

Selcan Kara

University of Connecticut
School of Business, Marketing Department
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Marketing, August 2010 to present
University of Connecticut
GPA: 3.97/4.00

M.B.A., February 2010
Bahcesehir University, Istanbul, Turkey
GPA: 3.90/4.00

B.S. in Industrial Engineering, May 2007
Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

HONORS AND AWARDS

University of Connecticut

- 2014 Dean's Pre-doctoral Fellowship
- Ph.D. Program Summer Fellowship (2014)
- Graduate School Pre-Doctoral Fellowship (2014)
- Marketing Department Outstanding Ph.D. Student Scholar Award (2012, 2013, 2014)
- University Pre-doctoral Fellowship (2011, 2012, 2013)
- School of Business PhD Travel Awards (2012, 2014)
- PhD. Graduate Assistantship (2010-2016)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Consumer Behavior
- Brand Personality, Self-concept and Brand Relationships
- Effect of brand naming strategies on consumer behavior
- Effect of number cognition on consumer brand evaluations

WORKING PAPERS

Kara, Selcan, Kunter Gunasti, and William T. Ross Jr. (2014), ““Alpha” and “Numeric” in Alphanumeric Brand Names,” ready for submission to *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (anticipated in March 2015).

Gunasti, Kunter, **Selcan Kara**, Rod Duclos, and William T. Ross, Jr. (2014), “What Does Your Brand State to You?: An Exploratory Examination of How Your Language Affects Your Reading of

Alphanumeric Brand Names,” data collected; data analysis complete; manuscript being prepared for submission to *Journal of Marketing Research* (anticipated in May 2015).

Kara, Selcan, and Anna J. Vredeveld (equal authorship) (2015), “Shared Brand and Interpersonal Experiences: How Consumers Form Relational Connections with Brands” first set of data collection and analysis complete.

Kara, Selcan, William T. Ross Jr., and Kunter Gunasti (2015), “What Does Your Brand Suggest to You?” data collection and data analysis complete.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Gunasti, Kunter, **Selcan Kara**, Rod Duclos, and William T. Ross, Jr. (2014), “An Exploration of the Process and Variations for the Effect of Language on Processing of Numbers in Alphanumeric Brand Names,” anticipated further data collection May 2015.

DISSERTATION

Two Essays on Effect of Alphanumeric Brand Names on Consumers’ Brand Evaluations

Co-Chairs: William T. Ross, Jr. and Kunter Gunasti

Committee Members: David Norton

Essay I. The “Alpha” and The “Numeric” in Alphanumeric Brand Names

Alphanumeric brand names (ANBs) consist of combinations of letters and numbers either in digit or word forms (Pavia and Costa 1993), such as Coke Zero. ANBs lead consumers to form associations between letter and/or number parts of the brand name and product features, series, or new product lines (Gunasti and Ross; King and Janiszewski 2011; Pavia and Costa 1993). This research contributes to the prior literature on alphanumeric brand names by delineating the “alpha” and “numeric” components of ANBs and examining the underlying cognitive structures of consumers’ evaluation of ANBs. Initially, due to differences in serial order memories between numbers and letters (Jou 2003), we address on the “alpha” component of ANBs. Specifically, despite the descending superiority in the ordinality of alphabet (Jou 2003), we demonstrate that consumers evaluate the line extension formed with an ascending order of the letter in ANBs (e.g., from B to C), compared to a descending order of the letter in ANBs (e.g., from B to A), more favorably, because of the strong forward direction bias in the alphabet (Jou 2003), resulting in consumers’ strong associations of the latter letter (e.g., C compared to B) with introduction of line extensions. Additionally, results indicate that, due to differences in serial order processing between numbers and letters (Damian 2004; Jou 2003), consumers perceive the line extension as a larger improvement of the existing product when the number component of the ANB increases (e.g., from A70 to A80) than when the order of the letter component of the ANB increases (e.g., from A70 to B70). Finally, we report the variations in how consumers evaluate the attribute improvements and dimensions of improvement resulting from the effect of numerical anchors (i.e., increase in numeric components of ANBs) on subsequent judgments. Specifically, we observe that consumers align their preferences by “increase” in the numeric components of ANBs, thus anticipate the numeric attributes of line extensions to be increased relative to parent brands. And this alignability effect mediates the differential effect of “alpha” versus “numeric” change in ANBs on consumers’ evaluation of line extensions, as higher quality and more expensive.

Essay II. Effects of Language on Processing of Numbers in Alphanumeric Brand Names

Past research documents that inclusion of numbers in ABNs affects consumers' evaluation of product quality, attribute inferences and price perceptions (Pavia and Costa, 1993; Gunasti and Ross, 2010). However it is not known whether consumers' number processing in ABNs can be related to differences in the language structure of the numeral system they use. For example, some languages, such as Chinese, have very systematized numeral systems; once you know the numbers 1 through 10 you can easily process any other number (transparency). Other languages, such as Turkish, require the knowledge of a new word for each decade. Some languages, such as English have unstructured wording for numbers below twenty. Certain languages, such as German, use backward wording for a verbal representation (inversion). Finally, on the extreme side, some languages have even more complex systems; for example, French has a vigesimal (20) system and other irregularities; and they process the number 91 as four twenties and eleven. Prior literature indicates that numerical cognition is associated with language, mediating human cognitive processes (De Cruz and Pica 2008); and the linguistics of counting systems might affect mathematical development (Dowker, Bala and Delyth 2008). Thus, the aim of this research is to illustrate variations in consumer perceptions of ABNs resulting from linguistic differences in numeral systems. Specifically, results of multiple international studies indicate that the aforementioned linguistic properties, such as transparency, inversion and vigesimal digit structures, in numeral parts of ABNs create different perceptions of product features and new products introduced under the same parent brand umbrella across languages, such as English, French, German, Chinese and Turkish.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Kara, Selcan, Kunter Gunasti, and William T. Ross, Jr. (2014), "The Effect of Number versus Letter Cognition on Consumers' Evaluations of Alphanumeric Brand Names," *Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP) Annual 2014 Winter Conference*, Miami, FL.

Gunasti, Kunter, **Selcan Kara**, Rod Duclos, and William T. Ross, Jr. (2014), "An Exploration of the Effect of Language on Processing of Numbers in Alphanumeric Brand Names," *Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP) Annual 2014 Winter Conference*, Miami, FL.

Kara, Selcan, and Kunter Gunasti (2012), "The Magic of Numbers and Letters in Alphanumeric Brand Names," *Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Annual North America Conference*, Vancouver, Canada.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor (University of Connecticut, Storrs)

Introduction to Marketing Management

Student Evaluation: Fall 2012 8/10

Spring 2013¹ 5/5

Summer 2013 4/5

¹ NOTE: The University of Connecticut changed the scale of instructor evaluations and the statistics reported regarding instructors' performance.

Prior to Spring 2013: A 10-point scale (10 = Outstanding; 1 = Unacceptable) was implemented, and the overall mean score was reported. Beginning with Spring 2013: A 5-point scale (5 = Excellent) was implemented, and the median score of the overall rating of an instructor's teaching was reported.

Strategic Brand Management

Student Evaluation: Fall 2013 4/5

Teaching Assistant (University of Connecticut, Storrs)

Marketing Planning and Strategy (Spring 2012)

Data Analytics (Spring 2011)

Introduction to Marketing Management (Fall 2010, Fall 2011)

SERVICE

- Behavioral Lab Coordinator, Marketing Department University of Connecticut (Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015)
- Reviewer for SCP 2015 Conference Phoenix, AZ (Competitive Paper Session)
- Reviewer for SCP 2015 Conference Phoenix, AZ (Working Paper Session)
- Reviewer for SCP 2014 Conference Miami, FL (Working Paper Session)
- Reviewer for ACR 2013 North America Conference, Chicago, IL (Working Paper Session)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Association for Consumer Research (ACR)
- Society of Consumer Psychology (SCP)
- Academy of Marketing Science (AMS)

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Data Reporting Analyst, Isbank Co. Head Office, Commercial Banking Marketing Department (Istanbul, TURKEY)

March 2008 – July 2010

REFERENCES

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Professor of Marketing*

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