

DISPARITIES IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY: INNOVATION OR LINGUISTIC MANIPULATION?

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Abstract

For many centuries, developing countries have relied on imports of consumer goods from developed nations. This paper surveys some of the ways in which these countries have adopted in order to bridge the gap in the manufacturing sector. Most developing countries in a bid to manufacture products for the domestic markets have resulted to imitations, changing 'original' product names, copying packaging materials, colours, structures among others. This paper investigates one specific aspect, namely that of product names. It examines how manufacturers in developing countries have employed linguistic manipulation of product names in order to provide products similar to 'original' ones.

The data for this study was collected in Kenya. The researcher visited supermarkets, shops, 'kiosks', shopping outlets, malls and manufacturing concerns mostly in Nairobi. The data covered diverse commodities such as the pharmaceuticals, domestic and farm products, among others. The study argues that in a bid to provide products that are seemingly local, developing countries have resulted in cheap imitations that do not build economies but instead destroy them through erosion of consumer confidence. This is because Consumers prefer original products from multinational companies because they are assured of quality and value. They despise locally produced commodities.

The argument is that imitated products, although cheap, are not worthy the money spent. The result has been retardation in the growth of the manufacturing sectors of most developing countries. The paper concludes that in order for developing countries to forge ahead, there is need to produce quality goods.

The Data

This section deals with the data for the study. It shows some of the existing products in the Kenyan market that are presented in names derived from original product names. Data was drawn from a variety of products found in the market and is presented in ten categories as follows..

Electrical Goods

Original Brand Names

Sony
Philips
Panasonic
National
MEM(electrical goods)
Ramtons
Toshiba
Moulinex

Imitated Product Names

Sqny; Sqnyy; Sunny; Sonilex
Philibs
Biasonic; Panasound; Panasonic; Tonsonic
International (iron boxes, radios and Tvs)
MEN
Carltons
Tōshika
Mammoulex

Watches and Clocks

Original Brand Names

Christian Dior
Amona
Seiko
Oris
Citizen
Rado
Omax
Ajanta

Imitated Product Names

Christian Daniel; Charles Delon
Ramona; Aronca
Aseiko; Seciko
Norris; Morris
Ceitizen
Radid; Rondo; Radio
Radimax
Janta

Pharmaceutical Products

Original Brand Names

Asprin
Augmentin
Panadol
Ventolin
Zantac
Ciprofloxacin
Fansidar
Metakelfin
Camoquin
Buscopan
Ponstan
Brufen

Imitated Product Names

Totosprin
Julmentin
Curamol; Prunol
Ventosal
Rantag
Ciprobid; cipromed
Malidar
Metifen; Zetakelfin
Emoquin
Hyospan
Ranstan
Ibufen; Ibumex

Cooking Fats, Oils and Margarines

Original Brand Names

Blueband
Chipsy

Imitated Product Names

Goldband
Chipolata

Beauty Products

Original Brand Names

Nivea
Dark and Lovely (USA)

Imitated Product Names

Niveallite
Nice and Lovely

Detergents

Original Brand Names

Panga

Imitated Product Names

Kwanga

Beverages

Original Brand Names

Nescafe
Kenya coffeehouse

Imitated Product Names

Africafe; Nesquik
Dormans coffeehouse

Wines & Spirits

Original Brand Names

Borzoi Vodka
Three Barrels Rum

Imitated Product Names

Mary Cane Vodka, Sapphire Cane Vodka
King Lion Rum

Soft drinks and Cigarettes

Original Brand Names

Cocacola
Sportsman

Imitated Product Names

Pepsicola, Softa soda
Horseman

Others

Original Brand Names

Viro (brand name for padlocks)
Union(locks)
Nacet
Bridgestone
Bofa mathematical sets (China)
Arcopol

Imitated Product Names

Oriv
Onion
Nagget
Firestone
Kofa mathematical sets
Arcoroc

Methods Evident in Linguistic Manipulation

Replacing certain phonemes with others

By using this method, manufacturers replace closely related but contrastive phonemes with others in a bid to come up with a brand name. For instance, the following classes of phonemes are commonly altered;

<i>Type of phoneme</i>		<i>Examples</i>		
Stops	t/d, k/g, b/p/	cf. Philips	>	Philibs.
Nasals	m/n	cf. MEM	>	MEN (electrical goods)
Vowels	u/o	cf. Union	>	Onion.

Rearranging letters in the original name

This method entails a complete or partial rearrangement of letters of the original product name. For instance in the following examples;

<i>Original brand name</i>		<i>Imitated product name</i>
Viro	>	Oriv
Duracef	>	cefamed

Substituting lexical items with others

This method entails chunks of lexical items or words being replaced with others. See the following examples.

<i>Original brand name</i>		<i>Imitated product name</i>
Coca cola	>	Pepsicola;
ampiclox	>	reichclox
noroxin	>	norillet

Adoption of Sound Pattern of the name of the Original product

By using this method, the new product name imitates the sound pattern already found in the original product's name. For example;

<i>Original Brand Name</i>		<i>Imitated Product Name</i>
Cocacola	>	softasoda;
Achromycin	>	tetracycline

Maintaining original names

This method entails selling fake goods under the cover of original brand names. Consumers are lured to buying imitated goods, which have the original brand name. For instance:

Crabtree electrical products
Phillips products (especially iron boxes)

Other Non-Linguistic Methods

These include adoption of colours, shapes, and packaging among others from the original products by local manufacturers for their new products. For instance, most vegetable cooking oils are packed in yellow and green containers adopted, most likely, from *Elianto* packaging technique. Furthermore, solid-cooking fats packaging resembles that of *Kimbo*, while majority of lotions is packed like *Lady Gay*. However, the paper recognizes the fact that not all brand names have followed this trend. Some products have original names, mostly derived from indigenous languages like Kiswahili (Mudhune, 2002: 306). For instance, the following brand names are used:

Pharmaceutical Products

maraja moja
tembe
chapa shoka

Maize flour

ndovu
karibu
shujaa
pembe
jogoo

Soft Drinks, Beverages and

Bisquits
passina
savanna
kahawa no moja
simba chai
Fahari ya Kenya
malaika
Jambo
Rafiki
Mrembo

Cooking Fats

joma
mallo
kasuku

Others

tuzo
mala
menengai
ushindi

Conclusion

For developing economies to industrialize, there is need for products to be given original names instead of copying brand names of products from multinational companies. This is important in restoring consumer confidence in their products. This will also come along way in promoting their manufacturing sector and reducing heavy dependency on big multinational corporations such as Glaxo-Allensbury's, Colgate-Palmolive, Sterlin Winthrop, Sanyo Armco and Cadbury Schweppes among others, which have monopolized Kenya's industrial sector for many years (Nyong'o, 1988:34). For Kenya, consumers will be responsive to the call of '*buy Kenyan, build Kenya*'. Moreover; for sustainable development to be achieved in Africa at large there is need to base African development on 'what we have and what we know, than indiscriminate or free-wheeling borrowing from external sources' (Prah, 2002: 25).

The Way Forward

In order to enhance consumer confidence, there is need to put new measures to curb the existing trend of linguistic manipulation in order to restore consumer confidence. The following measures are proposed as a means to curb the menace.

Banning cheap imports

Burning and destroying all fake, counterfeit sub-standard goods

Imposing penalties and fines including heavy taxation on imported products

Providing incentives to local manufacturers

Less taxation on locally manufactured goods

Authentic products: encouraging the selling of original products by dealers using the original product names

Businessmen to be encouraged to indicate the actual place of manufacture to avoid coning consumers

Coming up with new original packaging techniques

Adoption of African names to bridge '...the missing link in all our development endeavors in the African continent' (cf. Prah, 1995a: 72; see also Prah, 1995b: 7) For example, the use of names such as *Mallo*, *Roiko*, *Saffi* among others has boosted the Kenyan manufacturing industry in the recent past.

Nationalism: People to be convinced to commit themselves to consume locally produced goods instead of imported ones. However, they must be assured of quality.

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