A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSLITERATION AND FREE TRANSLATION OF BRAND NAMES IN BRAND INFILTRATION ON CONSUMER WILLINGNESS

Peipei Wang and Xinyue Hu

Zhuhai Campus of Jinan University, Zhuhai, 519070, P.R.China

ABSTRACT: *In the infiltration process of brand localization and internationalization, the translation of its name has important academic research value and practical significance. On the transliteration and free translation of brand names, the academic research is not sufficient and not well targeted. In this paper, a controlled experiment which is a combination of questionnaires and psychological experiments was conducted. The one-way stimulation of the brand name transliteration or free translation of the subjects directly and indirectly was measured to determine the familiarity and willingness of consumers in China to foreign brands. The results show that in the initial stage of brand infiltration, the positive stimulating effect of transliteration on consumer willingness is more significant, but with the comprehensive and deep knowledge of consumers' brand knowledge, the brand name of free translation is more durable enough to stimulate consumers' willingness to consume.*

KEYWORDS: Brand Infiltration, Brand Names, Transliteration, Free Translation, Consumer Willingness, Psychological Experiment

INTRODUCTION

It is generally believed that in the dimension of brand equity, brand names can produce the most primitive, direct, and even long-lasting stimulus for consumers. The brand name reflects the important attributes and key associations of the product in the most compact and economical way, and is therefore one of the most important aspects for brand managers to handle. The impact of brand names on consumer incentives is at the forefront of brand operation management. This is because the brand name is the product or service represented by the brand in contact with its (potential) consumers, both in time and space. For the brand infiltration of foreign brands in new markets, the brand name is also the vanguard. In the past 20 years, scholars from the East and the West have continually conducting researches on brand naming strategies, and have opened up different research paths, such as the linguistic structure of brand names, the consumer cognition of brand names, and cultural differences. These research topics are mainly focused on brand strategy management, especially related to important research topics such as brand association, brand memory, brand attitude, brand extension, and brand activation. At present, the researches on some brands, who have already established in the actual market and are willing to explore the brand infiltration of other regional markets are lacking. Therefore, whether these studies have practical value deserves further argumentation. This will lead to two basic premises for this paper: First, the brand has been established in a regional market, with a brand effect; Second, there is a willingness to

infiltrate the brand in other regions and open up new markets. Under these two premises, clarifying the influence of the transliteration and meaning of its brand name on the stimulation of consumer willingness in the foreign brand infiltration will help to promote the internationalization of the brand "going out" and the localization process of "walking in" for China. It is also helpful for the Chinese national brands to enter the world stage and become international brands by providing some empirical analysis and theoretical basis. This article takes Chinese consumers as the research objects to explore the psychological willingness and preference for the brand names of transliteration and free translation in the current international brand construction stage.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Research on Brand Names in Brand Equity

Brand equity refers to the increase in marketing utility or output of a branded product compared with the same product without a brand name (Keller, 1993). Brand equity is the embodiment of the brand's core market value, and the brand name is the primary component of the product or service it contains. Both the direct measurement method and the indirect measurement method for brand asset measurement are based on the same foundation, that is, the brand name is taken as an integral dimension of the brand assets. For example, the CBBE brand asset structure model believes that the brand equity model based on customer psychology has two main dimensions: brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). In this framework, the brand name appears in the construction of brand awareness and brand image with an undivided overall image. A good or meaningful brand name can promote marketing communication and help consumers build brand awareness and brand association. Consumer preferences for a brand name can stimulate the consumer to make a stressful association when making decisions. This brand association directly affects the actual occurrence of consumer decision-making (Buil et al., 2008). The brand name is regional and periodical, so it is increasingly necessary to further subdivide the brand name and discuss its specific market value under different forms of expression.

The Internationalization and Localization of Brand Names

A large number of foreign brands in China, such as BMW, Benz, and GUCCI, have achieved great success in the Chinese market. This is due to the quality and innovation of the products and services they represent, as well as the strong advertising campaigns for these brand names, and it cannot be denied that these can both imply product characteristics and stimulate positive associations among consumers. The brand name, which has a high degree of cognition and recognition in the minds of consumers, has greatly promoted the infiltration of the Chinese market. At the same time, studying the localization process of transliteration and free translation of foreign brands has more practical significance and strategic prospects for the internationalization process of Chinese brands going global.

In the global marketplace, localized brand names can create, enhance or undermine brand equity. When a foreign company introduces a product or service to the local market, the first and most important consideration is to choose a suitable brand name. Therefore, the translation of foreign brand names has always been one of the focuses of cross-cultural in international marketing practice. There has been a lot of theoretical and practical researches, especially research on the brands from English-speaking countries to operate on the Chinese market. Whether it is localization or internationalization, the brand name has an important position of "first-in-coming" and "pre-emptive". At present, foreign brands have considerable experience in the localization process, and it is necessary to summarize their experiences and lessons, and provide objective and practical needs for the theoretical basis of Chinese brands' internationalization.

Differentiation of brand name transliteration and free translation

Different scholars have put forward different opinions from different angles on the method of translating English brand names into Chinese. According to the research of this article, there are two basic translation methods in the localized translation of foreign brand names, namely transliteration and free translation. The definition of transliteration and free translation has two main dimensions, namely, the degree of pronunciation, and whether the translation has actual Chinese meaning. Based on this, we clarify the definition of transliteration and free translation: transliteration means the translated Chinese brand name and the original English brand name are similar in pronunciation but do not have actual Chinese meaning. For example, Walmart's Chinese name "wo-er-ma" does not have actual Chinese meaning.. If the translated brand names have actual Chinese meaning, it is called free translation. For example, Carrefour's Chinese name "jia-le-fu", even the sound is similar, but it has actual Chinese meaning, it is still considered as a free translation.

The proper handling of brand culture meaning in brand name translation is very important. Through reviewing related literatures, many scholars have noticed the cultural differences in brand name translation. Most of the product brand words have specific national cultural connotations. Therefore, in order to achieve good social and economic benefits, in translation, the intrinsic cultural significance of trademark words should be properly translated (Hu Kaijie, 2001). Another Chinese scholar Hong Ming (2006) pointed out that brand name translation should pay full attention to the cultural factors in brand planning; Huang Zeping (2007) discussed the cultural differences between China and the West, emphasizing the principles and methods of brand translation from the perspective of cultural differences. However, these studies are all based on the speculative methodology, lacking corresponding empirical and systematic analysis, there is no research on the impact of the transliteration and free translation of foreign brand name on consumer willingness.

METHODOLOGY

Empirical design and pre-test

This empirical analysis incorporates the main methods of psychological experiments, explores the traditional market research questionnaires and psychological experiments, that is, and conducts questionnaires in the context of psychological experiments.

Experimental design and samples

The objects of this experiment are 93 foreign brand names. These brands are among the 2010 BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Brands in the World. Due to the needs of the experiment, we deleted 7 Chinese brands. According to the defined standards of transliteration and free translation, the authors of this article formed different groups to classify the 93 brands and carried out classification work, and finally took 63 brand names as the experimental subjects for pre-test.

The source of the participants in this pre-test was chosen at random of boys and girls in the business school of a university in Zhuhai, and the proportion of boys and girls was the same. There are 20 undergraduates (12 boys and 8 girls). Participants were asked to be in a closed laboratory. During the pre-test, the control of external sound, light and temperature is in an ideal state. During the pre-test process, a projection display screen was placed 4 meters away in front of the laboratory. The 20 people entered the laboratory randomly and were separated from each other to ensure the stress of each subject in the experiment and they are all true subjective reflections. The screen randomly displays the Chinese (or English) names of 63 brands to the participants at a speed of 5s/sheet. The participants need to respond within this time and write their familiarity degree on the cardboard. It should be noted that each brand only displays one name randomly either in Chinese or English, and the order in which the brands are displayed is also random. The level of familiarity in this study was based on the Likert 5-point scale, which ranged from "very familiar and with consumer experience" to "completely ignorant and without any consumer experience", given 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grade score respectively.

Data analysis and the determination of research objects

The author uses the commonly used Cronbach a coefficient to measure the reliability of the psychological test to test the reliability of the data obtained in the pre-test to ensure the stability and internal consistency of the study. According to a study by Fornell & Larcker (1981), when the Cronbach a value is greater than 0.6, it is within the acceptable range. According to the pre-test results, 13 of the 63 brands' Cronbach a value is below 0.6 and the rest were above 0.6. Therefore, this study lists 13 brands that do not meet the research criteria to achieve the purpose of correcting the questionnaire and preparing for the trial. Table 1 shows the range of Cronbach a value for 50 brands of 5 grades and the number of corresponding brands.

Table 1. Pre-test sample reliability analysis

Research variables	Cronbach's a value/ Range	Corresponding brand numbers
overall bariables	0.7591	50
1-very familiar with consumption experience	0.6783—0.8736	7
2-general familiar with consumption experience	0.6214—0.9232	12
3-general familiar without consumption experience	0.6011—0.8785	13
4-only heard about without consumption experience	0.7220—0.8668	11
5-completley do not know and without consumption experience	0.6079—0.8376	7

Based on the analysis of the pre-test results, and according to transliteration and free translation, the researchers divided the 50 brands into two control groups, A and B. A and B groups all present these 50 brand names, based on the Chinese characters presented, questionnaire A only presents Chinese characters which are translated by free translation method, and the rest displays their brand names in English. In the same way, the B questionnaire only presents transliterated Chinese characters, and the rest displays their brand names in English. The order in which the brands are arranged is still random. Both types of questionnaires examined the degree of familiarity and willingness of the participants to the brand presented. The purpose of this is to purify the stimulus from the brand name as much as possible, and to ensure that the stimulus is of two types: transliteration and free translation.

Formal test

In the formal test, the 50 brand names will be compared on the consumer familiarity of the transliteration and free translation, and willingness to consume.

Research design and assumptions

Before the experiment and the questionnaire filling out, the premise was made clear to the participants: (1) Each participant has sufficient purchasing power; (2) each subject has a demand for the products or services offered by each brand presented; (3) this is a perfectly competitive market, the product or service provided all has competitors to several homogeneous products or services. The process of filling out the questionnaire in the experiment is roughly as shown in Figure 1:
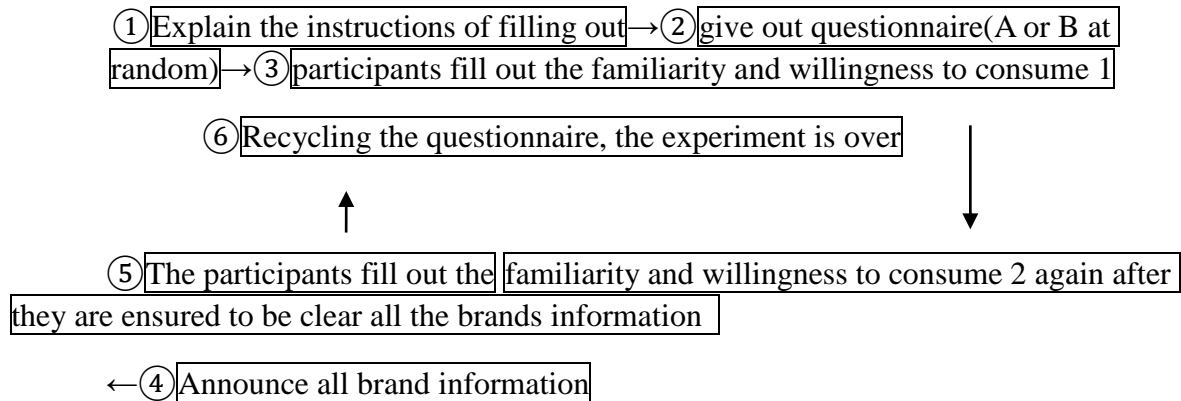
①Explain the instructions of filling out→②give out questionnaire(A or B at random)→③participants fill out the familiarity and willingness to consume 1

⑥Recycling the questionnaire, the experiment is over

⑤The participants fill out the familiarity and willingness to consume 2 again after they are ensured to be clear all the brands information

←④Announce all brand information

Figure 1. Formally test the main process

This questionnaire survey randomly selected full-time undergraduates from a university in Zhuhai. Considering the survey is conducted in the form of experiment, the sample size was 100, of which 50 for the questionnaire A and B respectively, and it is conducted in three separate closed classrooms. Participants completed the questionnaire under the guidance of the laboratory staff and ensured that the participants did not interact with each other when completing the questionnaire. 50 copies of each of the A and B questionnaires were issued. After recycling, 46 valid copies of the questionnaire A and 46 valid copies of the B.

Model evaluation

In the test, validity refers to the correctness of the measurement, that is, the reliability or validity of the test. Validity is goal-oriented, according to Standards for Educational and Psychology Testing (1985): "In the test evaluation, validity is the most important consideration, validity concept refers to the appropriate, meaningful, and useful case of the inference of a particular test result. The course of whether the test is valid is the process of accumulating evidence to support the above inference." In this study, these two types of questionnaires included a link in which the subjects completed the Consumer Willingness 2 column with the same brand information given to all subjects. If the questionnaire has good validity, then whether it is questionnaire A or questionnaire B, its consumption willingness 2 should have a high degree of fitness. In addition, it is inevitable that there is a significant difference in the consumer willingness 1 of the two volumes A and B. With this inference, the author sorts out the squared difference between the consumer willingness 1 and consumer willingness 2 of 50 brands, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Validity test on the difference and fitness between consumer willingness 1 and 2

	Mean value	Corresponding difference mean value	Corresponding difference square mean
consumer willingness 1: difference	A—2.9419 B—2.9182	1.5761	0.2775
consumer willingness 2：fitness	A—1.5652 B—1.7608	-0.2746	0.0874

From Table 2 above, it can be clearly seen that there is a significant difference between the consumption willingness of the two types of questionnaires, and the mean value of the corresponding differences exceeds 1.5 judgment levels, which indicates that the questionnaire has a high validity in showing the differential influence of the printed box. Similarly, the consumption willingness 2 of the two types of questionnaires is very close, the mean of the square of the corresponding difference is 0.0874, and the fitting degree is very good. This shows that the two types of questionnaires can reflect the actual psychological state of the participants more realistically, and the questionnaire is better. Validity.

The reliability test shows that the internal reliability of the overall questionnaire of the tested brand is between 0.6011 and 0.9232, and the internal reliability of each dimension reaches and exceeds 0.600. A reliability of 0.7 or above indicates that the model has good reliability. However, in the case of models with high validity, reliability that is above 0.6 is acceptable (Hair et al., 2006). Thus, the reliability test above indicates that the questionnaire has been validated and is versatile between transliteration and free translation.

Data analysis

First, measure the degree of influence of transliteration or free translation on consumer willingness through familiarity profiles. Adding the familiarity scores of the same brand of the A and B questionnaires, and compare the corresponding brand scores of the A-volume and the transliteration B to the paired T test (Table 3). The results show that there is difference between the score of each brand's willingness to consume, which shows that the participants can perceive the difference between transliteration and free translation of the brand names in reality, whether it is only conscious or unconscious behavior.

Table3. T-test of familiarity and consumer willingness 1

	familiarity	A1 consumer willingness A1		familiarity	B1 consumer willingness B1
mean	2.5946	2.9419	mean	2.5946	2.9183
variance	0.5741	0.4073	variance	0.5741	0.3579
t Statistics	-2.4794		t Statistics	-2.3708	
t Double tail critical	1.9853		t Double tail critical	1.9858	

Second, calculate the impact of transliteration and free translation on consumer willingness. Prior to this, we classified the brands based on the differences in the familiarity of the brands which is based on the results of the first step. In the classification, two factors are mainly considered. One is whether there is brand memory, and the other is whether there is a consumption experience. If both are available, it can be inferred that the brand is highly familiar to consumers. In order to completely avoid other interference factors, we only select brands that is not familiar by consumer in questionnaires A and B and have no consumer experience. In this case, it can be approximated that the only stimulus about the brand received by the subject in the experimental questionnaire is the brand name, and the control group of transliteration and free translation is the only variation of the subject. After sorting, there were 7 brands in questionnaires A and B who were completely ignorant and had no consumer experience at all: Tesco, Oracle, Wells Fargo, Chase, SUBWAY, Petrobras, Morgan Stanley. The consumption intentions of the seven brands are accumulated, their average values calculated, and there fluctuations compared, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of the influence of transliteration and free translation on consumer willingness 1

	Tesco	Oracle	Wells Fargo	Chase	SUBWAY	Petrobras	Morgan Stanley
A1 Total score	143	142	166	148	131	172	146
B1 Total score	142	172	179	170	154	183	155
A1 The standard deviation	1.2334	1.1705	23.7179	1.1138	1.0321	1.0206	1.2166
A1 The variance	1.5213	1.3700	562.5393	1.2406	1.0652	1.0415	1.4802
B1 The standard deviation	0.8648	0.6123	0.3788	0.7563	1.0375	0.1474	0.8527
B1 The variance	0.7478	0.3749	0.1435	0.5720	1.0763	0.0217	0.7271
A Degree of confidence	0.3663	0.3476	6.9638	0.3308	0.3065	0.3031	0.3613
B Degree of confidence	0.2568	0.1818	0.1125	0.2246	0.3081	0.0438	0.2532

Note: A and B indicate questionnaire A and questionnaire B respectively; 1 indicates consumer willingness 1; significance level is 0.05.

It can be clearly seen that in Table 4, except for the volatility of Wells Fargo, the credibility is not high, the other six brands have good stability. It can be further confirmed that the degree of reliability of the consumption intention 1 of the two types of questionnaires A and B is relatively high. At the same time, it can be seen that in questionnaire B, except for Tesco, willingness 1 in questionnaire B is slightly lower than questionnaire A, and the other brands are all beyond questionnaire A, and the total excess is large, reaching 107 points. This shows that when the consumer's information about the foreign brand is in a blank period, the transliteration of the explicit questionnaire B is more significant than the free translation of the explicit questionnaire A to stimulate the consumer's willingness to consume.

RESULTS

The impact of transliteration and free translation of brand name from the perspective of brand development stage

Because consumers' perceptions and consumer willingness are affected by many complex and numerous factors, the impact of transliteration and free translation on consumer willingness is difficult to purify. In this regard, this study attempts to measure the degree of influence of transliteration and free translation on consumer willingness through the degree of brand familiarity as an intermediate conversion. The purpose is also to show that the impact of brand infiltration on transliteration and free translation on the stage of brand development is significant. In the experiment, the lower the familiarity of the subjects with the brand, the greater the influence of transliteration and free translation on their willingness to consume. In terms of expansion, the lower the familiarity of the brand means that the brand infiltration is shallow, and the brand development is at an early stage. When the consumer's perception of the brand is blank, the transliteration and free translation of the brand name will play a huge role in the formation of consumer willingness. However, as the brand develops more maturely, consumers' access to brand knowledge is more comprehensive and in-depth, and the role of transliteration and free translation of brand names is rapidly weakened. Therefore, the transliteration and free translation of foreign brand names have a strong influence on the initial stage of brand infiltration. As the brand infiltration deepens, its influence is rapidly declining. Question 1 is resolved.

A Comparative study on the influence of brand name transliteration and free translation on consumer willingness

By stimulating with the names of purely brand transliteration or free translation to consumers who are completely vacant in brand knowledge, their willingness to consume has a different development trend, that is, the transliteration is dominant in the brand name relative to the free translation. The brand name has a stronger role in stimulating consumer willingness. This differentiation can be visualized through data analysis, as shown in Figure 2.
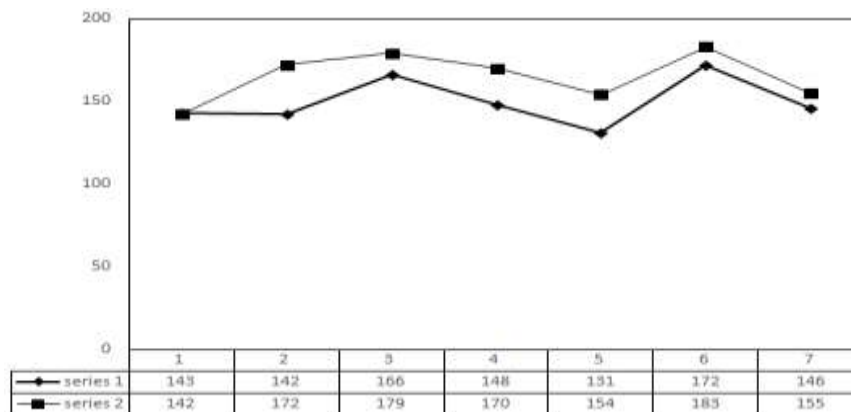
Figure 2. The influence of transliteration and free translation on the consumption willingness 1 of questionnaires A and B

It can be seen that transliteration can form a positive stimulating effect on consumer's willingness to consume in the initial stage of brand infiltration, thus promoting its brand infiltration and market expansion. Question 2 is resolved.

DISCUSSION

In the experiment, when consumers fully understand the basic information of all experimental brands, they filled in the consumer willingness 2. In combination with those brands that completely unknown to consumers before the experiment, it can be considered that if the test is reversed, when the participants fully understand the brand-related information far more than the name of the brand, will their consumption intentions deviate? In theory, when the consumers' brand knowledge is accumulated, the willingness to consume will inevitably change, is it positive or negative? Here, the brands that were previously unknown to the seven consumers are still used. Calculate the difference between the willingness to consume 1 and the willingness to consume 2 and analyze it.

Table 5. Changes in consumer willingness 2 relative to consumer willingness 1

	Tesco	Oracle	Wells Fargo	Chase	SUB WAY	Petrobras	Morgan Stanley
A Reverse change total amplitude	3	27	6	10	6	14	5 14
B Positive change total	13	5	15	12	16	0	2
B Reverse change total amplitude	3	17	2	10	6	19	8

It can be clearly observed from the above table that the consumer willingness 2 has changed significantly compared with consumer willingness 1, and this change has a distinct positive and negative bidirectional phase reversal trend. Among them, Tesco, Wells Fargo, Chase and Subway have changed positively. This in turn shows that transliteration and free translation have a negative effect on the true consumer willingness. Brands with reverse changes are: Oracle, Petrobras and Morgan Stanley. This in turn shows that transliteration and free translation have a positive effect on real consumption intentions. Therefore, it can be considered that the transliteration and free translation of the brand name have a two-way effect on consumer willingness, both positively or negatively. Question 3 is resolved.

According to Table 5, when the subject chooses the to consumer willingness 2 after obtaining sufficient brand knowledge, the brand that changes positively is only the brand with the name that has actual Chinese meaning. On the contrary, brands with reverse changes are mostly brands that do not gave actual Chinese meaning after translation. Therefore, if a brand wants to have a long-lasting sustainable brand influence, it needs to be integrated into the local cultural tradition to achieve a true localization. Of course, this conclusion and conjecture is based on the empirical analysis of Chinese consumers. The reason for transliteration has a greater influence in the early stage of brand infiltration is that China was once insulted by Western powers in modern age, national self-esteem is frustrated, and foreign worship is still in existence. This requires further argumentation and analysis.

CONCLUSION

Aiming at the impact of transliteration and free translation of brand names on consumer willingness in brand infiltration, this paper conducts comparative experimental study of Chinese consumers. Through the analysis of the data of the experimental investigation, the following conclusions and related recommendations are obtained:

(1)The transliteration and free translation of brand names is relative to the degree of consumer willingness and the stage of brand growth; transliteration or free translation of brand names at different stages of brand infiltration play different roles and have different functions.

(2)In the initial stage of brand infiltration, the transliteration of the brand name is more stimulating to consumers' willingness to consume than free translation, and this relative word advantage is significant. In this regard, in the initial stage of brand infiltration, enterprises should fully grasp the psychological characteristics of consumers in the target market. As far as the Chinese consumer market is concerned, the strong transliteration name of "foreign" still has a significant market advantage.

(3)However, when the brand knowledge of consumers has been expanded, the brand name of the free translation is more advantageous than the transliteration the brand name in stimulating consumers' willingness to consume. This relative stimulus advantage is also significant. This indirectly implies that the localization of brand culture in brand infiltration

has a longer-lasting positive effect on the stimulation of consumers' willingness to consume. In this regard, enterprises should pay more attention to the construction of brand culture, pay attention to the integration of brand culture and target market culture, and realize the localization in the cultural sense, only such brand infiltration is persistent. At the same time, it is also necessary to pay attention to the "foreign" name of transliteration. Although it has a good effect in the initial stage of brand infiltration, with the deepening of penetration, this advantage will decline rapidly. Enterprises need to change their strategies flexibly, and consider the localization of brand culture as the core, to achieve brand infiltration in the true sense.

REFERENCES

Banerjee.S.(2008). Strategic brand-culture fit: a conceptual framework for brand management.

Hong,M.(2006).On Cultural Strategy in Brand Planning and Brand Name Translation Social Sciences in Hunan, (3)

Hu,K.J.(2001).*On the Conversion of the Meaning of Trademark Names in English-Chinese Translation.* Chinese Science and Technology Translation, (4).

Huang,Z.P.(2007). *Principles and Methods of Cultural Differences and Brand Translation.* The Science Education Article Collects, (6).

Keller,K.L.,Heckler,S.E.Houston,M.J.(1998).*The effects of brand name suggestiveness on advertising recall.* Journal of Marketing, 62, 48～57

Klein,J.G.,Ettenson,R. and Morris,M.D.(1998).*The animosity model of foreign product purchase：An empirical test in the People's Republic of China.* Journal of Marketing,Vol.62,pp.89～100

Kohli, Chiranjeev, LaBahn, Douglas W.(1997).*Observations:creating effective brand name: A study of the naming process.* Journal of advertising research, Vo. L 37, issue 1, 67～76

Kotler,P, and K.L.Keller.(2006). Marketing management. (12th Ed.). New Jersey：Pearson International Edition, 22.

Liu,J.F.(2009).*An Empirical Analysis of the Cultural Meaning in the Process of English to Chinese translation of Brand Names.* Journal of Southwest Minzu University (Humanities and Social Science), (7)

Maheswaran,D, D.M.Mackie and S.Chaiken.(1992). *Brand name as a heuristic cue：The effects of task importance and expectancy confirmation on consumer judgments.* Journal of Consumer Psychology,1(4):317-336

Zhang Shi and Bernd H Schmitt.(2001).*Creating local brands inmultinational internationalmarkets.* Journal of Marketing Research, 38 (August), 313-25.