

A STEP FORWARD TOWARD DISCERNMENT OF CO-BRANDING STRATEGY

Ali Besharat, University of South Florida, United States

ABSTRACT

No rigorous research exists to distinguish co-branding from other types of brand alliances. The current paper first through in-depth review of existing literature proposes a clear definition of co-branding. Second, it recognizes the potential antecedents, and consequences of co-branding formation. Finally, it provides multiple future venues for research in co-branding.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, there is no comprehensive conceptual framework of co-branding that put together most of the proposed but fragmented antecedents and consequences of co-branding strategy in the literature. A conceptual framework will enable researchers to shed light on the similarities and differences among various types of brand alliances, to organize existing knowledge better, to propose more challenging and complex questions, and to set an agenda for future research. This paper purports to take the first step toward development of a comprehensive conceptual framework by recognizing the potential antecedents, and consequences of co-branding. Meanwhile, this study outlines a valid unified definition for co-branding by comparing the similarities and dissimilarities between the elements of definitions provided for any other brand partnerships (e.g., co-branding, ingredient branding, joint venture, brand alliance, dual-branding, co-sponsorship, joint promotion, co-promotions, composite brand extension, and joint branding) in the existing literature. Finally, the author after a thorough review of prior research identifies multiple directions and future venues for research in co-branding literature.

A FOUNDATION FOR CO-BRANDING RESEARCH

Definition

This paper establishes a new definition for co-branding strategy based on the thorough review of the brand alliance literature. Co branding is defined as a long-term type of co-operation between two or more brands with equal (or non-equal) brand image in which the identity of the associated brands is communicated through the inclusion of the brand name on the product or product packaging. This strategy results into the creation of a single new product in the existing or a new market to add value greater than the value of each participating brands.

Variables

To date, existing literature has identified following factors that can directly or indirectly impact the evaluation of co-branding strategy. They are pre-attitude toward each partner brand, partner image congruity/brand fit, brand image and product category schema consistency, product fit, brand familiarity, and country brand image. Meanwhile, some scholars have investigated the financial and non-financial consequences (positive and negative) of co-branding strategy such as product differentiation, leverage of customer and brand equity, positive royalty income, and positive affect and attitude transfer.

Future Research Venues

First, in co-branding research to levels of fit should be studied. One is the fit (typicality) between product categories of participating brands. Another is the degree of overall fit between the co-brand and new product extension. The existing literature has overlooked latter form of overall fit. Second, brand image fit is conceptualized as unidimensional construct. It is apparent that brand image encompasses different brand associations that can not be represented by single item. Further construct development is required to elaborate this issue in the current body of literature. Third, dual process models such as Elaboration likelihood model (ELM) are neglected. Fourth, There are very few attempts in the literature to compare the effectiveness of co-branding over the solely brand extension. Finally, research on co-branding from a firm perspective has been overlooked.

References Are Available Per Request.