REVIEW ARTICLE

Journal of Brand Management: year end review 2020

Shaun M. Powell[1]

Abstract

This is a review and reflection on some of the themes published within the Journal of Brand Management during 2020, plus extrapolation of future research avenues. Themes discussed include (1) co-creation, (2) brand naming, (3) brand support and leadership, (4) digital branding, (5) luxury branding, (6) corporate branding.

Keywords Co-creation · Luxury branding · Brand prominence · Brand naming · Corporate branding · Internal branding · Brand support and leadership · Digital branding · Future brand research

Introduction

The *Journal of Brand Management* (JBM) continues to consider all dimensions of this fast-evolving field and provides some of the latest thinking from leading international experts in academia and industry. As Volume 27 draws to a close, this article reflects upon a selection of themes published within the Volume during the year. These include: brand management and co-creation, brand naming, brand support and leadership, digital branding, luxury branding and corporate branding. The remainder of this review will discuss these themes and also extrapolate opportunities for future research in the domain of brand management. Many additional insightful topics published throughout the year are presented in Table 1.

Co-creation

One of the themes discussed within Volume 27 is brand management and co-creation. For instance, Ind et al. (2020) consider the role of intrinsic and extrinsic benefits in relation to motivating participants' to contribute in the case of three company-sponsored and high involvement co-creation communities online. Building on earlier studies, the

aspects considered in the study include the perceived level of control, plus freedom of expression of those taking part in the communities. Context is also considered in terms of how intrinsic and extrinsic benefits may work in different ways depending on community purpose. The first phase of the research was supported via a qualitative/quantitative research tool combining conversation and machine learning to help facilitate quantitative insights to qualitative questions. During the second phase, summaries from the first-phase were provided to the members of the communities in order to consider how well these aligned with personal experiences. Further comments were also encouraged during the second phase along with additional questions. The findings discuss several theoretical contributions, and recommendations are provided for managers to help encourage active community participation. The authors call for future studies to use the same methods to explore additional company-sponsored communities and to investigate whether a community with a different approach and culture would deliver similar results. Longitudinal studies of a community could also be implemented.

France et al. (2020) also discuss their findings of a study on the interplay between the dimensions of quality, emotional, price, and social value with respect to co-creation behaviour, focusing in this case on well-known personal computer and telecommunications brands. Survey respondents are included from the USA and Canada. The authors note that while their research is exploratory and findings indicative rather than conclusive, the outcome provides a number of insights for managerial understanding of co-creation. For example, findings indicate that advocacy and

✉ Shaun M. Powell
  spowell@uow.edu.au

1 School of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Business and Law, University of Wollongong, Building 40, Northfields Ave, Wollongong, NSW 2522, Australia

Table 1 Additional articles published within Journal of Brand Management Volume 27 (2020)

What can be done to address luxury counterfeiting? An integrative review of tactics and strategies (Amaral 2020)	Exploring sources of voter-based political human brand equity (Atzger et al. 2020)	How brand owners construct imagined worlds with brand visual aesthetics (Buschgens et al. 2020)
Managing founder-based brand identity during succession (Casprini et al. 2020)	Counterfeit versus original patronage: Do emotional brand attachment, brand involvement, and past experience matter? (Bian and Haque 2020)	Dynamic brand evolution mechanism of professional sports teams: empirical analysis using comprehensive major league baseball data (Feng and Yoon 2020)
Bygone days and memories: the effects of nostalgic ads on consumer brand resurrection movements (Gilal et al. 2020)	Heart, head, and hand: a tripartite conceptualization, operationalization, and examination of brand loyalty (Dapena-Baron et al. 2020)	Sustainability countenance in brand equity: a critical review and future research directions (Ishaq and Di Maria 2020)
Nature of brand love: examining its variable effect on engagement and well-being (Junaid et al. 2020)	The differential impact of consumer's thinking styles on brand placement: a cross-cultural study (C. Hur et al. 2020)	Brands as activists: The Oatly case (Koch 2020)
Counterfeit luxury consumption strategies in a collectivistic culture: the case of China (Li et al. 2020)	When does customer CSR perception lead to customer extra-role behaviors? The roles of customer spirituality and emotional brand attachment (W. Hur et al. 2020)	The impact of relational drivers on customer brand engagement and brand outcomes (Nyadzayo et al. 2020)
When fan engagement with sports club brands matters in sponsorship: influence of fan–brand personality congruence (Pradhan et al. 2020)	Does effective cost transparency increase price fairness? An analysis of apparel brand strategies (Jung et al. 2020)	Explaining the theoretical model of place branding: an asset-based approach to regeneration of the historic district of Tehran (Shahabadi et al. 2020)
Do proactive and reactive causes to delete a brand impact deletion success? The role of brand orientation (Temprano-García et al. 2020)	Exploring brand management strategies in Chinese manufacturing industry (Lin and Siu 2020)	Brand user imagery clarity (BUIC): conceptualization, measurement, and consequences (Xie et al. 2020)
The impact of electronic entrepreneur-related word of mouth on brand evaluation (Yuan and Peluso 2020)	Branding destinations: symbolic and narrative representations and co-branding (Rowley and Hanna 2020)	
	You are so embarrassing, still, I hate you less! Investigating consumers' brand embarrassment and brand hate (Sarkar et al. 2020)	
	The influence of passion/determination and external disadvantage on consumer responses to brand biographies (Nguyen and Grohmann 2020)	
	A sociolinguistic perspective of the effects of packaging in bilingual markets (Khan and Lee 2020)	
	Building a unique brand identity: measuring the relative ownership potential of brand identity element types (Ward et al. 2020)	
	From brands to classical music: Broadening and deepening a brand love prototype (White et al. 2020)	

development contribute to enhanced brand value perceptions for the co-creator. There is also an indication that forms of different customer behaviour may create or destroy value in different ways. Limitations are discussed and suggestions for future studies include a consideration of more diverse brands and categories, in order to investigate how value co-creation may be impacted in different brand settings. Additional cultures could also be investigated to consider the implications of cultural variation upon customer participation in co-creation, as well as the outcomes.

Brand naming

Another theme to emerge is brand naming, as illustrated via Pathak et al. (2020). Their research brings into focus the importance of considering the sounds of the first letters of brand names, as the pronunciation of the same letter is often not uniform in the English language. Four studies were undertaken with the authors explaining how the findings may aid marketers and brand managers during the brand name discovery process. For example, amongst other findings, the authors advise that studying phonemic differences between current children's names and top brand names may uncover some important patterns. Additionally, the research can aid brand managers to identify and use linguistically sound brand names globally.

Kara et al. (2020) undertake four experiments to enhance our understanding of identity-related brand consumption and brand relationships. The research combines two research streams in consumer psychology: brand naming and identity-related consumption, which are used to introduce personification as another characteristic of suggestive brand names. The authors also present a model of consumers' willingness to form brand relationships resulting from personified suggestiveness of brand names. A number of research avenues are delineated, including a proposal to examine the effects identified during the four studies across different product categories, in order to identify how these may differ.

Brand support and leadership

Gaining or enhancing brand support from employees and/or customers, as well as the role of transformational leadership, is also discussed within the Volume.

In their study, Sujchaphong et al. (2020) take an internal organisational focus by examining internal branding across a number of business schools in higher education. Their findings highlight the positive impact of brand-centred training and development activities, as well as the indirect effect of internal brand communication activities on employee brand support. A positive relationship is also identified

with regard to the role of transformational leadership. The authors outline a number of potential future research directions, including consideration of the generalisability of their findings by testing for applicability across different settings and industries. Other perspectives, such as that of managers, could also be sought and considered in relation to gaining employee brand support.

Chiang et al. (2020) consider the role of leadership in building and sustaining a strong brand within the hotel industry. Their study explores the effects of transformational leadership on the brand-related attitudes and behaviours of employees and customers. The findings indicate that employee behaviour, influenced by brand-specific transformational leadership, can in turn influence the feelings and behaviours of customers. Hence, the authors advise managers to articulate and clearly communicate a compelling vision and mission of the brand and strengthen the core values behind the brand vision and mission. Managers are also advised of the need to serve as role models to help motivate employees to deliver the brand promise to their customers. Future research may include studies focused on different industries to better understand the generalisability of the findings. Research could also consider the impact of the various characteristics of brand-specific transformational leaders, employees, and customers. Longitudinal studies are also called for, as well as considering the potential relationship with other organisation-level variables.

Digital branding

Previous JBM reviews (Powell 2016, 2017) have identified that brand management research related to digital branding has increasingly attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners, as remains the case in Volume 27.

For example, Mathur (2020) probes some of the key drivers and measures of social media equity while considering the roles of psychological, social, and strategic-level factors within a retail industry context. A conceptual framework is generated to better understand the influence of different consumer-associated factors, such as acquiescence, recognition, and integration on a retailer brand's social capital. The findings highlight the importance of reciprocity, cohesion, and centrality of a retailer and demonstrate that social media equity reduces retailer idiosyncratic risk. Managerial implications are discussed, and future research avenues are anticipated. These include the need for additional consideration of the effect of social media equity on return on investment (ROI), as well as exploring the effect on social media equity of various situational factors and reactional triggers.

Sashittal and Jassawalla (2020) set out via three studies to investigate the personal influence that Instagram bloggers have on the brand perceptions and consumer-brand

relationships of Instagram users. The findings include an indication that the tribal leader, tribal affiliation, and curation are central in the consciousness of Instagram users, whom also indicate that they follow other people on the medium and that brands are afterthoughts. The research also indicates that the influence of Instagram bloggers on brand perceptions is wider than currently reported; hence, the authors bring into focus the risk for brand managers in granting or losing messaging and curatorial power to independent Instagram bloggers. The authors call for further research to test their hypotheses and scales and also suggest applying longitudinal designs and studies within the context of the personal influence of Instagram bloggers.

In their study, Schivinski et al. (2020) focus on social media and consumer brand engagement in the context of shared and collaborative consumption businesses, in this case focusing on Airbnb. The study highlights how brand image operates in different ways depending on its content type (hedonic or functional), with hedonic playing overall a more relevant role with regard to consumption, contribution, and creation of brand-related content. A number of future research possibilities are suggested which includes identifying which other mechanisms might be of relevance in relation to the effects noted in the study. The relevance and influence of other reference groups might also be considered. The authors also suggest it would be fruitful to replicate their study across different countries and cultures.

Luxury branding

Luxury branding has remained a popular theme within Volume 27. For example, Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau (2020) undertake a cross-generational international comparison to consider millennials' sensitivity to the sustainability of luxury brands when purchasing luxuries. The study includes samples of luxury purchasers from six countries: China, Japan, USA, Brazil, Germany, and France. The research considers a number of hypothesis. These include whether millennials are more sensitive to sustainability of a luxury product or brand when they purchase a luxury item, in comparison with their former generations and whether millennials are less disengaged about sustainability issues when they purchase a luxury item. The research also considers if millennials' attitude about the coexistence of luxury and sustainability is similar across countries, cultures, levels of economic development, and maturity of the luxury market. A number of insightful findings are presented with some proving to be contradictory to discussions held previously on the topic.

Conejo et al. (2020) revisit and consider the performance and robustness of the Brand Luxury Index (BLI) and present results from four studies with US students, Chinese students,

US consumers, and pooled data. The findings are discussed in relation to BLI stability, and the authors call for luxury brand dimensionality to undergo further attention, as well as the development of a new generation of instruments. Limitations are discussed and future research avenues outlined, which include an evaluation of the impact of methodological variations on BLI stability, as well as research to assess BLI stability over time.

Greenberg et al. (2020) undertake studies to investigate the role of brand prominence and extravagance of product design in luxury brand building, focusing on what drives consumers' preferences for what has been termed 'loud' versus 'quiet' luxury. Amongst other things, the findings indicate aspects of consumer personality drives preferences for product design elements of luxury goods. Additionally, some luxury consumers display a strong preference for extravagantly designed luxury brands. A number of implications follow including the need for introducing various degrees of design extravagance into the product assortment. Further research is proposed including investigating additional personality-related variables in the context of luxury product design preferences. A focus might also be applied on differing social contexts in order to examine product design preferences across various situations.

Corporate branding

Corporate brand management has also been considered within the Volume, with Bharadwaj et al. (2020) undertaking research to unpack the relationship between corporate brand value and cash holdings. The authors present the case for stronger brands helping to lower their firm's working capital requirements. The findings also point to why Chief Marketing Officers should be included amongst the top management teams in organisations, similar for example to the rank accorded to Chief Financial Officers. A number of future research avenues are suggested. These include the need to understand the impact of brand equity beyond consumers and employees, such as investors, suppliers, and channel intermediaries. It may also be productive to consider the brand equity–cash holdings relationship in emerging markets.

In their study, Isiksal and Karaosmanoglu (2020) conduct a scenario-based experiment to explore consumer reactions (punishing behaviour) regarding corporate brands that engage in transgressions of various types and severity (severe vs. mild). Findings indicate that consumers tend to react more negatively towards the transgressor if they feel that they have been harmed. Additionally, if an individual has previously been a victim of value-related brand transgressions then cases that are perceived as being relatively mild may still proceed to generate reactions that are just as

negative as more severe cases. Hence the authors advise corporate brands to be more careful when transgressions occur. A number of research avenues are outlined. These include a need for studies that take into account cultural values and how brands may violate them, as well as exploration of more indirect violations, including for example long-term environmental transgressions.

Commentaries and reviews

The editors of the Journal of Brand Management continue with an initiative of including invited commentaries on key brand management topics by leading experts in the domain.

Iglesias and Ind (2020) provide a stimulating commentary on 'conscientious corporate brand co-creation'. A number of brands are discussed in the commentary including Patagonia, SAP, Dilmah Tea, Tata Steel, and Danone. The authors advise that 'conscience should be at the core of the corporate brand identity'. They also indicate that 'conscientious corporate brands are a growing managerial reality, but still a nascent academic field'. The commentary further delineates a number of topics, plus associated questions, to help drive future research and understanding of conscientious corporate brands.

Within Volume 27, the editors also provide an analysis and review of publications in the Journal between 2015 and first half of 2019 in order to identify trending concepts and topic areas in the period and some challenges and opportunities (Golob et al. 2020). Discussions related to brand management include theoretical development; social relevance and impact; digital technology and media; marketing intelligence; type of planning and risk-taking under disruptive markets; changes in HR/internal marketing practices; challenges for integrated brand communications; developing relationships; interdisciplinary themes; and branding in developing countries. The editors further discuss the need to respond to brand management challenges and opportunities 'by engaging in research that is timely, of practical relevance, and which reflects social and, real-world problems'. The editors also outline the kind of papers that would be most sought after in JBM.

Conclusion

Volume 27 has included some of the latest thinking in the field of Brand Management. Moving forward the editors encourage continued submission of original and insightful articles as well as industry-based case studies which rigorously consider:

1. models and theories effectively used in brand management research and practice
2. how the world's leading companies are managing their brands
3. the latest thinking, techniques, and initiatives used by agencies and consultants
4. current case studies which explore leading organisations' practical experiences, the problems faced, and the lessons learned, and
5. applied research from leading business schools, research institutes, and universities

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Shaun M. Powell is a co-editor of the Journal of Brand Management and his research has appeared in a range of refereed International journals. Shaun has co-edited several books on corporate branding and luxury brand management alongside leading thought leaders in their fields. He is also a member of several journal editorial boards.