

Brands picked for narcissistic reasons

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French researchers say we pick certain brand names for an entirely narcissistic reason: they contain letters of the alphabet that are in our own name.

The theory is an extension of the "name letter effect," which has demonstrated that people indeed like the letters in their name more so than others letters. The current research extends that phenomenon to consumerism and defines "name letter branding," which shows a connection between a consumer's name and the brands one chooses.

"In our experiments, respondents were more likely to choose a brand when its name included name letters than when it did not," said C. Miguel Brendl, an assistant professor of marketing and the director of the INSEAD Social Science Research Center in Paris.

Brendl and colleagues said they found name letter branding influences choices only under one of two conditions: Either consumers have a need to enhance their self-esteem because of a threatening situation or when consumers have to have a product relevant need, for example a need to drink when choosing a beverage.

The study is detailed in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Consumer Research.

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