
Editorial

The current issue of the *Journal of Product and Brand Management* (Vol. 25 No. 2) has in total eight contributions; all in the area of product and brand management. Continuing the 25th year celebration of the journal, this issue starts with a contribution from Jean-Nöel Kapferer, member of the Journal's Senior Advisory Board; four papers are regular submissions; and three papers stem from the call for papers for the special issue on branding and neuroscience. The 16 authors who have authored the papers in this issue are based in universities from seven different countries.

Jean-Nöel Kapferer (member of the Senior Advisory Board) and Pierre Valette-Florence explore the desirability of luxury brands beyond their rarity and high quality. Based on findings from interviews of more than 1,000 consumers, they identify eight experiential and perceptual levers that guide desirability through two paths: selection and seduction. Their study concludes that to grow and yet remain desirable, mega-brands of luxury should focus on "abundant rarity" that elicits feelings of privilege and prestige.

Richard Flight and Kesha Coker examine the role that enduring consumer emotional traits play in brand constellation formation. Using theories of self-image and brand-image congruence, they explain how complex brand constellations are a reflection of emotional disposition. Their results reveal four unique consumer clusters with unique brand constellations and differing degrees of brand congruence: sad, passionate, joyful and balanced middle. By introducing emotional disposition, they demonstrate that psychometric variables offer a new methodology by which brands may be categorised.

Mourad Touzani, Fatma Smaoui and Fatma Abdellah Kilani investigate consumers' preferences for over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, regarding three attributes: country of origin (COO), brand status (branded versus generic) and price, and test the effect of COO and brand status on consumers' perceptions of quality, trust and purchasing intentions. Their findings show that, in an emerging countries' context, COO is less important than brand status in consumers' preferences and that COO and brand status have a greater effect on consumers' perceptions of drug quality and trust than on purchasing intentions. Their findings have important implications for pharmaceutical companies exporting generic drugs to emerging markets.

Phillip Frank examines the relationship between acculturation to global consumer culture (AGCC), perceived brand equity, attitudes toward the brand and brand resonance in the global sportswear brands context among young consumers in the USA. His findings demonstrate that while cosmopolitan and

self-identification with global consumer culture (GCC) dimensions of ACGG positively influence perceived brand equity, exposure to marketing activities of multinational corporations (MNCs) and global mass media exposure dimensions of AGCC negatively influence perceived brand equity. Perceived brand equity also has positive association with attitudes toward the brand, which in turn, affects brand resonance. This study is one of the first to explore the applicability AGCC in predicting young consumers' attitudes and behavioural responses toward global brands.

Jorge Vera explores how consumers process information differently under two dissimilar types of brand strategies. By analysing data from consumers who evaluated two different dishwashing detergent brands, one with a high differentiated/performance/price brand (HB) strategy and other with a low differentiated/cost/price brand (LB) strategy, he shows how the structural relationship between some constructs differ under each price brand strategy.

Branding and neuroscience

John Gountas, Murdoch University, Management and Governance School, Perth, Australia. Luiz Moutinho, Dublin City University, Ireland.

There is no doubt that behavioural sciences over many decades have provided a wealth of information on why people behave the way they do in commercial transactions. However, the precision of measuring unobserved constructs and drivers of decision intentions has been limited with the use of traditional marketing research techniques relying on surveys, experiments and qualitative research methods. Most of the marketing research currently relies on a narrow range of traditional research methods attempting to understand unobservable cognitive processes such as cognitive evaluations, affective preferences and motivational, attitudinal and individual differences. Marketers are cognisant of the importance of all these constructs for predicting consumer brand choices and marketing communications effectiveness. With the exciting developments in neuroscience and the growth of the research methods in all fields of psychophysiology, there are many research opportunities to adopt new empirical techniques in marketing research. A greater diversity of measurement methods could benefit consumer decision theory development and the pursuit of new areas of research. There is a need for adopting multiple and new research measurement tools, polymeasures, in all marketing fields of research. Adopting a polymethod research approach from neurobiological and physiological sciences, such as biometrics, eye tracking, experience-sampling measures, mechanical observation, neuroscience and brain scanning, can improve marketing research findings. Combining psychological, behavioural and neuroscientific tools, researchers can test existing and new theories more effectively in all aspects of branding and marketing management (Plassmann *et al.*, 2015). Cognitive and affective processes involved in consumer decisionmaking are no longer unobservable constructs. Current neuroscientific tools can identify them and measure their effects on brand choices. Subconscious attitudes are now measurable and therefore marketers can understand more in depth brand attitudes and

brand loyalty, which are very important for brand managers (Venkatraman *et al.*, 2015).

Brain imaging techniques that have direct applications in all kinds of brand neuromarketing research can be broadly classified into three groups. The high spatial resolution group (up to 1–2 millimetres), which are very expensive and provide low temporal information, includes techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and positron emission tomography (PET). The high temporal resolution group, with lower costs but weak spatial information (milliseconds of brain activity), includes techniques of electroencephalography (EEG), magnetoencephalography (MEG) and functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS). The third group includes techniques that can test causal relationships, but temporarily interfere directly with brain activation without any adverse effects, include transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) and transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) (Toronov *et al.*, 2001, 2007).

Neuroscientific research methods have been used in branding for a number of years with varying success. This special section includes three brand neuromarketing papers that report original research findings using a range of research techniques, such as fMRI, EEG and facial muscle recognition. All of the papers attempt to uncover unobservable conscious and subconscious influences on consumer decisionmaking and brand choices.

Jose Paulo Marques do Santos, Marisa Martins, Hugo Ferreira, Joana Ramalho and Daniela Seixas examine some fundamental differences between national brands versus own-label brands. Using fMRI tests, they identify the price influence of both types of brands (national versus own-label) by switching high and low prices for both categories. Following the “Save Holdings or Purchase (SHOP) task”, the conducted fMRI tests reveal that higher prices for both types of brands produce higher activations that are difficult to interpret in the absence of additional tests and more definitive evidence. Their findings suggest that price is one of the more powerful drivers of brain activation and that brand image does not seem to produce statistically strong brain activations.

Christo Boshoff explores consumer reactions to tarnished brand names. He focuses on identifying consumers’ subconscious emotional responses towards trademarks of brand names that have been diluted, blurred and tarnished in various forms by competitors. An experimental study involving EEG, facial muscle activation and electromyography (EMG) tests measures consumers’ emotional responses towards 12 well-known tarnished global brands. Their research findings suggest that overall consumer’s subconscious emotional reactions are neutral, not negative, for all types of brand categories. They conclude that severe and adverse economic outcomes and brand tarnishment are not likely and, thus, legal action against those who engage in tarnishing a brand (e.g. social commentators) is probably unnecessary and unproductive.

Sam Al-Kwafi investigates the factors that underpin consumer attitude towards switching a product brand. Using fMRI, he analyses how attitudinal change affects consumer choices adopting the dual processing system of affective and

cognitive influences as the main decision drivers of the intention to switch brands. He demonstrates that brand features of perceived superior usefulness appear to influence more brand-switching attitudes. Perceived brand usefulness characteristics of competing smartphone brands appear to generate greater brain activation on the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), which is a strong indication of switching intention attitude.

Concluding remarks

We would like to thank the reviewers involved in the assessment of the papers in this issue and for providing guidance to the authors on how to improve their submissions. The people who reviewed papers in this issue are based in universities from 11 different countries and are listed below in an alphabetical order:

- Yana Andonova, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA.
- Christo Boshoff, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- Andres Cuneo, ESADE Business School, Spain.
- Nebojsa Davcik, University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL), Portugal.
- Abishek Dwivedi, Charles Sturt University, Australia.
- Nicholas Grigoriou, Monash University, Malaysia.
- Verena Gruber, WU Viena, Austria.
- Andrew Hurley, Clemson University, USA.
- Colin Jevons, Monash University, Australia.
- Uma Karmakar, Harvard Business School, USA.
- Chien-Hsin Lin, Yu Da University of Science and Technology, Taiwan.
- Carlos Lucas de Freitas, Instituto Superior Técnico, Portugal.
- Ian Phau, Curtin University, Australia.
- Nilanthi Ratnayake, University of Hull, UK.
- Jyrki Suomala, Laurea University of Applied Science, Finland.
- Laurent Tournois, Singidunum University, Serbia.

We hope that you find reading this issue intellectually stimulating and enjoyable.

Cleopatra Veloutsou
Francisco Guzman
John Gountas
Luiz Moutinho

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Further reading

Hedman, J. and Tscherning, H. (2010), “Emotions and intention to buy: applying neuro-IS on the adoption of the iPhone”, *NeuroPsycho Economics Conference Proceedings, Copenhagen*, p. 20.

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