Guest editorial

Branding and place branding management: theory, research, and practice

Corporate and place branding are art and science. This *Branding and Place Branding Management: Theory, Research, and Practice* special issue has two sections:

(1) branding and brand management; and

(2) place branding.

Many business people recognise that the most valuable asset a firm has is its corporate reputation. Even though competitors can copy products, processes, prices and promotional campaigns, they cannot reproduce strongly held beliefs and attitudes embedded in customers' and stakeholders' minds. Creating and nurturing a strong corporate brand poses considerable challenges. Brands vary in the amount of power and value they have in the marketplace. Some are unknown to most buyers, whereas others have a high degree of brand awareness and a few enjoy a high degree of brand preference and loyalty. A powerful brand has high brand equity which can be perceived as a reflection of a brand's market share. Building brand equity demands considerable marketing efforts and investment. But high brand equity provides a company with many competitive advantages. A powerful brand enjoys a high level of consumer brand awareness, performance, quality, reputation and loyalty.

Branding and brand management plays a special role in service and product companies because strong brands increase customers' trust of the invisible purchase. Strong brands enable customers to better visualise and understand intangible products. They reduce customers' perceived monetary, social or safety risk in buying services, which are difficult to evaluate prior to purchase. Branding and brand management is the part of corporate structure that is concerned with the branding of products, business units and the corporate umbrella and how they appear to an organisation's audience. It is closely related to brand strategy, which refers to the way firms mix and match their corporate, house and individual brand names on their products. Marketing and branding academics and practitioners focus on the visual identity as a concept that is formed on the basis of the brand promise of an organisation, used to differentiate characteristics of a brand, product and services, and provides reassurance for the customer. The focal point of the special issue lies in analysing past, present and future scenarios in terms of brand and brand management. Which brand management or practices have proved adequate or inadequate? What, if any, changes are needed? What is the role of corporate and brand managers in reinvigorating businesses, societies and economies? How can organisations build trust and confidence in brands either of a corporate or marketing nature? The same questions apply to institutions, NGOs and other organisations that are inexorably tied up with branding management.

The next section of our special issue is focused on place branding, which is a rapidly expanding practice of nations, regions and cities that are fiercely competing in the international arena for capital, workforce, tourists and students. This special issue on "place branding" of *Qualitative Market Research an International Journal* advances the theoretical understanding of the field by incorporating cross-disciplinary knowledge using multiple case studies. Particular attention is often given to the significance of stakeholder engagement for effective place branding along with methods to facilitate it.

The guest editors along with others have encouraged this academic research stream by organising colloquia and bringing together multiple strands in the *3rd International Colloquium on Corporate Branding, Identity, Image and Reputation* at Middlesex University

London in 2017, which has since become an annual event (Ageeva *et al.*, 2018, 2019a, 2019b; Foroudi, 2019, 2020; Hussain *et al.*, 2020; Melewar *et al.*, 2018; Tourky *et al.*, 2020). This special issue focuses on how the firms' ability could link and articulate their identity through various organisational practices, create and constantly attempt to influence the impressions of their corporate body among their various constituencies and stakeholder groups, use their employees and managerial cognitive capabilities to deliver and strengthen their corporate brands and measure the impact of corporate identity and reputation on corporate performance and how customers seek to engage with an organisation and what it offers.

This issue includes 20 of the best papers from well-known contributors in the domain of corporate/place branding and identity. The first paper by Shahzeb Hussain, T.C. Melewar, Constantinos-Vasilios Priporas and Pantea Foroudi examines the effect of advertising credibility on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image. The findings suggest that advertising credibility is defined using terms such as accurate, caring, competent, complete, convincing, ethical, honest, impressive, reliable and warranted, and on the basis that it delivers what it promises about the products/service. Also, the results illustrate that advertising credibility has a positive effect on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image.

The next two papers focus on corporate social responsibility and ethics. A paper by Ahmed Suhail Ajina, Sanjit Roy, Bang Nguyen, Arnold Japutra and Ali Homaid Al-Hajla empirically investigates employees' perceptions of socially responsible financial services brands in Saudi Arabia. The study also identifies the motives and challenges for Islamic banks for higher involvement in social responsibility initiatives to enhance their brand values. Findings provide insights about how corporate social responsibility initiatives for financial services brands in a developing and Islamic country are perceived. Results show that the focus of corporate social responsibility activities is on the attributes of corporate social responsibility, the magnitude of corporate social responsibility and attitude towards corporate social responsibility. Results show two main motives to engage in corporate social responsibility activities, which are instrumental and ethical motives. The main challenges are related to the government, business, charitable organisations and customers and society. The next paper explores the public evaluation of the ethics of marketing tobacco in Indonesia through the theoretical lens of normative ethics. Tjandra, Nathalia, Aroean, Lukman and Prabandari, Yayi identified six main themes, economic contribution of the tobacco industry, harmful nature of tobacco products, tobacco marketing targeting vulnerable groups, covering the danger of smoking, intention and integrity of tobacco marketers and infringement of law and social norms. Adopting the theoretical lens of utilitarianism, deontology, contractarianism and virtue ethics, the analysis illustrates that most participants believed that tobacco marketing practices in Indonesia are unethical.

The next three papers empirically investigate the role of corporate branding in B2B. Sena Ozdemir, Suraksha Gupta, Pantea Foroud, Len Tiu Wright and Teck-Yong Eng examine the main constituents of a corporate brand, how does a corporate brand generate tangible and intangible brand value for their business customers, and how do tangible and intangible brand benefits influence relationship initiation and management practices of the case companies? The results show that a corporate brand can generate intangible and tangible brand value benefits for business customers. The findings also note the importance of the brand value in enhancing relationship initiation. The next paper by Suraksha Gupta focuses on how brand managers can use interactions to motivate business customers and engage them in the creation of customised brand value. The findings identified an overlap between organisational goals, resource-related needs and capabilities of business customers

that are indicative of modifications required in a brand's marketing strategy. The following paper is set in a B2B context and was developed by Suraksha Gupta and Len Tiu Wright. They aim to identify important enablers of the brand-reseller representative relationship in business-to-business markets, and the results demonstrate the main influences of the reseller representative effects on brand performance, enabling and managing reseller networks.

The seventh paper was on the Evaluation of the Impact of Innovation management Capability to Organisational Performance. Based on resource-advantage theory, this study analyses to what extent intellectual and emotional assets influence marketing management capability which loads to organisation's performance. By focusing on a holistic approach, the research recognised the existing links among concepts of intellectual and emotional assets (digital technology, knowledge and competence, reputation), personality, IMC, types of innovation and specific business performance.

Elvira Bolat, Julie Robson, KokhoJason Sit, Shannon Birch-Chapman, Samreen Ashraf, Juliet Memery, and Caroline Jackson aim to understand consumers' responses to the trust repair mechanisms adopted by corporate brands in a service sector context following prominent trust damaging organisational transgressions. They find that consumer trust varies by context. Despite the severity of trust damage, corporate brands can recover trust towards their brands amongst consumers not directly affected by transgressions. Not all trust repair mechanisms are equally applicable to all service contexts, and re-branding could be used as a trust repair mechanism. Corporate brands in the service sector should focus on sense-making, relational approaches and transparency. Orchestration of trust repair mechanisms needs to be integrated within the trust rehabilitation processes.

Robert E. Hinson, Ellis Osabutey and Frederick O. Asiedu examine how professional football clubs have attained success with internationalisation and branding strategies in foreign markets. The findings of this study highlight that the strength of professional football brand equity is jointly determined by the level of brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality. However, increasing competition in international markets require professional football clubs to clearly define their marketing strategies to improve how fans perceive them.

Maria Jerez-Jerez and T.C. Melewar develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between waiters' professional identity and its antecedents such as: extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma. The consequences of professional identity on passion and turnover intention are analysed. Findings demonstrate that the main factors of the formation of waiters' professional identity are extroversion, education, brand standard, identity interferences, authenticity and stigma, its consequences can be expressed in terms of passion and turnover intention. "Salience" is a moderator of this relationship, explaining the prominence and relevance of the stimuli. These factors have been demonstrated to effect the formation of professional identity.

Angela Bargenda critically examines the claim that artworks and corporate art collections contribute a qualitative dimension to corporate identity by satisfying aesthetic, social and cultural standards. She found that corporate art achieves synergies between culture and capital, internal and external communication and thus offers significant opportunities for innovative marketing communication and identity-building strategies.

A paper by Nathalia Tjandra, John Ensor, Maktoba Omar and John Thomson investigates the applicability of Ritter's (2000) framework of interconnectedness in a triadic relationship between a provider, intermediaries and customers and extends the framework by considering how the condition of relationship influences the relationship dynamic. The findings confirm that synergy effect, lack effect, competition effect and by-pass effect exist in the triadic

relationship, variously positive (+), negative (−) or neutral (0). These effects combined with an interconnectedness effect determine the dynamic of the triadic relationship network.

Rezvan Velayati, Alireza Nazarian and Esmail Shabani investigate major industry trends as well as organisational attributes that affect organisations' capability in designing innovative services. The results suggest that privatisation, technological shortcomings, legislative inefficiencies and deposit-orientation instead of market orientation were major industry trends that affect service innovation. Furthermore, ambiguity in knowledge management regimes, silo mentality and the absence of a collaborative organisational culture, growing need to focus on human capital and risk aversion are the main organisational attributes that should be addressed for effective service innovation.

The purpose of the last paper in our special issue was to make theoretical contributions to the identification and comprehension of the "once-in-a-lifetime purchase" (OILP) phenomenon. The principal traits of OILP are quadripartite in character: zero-repurchase intention; permanency of purchase; high social pressure and extensive information search. The results of study by Ahmed Suhail Ajina, Sanjit Roy, Bang Nguyen, Arnold Japutra and Ali Homaid Al-Hajla contribute to the theoretical understanding of the higher education (HE) sector as one type of OILP provider, and managerial implications are discussed specifically for the HE institutions.

The next section of this special issue considers the topic of place branding. Concentrating on branding decisions at a product level, related to a tourist destination, TC Melewar and Heather Skinner explore a range of product brand management decisions affecting tourists' experiences. Their study focuses on a micro-brewery located on the Greek island of Corfu, which heavily relies on tourism, and the data were collected through in-depth interviews with the owner and the senior management team. The Melewar and Skinner study findings showcase how meanings are transmitted through the brand name including sense of place, authenticity and experiential consumption.

The second paper in the place branding section adopts a case-based qualitative approach, focusing on the cases of Lagos, Nigeria and Dubai, U.A.E. Sanya Ojo explores the potential reverse effect of the country of origin on city brand. The author claims that in most cases a city's reputation is positively or negatively affected by the reputation of the country within which the city is located. Although Dubai's strong brand contributes to U.A.E. rising brand, Lagos seems to suffer from Nigeria's weak nation brand. In the case of Lagos, its robust image seems to bestow reputation upon Nigeria. This study concludes that cities can build strong effective brands irrespective of the reputation of the broader country brand.

Further exploring the concepts of place branding and community relations in Ghana, Maria Palazzo, Linda Deigh, Pantea Foroudi and Alfonso Siano provide evidence of how to boost place branding by leveraging community relations. Using a multiple case study approach of several companies, supplemented with archival data analysis and in-depth interviews with brand managers, the authors conclude that the place-branding process is complex due to a range of influential factors including culture, organisational management, government interventions and diversity of stakeholders involved. Place branding could evolve around a range of community relations elements, assisting policy makers and brand managers in their efforts.

The work of Juha Halme concentrates on the regional level and discusses common issues that arise in region branding and stakeholder collaboration. Drawing on 23 interviews with stakeholder representatives participating in two regional level place marketing initiatives in Finland, this study identifies issues related to the competitiveness of the regions, lack of financial resources and peer pressure. Following an analysis of interests the author further identified two discursive challenges related to the spatial and symbolic content of the marketing activities. The paper concludes with some implications for stakeholder communication, which is vital for successful place branding.

Article no.	Title	Authors
Brand management		
1 QMR-12–2017-0175.R2	Examining the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image: A qualitative approach	Shahzeb Hussain, T. C. Melewar, Constantinos-Vasilios Priporas, and Pantea Foroudi
2 QMR-11-2017-0145.R5	Enhancing brand value using corporate social responsibility initiatives: Evidence from financial services brands in Saudi Arabia	Ahmed Suhail Ajina, Sanjit Roy, Bang Nguyen, Arnold Japutra, and Ali Homaid Al-Hajla
3 QMR-01-2020-0011.R1	Public evaluation of the ethics of tobacco marketing in Indonesia: Symbiotic ethical approach	Nathalia Tjandra, Lukman Aroean, and Yayi Prabandari
4 QMR-12-2017-0168.R3	Corporate branding and value creation for initiating and managing relationships in B2B markets	Sena Ozdemir, Suraksha Gupta, Pantea Foroudi, Len Tiu Wright, and Teck-Yong Eng
5 QMR-11-2017-0150.R4	Motivating Business-to-Business Customers of the Brand in Competitive Markets	Suraksha Gupta
6 QMR-11-2017-0149.R5	Brand-Reseller Representative Relationship for Enablement: A Research Agenda	Suraksha Gupta and Len Tiu Wright
7 QMR-04-2020-0052.R1	The Evaluation of the Impact of Innovation management Capability to Organisational Performance	Javad Izadi, Sayabek Ziyadin, Maria Palazzo, and Mendip Sidhu
8 QMR-12-2017-0187.R3	Service brand rehab: Diagnosing trust repair mechanisms	Elvira Bolat, Julie Robson, Kokho Jason Sit, Shannon Birch-Chapman, Samreen Ashraf, Juliet Memery, Caroline Jackson
9 QMR-12-2017-0188.R3	Internationalisation and branding strategy: A case of the English Premier League's success in an emerging market	Robert E. Hinson, Ellis Osabutey, John Paul Kosiba, Frederick O. Asiedu
10 QMR-01-2020-0013.R1	The consequence of waiters' professional identity on passion for work and its effects on employee turnover	Maria Jerez-Jerez and T. C. Melewar
11 QMR-12-2017-0182.R3	The artification of corporate identity: aesthetic convergences of culture and capital	Angela Bargenda
12 QMR-02-2020-0029	An evaluation of the effect of interconnectedness and condition of relationship in a triad: A dynamic approach	Nathalia Tjandra, John Ensor, Maktoba Omar, and John Thomson
13 QMR-05-2020-0062	Coin It: Service Innovation as a Driver of Brand Equity	Rezvan Velayati, Alireza Nazarian, Esmail Shabani
14 QMR-12-2017-0169.R4	Higher Education: a once-in-a-lifetime purchase	Ahmed Suhail Ajina, Sanjit Roy, Bang Nguyen, Arnold Japutra, Ali Homaid Al-Hajla
Place branding		
15 QMR-05-2018-0044.R1	Why would anyone come to Corfu to have a Heineken?	T.C. Melewar, Heather Skinner
16 QMR-11-2017-0151.R4	Interrogating Place Brand – A Case of Two Cities	Sanya Ojo

(Continued)

Table 1.
The list of the accepted papers in the special issue

	Article no.	Title	Authors
17	QMR-01–2018-0013.R2	How to boost place branding leveraging on community relations. An exploration of the banking sector in Ghana	Maria Palazzo, Linda Deigh, Pantea Foroudi, Alfonso Siano
18	QMR-12–2017-0172.R3	Constructing Consensus and Conflicts: Dynamics in Regional Place Marketing Collaboration	Juha Halme
19	QMR-12–2017-0180.R1	Place over branding and how to prevent it: combining two conceptual and methodological approaches	Kirill Rozhkov, Konstantin Khomutskii, Robert Romanowski, Norberto Muniz-Martinez
20	QMR-01–2018-0012.R2	Intra-organisational Brand resistance and Counter-narratives in City Branding – a Comparative Study of three Danish Cities	Marianne Wollf Lundholt, Ole Have Jørgensen, Bodil Stilling Blichfeldt

Table 1.

Kirill Rozhkov, Konstantin Khomutskii, Robert Romanowski and Norberto Muniz-Martinez propose avoiding the pitfalls of over-branding as a criterion of successful place branding. Their paper discusses tools that can be used by place marketers to protect places from the harmful effects of over-branding and over-tourism. Based on three focus groups with future place managers conducted in three different countries (Russia, Poland and Spain), the importance of brands that reflect local values and way of life was introduced. The proposed framework is useful for the development of verbal attributes of place brands assisting in the avoidance of the effects of over-branding.

The last paper focuses on the branding practices of three cities (Odense, Kolding, Horsens) in Denmark. Marianne Wollf Lundholt, Ole Have Jørgensen and Bodil Stilling Blichfeldt improve our knowledge of intra-organisational brand resistance by exploring a range of counter-narratives resulting from the political and administrative context. Based on data drawn from in-depth interviews with mayors and place managers, a number of intra-organisational counter narratives were identified stemming from lack of ownership, competition for resources and conflicts/competition. The novelty of this study lies on its focus on internal stakeholders within municipal organisations and the ways these stakeholders determine the city branding process.

In conclusion, this special issue develops a coherent and consistent contribution to research into branding and place branding management with empirical studies across a wide range of settings. The guest editors thank all of the authors who submitted papers to the colloquium. We also thank the reviewers for the detailed, constructive comments that have contributed to the development of this special issue (Table 1).

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Hussain, S., Melewar, T.C., Priporas, C. and Foroudi, P. (2020), "Examining the effects of advertising credibility on brand credibility, corporate credibility and corporate image: a qualitative approach", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.

Melewar, T.C., Foroudi, P., Dinnie, K. and Nguyen, B. (2018), "The role of corporate identity management in the higher education sector: an exploratory case study", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp. 337-359.

Tourky, M., Foroudi, P., Gupta, S. and Shaalan, A. (2020), "Conceptualising corporate identity in a dynamic environment", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.