

Letters of Luxury: How Orthographic Patterns Shape Willingness to Pay and Brand Perceptions

Iman Ahmadi

University of Warwick

Hamid Shaker

Nottingham Trent University

Babak Taheri

Department of Hospitality, Hotel Management & Tourism, Texas A & M University

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Hamid Shaker

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Abstract

This research examines how the visual structure of brand names—specifically, their orthographic composition—can shape consumer price perceptions and signal prestige. Drawing on category-based learning, we introduce Luxury Letter Alignment (LLA): the degree to which a brand name's letter composition matches the letter frequency of established luxury brands. We propose that higher LLA increases consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) and perceived brand prestige. Across two studies combining AI-based simulations using large language models (LLMs) with human evaluations, brand names with higher LLA consistently yield greater WTP. A boundary-condition test using household bleach, a utilitarian product, shows that orthographic patterns lose their influence when prestige associations are irrelevant. Together, the findings show that subtle visual cues in brand names can prime luxury impressions and guide name design in premium markets.

Track: Consumer Behaviour