COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR MARKETS IN EMERGING ECONOMIES: A RESEARCH AGENDA

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Abstract. *Most marketing, and particularly marketing communications concepts and approaches, have been developed and codified in western economies. Academicians and professionals have then tried to export those concepts to emerging markets, often with little success. In this paper, we argue many of those concepts are not applicable or relevant for the emerging economies around the world. Yet, due to the constrained and controlled nature of academic publishing, little new information has been developed or distributed on the differences and needs of scholars and professionals in emerging economies. This paper suggests a new marketing communications research agenda for emerging economies based on four specific areas: (1) consumers and consumer behaviors, (2) brands and branding, (3) communication content and context and (4) emerging communication delivery systems. The authors encourage editors of academic journals to recognize the need and be more open to emerging economy research and papers.*

Key words: *marketing and marketing communications research, emerging economies, research agenda, western cultural biases in research, new media*

I. Introduction

Having spent considerable time teaching, researching and consulting in marketing and marketing communication around the world for the past 30 years, I have become increasingly concerned about the relevance and appropriateness of the marketing communication concepts, approaches and methodologies that have been developed in the Unites States and Western Europe. That's particularly true of those which have been exported to other countries and cultures, particularly emerging economies. It was only a few years ago, however, that I began to seriously study the issues involved. Some of that came as a result of work I did with Professor Gang Chen, Peking University, Beijing, China in 2006–2007. Chen's view was that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), an area I had helped initiate, had to be developed and managed differently in

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China, from the way it had been done in established economies in the west. That became increasingly clear as I spent more time in China and the other emerging economies. It was Chen's basic argument, however, that has led to much of my recent work in exploring the relative value of existing marketing communication concepts and how they relate to emerging economies.

This interest increased when two professors visited the IMC department at Northwestern University in 2006–2007. Dr. Ilchul Kim, Busan University, South Korea and Dr. Gayle Kerr, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, visited only a few months apart. While neither is from what is considered an "emerging economy", both had a major interest in the diffusion of IMC research and teaching. From our extensive discussions, the three of us began a joint study to determine how Integrated Marketing Communication was being taught around the world. That resulted in a paper titled "An Inside-Out Approach to IMC: An International Analysis" (Kerr et al., 2008).

Work on that paper was the eye-opener for me. I realized that emerging economies could not, and likely should not, try to mimic developed market marketing communication approaches. Yet, I had been doing just the opposite….speaking at conferences and teaching at universities in emerging economies and recommending that they do "what we in the west have learned how to do". In short, I was applying often irrelevant concepts to totally different situations. So, this paper is partially insight and partially repentance.

A. A very short literature review

Using the IMC paper as a springboard, Kerr and I developed another study on the relevance of current academic advertising research in the global marketplace. The result was a paper titled "Filling the Gaps or Plugging the Holes? Why the Academic Advertising Research Model Needs Maintenance". That was presented at the 2008 ICORIA (International Conference on Research in Advertising) Conference in Antwerp.

That paper led to invited keynote presentations at the American Academy of Advertising Asia-Pacific Conference, Beijing, May, 2009 and a similar keynote address at the ICORIA Conference in Kalgenfurt, Austria the following June. So, what started initially as a quick study of the development of IMC instruction around the world has turned into a major research topic for me and a growing community of scholars who also recognize the special challenges emerging economies pose for research and teaching.

This issue of emerging economies and advertising and marketing communications research and scholarship is starting to get traction in the academic community in the U.S.. For example, Professor Dean Krugman, University of Georgia and out-going president of the American Academy of Advertising (the academic association in the U.S.) wrote in a recent issue of the Academy's Newsletter (Krugman, 2009):

> "During the opening day remarks (at the May, 2009 AAA Asia-Pacific Conference, Beijing, China) one of our esteemed colleagues from China noted that his country is a socialist market economy. I was struck by the remark, as it signified a way of thinking about the im-

pact of advertising that we commonly do not encounter in market-based economies, even those market economies where portions of advertising are heavily regulated. Here's a question: Does what we know about the way advertising works in predominately market-based economies hold for an enormous and fast growing, more centrally controlled economy that encompasses aspects of the market system? What is clear, at least to me, is that we need to continually advance our knowledge of advertising in countries that offer dramatically different economic systems."

"…..Back to my question: Does what we know about the way advertising works in predominantly market-based economies hold for a huge and fast-growing centrally controlled economy? Here's another way to view the question: Beyond the constructs of information and persuasion, when you teach material related to advertising's economic role, what economic constructs do you use as your base? Given that the majority of advertising's economic work is based on the United States and Western Europe, and that we now have some fundamental questions regarding economic theory, we likely need to rethink advertising's global economic role. As members of the Academy, we are pressed to continually update our knowledge of world trade and economics."

A very statesman's like view of what must be troubling a large number of professors and other educators around the world.

B. Meeting the challenge

When I saw the announcement for the new journal, ORGANIZATIONS AND MARKETS IN EMERGING ECONOMIES (OMEE), I immediately contacted Professor Urbonavicius to offer my congratulations and support for his team's efforts. From that, Professor Urbonavicius kindly asked me to develop this invited paper outlining a research agenda for marketing communication in emerging economies. Thus, what follows is not a formally researched, quantitatively supported and literature based research paper. It is, instead, the view of a person who has written 25 books, 150+ peer-reviewed articles, founded scholarly journals, written columns for marketing communications publications and spoken in countless countries on marketing communications for over forty years. It is based on my own experiences in many emerging economies…. from China to Brazil and from Viet Nam to Trinidad/Tobago and many others in-between.

Could this short personal paper pass a peer review for an established western journal? Not likely. But, that fact is really part of the communication research issue at hand. Today, marketing communication scholars in emerging economies simply can't get their work, views, or even their concepts published in existing, citation-focused western journals. "Emerging economy research" doesn't fit the "developed economy journal model". That's part of the problem. As Professor Pat Rose, Emerita Professor at Florida International University put it in a recent note to me: "My major problem continues to be the whole premise of academic research: research done for the sake of publishing (for T&P), being cited, and producing meaningless material. Professors know they need to be in "the top journals" and come up with research that fits the model of what the journal accepts. Done too, too often. No – not by all, but I dare say it is done by the

majority." Hopefully, this paper doesn't fall into that "written for publication genre" but developed from a true concern for the future of the academic community.

So, lacking a long list of often no longer relevant citations of student-based studies in the United States and Western Europe, work on the understanding and development of marketing communication in emerging economies just doesn't pass the methodology-focused screening used by established journals. So, OMEE is a welcome solution to the need that continues to grow around the world.

II. The needs of emerging economies

The inability of emerging economy scholars, or even established scholars working in emerging economies, to get their work recognized, accepted and published in existing western-focused, peer-reviewed journals is an accepted fact. Editors blame their reviewers. Reviewers blame the editors and publishers. But, the end result is the same: little or no distribution of research on emerging economy approaches and/or methodologies. Part of the problem, of course, is there is no history or culture of consumer research in many of these markets. Consumers are often unwilling to participate in interviews or discussions and there are few other methods or research tools available to researchers. But, there are other issues as well which I discuss in later sections.

Marketing communications, as it is researched and studied today, is clearly too focused on developed markets, recognized streams of study, the "filling of miniscule gaps in the existing literature", often using exotic and irrelevant statistical methodologies that simply have no place in communication systems that are nascent, dynamic, culturally-driven and continuously evolving….which is what is commonly found in emerging economies. As Professor Rose has so eloquently said: "I fear the current academic model (still publish or perish) diminishes the opportunity for useful research. … … And, it seems, we are training all of our newly minted "to be's" in the old model. I must admit, if I review one more student-based study (without students being the target) I will scream." But, that's just one of the issues.

Quite honestly, learning more about how organizations in established economies communicate with their stable, often slow-to-no-growth markets is not what is critical today. Established economies, while perhaps dominant in terms of financial value, only account for about 20% of the world's population. The other 80% of the people are located in either developing or emerging economies….and, those economies are the ones that are growing, expanding, energetic and likely hold the key to the future of the world. Yet, precious little time or effort is spent trying to understand what those markets need, what would assist them in their development, bring about their emergence more rapidly and, quite truthfully, be more valuable and beneficial to the entire global community than the communication research currently being published in developed market journals.

Emerging economy published research is what is needed. If researchers can't get published, they can't progress no matter how relevant or useful or valuable the work they do might be. So, this paper is essentially directional, in terms of what needs to be

studied, what would be most relevant and what might move emerging economies up the marketing communications ramp faster and more effectively.

A. The Chinese conundrum – the heterogeneity of development within developing countries

Professor Chen at Peking University has developed an interesting concept about marketing and communication in China which seems relevant to the emerging economy debate. He argues that the Chinese market is developing on two levels. One level consists of the increasingly sophisticated marketplaces of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other seaboard cities. At the same time, another part of China is developing in parallel….yet, not in same way. In fact, it is quite different. That is rural China and the third tier and below cities and markets that still make up the bulk of the Chinese economic system and the majority of the Chinese population. Chen's premise is that because developed economies such as the U.S., UK, Germany, Japan, Australia and others are fairly homogeneous in economic development and communication sophistication, an assumption is made that emerging markets will develop along the same lines and in the same, identifiable way. While that makes a good argument, it's likely not true. What I have continuously found in emerging economies is not homogeneity but heterogeneity, radically different systems developing within the same country or even region, but all marching under the same national banner. For example, in countries such as Brazil, the southeast section of the country, i.e., Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, are comparable to the most sophisticated cities on the planet. But, the northeast of Brazil is still struggling with marketplace basics such as clean water, housing, consistent electrical power and the like. Thus, there is a clear need for understanding and enlightenment about how marketing communication develops in emerging economies, the factors that drive that growth and the research needed to assist in that development.

B. Market and marketing evolution run rampant

Clearly, emerging economies are different. Each one is different. And, they're different for a multitude of reasons. In the sections below, I compare the major developed market marketing communication concepts, as they have been generated and articulated over the past half century through academic and professional research. I then contrast those findings, most of which have a distinct western cultural bias, with what appears to be needed in emerging economies. As will be seen, there are vast discrepancies and differences.

One simple example makes the point. The individualistic societies of the U.S., UK and Western Europe have dominated marketing communication research, both academically and professionally, since the 1950s. Those economies have generally been driven by shareholder-based capital markets with a strong focus on personal and individual success. They have commonly been stable, both politically and economically, and have generally faced limited, albeit powerful, competitors. In addition, these western

economies have engendered many of the technological innovations found around the world today, particularly in communication systems ….initially in print, then broadcast and now in digital and interactive. They have, therefore, created somewhat homogeneous cultures and marketplaces with generally agreed upon social norms.

This evolving societal development has not always been true in emerging economies. These are often polyglots of different cultures, social norms, political systems and the like, all cobbled or brought together, in some cases by force. They have, however, somehow assembled themselves to form increasingly important economies and markets. But, they don't act like developed markets nor should they.

The greatest difference between the established and emerging economies is, however, that most of the developed economies have been driven by the now centuries-old industrial revolution…..making products and things by privately-held organizations whose primary objective has been to achieve economies-of-scale since that generated profit for the owners. This has encouraged and evolved into mass distribution, mass marketing and mass communication. Emerging economies have no such restrictions, requirements or even opportunities. Thus, they have, and will continue to develop differently, using a mix of manufacturing, service, technology and personal initiative to build dynamic systems that will emerge quickly in response to the growing importance to their customer base. Some of that can already be seen in the "shanzhai" marketing approaches developing in China. These seem to follow none of the traditional marketing and branding "rules". Instead, they are what entrepreneurs have found work in those marketplaces and among those consumers. (shanzhai is a Chinese term referring to something that is imitation or counterfeit). (Wolf, 2009)

C. Marketers in control

In truth, much of the communications research in established economies has been driven by the various forms of technology which have developed over the years. And, that technology came in systems and processes the marketing organizations have typically controlled. That, perhaps, is the greatest difference ….where the marketplace control lies.

Marketing communication developments in emerging economies are being driven more by consumers, than by marketers. Increasingly, it is the consumers in those markets who talk and listen to each other, compare marketplace experiences every day and come to communal decisions that fit the group or cohort to which they belong. That occurs because more sophisticated communication systems are often available to them and they have no compunction about using them. That is, consumers in several emerging markets have gone from no telephones to 3G hand-held devices in less than a generation. Surprisingly, consumers in established markets have been much slower to employ the new technologies simply because the infrastructures to support them have been slow in developing. For example, expanded mobile telephony, (beyond just voice), which has been dominant in Korea, China and Japan for almost a decade, is just now developing in the United States. Thus, established economy marketers have tend-

ed to pursue mass media marketing communication strategies simply because they are so widespread and are the marketing currency. That, I believe, is one of the primary differences between communication in emerging and established economies…infrastructure and its availability to the general population.

III. Starting with the basics

With these thoughts in mind, I have identified the communication research areas needed to support and develop marketing communication research in emerging economies in the sections which follow.

First, however, some preliminary comments on the basic issues facing marketing communication research, whether that be for established or emerging economies, is required.

A. From transitions to transformations

Researchers must understand that all marketing is going through a transformation today. The rapid technological changes, globalization and now the economic shifts of the past two years have clearly established that radical change is not just ahead, but, clearly in progress. Traditionally, cultures, societies, organizations, marketers and even consumers could identify the shifts which were occurring and impacting them. From that, they could then make adjustments. The seismic economic changes of the last two years, however, demonstrate that radical change in all marketing thinking is required. In my view, all societies, governments, economic systems, and, certainly marketing organizations, must transform themselves to deal with the new marketplace which is developing.

Many argue that when the established economies right themselves, the known and recognized systems will return and normalize. My view is, those known and recognized systems of only a few years ago, are gone forever. Societies must change. Economies must change. Marketing organizations must change. And, certainly academic research must change. The world will never go back to the way it was. Today is the new normal, like it or not. Today, technology, and specifically communication technology, will continue to change, most likely at an increasing pace. As marketers, it is unlikely we will ever control or get ahead of technology. What is needed is an understanding of how consumers and markets respond to and react to the changes in communication technology are occuring. Most important will be an understanding of how consumers in different countries and different economies accommodate change and either meld it into their existing norms or use it to develop totally new approaches and methodology such as we are seeing now in Japan, Korea and China and how those countries and consumers are responding to technological change.

The transformational change we are experiencing will require rethinking of how businesses operate, how consumers behave, how marketing and communication must be conducted…..in short, all the things we've been trained to manage are in the midst of upheaval. These changes will be no less traumatic to today's business managers than

the industrial revolution was to managers two hundred years ago. After all, it was the industrial revolution which spawned most of the basic business organizations and operations we know today. The truth is: only those organizations who can adapt successfully will survive.

This paper identifies the communication research needs and sets a new research agenda for academicians around the world. The focus is on emerging economies but, clearly, researchers must consider that, based on the marketplace changes, all areas of market and marketing research must be re-invented as well. The major ongoing business upheavals demand no less.

B. Changing the basics

Today and tomorrow, marketing communication managers must learn to operate in a dynamic marketplace, where consumers have most of the marketplace power. Therefore, basic business models must change. Today, roughly 80% of the business operating models employed by organizations are based on industrial-era, supply-chain logic, i.e., manufacturing and selling, not marketing and certainly not customers-serving. Using the substantial resources they control, most business organizations make and distribute products for which they have capablility and capacity. Thus, success commonly goes to those firms who make the most effective and efficient use of their resources. Yet, the increasing prevalence of the concept of the Long Tail of Marketing (Anderson, 2006) suggests that it may not be an inventory issue at all. It may simply be how products and services can be created in new forms that make them available long after the common concept of the product life-cycle has played itself out.

Today's marketers, believe they build value into the products they make and that value can then be extracted by consumers. Thus, the focus is primarily on selling what they have made. Value can therefore, be inventoried until needed by the consumer. But, in rapidly developing economies, it is speed and change that is important, not static systems of inventoried products. That's one of the primary issues facing many organizations and about which there is limited knowledge or understanding.

Increasingly, the marketplace is shifting to a services-based system where product and service value is co-created by the maker and buyer. New service-based marketing models are emerging. Thus, the manufacturer-model of marketing, focused on the four Ps, must give way to a service model driven by the 4 Cs …..consumers, communities, communication and competition. Some evidence of this change is in place and more will follow.

Pricing will be a critical part of this new marketing system. In many established markets, pricing is uniform, or, at least attempts are made to develop uniform pricing by the seller. The new communication technologies obviate those uniform pricing concepts. Transparent and/or negotiated price among knowledgeable equals is clearly the future. The rapid growth of online auctions such EBay and others is only a glimpse of the future. In many emerging markets, differential pricing is commonly the norm with haggling and negotiation between the buyer and seller being part of the basic fabric of the society. New technologies will likely create a negotiated or non-uniform pricing

approach where the marketer will have an "ask price" but consumers will determine the "buy price".

These three issues cover the bulk of the Four Ps on which most modern marketing has been based. Clearly, the changes that will occur in all these areas will impact marketing communications. So, understanding the basic organizational issues outlined above helps set the stage for a new view of marketing communication research which must develop.

IV. A new marketing communication research agenda

Many areas of marketing communication research must change to meet the requirements of emerging economies. The six listed below are, I believe, the primary ones, although arguments could be made for the inclusion of many others. The first two areas, consumer behavior and research methodologies, are critical to the development of any type of marketing and/or communication research. The other four, customers, brands, content and delivery have been adapted from the marketing communications planning process developed by Schultz et al. (2009) to meet the needs of global marketing organizations. They have been found to be applicable in most of the markets around the world.

A. Consumer behavior in emerging economies

All marketing communication planning, development and implementation approaches are based on some set of assumptions about how consumers behave in the marketplace. A multitude of consumer behavior models are available to researchers such as Howard and Moore (1963), Howard and Sheth (1969), Bettman (1979), Gutmann (1982) and others developed later. All have one thing in common: they are all based on a set of values held by consumers in developed western economies. The question is: are these models applicable in new or emerging economies.

These models all assume the individual is the basis for consumer understanding. This comes from the individualistic cultures which have developed in most western societies. They assume a wide range of consumer alternatives and choices which can and are independently determined by the individual consumer. All assume the consumer is making rational, considered purchase decisions which optimize their resources and generate the best personal outcomes. The key element, of course, is that all are undergirded by basic behaviorist psychological assumptions which are assumed to be relevant to all markets and to all consumers. For example, Maslow's "Hierarchy of Human Needs" (1943) is a common concept found in much of the established economy consumer behavior literature. If emerging economies truly represent different cultures and different ways of thinking and planning by consumers, we likely need new and improved models of what really drives human behavior. It is these long-held and closely-guarded value systems which have been enshrined in the west that may need to be challenged as they may well have served their time.

Many of the hoary psychological concepts of Freud and others are increasingly being challenged globally as well they should be. These assumptions certainly may or may not be relevant in many of the emerging economies where the communal Confucian concepts of striving for the common good and dependency on interpersonal support may be more important than self-actualization.

As far back as 1993, Durvasula, Andrews, Lysonaki and Netemeyer were questioning the validity of western-based consumer behavior models in other cultures. They argued for cross-national research to establish the generalizability of the various theoretical relationships posited in the models being used. Unfortunately, while there is a need for this type of research, it appears little progress has been made in the last 15 years. Given that consumer behavior provides the base for almost all types of marketing communication research, this would appear to be a prime area, not just for new concept development, but, also as a method of developing and proving the support for the existing models in various emerging economies.

B. Research methodologies

For the most part, marketing communication research in developed economies has been conducted primarily through survey research, either by mail, mall intercept, telephone or increasingly, online. These methods are accepted by consumers in established markets and, although response rates continue to dwindle simply because of overuse by researchers they are the norm. So, the use of questionnaires and interviews to gather marketing communication data are accepted by the general population in established markets.

Emerging economies have no such luxury in terms of data gathering. Historically, political and cultural taboos have grown up around answering questions posed by unknown questioners. Thus, the capture and storage of personal data has been suspect. Therefore, gaining information and data through traditional established market research methodologies in many emerging economies is limited at best. The problem this creates for researchers is that most developed economy marketing communication research is based on survey results, derived from analyses of a statistical normal curve. Tests of significance are the primary tool used to determine the validity of marketing communication hypotheses. Without adequate respondent data, these types of traditional marketing communication studies are not possible. Thus, many established market journal editors have rejected emerging economy communication research out-of-hand since it cannot be compared with the existing literature.

In most emerging economies, observational and other qualitative forms of research have been the primary methodologies available to marketing communication researchers. While these types of studies provide insights into various research questions, they lack the perceived academic rigor which would enable them to be accepted and published in developed market journals.

Over the last few years, the acceptance of grounded theory research, as developed by Glasser and Strauss (1977) and Corbin and Strauss (1990), where qualitative data

is used to develop a theory base, would seem to provide some opportunities for marketing communication research in emerging economies. When combined with ethnography and observational research, it might be possible to develop basic understandings of how marketing communication operates in emerging economies. This could be the alternative to traditional established market, quantitative approaches. This too seems to offer a great opportunity for researchers to understand more about less developed economies using relatively new, but, increasingly acceptable research techniques.

C. The four key areas for marketing communication research

In 2009, Schultz, Barnes, Schultz and Azzaro released a new marketing communication text "Building Customer Brand Relationships" (2009). In that book they presented a new model of marketing communication planning. It was based on "four circles" or planning units. These represented the four key ingredients in the development of any marketing communication program. The circles represent the customer, the brand, communication content and communication delivery. The argument made was that these are the four ingredients in any successful marketing communication program. It is how the elements are mixed and matched by the marketing communications manager that determine the success of the communication program. This approach was used academically and professionally around the world prior to the release of the text. It has been found to work well as a planning process in a number of emerging economies such as China, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, India and other countries. Thus, I believe it provides a sound base from which to discuss the research needs of emerging economies.

As before, the four key elements are: customers, brands, content and delivery. Each element is discussed below in terms of how it can be used to identify the various research needs in emerging economies.

1. Customers in emerging economies

Customers are the key element in any marketing communication program. It is their response to the communication that determines the program's success. In established markets, very sophisticated STP (segmentation, targeting and positioning) approaches have been developed. Most of these have been based on attitudinal research developed by the marketing organization or the marketer's agencies or suppliers. Most of these approaches have been based on established, western-biased, developed economy consumer behavior assumptions. They therefore suffer the same difficulties when transported to emerging economies that have been previously discussed. Thus, if the consumer behavior model is irrelevant, then the output of any type of segmentation scheme is likely wrong as well.

The research challenge in emerging economies would be to test the established economy STP models to determine their applicability and relevance. In my opinion, many of the existing approaches based on such things as "needs assessment" or economic indicators or even geographical location methodologies simply don't fit the

markets or consumers in emerging economies. And, like the example of Professor Chen (discussed earlier), they are likely applicable only to portions of the population or marketplace. Thus, this would seem like a fertile field for marketing communication research in emerging economies.

A second area of research among consumers revolves around the use of behavioral data. Because of the development of sophisticated attitudinally based consumer segmentation and targeting methodologies, behavioral data has not developed as widely as it could or should in established markets. Emerging economies, because of their more sophisticated information technology systems, often have better behavioral data than established markets. Mobile technology, where actual consumer behaviors are captured in behavioral databases, would seem to offer a wide range of opportunities for marketing communication researchers. While there are some restrictions on the use of this type of data, in many emerging economies such challenges are not often encountered.

Emerging economy customers are often unique and they commonly vary from country to country. Thus, finding new ways to develop relevant segmentation, targeting and positioning approaches, ones that are relevant to these markets, would seem to offer great opportunities for researchers.

2. *Brands and branding in emerging economies*

Brands and branding, while ancient in terms of usage by buyers and sellers is a relatively new area of marketing communication research. Indeed, the first formal branding text (Aaker, 1991) is less than two dozen years old. The challenge for emerging economies, of course, is that most of the current branding knowledge is based on assumptions of mass marketing in established economies developed by mass marketers using mass communication techniques. Indeed, the value of the brand is often measured based on consumer surveys of brand awareness and knowledge based on some type of brand differentiation. Lacking the basic market research tools, as discussed earlier, brand development and certainly brand measurement is substantially challenged in emerging economies.

For the most part, brand understanding is based on consumer brand equity, a fairly sophisticated concept in and of itself. For example, Keller's model of customer brand equity (Keller, 1993), the most accepted approach to brand understanding, is clearly based on a western-biased view of how the human mind works. Whether or not consumers in other cultures create the same type of brand networks as those envisaged by Keller is open to debate. Certainly when one considers the thinking patterns which occur in other cultures, new forms of branding networks may emerge. Thus, it may well be that brands have some common concepts that cross between established and emerging economies, but then again, they may be quite different. Given the cultural implications of how brands are perceived, valued and stored in the minds of consumers, this would seem to be a great opportunity for marketing communication research.

A second major area of brand research would seem to be in how brands are valued. In established economies, the price premium brands can generate is often taken

as a measure of their value to the consumer. Yet, in emerging economies, copying and counterfeiting are often common. Thus, the question arises as to whether the brand has the same inherent price premium value in emerging economies as it does in established markets where intellectual property rights are perhaps more rigorously enforced.

A third area of brands and branding research has to do with the value of own label or private label products in emerging economies. In emerging markets, with their often nationalistic focus, do local brands have the same value as multi-national brands in terms of consumer value? And, how is that value determined? These are major questions that need answers.

The final area of branded marketing communication research is that of how new brands are created. For the most part, established brands in developed markets were built through mass media advertising and promotion. Yet, today, the new media technologies challenge that brand-building model. Is it possible that brands can be built in emerging economies with the new media forms such as mobile, search and social media, most of which are much less expensive than traditional mass media approaches? Could it be that marketers in emerging economies could well be the leaders in new types of brand building? It certainly seems possible.

3. Communication content in emerging economies

Historically, the content of marketing communication has generally been considered the key to success. That has been particularly true over the past 50 or so years in the developed economies where mass media advertising has been the dominant form of marketing promotion. Such creative concepts such as AIDA (attention-interest-desire-action) (Strong, 1935), and USP (unique selling proposition) (Reeves, 1961), are still in use, even though they were developed for radically different marketplaces. The strength of these approaches was based on the success of mass media in aggregating large consumer audiences with similar interests and backgrounds and exposing those audiences to the same marketing communication content. In other words, the marketing communication served as a contributor to the development of national cultures. As a result, a large body of research on what made or makes successful advertising exists. Unfortunately, all these studies and all this experience are based on established markets with large media systems and fairly large and homogeneous audiences. Again, those audiences have been primarily western-based and have, like American movies, catered to the cultural mores of the society.

Later researchers such as Taylor and Johnson (2002), Taylor and Okasaki (2006) and de Mooij (2009) have challenged the belief that marketing communications, more specifically advertising, could cross borders and generate the same meaning in other cultures. We have learned, for example, that humor in advertising does not always travel well (Unger, 1995; Bischoff, 2006). Thus, cultural differences do have an impact on the success of marketing communications content. So, if the emerging economy is different culturally from the established markets in which the research has been conducted,

it is likely that additional research, or at least clarification, is needed. This would seem to be a major opportunity for communication scholars.

The second major area is how marketing communication is processed. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) first proposed an Elaborated Likelihood (ELM) model which suggested that information in advertising was processed in two ways, from a direct or indirect approach. That concept has been extended and expanded by MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) and Scholten (1996) but it still is based on samples from established markets where content is much more important than context.

In many Asian markets, the context of the communication appears to really drive the impact and effect of the communication message. Context simply means that the communication is viewed holistically, where images and concepts and words and pictures all merge into a single image of what message the sender is trying to communicate. Often, in contextual situations, the mood and atmosphere created for the communication is more important than the actual words or literal meaning used. For example, in Japan, nature is a primary force for the entire culture. It underlies almost all meaning for all Japanese communication. If one does not understand the Japanese person and their relation to the nature-focused world they live in, one cannot hope to develop meaningful messages. Thus, there would appear to be major opportunities for emerging economy scholars to develop alternative models of how marketing communication information is processed by consumers in those markets.

4. Delivery systems in emerging economies

Perhaps the greatest opportunity for the development of new concepts and ideas related to emerging economies is in the area of marketing communications delivery. Often thought of as media or message distribution systems, this is probably the most attractive area for immediate emerging economy marketing communication research. For the most part, marketing communication delivery systems that have been developed in the established markets focus very heavily on traditional major media, i.e., television, radio, newspapers, magazines and the like. All these media forms are outbound and, for the most part, are linear in their distribution. The development of the new interactive, primarily digital media, which are developing and expanding most rapidly in the emerging economies, provide a wealth of research opportunities for communication scholars.

For the most part, established market marketing communication research has focused on measuring the impact and effect of messages distributed by the marketing organization through established media. Planning for those media forms has been based on an assumed Hierarchy of Effects model (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Colley, 1961), which posits consumers move through a series of steps, influenced by advertising exposure, on their way to a purchase. The system is all linear and all one way with the marketer always in control of the communication system. It is this assumed model that underlies all media planning and optimization models around the world.

The questions concerning this linear marketer-controlled approach have been heightened with the development of digital and interactive systems which the marketer does not control. Most importantly, these new communication methodologies are developing much more rapidly in emerging economies than in established ones. Inherent in the development of these new systems are the questions of how and in what way online and offline, digital and analog, traditional and new media can be combined or integrated most effectively. Clearly, consumers have already reached the point of combining these media forms for themselves, but marketers have not. Marketing communication scholars in emerging economies, where the new media forms are rapidly expanding, can likely provide greater knowledge about the combination of push and pull media than is currently available in established markets.

An allied area for research on these online and offline media forms is the question of media synergy. That is, what is the impact of multiple media exposures by consumers who are using several media forms simultaneously. For the most part, today, media distribution is measured by individual media form, i.e., television audiences alone, radio audiences seperatley, newspaper circulation and the like. That raises the question of how media, which is consumed simultaneously by the target audience, can be measured. Clearly, there is some value in media distribution overlap and simultaneity but little knowledge exists today. This too would seem to be an area in which emerging economy knowledge could be an advantage, not a disadvantage.

The other major area of delivery system research in emerging economies is that of consumer media consumption. Today, almost all media is measured and evaluated on the basis of the number of messages or incentives the marketer distributes. In truth, the value of marketing communication is not in the delivery of the messages or incentives, it is in the consumption of those messages by customers and prospects. Few measures are available on media consumption, yet, in emerging economies, this is an increasingly viable consumer activity for academic study. For example, in many economies today, consumers have found a way to extend and expand the concept of time. They do this through multi-tasking and multi-media usage. Total usage of many traditional media forms have continued to grow while consumers report they have devoted more and more time to the new media. The only possible explanation for this anomaly is the practice of simultaneous multi-channel and multi-media activities on the part of the consumers. While some work has been done in this area, this too would seem to be a major research opportunity for marketing academicians in emerging economies where traditional media measurement forms are either limited or just starting to develop.

V. Summary and next steps

Is this the ultimate research agenda? Certainly not! But, as is true of most things in many emerging economies, one must start somewhere. This is my somewhere. Challenge it. Change it. Adapt and adjust it. But, don't ignore it. The other 80% of the world really need marketing communication concepts, approaches and methodologies that

are relevant to them, not just rehabbed concepts found in the literature of established marketing communication systems which journal editors and peer-reviewers want to keep alive, no matter their relevance.

The greatest value, of course, is the establishment of this journal. A scholarly publication dedicated to research and investigation is truly needed by all types of organizations in emerging economies. Make use of this publication. The stronger it is, the stronger the knowledge of what is important to the majority of the world's population will be.

End Note: As noted earlier, invited papers commonly do not undergo peer review. Such is the case with this paper. It has however, been reviewed by several marketing communication scholars whose contributions should be acknowledged. I list them in no particular order but they are Dean Krugman, University of Georgia, Patricia Rose, Florida International University, Gayle Kerr, Queensland University of Technology and Heidi Schultz, Northwestern University. All have contributed mightily through their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this work. I thank them for their contributions but, as is mandatory, any errors or omissions are my fault. Hopefully, you won't find many.

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