

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

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6.2 Branding and Marketing Communications (Special Session)

Current Issues in Brand Management Research

Chair:

Rebecca J. Slotegraaf, Indiana University

Participants:

Branding Challenges in Global Markets

Rajendra Srivastava, Emory University

Brand Portfolio Strategy and Firm Performance

Neil A Morgan, Indiana University

Lopo L Rego, University of Iowa

Individual Differences in Brand Extension Evaluation: The Role of Brand Centricity

Sanjay Puligadda, Miami University of Ohio

William Taylor Ross, Jr., Pennsylvania State University

Rajdeep Grewal, Pennsylvania State University

Understanding the Brawn, Beauty, and Brain Behind Co-Branding: Why Co-branding Involves More than Matching Brand Images

Yuna Kim, Indiana University

Rebecca J Slotegraaf, Indiana University

Neil A Morgan, Indiana University

Session Summary Writer: Mayoor Mohan; Oklahoma State University

Session 6.2 was one of the many special sessions in the Branding and Marketing Communication track. The focus of the special session was to identify relevant issues in branding, which could help focus academics towards conducting pertinent yet cutting edge branding research. Four papers, presented by well-known scholars in the area, dealing with varying aspects of branding were presented.

The session began with a presentation by Neil Morgan of Indiana University. He presented his work titled "Brand Portfolio Strategy and Firm Performance," which examines how different brand portfolio strategies can have varying effects on a firm's financial performance. The core of the research tackles issues concerning whether or not a firm should allow its brands within a portfolio to compete against each other or let them compliment each other. He argues that the choice of how brands within a portfolio co exist with each other has ramifications for strategy decisions dealing with how the brands should be positioned in the market and how to target consumers. Dr. Morgan argues that this is a new stream of research on which he plans to focus and expand, and that this paper is the first piece of research that has come out of it. An initial study within the paper finds that brand portfolio strategy decisions are indeed important, and that its impact depends on performance metrics. He concluded by stating that the relationships between brand portfolio strategies and firm performance are more complex than current theories suggest.

The second paper was presented by Sanjay Puligadda of Miami University of Ohio. This paper concentrated a lot more on the consumer behavior side of branding. Dr. Puligadda argues that individual differences in brand extension evaluations are moderated by what he calls brand centricity. He states that brand centricity is a new construct that looks at how people use schemas to create and evaluate brand extensions. A scale development study was part of the paper presented, and brand centricity is measured by a 10-item reflective scale. The authors argue that there are important contributions to consumer behavior, the theoretical domain, and managers in general. Currently the paper has is going through a revise and resubmit at Journal of Consumer Research.

Ms. Kim from Indiana University presented the 3rd paper which dealt with co branding. Basically she argues that co branding has more to it than making sure that two brand images match on

various dimensions. The paper suggests that various characteristics of the partnering firm have to also match in order for successful co branding. However the dimensions on which partnering firm have to match can change depending on whether the co branding is an 'in-house' or 'out-of-house' exercise. Some of these dimensions of partner characteristics include breadth of portfolio, intra portfolio competition, asymmetric/symmetric brand equity and others. An initial study involved the use of secondary data, and using firm performance as the primary dependent variable, the paper finds initial support for its hypotheses.

The final paper was presented by Rajendra Srivastava of Emory University. His presentation focused on new opportunities and various other issues in the global branding environment. He strongly believes that we are moving from a B2B and B2C environment to a B2C2B type of market. He feels that brands will play an important role in such an environment, and that researchers should focus on some important dimensions of branding. These include how globalization is affecting branding, the role of design in branding, how brands can be effectively leveraged, and how brands can be effectively valued. He feels that there is no global branding strategy that can be successfully adopted and that firms need to treat their brands with care.