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*Reviewed by Abhijit Roy, Department of Marketing,
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EDITORIAL

The paper by Ketelaar et al is a generalization study which determines if open advertisements for brands differing in familiarity can be successfully used as a cross cultural advertising tool. Open ads do not guide consumers towards a ready-made interpretation and require more effort to decipher than closed ads. The study was performed in five European nationalities and the United States. A randomized 4-group design was used with ten advertisements, each in four different versions, with attitude toward the ad as the dependent variable. For each of the ads, we created an open (without slogan) version and a closed (with slogan) version, both in an unfamiliar and a familiar brand version.

The results, which are robust across different nationalities, show that the attitude towards closed ads with familiar brands is more positive than towards open advertisements with unfamiliar brands. The lack of text and the use of images is an effective way to advertise across borders as it gets around language barriers. The standardization of the advertisement lowers costs because only one, textless advertisement is needed for different nationalities. By using the same advertisement everywhere, there is a chance of achieving a uniform market image. The negative effect of openness and the positive effect of brand familiarity can be explained by ease of comprehension. When advertisers aim their campaigns at different nationalities, they might consider using open advertisements in combination with unfamiliar brands, but only if these ads are easy to understand. If not so, advertisers are better off using closed ads. Furthermore, the results suggest that making sure that open ads will be easy to understand will be more difficult to accomplish for unfamiliar brands than for familiar brands. Considering its potential negative effects and the large amounts of money involved in the advertising business, we may conclude that the open ad-strategy seems a risky venture.

The purpose of the paper by Palegato et al. is to explore audience perceptions of brand dimensions of a cultural product - in this case the newly constructed, and widely commented on, Opera House in Oslo, Norway. In our research we wanted to uncover the nature of perceptions prior to attending a performance at the Opera House and whether those perceptions had changed as a result of what had been experienced. To undertake this research, we conducted 201 interviews prior to a performance and 111 interviews afterwards, followed by two focus groups.

People already had clear perceptions before the performance experience, but our research shows there were three significant brand dimensions that were positively affected by attending the Opera House: artistic innovation, pride, and for ordinary people/everyone. Of particular note is that pride featured highly in consumer associations both before and after consumption. We identified pride as a cultural brand dimension, which is a function of 'enthusiasm' and 'knowledge', which can be linked to the building and to the performance. Overall, the strength of the brand dimensions indicates that consumers can have strong associations (even a sense of closeness) with a cultural brand prior to experiencing it.

There are two key implications of our study. The first is that while cultural and brand managers may assume that the marketing of a cultural brand begins when they decide to communicate, in fact, a brand may already have acquired brand dimensions. Observation of a building as it is constructed, word-of-mouth recommendation, and media commentary begin to create associations and perceptions of the brand. In our study, most of the brand dimensions aligned before and after the visit, but it is also possible that people may have confused or negative perceptions, which may be subsequently difficult to alter. This observation should remind managers (especially those involved in the construction of a new cultural venue) that the desired brand needs to be considered from the very outset.

The second key implication is that pride is an important brand dimension to foster. This dimension is elusive, but our qualitative research indicates that the more accessible the brand is (in the case of the Oslo Opera House people could walk on the roof of the building prior to its opening) and the more it connects with significant symbols (e.g., glacier, Norway, snow), the more likely pride will exist. Again, this has implications for brand thinking: fostering pride needs to be incorporated into the earliest stages of an initiative, and managers should be encouraged to make cultural venues and experiences as accessible as possible to avoid the temptations of elitism.

The growth of private label brands (also known as store brands or retailer brands) has intensified in recent years in most countries around the world and this can be seen as a threat to manufacturer brands. The increasing importance of private label brands as a permanent feature of grocery retail shelves has warranted an investigation into their relational coexistence with manufacturer brands since manufacturer brands have traditionally dominated the shelves. As private labels continue to make inroads into grocery retail product categories, an interesting question arises on the extent to which private label share can grow in relation to manufacturer brands; a question that has never been answered conclusively.

The aim of the study by Chimhundu and Chadee is to gain insights into private label share trends with a view to better understand how share growth might stabilise. The study focused on the interplay between retail concentration and private label quality spectrum in the determination of private label share growth and stabilisation. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions: Do different levels of grocery retail concentration and private label quality spectrum result in different private label share patterns? What patterns of private label share trends are exhibited by different combinations of level of grocery retail concentration and degree of employment of private label quality spectrum?

The research employed the multiple-case study methodology and investigated aggregate share trends of private label brands in four countries; UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand, over a fourteen year period. The data collected and analysed included private label share trends, private label quality spectrum and grocery retail concentration levels. The major finding was that, when private label share finally reaches the state of stabilisation, there are two possible points of such equilibrium. The states of equilibrium have been termed mature and premature equilibrium in this research. One is a premature point in that there is still potential to go higher if the ideal conditions are made to prevail, and the other is mature in that there is limited scope to go beyond it. The resultant state of equilibrium is largely driven by the combination of the degree of exploitation of private label quality spectrum and the concentration level of the grocery retail industry. As a snapshot of the results of this research, a private label quality spectrum / grocery retail concentration matrix was created.

The research has managerial and business policy implications. Executives should bear in mind that; to attain the state of mature equilibrium, full exploitation of the private label quality spectrum consisting of Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 private label brands is necessary in business environments of both high and low retail concentration. Actively seeking opportunities for retail consolidation would additionally be a mandatory route in environments of low retail concentration. This is because, neither high retail concentration alone nor full exploitation of the private label quality spectrum alone is sufficient to enable the attainment of mature equilibrium. Both conditions have to be existent for mature equilibrium to be attained. Furthermore, decisions on private label quality spectrum have a strong influence on the competitive progress of private labels against manufacturer brands. The strategic choices taken on the level of exploitation of

private label quality spectrum have far reaching implications on the competitiveness of private labels against manufacturer brands on supermarket shelves.

The study by Aksoy and Basaran may help businesses which are willing to provide better quality services to their online consumers. Also, it is considered that it contributes to the theoretical development of literature by explaining customers' acceptance of the internet in purchasing products and services. Based on the study results, businesses which sell their products and services over the internet, must organize their web sites in such a manner that consumers can easily perform their operations. To this end, the prepared guidelines for purchase and payment procedures should be clear, and easily understandable to consumers. Also, businesses must consider the desires and needs of consumers for online shopping. Businesses which want to create more useful web layout within the scope of sales over the internet, should be more informative about the contents of products and services, should provide time savings to consumers by serving them quicker, and must establish more flexible return and exchange policies. Businesses have to provide confidence to consumers to protect their personal information, and account or credit card information that are required during payment. Also, accurate, complete and timely delivery of the product or service is important to give confidence. It is determined that, the opinions of the communities such as family and friends that within the consumers' inner circle, affect their beliefs regarding online shopping usefulness and intentions of shopping online. Therefore, businesses must consider the thoughts, expressions and behaviours of their target group's inner circle. In addition, it should be noted that businesses should understand consumers' demand for their web sites and should offer more customized features on the basis of the specific needs of consumers such as providing online support to them when they need it during the process of online shopping.

The paper by Vargas-Hernandez and Burgos-Campero analyzes the theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of neuro-marketing for designing business strategies. The methods of "articulated answers" as market research, surveys and focus groups to name some of them, are not ideal to know the way a person feels about a product or service because it is difficult to describe in precise words the emotions experienced by a person to a stimulus such as a product. In the case of focus groups participants' responses may be influenced by the dominant group subjects, in addition to factors such as incentives, time and pressure that may have some interference in its report. Surveys in turn require substantial samples and design tools developed to be able to counter variables such as language, education and culture between subjects tested (Pradeep, 2010, 10). In contrast, Neuro-scientific methodologies provide insight through neuro-imaging, brain areas involved and subconscious processes without conscious effort of the participants. It offers the possibility to study in real time, allowing the viewer to understand the phenomena related to specific times of the test. Most of these methods measure the physiological response noninvasively. However, each has certain limitations which are discussed through the paper. The main conclusion is that neuro-marketing allows us to know the customer's reactions in terms of brain activation without the need to appeal to the report of his conscious experience. In consequence the firms will be able to develop capacities and valuable resources to create focal strategies.

Nowadays, there is an increasing turn to purchasing private label products. A combination of good price and quality makes them attractive to consumers. Businesses spend a great amount of money on research in order to identify consumers' behavior. Consumers are becoming more demanding in order to satisfy their needs while they are looking for products that can combine high quality and low prices. Thus, Consumers are becoming familiar with private label products that

are a good alternative choice to advertised brand labels. Retailers are pushed towards investing in the grocery market to maximize their profits. The aim of the study by Angelaki et al. is to demonstrate that applying consumer behavior theory to the growing and relevant area of brand stores can provide information for decisions that may not be typically reviewed. This survey was deployed within various population segments across Crete. A sample of 575 customers, aged over 18, was chosen and the survey was conducted both face to face and via the internet.

The research aim of this survey is to identify how Cretan consumers behave concerning private label products and their opinion of these products. Private label products present significant growth in the last few years. Due to their competitive prices and attractive offers, consumers have become familiar with these products. It is found that people believe that they have the same quality and packaging as national brand products while some people also note that some of these products are of better quality which makes them more competitive with national brand products. The only drawback noted was their bad reputation. The majority of people who purchase private labels prefer stationery products, household detergents and other detergent products. Nowadays, private label products offer an alternative choice for people and help them to reduce their monthly family expenditure. The lower costs associated with advertising, research and marketing makes them more competitive in the grocery market.

Enjoy reading the journal!

Erdener Kaynak
Editor-in-Chief

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