

Title:**The impact of West German consumer prejudice on the appreciation of the sensory quality of East German food and beverage brands****Authors & affiliations:***S. Glassl¹, A. Scharf^{d,2}**¹University of Applied Sciences Nordhausen, Germany**²isi GmbH Göttingen, Germany*

Abstract: (Your abstract must use **Normal style** and must fit in this box. Your abstract should be no longer than 300 words. The box will 'expand' over 2 pages as you add text/diagrams into it.)

With many brands from the food and beverage sector the brand's origin affects the consumers' subjective quality rating more or less positively.

Even 20 years after the reunion in 1989/90 the separation of the two German states in 1949 does not appear to be overcome. Numerous studies prove that part of the West German population is consciously or unconsciously prejudiced against East Germany and East German products respectively. The aim of this study was to reveal preconceptions West German consumers may have about East German food and beverages.

Test design study 1:

As people often may not want to state their prejudices against attitude objects, the purpose was to determine West German consumer attitudes towards food and beverages of different origin by use of the Implicit Association Test (IAT). Two measuring phases supplied varying reaction times depending on compatible/incompatible combinations of target concepts. The IAT-Effect -308 msec verifies strong prejudice in the sample (n=191) of West German consumers against East German food and beverage brands.

A reaction-time-based association test was applied for the validation of these results. Subjects (n=300) had to assign temporary on-screen associations with a positive or negative valency to 12 brands of different origin. Apart from typical East and West German products we also included several fictive brands (Split-half design with East and West German designation of origin). The two-dimensional space of the products combined with the associations gave indication of a prejudiced perception of East German brands (negative items near to them). Despite identical product descriptions and product illustrations the two subsamples also ascribed different associations to the fictive brands only due to the different designation of origin.

Test design study 2:

The aim was to examine how the information that the product (sparkling wine) to be evaluated was produced in East and West Germany respectively affects the evaluation of the sensory product quality by West German consumers.

It was necessary to evaluate the sensory overall quality as well as separate sensory dimensions (n=240) in a monadic sensory test. The impact of the product's origin was achieved through a concept description (sheet with picture of bottle, map with origin and product description) and three subsamples:

- Test group 1: concept description with origin East Germany + sensory test with product A
- Test group 2: concept description with origin West Germany + sensory test with product A
- Control group 3: sensory blind test with product A (without any information)

The evaluation of the sensory product quality subject to the information on the product's origin supplies significant differences grouped according to the subjects' age.