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# Marketing Research Updates

*A Quarterly Newsletter*  
**January-March, 2009**

## Highlights

*Research Papers (4)*  
*Working Papers (2)*  
*Excellence Award (1)*  
*Online Video Session (7)*  
*Participation in International Conference (1)*

## Research Papers Published

Rajagopal and Rajagopal A (2009), Buyer-supplier Relationship and Operational Dynamics, *Journal of Operations Research Society*, 60 (3), 313-320 (Impact Factor: 0.784) ISI Journal

**Abstract:** This paper examines the effectiveness of business-to-business relationships in reference to the suppliers of office equipments serving the industrial accounts in Mexico. The study addresses broadly the performance-related issues as to what extent is the impact of quality of services responsible for doing business with the organizational buyers. Discussions in the paper also analyze the impact of channel function performance on relationship quality, which is moderated by the extent dependence structure of the relationship. The results of the study showed that the impact of buyer-supplier co-dependency and relationship quality significantly affects the supplier performance. It has been argued in the paper that the market orientation is positively associated with measures of channel performance such as service quality and the extent of buyer satisfaction. The study also demonstrates that in the processes of managing business relationships, cognitive dimensions like trust, commitment, and low level of conflicts provide 'win-win' situation for buyers and suppliers. Finally, this study attempts to make contributions to the literature on buyer-supplier relationships towards cognitive and relational perspectives leading to optimizing functional efficiency of a firm.



URL: <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/jors/journal/v60/n3/abs/2602560a.html>

Rajagopal and Rajagopal A (2009), Place Branding Architecture for Ecotourism, *International Journal of Leisure and Tourism Marketing*, 1 (1), 58-69 (Inaugural Issue)

**Abstract:** The number of international tourists leaning on ecological attractions is rapidly increasing and as the demand for access to eco-tourism is outpacing capacity, some companies are in race to drive profit by creating destinations. Such trend in tourism industry as an outgrowth of globalization has paved the path for place branding. The concept of place branding has run over various social, political and economic conflicts in developing as strong brand perspectives; there is a need to define and implement brand architecture strategies to empower place branding concept. Broadly, brand architecture is concerned with the pedigree of brands of a firm, role of specific brands and the relationship between sub-brands. The paper discusses the stages of brand architecture and role of brand audit to manage the brand portfolio of an eco-tourism firm. Discussion in the paper also delineates the managerial perspectives in optimizing the performance of ecological place brands.



URL: <http://www.inderscience.com/filter.php?aid=21991>

Rajagopal (2009), Brand Strategy for Bottom Line Markets, *Innovative Marketing*, 5 (1), 34-40

**Abstract:** This paper aims at delivering new models of brand management in the bottom of the pyramid markets considering the personality traits, image, technology and reputation of firms associated with the brands. Reviewing the previous research studies, this paper argues that performance of global brands in low profile consumer market segments is constrained by high transaction costs and coordination problems along the brand promotions, consumption and customer value chain. Hence, firms in managing brands in the Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) market segments are needed to reduce brand costs by increasing the volume of sales and augmenting the customer value. Brands of the BoP market segments are socially and culturally embedded, and co-created and positioned by the up-market brand influence. Unlike traditional brands, BoP brands may be sufficiently malleable to support brand interpretations at the rural and suburban consumer segments. This paper offers new business strategies to managers on brand positioning and targeting in suburban and rural markets with convenience packaging, pricing and psychodynamics.

URL: [http://www.businessperspectives.org/component/option.com\\_journals/task.issue/id,100/jid,5/](http://www.businessperspectives.org/component/option.com_journals/task.issue/id,100/jid,5/)



Rajagopal (2009), Cognitive Factors Affecting Buying Decision of Young Consumers: Role of Arousal and Merriment, *International Journal of Economics and Business Research*, 1 (4), 454-466

**Abstract:** Arousal among young consumers plays a key role in buying decisions. One of the challenges for success in retailing is to enhance the in-store ambience to influence the young consumers for prolonged stay in the store for shopping and explore the zone of experience of new products. This paper attempts to analyze arousal and satisfaction as behavioral drivers which influence buying behavior of young consumers and measures the extent of satisfaction on purchases made through empirical investigation in Mexico. Discussions in the study are also focused on the role of in-store recreation, ambience and point of sales strategies in influencing buying behavior of the young consumers.

URL: [http://www.inderscience.com/search/index.php?action=record&rec\\_id=24720&prevQuery=&ps=10&m=or](http://www.inderscience.com/search/index.php?action=record&rec_id=24720&prevQuery=&ps=10&m=or)



## Working Papers (2)

Rajagopal (2009), *Determinants of Shopping Behavior of Urban Consumers*, ITESM-EGADE, February, 1-38

**Abstract:** This study explores the influence of geo-demographic settings of commercial centers, customer attractions in shopping malls, and route to shopping of urban shoppers. The present research analyzes retailing patterns in urban areas in reference to customer orientation strategies, product search behavior and enhancing the customer value. Interrelationship among urban retailing, marketplace ambience, conventional shopping wisdom of customers, long-term customer services, and technology led selling processes are also addressed in the study based on empirical survey. Broadly, this study makes contributions to the existing research in urban retailing towards factors determining shopping attractions, routes to shopping, and establishing the customer-centric strategies of the firms.

URL: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1351551](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1351551)

Rajagopal and Ananya Rajagopal (2009), *Investor Confidence and Organizational Downsizing in Financial Institutions*, ITESM-EGADE, March, 1-8

**Abstract:** This paper aims innovative perspectives on strategy development in financial institutions to overcome the current global financial recession. Organizational restructuring is argued in reference to proactive and reactive financial and human resource strategies. It is observed that growth of many financial institutions is jeopardized due to primary market downfall, falling investor confidence, liquidity crisis, misjudged lending, high operational costs and blurring corporate image among markets. Authors suggest proactive and reactive measures which may be employed in responding to the current financial crisis. Among many proactive roll-on strategies, banks need to urge government to provide a guarantee that bonds and securities created out of mortgages or out of loans to companies do not become irrecoverable and seize yielding. Financial institutions may manage human resource during the period of economic crisis in a financial institution is to pursue defensive downsizing rather than strategic restructuring, as a result of both internal and external constraints on restructuring strategies.

URL: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1356786](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1356786)

### Excellence Award (1)



Research paper entitled [Measuring brand performance through metrics application](#) authored by Dr. Rajagopal and published in *Measuring Business Excellence* has been chosen as a [Highly Commended Award Winner](#) at the [Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2009](#). The award winning papers are chosen following consultation amongst the journal's Editorial Team, many of whom are eminent academics or managers. This paper has been selected as it was one of the most impressive pieces of work the team has seen throughout 2008.

### On-line Video Session (7)

Dr. Rajagopal had conducted course on Advanced Selling System for graduate students at EGADE, Campus Estado de Mexico during January-April, 2009. The course was delivered using applied teaching tools including simulation, card game and case breakdown method). The following session videos of most important issues are available on the Internet:

1. **Advanced Selling Process** <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3341090281112578499>
2. **Managing Sales Conflicts** <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5352894564261706873>
3. **Organizing Sales Teams** <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=495450822179412824>
4. **Integrated Sales Activities** <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5194308451969708289>
5. **Hiring Salespeople** <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5723834139823545636>
6. **Deploying Salespeople** <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=881700572791546647>
7. **Empowering Sales Negotiations** <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=5183821652473685603>

### Participation in International Conference (1)

Dr. Rajagopal chaired two sessions in the global convention of the [Business and Economics Society International](#), Worcester, MA held at Acapulco- Hyatt International Hotel during January 03-06, 2009. He chaired sessions on Debt management, retailing and industrial relations and a

Round Table Session on Globalization and Transition of Business in Mexico exclusively participated by ITESM community including Dr. Rajagopal, Professor Marcella C Riviera and Mariana Mora Fonseca (Student of under-graduation program in marketing) and presented academic papers. Mariana Fonseca did her course project work on Overseas Business Venturing in Mexico after Globalization, with Dr. Rajagopal during her studies in the course on International Commerce Strategy offered during January –May 2008.

### Research Projects in Progress 2009-10

Following research projects have been taken up by Dr. Rajagopal under the aegis of Catedra in **Consumidor y competitividad** coordinated by Dr. Jorge Vera Martinez, Department of Marketing, Business Division, ITESM-CCM.

#### 1. Consumer behavior in urban shopping locations

This study is proposed to examine the impact of growing congestion of shopping mall in urban areas on shopping conveniences and shopping behavior. Based on the survey of urban shoppers, the study intends to analyze the cognitive attributes of the shoppers towards attractiveness of shopping malls and intensity of shopping.

*Time Plan:* Date of Initiation- October 02, 2008; Expected date of completion- September 02, 2009

#### 2. Convergence of sales and services in building customer value: A study of automobile market in Mexico

This study aims at analyzing the impact of market orientation strategies and performance of customer services on customer acquisition, retention and sales of automobiles, which reveals overall performance of the automobile dealers in Mexico. The study also proposes to develop customer value convergence model on customer-dealer relationship in the automobile market segment referring to the key factors which establish services quality encompassing tangibility, responsiveness, trust, accuracy and empathy.

*Time Plan:* Date of Initiation- December 01, 2008; Expected date of completion- February 2010, 2009

#### 3. Measuring effects of customer loyalty programs in retail stores in Mexico

This study analyzes drivers of compulsive buying behavior induced by store based promotion through empirical investigation in Mexico. The buying behavior in reference to point of sales promotions offered by retailing firms and determinants of sensitivity towards stimulating shopping arousal and satisfaction among customer in building store loyalty will be analyzed in the study. This study also proposes to build arguments around convergence of attractiveness of point of sales promotions and effectiveness of customer services as a tool for gaining competitive advantage in the retail business environment.

*Time Plan:* Date of Initiation- July 2008; Expected date of completion- November 2009

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<http://www.inderscience.com/ijltm>

Chair, Latin American Chapter of Business and Economics Society International, USA for International Conference at Acapulco

(Mexico), Jan 03-06, 2009 <http://www.besiweb.com>

Biographee "Who's Who in the World", 25th Edition, 2008 and 2009, Marquis Who's Who LLC, USA; Biographee "2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of 21st Century", 5th Edition, Summer 2008, International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, UK

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