

CREATING A NEW BRAND NAME: A RESEARCH WITH THE CASE STUDY METHOD

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Article History:

- received 12 July 2023
- accepted 24 January 2024

Abstract. With the rapid growth of the fast-food restaurant sector in Azerbaijan, the number of domestic and international enterprises is increasing. With this, the brand name becomes very important. Based on this, the purpose of the study is to create brand names for new fast-food restaurants. The study is qualitative research and was analysed by case method. As a result of the study, brand names were suggested by participants, and these brand names were analysed. Suggested brand names were classified before being analysed. Brand names classified in 7 groups as creative, national, fast, delicious, local, global, and competitive were then analysed. Among the brand names suggested by the participants, the most suitable were for the creative concept. Brand names with the meaning *national* suggested by the participants in both cases are among the most recommended. When evaluated in general, a total of 118 brand names have been suggested, and among these names, more suggested names are suitable for the words *national, creative, local, delicious, global, food, and fast*. The rapid development of the fast-food sector in Azerbaijan and the interest of both local and global companies in this sector create a need for new brand names. In this respect, it is thought that the article will contribute to the academic literature and practitioners.

Keywords: brand naming, brand strategy, branding, case study, creativity, fast food.

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1. Introduction

Western lifestyles have led to more fast-food franchise restaurants and high-calorie items in supermarkets (Anwar, 2016). With more moms working, fast food replaces traditional meals due to time, comfort, and lifestyle (Benajiba, 2016). In emerging economies, local and multi-national brands coexist. From this perspective, every new enterprise requires a brand name. This is when innovation and creativity shine. There is a prevalent belief that creativity is required for innovation (breakthrough solutions). Despite empirical data, creativity is vital to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial goals (Wach & Bilan, 2023).

Creativity includes ideation, problem-solving, and solution creation (Weisberg, 1988). Promoting 21st century skills is a core tenet of modern innovation education strategies and involves creativity and creative cognitive habits (OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 2016). Effective creativity requires a combination of competence, creative thinking, and motivation (Lindwall & Wikberg Nilsson, 2021). Todd et al. (2023) examined undergraduate students' compensating strategies for creative idea appraisal. The research concluded

that good strategies improve customer value, whereas ineffective strategies concentrate on profit and marketing strategy.

It is important that all businesses that want to participate in the market need a new brand name and that this name is compatible with the sector and consumers. However, considering that the brand name is one of the most important factors in branding and marketing strategies, there are no concrete resources that new initiatives of both local and global brands can use when brand naming. The literature review revealed a scarcity of academic studies on brand name creation. This study was designed to fill the gap in the literature.

Consumers only use such assistance when they know brand names and do not know the product's functions or production methods (Teas & Grapentine, 1996). Hsu and Lin (2013) compared brands to road signs, providing quality, assurance, and other information to help consumers buy.

Brand names identify items, but more crucially, they convey a complex combination of symbols and meanings carried by objects (Levy, 1978). With more branded items on the market, consumers chase brands and believe in them. Brand names, one of a company's most valuable assets, may boost brand recognition and impact product evaluations and purchases (Aaker & Lane Keller, 1990).

The market today is very dynamic, volatile, and extremely competitive, even as customers become smarter, more knowledgeable, and have more access to many channels and options that take little time to exercise (Nwulu & Ateke, 2014). In order to maintain their dominance in the market, firms undertake numerous activities and find and implement various strategies (Brown Ateke & Chibunna Elvis, 2013). Since customers are very important, it is essential for companies to always be at the top of their minds. For this reason, companies that know that getting out of the confusion of marketing messages and attracting their attention is an obvious way to gain a competitive advantage struggle to outperform each other with various strategies (Ateke, 2013).

Creating an effective brand name is a challenge. In this study, brand names were created for new fast food initiatives with the participation of young people and analyzed by the case method. The global youth hypothesis proposes that advances in communication technology serve to homogenize the values, fashion preferences, and attitudes of the world's youth (Parker et al., 2006). Researchers have conducted studies on branding in the fast-food industry. Ateke et al. (2015) evaluated celebrity endorsements and fast-food brand image.

There have been studies on brand name creation in recent years. Some authors (Wu et al., 2018), with these two dimensions of 1) sound and 2) meaning, propose a four-way classification of brand name types for logographic languages: 1) alphanumeric; 2) phonetic; 3) phonosemantic; or 4) semantic. Advocates argue that the four-way classification of brand name types enables multinational companies and domestic Chinese companies to comprehend and capitalize on the connection between brand name types and consumer demand. Pathak et al. (2020) analyzed the initial phonemes of leading brand names in their study. A study by Pathak and Calvert (2020) examines how certain speech sounds in a brand name can change expectations about the taste of the product.

A study by Swani et al. (2021) discussed the impact of using different levels of brand names (corporate and product) in social media posts on customer interaction and service purchase intentions. Based on the service branding and brand identity literature, the study

examined whether the use of corporate brand names in the service context will increase message liking and purchase intention. Some authors (Pogacar et al., 2021) examine the effects of gender connotations in the brand name on three important brand outcomes: 1) attitudes; 2) choices; and 3) performance. The study found that feminine brand names increased both hypothetical and consequential attitudes and choice sharing and were associated with better brand performance.

A study by other authors (Roggeveen et al., 2021) discusses how creative product offerings and innovative merchandising strategies contribute to the creation of a unique retail brand identity and facilitate the communication of this identity to consumers. Retail practitioners were interviewed to formulate five ways retailers can create and communicate their brand identity through creative product offerings.

Since Azerbaijan is an oil-based country and most of its exports consist of oil, the share of oil in the country's revenues is high (Gerhart & Feng, 2021; Huseynli, 2022a). Based on this, one of Azerbaijan's future goals is to direct oil revenues to human capital. Therefore, it is very important to conduct scientific studies on entrepreneurial activities.

The importance of branding strategies in new emerging markets is known. In this context, naming newly created brands is not an easy task. The literature clearly states that the brand name is an important factor for companies facing the brand name problem in the sector. The main problem of the research is to create and analyze brand names in the fast-food industry. In this direction, entrepreneurs can utilize creativity. Considering all this, the aim of the study is to create and analyze brand names for new fast food entrepreneurs.

Although creative brand name creation is considered an important success factor in branding strategies, marketing literature lacks a systematic empirical explanation of how brand name creation works. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to creative brand name creation efforts.

The study consists of six chapters: 1) introduction; 2) theoretical background; 3) methodology; 4) findings; 5) discussion and conclusions; and 6) references. After the introduction section, where the general outlines of the study are determined, the theoretical background section is given. Here, creativity, creativity in branding, brand building, and the process of creating a brand name are mentioned. In the methodology section, first the purpose of the study is given, and then the method, design, and procedure used are presented. Next, the findings section presents the research findings, followed by the references section. Finally, the research concludes by presenting two cases that were used within its scope.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Creativity and creativity in branding

The studies describe creativity from several angles, painting a whole picture from various angles. Given its relevance to and significance in almost every discipline, creativity is a subject that is attracting growing research, according to Prabhu et al. (2008). The competitiveness of the economy and its need for creativity are both crucial. But most significantly, it is essential for the growth and competitiveness of the company as well as for entrepreneurship in general (Gong et al., 2009).

Psychologists have long held the belief that creative thinking may influence psychological well-being (Forgeard, 2019; Leckey, 2011; Simonton, 2003) and enhance decision-making abilities (Forgionne & Newman, 2007). However, various elements (copying, augmentation, and resetting), degrees, and disciplines like music, art, acting, mathematics, and engineering all have a varied impact on creative contributions (Gustafsson, 2023). The two criteria for defining creativity, according to Runco and Jaeger (2012), are: 1) originality (also known as novelty, unusualness, or uniqueness) and 2) effectiveness (also known as utility, relevance, or significance). According to this definition, creativity is the act of coming up with a novel idea, product, or service that benefits the society in which the creator lives as well (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010).

Marketing products and services to target audiences requires a stronger understanding of customer sentiments about them in the marketplace. The literature on consumer behavior extensively discusses how consumer attitudes are relevant to the great majority of products and services on the market. The relational approach has an important place in marketing, which has developed under the influence of changes in the needs of businesses and customers. Relationship marketing should be based on the successful creation, development and maintenance of all marketing activities (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Furthermore, relationship marketing, which places a strong focus on creating and sustaining these connections, seems to be the next marketing trend, replacing conventional marketing of the product or service (Haj Khalifa, 2014).

Branding is a process for creating names or symbols to differentiate a product from its competitors (Kotler et al., 2005). A brand is one of the most valuable assets of any firm that wants to develop a competitive advantage (Schultz et al., 2013). Wantini and Eka Yudiana (2021) define brand as the customer's perspective on brand reputation. When a particular brand has a good reputation, it means that the brand has the potential to have high brand equity.

Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities associated with a brand, its name, and a symbol that enhance or maintain the value that a product or service provides to consumers (Haudi et al., 2022). It can give customers more confidence in purchasing products or services by maintaining and increasing brand value (Ju Seo et al., 2020; Suharto et al., 2022). Wantini and Eka Yudiana (2021) defined brand equity as a positive differentiating effect on the consumer's reactions to products or services related to that brand after learning the brand name. Effective brand communication and image strengthening can influence brand preference, as building strong brands improves brand preference (Ebrahim et al., 2016; Schultz et al., 2013).

Consumer perceptions, images, and emotions about a brand's products and their comparison to competing products create the brand's position. Therefore, to position a product, companies need to understand how consumers perceive products in their category (Robertson et al., 2022).

Companies must have a positive brand image in customers' minds, and marketing strategies need to be carefully considered to influence purchasing choices, as well as developing high-quality products and offering them for sale at competitive costs (Ari Sanjaya & Sri Ardani, 2020). Brand image is the place of brand positioning in consumers' memories. Consumer-brand relationships are similar to psychological contracts between consumers and the brand (Ma, 2020).

A key marketing challenge is creating a brand name that people will remember (Lane Keller & Lehmann, 2006), especially in an era when companies must compete across borders, cultures, and value systems (Mittal & Tsiros, 1995).

2.2. Brand name and brand naming process

There are several elements to the brand name creation process. Firstly, the firm represents its management, employees, and image. Secondly, customers who use the company's products and services, and thirdly, the people or institutions that make up the brand name, can be specified. As is known from the literature, proper naming of a product facilitates communication between a company and a consumer. However, according to Hsu and Lin (2013), brand name selection is a complex and often subjective process for business owners. In particular, in the global marketing environment, business owners lack clear, objective decision-making procedures and evaluation criteria.

According to another approach, brand naming consists of three components: 1) the market component; 2) the legal component; and 3) the linguistic component. Each component fulfills its own specific requirements for creating a new brand. The market component requires a brand to offer productive benefits. The legal component demands the legal existence and uniqueness of the mark. The linguistic component consists of three parts: 1) phonetically, a brand should be easy to pronounce and pleasant to hear; 2) it should be morphologically short and simple; and 3) semantically, a brand should present a positive connotation (Huang & Chan, 1997; Chan & Huang, 2001).

It has been shown that in creating a brand name, businesses rank the criteria in terms of importance as follows: emotional attractiveness, linguistic attractiveness, marketing attractiveness, and legal attractiveness (Hsu & Lin, 2013). Brand names are the foundation of brand image and customer attraction. It defines this brand's capabilities. The brand name hides the brand idea and image (Aaker, 1991). Brand name selection is a tough process that shapes the brand's core principles. Nearly 60% of United States product and brand managers said the name may affect sales without advertising (Kohli & LaBahn, 1997).

New goods need excellent brand names to help consumers remember and like them (Aaker, 1990; Charmasson, 1988; Lane Keller, 1993). Brand recall is crucial to an attractive brand name (Robertson, 1989). The basic goal of brand creation is to give a product a unique identity in consumers' minds. Brands distinguish items from competitors when choosing and buying them. According to Tihomir Vranešević and Ranko Stančec (2003), consumers increasingly base their food product decisions on well-known brand names as quality indicators. Naming a product makes it possible to refer to it as if it had a distinctive character or quality. Brand names are memorable, like the meanings of ordinary words (Danesi, 2011).

2.3. Features of creating a brand name

Collins (1977) spoke about two basic naming approaches. The first strategy is to choose a name and repeatedly use it to implant it in customers' minds. A name with the required phonetic symbolism is selected using the second strategy. Vanden Bergh et al. (1987) established a thorough taxonomy of linguistic and phonetic symbolism that may be employed to produce an appealing name in order to explore this further. The elements of a strong and successful brand name have been the subject of research in the literature. These criteria appear in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for creating a brand name (source: created by author, based on Huang & Chan, 1997, p. 333)

No.	Criterion	Source
1.	It should suggest something about the product's benefits and qualities.	Kotler and Armstrong, 1997
2.	It should be easy to pronounce, recognize, and remember.	
3.	It should be distinctive.	
4.	It should translate easily into foreign languages.	
5.	It should be capable of registration and legal protection.	
1.	Short and simple.	McCarthy and Perreault, 1987
2.	Easy to spell and read.	
3.	Easy to recognize and remember.	
4.	Pleasing when read or heard – and easy to pronounce.	
5.	Pronounceable in only one way.	
6.	Pronounceable in all languages (for goods to be exported).	
7.	Always timely (does not go out of date).	
8.	Adaptable to packaging or labelling needs.	
9.	Legally available for use (not in use by another firm).	
10.	Not offensive, obscene or negative.	
11.	Suggestive of product benefits.	
12.	Adaptable to any advertising medium.	
1.	Descriptive of product benefits.	McNeal and Zeren, 1981
2.	Memorable.	
3.	Fits with company image and other products' image.	
4.	Trademark available.	
5.	Promotable and advertisable.	
6.	Uniqueness versus competition.	
7.	Length.	
8.	Ease of pronunciation.	
9.	Positive connotations to potential users.	
10.	Suited to package.	
11.	Modern or contemporary.	
12.	Understandable.	
13.	Persuasive.	
1.	Unique.	Collins, 1977
2.	Remindful of the product category.	
3.	Easy to read in all the countries in which the brand is to be marketed.	
4.	Easy to pronounce.	
5.	Of such a verbal form as to have semantic and/or symbolic associations, i.e., to convey feeling.	
6.	Be capable of continuation despite changed circumstances.	

Table 1 shows that Kotler and Armstrong (1997) identified five criteria, Collins (1977) identified six, McCarthy and Perreault, Jr. (1987) identified twelve, and McNeal and Zeren (1981) identified thirteen criteria for the brand name. However, although the spelling of some of

these items is different, they have the same meaning. For example, McNeal and Zeren (1981) use *ease of pronunciation*, while McCarthy and Perreault, Jr. (1987) use *easy to spell and read*. However, some authors (2018) proposed a four-way classification of brand name types as 1) alphanumeric; 2) phonetic; 3) phonosemantic; or 4) semantic.

Recalling a product's name boosts buyer demand, according to Howard et al. (1995). Research on brand names identifies many characteristics of successful brands. Robertson (1989) appreciated the simplicity, distinctiveness, relevance, and product-class relationship of a strategically wanted brand name. Meyers-Levy (1989) found that unique words or meanings make brand names memorable. Lane Keller et al. (1998) found that a brand name that evokes a product benefit is easier to recall. Studies demonstrate that vulgar brand names help individuals recall marketing promises.

2.4. Literature review on brand name creation

Academic research progress on the brand name creation process appears to have stalled since then. Many details are unknown about the current processes and techniques that private sector branding experts now use to create new brand names (Arthur & Bejaei, 2022). There are studies in the literature on brand name creation. It is possible to divide these studies into two main directions:

- 1) First, process-oriented brand name creation (Collins, 1977; Opatow, 1985; Díaz-Restrepo et al., 2022; Arthur & Bejaei, 2022);
- 2) Secondly, brand names are created based on different issues (sound symbolism, language confusion, brand image) (see de la Cova, 2021; Pathak & Calvert, 2021).

Table 2 provides summary information about brand name creation efforts.

Table 2. Summary of process-oriented brand name creation efforts (source: created by author, based on Arthur & Bejaei 2022)

No.	Source	Location	Method	Steps
1.	Collins, 1977	United Kingdom	Prescriptive discussion	1. Establish marketing strategy/criteria; 2. Generate names (brainstorm, bookwork, etc.); 3. Evaluate/prune names down against criteria; 4. Test with consumers before decision.
2.	McNeal and Zeren 1981	United States	Survey	Three – seven steps, usually six steps: 1. Set objectives; 2. Generate names; 3. Screen names; 4. Consumer research; 5. Trademark search; 6. Final selection.
3.	Opatow, 1985	United States	Prescriptive discussion	1. Set objectives; 2. Establish name criteria; 3. Generate names; 4. Evaluate names (in-house; iterative); 5. Preliminary trademark review; 6. Final evaluation, selection, trademark.

Continue of Table 2

No.	Source	Location	Method	Steps
4.	Lefkowitz and Moldenhauer, 1985	United States	Prescriptive, case study	1. Background research; 2. Establish name criteria; 3. Generate names; 4. Initial evaluation; 5. Preliminary trademark review; 6. Select final candidates; 7. Full trademark and consumer evaluations including initial design concepts; 8. Final evaluation and selection.
5.	Shipley et al., 1988a	United Kingdom	Survey and prescriptive discussion	After broader marketing objectives: 1. Set objectives; 2. Decide brand strategy; 3. Establish name criteria; 4. Generate names; 5. Screen names; 6. Select a name.
6.	Shipley and Howard, 1993	United Kingdom	Survey and prescriptive discussion	After broader marketing objectives: 1. Set objectives; 2. Decide brand strategy; 3. Establish name criteria; 4. Generate names; 5. Screen names; 6. Select a name.
7.	Kohli and LaBahn, 1997	United States	Survey Prescriptive discussion, based on earlier survey	1. Set objectives; 2. Generate names; 3. Evaluate names; 4. Make choice; 5. Trademark.
8.	Kollmann and Suckow, 2007	Germany	Survey	Traditional step by step: 1. Set objectives; 2. Generate names; 3. Evaluate names; 4. Make choice; 5. Check domain; 6. Domain registration; 7. Trademark. Fast iterative: 1. Set objectives; 2. Choice (pick via brainstorming); 3. Check domain: not available? Go to step 2; 4. Creation of candidate names list; 5. Evaluation against objectives; 6. Domain registration; 7. Trademark.
9.	Díaz-Restrepo et al., 2022	United Kingdom	Prescriptive discussion	1. Establish the goals for the brand; 2. Evaluate restrictions regarding reading or pronunciation; 3. Define the target audience; 4. Designate what idea is the brand intended to convey; 5. Generate the nominee names list; 6. Select the best options; 7. Check for legal clearance; 8. Proceed to market testing.

End of Table 2

No.	Source	Location	Method	Steps
	Arthur and Bejaei, 2022	Canada	Prescriptive discussion, survey	1. Preliminary research; 2. Marketing objectives: brand name objectives and brand name strategy; 3. Selection of brand name criteria; 4. Creating names; 5. Evaluation; 6. Choosing a name(s); 7. Creating trademarkable brand names.

Collins (1977) discussed the naming of new brands from a psycholinguistic perspective. The focus of this study is not on the step-by-step process of creating a general name, but specifically on addressing the linguistic aspects of how to create a good new brand name. McNeal and Zeren (1981) examined the actual brand name development processes used by major American consumer product manufacturers. Although the authors used a six-step process, they were criticized for not separating brand objectives from overall marketing objectives (Shipley et al., 1988a, 1988b).

Opatow (1985) situates his article mostly in American consumer products and services markets and emphasizes the need for structure and discipline to avoid introducing personal biases and prejudices into the process. The author has included a step to detail the required name criteria and emphasizes the need for a light initial name selection, followed by iterative elimination rounds supported by adherence to objectives and name criteria. Lefkowitz and Moldenhauer (1985) presented a case study detailing the steps a regional American bank followed to create a brand name for a new type of consumer account. The authors' eight-step process includes a unique first step of preliminary background research and the creation of initial design concepts for the evaluation of final candidate names.

Some authors (Shipley et al., 1988a, 1988b) developed a brand name creation model based on extensive qualitative research with consumer products marketing managers, created and pilot tested a survey, revised it, and then validated the model by asking survey participants to rate the importance of each step provided. Kohli and LaBahn (1997) identified a five-step brand name creation process: 1) goals; 2) name creation; 3) evaluation; 4) selection; and 5) trademark registration. They surveyed the author, American consumers, and manufacturers of industrial goods about the actual process followed. Kohli and Labahn (1997) found that participants did not separate marketing and brand goals from brand name criteria and that name criteria emerged only during the name evaluation phase.

Kollmann and Suckow (2007) created a survey after preliminary interviews and surveyed electronic entrepreneurs about the process they used to create their new corporate name. Kollman and Suckow's (2007) results are valuable as they shed light on the impact of the Internet on brand naming decisions, and their results have implications beyond the issue of corporate name creation by electronic entrepreneurs. Some authors (Díaz-Restrepo et al., 2022) also conducted a time-oriented brand name development study. Branding frameworks provide guidelines for creating names or symbols that differentiate products from competitors. These authors (Díaz-Restrepo et al., 2022) investigated whether species common names following these guidelines could improve their fundraising potential.

3. Methodology

3.1. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to create brand names for new fast food entrepreneurs. The study was carried out in Azerbaijan. The study is qualitative research and was analyzed by the case method.

3.2. Analysis method

This study is about brand name selection. A multiple-criteria decision analysis problem, picking the best brand name necessitates using the right criteria and rigorous screening. The use of a tangible and numerical method to choose an ideal brand name has rarely been discussed (Hsu & Lin, 2013). Researchers recognize idea assessment as a crucial element in the creative problem-solving process, even though the precise methods individuals use to assess and compensate for flaws in their creative ideas remain unknown (Todd et al., 2023).

The case method was used to examine the research. Case studies in exploratory research projects provide great value and help elucidate the processes' fewer known facets (Yin, 2014). Individuals may freely express their opinions using the case method, which is a creative method. People who approach challenges in a flexible and imaginative manner are more likely to engage in creative thinking (Amabile, 1998).

However, students were selected as participants in the study. The idea of developing students' creativity in the educational process is not new (Bruner, 1965; Scott et al., 2004). One of the most important criteria in the selection of students was the ability to compare the analysis of the brand names suggested by individuals with the same education level for the same cases.

Since our study followed a process-oriented brand name creation process, articles that followed the first direction were examined, and others were excluded. Arthur and Bejaei (2022) also followed this approach in their brand name creation study. After examining the sources related to brand name creation in the literature, we followed the process outlined in Figure 1 to create a brand name for this study.

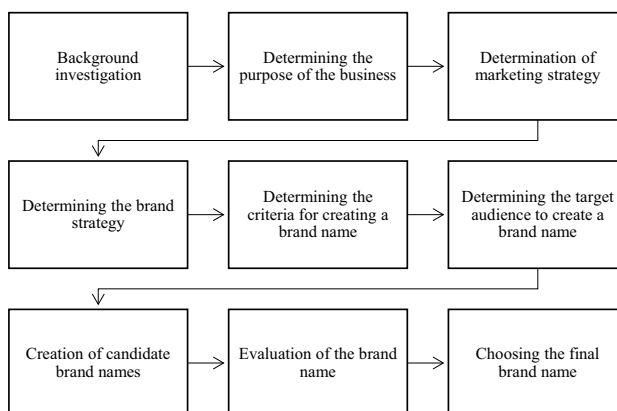


Figure 1. Brand name creation process (source: created by author)

3.3. Design

Table 3 provides detailed information about the stages of the brand name creation process given in Figure 1 and the processes carried out in line with these stages.

Table 3. Brand name creation process and actions taken (source: created by author)

No.	Stage of the process	Operations performed
1.	Background investigation	First, the existing literature on brand name creation was researched. In addition, information about the brands and their names related to the sector in which the brand name will be created was also examined.
2.	Determining the purpose of the business	It is important to research the purpose of the business for which the brand name will be created for the next steps. We examined these restaurants in the fast-food sector in our study. The determination of the fast-food sector in the study is that this sector has rapid growth rates. The study states the business purpose in the case.
3.	Determination of marketing strategy	We examined the marketing strategies of the businesses that had brand names. Since the study did not aim to create a brand name for any business, the target audience, positioning strategies, competitors, and market shares of the companies in the sector were researched at this stage.
4.	Determining the brand strategy	The brand strategies of the businesses for which brand names were created were examined. Since the study did not aim to create a brand name for any business, at this stage, the brand identity, brand personality, brand communication, and brand-consumer relations of the brands in the sector were investigated.
5.	Determining the criteria for creating a brand name	The criteria for creating a brand name were realized in light of the information obtained from studies in the literature and the information in steps 3 and 4.
6.	Determining the target audience to create a brand name	The target audience for creating a brand name was determined as students who understand terms such as marketing, brand, consumer behavior and know their importance.
7.	Creation of candidate brand names	The target audience for creating a brand name was determined to be students who understood terms such as marketing, brand, and consumer behavior and knew their importance.
8.	Evaluation of the brand name	The brand name that is desired to be created in this study is a creative brand name. In addition, 118 candidate brand names created by the participants were evaluated in seven categories.
9.	Choosing the final brand name	The main purpose of the study is not to choose one brand name. On the contrary, it was to create brand names in line with the criteria determined in the fast-food industry. For this reason, the evaluators assessed the created brand names in different categories instead of simply choosing one.

The first stage (background investigation) specified in Table 3 was carried out as a literature review. The second stage (determining the purpose of the business) is stated in the case study. In the third (determination of marketing strategy) and fourth stages (determining the brand strategy), a specific brand and business were not considered, on the contrary, it was stated that this study was carried out under the conditions of a sector. Existing literature on brand name creation criteria in the fifth stage (determining the criteria for creating a brand name) was researched, but participants were not informed of any criteria for brand name creation. The aim here is to highlight the creativity of the participants. In the sixth stage (determining the target audience to create a brand name), the participants of the study were determined (this procedure is given in detail in section 3.4.). The seventh stage (creation of candidate brand names) concerns the candidate brand names created by the participants (details of this stage and all candidate brand names are given in section 4.1.). In the eighth stage (evaluation of the brand name), the candidate brand names created by the participants were evaluated (details of this stage and all candidate brand names are given in section 4.2.). It is about selecting one or more of the candidate brand names created in the ninth stage (choosing the final brand name). However, rather than creating a name for a brand, this study examines how participants create a creative name by considering marketing and brand strategies in a specific sector.

3.4. Procedure

The people who participated in the case analysis were determined in accordance with two criteria. First, the research included students with basic knowledge of marketing, branding, naming the brand, and creativity in branding. The second criterion was that the participants had knowledge about the fast-food industry and had eaten at fast-food restaurants several times in the last three months.

In order to get a greater market share, restaurants compete fiercely in the fast-food chain restaurant sector (Hussain, 2018). There are also creative articles on case study analysis (Carpio et al., 2025). Participants create their own (individual) products and use social media to communicate with others, allowing students to exchange ideas and develop their creativity (Rezende Vilarinho-Pereira et al., 2021). Parker et al. (2006) found significant differences in brand attitudes among Chinese, Japanese, and American youth in their study. With a focus on globalization, marketers often imagine a uniform world where everyone, particularly young people, joyfully consumes *McDonald's* hamburgers and French fries.

The research was conducted in Baku, Azerbaijan, in April, 2023, with 118 participants who met the criteria. Of the 118 participants in the study, 65 were women and 53 were men. Participants are between the ages of 22–24. 110 of the participants are single, and 8 are married.

Eight different groups were selected for brand building. The groups included 15–22 people over the age of 18. Two predesigned case studies were shared with people in these groups. Four groups were presented with the first case study (Appendix, Table A1), while the other four groups were presented with the second case study (Appendix, Table A2). The cases are designed with two stories in the same sector that have similar but different meanings.

Participants read the case and suggested brand names in a total of 55 minutes. The organizers distributed paper cases to each participant first. After 10 minutes, we explained the required details of the case and answered the participants' questions. Then, within 45 minutes, the participants analyzed the case and suggested a brand name for the company in the case. Each of the participants answered the questions personally.

In accordance with the meaning of the story in the designed cases, the participants suggested a name for the brand. Each brand name was evaluated based on the criteria related to the brand name. Evaluation criteria are based on relevant literature reviews and expert interviews.

4. Findings

4.1. Creation of candidate brand names

Brand strategy is the methods chosen to achieve brand goals. Strategy can influence name choice. Brand names can cause consumers to choose and switch brands. Especially creative names can attract potential consumers. The purpose and strategy of the business were also reflected in the case studies presented to the participants for brand building.

In the answers of the participants who suggested a brand name for the first case, Azerbaijani expressions meaning *milli* (in English: *national*), *azfood*, *yeməli* (in English: *fast, food, meal, edible*), and *tez* (in English: *fast*) were found more. Brand names derived from the combination of these expressions were suggested by more participants. The number of participants who put forward a brand name for the first case is 65 people in total. Four of these participants suggested *Azfood*, two of them *Ayaqüstü* (fast meal that can be eaten standing up), two of them *Millifood*, and two of them *Tezbazar* as brand names. A visual version of the brand names proposed by the participants in the first case is given in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Brand names suggested by participants for the brand in the first case (source: created by author)



Figure 3. Brand names suggested by participants for the brand in the second case (source: created by author)

The participants who read the second case, on the other hand, derived new names from expressions in English meaning *food*, *national*, *fast*, *burger*, *delicious*, *kitchen*, *cheap*, and *fast*. The number of participants who put forward a brand name for the second case is 53 people in total. Two of these participants suggested *Azfood*, one of them *Tezbazar*, one of them *Tezdad*, and four of them put forward brand names with the word *national* in their content. A visual version of the brand names proposed by the participants in the second case is given in Figure 3.

Market positioning is important in helping consumers understand a product. Another part of market positioning is deciding on the brand image. It is very important what character, style, or personality a brand wants to reflect and what it wants to convey with the name. It has been observed that almost all of the brand names created here have a marketing idea.

4.2. Evaluation of the brand name

It is possible to classify the brand names suggested by the participants for the fast-food brand mentioned in both cases in several categories (Appendix, Table A1–A2). These categories are: 1) creative; 2) national; 3) fast; 4) delicious; 5) local; 6) global; 7) competitive.

Let us look at each of these categories separately. Among the brand names suggested by the participants, the most names suitable were for the creative concept. In other words, the capacity to explore for issues and develop answers is what might be referred to as creativity (Runco, 2007; Sawyer, 2012). In general, until an action deviates from the routines we are used to, it cannot be deemed creative. Parallel to their discussion on creativity, Runco and Jaeger (2012) also address the need of originality (sometimes referred to as freshness). In this direction, brand name suggestions such as *Keyifsi*, *Gogoal*, and *TakıFast* can be given as examples. The brand name suggested by 36 participants in total belongs to the category

identified as the creative. 19 of them were evaluated as only creative names. Of the remaining 17 brand name suggestions, the concept of the creative took first place in six of them. *Go-goal* (the English pronunciation of the Azerbaijani national dish *goghal* (in Azerbaijani: *qoğal*) has been prepared accordingly), *Tam Door* (the pronunciation of the word seems to mean *tandoor* in Azerbaijani, in English meaning the *place* where local national dishes are cooked), and *Doyuran* (in English it means *to be full* or *when you eat, you will be full*) are suitable for creativity criteria. In addition, mixed-name suggestions brought about by globalization can also be considered creative brand names. Among them, brands such as *Keyifsi* (Azerbaijani *keyif* in English means *pleasure* or *enjoyment* and at the same time; it has been synthesized with the pronunciation of the word *KFC* in Azerbaijani language), *FastGood*, and *TakıFast* whose names should be specified.

Two types of creativity can be distinguished: first, making new connections where known ideas or solutions are combined in new ways; second, working with conceptual spaces by thinking outside the box (Boden, 2004; Taura & Nagai, 2017). It is possible to show brand names such as *Faztfood*, *Milliburger*, and *FastGood* in the first category, and brand names such as *TakıFast*, *U-cuz-biz*, and *Doyuran* in the second category.

Brand names with the meaning of the word *national* suggested by the participants in both cases are among the most recommended. 14 of these brand names have only a meaning *national*, and in the remaining 20, the first row evokes a meaning *national* in 11 of the names that have meanings between one and three criteria. Six of the participants, unaware of each other, suggested the name *Azfood*. The brand name *Millifood* was also the second most recommended brand name.

Names meaning fast were also suggested a lot by the participants. Some of the brand names in this category are just for speed (e.g., *Tezbazar*, *YeQaç*, and *Ayaqüstü* all of which mean in English is *fast*), while others are based on speed as well as other criteria (*Tez Milli*, which is derived from English words *fast* and *national*).

Brand names suggesting that the fast food product is delicious have also been suggested. Such brand names can be translated into English purely (e.g., *Delicious Meal*), Azerbaijani (e.g., *Sürətli və Dadlı*), and mixed (e.g., *Ləzizfood* – *ləziz* can be translated into English as *delicious* – name means *delicious food*) has been suggested.

Local and global brand names are also included among the brand names suggested by the participants. *Biş-düş* (Azerbaijani *biş-düş* in English means *to cook*), *U-ciz-biz* (in English it means *offered at an affordable price*). However, this name is also suitable for the pronunciation of one of the national dishes of Azerbaijan – *ciz-biz*) and *Dolma* (it is the name of the national dish in Azerbaijan) are suitable names for this category.

It is possible to show names such as *Delissimo*, *Grandma's Food*, and *National Fast-Food Chain* among the brand names that fit the global category. However, some names evoke both national and global meanings. Names such as *AzDonald's* and *MilliDonald's* can be given as examples.

The participants' brand names for both scenarios were compared. Both ensembles have similar brand names despite their differing compositions. The suggested brand names for both cases are shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. General analysis of brand names suggested by participants for brands in both case studies (source: created by author)



Figure 5. Key details that participants emphasized in the brand names they nominated (source: created by author)

However, the brand names proposed by the participants in both cases were classified into certain categories. After this classification, the word cloud was again analyzed and the most stressed words were revealed through the analysis (Figure 5).

When evaluated in general, a total of 118 brand names have been suggested and among these names, more suggested names are suitable for Azerbaijani words *milli*, *yaradıcı* (in English: creative), *lököl* (in English: local), *lazzətli* (in English: delicious), *global* (in English: global), *tez*, and English words *fast* and *food*.

The number of fast-food restaurants in Azerbaijan is growing rapidly (FED.az, 2016–2025). This indicates the growth of the fast-food sector. Although fast-food restaurants in Azerbaijan are franchises of global brands, the emergence of local fast-food restaurants has also been observed in recent years. From this point of view, the information obtained in this study is of great importance for the fast-food industry.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Most of the information about the fast-food industry is considered almost the same all over the world. This shows that the fast-food industry has become standardized all over the world. According to Bender (2009), suppliers specialize in hamburgers, pizza, chicken, or sandwiches to provide a limited food menu for manufacturing line processes. Fast food is cheap, fast, frequently eaten by hand, simple to package, and has a short shelf life (Price, 1997).

The atmosphere and food quality of a restaurant have also become important (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Clark and Wood (1998) say food value and quality are most important for restaurants. Goyal and Singh (2007) found that young people eat fast food for fun and change. Participants in our research created brand names that fit into the creative and entertaining class. Musaiger (2014) found that customers considered all Western fast food. Hamburger had 96% and pizza 75%. Fast food products like hamburgers, French fries, pizza, kebabs, doner kebabs, lahmacun, pita, hot dogs, pirozhki, *etc.* are more commonly consumed in Azerbaijan.

Senior management and other key decision-makers use a variety of elements to decide whether a team will support their new proposal, which risks ambiguity and failure and may drain organizational resources (Baer, 2012). Decision-makers commonly rely on their opinion of a team's past performance or ability.

However, Azerbaijan pays attention to the development of the non-oil sector. The development of the non-energy sector is very important for a country whose economy depends on energy resources (Huseynli, 2022b, 2023). Developing the economy, which has relied on oil revenues for years, is a priority in the country's future strategy directions. From this point of view, both supporting local owners and attracting foreign investors are important for Azerbaijan. From this point of view, the increase in the number of Azerbaijani fast-food restaurants may occur both on the basis of domestic and foreign capitals. In growing markets, the unity of marketing, branding, and creativity is very important in ensuring customer satisfaction and making sound decisions. Namely, the characteristic of the team is the role model and competence of the leader (Qu & Liu, 2021).

As a result of the brand name creation study conducted by Kohli and Labahn (1997), an average of 46 candidate names were created by the participants. It is recommended that from 100 to 500 brand names be established initially, especially given the burden of meeting trademarked eligibility and avoiding variants (Opatow, 1985; Lefkowitz & Moldenhauer, 1985). In our study, 118 brand names were created.

In a study conducted by Kim and Phua (2020), consumers' reactions to two types of hash-tags were measured and evaluated within the scope of brand personality and advertising. In our study, the determination of the brand name was left entirely to the initiative of the participants and was considered as the product of their creativity. The study by Muller and de

Klerk (2020) investigated the impact of device design aesthetics and brand name on Millennials consumers' intention to use wearable activity tracking devices. As a result of the study, it was revealed that the brand name of the device is as important as the design aesthetics of the device in determining the intentions of Millennials students to use such tracking devices. In our study, a research was conducted to determine the creative brand name.

118 participants submitted brand names for examination in the research. Prior to analysis, the researchers categorized the suggested brand names. We analyzed brand names that were innovative, national, fast, delicious, local, global, and competitive. Among the brand names suggested by the participants, the most suitable were for the creative concept. Brand names with the meaning *national* suggested by the participants in both cases are among the most recommended. Furthermore, participants have also recommended brand names that convey the idea of the product being fast, delicious, and satiating.

Due to urbanization and the goal to integrate the creative economy with urban redevelopment and national economic growth, cultural policy research has recently concentrated on urban and national contexts (McKerrell & Hornabrook, 2022). When the participants think of fast food, it is obvious that they contradict it with the *McDonald's* brand. Namely, it is the result of a participant suggesting names such as *AzDonald's* and *MilliDonald's*. The results of the research show that participants are very impressed by the names of global fast-food brands.

The biggest theoretical contribution of the research is the creation of brand names based on creativity. The research analyzed the suggestions that individuals generated through their creativity using the case method. However, it is obvious that the work also contributes to the employees of the sector.

These may be the most basic suggestions for managers in the sector. First, they should pay attention to the national names of the relevant culture when naming fast food brands. Second, they are advised to use creativity when naming brands. Third, most of the participants associate fast food products with global brands, which should be considered when choosing a brand name.

The industry that employs the most people worldwide is the restaurant sector (Feerasta, 2017). This study was conducted in Azerbaijan with 118 participants. This qualitative study was conducted using the case study method. Conducting the study in Azerbaijan created a new source of brand name creation for local businesspeople and international foreign investors in the country. However, conducting the research in Azerbaijan is a limitation of the study. Future studies on brand name creation may benefit from using quantitative methods. However, conducting such research in different cultures to ensure generalizability and utilizing comparative analyses may be recommended.

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Appendix

Table A1. Case study 1 (source: created by author)

Aynur, Ilkin, Sama, and Rashad, a new startup company team of university students who want to present the dishes of national cuisine to the market in the format of fast food, have planned to start their activity by opening kiosk-type sales places in front of metro stations. The team, whose main goal is to open 10 such places in 3 years, first aims to open a place in front of Ganjlik (Baku Metro), Azerbaijan, and Nariman Narimanov (Baku Metro), Azerbaijan, metro stations. The team, which presented startup company ideas to different investors, focused on their work with high motivation and determination because they attracted investment from *PNH Holding*. With this investment, they will attract the tools and equipment they will use to prepare the food, the supplies to present the finished product to the customers, and even stand-up kiosks to sell the food. Members of this team are those who prepare the food, serve it to the customer, and answer the customer's questions by posting on social media. All the supporters directed the entrepreneurs to find the brand name first. What would you name this brand?

Table A2. Case study 2 (source: created by author)

Lamiya, Ulkar, Zahid, and Ravan met in a business training, and they want to improve and implement the project they prepared for the training. The business they want to realize is in the fast-food sector. Therefore, they must first find a name for this brand. Although young people applied to banks to create their businesses, the banks said that they did not give business loans to startup companies, and their hopes remained on the amount they could get from themselves and their families. Lamiya started to prepare the research parts of the business plan with her friend, whom she knew from the university and who is currently working in the field of research. According to the research, they want to sell their products only within 20 minutes from Ganjlik (Baku Metro), Azarbaijan, metro station. The price of their products was slightly lower than the price of their competitors in the market. However, in this startup company, they planned to present some dishes from our national cuisine to customers in the form of fast food. If the startup company is successful, the young people will be engaged in the production of ayran, dovga, and compote under this name as a growth strategy. Since Ravan is the nephew of a well-known singer in the Azerbaijani music world, his uncle said that he would help them in the promotion of this product. Ulkar's mother first worked in the fast-food section of a famous fast-food brand for five years, then took orders from home and was only busy cooking sweets. He told them that he would help them in the kitchen in preparing their hamburgers in their new startup company. Zahid was entrusted with the field of digital marketing as he had experience in two digital marketing companies. All the supporters directed the entrepreneurs to find the brand name first. What would you name this brand?