

18TH GLOBAL BRAND CONFERENCE 2025

CATÓLICA PORTO BUSINESS SCHOOL
PORTO, PORTUGAL

May 7th to 9th

BRAND PURPOSE

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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ACADEMY OF
MARKETING

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Parallel Session 1 - Brand Purpose as an Emergent Construct**May, 07 11:15****Room EP002**

Russell Abratt - Chair

GBC2025-70166

I Want to Break Free: Brand purpose as an emergent property*Nils Grimm - University of Twente**Janina Schaumann - University of Twente**Yasin Sahhar - University of Twente**Christoph Moss - International School of Management**Jörg Henseler - University of Twente*

Brand purpose is often framed as a fixed concept derived through reductionist frameworks. However, these approaches oversimplify brand purpose by neglecting its complexity and intersubjective nature. This paper challenges conventional frameworks by applying an emergentist lens, arguing that brand purpose is not a static entity but a dynamic property that arises unpredictably from interactions within a brand's assemblage. In line with systems theory and assemblage theory, brand purpose emerges from the complex interplay of contextual factors, stakeholder interactions, and relational dynamics. This conceptual paper, positioned as a theoretical provocation, is supplemented by an anecdotal case study of a worldwide wholesaler, where brand purpose unfolded as a response to socio-political stimuli. The case illustrates how brand purpose emerges from non-linear, adaptive processes rather than from managerial intent. Theoretical implications highlight a shift towards adaptive branding that embraces complexity and the limits of managerial control, while practical implications encourage brand managers to sense and make sense of evolving patterns within their brand assemblages. Ultimately, it advocates for an emergentist view of brand purpose, rendering pattern orchestration a perpetual quest toward the 'common good'.

Keywords: emergence, assemblage theory.

GBC2025-57147

Leading with a Purpose: Exploring the Operationalization of Corporate Brand Conscientiousness*Sonja Sarasvuo - Hanken School of Economics**Valeria Penttinen - Northern Illinois University*

A brand's purpose captures its core ethos and long-term societal objectives, representing the fundamental reason for its existence. Conscientious corporate brands (CCBs) distinguish themselves by committing to ethical practices and sustainability-driven missions, aligning their business operations with broader societal and environmental goals. Despite the growing interest in brand purpose and CCBs, only a few studies have explored the role of corporate leaders in operationalizing brand conscientiousness. The present study investigates the process of becoming a CCB by examining the drivers and barriers contributing to it from a corporate leadership perspective. This work-in-progress adopts a qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews with corporate leaders representing consumer brands across various industries as its primary research method. The investigation sheds light on the operationalization of brand conscientiousness, focusing on three core themes: (1) the process of becoming a conscientious brand, (2) the role of corporate leaders in navigating this transformative journey, and (3) the internal and external drivers and barriers influencing the development of brand conscientiousness. The findings contribute to the growing research on brand purpose by developing a framework that outlines the process of becoming a CCB strategically, from the perspective of corporate leaders. In doing so, the study highlights the tensions that emerge when pursuing purposeful branding in a commercial context. For managers, this study offers practical recommendations to facilitate the strategic development of CCBs while addressing the barriers that may impede this process.

Keywords: Brand purpose, Conscientiousness, Leadership, CSR.

GBC2025-59353

Open hedonistic branding; Managing brand purpose in a hedonistic era*Richard Gyrd-Jones - Copenhagen Business School*

This paper presents the concept open hedonistic branding as a response to the paradoxical challenge of engaging disaffected and unengaged consumers around brand purpose to address society's grand challenges. The paradox lies in the belief in brands as cultural sites of meaning, purpose and change with the consumer skepticism towards brands and commercial messaging generally. The paper suggests that this paradoxical space is fertile ground for theoretical exploration and the foundation for reengaging consumers curating their own personal brand.

Keywords: Brand Purpose, Hedonism, Consumer Acceleration.

GBC2025-20389

Corporate purpose needs branding! Integration, reconciliation and a way forward*Russell Abratt - Costello College of Business, George Mason University**Nicola Kleyn - GIBS, University of Pretoria*

The first objective of this paper is to integrate and reconcile literature on corporate and brand purpose. We review literature on both and make the case that branding capability is integral to translating corporate purpose into positive perceptions and responses from organisational stakeholders. The second objective is to present and describe a process that can be used by organisations to ensure that their corporate purpose becomes lived and held in high regard by organisational stakeholders. The literature on corporate purpose and brand purpose were reviewed and then reconciled. As this is a conceptual paper, we follow the approach to conceptual research suggested by Heinonen and Gruen (2024) which blends an extensive literature review with flexible, creative synthesis of ideas to develop novel theories and harmonise depth with innovation by integrating insights from differing sources. Although there are occasional touchpoints, management and branding literature on the theme of purpose tend to remain within their disciplinary confines. We propose that branding plays an essential role in supporting an organisation to translate its corporate purpose into brand promises that serve as a basis for communication and co-creation efforts with internal and external stakeholders. We integrate this symbiotic relationship into a framework that shows how organisational purpose needs to be translated into brand promises which must be promulgated into communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders to influence and shape stakeholder perceptions. We discuss implications for brand managers, stakeholders and society at large.

Keywords: Corporate Purpose; Brand Purpose; Stakeholders.

Parallel Session 2 - Ethical, Charity and Sustainable Brands

May, 07 11:15

Room EP004

Sarah-Louise Mitchell - Chair

GBC2025-32590

Conceptual considerations towards the development of a scale to measure perceived Brand Circularity

Isabelle Hillebrandt - University of Applied Sciences Mainz

Rebecca Stephan - University of Applied Sciences Mainz

Victoria Diehl - University of Applied Sciences Mainz

Fabian Stolzfuss - University of Applied Sciences Mainz

This study elaborates on initial conceptual considerations towards the development of a scale to measure perceived brand circularity. The topic of brand circularity is of growing importance as societies seek avenues to tackle environmental challenges. While such initiatives potentially help to decrease the negative impacts of the economy, further motivation in accelerating such initiatives might stem from increased market success. We thus lay the groundwork for investigating potential positive market outcomes by developing a scale to measure perceived brand circularity. As the literature on this topic is still scarce, we share initial conceptual considerations on how to develop a comprehensive measurement scale.

Keywords: perceived brand circularity, scale development.

GBC2025-35509

Organic brand extensions: psychological mechanisms underlying consumer evaluations

isabelle Ulrich - Neoma business school

fanny Cambier - Neoma business school

The introduction of organic extensions by FMCG brands is a popular green marketing strategy. Companies leverage their existing brand names to launch organic variants with lower risk and cost. However, research on consumer perceptions of these organic claims is still in its early stages, with mixed marketplace results. This study explores how organic extensions impact brand evaluations, with two experiments focusing on consumer responses to organic versus non-organic product extensions. Findings from Study 1a show that while both organic and non-organic extensions positively affect purchase intentions, trust, and brand identification, novelty may drive these responses more than the organic label itself. Study 1b reveals that perceived price premiums reduce positive perceptions of organic extensions, even when no actual price increase is present. Additionally, consumers with high green values showed a preference for non-organic options, possibly due to a moral licensing effect. This research highlights the complexities of organic brand extensions, including perceived price fairness and skepticism towards sustainability claims.

Keywords: organic brand, line extension, sustainability.

GBC2025-62917

Conscientious Business: A Systematic Scoping Review

Peter Lewis - Kristiania University College

Nicholas Ind - Kristiania University College

Erlend Nybakk - Kristiania University College

This systematic scoping review examines the emerging concept of conscientious business, which builds upon research into conscientious corporate brands (CCBs). While businesses face increasing pressure to address societal challenges, existing reviews have focused narrowly on specific aspects like co-creation or brand purpose. This review provides the first comprehensive synthesis of how conscience shapes organizational values, strategies, and practices. Following systematic review methodology, we analyzed 43 peer-reviewed articles from business ethics, brand management, and organizational behavior literature. Initial findings reveal five key characteristics of conscientious business: stakeholder orientation, balanced

temporal perspective, open and participatory culture, transformative purpose, and ethical values. The theoretical analysis identifies three main frameworks used to examine conscience in business contexts: organizational theories (e.g., contagion theory, stakeholder theory), moral philosophy frameworks, and economic theories exploring tensions between shareholder and stakeholder capitalism. The empirical landscape covers both B2B and B2C contexts, though significant gaps remain in key sectors like energy and agriculture. This review makes three main contributions: (1) establishing clearer definitional boundaries of conscientious business across disciplines, (2) mapping and integrating theoretical frameworks to reveal areas of convergence and tension, and (3) developing a more comprehensive understanding of how conscience operates in business contexts by identifying patterns and boundary conditions across sectors and geographies. These insights advance both theoretical understanding and practical application of conscience in business contexts.

Keywords: Conscientious business, conscientious corporate brand.

GBC2025-30073

The challenge and complexity of communicating the purpose of charity brands.

Sarah-Louise Mitchell - Oxford Brookes University

Andrea Macrae - Oxford Brookes University

As Fernandes et al. (2024) argue, purpose is the new branding. Better understanding conscientious, purpose-driven branding, and especially the relationship with brand outcomes, is fundamental for brand managers moving forward. A key criticism of commercial brands adopting a higher purpose is the lack of authenticity and relevance. In contrast, charities are the ultimate purposeful brands. They are driven by the strong internal moral compass, commonly articulated through their charitable mission.

The purpose of *this* research is to better understand how charity brands “do good” within the new framing of purposeful brands. Charity brands need a deep and nuanced understanding of how to present the “ask” in a respectful and dignified way. Unwritten rules around language and imagery varies considerably across cause sector with overseas development as the most “evolved”.

Sensitivities around dignity and respect of beneficiaries mean the practice of communication brand purpose and impact on society has become more complex requiring greater internal capability.

What this research does is to ensure that charity brands, the original and arguably most authentic purposeful organisations, are not lost in the growing academic conversation around purposeful branding. For the first time, it anchors the evolving conversation about tension between raising the salience of need (the cause) with sensitivity of language and imagery particularly of the charity beneficiaries within the purposeful branding theory.

Keywords: Charity, Purpose, Cause, Communication, Complexity.

Parallel Session 3 - AI and Consumer Responses to Brands**May, 07 11:15****Room EAA101**

Salim Azar - Chair

GBC2025-19272**Empathetic Machines and Consumer Journeys***Alena Kostyk - EDHEC business school*

Brand touchpoints using artificial intelligence (AI) are increasingly important for building relationships between consumers and brands. Expanding prior work on AI design factors that influence firm- and brand-level outcomes, present research turns to artificial empathy to explain interactions between consumers and brand AI agents. Specifically, it introduces a consumer journey perspective, to propose and test whether artificial empathy has a differential effect on brand outcomes for consumers at different stages of their journey.

Keywords: AI, consumer journey, consumer-brand relationship.

GBC2025-34510**From Functionality to Connection: The Impact of Emotionally Intelligent AI on Brand-Consumer Relationships***Dr. Vikas Arya - EMLV - Léonard de Vinci Business School, Léonard de Vinci Pôle Universitaire, Paris, France**Karolina Sallaku - LUM University, Casamassima (BA), Italy**Dr. Sonal Purohit - Symbiosis Institute of business Management, Symbiosis International University, Pune, India**Dr. Anshuman Sharma - Department of Marketing, College of Business Administration, Ajman University, Ajman, UAE*

This study introduces an AI-driven product co-creation framework that focuses on the role of emotionally sensitive AI platforms in fostering users' emotional attachment within brand-consumer co-creation processes. Drawing from value co-creation theory and research on the emotional dimensions of AI, a mixed-method approach was employed, comprising four studies aimed at bridging the knowledge gap on how emotion-sensitive AI impacts users' psychological responses. Study 1 explores how user engagement with emotion-sensitive versus non-emotion-sensitive AI platforms influences emotional attachment during the product co-creation process. Study 2 identifies and prioritizes these emotional dimensions and their effects, while Study 3 evaluates the conceptual model by analyzing relationships between these factors. Finally, Study 4 employs artificial neural network analysis to validate the predictive strength of these variables in fostering emotional attachment.

Keywords: AI-Co-Creation, Brand-Anthropomorphism, Emotional-Intelligence, Brand-Empathy.

GBC2025-70328**The effect of chatbot gender on brand engagement and advocacy, for masculine or feminine brands.***Azar Salim - CY Cergy Paris Université, IUT de Cergy-Pontoise**Isabelle Aimé - Kedge Business School**Isabelle Ulrich - Neoma Business School*

The study explores the impact of chatbot gender on brand engagement and advocacy, especially for brands associated with masculine or feminine product categories. With the chatbot market growing, understanding consumer interactions with chatbots is crucial as consumers tend to prefer human interactions over AI ones. The research examines how humanizing chatbots and selecting an appropriate gender for them can enhance brand warmth, competence, engagement and advocacy. Generally, brands use female chatbots to convey warmth, aligning with consumer preferences for female voices in service roles. However, research also suggests that male chatbots may be more effective in specific contexts, such as promoting masculine products or engaging with utilitarian product consumers.

The experiment used a 2x2 design, assigning 590 participants to interact with male or female chatbots representing masculine (Tesla and Ford) and feminine (Nivea and Dove) brands. Results indicate that

male chatbots significantly increase brand engagement and advocacy in masculine product categories, while chatbot gender effects are minimal in feminine categories, supporting H 1 but not H 2. This finding suggests that chatbot gender should be tailored to product category gender to maximize brand outcomes.

The study contributes to theory by challenging the default use of female chatbots and providing practical insights for brands to consider chatbot gender strategically, depending on brand identity and product category. This research has broader implications for AI-based brand interactions and digital personification in marketing.

Keywords: chatbot, warmth, competence, brand gender.

GBC2025-43295

Unlocking Brand Power: Exploring Generative AI's Role in Shaping Consumer Journey on Microblogging Platforms

Maya F. Farah - Lebanese American University

Zahy Ramadan - Lebanese American University

Yaman Nassereddine - Lebanese American University

Microblogging platforms have become essential components of today's digital landscape, allowing for real-time communication of knowledge and global debates. To improve consumer-brand interactions, these platforms have integrated generative AI to enhance the generation of customized, dynamic content that increases brand visibility and encourages deeper interactions. With an emphasis on the key consumer journey phases of awareness, engagement, purchase, and loyalty, this study examines the relative effects of generative AI on customer-brand relationships across X and Threads. Using an exploratory qualitative methodology, data were collected through two studies from interviews with 40 users interacting with non-generative AI brands, and 30 consumers engaging with brands using generative AI on both X and Threads. The results show that although Threads' community-focused and visual approach increases engagement and loyalty, especially for non-generative AI brands, generative AI's automated content significantly increases awareness and purchases on X.

Keywords: X; Threads; Generative AI; brand-relationship.

Parallel Session 4 - Brand Experience

May, 07 11:15

Room EAA002

Wilson Bastos - Chair

GBC2025-11316

Brand vs members: Re-delineating the brand community field

Lena Kemna - Nova School of Business and Economics

Catherine da Silveira - Nova School of Business and Economics

This study questions current approaches to brand community in the literature. Based on a comprehensive literature review, we analyse the field from the angle of brand-managed vs. member-managed brand communities. This analysis leads to set new boundaries and to re-visit the established perspective of brand community as co-managed by brand and members. We suggest that fully co-managed brand communities are scarce and unstable. Tensions arise between brand and members, challenging the seminal definition of brand communities set by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001).

Keywords: Brand Community, Brand Management, Co-creation.

GBC2025-67966

The dark side of brand purpose – The link between identifying with a brand, materialism and cyberbullying

Jan Breitsohl - University of Glasgow

Nadia Jimenez - University of Burgos

Holger Roschk - Aalborg University

Phil Megicks - University of Southampton

Ulf Aagerup - Jönköping University

Online brand communities (OBCs) have become an increasingly important means for companies to promote brand purpose. However, there is evidence that brand purpose communications, whilst fostering consumers' identification with brands, can also cause polarization and incite consumer-to-consumer conflicts. These comments cause considerable psychological damage to community members and commercial damage to the brand. Yet, at present, knowledge on what exactly drives consumer brand-cyberbullying (CBC) remains limited. Drawing on research from information studies, psychology and marketing, and based on an online survey (n=1156), we show that a key explanation for why consumers who identify with brands bully others lies in their materialistic aspirations. Moreover, the extent of this depends on their online community participation, prior cyber-bullying experiences, and brand involvement. Our findings contribute theoretically by linking brands to cyberbullying, and we raise practitioners' awareness on a growing and novel social purpose issue.

Keywords: Cyberbullying; Social Media; Consumer-to-consumer interactions.

GBC2025-42341

It's A Matter of Perception: Extraverts See Purchases more as Experiences than as Material Objects and Consequently Gain more Happiness from Them

Wilson Bastos - Catolica Lisbon School of Business and Economics

Fernando Machado - Catolica Lisbon School of Business and Economics

Consumer happiness is of primary interest to most brands. Past research has shown that people gain more happiness from experiential than material purchases—the finding behind the “experience recommendation” (Nicolao, Irwin, & Goodman, 2009, p. 189). Interestingly, research has also shown that interventions encouraging consumers to perceive the same purchase more experientially (vs. materially) similarly yield this happiness benefit. The present investigation takes a novel perspective and investigates whether there are identifiable individual characteristics that make people naturally prone to perceiving purchases more experientially, and whether this too produces a happiness difference. Five studies show that extraversion leads people to see purchases more experientially, which increases purchase-related happiness. This unfolds for extraversion but not for other major personality traits. Further, borrowing

from the notion that extraversion is malleable, this work manipulates extraversion and finds convergent evidence for state extraversion, a managerially relevant finding. Additionally, it identifies a psychological mechanism responsible for extraverts' tendency to perceive purchases more experientially—need for uniqueness.

Keywords: Experience, Material Object, Consumer Happiness.

Parallel Session 5 - Brand Purpose: Strategic Alignment and Organizational Challenges

May, 07 14:00

Room EP002

Francisco Guzman - Chair

GBC2025-19309

Navigating competing institutional logics: Tensions in brand purpose activation within hybrid organizations

Christian Koch - Kristianstad University

Purpose-driven branding offers hybrid organizations the potential to align societal impact with market success. However, activating a clear and coherent brand purpose in such organizations is characterized by tensions stemming from the coexistence of conflicting institutional logics. This study explores these dynamics within a hybrid organization in the public transport sector, where a public, political, and bureaucratic logic emphasizing accountability and societal value competes with a private, market-driven, and innovation logic focused on profitability and customer-centricity. Through a longitudinal case study spanning two years, involving interviews, workshops, and observations, the research reveals that these competing logics create persistent ambiguities in defining and enacting brand purpose. These tensions are further complicated by identity-based dynamics, as individuals and groups within the organization adapt to or resist the hybrid roles. Employees experience conflicting expectations, often leading to fragmented interpretations of brand purpose, misaligned practices, and external perceptions of inconsistency. The findings demonstrate how hybrid organizations use selective coupling strategies to manage these tensions, combining elements of both logics in specific contexts. While this approach offers temporary solutions, it also intensifies ambiguity and internal conflict, undermining the organization's ability to achieve a unified brand purpose.

Keywords: Brand, Purpose, Logics, Tension, Hybridity.

GBC2025-61431

Bringing brand purpose to life through strategic alignment

Oriol Iglesias - ESADE Business School

Nicholas Ind - Kristiana University College

Michela Mingione - Università San Raffaele Roma

Brand purpose is a process of engagement. To bring purpose to life, it needs to be materialized into concrete policies and practices that strategically align the brand's key stakeholders. By taking this perspective, brand alignment represents a strategic enabler to orchestrate the corporate brand relationships with internal and external stakeholders and to enhance stakeholders' mutual understanding and value co-creation.

To ensure internal coherence, a brand should aim to strategically align employee behavior with the intended purpose. This requires a supportive culture, intensive training and appropriate incentives. Externally, brands should strategically align their complex network of stakeholders. This interconnected web of relations plays a key role in realizing a brand's purpose and can strongly amplify either the responsibility or the irresponsibility of the focal brand. Consequently, brand purpose research needs to adopt a systems approach. However, surprisingly, there is still extremely scarce research on how to activate brand purpose from a stakeholder perspective.

Keywords: Brand purpose, Conscientious brands.

GBC2025-70490

Impact of Perceived Work-Life Balance on Perceived Brand Purpose

DAMINI BOSE - University of North Texas

Francisco Guzman - University of North Texas

In today's world, as consumers increasingly prioritize brands with strong sociopolitical and environmental commitments, understanding the internal drivers of brand purpose is crucial. While existing literature

emphasizes the importance of brand purpose and its outcomes, there is a dearth of knowledge of its value, drivers, and antecedents. This study addresses this gap by examining how employee well-being, specifically work-life balance, and employee engagement within an organization influences companies' ability to build and communicate their brand purpose. This research aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on brand purpose by providing empirical evidence of its internal drivers. It also offers practical implications for organizations seeking to strengthen their brand purpose through employee-focused initiatives. The research findings support the notion that prioritizing work-life balance serves as a strategic approach to better engage employees and develop a more authentic and impactful brand purpose, ultimately leading to increased consumer trust, profit, and brand equity.

Keywords: brand purpose, work-life balance, employee engagement, antecedents.

GBC2025-81070

Corporate carve-outs: Brand Purpose as key pillar for successful corporate transformation

Oliver Vogler - ISM International School of Management

In today's world, as consumers increasingly prioritize brands with strong sociopolitical and environmental commitments, understanding the internal drivers of brand purpose is crucial. While existing literature emphasizes the importance of brand purpose and its outcomes, there is a dearth of knowledge of its value, drivers, and antecedents. This study addresses this gap by examining how employee well-being, specifically work-life balance, and employee engagement within an organization influences companies' ability to build and communicate their brand purpose. This research aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on brand purpose by providing empirical evidence of its internal drivers. It also offers practical implications for organizations seeking to strengthen their brand purpose through employee-focused initiatives. The research findings support the notion that prioritizing work-life balance serves as a strategic approach to better engage employees and develop a more authentic and impactful brand purpose, ultimately leading to increased consumer trust, profit, and brand equity.

Keywords: brand purpose, work-life balance, employee engagement, antecedents.

Parallel Session 6 - AI and Brands**May, 07 14:00****Room EP004**

Holger Joerg Schmidt - Chair

GBC2025-36544**Have you changed my life? Drivers and Barriers of Generative Artificial Intelligence Integration for Brand Professionals***Alexandra Kirkby - University of Twente & HWR Berlin**Carsten Baumgarth - HWR Berlin**Jörg Henseler - University of Twente*

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) technologies allow for novel and original assets to be generated. Consequently, opportunities arise for brand professionals in how they approach and manage creative brand voice. Although GenAI shows strength in creative work such as formulating brand text, creating images, and drafting storyboards, brand professionals are not fully integrating GenAI-outputs for brand voice. This work assesses drivers and barriers to GenAI integration from the individual brand professional perspective by conducting ten in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interviews are structured around five timeframes surrounding the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 in order to evaluate increases and decreases in GenAI integration intensity. The first findings reveal six realms encompassing driver and barriers: individual, technology, brand, leadership, organisation and environmental, which are further assessed according to the timeframes in which they emerge.

Keywords: Brand_Voice, Brand_Management, Creativity, Artificial_Intelligence.

GBC2025-86961**Designers' Perspectives of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Visual Identities and Contemporary Branding***Sofia Almeida - Universidade de Aveiro**Catarina Lélis - Universidade de Aveiro**Diogo Gomes - Universidade de Aveiro*

The rapid integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) into branding practices is transforming the field of visual identity (VI) creation, offering new opportunities for innovation, personalisation, and audience engagement. GAI, a technology capable of autonomously generating adaptive content based on pre-existing data, has introduced a paradigm shift in branding by enabling co-creation and customisation at an unprecedented scale. However, alongside these advancements, GAI also raises significant challenges related to authorship, originality, and the role of designers, making it a critical subject for investigation.

This study seeks to explore the perceptions of designers regarding GAI and its integration into the creation of VIs, addressing the research question: "How do designers perceive and integrate GAI in the creation of visual identities?". The research focuses on key areas such as designers' views on the creative possibilities and limitations of GAI, its practical applications in workflows, and its impact on traditional design principles such as authenticity, originality, and creative autonomy. By investigating these dimensions, the study aims to understand how GAI is reshaping design practices, brand personalisation, and audience engagement in contemporary branding.

A mixed-methods approach is employed, using an online structured questionnaire distributed through a snowball sampling method to reach a diverse population of professional designers, including freelancers, in-house professionals, and trainees. The questionnaire includes closed-ended questions designed to capture designers' insights on the integration of GAI in their workflows, focusing particularly on its potential for co-creation and personalisation. The findings are expected to provide critical insights into how designers perceive GAI's role in shaping VIs and fostering audience engagement.

Preliminary insights suggest that GAI is viewed as both a transformative tool and disruptive force. On one hand, it enhances efficiency and creativity, enabling the creation of highly personalised and adaptive VIs that resonate with diverse audiences. Designers acknowledge its potential to foster participatory design processes, shifting audience interaction from passive consumption to active co-creation. On the

other hand, concerns are raised about the risk of standardisation, diminished creative autonomy, and challenges to traditional notions of authorship and originality. The findings underscore the dual role of GAI as both a facilitator of innovation and a disruptor of established design practices.

This research has significant implications for theory and practice. Theoretically, it contributes to the emerging body of knowledge linking technological advancements in GAI with shifts in design thinking and practice, particularly in branding. It explores how GAI can redefine audience engagement, personalisation, and co-creation, supporting theories of technology acceptance and human-AI collaboration in creative fields. Practically, the study offers actionable insights for branding professionals, design educators, and software developers, emphasising the need for strategic guidelines to integrate GAI while maintaining brand authenticity and originality.

Keywords: GenerativeArtificialIntelligence, VisualIdentity, Co-Creation, Branding.

GBC2025-30908

AI speaks brand – Expert evaluation of Few-Shot Prompting for LLMs-generated brand voice

Carsten Baumgarth - HWR Berlin

Jonathan Mall - NeuroFlash

Since the launch of ChatGPT, AI-driven brand text generation has become increasingly common, yet achieving a consistent brand voice remains a challenge. This study investigates the efficacy of Few-Shot Prompting as an approach for producing consistent AI-generated brand texts, addressing the importance of brand consistency in consumer memory formation. Leveraging theories like the mere-exposure effect and schema theory, the study emphasizes the need for a consistent brand voice, a principle fundamental to strong brand identity and enduring consumer loyalty.

The study employs a Turing test and the Brand Touchpoint Quality (BTQ) model, assessing usability, experience, and brand fit across AI-generated and human-created texts. The expert evaluation involved 43 brand professionals assessing AI-generated posts, produced by Few-Shot Prompting (NeuroFlash) and ChatGPT, alongside original human-written posts. Results indicate that Few-Shot Prompting yields higher brand consistency and expert preference over other methods, with experts recommending NeuroFlash posts 51% of the time.

These findings suggest that Few-Shot Prompting is a cost-effective solution for maintaining brand consistency in AI-generated texts. The BTQ framework presented here provides a practical tool for pre-testing brand texts, contributing to both academic research and practical applications in brand management. This study underscores the significance of integrating AI in a brand-aligned manner, ensuring brand safety in an AI-driven future.

Keywords: AI, Brand_Consistency, Brand_Voice, Few-shot-Prompting.

GBC2025-43986

Does Edmund de Belamy strengthen the brand of a soap dispenser? The AI art infusion effect

Carsten Baumgarth - HWR Berlin

This paper discusses an expansion of the classical art infusion effect when AI is the creator of art, which suggests that associating art with a commercial product or brand positively impacts consumer evaluation. Recent developments in the art and technology sector expand art to AI-generated art. The article examines whether AI art is perceived similarly to human-created art, influences brand perception like human art, and whether disclosing the creator as AI reduces this effect. Two studies show that AI art is generally perceived as art and enhances brand attitudes, though the effect weakens if consumers know the artwork is AI-generated. Future research should explore the impact of explicit authorship indications, consumer heterogeneity, and the psychological reasons behind the AI-art infusion effect. Limitations include small sample sizes and a focus on explicit brand attitude measurements.

Keywords: AI_art, AI_Art_Infusion_effect, Art_Infusion, Brand_tochpoint_evaluation.

Parallel Session 7 - Brand Identity: Local vs Global brands**May, 07 14:00****Room EAA101**

Nathalia Tjandra - Chair

GBC2025-59835**Running with purpose: brand-facilitated running clubs as social spaces for local identity construction***Trine Susanne Johansen - Aarhus University*

The paper contributes to purpose branding scholarship by highlighting how community engagement activities act as resources for creating and maintain social brand purpose for local brands. Approaching purpose branding as anchoring the brand socially in its local community, it is explored how brand-facilitated running clubs form social spaces for local identity construction. The dual aim is to develop a theoretical framework for conceptualising local brand-facilitated running clubs as complex social spaces for brand and consumer identity construction; and to illustrate the framework's applicability as a conceptual lens through an explorative study of three running clubs. The theoretical framework combines neolocalism with the localised ritualistic and symbolic activities of consumer tribes in order to develop a conceptual lens to understand how local brands construct social community spaces and thereby develop their brand purpose. The framework is applied to studying three running clubs using netnographic and ethnographic methods. Preliminary insights point to different ways in which local brand and consumer identities are constructed within the social context of the running clubs as specific rituals and symbols are used to construct a sense of local community and belonging both on- and offline. Theoretically, the paper holds implications for discussions on how local brands may establish and maintain brand purpose by offering meaningful social spaces for consumers' need for community belonging. Practically, it provides implications for local brand owners and/or managers in terms of understanding how they can apply ritualistic and symbolic manifestations of localised sociality to create and maintain brand purpose.

Keywords: purpose-branding; neotribalism; neolocalism; qualitative research.

GBC2025-83523**Firm's local/ global brand intended positioning vs. consumer's brand perceptions: A qualitative research***Maryam Vaziri - La Salle University**Joan Llonch-Andreu - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**Pilar López-Belbeze - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*

This empirical study effectively contributes to a better understanding on how consumers perceive brand localness or globalness through the signals delivered by the company's brand positioning. It is a pioneering study on this field because it analyses at the same time consumer's perceptions about brand localness or globalness and the intended firm's positioning on this issue. Furthermore, it helps to determine whether consumers' perceptions of brand localness or globalness are consistent or not with the signals provided by a firm's brand strategies and why. For doing this, we first conducted 34 in-depth interviews to consumers, and latter, we identified the intended brands' positioning with a study of its advertising campaigns, product packaging, web pages, and annual reports, among other sources. From a theoretical point of view and based on the signalling theory applied to brands, this research has a significant contribution to determining how much consumer's perception of a brand category is influenced by the company's intended brand positioning. In addition, this study provides important insights on how to develop brand positioning or repositioning of a local or a global brand by conducting a clear and consistent communication strategy according to the consumer's point of view. Thus, our findings can be very helpful for local and global brand managers to improve their marketing strategies.

Keywords: Local/Global brand; Positioning; Iran.

GBC2025-80262

Balancing local renewal and continuity of retailer brands*Guenther Botschen - University of Innsbruck**Andrea Hemetsberger - University of Innsbruck**Mathias Streicher - University of Innsbruck*

There is a need for continuous renewal of attracting physical retail environments to keep up with change. Usually, retailer chains tend to use standardized designs to help consumers recognize the brand and to economize costs. However, this approach can lead to less attractive retail environments, which are likely to encourage a switch to competing offerings and to on-line shopping. A considerable challenge is to develop attractive retailer brands that can be recognized by consumers, but can also be modified to flexibly fit into changing local environments. Hence, local renewal has to be balanced with continuity to strengthen the retailer brand's identity. This study contributes to the theory of the flexible retailer brand by discussing the notion of selfsimilar aesthetically folding retail outlets into its changing local environments to balance continuity and renewal in corporate branding. Based on a case study, Mpreis supermarkets, the authors emphasize the idea of the brand fold whereby the social and physical-geographical environment of the retail brand is actively integrated into the chosen brand identity. The case study further shows how the core of its corporate brand identity is consistently transferred to customers via sensually experiences at the various touch points adding to a positive resonance with consumers. Finally implications of developing a flexible retailer brand through aesthetically folding for practice, society, theory and further research are discussed.

Keywords: brand identity, folding, self-similarity.

GBC2025-80963

The essence of Scottish brands*Paria Zamanfashami - Edinburgh Napier University**Nathalia tjandra - Edinburgh Napier University**Alessandro Feri - John Cabot University**Kyle Andrews - Edinburgh Napier University**Mark Passera - Edinburgh Napier University**Jamie Thompson - Associate Professor in Marketing at Edinburgh Napier University*

The purpose of the current study is to examine the essence of Scottish brands. We explore how brands leverage Scottish identity to develop distinctiveness and competitive advantage. Using qualitative research methods, we conducted interviews with brand and marketing managers, founders and CEOs of Scottish brands as well as marketing agencies and Brand Scotland. The findings extend the existing body of literature on nation branding. Studying the multifaceted components of Scottish brand essence bring forth numerous practical and theoretical implications

Keywords: Brand essence, Scottish brands.

Parallel Session 8 - Product Branding**May, 07 14:00****Room EAA002**

Joern Redler - Chair

GBC2025-58532**“Talking about Socially Interactive Products”: How the Conversational Value of SIPs Explains Consumers’ Desire for the Technology***Wilson Bastos - Catolica Lisbon School of Business and Economics**Liang Huang - Tsinghua University**C. Clark Cao - Lingnan University, Hong Kong*

Products that communicate in human-like ways have popped-up across myriad brands. Naturally, consumers’ ability to talk with socially interactive products (SIPs) is central to those products and their brands’ appeal. We examine the possibility that, besides talking with, consumers also value talking about SIPs. We present convergent evidence showing that products with (vs. without) voice functionality have greater conversational value, which explains consumers’ inclination to acquire them. Critically, we demonstrate that the conversational value mechanism unfolds above and beyond consumers’ ability to talk with the product. Additionally, to provide additional informational value to the model, we seek to explain what drives the greater conversational value of SIPs. Findings show two mechanisms responsible for it: unique product and unique identity. Overall, this work extends the literature on voice-equipped products beyond the domain of consumers talking with the product to include consumers talking about it. In doing so, it adds to theory a novel explanation for those products’ appeal—conversational value. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

Keywords: voice-equipped products, conversational value, acquisition.

GBC2025-75664**To Cherish and To Hold (Onto): Structure Maintenance Behavior in Brand Consumption***C. Clark Cao - Lingnan University**Liang Huang - Tsinghua University**Wilson Bastos - Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics*

Brands frequently present their products into product sets (e.g., Marvel action figures or Diptyque fragrance collections) to take advantage of consumers’ preference thereof. The purpose of the present research, however, is to identify and experimentally test a downside of this strategy. Specifically, consumers become more reluctant to consume an assemblage of products when they are framed into a set, an effect we refer to as “structure maintenance.” We further demonstrate that this is because consumers derive possession value of these products not just from the individual items, but from the integrity of the set as a whole, which is destroyed in the process of consumption. Last but not least, we demonstrate that this effect can mitigate the structure maintenance effect. Structuring products by elements tied to usage can transform consumption into an act of structure building rather than structure dismantling, encouraging consumers to engage with the brand and facilitating repurchase.

Keywords: structure, sets, consumption, possession value.

GBC2025-73245**Brand Portfolio Challenges in the Media Industry: The Case of the German Public Service TV Broadcaster ZDF***Joern Redler - Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Mainz, Germany**Thomas Grimm - ZDF, Germany*

Branding in the public sector is still an evolving area of research. Public sector organisations are increasingly reliant on promoting a consistent, clear brand and are often faced with the challenge of structuring and managing brand portfolios. However, most brand theory has been developed in the private sector. Organisational theory and experience show that such frameworks are often not transferable to the reality of public organisations. In particular, existing brand portfolio and brand architecture theory does not

fit the reality of the public (media) industry. In addition to this, the public media sector faces significant disruption from platformisation and the shift to a co-creation paradigm in branding. This paper reports on a single in-depth case study. The empirical case is ZDF, Germany's second largest public broadcaster. The study aims to explore and understand the challenges faced by public media organisations in the context of a) platformisation, b) the need to build a consistent, strong brand and to structure and manage larger brand portfolios, and (c) the specificities of a public organisation. Initial findings show that managers do not find existing brand portfolio theory applicable to their context. In particular, the levels, roles and linkages discussed do not seem to fit public media companies. In addition, the findings underscore the need for further research into the specifics of marketing in publicly managed institutions. The data also shows that the co-creation paradigm and platformisation pose multiple challenges for branding in this industry. Based on the findings, further research avenues are outlined.

Keywords: brand portfolio, brand architecture, public.



NAV

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Parallel Session 10 - Brand Identity and Heritage**May, 08 09:00****Room EP004**

José I. Rojas-Méndez - Chair

GBC2025-70977**Conveying brand heritage through relics within corporate museums: an experimental investigation of consumer perceptions***Fabien Pecot - TBS, Barcelona**Antonella Garofano - Università della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"**Angelo Riviezzo - Università del Sannio**Maria Rosaria Napolitano - Università di Napoli Parthenope*

Over the last years brand heritage, a cornerstone of brand identity emphasizing the importance of history and continuity for competitive differentiation, has garnered substantial scholarly attention. Within the domain of heritage branding, research has highlighted the effectiveness of using heritage claims in the marketing mix, involving the indication of the founding date, the use of visual codes associated with the past in advertising, or the opening of corporate museums. However, limited research has explored the role of materiality within corporate museums, more specifically the effects that brand relics or tangible artifacts produce on consumer perceptions of brand heritage authenticity. Therefore, this study investigates the role of brand relics within corporate museums, assessing their effectiveness in enhancing authenticity while addressing skepticism. Three experiments were conducted: (1) an online scenario-based study involving fictitious brands, (2) an online study using a real Italian heritage brand and (3) a lab-based study with physical relics from another Italian heritage brand. These experiments employed validated measures of authenticity, skepticism, curiosity, and perceived heritage, with manipulations across tangible and digital artifact conditions. Findings reveal that brand relics significantly enhance perceptions of authenticity and curiosity while reducing skepticism. Theoretically, this research advances brand heritage literature by integrating materiality and authenticity perspectives in the context of corporate museums; practically, it underscores the importance of tangible artifacts in curating impactful brand heritage experiences. These insights may guide brand managers but also museum curators in leveraging relics for authentic brand-consumer relationships, bridging marketing objectives with cultural preservation.

Keywords: materiality, brand heritage, corporate museums.

GBC2025-78408**Heritage Brands as Narrative Worldmakers: Corporate Storytelling and Identity Building Strategies***Manuela Graf - Friedrich Schiller University Jena*

Heritage brands strategically deploy narratives centred on their origins and traditions as fundamental components in the formation of corporate identity, image and reputation. These narratives typically highlight key aspects, such as the founding date, core principles, influential individuals involved in the company's establishment, significant milestones and historical events that have shaped the corporate identity, along with notable locations associated with the company's inception and growth.

Accordingly, this research aims to contribute to the burgeoning field of heritage brand studies by spotlighting the corporate storytelling processes and principles that underpin the "production" of heritage brands. In this context, the concept of worldmaking — encompassing peoplemaking, pastmaking and placemaking principles — is integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of how corporate storytelling strategies employed by heritage brands contribute not only to the construction of their identities but also to the shaping of broader cultural and social landscapes. While the notion of worldmaking has appeared sporadically within branding discourse, its application in the branding domain remains entirely unexamined and conceptually vague. This study offers the first analysis of narrative worldmaking in the specific context of heritage brands, exploring how these entities develop narrative-driven brand management strategies that extend beyond traditional approaches to branding.

Keywords: Heritage Brands, Corporate Storytelling, Worldmaking.

GBC2025-82478

Can brand positioning be oxymoronic?*Giuseppe Pedeliento - University of Bergamo*

Traditional marketing literature discourages unclear or "fuzzy" positioning, associating it with confusion and reduced brand value. However, the paper challenges this notion by analyzing Barbour, a British brand that thrives on paradoxical positioning. Barbour's success stems from embracing contradictory values—being contemporary yet traditional, local yet global, rural yet urban, and popular yet aristocratic. The brand has evolved from producing utilitarian garments for workers to becoming a lifestyle icon, appealing to diverse demographics while retaining its British heritage. It balances tradition with modernity through collaborations with streetwear brands and designers, achieves global reach while maintaining a strong British identity, and bridges social classes by being accessible yet prestigious. This case introduces the concept of the "oxymoronic brand," which intentionally incorporates contradictions into its identity. Barbour's positioning highlights that such tensions, rather than undermining a brand, can enhance its distinctiveness and appeal. The study calls for further exploration of whether other brands can adopt and benefit from this unconventional strategy in today's dynamic market landscape.

Keywords: Positioning; oxymoron; Barbour; case study.

GBC2025-43298

What do Family Businesses Signal about Themselves?*José I. Rojas-Méndez - Carleton University, Canada**Teagan Dube - Carleton University, Canada**Dian Wang - University of Bedfordshire, UK**Gary Davies - The University of Manchester, UK*

Our paper compares what family firms say about themselves on their websites with the theoretical model of the stereotype content model as applied to commercial organizations (Kervyn et al., 2012, Davies et al., 2018). A content analysis of the websites of 50 Canadian family firms chosen to represent a wide range of business types and geographical locations provided 1166 relevant signals of Warmth (e.g. friendliness, trust, and customer commitment), Competence (e.g. reliability, quality, and expertise) and Status (e.g. professional associations and awards) and an additional 110 signals indicating family ownership. Competence signalling predominated (51.86%), followed by Warmth (33.4%) and Status (7.9%). Most (86%) but not all firms signalled their family nature when describing themselves (compatible with prior work). The smaller the enterprise, the more likely there was an emphasis on Warmth. A cluster analysis revealed two main approaches being adopted, an emphasis on Competence, at the expense of Warmth signalling, and the alternative of an emphasis on Warmth at the expense of Competence coupled with a greater focus on communicating family ownership and operation. The second option appeared to rely upon the assumption that family firms are seen as more Warm than their often bigger and more Competent rivals and to emphasize such a view. The focus on Competence could be explained by the stereotyping of smaller firms as generally less Competent than their larger rivals and the need to counter such a view. Further work is needed to test the implications of both approaches. Managers of family businesses of all sizes might reflect upon what imagery they may be projecting via their websites, both intentionally and not.

Keywords: Reputation; SCM; Competence; Warmth; Status.

Parallel Session 11 - Digital Branding**May, 08 09:00****Room EAA003**

Jan Breitsohl - Chair

GBC2025-61637**Exploring Authenticity in Virtual Influencers: Current Trends and Future Directions***Zhuo Zhang - Department of Design, Production and Management, University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands.**Jörg Henseler - Department of Design, Production and Management, University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands and Nova Information Management School (NOVA-IMS), Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal.**Benjamin Österle - Faculty Management and Sales, Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences, Germany.**Janina Schaumann - Department of Design, Production and Management, University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands.*

This systematic literature review confirms the important role of authenticity in virtual influencer (VI) marketing by analysing 23 sample articles to explore the types, antecedents and consequences of 'virtual authenticity'. The rise of VIs, computer-generated characters with human-like qualities, offers unique advantages in influencer marketing, such as consistency, tirelessness and lack of scandal. However, authenticity remains a critical factor in VI effectiveness, as audiences often approach these artificial personas with scepticism. The research addresses two main questions: whether VIs can convey a sense of authenticity, and the factors that influence VI authenticity and the causal outcomes of these influences. The research highlights that authenticity segmentation helps to identify the characteristics of VIs that convey a sense of authenticity to audiences. The segmentation identifies three types of authenticity: true-to-ideal (TTI), true-to-fact (TTF), and true-to-self (TTS). These types help to frame the authenticity of VIs based on idealised factors, artificial transparency of nature, and creator intentions. Results show that elements such as anthropomorphism, visual identity disclosure, engagement strategy, narrative consistency, social and cultural cues, and perceived capability significantly influence perceptions of VI authenticity. In addition, authenticity promotes user engagement, satisfaction, trust, emotional attachment and positive brand perceptions, ultimately increasing endorsement effectiveness and purchase intention. This research contributes to the understanding of VI marketing by highlighting the multifaceted nature of authenticity and suggesting avenues for future research. It encourages the exploration of technological advances, ethical considerations and user-specific factors to deepen insights into VI-audience relationships and inform effective VI marketing strategies.

Keywords: Brand authenticity, AI influencer.**GBC2025-59379****Digital Prosumers: exploring coexisting motivations and practices of content consumption and creation among gamers across multiple platforms***Henrique Vicente Martinski - Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing**Edson Crescitelli - Universidade de São Paulo**Maria Carolina Cavalcante Dias - Universidade de São Paulo*

The present paper investigates motivations and practices of content prosumers in the gaming industry, focusing on how gamers transition into content creation roles in multiple platforms. Based on the notion of prosumerism, a concept where individuals both consume and produce content, the study's originality lies in addressing the research gap concerning the motivations and processes behind multi-platform prosumerism. The study used a qualitative approach, employing open-ended, semi-structured interviews with Brazilian prosumers active on platforms like YouTube Gaming and Twitch, to gain a deep understanding of the complexities of digital prosumerism in the gaming world. As data collection strategy, ten interviews were conducted with prosumers and ten with regular gamers, including one joint interview featuring both types of participants. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached, meaning no new information emerged from the interviews. The data was analyzed using thematic content analysis, aided by Atlas.ti software. Results showed that prosumers in the gaming industry are driven by factors previously identified in the literature, such as self-efficacy, skill development, creative ex-

pression, and professional visibility. However, the study also revealed new dimensions, suggesting that prosumer activity is influenced by external factors related to digital labor dynamics, including the relationship between content monetization, sponsorships, rewards, and partnerships as part of prosumers' compensation, and the unequal earnings distribution between platforms and gamers. Finally, the study presents preliminary considerations and discusses theoretical and empirical implications for gamers, platforms, and brands.

Keywords: Prosumers. Content Creation. Platforms. Gamers.

GBC2025-41690

Negative Online Consumer Reviews: Reducing Cognitive Load with Review Language Style, Length, and Images

Sebastian Ullrich - Schmalkalden University of Applied Sciences

Negative reviews are known to have a stronger impact on consumer decisions than positive reviews. Consumers are faced with an increasing number of reviews. Drawing on cognitive load theory, this study explores ways to reduce the mental effort required to process negative online consumer reviews. Three key factors – review length, language style, and the presence of images – were examined using a 2x2x2 between-subjects design. The study used an international sample of 312 participants who were randomly exposed to reviews of a backpack under varying conditions: short or long text, strong or moderate language, and with or without an image of the product problem. Results partially supported the hypotheses. Reviews with images were perceived as more credible and led to less favorable product attitudes, although they did not significantly affect purchase intentions. Contrary to expectations, review length did not influence credibility, attitudes, or purchase intentions. Strong language reduced perceived credibility but did not significantly affect attitudes or purchase intentions. In addition, perceived credibility was found to strongly influence how much a review influenced consumer evaluations. The study provides practical insights for marketers: allowing consumers to post images can increase review credibility, while artificial intelligence could help optimize review content by flagging overly strong language or insufficient detail. The research contributes to the understanding of how reducing cognitive load can help consumers make more informed decisions when reading negative reviews online. The study was conducted as part of a course project involving 14 students in an international bachelor's program.

Keywords: consumer reviews, cognitive load, image.

GBC2025-24044

The Emerging but Neglected Field of Digital Reputation in Brand Research: Findings From a Systematic Literature Review

Rebecca Stephan - Hochschule Mainz - University of Applied Sciences

Prof. Dr. Isabelle Hillebrandt - Hochschule Mainz - University of Applied Sciences

Prof. Dr. Jörn Redler - Hochschule Mainz - University of Applied Sciences

Prof. Dr. Jörg Henseler - University of Twente

This study investigates the concept of digital reputation and its integration into the broader framework of corporate reputation, a well-established subject in marketing literature. As companies navigate in an increasingly interconnected digital environment, understanding how digital interactions shape perceptions of reputation has become crucial. The aim of this study is therefore to aggregate the existing research findings that can contribute to this understanding. Conceptualisations of digital reputation are examined and prevailing approaches to measurement are identified.

Employing a semi-systematic literature review, 191 relevant publications have been analysed. The findings reveal diverse conceptualisations of digital reputation, emphasizing the central role of stakeholders, the dynamic nature of reputation, and the uncontrollable influence of third parties. Moreover, a significant discrepancy between the complexity of digital reputation and the predominantly unidimensional measurement approaches that are currently in use became evident. The measures are largely reliant on single-channel indicators.

This study offers a comprehensive overview of digital reputation, underscoring the necessity for further conceptualisation efforts and the establishment of a multidimensional measurement framework. Furthermore, there is a need to intensify efforts to develop integrated tools that are capable of monitoring a range of channels and also acknowledging the impact of offline experiences on digital reputation. This seems essential for ensuring that theoretical principles can effectively inform practical management.

Overall, this research lays the groundwork for further exploration and a unified understanding of digital reputation in the contemporary marketing landscape.

Keywords: corporate reputation, online reputation, branding.

Parallel Session 12 - Brand Activism**May, 08 09:00****Room EAA102**

Zoe Lee - Chair

GBC2025-10069**Brand Activism: Current Perspectives and Future Scenarios***Holger Joerg Schmidt - Koblenz University of Applied Sciences*

Brands have always been involved in socio-political issues, from Lucky Strike's Torches of Freedom campaign in the 1930s to Benetton's controversial campaigns in the 1980s. This strategy, often referred to as brand activism, gained momentum around 2020 and is currently a hot topic. Brand activism refers to brands taking a stance on polarised social issues such as LGBTQ rights and diversity. It is popular because consumers are increasingly looking for brands that reflect their values, especially as trust in political systems declines, and because brands are looking for ways to connect emotionally with their audiences. But how likely is it that brand activism is here to stay? How will brand activism evolve in the medium to long term? What developments are influencing it? And what should research focus on in this context? An expert survey based on the Delphi method provided initial answers to these questions and outlined three possible future scenarios: 1) Activism will become a central theme for many brands, 2) Activism is a fleeting trend of the 2020s, or 3) Its importance varies by industry, target audience and cultural context. The future of brand activism remains uncertain; it could either become an enduring element of brand strategy or fade away as a passing trend. Ongoing research will explore these variables to understand and guide the evolving role of brand activism in different contexts.

Keywords: Activism, Scenarios, Delphi, Experts, Trends.

GBC2025-49989**Rewards and penalties: How consumers respond to activist brands in case of performance and value-related failures***Roberta De Cicco - University of Urbino**Barbara Francioni - University of Urbino**Ilaria Curina - University of Urbino**Marco Cioppi - University of Urbino**Mauro Dini - University of Urbino*

This study explores the impact of brand activism on consumer attitudes and intentions, aiming to determine whether consumers reward activist brands in the case of performance-related failures and penalize them in instances of value-related failures, especially when the latter are perceived as highly severe. Two experimental studies were conducted to investigate different types of brand failures. The first study highlights a distinction in favor of activist brands compared to non-activist brands regarding brand attitude and repurchase intentions during performance-related crises. In contrast, the second study reveals no significant differences in the context of value-related crises. Unlike the initial study, attitudes and intentions towards the brand decline during a value-related crisis, regardless of its severity, particularly for activist brands. This undermines the protective benefits identified in the first study. The findings show no difference between the two types of brands regarding consumer hatred, suggesting that other factors contribute to this negative sentiment. This research significantly enhances our understanding of brand activism within the context of brand t. It fills a crucial gap in the literature by examining the impact of brand activism on consumer attitudes and repurchase intentions across various levels of severity in value-related crises. From a managerial perspective, the findings provide vital insights for brands considering or actively engaging in activist initiatives.

Keywords: Brands, Activism, Crises, Attitudes, Intentions.

GBC2025-53681

Unveiling the Unintended Consequences of Corporate Sociopolitical Activism*Amanda Spry - RMIT University, Australia**Zoe Lee - Cardiff University**Marian Makkar - RMIT University, Australia**Cassandra France - The University of Queensland*

Corporate sociopolitical activism (CSA) offers firms significant advantages, enabling strategic differentiation in competitive markets and allowing companies to express values in a deeply divided society. While existing literature extensively explores key drivers and outcomes, the potential hidden costs and unintended consequences —particularly for consumers—remain underexplored. This gap aligns with mainstream marketing research, which typically emphasises positive outcomes. While scholars have started to question the challenges and risks associated with CSA, the unintended consequences for consumers have largely been overlooked. Yet, numerous high-profile cases show that when companies take a public stance, consumers often bear the negative consequences, most commonly, by being responsabilised for action the changes through their consumption practices. In this work, we interrogate CSA by applying ethics of care, namely Tronto's five phases of care, to illuminate the dark sides. To do this, we employ the 'theory adaptation' conceptual approach. We focus on unintended consequences for consumers, given that firms are the focal actors operating with the agency to enact CSA, which tends to 'cast into shadow' unintended consequences of this position of power.

Keywords: Corporate activism, care ethics, darksides.

Parallel Session 9 - Brand Purpose: Case Studies**May, 08 09:00****Room EP002**

Clarinda Jansberg - Chair

GBC2025-29941**Stop for a moment; who creates or determines the “reason to exist”? A case study exploring the craft of the brand purpose***Miralem Helmefalk - School of Business and Economics, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden**Andreas Eklund - College of Business, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse, United States*

While recent research has discussed the role and functions of the brand purpose (BP), less attention has been given to how and when a BP is created, integrated, and aligned into organizational processes. To understand the mechanisms of crafting a BP, we employ a case study of a sustainable local distillery with a restaurant and bar in the Midwest, US, which are consciously working with their BP. We aim to illustrate and analyze how a BP is created, communicated, and integrated into everyday operations by performing in-depth interviews and obtaining materials. Preliminary findings reveal the importance of personal knowledge, ethos, relevance, and why the BP was crafted. To the extent of our knowledge, this paper is one of the first to illustrate how BPs are crafted and sustained in a SME, as well as how this creation and modification is continuously ongoing.

Keywords: Brand-purpose, Brand-Value, Case-study, Value-Creation, Sustainability.

GBC2025-48865**The Interplay among Black Swan Events, Entrepreneurial Orientation, and Purpose-Driven Brands: A Working Paper***Alexandra Vilares - University of Minho**Cláudia Simões - iBMS, University of Minho**António Moreira - University of Aveiro*

This study provides a novel perspective by viewing black swan events as opportunities for purpose-driven brand evolution, rather than just as disruptive challenges. Its originality stems from an interdisciplinary approach that integrates concepts from marketing, psychology, and entrepreneurship. The study proposes a model whereby black swan events inspire entrepreneurial and creative responses, ultimately leading to the development of outlier brands characterized by strong, purpose-driven identities.

Keywords: Brand Purpose, Entrepreneurial Orientation.

GBC2025-70093**Driven by brand purpose, hit by reality: A multi-stakeholder perspective on negative outcomes of a failing brand purpose***Galina Biedenbach - Umeå University*

In contemporary managerial practice as well as academic research, brand purpose is increasingly seen as a vital strategic component of successful brand management. Previous branding studies highlight numerous positive outcomes of brand purpose. However, in relation to negative outcomes, prior research provides scarce evidence, mostly applying a consumer perspective. This study aims to address this research gap by applying a multi-stakeholder perspective for exploring negative outcomes of brand purpose. The main purpose of this study is to investigate negative outcomes of a failing brand purpose for internal and external stakeholders by applying a multi-stakeholder perspective. The study is based on a single case, focusing on Northvolt, a green battery manufacturer from northern Sweden developing gigafactories across Europe and North America. This organization started to fail in achieving its purpose in 2024, leading to severe negative consequences for its diverse internal and external stakeholders. The study provides a nuanced overview of negative outcomes of a failing brand purpose from a multi-stakeholder perspective. The study contributes to managerial practice and branding research by providing insights about the complex phenomenon of brand purpose, investigating its potential negative conse-

quences for multiple stakeholders. The study highlights challenges of purpose-driven brand management, but also indicates opportunities for building a strong and relevant brand purpose by applying a multi-stakeholder perspective.

Keywords: Brand management, brand purpose, stakeholders.

GBC2025-24930

Turning negative into positive – the case of Liquid Death

Clarinda Jansberg - Linnaeus University

Adele Berndt - Jönköping University

Integrating brand purpose into a brand's strategy can drive societal value and create brand equity. Embedding brand purpose as a core element of brand identity is essential for leveraging a brand's promise, aligning with the need for authenticity and credibility.

This paper explores a disruptive brand purpose as exemplified by Liquid Death. This brand combines environmental activism with a rebellious image, using a strategy that includes transforming hate speech into brand content. The launch of their "Greatest Hates" albums repurposes negative comments into satirical music. This approach redefines the relationship between negative sentiment and brand identity, leveraging criticism to reinforce authenticity and appeal to nonconformist consumers.

This study employs thematic analysis to examine the lyrics of Liquid Death's albums, revealing how a disruptive brand can embrace negativity to enhance its rebellious image. The analysis of the lyrics examines the vocabulary, style, semantics, orientation and song structures as they reflect the negative comments posted online. The use of expletives, mockery and repetition is aligned with the heavy metal genre of the albums. The lyrics contain objections based on the social, corporate, religious and marketing perspectives of brand critics.

The study exemplifies how a disruptive brand purpose centres on boldness and unconventionality, resonating with younger generations. This paper contributes to the literature on brand purpose by demonstrating how hate-acknowledging advertising can be a core component of a disruptive brand strategy, offering practical implications for brand management and crisis communication.

Keywords: Disruptive brand purpose, brand hate.

Parallel Session 13 - Brand Purpose: Unique Contexts**May, 08 13:40****Room EP002**

Adele Berndt - Chair

GBC2025-66857**Brand Purpose in Defence?***Craig Hirst - Sheffield Hallam University**Gary Burnand - Studio Graft**Paul Beresford - Sheffield Hallam University*

As the World Economic Forum is declaring that “climate change is no longer a far-off threat” (WEF, 2023, p.3) and the World Meteorological Society are reporting that the records across most significant climate change indicators continue to be broken (Hirst & Burnand, 2024), it is crucial to understand how businesses are adapting to address what has been called the single greatest threat to humanity (Upreti, 2023). This comes at a time when arms-makers and global military manufacturing brands are making record profits from governmental defence spending resulting from the conflicts unfolding in Europe and the Middle-East and the mounting instability in other parts of the world (Jolly, 2024). Meanwhile, the marketing and brand management academy are wrestling with the idea of brand purpose, to expose its conceptual boundaries and definitional limitations, and greater understanding is required here if we are to mitigate the climate change challenge. Building on this context, and the growing evidence that brands are stepping “into a new role, where they are expected to be powerful instruments for societal change” (France et al, 2023, p.), this working paper outlines our study that aims to investigate the extent to which defence company strategy aligns with theories of brand purpose in relation to efforts to combat climate change and mitigate nature loss.

Keywords: Brand Purpose, Climate Change, Defence.

GBC2025-57403**The challenge of Transformative Branding for B-to-C Brands***Isabelle Aime - Kedge Business School*

In the face of rising consumer experience, many B-to-C are claiming a purpose beyond profit and seeking to demonstrate their concern for social responsibility and sustainability. This strategic brand shift is complex, as the brand must also maintain its DNA, values and relevance to remain distinctive and attractive. However, there is still little research on how a B-to-C non-conscientious brand could concretely make and communicate a change towards more conscientiousness to consumers. Building on the dynamic capabilities approach and the prism of sustainable brand learning capabilities, this research uses a multiple case study of two well-known FMCG brands within the same international corporation to explore the transformative power of brands facing the urge of sustainability. More specifically, it attempts to analyse and understand how non-conscientious B-to-C brands can adapt their purpose toward conscientiousness to ensure their own sustainability and how they can communicate it to consumers. The results show two different processes and outcomes depending on whether sustainability is perceived as an opportunity or a constraint, even within the same international group. While Blue Brand uses it as an opportunity to revitalize the brand with a completely new brand platform based on conscientiousness, the change towards sustainability seems to be more defensive for Black Brand with only a limited shift in brand purpose.

Keywords: brands, purpose, conscientious, sustainability, storytelling.

GBC2025-65239**Social Brand Purpose and the use of Elderly Models in Indian food advertising***Adele Berndt - Jönköping International Business School**Pritha Chakraborty - Bennett University, India*

Consumers increasingly expect brands to have values beyond profit including social brand purpose which includes issues such as diversity and inclusion. Advertising reflects the values in society, using visual cues

(e.g., the models and characters used) to communicate with consumers and align its brand with customer values.

Older people, a growing demographic, are often underrepresented in advertising. In India, the elderly population is projected to double by 2050, yet they remain underrepresented in advertising. This preliminary study explores how elderly individuals are portrayed in Indian advertising.

An advertising database was used to collect adverts using “food” and “India” as search terms, producing 270 print and digital adverts. An initial analysis led to the removal of adverts without older models, leaving 20 adverts for further analysis.

Very few adverts contain older models, and men are more likely to appear in adverts than women. They reflect their wisdom, support and guidance as well as loving behaviour individually, within the family and in society (e.g., in celebrations like Diwali). The adverts used both real and AI-generated images.

This research contributes to the understanding of diversity in advertising as a reflection of social brand purpose. Practical implications include the need for organizations to re-evaluate casting strategies to increase social inclusion and the potential of AI in creating diverse representations underscoring the importance of inclusive advertising to reflect social brand purpose and fostering a deeper connection with diverse audiences.

Keywords: Social brand promise, advertising, elderly.

Parallel Session 14 - Brand Personality**May, 08 13:40****Room EP004**

Richard Rutter - Chair

GBC2025-18947**A hierarchical approach to Brand Personality: an application to brand innovativeness***Ackermann - Rennes School of Business**Hetet - IDRAC*

Brand personality research usually adopts a psycho-lexical perspective to identify several dimensions subsuming brand personality. We explore whether a context-specific, single trait approach can be considered to understand brand personality. More precisely, we adopt a hierarchical approach, similar to that found in research on human personality, and we use brand innovativeness as our context of investigation. We view brand innovativeness as a brand personality trait capturing the extent to which consumers believe the brand is consistent in its innovative behavior. Brand innovativeness can be understood in terms of two core dimensions, creativity and Zeitgeist. We propose a hierarchical model in which brand personality traits, namely Activity, Responsibility, and Simplicity, are cardinal traits within the model, Creativity and Zeitgeist are the central traits, and brand innovativeness is a surface trait. Results from a quantitative study provide support for this model: the indirect effects of Activity on brand innovativeness through Creativity is positive and significant; the indirect effect of Simplicity on brand innovativeness through Creativity is negative and significant; and the indirect effect of Responsibility on brand innovativeness through Zeitgeist is positive and significant. To the extent of our knowledge, no research had adopted a hierarchical approach to brand personality, explaining how underlying brand personality traits relate to context-specific surface traits.

Keywords: Brand personality; brand innovativeness.

GBC2025-19221**The effect of brand personality on organizational attractiveness: an examination of business school students***Ackermann - Rennes School of Business**Hetet - IDRAC*

This research explores the extent to which the symbolic image individuals have of a consumer brand as consumers may also inform how they would behave, as prospective employees, towards the company owning this brand. We are especially interested in investigating answers from second year graduate students from a business school as those students belong to the applicant population targeted by companies owning consumer brands, and are less aware than more experienced people of the potential gap between a brand's public image and the actual behavior of an organization as an employer. Results from two studies show that activity, responsibility and emotionality have a positive effect on organizational attractiveness while the effect of simplicity is negative. This effect is independent of their professional experience length and of their curriculum. Results also show that self-congruence decreases the intensity of this effect. Past research has already used brand personality scales to measure employer brands' symbolic aspects. However, to the extent of our knowledge, no research had explored the extent to which the public image of a consumer brand informs the interest for the organization owning the brand as an employer.

Keywords: Brand personality; organizational attractiveness; self-congruence.

GBC2025-42453

Marketing Higher Education Across Countries: An Examination of Co-Branding Kuwaiti HEIs*Richard Rutter - Australian University, Kuwait.**Steven Telford - Australian University, Kuwait.**John Nadeau - Cape Breton University, Canada.**Fiona Lettice - University of East Anglia, UK.*

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and more esteemed Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are co-branding, associating and cooperating more. These strategic alliances help the GCC HEIs achieve their educational, research, and financial goals. This study compares Kuwaiti HEIs' marketing communications, specifically their language, to their partner HEIs to demonstrate how branding and cross-cultural marketing effect market positioning. To assess strategic partners' brand positioning and associated brand leveraging, we utilise Aaker's brand personality framework and Opoku's dictionary-based brand personality instrument. Then, we compare how Kuwaiti HEIs' brand personality distinguishes them within the market. Findings show that Kuwaiti HEIs exclusively partner with Western HEIs and that American alliances are the most common. Kuwaiti HEIs emphasise 'Excitement' over their associated partners. The market is characterised by 'Competence' and 'Excitement' as an underlying difference. Kuwaiti HEIs use country of origin names and institutional positioning to capitalise on Western HEIs' reputation, adapted for the domestic audience.

Keywords: higher education; branding; personality; marketing.

Parallel Session 15 - Place Branding**May, 08 13:40****Room EAA003**

Carla Carvalho Martins - Chair

GBC2025-10445**City bBranding: A strategic approach to attract and retain talent***Pedro Assunção - School of Economics, University of Porto**Carlos Brito - School of Economics, University of Porto*

City branding has gained relevance not only in the scientific field, but also in municipal management. Indeed, it has been widely used by cities to position themselves as tourist destinations. However, the tourism sector is only one facet of a city's development. This means that cities are increasingly taking advantage of the value of their territorial brand to assert themselves in the economic environment by attracting and retaining companies and generating economic dynamism in their territory. This issue is strategic for cities that aim to attract talent and be economically relevant in knowledge and technology-based industries. In this context, the aim of this paper is to understand the attributes most valued by talent that position a city as a place of excellence in which to live and work, and to understand the role of the various stakeholders in building a city's brand. The case studied in this research is the city of Porto on the basis of a qualitative methodology. This research makes original contributions to the literature, as well as to territorial management. It contributes to fill some gaps in literature, namely the importance of contextual factors for the performance of a territory's brand, the benefits that a city's brand can bring to a region, and the importance of anchor investments for attracting talent and companies. This research also highlights the role of stakeholders in building a successful brand and suggests a framework with the main steps city council managers should follow to build a strong city brand.

Keywords: City Branding, Attract, Retain Talent.

GBC2025-26029**Nation branding in the decade of crises – Hungary***Dr Fanni Tanács-Mandák - Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary*

Hungary as most countries in the world has been facing with a long period of crises which brought unprecedented challenges. Hungarian politicians and scientists interpret this period as the so-called decade of crises (2015-2024), started by the migration crisis of 2015, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the escalation of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. These challenges have been generating health, financial and social crises and profoundly affected our lives and our habits. The new challenges influenced also political leadership, national governments and international organisations had to react situations without precedent.

The new situation caused by the different crises forced nations to re-think the strategies, priorities and instruments they use for nation branding and public diplomacy. In this new and increasingly competitive world, nation branding has become a crucial way to promote a country in a period when nation states have more need than ever to be assessed good.

The research analyses how Hungary has adjusted its policies, strategies and institutional system responsible for nation branding accordingly in this new and sometimes very conflictual and controversial context. The research examines primary sources, the relevant legislation, strategies, programmes and the institutional structure responsible for their implementation, and uses interviews with senior officials to assess the efficiency of the government's response to crises. The analysis of the efficiency will be completed by analysing the evolution of Hungary's position in international rankings (Anholt Nation Brands Index, Global Soft Power Index, Bloom Consulting Country Brand Rankings, Good Country Index, Future Brand Country Brand Index), analysing whether the measures introduced during the crisis period have had a measurable positive impact.

Keywords: crisis, Hungary, nation branding.

GBC2025-72951

A content analysis of Porto's online perceived and projected city image*Maria Isabel Marramaque Ribeiro - Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Católica Porto Business School**Joana César Machado - Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Católica Porto Business School and CEGE**Carla Carvalho Martins - Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Católica Porto Business School and CEGE*

Cities increasingly invest in branding to create a competitive identity and communicate their unique characteristics to target audiences. A city's image—shaped by people's experiences, word-of-mouth, and city communication—is increasingly co-created with social media users. The brand identity of Porto, established as "Porto." in 2014, and managed by the Department for Tourism and Internationalisation (DMO), aims to reflect the city's distinctive qualities.

With social media's influence on travel decisions, Instagram plays a crucial role in shaping Porto's image through shared experiences, images, and hashtags. This study aims to analyze how the image of Porto depicted by Instagram users aligns with the DMO's intended image. Using qualitative content analysis, 700 Instagram posts tagged with #Porto were categorized to capture common themes, such as historic landmarks, local cuisine, and scenic views.

This research offers insights into the alignment between user perceptions and official city branding, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for Porto's DMO in managing its image on social media platforms. Instagram users predominantly associate Porto with its historic buildings and heritage, highlighting the city's monuments as central to its image. Content analysis shows a strong correlation between heritage sites and tourism facilities, largely because many attractions are in Porto's historic center. Hash-tags like #visitporto and #travel emphasize Porto's appeal as a tourist destination. On the other hand, Porto's DMO aims to expand perceptions beyond heritage, especially promoting gastronomy and other tourism segments. This study offers insights into aligning city branding with user-generated perceptions and suggests that targeted hashtags could encourage content from lesser-known areas, enhancing the overall city image online.

Keywords: city; branding; image; social-media; Porto.

Parallel Session 16 - Sports and Athlete Brands**May, 08 13:40****Room EAA102**

Giuseppe Pedeliento - Chair

GBC2025-34399**Retirement Won't Tear Us Apart: Nostalgia and Identification in Sport Consumption***Michela Cesarina Mason - University of Udine**Giuseppe Cappiello - University of Bologna**Daniel Lock - Bournemouth University**Gioele Zamparo - University of Udine*

This work examines the impact of nostalgia and brand identification on consumer behaviour toward retired athletes and their former endorsing brands, focusing on Valentino Rossi and Michael Schumacher. In Study 1, brand identification with Rossi influenced fan nostalgia, increasing loyalty toward VR46 and Yamaha. Study 2 extended these findings, revealing that high identification and nostalgia with Schumacher enhanced loyalty and positive perceptions of Ferrari, including brand uniqueness, attitude, and resilience to negative information. The results highlight how nostalgia and brand identification with retired athletes can significantly benefit personal and historical endorsing brands.

Keywords: Nostalgia, Identification, Sports, Retired Athletes.

GBC2025-76347**Exploring globalised marketing strategies for sport merchandise brands in China***Xin Zhang - Loughborough University**Do Young Pyun - Loughborough University**Sahar Mousavi - Loughborough University*

In recent years, Chinese SMBs have realised that increasing consumers' perceived brand globalness (PBG) could be an effective tool for competing with foreign global SMBs (Dong & Yu, 2020). Foreign global SMBs, on the other hand, are not backing down either. They continue to leverage their extensive global market experience to strengthen their globalised marketing strategies to maintain consumers' PBG (Xie et al., 2015). Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore what marketing strategies SMBs can adopt in the Chinese sport market to increase their PBG, and how these marketing strategies are conceptualised and linked to consumers' PBG. This study employed a qualitative approach using an interview method. This study findings identified three key globalised marketing strategies for PBG: brand innovativeness, global market reach, and brand storytelling strategy. This study contributes two important theoretical implications. The first implication is that it develops comprehensive globalised marketing strategies based on Schmidt-Devlin et al.'s global acceptance theory (2022), which serve as a guide for SMBs to enhance their PBG in China. The other implication is that this study adopts a multi-perspective approach by collecting data through interviews with both consumers and brand managers, thereby overcoming the limitation of relying on a single perspective. Practically, these globalised marketing strategies reflect the most recent and authentic insights from both consumers and brand managers, providing SMB managers with a powerful tool to quickly adapt their strategies to the dynamic China's sport market.

Keywords: globalised marketing strategies, Chinese market.

GBC2025-62512**The athlete brand is in the eyes of the commenter: Audience perceptions of athletes' self-presentation on social media***Gabriele Murtas - Università degli studi di Bergamo**Federico Mangiò - Università degli studi di Bergamo**Giuseppe Pedeliento - Università degli studi di Bergamo**Argyro Elisavet Manoli - Università degli studi di Bergamo*

Current literature on athlete branding on social media has predominantly focused on male athletes, with comparatively less attention given to the female context. Furthermore, research in this field tends to be

divided into two separate streams: one investigating athletes' self-presentation strategies and the other examining audience perceptions of these brands, with the latter neglecting the different types of content promoted by the athlete. Acknowledging these gaps, this study addresses the following research question: How are female athletes' self-presentation strategies perceived by social media users? We investigate this question through two studies. In the first one, we examine the self-presentation strategies of female athletes in Italy's first football division (Serie A) using the Model of Athlete Branding via Social Media (MABSM). We quantify metrics of consumer engagement on social media (CESM) and employ automated textual analysis techniques to analyze the content of user-generated comments. Findings reveal that female athletes are perceived as competing athletes when sharing posts about their sports or personal lives; as social media models when emphasizing their attractive appearance; whilst users' toxic representations persist independently of the self-presentation strategy adopted by the athletes. In the second study, we focus on Italian track and field professionals, expanding the volume-based CESM analysis to include both genders and the entire spectrum of online engagement behaviors. Findings reveal that male athletes generate on average more low and medium-involvement engagement - i.e., views and likes - while female athletes attract higher views specifically when sharing content related to their physical appearance.

Keywords: Athlete branding, Social Media, CESM.



NAVY

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Parallel Session 17 - Brand Purpose: Communication and Consumer Perceptions**May, 09 09:30****Room EP002**

Alessandro Feri - Chair

GBC2025-10370**Influencer Critiques of Brand Purpose: Examining Follower Engagement and Sentiment Across CSR Themes on Social Media***Zhuolin Bao - University of Glasgow**Jan Breitsohl - University of Glasgow**Bowei Chen - University of Glasgow**Amy Goode - University of Glasgow*

This paper examines how followers respond to social media influencers' critiques of brand purpose, specifically within CSR themes of sociopolitical, environmental, and economic issues. Building on previous research that categorized influencer critiques into these themes, this study explores the degree of follower engagement and the sentiment distribution in responses across these categories. Using a dataset of 681 influencer posts and 13,410 follower comments on social media, a one-way ANOVA reveals significant differences in engagement, with economic critiques eliciting the highest follower involvement. Sentiment analysis further shows that economic criticisms provoke more intense negative responses than sociopolitical or environmental themes, which evoke more moderated reactions. These findings offer insights into the role of influencers as intermediaries in CSR discussions, showing that critiques of economic brand purpose notably intensify public engagement and negative sentiment. This study thus contributes to understanding how influencers' critiques shape audience perception and brand accountability within CSR discourse.

Keywords: Brand purpose; Engagement; Sentiment.

GBC2025-71278**Brand purpose impact on consumer brand evaluations***Cassandra France - The University of Queensland**Anne-Maree O'Rourke - The University of Queensland**Amanda Spry - RMIT University**Claudia Gonzalez-Arcos - Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*

Brand purpose is emerging as a potentially valuable strategy to enable contribution to societal betterment which shifts the brands motivations beyond purely profit. Recent research clarifies the nature of the brand purpose concept and advances managerial approaches to purpose adoption. As an increasing number of brands take up the brand purpose reins, this research shifts to empirical examination of how brand purpose will influence the way in which consumers perceive brands. Specifically, through 2 experiments, we evaluate how brand attitudes and purchase intentions are influenced when brands pursue a societal brand purpose. Further, we draw on emerging literature to consider how brand purpose may increase self-brand connection as a mechanism for enhancing consumer brand evaluations. Finally, we examine how the nature of brand differentiation in diverse brand categories may influence the way in which brand purpose impacts these brand evaluations, isolating the relevance of brand purpose strategy in different branding contexts. Ultimately, this research (working paper) hopes to establish empirical evidence to address recent dissent emerging in the industry narrative around the efficacy of brand purpose. As the brand purpose domain grows it is useful to establish, as a starting point, the impacts of purpose upon the valuable stakeholder that is the consumer and provide confidence in the value of brand purpose in the competitive marketplace.

Keywords: brand purpose, brand equity, differentiation.

GBC2025-45278

Exploring the Paradox of Purpose-driven Brands and Purpose-less Behavior among Gen Z Consumers*Andreas Hesse - Koblenz, University of Applied Sciences**Ida Engelhardt - Koblenz, University of Applied Sciences*

This study explores the paradoxical relationship between purpose-driven brand management and the purchasing behavior of German Gen Z consumers, a demographic known for valuing ethical commitments yet frequently engaging in contradictory consumption patterns. While purpose-led branding is championed as a key strategy for fostering consumer loyalty and differentiation, there is limited empirical evidence on how younger consumers respond to such initiatives. Drawing on semi-structured interviews and focus groups with Gen Z participants, this research investigates their perceptions of brand purpose and its influence on purchasing decisions. Findings reveal that while Gen Z consumers appreciate brands' ethical commitments, brand purpose often acts as a "hygiene factor", a baseline expectation rather than a primary purchase motivator, when competing attributes, such as price and design, take precedence. Additionally, Gen Z's involvement in digital spaces allows them to co-create brand narratives, shaping and reshaping brand purpose in real-time. The study contributes to the literature by providing a nuanced understanding of Gen Z's complex consumer behavior, which embodies a paradoxical duality between ethical intentions and pragmatic purchasing. It challenges the prevailing assumption that purpose-driven strategies are universally impactful, suggesting instead that their effectiveness may vary based on specific consumer priorities and situational factors. By examining the conditions under which brand purpose resonates with Gen Z, this paper offers actionable insights for managers aiming to authentically engage younger consumers through purpose-driven branding.

Keywords: Gen Z; consumer paradox.

GBC2025-55367

Enhancing Brand Purpose Recall Through Insight-Driven Advertising: The Role of Reward Responsiveness*Alessandro Feri - John Cabot University**Alessandro Signorini - John Cabot University**Matteo Forgiarini - Luxembourg School of Business**Nathalia C Tjandra - Edinburgh Napier University**Carola Salvi - John Cabot University*

This study examines how embedding brand purpose within insight-driven advertising can enhance memory retention, particularly for consumers with high reward responsiveness. The research extends the "insight memory advantage", a phenomenon where information triggering "Aha!" moments is more memorable, to brand messages encountered proximate to the 'Aha!' experience. Using a two-phase experimental design, participants first evaluated Sustainable Development Goal-aligned brand purposes, and then processed these messages following puzzle solutions solved via either insight or analytical (step-by-step) methods. Results show that consumers with high reward responsiveness better recall SDG-driven brand purposes after they experience insight moments, while those with low reward responsiveness retain information more effectively through step-by-step solutions. This finding highlights the potential for purpose-driven brands to use insight experiences to construct stronger emotional and cognitive connections with consumers, promoting meaningful brand engagement and improving message recall. Theoretical implications extend the "insight memory advantage" to brand purpose communication and memory recall, while practical insights suggest that brands may tailor their strategies to reward-sensitive audiences through either insight based or step-by-step based content. This research contributes to branding literature by linking cognitive science with brand communication, offering a novel approach for memorable advertising in an increasingly purpose-driven market.

Keywords: Brand purpose, insight, memory recall.

Parallel Session 18 - Brand Equity**May, 09 09:30****Room EP004**

Maria Carolina Cavalcante Dias - Chair

GBC2025-27993**The effect of the Metaverse on Consumer Learning (Work in progress)***Yunus Kalender - University of North Texas**Francisco Guzmán - University of North Texas**Lidan Xu - University of North Texas*

As an interactive and immersive media platform, the metaverse provides many opportunities for brands to interact with consumers that are not possible in physical and online environments. The metaverse is thus becoming a popular investment channel among brands. However, how brands benefit from the metaverse and its potential consumer impacts remain unknown. This paper attempts to bridge this gap by investigating how metaverse brand interactions lead to consumer learning. Using flow theory as a theoretical lens, the paper proposes that when consumers interact with brands in the metaverse, compared to physical environments, they are more open to learning about the brand. As an underlying mechanism, the flow state mediates the relationship between the metaverse experience and consumer learning. Brand equity is proposed as a downstream consequence of consumer learning. This paper contributes to consumer learning by investigating the importance of consumer brand interaction point characteristics. It shows that the metaverse as an immersive and interactive environment increases consumer learning. Moreover, it proposes the flow state as an underlying mechanism. From a managerial perspective, this paper provides insights to brands on how to benefit from the metaverse as a consumer interaction point by revealing the impact of metaverse interactions on brand equity.

Keywords: Brand Equity.**GBC2025-72147****“Oh, you’re a horse person!”: Serious leisure as an aspect of the personal brand***Maria Ek Styvén - Luleå University of Technology**Tim Foster - Luleå University of Technology**Lena Manderstedt - Luleå University of Technology*

Transferable skills strengthen an individual’s personal brand equity, resulting in increased employability, job performance, and career success. Serious leisure, such as horseback riding, seems to lead to the development of transferable skills, but studies are lacking on whether and how such skills can be beneficial in working life outside of the equestrian sphere. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore perceptions of transferable skills developed through horse handling and riding as a serious leisure from the perspectives of employers/recruiters and riders. These (perceived or actual) skills are analyzed through the lens of personal brand equity.

Qualitative data are collected through semi-structured interviews with people representing the employer’s perspective (recruiting managers, specialists in HR (human resources), and consultants specializing in recruitment) and focus groups with individuals who are engaged in horses and riding as a serious leisure. This is a work in progress, and we are still collecting and analyzing data. However, some tentative patterns emerge. The idea of what a ‘horse person’ is like seems prevalent among the riders themselves and the people around them. Participants also testify that being a rider and taking care of horses is viewed as merit when applying for a job. This study suggests that personal branding through serious leisure pursuits may enhance employability. Individuals committed to serious leisure, such as horse riding, develop long-term personal and interpersonal skills that not only elevate their self-efficacy but also resonate with employer expectations of diligence, initiative, and attention to detail.

Keywords: Personal brand equity, serious leisure.

GBC2025-66229

When innovation outshines imperfection: the impact of cognitive biases and charismatic leadership on brand loyalty*Wenwei Li - School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London**Ibrahim Abosag - School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London**Senija Causevic - Université Internationale de Rabat, Rabat Business School*

This study investigates the resilience of brand loyalty in the face of product imperfections within the electric vehicle (EV) industry, focusing on how cognitive biases, symbolic value, and charismatic leadership influence consumer perceptions and loyalty, particularly when product performance might not meet conventional expectations.

Keywords: Innovation, brand loyalty, cognitive bias.

GBC2025-14990

Evaluating Brand Health Tracking Metrics for Explaining Brand Longevity Determinants*Maria Carolina Cavalcante Dias - University of Sao Paulo**Edson Crescitelli - University of Sao Paulo*

The present study aims to analyze how well brand health metrics align with factors that contribute to brand longevity. The objective is to determine if current brand health tracking methods can accurately explain a brand's long-term success and guide strategic decision-making to enhance brand lifespan. For this purpose, the study adopted a two-stage, mixed-methods approach. The first stage, qualitative in nature, focuses on identifying key metrics in market practice and academic literature. Researchers analyzed methodologies from reputable market research companies and digital platforms, focusing on metrics used to monitor brand performance. A literature review was also conducted to gather insights on brand longevity variables. The second stage involves a quantitative investigation of the correlation between brand health and longevity metrics. Researchers used historical data from three established brands across different categories to analyze potential relationships. As an ongoing study, expected results and outcomes include identifying frequently used brand health metrics and longevity indicators; creating a framework to assess long-term brand viability; determining the effectiveness of existing metrics in predicting brand longevity; identifying metrics needing adaptation for the digital landscape. The study offers preliminary practical guidance for brand management and contributes to the academic understanding of brand measurement. It aims to bridge the gap between brand health tracking and longevity forecasting, encouraging the development of methodologies that capture both short-term health and long-term resilience.

Keywords: Brand Health. Brand Longevity. Metrics.

Parallel Session 19 - B2B Branding**May, 09 09:30****Room EAA002**

Stefan Markovic - Chair

GBC2025-59207**Omnichannel branding's impact on franchise relationships***Nabil Ghantous - ISC Paris**Damien Chaney - EM Normandie Business School**Fabienne Chameroy - Aix Marseille Université**Sophie Jeanpert - Aix Marseille Université**Maryline Schultz - Université de Bourgogne*

This study examines how omnichannel branding implementation affects franchisee-franchisor relationship quality. Drawing from franchising and omnichannel literature, we develop and test a model investigating the effects of omnichannel branding value, channel integration quality, and relationship factors on franchisees' satisfaction. Using data from 400 French franchisees across 251 brands, we employ PLS-SEM to test our hypotheses and examine the moderating role of territorial exclusivity. Results reveal complex dynamics between perceived value and relationship satisfaction. While channel integration quality's dimensions (breadth, transparency, and consistency) positively influence perceived omnichannel branding value, their impact on relationship satisfaction varies. Notably, channel transparency shows contrasting effects: positive for perceived value but negative for satisfaction. Territorial exclusivity emerges as a crucial moderator – without it, omnichannel branding value negatively affects satisfaction, and intra-brand competition becomes highly detrimental to relationships. Furthermore, territorial protection fundamentally alters how franchisee empowerment and franchisor support influence satisfaction. With exclusivity, empowerment enhances satisfaction while support becomes less critical; without it, empowerment negatively influences satisfaction while support becomes crucial. These findings contribute to understanding how digital transformation through omnichannel branding affects B2B relationships in franchise systems and highlight the importance of contractual arrangements in shaping these effects. The study offers practical guidance for franchisors implementing omnichannel strategies, emphasizing the need to adapt relationship management approaches based on territorial protection status.

Keywords: omnichannel, franchising, relationship quality.

GBC2025-72449**Franchise branding and the reliance on franchisee-ambassadors***Rozenn Perrigot - University of Rennes - IGR-IAE Rennes & CREM**Corentin Le Bot - University of Rennes - IGR-IAE Rennes & CREM**Anna Watson - Edinburgh Napier University – Business School*

Franchise branding refers to the way franchisors position their franchise opportunities to attract new franchisees. In this context, most franchisors rely on franchisee-ambassadors, that are franchisees who assume the role of ambassadors of the chain they belong to, by being a point of contact to external franchisee candidates to answer questions during phone calls and/or store visits, and/or at franchise exhibitions. Our research based on a qualitative approach with a series of 27 in-depth interviews with franchisors and chain developers aims to understand the roles of these franchisee-ambassadors in franchise branding. More specifically, we examine (1) how franchisee-ambassadors are selected, (2) if and how franchisee-ambassadors are managed, and (3) the role of franchisee-ambassadors in franchise branding. We find that the use of franchisee-ambassadors is common practice, although the approaches used by franchisors vary. Some try to signal complete transparency by offering franchisee candidates the opportunity to contact anyone in the chain, and do not brief franchisees in advance. Others are more selective, and seek to promote interactions with successful and mature franchisees, or franchisees who represent different stages of maturity and guide franchisees around particular areas to discuss with candidates.

Keywords: Franchising, branding, franchisee-ambassadors, chain development.

GBC2025-87016

The importance of business-to-business relationships for improving brand performance*Nikolina Koporcic - Aalto University School of Business**Shikhar Bhaskar - Plymouth Business School**Ilia Gugenishvili - Åbo Akademi University**Stefan Markovic - NEOMA Business School*

This study investigates the importance of business-to-business relationships for improving brand performance. More specifically, it offers a better understanding of the relevance of relationships with suppliers for improving buyer brand performance in contexts with multiple simultaneous crises. While most of the existing studies have focused on supplier selection based on variables such as price, quality, capabilities or delivery, our study goes a step ahead, focusing on a more holistic and intangible variable as reputation.

Keywords: B2B relationships, brand performance, COVID-19.

GBC2025-36758

B2B Brand Building in Developing Economies: A Case Study of SME Professional Services in Uganda*Priscilla Achieng - The University of Brighton*

Small B2B professional service firms (PSFs) have expanded significantly and are now increasingly popular within developing economies. However, many existing studies do not address the modern challenges, opportunities and processes of building professional services brands in such contexts. In the literature, PSF brand-building is influenced by client-employee interactions or relationship branding. Nonetheless, the digital shift that intensified with the COVID-19 pandemic was projected to increase reliance on on-line engagement, potentially disrupting this dynamic. With growing awareness about the relevance of branding, it remains to be explored how businesses in this context build their brands amidst these developments.

This research addresses this gap by identifying specific activities, channels, and cocreation activities through which small B2B professional service firms in developing economies may address brand building. It further assesses if and how post-Covid digitalisation impacted these strategies. Existing literature is explored, and key branding frameworks are studied. The researcher conducted exploratory case studies on six small B2B professional services businesses in Uganda, obtaining 31 interviews from staff, management, and external industry practitioners. It supplements these findings with data from social media posts and website content.

The findings and discussions in this research theoretically contribute to the understanding of brand-building processes of SMEs, B2B service brands and professional services in the context of developing economies. It also makes a practical contribution by suggesting a relevant and workable framework that businesses can explore to develop their brands for lasting growth and global expansion.

Keywords: B2B branding, professional services, SMEs.

Parallel Session 20 - Brand Activism and Brand Purpose**May, 09 11:30****Room EP002**

Daniela Andreini - Chair

GBC2025-65426**It's Ridiculous: How the Marketing Reality Movement has resisted brand purpose***Simon Blyth - University of Bristol**Michael Beverland - Sussex University*

This working paper is concerned with how ridicule has been deployed by marketing industry practitioners to critique and challenge brand purpose. It reports on an empirical project exploring how, why and to what effect ridicule has been used, repeatedly, to resist brand social purpose by a disparate and loosely organised group of advertising and marketing practitioners, dubbed the Marketing Reality Movement. Because of its ability to draw attention to the working relational arrangements between human and non-human entities theoretically, the paper is grounded in Actor Network Theory (ANT). The aim of this paper is therefore not to arbitrate but to trace and document how ridicule is deployed to mark a distinction between commercial and culturalist practices and on what basis such 'purification' is claimed. Organised around particular examples of ridicule (left handed mango chutney; Cheetos and transgender cheetahs; mayonnaise for salads and sandwiches) the paper zooms in on incongruity theories of humour to unpick, in detail, particular acts of ridicule, created, exchanged or discussed by the Marketing Reality Movement. The contribution of this paper, therefore, is to trace the making of these 'purified' entities, and their performative value, by the Marketing Reality Movement, through an analysis of the congruence and incongruence necessary for ridicule and the subsequent rendering of brand purpose strategy as ridiculous.

Keywords: brand purpose, backlash, practitioners, ridicule.

GBC2025-62376**Give your brand a purpose: A cross-cultural study on conscientious purpose-led branding***Teresa Fernandes - University of Porto, Portugal**Francisco Guzmán - University of North Texas, USA*

Conscientious purpose-led branding (CPB) is a strategy that aims to unite a brand's core values with the right cause making it a part of its brand identity and positioning in the long-term, to raise awareness, build emotional bonds with consumers, and positively impact a societal need. The scant empirical research developed on CPB in B2C contexts has considered brand authenticity and the joint effects of cause-brand-consumer congruence as critical to its success. This research aims to extend prior research by validating existing findings cross-culturally, comparing two relevant and timely settings, Europe and the U.S.. To the author(s) best knowledge, this is the first cross-cultural CPB study developed in a B2C context. From a theoretical standpoint, the research extends findings previously validated in Europe to the U.S. context, allowing scholars and practitioners to understand if and why consumers may react differently to CPB efforts in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, it advances the CPB literature by demonstrating that, although there are similarities, some significant differences between the two cultures exist regarding various hypothesized relationships within the previously validated moderated-mediation model. This research further provides scholarly insights and practical guidance to managers wishing to successfully implement CPB strategies on a global scale. Specifically, it helps practitioners to understand the role of brands as "purpose-driven entities" across international markets and the challenges derived from cross-cultural differences.

Keywords: Brand, Purpose, Conscientious, Cross-Cultural.

GBC2025-77344

Between advocates and keyboard warriors: Who lies behind polarized reactions to brand activism on social media?*Federico Mangio' - University of Bergamo**Riccardo Valesi - University of Bergamo**Giuseppe Pedeliento - University of Bergamo**Daniela Andreini - University of Bergamo**Lia Zarantonello - University of Roehampton*

Brands increasingly adopt brand activism communication (BAC) to advocate for sociopolitical causes, which often elicit polarized reactions among their online audiences. However, there remains a limited understanding of whether such polarized responses depend on individual differences. Grounded in emotion regulation theory, this study identifies key technical, political, and psychological predictors of positive responses to BAC. An online experiment with 363 Italian Facebook users tested reactions to BAC compared to traditional brand communication. The results show that BAC evokes more favorable attitudes among consumers with high web skills, low social networking sites addiction, liberal political orientations, and high resilience. These findings provide actionable insights for segmenting online audiences and tailoring BAC strategies. By moving beyond traditional factors like brand-cause congruence, this study enriches theoretical frameworks on BAC and sheds light on the psychological mechanisms shaping consumer responses.

Keywords: Activism; social media; polarization.

Parallel Session 21 - Brand Equity, Sustainability and Micro-Organizations**May, 09 11:30****Room EP004**

Stuart Roper - Chair

GBC2025-28893**Perceptions or Actions? Exploring the Impact of Brand Sustainability on Financial Brand Value***Carmen Abril - Complutense University**Gabriela Salinas - Complutense University*

As sustainability becomes increasingly crucial for brand managers aiming to align with consumer values and societal expectations, understanding its financial impact is essential for making informed strategic decisions and justifying sustainability investments. This study examines how customer perceptions of brand sustainability influence financial brand value, a perspective often overlooked in favor of corporate sustainability actions. By matching financial brand values from Interbrand's 2023 rankings with Brand Finance's perceptual data, the analysis finds a positive correlation between perceived sustainability and the financial brand value. This research contributes to sustainability and financial brand value literature by focusing on consumer perception rather than firm actions. Our results offer, practical insights for managers on leveraging sustainability communication to enhance financial brand value, thus underscoring the importance of consumer perception in driving tangible financial outcomes.

Keywords: Financial brand value, sustainability, ESG.

GBC2025-16736**Regional Dynamics in Branding: How Quality of Life and Ethnocentrism Drive Sustainable Local Brand Preference***Pilar López Belbeze - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**Josep Rialp Criado - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**Maryam Vaziri - La Salle Barcelona – Ramon Llull University*

This study explores the relationships between quality of life (QoL), consumer responsibility for sustainable consumption (CRSC), ethnocentrism, and their effects on local brand preference. We examine how regional QoL disparities within Spain impact these dynamics. Data from 2589 individuals, collected through an online survey, was analyzed using hierarchical cluster analysis to categorize regions based on QoL and Structure Equations Models to test the relationships among the mentioned constructs. Findings indicate that higher QoL regions exhibit a lower propensity to favor local brands, possibly due to greater access to both local and global brands with sustainable practices. Ethnocentrism enhances the preference for local brands in high QoL areas, reinforcing cultural identity and pride. Conversely, in lower QoL regions, ethnocentrism significantly influences sustainable consumption, with consumers favoring local brands to support their community. This research contributes to understanding regional influences on sustainable consumption, emphasizing the need for localized marketing strategies and policies. By using a nationally representative sample, the study provides a comprehensive view of consumer attitudes and behaviors across different QoL contexts in Spain.

Keywords: Branding, Sustainability, Ethnocentrism, Quality-of-Life.

GBC2025-56145**Growing Brand Equity through Networks in Micro-Organisations***Stuart Roper - Northumbria University**Vicky Roberts - Staffordshire University**Sabrina Thornton - Sheffield University*

Branding in small and micro-organisations is a very underdeveloped part of the literature. The branding process is often hampered by constrained resources and fuzzy internal and external resource exchanges. We therefore use network theory to understand the interactions between actors in micro-organisations helping us to understand how they harness brand equity through their networks.

We use a case study methodology studying five micro businesses in detail and mapping their networks to give greater clarity as to how a small brand can develop. All brands are independent fashion retailers offering both a physical and online presence. Our findings demonstrate that owner managers utilise tacit knowledge to overcome their constraints and gain digital skills support through their networks. As the micro- brand grows it is important that it is able to move away from the strong and often multiplex ties that define it in the early stages of development and develop weak ties, that are able to grow the influence of the brand. Whereas dense network structures support the brand in the early stages, bridging structural holes allow the brand to stretch out to more distant cliques as its network grows and develops.

Keywords: branding for micro-organisations, network theory.

Parallel Session 22 - Brand Communication**May, 09 11:30****Room EAA002**

Ulla Hakala - Chair

GBC2025-11480**The Purpose of Lead Advertising Agencies in Driving New Technologies in Brand Communication***Anja Lambrecht - University of Twente**Carsten Baumgarth - Berlin School of Economics and Law**Jörg Henseler - University of Twente*

Brand management divisions involve advertising lead agencies when creating and implementing communication activities. Lead agencies are appreciated because of their high level of creativity and innovation, especially in the technological context. New technologies like Extended Reality, Metaverse, and Artificial Intelligence are also becoming increasingly important in brand communication, for which brand managers need agencies' expertise. However, research underrepresents the decision-making process of lead advertising agencies in defining innovative technology as communication tools. Thus, our work-in-progress paper examines the role of advertising lead agencies in the decision-making process for technological innovations in brand communication, focusing on Extended Reality.

We decide on a qualitative approach, to answer the research question. In semi-structured face-to-face interviews, we would like to collect insights from the upper and middle agency management. The results will be presented at the GBC 2025 in Porto. We expect that our contribution enhances the understanding of how creativity and technological expertise in agency-brand collaborations frame the decision for or against new technologies like Extended Reality in brand communication.

Keywords: extended reality decision-making process.

GBC2025-55455**Advertising effectiveness on the consumer-based brand equity of soft drinks: effects of brand size, positioning statement and consumer segment***Sara de Castro Santiago - University of Brasilia**Rafael Barreiros Porto - University of Brasilia*

The importance of brand positioning statements in advertising campaigns has been widely acknowledged, but there has been limited research on their effectiveness. Previous studies have used inconsistent methods to measure their impact. To address this gap, this study proposes an experimental approach to assess the effect of brand size and positioning statements on consumer-based brand equity for soft drinks. The experimental method for testing effectiveness surpasses A/B Testing, often utilized in executive practices and market research. The study manipulated variables such as points of parity, points of difference, and brand size to measure their effects on changes in brand equity. Using a factorial design with eight experimental groups, the researchers performed two analyses of covariance, controlling for sociodemographic variables and healthy consumption clusters, and a third analysis that considered these clusters. The results showed that brand size and points of difference directly influenced changes in brand equity. Additionally, consumer segments, such as health consumption profiles, interacted with points of parity to influence brand equity. The study also found that all manipulated variables had significant interactions, leading to variations in perceived quality. This research provides valuable insights for creating and managing brand positioning statements for large and small brands, with and without differentiation.

Keywords: brand equity, advertisement, branding, positioning.

GBC2025-20690

Transferring meanings from archetypes in advertising – findings of an eye-tracking study*Ulla Hakala - University of Turku**Katariina Pajuranta - Turku University of Applied Sciences**Rami Olkkonen - University of Turku*

Understanding how to capture, retain, and guide customers' attention is paramount for the success of businesses (Davenport & Beck, 2001). No attention means no ad processing and hence, no brand communication effects. Instead of basing the marketing on discernible product features, which can be quickly imitated and duplicated by rivals, companies are advised to imbue their products with meaning. Meanings and associations can be transferred to a brand (McCracken, 1989) e.g. from well-known stories and archetypes, such as Mona Lisa and Snow White.

Theoretically, our study applies the idea of meaning-based marketing (MBM), a sub-discipline of consumer culture theory (CCT). Research in this tradition holds that consumers are active meaning makers, seeking identity value from brands. (McCracken, 1989) We investigate how archetypes can transfer meanings in advertising by first, measuring consumers' eye behavior, using eye-tracking as a research method. Eye behavior, encompassing gaze direction, fixation, saccades, blinks, and pupil dilation, serves as a window into individuals' higher cognitive functions (Holmqvist & Nyström, 2011; Wedel & Pieters, 2008). After the eye-tracking phase, we delve deeper into the participants' (N=44) interpretations of the ads by having them fill out a questionnaire.

Keywords: eye-tracking; fairytales; archetypes; meaning transfer.

Parallel Session 23 - Luxury Branding**May, 09 11:30****Room EAA102**

Ulf Aagerup - Chair

GBC2025-26062**Luxury Revisited: Identifying luxury moments in consumption to infuse demarketing strategies***Dirk-Mario Boltz - Berlin School of Economics*

This study investigates the potential of integrating demarketing strategies into luxury branding to promote sustainable consumption while preserving brand desirability. Luxury consumption, characterized by ephemeral moments of freedom and personal meaning, is explored through both product-centered and consumer-centered perspectives. By conducting 40 narrative interviews with Late Millennials and Early Gen Z across diverse demographics and cultural backgrounds, the study identifies "luxury moments" that influence consumer perceptions and behaviors. The research emphasizes the role of sufficiency communication, as exemplified by campaigns like Patagonia's "Don't Buy This Jacket," which encourages conscious consumption. Using a qualitative content analysis methodology and tools like MAX-QDA, the study seeks to validate existing luxury moment typologies and uncover new experiential dimensions. The findings are anticipated to reveal intercultural variations in luxury perceptions and identify strategic opportunities for leveraging luxury moments in demarketing and experiential marketing. Theoretical contributions include expanding the concepts of "experience marketing" and "demarketing" through the lens of luxury moments, while practical implications focus on guiding brand managers in creating meaningful, sustainable consumer experiences. The study highlights a paradigm shift in luxury branding, transitioning from material possessions to profound consumer experiences that inspire less but more valuable consumption.

Keywords: Luxurymoments, Demarketing, Brandexperience.**GBC2025-15838****The Moderating Role of Self-Brand Regulation on Self-Brand Congruity and Emotional Brand Attachment***Stephanie Haddad - Liverpool Hope University**Katherine Baxter - Liverpool Hope University*

This study examines the moderating role of self-brand regulation on the relationship between self-brand congruity—comprising actual, ideal, social, and ideal-social self—and emotional brand attachment in the context of original and counterfeited luxury brands within the UK market. Utilising a quantitative approach, data were collected through an online survey from a diverse sample of participants, and statistical analyses were conducted to assess the interplay between regulatory focus, self-congruity and emotional brand attachment. The findings reveal that individuals with a promotion focus exhibit stronger emotional attachment to original luxury brands when their self-brand congruity aligns with their ideal self. Conversely, those with a prevention focus show heightened emotional attachment to counterfeit brands when their self-brand congruity reflects their actual self. Additionally, the ideal-social self-brand congruity dimension significantly influences brand attachment, underscoring the impact of societal expectations on consumer behaviour. This research contributes to the literature by integrating self-regulation theory into the study of brand attachment, providing valuable insights for marketers seeking to foster emotional connections with consumers. By understanding the psychological factors that drive consumer behaviour, brands can tailor their strategies to resonate more effectively with target audiences, enhancing brand loyalty and market competitiveness.

Keywords: Self-regulation, self-congruity, attachment, luxury, counterfeits.

GBC2025-17714

Treat them mean, keep them keen —is customer rejection a viable brand building strategy for luxury hospitality?

Ulf Aagerup - Jönköping International Business School

Gonzalo Luna Cortes - Jönköping International Business School

Luxury purveyors commonly try to elevate consumers' opinions of their brands by treating them poorly, so called retail rejection. When this is used for luxury hospitality brands, it creates a dilemma, because consumers do not just want status, they also want to enjoy themselves. The presented study investigates if the theory of retail rejection is applicable to luxury hospitality brands, how the added dimension of other guests might affect rejection outcomes, and how the dilemma of play vs. status can be overcome. The expected results are that retail rejection indeed does improve outcomes, but that for the best results, it should be combined with a welcoming experience once the rejection phase is over.

Keywords: Rejection, Stereotyping, Luxury.

Conference chair and Academy of Marketing's Brand, Identity and Corporate Reputation SIG Chair

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