

**Summaries of Selected Sessions from the
2008 AMA Winter Educators' Conference
(Austin, TX)**

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3.2 Marketing Management, Strategy, and Channels (Special Session)

Methodological Issues in Marketing Management Research: Perspectives from Authors and Editors

Chair:

Aric Rindfleisch, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Panelists:

Rajesh Chandy, University of Minnesota

Rajdeep Grewal, Penn State University

Shankar Ganesan, University of Arizona

Donald Lehmann, Columbia University

David Stewart, University of Southern California

Session Summary Writer: Rand Wergin, Oklahoma State University

The focus of session 3.2 was to discuss the current state of methodological issues in marketing research. Dr. Rindfleisch introduced the session with this quote “I do not know the full social conditions of the best intellectual workmanship, but certainly surrounding oneself by a circle of people who will listen and talk is one of them.”--C. Wright Mills, 1959

The session began with a presentation by David Stewart from the University of Southern California. His introduction was centered on the question “How does the method bias the hypothesis?” He suggests that facts and truth are often bound up in the research method we use.

The second panelist was Don Lehman of Columbia University. He brought four points to the discussion. First, no one method can be used to find truth. Multiple methods and triangulation ought to be used to determine the truth. He offered a list of several research methods available. His second point was that the metrics that researchers use ought to reflect real world performance of the firm. Stock prices are commonly used and offer a realistic validation of the performance of a firm. Third, meta-analysis is an important tool for researchers. He suggests that it is not atheoretical, but important for the purposes of theory building. Finally, he suggests that simple analysis is a valuable tool. He encourages researchers not to neglect the simple usefulness of showing the means.

The third panelist, Rajdeep Grewal from Pennsylvania State University, presented three points for researchers to consider. He began by discussing the features of contemporary data analysis. He suggests that multivariate research will continue to be more common, that our data will increasingly be temporally related, and that we will continue to see a predominance of cross-sectional data. He discussed the theoretical challenges in the future for temporal and cross-sectional data. Temporal patterns include evolution, path dependence, regime shifts, and dynamics. He also discussed the challenges with cross sectional dependence, which includes sharing competitive space, sharing knowledge, and competitive behaviors. He concluded with a discussion on models that account for the challenges posed in contemporary data analysis.

Rajesh Chandy was the fourth panelist. He presented a perspective where the researcher has opportunities in data analysis. He suggests that authors look within a single industry, which allows for control of much variability. He suggests looking across levels of analysis and looking beyond borders, i.e., get international data, in order to gain insight. Looking above the firm, or at the top levels of the firm and looking at the history of the firm are also ways to discover insights.

The final presentation was from Shankar Ganesan of the University of Arizona. He suggests that multimethod studies are increasingly common. The advantages of multimethod studies are that each method leads to valid empirical and theoretical generalizations and rival explanations are more readily invalidated. Since each individual method is imperfect, a cooperation of methods can be used to manage the weaknesses in the individual studies. Researchers should be looking for a convergence and a divergence in the analysis. The convergence indicates support for a strong, unifying theory. A divergence indicates that explanations could be made through theory extension.