



Summer 2007 AMA Educators' Conference High Impact Sessions

Session 4.5 Methodological Considerations in Building an Early Research Career

Session Chair: James E. Burroughs, University of Virginia

Participants:

Richard Bagozzi, University of Michigan

Jan-Benedict E.M. Steencamp, University of North Carolina

David Crockett, University of South Carolina

Richard G. Netemeyer, University of Virginia

Nancy Whang also helped organize the session

Session Summary Writer: *Kate Loveland, Arizona State University*

Many young scholars are often interested in how great research careers are begun and what the tradeoffs there are between focusing on substantive versus methodological issues. In this session, both of these issues were addressed. What was particularly interesting was that while the panel members represented a wide range of methodological expertise, from structural equation modeling to consumer culture theory the panel members agreed that their interests in methodological issues stemmed from a desire to find the most appropriate tool to address the substantive issues that they found most compelling.

When asked about the tradeoffs between building expertise in substantive issues versus methodological issues, the panelists advised students to follow their interests, as research and expertise is often very evolutionary in nature. While expertise in a specific method was often driven by substantive needs for the panel members, there was a general consensus that it is very rare for a single scholar to be both a superlative theorist and methodologist. Instead, students are advised to choose areas that they feel deeply about, and then to make a commitment to those choices, building an expertise in the methodology of that area.

In addition to advice about what to do, some useful advice was also given about behaviors to avoid. Young scholars were advised that when collaborating on a project, to make sure not to divide the labor too many ways and to learn about all aspects of the project, so that everyone contributes and learning continues. Also, when doing interpretive work, scholars shouldn't get distracted by behavior, but rather remember that the goal of interpretive work is to search for meaning! When doing survey research,

single source data is getting harder and harder to publish. Knowing this, one should try to use multiple sources, look for non-linear relationships, and use longitudinal data whenever possible.

The general message for this session: let your substantive research interests drive your methodological expertise, and do what you enjoy!