

Effect of Destination Grammatical Gender on Perceived Destination Masculinity and Femininity

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This research explores how grammatical gender - an inherent feature of many languages - influences destination gender perceptions. To investigate this, we designed a survey-based experiment in which participants from different linguistic backgrounds (e.g., French and English) rated destination names on gendered attributes (e.g., perceived masculinity or femininity). The dataset comprises hierarchical responses, with multiple evaluations per respondent, structured to allow for inter-individual variation. We analyzed the data using multiple linear regressions with random intercepts, estimated in Stata via the `xtreg` command, which accommodates nested data and random effects efficiently. We explain that the grammatical gender of destination names predicts their perceived masculinity or femininity among speakers of gendered languages such as French. English speakers, whose language lacks grammatical gender, are unaffected by this effect. These findings support the theory of linguistic relativity, showing that language structure can influence cognitive evaluations of non-animate objects. The research contributes to branding and tourism literature by identifying grammatical gender as a key yet overlooked determinant of brand personality. Managerial implications include the strategic importance of considering grammatical gender when naming brands or marketing destinations in gendered-language contexts. Ultimately, the study proposes that international marketers integrate linguistic features into brand positioning strategies, especially when targeting diverse linguistic audiences.