

Predictive Label Design: Myth or Opportunity?

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Abstract

◦Purpose – Extant research shows that extrinsic product cues, such as packaging and branding, influence consumers' product evaluations. Wine consumption is a multi-sensory experience with possible interactions between different stimuli, such as label or taste. However, the potential effects of wine label design on consumers' actual product perceptions (e.g., taste or quality), consumer attitudes (e.g., liking or preference), and consumer behaviour (e.g., purchase intention or word-of-mouth) remain relatively unexplored. Our study builds on the theory of cross-modal correspondences as well as cue consistency theory to study such potential effects of wine label design on consumers' product perceptions, consumer attitudes, and consumer behaviour.

◦Design/methodology/approach – To study the effects of wine label design on consumers' product perceptions, consumer attitudes, and consumer behaviour, we proceeded in two sequential steps. First, we conducted several explorative pre-studies, involving qualitative expert interviews (n=20), a paper-pencil survey (n=20), and an online survey (n=876) with consumers in Australia and Germany. The results helped us to build an understanding of the impact of label design on consumers' taste associations and helped us to identify label design dimensions that trigger these taste associations. In a second step, we conducted a lab experiment (n=60) and several field experiments (n=271) to explore the impact of each

identified label design dimension on perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour with consumers in Germany.

◦Findings – Our pre-studies showed that consumers indeed link specific label designs to particular wine taste associations. We revealed four dimensions for the assessment of wine taste associations triggered by label design: sweetness, intensity, texture, and maturity. Several specific label cues and label designs result in distinct taste associations among our study participants. Surprisingly, we cannot validate the anticipated taste perception effect in a field-experimental setting. However, our results show that consumer perceptions of consistency between label design and flavour have positive effects on consumers' product perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour.

◦Practical implications – Our findings indicate that wine producers and label designers should collaborate to create the most effective wine-label pairings. Bringing consumers' expectations triggered by wine label design and actual taste perceptions in line via a taste-congruent label design creates a more favorable multi-sensory drinking experience.

Key words: Wine Marketing; Consumer Behaviour; Label Design; Predictive Packaging Design; Product Perception
