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### Generic vs Brand Name Food Packaging

Large grocery stores frequently manufacture cheaper, generic store brand versions of brand name food products. The aim of this project is to compare and contrast the packaging of generic and brand name food.

Ideally, I would be able to obtain data on at least three different generic store brands. A number of grocery stores come to mind: Safeway, Lucky, Trader Joe's. Not having entered Andronico's or Whole Foods within recent memory, I can't say for sure whether or not they carry generic store brands, but it would be worthwhile to find out. Large department stores like Target or Walmart may also have generic store brands since they now carry a large quantity of food.

For simplicity, I will be limiting my study to only to food products that come in sealed packages (eliminating fresh produce and meat). Only generic products that have an easily recognizable brand name equivalent or are displayed with exactly one other equivalent buying option will be considered. The aim is to eliminate generic store products for items that don't have a distinct brand name equivalent (for example, generic brand potato chips). Ideally, I would like to collect data on all products that meet the above qualifications in a given store. At this point, it seems like a feasible task, but if it turns out to be impractical, I will have to devise some sort of sampling procedure. I will address this problem only if it arises.

Below are questions that I hope to address:

*Does generic packaging tend to be is plainer and deemphasize brand name?* Common sense says yes, but is it actually true? Things to look for: the presence or absence of images and graphics on the packaging; the size of the brand name in proportion to the rest of the package; the frequency with which the brand name appears on the package.

*Do generic store brands attempt to "mimic" brand packaging, or do they attempt to create their own recognizable brand?* (I will be working with the assumption that brand name products exist prior to the store brand variants.) This is basically an exercise in comparing and contrasting the colors, fonts, package dimensions, photo angles and positioning et al used in the generic and brand name packaging for a given product. If possible, I would also like to compare the levels of consistency in branding/style used across multiple products for both generic and brand name products. It may also be meaningful to keep track of whether or not (and to what extent) a given product package mentions other products from the same brand. If generic products tend to do this more frequently, it might be a sign of attempting to create their own brand.

*Does brand name packaging more frequently feature sentimental back-stories, recipes, games, activities, and other such "bonus material" that doesn't directly pertain to product nutritional/distribution information?* If I were to hazard a guess, I would say yes (especially for sentimental back-stories), but this may not be exclusively true. It would also be interesting to compare the language and style used in the descriptive text on packaging, but this may not be very feasible or even very meaningful.