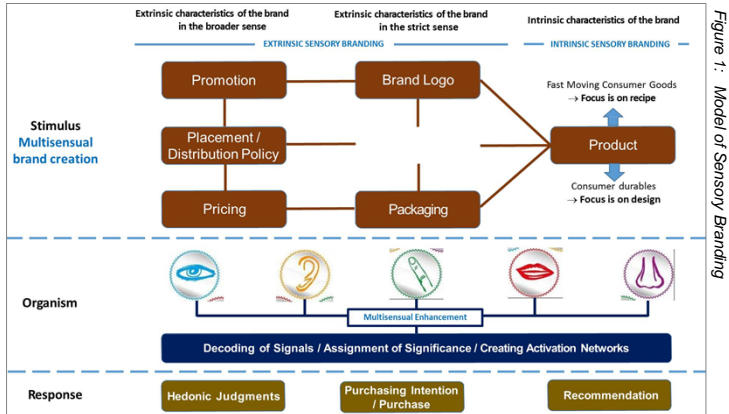


## I - Introduction

As part of their branding efforts, the providers of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) are constantly looking for marketing measures that will give their brands a unique selling point and enhance their recognition value. Many consumers do not, however, unambiguously identify "their" brand in blind tests, i.e. without extrinsic characteristics (e.g. brand name, brand-specific packaging). The intrinsic product characteristics (e.g. brand-specific smell and/or taste) of the various offerings are often so similar that they cannot be distinguished from each other without brand information.

When designing FMCG brands it is, therefore, useful to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic sensory branding elements. Figure 1 illustrates this differentiation.



Sensory branding therefore covers all work on the visual, audible, tactile, olfactory and gustatory characteristics that are inseparably associated with a product. The aim is to make these sensory characteristics perceivable and positively evaluated by consumers, and to trigger brand-specific associations.

## II - Main Objectives and Hypotheses

The objective of the study was to examine whether the Nutella brand has particular sensory characteristics that enable Nutella users to recognize the brand in a blind test, which would mean that brand associations can be proven to exist even in cases where no brand information is available other than the Nutella recipe itself.

Based on this objective, the following test hypotheses were made:

- H1: In a blind test, the brand Nutella was identified by current users solely on the basis of the product's intrinsic branding.
- H2: The differences between the evaluation of the Nutella brand in a blind test and in a branded test are not significant, because the intrinsic branding elements already trigger brand-specific associations in the blind test.
- H3: In a branded test in which Nutella users were given another nut-nougat cream brand that was marked as Nutella, the "false" Nutella sample was rated significantly worse (due to the lack of intrinsic branding effects) than the real Nutella sample.



Figure 2: Product selection

## III - Study Design

In addition to sensory evaluation of the products, the allocation of associations was measured using the isi ImplicitTesting tool in a semi-monadic acceptance test with three test groups each of N=80 (see Figure 3).

Classic Blind Test	Branded Test	Branded Test with Swopped Samples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• five coded samples</li> <li>• Identifying the Nutella brand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• five products with brand information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• four products with brand information</li> <li>• the Lidl product was presented as Nutella</li> </ul>

Figure 3: three test groups in the acceptance test

## IV - Key Findings

For H1: The Nutella brand can be identified solely on the basis of its sensory characteristics. The explicitly correct correlation of the Nutella brand with the relevant sample in the blind test was 64 percent (rate probability = 20 percent). Nearly four-fifths of respondents also spontaneously linked the name Nutella to the proper sample in the association test. Both results provide evidence that the sensory characteristics of the brand trigger brand-specific associations, and that there therefore is a sensory branding effect.

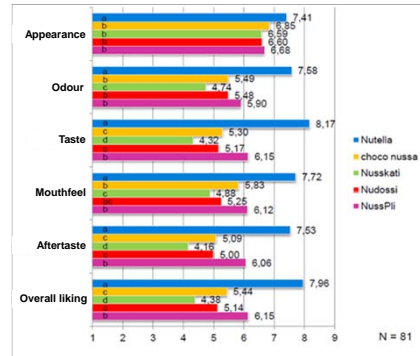


Figure 4: Results of evaluation of the test products in a blind test (mean values)

For H2: The second condition is that the sensory characteristics of a brand have to be evaluated above average in a blind test if the recipe alone is to achieve a positive image effect. Figure 4 illustrates how clearly the Nutella brand fulfills this second condition for successful sensory branding. Nutella scores significantly better than its competitors in all sensory dimensions and in terms of overall evaluation.

The interpretation that the positive Nutella brand effect already had a positive effect in the blind test is supported by the fact that the evaluation differences between the blind test and the branded test were not statistically significant (see Figure 5). In sensory tests in which the subjects fail to recognize the brand based on the recipe, the difference between a blind test and a branded test is significantly larger because the branding effect only comes into play in the branded test.

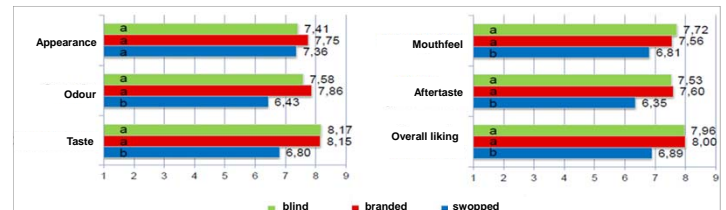


Figure 5: Evaluation of the sensory dimensions and the overall sensory profile of the Nutella brand in the three test stages

For H3: In the third stage of testing, the subjects were informed that they were testing the Nutella brand, but in fact they were given the Lidl Product "choco Nussa". Comparison of the results of the second test stage (branded test) with the results of the third test stage (test with swopped samples) in Figure 5 illustrates the influence of the sensory characteristics on evaluation of the brand. Apart from appearance, all results for Nutella with the "false recipe" were significantly worse than for Nutella with the "correct" recipe. This means that the sensory characteristics of Nutella exercise a significant influence on evaluation of the brand in the branded test. If the sensory evaluation of the Nutella brand was exclusively or predominantly determined by extrinsic branding elements, the evaluation difference between the second and third stage of testing would not have been as clear as it was.

## V - Conclusion

The results of the empirical study confirm the main hypotheses made. Successful sensory branding in the sense of targeted product design is only possible when the relationship between the sensory characteristics, on the one hand, and their influence on the identification and positive evaluation of the brand, on the other hand, can be reliably depicted using descriptive analysis methods.

Sensory Branding provides a methodology that will allow you to anchor your brand positively in the minds of consumers. Sensory marketing, i.e. the use of sensory characteristics that activate brand-specific associations and positive emotions in consumers which would otherwise only occur by deploying classical branding elements, can deliver an advantage in highly competitive markets.

Sensory characteristics of a brand that contribute to its identification and differentiation give the brand a distinctive sensory profile; they need to be carefully taken into consideration when deciding on modifications to the brand, new differentiations or extensions.

