



Siberian Cedar in Russian Business Naming: A Case Study

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Abstract: Business naming is important in the modern economy, but it can differ between countries. This makes it urgent to pay attention to representative examples of business naming (to be distinguished from brand naming) from different countries. This case study focuses on the usage of Siberian cedar in the names of Russian firms. This huge tree from taiga forests is not a true cedar, but pine. The national database permits the identification of 87 organizations named after Siberian cedar. Their geographical distribution is mapped, and their relation to industries is established. It is found that the considered firms are registered in 19 regions of Russia. A total of 42% of these regions are not Siberian, and they host 18% of the firms. A total of 16 types of activities characterize the considered firms, and more than half of the industries are not related to the usage of this tree. Hypothetically, these findings can be explained by the general interest of Russians in Siberia and their awareness of Siberian cedar coupled with the symbolic potential of this tree, which is able to symbolize stability and power. The studied principle of business naming contributes to the environmental knowledge of the public.



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1. Introduction

Business names are something more than “just names” because they are determined socially (Fox 2011). They facilitate effective strategic communication (Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016), which is essential for modern firms. Kollmann and Suckow (2007) showed that proper naming matters in the contemporary net economy. Moreover, names are linked to confidentiality-related ethics (Guenther 2009). Business names should be distinguished from brand names; the former are more important to businessmen, whereas the latter are more important to customers. Business naming has been studied less extensively than brand naming, and, thus, the former still requires investigation.

Various aspects of business naming have been studied in different countries. Social and cultural frameworks determine peculiarities of business naming in South Africa (Herbert 1999). Raento and Douglass (2001) found several determinants of casino naming in Las Vegas. Latino stores and restaurants in Florida are given names with links to Latino culture, but also following effective marketing strategies (Bletzer 2003). Shevliakova (2020) offered analysis of the naming principles in the Italian design industry. The growth of the so-called Arctic tourism has stimulated active inclusion of the word “Arctic” into the firms’ names (Marjavaara et al. 2022). Although brand naming differs from business naming, it is reasonable to note similar research. For instance, Alserhan and Alserhan (2012) developed a new method for the assessment of trade name distinctiveness, and special meanings of brand names have been examined in the Chinese-speaking countries (Kałużńska 2021).

The above-mentioned research implies that business naming, even if it is designed for effective communication, demonstrates strong links to cultural frameworks and national

traditions, reflects social situations, and can be related to particular social initiatives. Apparently, when a given firm aims at international expansion, naming may “anchor” it in the national heritage. Indeed, the already accumulated knowledge (see above) should be enlarged with examples from many countries taking into account their peculiarities. Moreover, attention has been paid to naming in the English language (Friedrich 2002), whereas not so much is known about naming in other linguistic “spaces” and, particularly, Russia.

Russia is famous for its rich cultural life and traditions, which influence on its business environment (Chimenson et al. 2022; Fey and Shekshnia 2011; Lubsky et al. 2016). Business naming in this country has already been studied, but there are only a few works, focusing on very particular aspects. Ustinova (2006) examined the importance of English in Russian advertisements (this topic differs from business naming *sensu stricto*). According to Fedosyuk and Baklanova (2017), business naming in Russia has its own specific features linked to the current state of communication in the business sphere. Kormazina et al. (2022) related naming practices in this country to its cultural peculiarities and, particularly, its openness and famous hospitality. These studies implied that the examination of business naming in Russia and its determinants is a promising research direction, although their current understanding is incomplete. If so, analyzing examples of business naming in Russia remains an urgent task.

The objective of the present paper is to provide a novel piece of information about business naming in Russia. Attention is paid to Siberian cedar, a big tree distributed widely in taiga forests with seeds used in contemporary Russian cuisine. Surprisingly, this tree appears in the names of many firms. Brief and rather descriptive papers such as this seem to be necessary to illustrate the diversity of practices of business naming. Moreover, sustainable development is the focus of the present research (Elkington 1994; Manioudis and Meramveliotakis 2022; Tomislav 2018), and its relation to business communication is established (García-Sánchez et al. 2020). Finding the living symbol of the taiga ecosystem in firms’ names stresses the importance of onomastic studies for business “greening”.

2. Siberian Cedar: An Outline

Siberian cedar is a common, but scientifically questionable, name for a large coniferous tree. Its correct name is Siberian pine (*Pinus sibirica* Du Tour, 1803), and it is not related to true cedars (*Cedrus*). It is widely distributed in the Siberian taiga—a dense forest dominated by conifers. This tree is commonly found in West Siberia, southern East Siberia, and in some parts of the Urals (Afonin et al. 2008). However, it is absent in the northern and northeastern parts of Siberia because of unfavorable permafrost conditions. The spatial distribution of Siberian cedar differed in the historical past. For instance, it expanded after the cutting of this tree was prohibited in the 1980s (Myasnikov 2019). Mountain ecosystems with this tree demonstrate certain sustainability (Danilina et al. 2020). Artificial plantations (particularly, for nut production purposes) have been created (Danchenko et al. 2016; Titov 2019). Siberian cedar is known for not only its huge physical dimensions (height up to 45 m, stem diameter up to 2 m, age up to 500 years), but also its practical uses (Figure 1). The most in demand are its edible seeds, traditionally referred to as nuts.

Pine nuts and their oil have been gaining attention for more than a century. The pioneering works by Adams and Holmes (2013) and Gill (1933) were followed by many in-depth investigations of these nuts. Bolling et al. (2011) summarized the information about their phytochemicals, which can be useful to human health. Awan and Pettenella (2017) examined the international market for these nuts and paid close attention to both food properties and forestry practices. Dyshluk et al. (2018) explained that pine nuts (particularly those of Siberian cedar) can be used in dairy production, with benefits to dairy product properties and human health. Meshgi and Asadi-Gharneh (2019) demonstrated that nuts from pine species differ in the content of oil and acids, and some of them are more suitable for consumption. Guàrdia et al. (2021) considered the agronomic aspects of pine nut production.



Figure 1. Siberian “cedar” (center), its pines and seeds (left), and some common products for sale (right).

The usage of Siberian cedar has also been investigated actively. For instance, [Rogachev and Salakhutdinov \(2015\)](#) explained that this tree with its unique chemical properties (not restricted to only nuts) has been used for the production of wood, needles, soft resin, and other things. [Zadernowski et al. \(2009\)](#) found unusual fatty acids in pine nut oil. [Bochkarev et al. \(2016\)](#) noted that oilcake from nuts can be important. According to [Derzhapolskaya et al. \(2022\)](#), pine nut cake can be considered a new food source of protein, and, thus, vegetable milk can be produced from it ([Egorova et al. 2017](#)). Antioxidant properties of seed extract have been studied ([Lantto et al. 2009](#)). These nuts also seem to be useful in sports nutrition ([Babich et al. 2017](#)). Importantly, the waste from nuts can be used with some benefits: bio-coal pellets can be produced from pine nut shells ([Tabakaev et al. 2022](#)), and this kind of waste can be used as an additive to the diet of cows to increase milk yield ([Ivanov et al. 2022](#)). The considered tree is a source of edible matter in Russia, and it is already used actively in the Russian (not only Siberian) cuisine. Nuts and nut-bearing products are sold widely as a kind of delicious and healthy food product. Siberian cedar has also been used in Mongolia since the times of the Mongolian Empire ([Hartwig 2008](#); [Rösch et al. 2005](#)). [Liu et al. \(2002\)](#) addressed the possibility of the introduction of Siberian cedar to increase boreal forest quality and nut production in contemporary China.

3. Materials and Methods

For the purposes of the present study, information about all Russian firms with the words “Siberian” and “cedar” in their names was collected from the online database “SPARK” ([Interfax 2022](#)). This database is an open resource summarizing the basic information about thousands of firms registered in Russia. This database is very comprehensive, and it is updated regularly. Thus, it serves the purposes of the present study ideally. A total of 87 firms using the expressions “Siberian cedar” or “cedar of Siberia” in their names were found. The exact names of firms, their geographical affinity (place of registration), and their activities (industry) were recorded. The parameters of financial performance are not employed because this information is confidential. To avoid any occasional challenge to the firms’ reputation, they are considered in this paper anonymously (anyway, they bear similarly-styled names such as “Siberian cedar Ltd.”).

The analysis is chiefly descriptive, which matches the objective of the present contribution. Despite its simplicity, this analysis explores a novel analytical perspective. It focuses on the geographical and industrial frame of business naming, which can be explored only in countries with very large territories and diversified economies. The correspondence of these frames to the actual distribution and usage of the object, after which firms are named, allows making judgments about whether this object is used as a kind of important symbol.

Two procedures are used. The first procedure is mapping the geographical distribution of firms named after Siberian cedar. Their affinity to particular regions (official administrative units of Russia) and settlements is established. They can be compared to the boundaries of Siberia and the geographical distribution of Siberian cedar delineated by Afonin et al. (2008). The second procedure aims at establishing the distribution of the firms by their activities, i.e., by industries. This allows an understanding of whether these firms concentrate on the industries potentially related to the usage of Siberian cedar (e.g., forestry or food production) and whether this distribution differs between the Siberian and non-Siberian regions. These procedures permit the accumulation of some original knowledge, which is subject to further interpretations.

4. Results

Firms named after Siberian cedar are found in 19 regions, 8 of which are not Siberian (Figure 2). This means that about a quarter of all Russian regions host organizations with such names, and a third of them are not Siberian. As for the Siberian regions, about a third of them do not host the considered firms, but this is not surprising because Siberian cedar does not grow in these regions. Speaking of the firms, 84% of them are registered in Siberia, and 18% of the firms are found beyond its limits (Figure 2). Of the regions with the largest number of organizations, four (Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Tomsk, and Irkutsk) are Siberian, and Moscow and the Moscow Region grouped in this study are not Siberian.

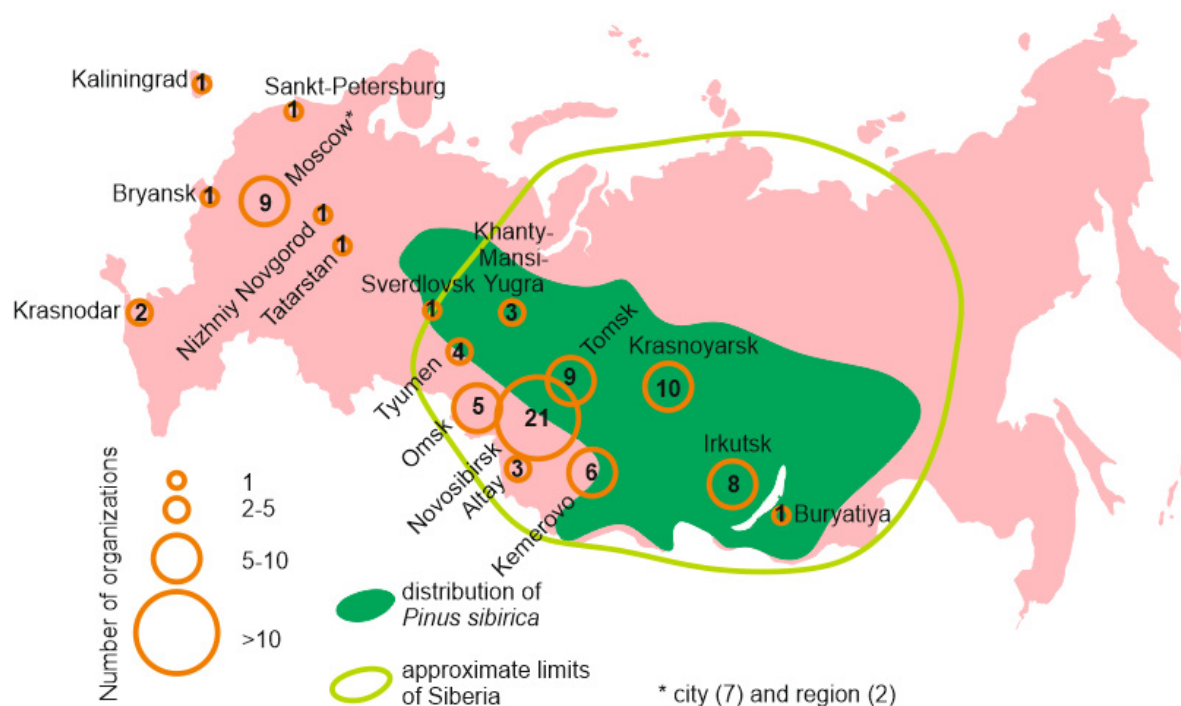


Figure 2. Geographical affinity of the firms using Siberian cedar in their names.

The considered firms' names are found in 46 settlements (cities, towns, and villages), 11 of which are located outside Siberia. Although many firms are concentrated in the administrative centers of the regions, the cases of the Irkutsk and Tomsk regions provide

the opposite line of evidence: 75% and 78% of the firms from these regions are not registered in their administrative centers, respectively.

Considering the geographical distribution of the tree, the proportions established above are generally the same: up to 20% of the firms named after Siberian cedar are located where it does not grow (Figure 2). Notably, the regions with many firms of this kind represent the periphery of the cedar's area (for instance, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo, and Omsk). This occurs because of the relatively smaller size of the regions of southern Siberia and their high economic activity (the latter results in larger numbers of firms). The Khanty-Mansi-Yugra, Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk, and Irkutsk regions, which embrace a significant part of the area of Siberian cedar, host a third of the considered firms.

A total of 16 types of activities (industries) are established for the considered firms, which is evidence of their heterogeneity (Figure 3). The most common are trade, forestry, wood production, and construction. Apparently, a little more than half of the activities and the relevant firms are not linked to the usage of Siberian cedar. This is also true for the most common industries indicated above. The distribution of the firms by the industries in the Siberian and non-Siberian regions differs. In the Siberian regions, the main activities of the considered firms are trade, forestry, and wood production. Many of them can be related to the usage of cedar. In the non-Siberian regions, the main activities are trade and construction, and the relevant firms cannot be linked to the usage of cedar. Nonetheless, the industries and the firms unrelated to the usage of cedar are rather numerous in both Siberian and non-Siberian regions.

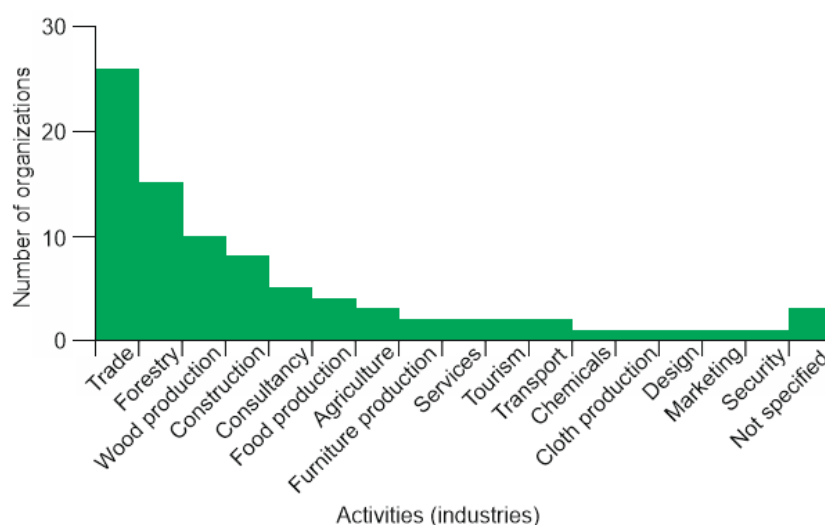


Figure 3. Industry affinity of the firms using Siberian cedar in their names.

5. Discussion

The results of the undertaken investigation allow the formulation of two inferences. First, the naming of businesses after Siberian cedar is “anchored” in Siberia, but it also extends far beyond the limits of this territory. Second, this business naming may often be symbolic as many firms do not use this tree. Taken together, these findings imply that the actual usage of Siberian cedar in business naming is an all-Russian phenomenon, which cannot be explained by the geographical location of the firms and their specialization. For instance, why do firms from the Krasnodar Region or Moscow, where this tree does not grow, and specializing in consultancy or transport, for the purposes of which this tree is not used, prefer to use the tree's name in their own names? A hypothetical, but suitable explanation is that Siberian cedar means something more than “just tree” to Russians. Indeed, special research is necessary to verify this explanation, but two preliminary assumptions should be taken into account.

First, this explanation can be reasonable if the tree is popular in the entire country. Alternatively, its usage in business naming would be futile. Only broad public aware-

ness of what is Siberian cedar makes the firms' names recognizable on the country-wide scale. There is a stereotypical vision of Siberia in Russian society: this territory is closely associated with taiga forests and cold weather (Kondrat'eva 2019a, 2019b). It seems to be remote, wild, and enigmatic to a significant degree. This vision has been developed historically in Russian society as implied by historical records and cultural production (Dameshek et al. 2017; Golovneva and Golovnev 2017; Matkhanova and Rodigina 2019). One should take into account that a significant part of the Russian population concentrated outside Siberia in the historical past, and, thus, the majority of judgments of Siberia were made from the outside. In the Soviet times, the above-mentioned vision remained together with the increase in the awareness of Siberia during its industrial "conquest"; the related processes facilitated broad interest of Russians in various Siberia-related themes, which were actively popularized (Sitnikova 2015). As a result, the Siberian cedar, a characteristic tree of this territory, has become known widely. Currently, the popularity of this tree is facilitated by the active promotion of pine nuts as a food product, which is sold in stores and local markets far beyond Siberia (Figure 1).

Second, the proposed explanation can be meaningful if the tree symbolizes some general and highly-valuable properties like stability and power. The symbolism of trees is well known (Crews 2003; Qi 2022; Von Hellermann 2016). The impressive size and age, the relatively wide distribution, as well as the practical importance of the Siberian cedar make it an ideal candidate for being the symbolic tree of Siberia. Hypothetically, it can symbolize not only a particular geographical domain but also the power of nature. Although special investigations are necessary to measure the actual symbolism of this tree in contemporary Russian society, its symbolic potential is indisputable.

The knowledge presented above implies that the wide usage of Siberian cedar in Russian business naming is complex. Somewhat similar phenomena were reported earlier in other places in Russia (Klimenko and Ruth 2018) and abroad (Zhang and Chan 2017).

Indeed, the business naming after Siberian cedar facilitates public awareness of this tree, which itself is important for the growth of the people's environmental knowledge. If so, this naming may contribute to environmental sustainability, especially because the conservation and introduction of Siberian cedar are on agenda (Myasnikov 2019; Il'ichev and Shuvaev 2016; Khamitov et al. 2022). It is reasonable to question whether the inclusion of a notable tree species in the name of a given firm is a sign of corporate environmental responsibility. The latter is one of the most studied and socially demanded aspects of contemporary business activities, although often discussed with emphasis on economical and societal rather than "pure" ecological benefits (Camilleri 2022; Chuang and Huang 2018; Kasych et al. 2020; Post et al. 2011; Wahba 2008). It is clear that corporate environmental responsibility is based on strategic thinking and pro-environmental intentions. Naming some (if not many) firms after Siberian cedar can be done for only marketing purposes—for instance, to symbolize the power of an organization or to stress its geographical identity. Such practices cannot be judged as true environmental responsibility. Nonetheless, some organizations are directly involved in the conservation, restoration, or introduction of the tree, or intend to relate their name to some environmental initiatives. In these cases, their names signify true corporate environmental responsibility. In other words, the answer to the question raised above depends on the purposes of the business naming in each given case.

6. Conclusions

The present study documents the example of usage of a particular tree, namely Siberian cedar, in contemporary Russian business naming on the territory much larger than where this tree grows and in industries where this tree is not used. The registered patterns can be explained by the stereotypical vision of Siberia and this tree in Russian society. However, this explanation is tentative and rather hypothetical.

Siberian cedar, which is neither a true cedar nor only Siberian (by the usage of its name) can be a well-understood, country-specific symbol. Such business naming can work

in the only geographical space where the broad public is aware of the given symbol and have some stereotypical visions related to it. In the considered example, this geographical space is limited to Russia. The main limitation of the present study is linked to its focus on names themselves, whereas surveying the opinions of businessmen is left for further investigations.

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