better accuracy and relevance. Participants shared their gender and age in order for the results to be able to differentiate the male from female responses, in order to understand whether there is a different view on the brand naming according to the gender, as well as age, since people of different ages can have a completely different perception of the linguistic characteristics of a brand. Also, participants shared the information on their level of education and country they reside in.

The second part had been focused on the linguistics of brand naming. It comprised of 12 questions divided into 3 groups. Questions in the second part were focused on the perception of the linguistic characteristics of brand names. Three brand names were taken and participants were asked questions about each name in order to define whether the different linguistic practices in each name have an impact on the consumer who saw the name for the first time. The goal had been to see whether the consumer will be more motivated to spend money and perceive the product as more upscale when it has a 'luxury' sounding brand name compared to the one that has a 'basic' sound. Or there will be no difference. Last, third part comprised of 12 questions divided into 3 groups as well. Last part had focused on the alpha-numeric brand names and the ability of a consumer to distinguish whether a certain name fits the product. Participants were asked to define whether a given alpha-numeric name will fit the product in question. The goal of the third part is to understand whether consumers with non-linguistic background are aware of the certain naming principles which are applied. To be more precise, are there brand names which consumer will relate to certain groups of products and are there names which would demotivate a consumer to conduct a purchase of a specific product. First part had multiple choice questions, while second and third had Likert scale with seven and five options respectively. For the second part the stages of the Likert scale differ from question to question, and for the third part, 1 would represent "Poor fit" and 5 "Excellent fit" of the product and the brand name.

The research questionnaire had been based on the questionnaires adopted from the paper "How the linguistic characteristics of a brand name can affect its luxury appeal" by Pathak, Calvert and Lim (2016) for the second part of the questionnaire, and from "The winning number – Consumer perceptions of alpha-numeric brand names" by Pavia and Costa (1993) for the third part of the questionnaire.

### 4.3 Research results

In the research conducted for the purposes of this paper 111 respondents participated - 75 or 67,6% were male, and 36 or 32,4% were female. Regarding the division based on the age of the respondents, as it had been expected, most of the respondents (49,5%) were aged between 18 and 25 years of age. By combining the respondents from age groups of 18 – 25

and 26 – 41, more than 80% of the answers received are part of those two groups. This is relevant on two levels, firstly, people aged 41 and below are the ones who are most aware of the branding principles and the different approaches to the brand naming as well as linguistic perception of the brand name. Because of that, the results received from them are very relevant for this research. Second level of importance is the fact that those are people who will be buying brands for a significant number of years to come, they are the ones brands are at the moment targeting in order to get them familiar with the branding strategies and all the positive sides a certain brand is having. On the graph below the detailed division of the age structure is visible.

**Table 3 - Age of survey participants**

Years of age	Number of respondents	Percentage
18 – 25	55	49,5%
26 – 41	36	32,4%
42 – 58	18	16,2%
58 and more	2	1,8%
Total	111	100%

Source: Survey conducted by the author

Also relevant for the results interpretation is the level of education of the respondents. Participants were able to choose from the following – High school, Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree and PhD. Results of the educational structure of respondents is presented in the chart below. It is important to note here that even though the questionnaire states that around 20% of the respondents have only high school, it should be noted that due to the Croatian education system which operates according to the Bologna principle, a number of people who have completed 4 years of study are not able to get a Bachelor’s degree but have to attend the fifth year of studies and go for the Master’s degree.

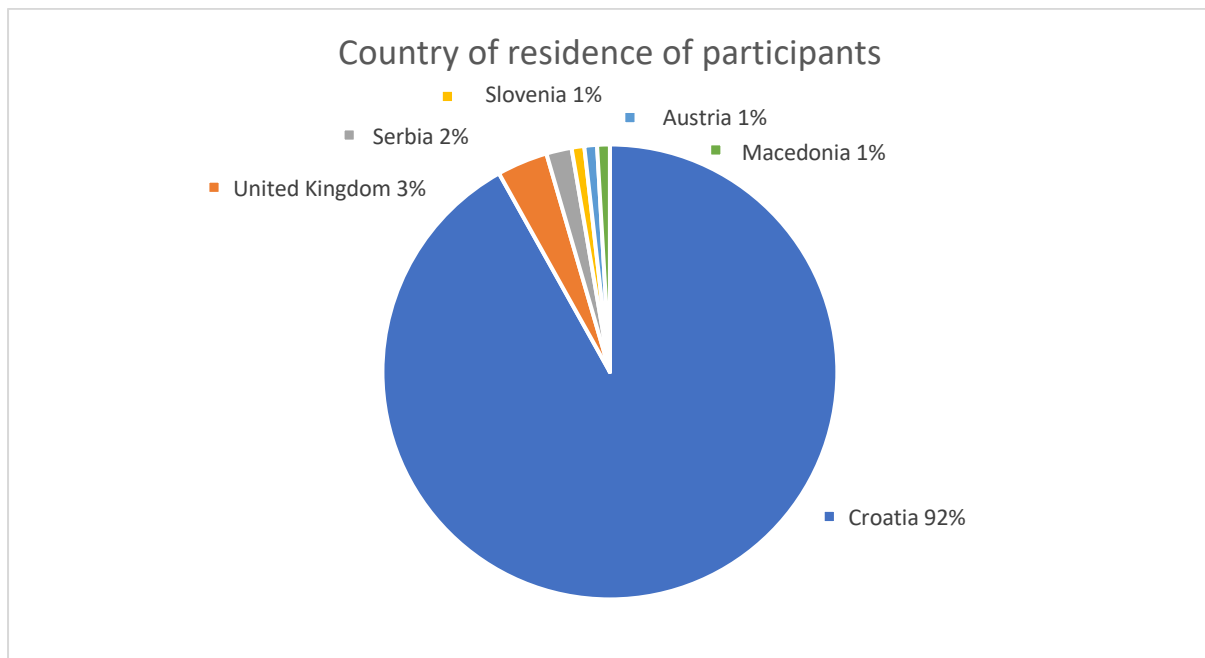
**Table 4 - Level of formal education**

Level of education	Number of respondents	Percentage
High school	21	18,9%
Bachelor's degree	36	32,4%
Master's degree	52	46,8%
PhD	2	1,8%
Total	111	99,90%

Source: Survey conducted by the author

Lastly, there is division according to the county of residence. For this research country of residence is not the most relevant information because the brands in question and in general linguistic branding principles apply to brands which go international. Most of the respondents had been from Croatia, 92%, while other European countries held 8%. Below is a chart with division according to the country of residence.

**Chart 1 - Participant country of residence**



Source: Survey conducted by the author

The first part of the conducted research had been based on three hypothetical brand names. Buxxor, Sacava and Jensi. Before the results are interpreted it is important to state the main difference between the three names. Brand names Buxxor and Sacava are perceived as luxury brand names, and they have linguistic elements international luxury brand names possess. On the other hand, Jensi is perceived as a basic brand name.

**H1** - Consumers are willing to pay more and feel better when consuming/owning brand names which are more familiar to them.

In order to test the hypothesis 1, statements from 1 to 12 were used with the exception of statements 2, 6 and 10.

*Table 5 - Results regarding linguistic characteristics of a brand name*

Question	No.	Mean	Median
<b>BUXXOR</b>			
S1 - You are seeing a new brand name. Does it seem similar to any other brand known to you?	111	5.25	7
S2 - You see a name. Do you feel it is a Basic brand name or a Luxury brand name?	111	4.14	4
S3 - If I use a product having this brand name, it will make me feel important.	111	3.79	4
S4 - I like this name so much that I don't mind paying a little extra for a product having this name.	111	3.03	1
<b>SACAVA</b>			
S5 - You are seeing a new brand name. Does it seem similar to any other brand known to you?	111	5.31	7
S6 - You see a name. Do you feel it is a Basic brand name or a Luxury brand name?	111	3.96	4
S7 - If I use a product having this brand name, it will make me feel important.	111	3.21	4
S8 - I like this name so much that I don't mind paying a little extra for a product having this name.	111	3.15	2
<b>JENSI</b>			
S9 - You are seeing a new brand name. Does it seem similar to any other brand known to you?	111	4.81	7
S10 - You see a name. Do you feel it is a Basic brand name or a Luxury brand name?	111	3.05	2
S11 - If I use a product having this brand name, it will make me feel important.	111	2.69	1
S12 - I like this name so much that I don't mind paying a little extra for a product having this name.	111	2.52	1

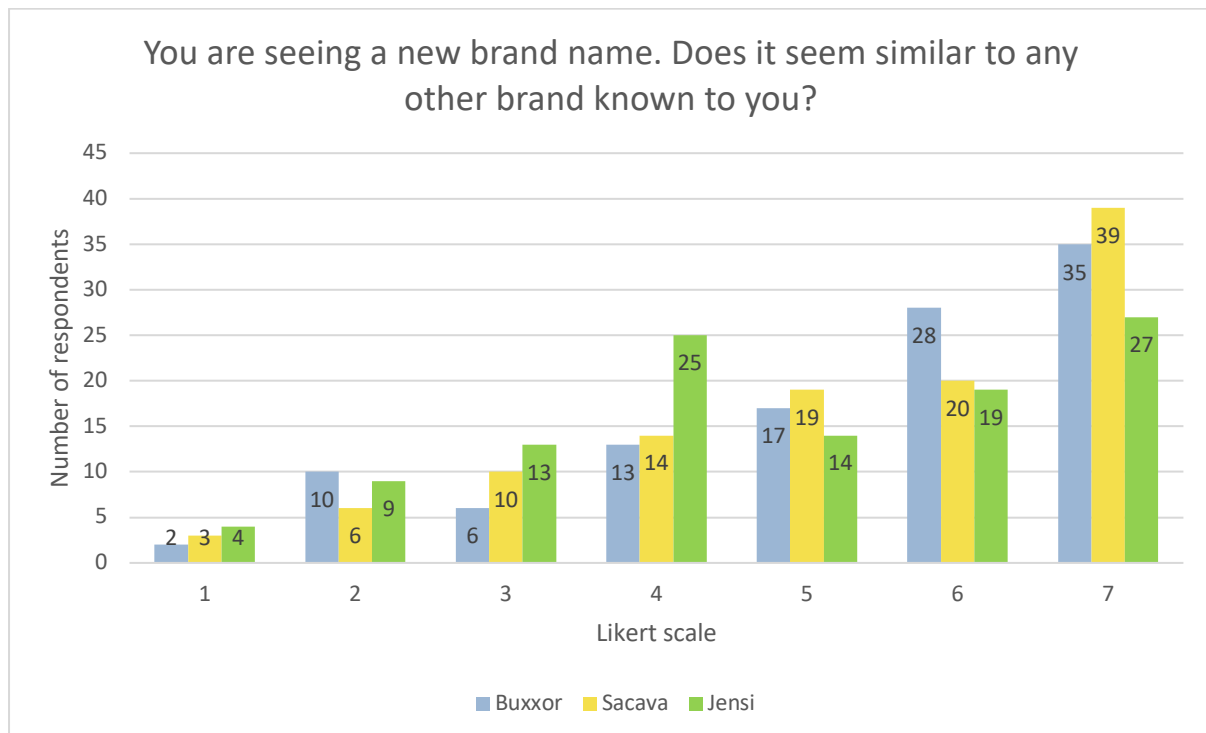
Source: Survey conducted by the author



According to the research, all three hypothetical brand names, Buxxor, Sacava and Jensi have a quite low level of similarity to other brands in the market, at least according to the results presented. Respondents have been most familiar with Jensi. Its mean is the lowest of the three brands in question, 4,81, while Buxxor and Sacava have 5,25 and 5,31 respectively. Furthermore, even though the average value can lead to conclusion that Jensi is more familiar to the respondents, it is important to mention the fact that median of all three brand names is 7 which is the highest possible grade, and it states that the brand name is definitely not familiar to the respondent.

Second part of the H1 regards the feeling of importance when it comes to owning a product branded as Buxxor, Sacava or Jensi. Arithmetic mean is the lowest for Jensi, 2,69, and a bit higher for Buxxor and Sacava at 3,79 and 3,21. Furthermore, median shows a significantly bigger discrepancy between the three. For luxury brands, most frequent answer is 4, whereas for the basic brand name Jensi, most frequent grade on the scale is 1. In the case of the feel of importance looking at the chart which presents the data is very helpful to get a better understanding of the results.

*Chart 2 - Responses regarding the similarity of the hypothetical brand name*

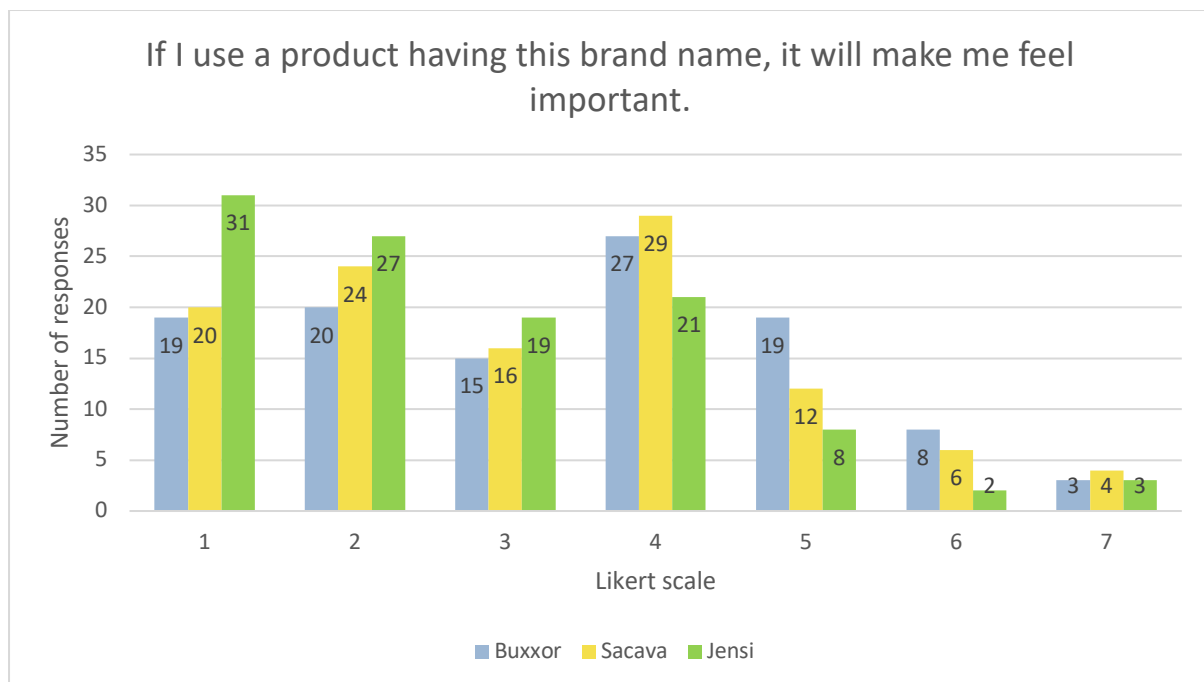


Likert scale legend: 1 – Definitely yes, 7 – Definitely no

Source: Survey conducted by the author

What can be seen from the chart is that even though high answers such as 6 or 7 which define that a certain consumer will feel important when owning a product from all three hypothetical names are quite rare, there is a certain degree of preference of the two luxury names compared to Jensi. By looking at the chart below, it is visible that there is even more distinction of the two luxury brand names and the basic one compared to the mean and median. For the basic brand name, the tendency towards lower grades is visible with having 31 and 27 votes for the two lowest grades which translates to over 50% of the respondents would not feel important by having products named Jensi, on the other hand, only 35% and 39% of the respondents would not feel important not even a slight by owning Buxxor or Sacava products.

*Chart 3 - Responses regarding the feeling of importance by using a product of hypothetical brand name*



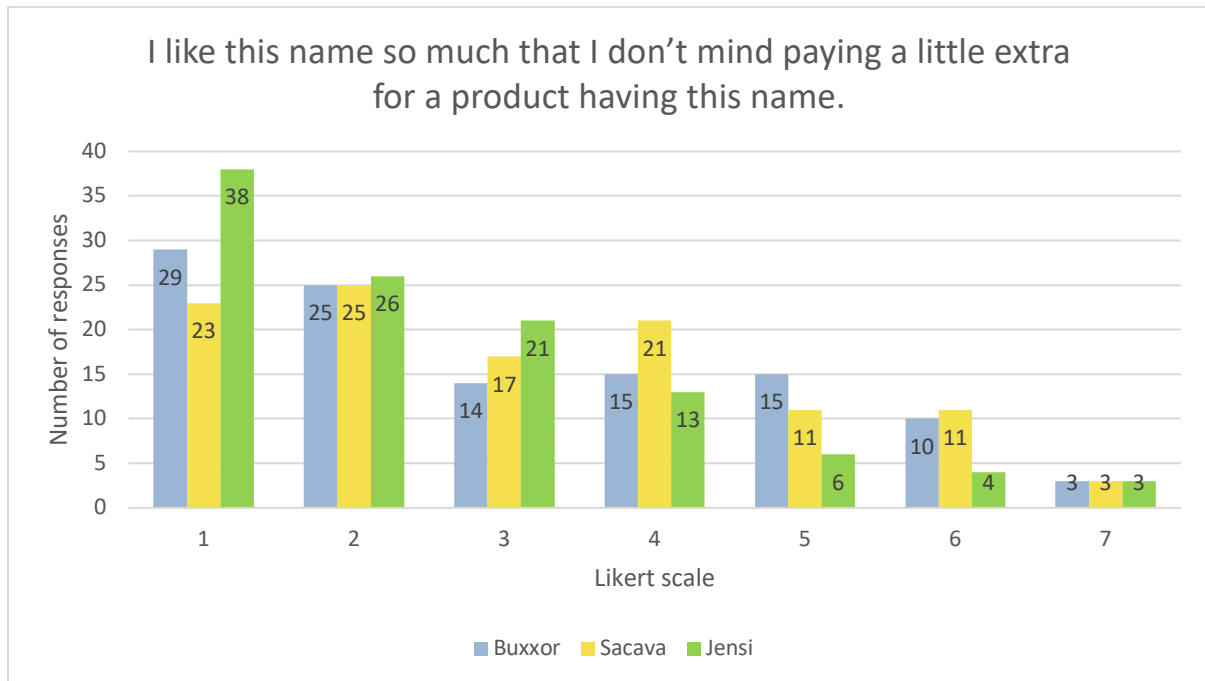
Likert scale legend: 1 – Strongly disagree, 7 – Strongly agree

Source: Survey conducted by the author

Lastly, the results regarding the willingness of the consumers to pay more for certain brand names show that there is a correlation between the feeling of importance when owning a brand and willingness to pay more for a brand name. In case of willingness to pay, median for Buxxor and Jensi are 1, while Sacava has 2. When it comes to mean, differences are a bit more visible, but still the numerical differences are very small, especially having in mind the fact that grading goes all the way to 7. 3,03 for Buxxor, 3,15 for Sacava and 2,52 for Jensi. Even

though differences are small, the quantity of people who gave Jensi a grade above 3 is very low, especially compared to the Buxxor or Sacava.

*Chart 4 - Responses regarding the willingness to pay extra for products under hypothetical brand name*



Likert scale legend: 1 – Strongly disagree, 7 – Strongly agree

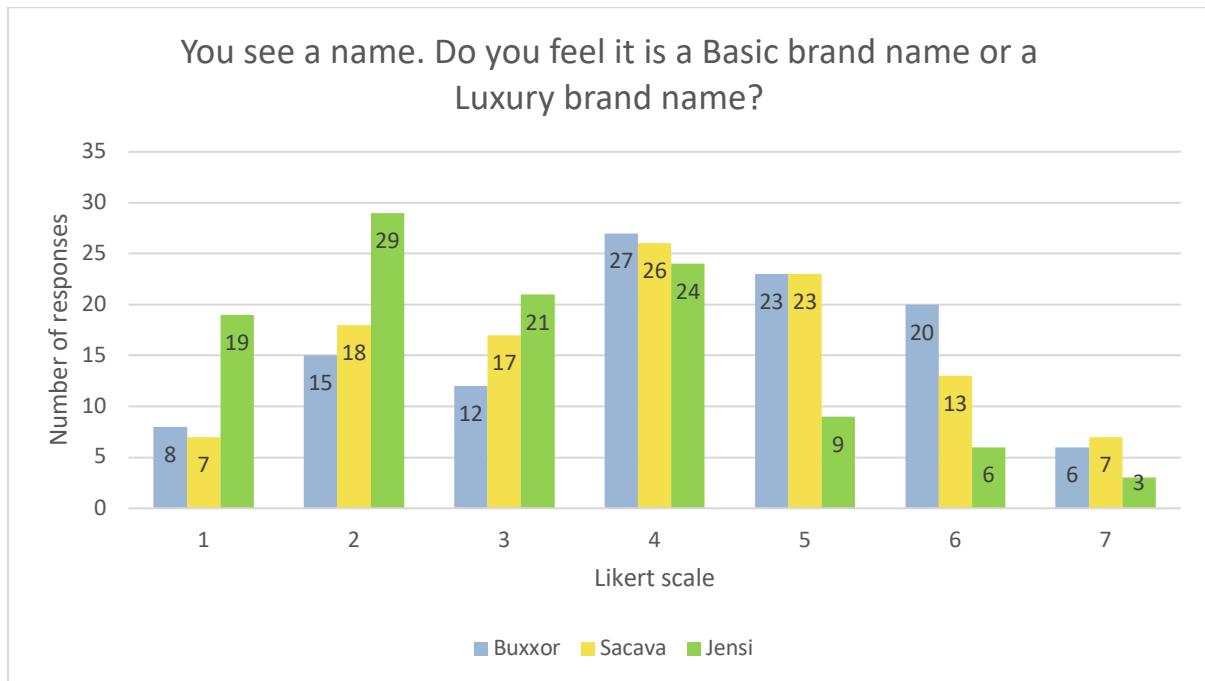
Source: Survey conducted by the author

According to the results presented in the charts and text above, it can be without a doubt stated that the H1 is disregarded and cannot be valid. Jensi as the most familiar brand name had been the one that people are the least willing to pay more and to feel better about owning it. Buxxor is the brand name which makes people to feel best, whereas Sacava will motivate people to spend the largest amounts of money.

**H2 - using back & stressed vowels and more syllables impacts the perceived luxuriousness of a brand.**

In order to test the hypothesis 2, statements from 1 to 12 were used with the exception of statements 1, 5 and 9.

*Chart 5 - Responses regarding the division between Basic and Luxury brand name*



Likert scale legend: 1 –Basic brand name, 7 – Luxury brand name

Source: Survey conducted by the author

According to the results when it comes to mean and median it can be said that in general people perceived brand names Buxxor and Sacava to be more luxurious than Jensi, even though in general, the number of grades above 5 is low. Mean for Buxxor is the highest of the three, at 4,14, whereas for Sacava and Jensi is 3,96 and 3,05 respectively. Next, median for the perceived luxury appeal of the brand name is 4 for both Buxxor and Sacava, and 2 for Jensi. By eliminating the grade number 4 completely, results become much more interesting and the luxury linguistic characteristics of brand names Buxxor and Sacava show their importance and relevance. Only 18 people gave Jensi a grade higher than 4, whereas 49 people gave 5, 6 or 7 to Buxxor and 43 to Sacava.

Furthermore, the perceived luxuriousness of a brand can be derived from the research questions which regard the feeling of importance when owning the given brand as well as the willingness to pay more for Sacava or Buxxor in this case. As it had been elaborated in the results of a first hypothesis, brand names Buxxor and Sacava have had better scores when it comes to the evaluation of the luxuriousness through feeling of importance and willingness to pay more compared to Jensi, their mean and median are as well fairly higher than the ones from Jensi.

In order to get a better understanding of the results when it comes to the perceived luxuriousness of solely the brand name, there is a need to divide the three tested names into simple factors in line with the hypothesis. Buxxor is a 2-syllable word which contains 2 back vowels, 'u' and 'o' which classify it as a luxury brand name. On the other hand, Jensi is also a 2-syllable word containing 2 vowels of which both are front which puts it into the basic brand name group.

Results received from the research which apply on to the H2 have confirmed the hypothesis and made it valid.

**H3 - Consumers will rate the fit of alpha-numeric brand name as better in case of products that are related to technology, chemistry or of powerful nature.**

In order to test the hypothesis 3, statements from 1 to 12 were used.

*Table 6 - Results of the survey regarding the alpha-numerical brand names*

Questions	No.	Mean	Median
ALUSTAR			
S1 - How does the name 'Alustar 4' fit a glittery cosmetics brand?	111	2.23	1
S2 - How does the name 'Alustar 4000' fit a glittery cosmetics brand?	111	1.88	1
S3- How does the name 'Alustar 4' fit the metal polish brand?	111	3.58	4
S4 - How does the name 'Alustar 4000' fit the metal polish brand?	111	3.80	4
Z			
S5 - How does the name 'Z 5' fit a candy bar brand?	111	2.30	1
S6 - How does the name 'Z 50' fit a candy bar brand?	111	2.27	1
S7 - How does the name 'Z 5' fit a new computer drive brand?	111	4.00	5
S8 - How does the name 'Z 50' fit a new computer drive brand?	111	3.94	5
RAX			
S9 - How does the name 'Rax Eight' fit a lingerie brand?	111	2.01	1
S10 - How does the name 'Rax 8' fit a lingerie brand?	111	2.07	1
S11 - How does the name 'Rax Eight' fit an insecticide brand?	111	3.59	5
S12 - How does the name 'Rax 8' fit an insecticide brand?	111	3.92	5

Source: Survey conducted by the author

In the second part of the survey results are significantly more straight forward and clearer to interpret. For the better understanding, the Likert scale went from 1 to 5, with 1 being 'Poor fit' and 5 being 'Excellent fit'. In the case of brand Alustar which had been tested with two numerical addons, 4 and 4000 results have shown that participants in the survey were able to define the appropriateness of the brand name to a product. For Alustar 4 and 4000 as brand names of glittery cosmetics participants had opted for "Poor fit" most frequently. Mean had been 2,23 for Alustar 4 and 1,88 for Alustar 4000. Compared to when Alustar 4 and 4000 were brand names for metal polish brand, where the most common grade had been 4, which means that the name is a very good fit for the product. Also, arithmetic means support the median, Alustar 4 as a metal polish brand had a mean of 3,58 and Alustar 4000 had even higher, 3,80.

Similarly, brand names Z 5 and Z 50 were not perceived by the respondents as a good solution for naming a candy bar brand. Most common answers for both Z 5 and Z 50 were 1, while mean had been surprisingly high at 2,30 and 2,27 for 5 and 50 respectively. On the other hand, using Z 5 and Z 50 as brand names for computer drive brands would be a success. Median is the maximum grade, 5 for both Z 5 and 50, while mean is the highest realized in this part of the research 4,00 for Z 5 and 3,94 for Z 50.

Lastly, Rax brand name with number 8 in both written and numerical form. For the fit of a Rax Eight and Rax 8 as a lingerie brand respondents have been very clear that it is an inappropriate name because of which the most frequent answer in both written and numerical form is 1, while mean is 2,01 for Rax Eight and 2,07 for Rax 8. At the same time using name Rax 8 for insecticide brand is a great approach since a number of the respondents believe that it is a great fit. Median is 5 for both Eight and 8, while mean is also quite high at 3,59 and 3,92 for Eight and 8 respectively.

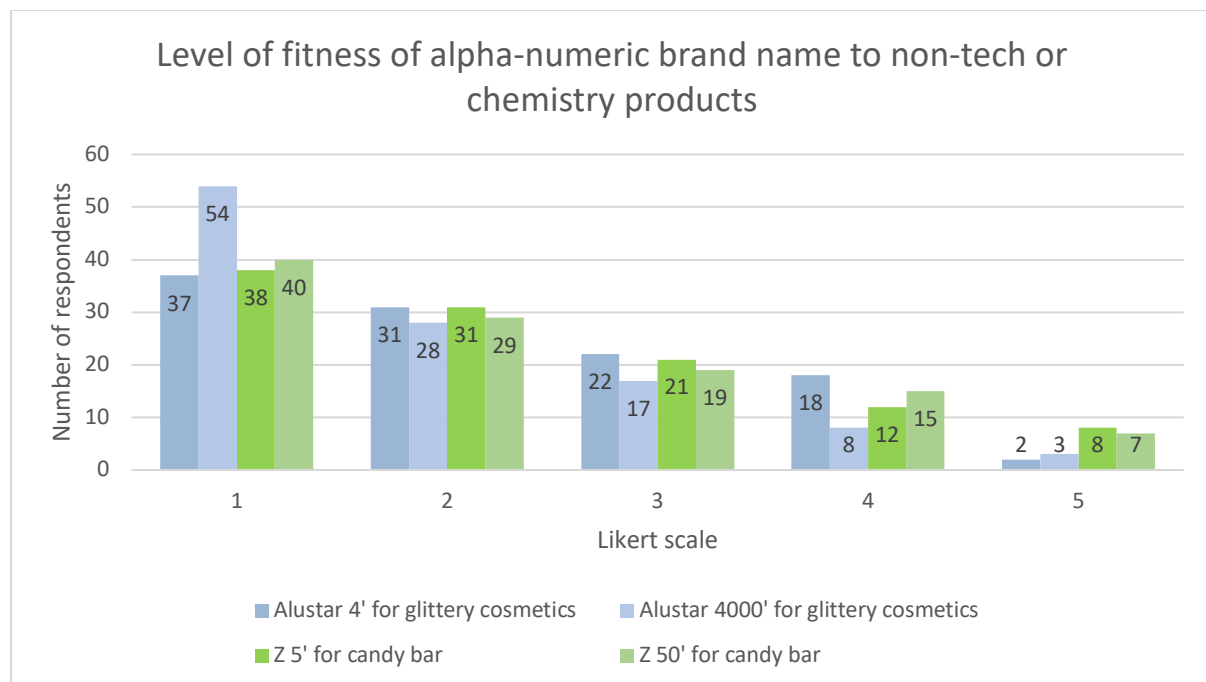
From the information presented above, it can be concluded that the hypothesis 3 is accepted and proven by the research conducted.

**H4 - for products that are not in the technology, chemistry or powerful nature category, customers will prefer names with less digits in alpha-numeric brand name.**

In order to test the hypothesis 4, statements from 1 to 8 were used.

Alpha-numeric brand names are not suitable for all types of product categories, some categories such as technology or chemistry will be more inclined towards using brand names compared to clothes or food industry. But there will always be products and companies who go against the wind, and who will use alpha-numeric names for their products, so the question here is - Will clothing or food industry consumers prefer having one or more digits?

*Chart 6 - Responses regarding the fitness of alpha-numerical brand name to certain products*



Likert scale legend: 1 –Poor fit, 5 – Excellent fit

Source: Survey conducted by the author

The research among the two tested brand names, Alustar and Z for categories of food and clothing with both one digit and multidigit numeric parts of the brand name showed the following results. Average grade for the appropriateness of a brand name Alustar 4 and 4000 for the lingerie products is 2,23 and 1,88. Median for both 4 and 4000 options is 1. From this results it can be concluded that more customers would opt for a brand name that has only one digit. When it comes to the Z 5 and Z 50 brand names which had been tested in the food

category holds means at 2,30 and 2,27, while medians are at 1 as well. From the second set of questions, it can be concluded that there is no clear difference between one- and two-digit alpha-numeric brand names. By looking at the chart it can without a doubt be concluded that 4-digit names are the least desirable when it comes to alpha-numeric naming of non-technology and non-chemistry products. When it comes to 1- or 2-digit alpha-numeric names, results show no clear distinction and preference among the answers collected in the survey.

From the research results presented above it can be concluded that alpha-numeric brand names with more than 2 digits are undesirable, which supports the hypothesis 4. Furthermore, in order to define whether do customers prefer 1- or 2-digit names, additional research is needed.

#### 4.4 Discussion

In this thesis four hypothesis had been tested. Of the four, three had been accepted, and one had been rejected.

By testing H1 – “Consumers are willing to pay more and feel better when consuming/owning brand names which are more familiar to them.” the goal had been to define the correlation between the familiarity with a brand name to the willingness to pay more or to feel better while owning a particular product. Research showed that there is a correlation between the familiarity of a brand name and a motivation to pay more. For brand names less familiar to the consumer he/she will be more prone to spend more money as well as to feel better while consuming them potentially due to simple curiosity. Because of the increased relevance of brand naming, familiarity of the new brand name to the existing ones in the common product category can be a very important aspect when it comes to brand survival in the market.

Testing Hypothesis 2 – “Using back & stressed vowels and more syllables impacts the perceived luxuriousness of a brand” had proven that there is a relationship between the usage of specific luxury brand naming techniques and the perceived luxuriousness of a brand name. Respondents in the research had been able to denote which brand name is luxury, and which is basic. What is more, according to the research consumers are willing to pay more money



for brands which bare names having luxury linguistic principles compared to the ones that have basic brand names. Also, when it comes to the general feeling of importance when having a certain product, the research had proven that consumers will feel better when consuming products that have a luxury sounding brand name. The importance of these findings is multidisciplinary. As it had been mentioned in the paragraph above, the importance of results of this research lays in the fact that the importance of brand naming is becoming more and more relevant. By using a brand name which is perceived as basic and familiar to the customer, brand might face difficulties in case of deciding to sell products of a higher price level. In case of using a luxury brand name for basic products two things might happen. First one is a completely wrong image of the brand through which customers will get a different perception of brand as well as different expectations of the pricing level which might impact the sales results. Second thing, and a bit more positive is that the brand could be perceived as affordable luxury, in the modern world in which democratization of luxury is omnipresent, it might be a good strategy to try to stand out in the mass.

According to Pathak (2016), brand names hold certain distinctive features which give them an ability to stand out in the mass of basic ones, things such as higher number of syllables, more back/high vowels, more stressed vowels, nasals and affricatives. By implementing those rules and practices brand names will be perceived as more luxurious, desirable and pricier. What is more, even though two luxury names in this were perceived as less familiar, when it comes to the luxury segment the brands will prefer to be less familiar since it is more profitable for them to create their own image then to take one already created in the market.

Testing Hypothesis 3 – “Consumers will rate the fit of alpha-numeric brand name as better in case of products that are related to technology, chemistry or of powerful nature” led to the conclusion that there is a clear distinction between the categories of products which accept alpha-numeric brand names. Research had shown that for products in the technology and chemistry categories as well as with products of powerful nature alpha-numeric brand names are far more acceptable to consumers. Consumers will relate the number in the name of the product to certain features a product has or with a general perception of its power. Product having number 500 is more powerful than the one having 200 in its name. Lastly, as it had been mentioned in the previous two paragraphs, having an appropriate brand name for the

category, is applicable to this hypothesis as well. Customers of categories such as food or clothing will not be the most welcoming when it comes to usage of alpha-numeric names for products. In the research conducted, respondents were very clear when it comes to the fact that alpha-numeric brand names are not the appropriate type of names for food or clothing.

Lastly, in hypothesis 4 – “For products that are not in the technology, chemistry or powerful nature category, customers will prefer names with less digits in alpha-numeric brand name.” the results have proven that consumers when it comes to non-technology of non-chemistry products prefer having less than four digits in an alpha-numeric brand name. This can be explained through the fact that consumers have gotten used to the usage of larger numbers in order to differentiate among the capacity, power or speed of products, whereas in the categories such as food or clothing this classification is not possible because those industries rarely have same looking products giving out different performance, such as the PC or detergent market. Finally, customers did not give a clear preference whether they prefer one- or two-digit alpha-numeric brand names, which will have to be investigated in the further research.

#### **4.5 Limitations and recommendations for future research**

Primary research had been conducted with some limitations. Firstly, the sampling method had been non-probability sampling of participants from Croatia and other European countries. Having in mind that the sum of all the participants is 111, one should be very cautious if deciding to use this research as a base for another paper. What is more, the percentage of participants from Croatia is very high, so the research results are biased towards the mindset of the Croatian participants. Next, over 80% of the respondents were aged 41 and below, which is a consequence of the fact that the survey had been distributed digitally and through social media, which as a result made it more complex to approach people over 50 years of age. Also, sound is a very important aspect when it comes to brand names and branding, and in this survey sound had not been used.

Lastly, limitations regarding the anonymity apply because of the fact that people were not asked for their identity, they could click without carefully reading the question, just in order to complete the survey as fast as possible.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In the world filled with constant development and a need to sell and produce more than ever, brand naming had become one of the most important aspects for a company. Historically brand names had not been overly important, but in the recent times more emphasis than even had been put on the appropriate branding and brand naming. Brand name is one of only a few tools through which a company communicates with the widest possible audience. Because of that the importance of having the right naming principles carries a significant weight. Due to the increasing need for specific branding principles, the theoretical background had to be developed in order to educate people on naming principles. Basics to naming consist of two principles, Juliet and Joyce. Juliet is based on the idea that a brand name will be evaluated according to the communication messages which had been given out by the marketing department, and Joyce principle bases its existence on sound symbolism. Sound and phonetic symbolisms can be defined as the ability of creating pictures in the minds of a consumer solely by using linguistic principles in brand naming. Furthermore, there are two more important aspects of when it comes to brand naming. Alpha-numeric brand names, which carry a very important role in the process of naming products such as computers or detergents. Alpha-numeric brand names consist of a combination of letters and numbers which represent a brand name. Through alpha-numeric brand names brands are able to present certain features of their products or services directly through product name to the consumer. Lastly, there is genericization which is a process of a brand name becoming a generic term. Terms such as “to xerox” or “to google” have become very popular due to the fact that companies like Xerox or Google are the first or the most popular in their line of business which led to their name becoming a generic term. Genericization can be very dangerous for the company since it could lead to losing the copyright on the name and consequently on diminishing the reputation company had been building for decades.

Brand names can carry different meanings, through them one is able to define the product type, price range, accessibility, even sometimes certain features of the product. Names have a significant impact on the brand perception and the process of building it. Companies are through names able to communicate perception to the customers and to give them certain information whether it is about the company, products or an image they would like to share

to their consumers. Company such as 7-Eleven communicates their working hours to the customers who are able to understand the message and perceive the 7-Eleven store as a store with longer working hours. Brand perception can be developed with linguistic principles such as sound symbolism or integration of alpha-numeric brand names in the product line-up. In that way the company shares an additional set of information to the consumer aside from the sheer basics.

The empirical research on this topic had led to the results that the linguistic principles used in the branding and brand naming are very important and applicable to different products and markets. Using certain sets of linguistic elements can impact the perceived luxuriousness or basicness of a brand. Lastly, alpha-numeric brand names tested had proven that using a number while naming a brand can be both a great and a very bad solution. Success of alpha-numeric brand names will significantly differ according to the segment of products they are used for.

After the theoretical background had been laid down and the results of the research interpreted it can be concluded that linguistic branding principles in brand naming process have a significant impact on the perception from the consumers and are able to influence the products as well as the overall brand recognition and position in the market. Sometimes a brand name is the only thing a company needs in order to succeed, yet sometimes a brand name is only thing a company is missing to succeed.

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## APPENDIX – QUESTIONNAIRE

### The impact of brand name characteristics on creating brand perception

As a part of a Master's thesis at the Faculty of Economics and Business in Zagreb, empirical research about the impact brand name characteristics have on brand perception is being conducted. This research is being conducted under the mentorship of Prof. Zoran Krupka.

The aim of this research is to define how certain linguistic practices impact the perceived brand image in the eyes of a consumer.

The questionnaire is anonymous, and the results will be used only for the purposes of the master's thesis titled -The impact of brand name characteristics on brand perception.

Time needed for the questionnaire is approximately 10 minutes.

In case of any questions, feel free to contact me via e-mail – mcukman(at)net.efzg.hr

I thank everyone for their response and effort.

Marko Čukman

#### Questions:

1. Gender:
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
  
2. Your age group:
  - a. 18 – 25
  - b. 26 – 41
  - c. 42 – 57
  - d. 58 and more

3. Level of formal education:
  - a. High school
  - b. Bachelor's degree
  - c. Master's degree
  - d. PhD

4. Country of residence:
  - a. Croatia
  - b. Other

### **Linguistic characteristics of a brand name**

In this section you will have 3 sets of 4 questions which all relate to the brand name appointed in the given set.

Brand name 1: Buxxor

5. You are seeing a new brand name. Does it seem similar to any other brand known to you?

Definitely Yes      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Definitely No

6. You see a name. Do you feel it is a Basic brand name or a Luxury brand name?

Basic and Luxury brands': 'By Basic brand I mean a brand that people use on a daily basis, like a can of soda' and 'By Luxury brand I mean a brand that people aspire to, like an expensive handbag.

Strong basic brand name    1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strong luxury brand name

7. If I use a product having this brand name, it will make me feel important.

Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Strongly agree

8. I like this name so much that I don't mind paying a little extra for a product having this name

Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Strongly agree

Brand Name 2: Sacava

9. You are seeing a new brand name. Does it seem similar to any other brand known to you?

Definitely Yes    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Definitely No

10. You see a name. Do you feel it is a Basic brand name or a Luxury brand name?

Basic and Luxury brands': 'By Basic brand I mean a brand that people use on a daily basis, like a can of soda' and 'By Luxury brand I mean a brand that people aspire to, like an expensive handbag.

Strong basic brand name    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Strong luxury brand name

11. If I use a product having this brand name, it will make me feel important.

Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Strongly agree

12. I like this name so much that I don't mind paying a little extra for a product having this name

Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Strongly agree



Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

18. How does the name 'Alustar 4000' fit a glittery cosmetics brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

19. How does the name 'Alustar 4' fit the metal polish brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

20. How does the name 'Alustar 4000' fit the metal polish brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

21. How does the name 'Z 5' fit a candy bar brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

22. How does the name 'Z 50' fit a candy bar brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

23. How does the name 'Z 5' fit a new computer drive brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

24. How does the name 'Z 50' fit a new computer drive brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

25. How does the name 'Rax Eight' fit a lingerie brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

26. How does the name 'Rax 8' fit a lingerie brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

27. How does the name 'Rax Eight' fit an insecticide brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

28. How does the name 'Rax 8' fit an insecticide brand?

Poor Fit      1      2      3      4      5      Excellent fit

## STUDENT CV

### **Marko Čukman**

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### **Education:**

**University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics and Business, Master's Degree in Marketing**  
*November 2021 - Today*

**University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics and Business, Bachelor's Degree in Business**  
*October 2017 - September 2021*

**Bocconi University Milano, Luxury Management course**  
*July 2019 - August 2019*

**Titus Brezovacki Grammar school, Zagreb**  
*September 2013 - May 2017*

**Franklin University Lugano, Business of international companies and international relations**  
*July 2016 - August 2016*

### **Work experience:**

**Nova Splet d.o.o., Sales representative, project assistant**  
*February 2022 - Today*

**Nova Splet d.o.o., Assistant in the IT department**  
*July 2019 - August 2019*

**Ledo d.d., Lab assistant for quality control**  
*June 2018 - August 2018*

### **Languages:**

**Croatian** – Native speaker

**English** – C1

**Russian** – B1

**Italian** – A1

### **Other skills:**

- Microsoft Office
- Adobe Photoshop & Lightroom
- Vectornator
- Squarespace CMS
- Basics of HTML & CSS
- Google Ads, Analytics and Console

### **Conferences and awards:**

Swatch Calling – Swatch x You 2021 design contest winner

Baselworld 2015

Leap-Summit (2016.,2017.,2019.) & Artificial Intelligence 2 Future 2017.