

Notoriety or Reputation: Implications for the Choice of Products with Potential Geographical Indication

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Abstract

The definition of geographical indication (GI) often involves the use of the two concepts: reputation and notoriety. However, both terms are used inconsistently and interchangeably, even though they have different implications and are measured in different ways. Notoriety refers to the knowledge that each individual has about the brand, product or company, while reputation describes a value judgment about a given product. The confusion over both terms may lead to sub-optimal product choices. Attiéké, an Ivorian dish that the national government is seeking protected status for, was analysed to determine the most suitable variety that could be put forward for a GI registration. We investigated 403 consumers in order to find attiéké varieties with the best profiles with regard to notoriety, reputation or both. The results revealed that attiéké varieties with high reputation have also demonstrated high notoriety. In contrast, when we listed the attiéké varieties, the rank based on notoriety was different or even opposed from that based on reputation. The analysis of both concepts can therefore help to identify potential GI products depending on the purpose.

Keywords: Geographical Indication; Notoriety; Reputation, Attiéké; Consumers

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Notoriety and reputation are fundamentally different; therefore, the common perception that reputation is equivalent to notoriety becomes inadequate (Giovanni 1999). Yet, these concepts seem to be used interchangeably when referring to geographical indication (GI).

Notoriety refers to how widely the name of a product is known, while reputation refers to the analysis of the determinants of notoriety (Bérard et Marchenay 2007). Notoriety was consequently defined as the share of members of a specified population who have heard about a brand or a label (Zaharia, 2003). Reputation, on the other hand, is more subjective, going beyond notoriety, comprising the consumer's perception about a given product. Giovanni (1999) defined reputation as the expression of what is generally said or believed about the abilities and/or qualities of somebody or something. These expressions are not based on objective perception but depend on feeling, taste, culture and the religion of those surveyed.

Normally, the two concepts are useful for different actors. Company stakeholders are primarily interested in reputation which becomes, in turn, a strategic input into management (Stuart et Shandwick 2012). Reputation will always be more important for organisations than notoriety because reputation is considered as a business capital (Watson et Kitchen 2010, 1). In contrast, notoriety, is primarily used to boost sales. When the consumers are aware about the product/brand, it becomes the first reference when they have to take a decision (Peter et Olson 2010; Timiras 2016).

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Notoriety is taking into account in short-term concept, while reputation can only be analysed in the long-term. While it is possible to obtain meaningful results about a new brand when assessing notoriety, a new brand cannot claim a reputation.

Traders use reputation rather than notoriety to exploit local products. However, although these measures exist, consumers are not always able to assess the quality of local products. This asymmetry in information leads to counterfeiting within and across countries. As GI products can be considered as ‘club goods’ or common-pool resources (Fournier et al. 2018), it can be difficult to overcome the asymmetry of information without investment into notoriety and reputation.

1.2 | Notoriety and reputation measurement

Notoriety tries to measure the awareness of consumers. It proposes three methods to measure it, i.e., top of mind awareness, spontaneous awareness and prompted awareness. The proportion of people who spontaneously cite a brand in their first response measures top of mind awareness. Spontaneous awareness consists in the listing of a brand when referring to the product category or the sector of activity. Prompted awareness refers to the recognition of a brand from a list proposed to respondents. In sum, the awareness fluctuates according to the period of the investigation and is not strongly linked to geographical origin; by consequence it has to be measured continuously. There is a slight difference between awareness and favourable attitude toward a brand (Timiras, 2016).

To find out if there is a favourable attitude towards a brand or product, the reputation must be analysed. Gangjee (2017) pointed out that the link between reputation and geographical origin requires three aspects that are interrelated and overlap with each other: (a) contemporary reputation; (b) historic reputation; and (c) the history of the product, including the specific production techniques, which gave rise to the distinctive product within that the area. In sum, there must be historic evidence that justifies charging a price above the marginal cost. For this reason, the price of GI products is often increased in international trade compared with non-GI products (Amanzou and al, 2018). In other ways, the reputation is used to overcome the information asymmetry between producer and consumer in the markets of goods (Giovanni, 1999). According to Capsuto (2012), reputation can be proved by a controlled survey of consumers’ perceived connection between the product and the geography or a survey, demonstrating that consumers can distinguish a product from its competitors based on taste, appearance or another functionality.

As notoriety and reputation can be measured cause, both notions are deemed quantitative. Boistel (2014) suggested that the definitions of reputation and notoriety are different among the social sciences. According to the social science, the tool used to analyse both concepts can also be different. So, within the same social science, the importance of reputation and notoriety can also vary. In economics for instance, reputation is considered as information that legitimate firms’ activities. Reputation has a quantitative as well as a qualitative dimension and is, in any case, concerned with contemporary consumer perception (Gangjee, 2017). The questionnaires are useful to measure notoriety and reputation but researchers must add interview to accurately reflect the perception of consumers. The history of a product can be, for instance, compiled through multiple interviews.

1.3 | Attiéké in Côte d’Ivoire – a case study

Attiéké, the semolina of steamed cassava is an Ivorian staple food (Assanvo et al. 2000). Reginal et al. (2015) distinguishes three main varieties of this food product: i) attiéké with extremely fine grains called ‘Ahité’; ii) attiéké with medium grains; and iii) attiéké consisting of large grains called ‘Agbodjama’. Populations in southern Côte d’Ivoire own all these traditional varieties.

Ahité and Agbodjama are commonly attributed to people from south of Côte d’Ivoire called ‘Ebrié’ based in the economic capital, Abidjan. The production requires know-how and meticulous sorting work to separate the homogeneous grains of different sizes. They are produced for family consumption and social events, especially funerals. In the latter case, the production is consciously conducted in a spirit of solidarity by a panel of women producers.

The medium grains are the most common on the market. This variety is a mix of Ahité and Agbodjama. Adjoukrou, Avikam, Alladjan and other south-Ivorian populations, produces the attieke with medium size. However, the analysis of the process of production shows difference between Adjoukrou and Avikam producers (Kouassi et al. 2016) which can be explained by their different geographical locations and traditional knowledge (Adjoukrou are from the department of Dabou and Avikam are from the department of Grand-Lahou).

Owing to the arduous nature of the work, the production scale of the traditional varieties is very small. To overcome this constraint, a variety of attiéké – commonly known as ‘garba’ – was developed, consisting of particles of cassava pulp rather than agglomerated grains (Assanvo et al. 2000). The production of this variety is characterized by the shortening and/or non-compliance with the traditional work protocol.

The name garba represents a generic denomination of the product – the used of tuna fish with any kind of attiéké – as well as two activities –production of a specific kind of attiéké and the selling of attiéké by men under hangars. Garba is the most-consumed variety (>50%) (Koffi et Boris 2010) of the total production of attiéké marketed in Abidjan. The production of attiéké is mostly done in Yamoussoukro, the political capital of Côte d'Ivoire.

The production of traditional attiéké is artisanal. This process of production is based on the empirical know-how of the producers' (Yobouet 2016). As part of the promotion of local products, the African Organization of Intellectual Property (AIPO) has identified 29 products with potential GI access including attiéké. A study conducted by the Swiss Centre for Scientific Research in Côte d'Ivoire (Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d'Ivoire; CSRS) on potential GI access for attiéké demonstrated that four types of attiéké actually have the GI product profile in the large attiéké basket of Côte d'Ivoire. These are the Agbodjama also called attiéké of Abidjan, the attiéké of Dabou, the attiéké of Grand-Lahou and the attiéké of Jacqueline. The consumers of attiéké want to pay more for characteristics other than price (Amanzou et al. 2018). This willingness to pay is not based on overall perception of consumers because many of them are not able to distinguish among the varieties of attiéke. By determining reputation and awareness among consumers, we aimed to classify the different types of attiéké to prioritize funding.

3 | METHODOLOGY

Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire, was the chosen site for the current study. The city has the largest proportion of the urban Ivorian population with 4,707,000 inhabitants and 20% of the population (INS 2014). It therefore represents the most important market for attiéké within Côte d'Ivoire and offers a vast outlet for production. To consider the different socioeconomic characteristics of the heterogeneous population within Abidjan, the city was divided according to the relative income per community. A high-income community (Cocody), a middle-income community (Yopougon) and a low-income community (Anyama) were selected randomly.

Four streets were chosen per community and divided according to the four cardinal points (North, South, East and West). A non-exhaustive independent sample of the population was selected according to François Daniel Giezendanner's formula proposed in 2012 (Giezendanner 2012).

$$n = \frac{t^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

According to this formula, the minimum population surveyed was 238 individuals for $p = 0.5$, $1-p = 0.5$ with a confidence level of $s = 95\%$. Therefore, the tolerable error margin was $e = 0.05$ and $t = 1.96$. By establishing an egalitarian distribution, 384 individuals were selected for the district of Abidjan, i.e. 128 individuals per commune, resulting in 32 individuals per district.

The top-of-mind awareness as proxy for notoriety was chosen as a practical criterion to classify the different attiéké varieties with GI potential. Reputation, defined as consumer perception, was measured by recidivism in the use of the product. The assumption underlying the choice of recidivism is that a product of poor quality is not regularly consumed or demanded, whereas a product considered being of excellent quality has a regular demand. The criteria studied are awareness of a specific attiéké variety, the one-time consumption of this variety and the recurrence in daily consumption.

A chi-square test was used for comparing the frequencies of two groups to infer a relationship between X (Yes) and Y (No) when the dependent variable is qualitative.

4 | Results and Discussion

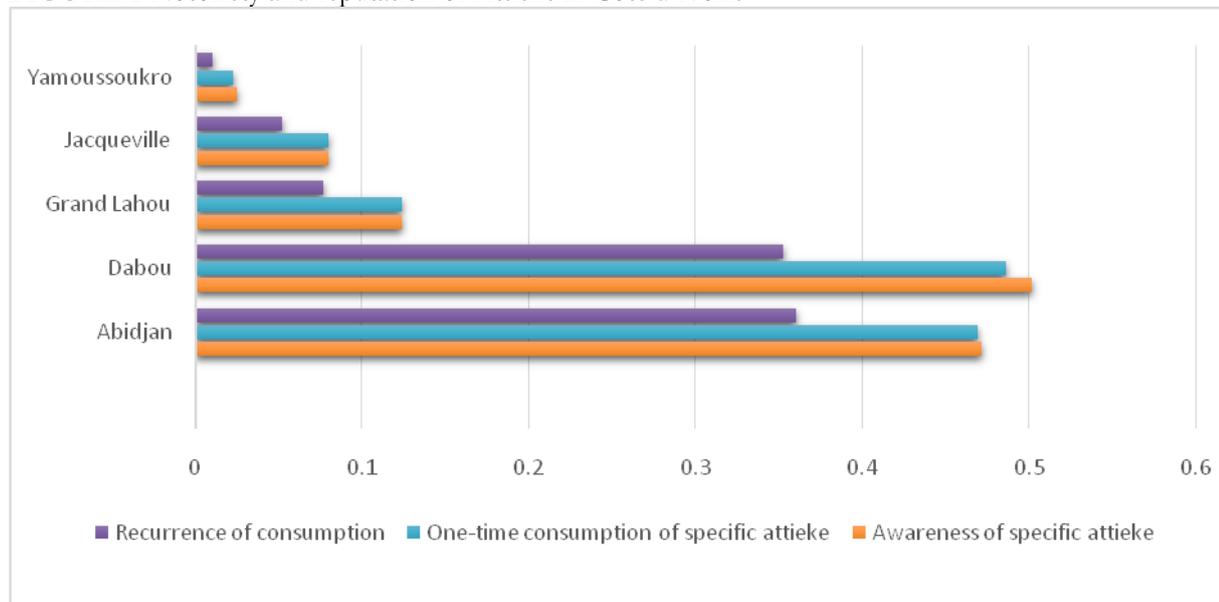
We found lot of outcomes about the awareness of attiéké, the one-time consumption and the recurrence of the consumption in the targeted localities of the investigations. These outcomes have been submitted to chi-square test. These chi-squares were significant in all these cases at 5% except for the reputation in the localities of Grand-Lahou and Jacqueline (see Table 1). This mean that the results found are strong for a statistical analysis and interpretation because chi-squared test is used to determine the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies are considered as the same.

TABLE 1 Chi-squared test of notoriety and reputation of attiéké consumers in Abidjan

| | | Abj | Dabou | Grd Lahou | Jaqvil | Yakro |
|--|-------------------|--------|---------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Awareness of specific attiéké variety | Chi-square | 89.036 | 100.311 | 14.138 | 8.609 | 2.477 |
| | Degree of freedom | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Significance | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.003 | 0.116 |
| One-time consumption of specific attiéké variety | Chi-square | 94.205 | 82.932 | 15.716 | 9.570 | 0.770 |
| | Degree of freedom | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Significance | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.002 | 0.380 |
| Recurrence of consumption | Chi-square | 33.166 | 13.127 | 0.005 | 0.245 | 2.074 |
| | Degree of freedom | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Significance | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.943 | 0.620 | 0.150 |

Source: Own Calculation, Firca-IG project database (2015).

Among the 403 people interviewed during the survey, the attiéké variety of Abidjan named Agbodjama was listed 190 times, one-time consumed by 189 individuals and was regularly claimed in the consumption of 145 people. The Dabou variety was known to 202 people, once consumed by 196 people and claimed to be regularly consumed by 142 participants. The attiéké of Jacquville was known by 32 out of 403 respondents and was claimed to be part of the regular consumption pattern of 31 consumers. Similarly, the attiéké of Grand-Lahou was known by 50 individuals and was claimed to be regularly consumed by 31 consumers.

FIGURE 1 Notoriety and reputation of Attiéké in Côte d'Ivoire

Source: Own Calculation. Firca-IG 2015 project database (2015).

The data analysis indicates that about half of the individuals' surveyed claimed to know the attiéké of Abidjan and Dabou, while less than 15% of them claimed to know the attiéké of Grand-Lahou and Jacquville. The proportion of individuals who claimed to have consumed a specific attiéké variety only once is about 76% for Abidjan, 72% for Dabou, 65% for Jacquville, 62% for Grand-Lahou and 44% for Yamoussoukro.

The probability of having a respondent who knows an attiéké of origin and claimed it to be regularly featured in his/her consumption was 0.1688 for Abidjan, 0.1710 for Dabou, 0.0041 for Jacquville, 0.0095 for Grand-Lahou and 0.0002 for Yamoussoukro.

In terms of notoriety, the attiéké of Dabou was the most consumed among the original attiéké varieties assessed in the current survey. In fact, it has received much promotion (e.g. songs, anecdotes and television programmes) to the point of positioning it as the reference attiéké for half of the district's population. In addition, the attiéké of Dabou is often confused with the attiéké of Abidjan because of the geographic proximity of the Dabou and Abidjan. In terms of notoriety, the attiéké of Jacquville and Grand-Lahou showed also to be popular. However, they benefit from the reputation of the people of Grand-Lahou in terms of technical knowledge. No promotional skylights are offered to them even if the few individuals who have consumed this variety have remained attached to it. This analysis shows that the attiéké of Dabou and Abidjan are the leaders in terms of notoriety. And the challengers (Jacquville and Grand-Lahou) need more advertising to position themselves in the minds of consumers as products of good original quality.

In terms of reputation, Abidjan (76%) is in first place, followed by Dabou (72%), Grand-Lahou (62%) and Jacqueville (44%). The hegemony of Abidjan is undoubtedly explained by its proximity to the consumer market and the fact that it can be named unlike other products.

5 | CONCLUSION

It emerges from the analysis that the approach by notoriety favours the attiéké of Dabou and the approach by reputation favours the attiéké of Abidjan. Based on reputation, the financing of local products should prioritize in the following order: 1) attiéké of Dabou, 2) attiéké of Abidjan, 3) attiéké of Grand-Lahou and finally 4) the attiéké of Jacqueville. However, given the strong commercial potential of the attiéké of Abidjan, owing to its proximity to the final market, giving it a special status it would make sense to prioritize funds for the attiéké in Abidjan, then the Dabou attiéké, the Grand-Lahou attiéké and finally the Jacqueville attiéké. To select a GI product by implementing methods to identify notoriety and reputation is controversial. The debate could be more ambiguous for perfectly similar products, therefore it would be wise to base the analysis of the difference between notoriety and reputation on quantitative data to succeed the implementation of GI, even if the notion of reputation already seem more appropriate.

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