

Reconceptualizing brands from a social systems perspective

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Abstract

Contemporary branding studies have been increasingly focusing on socio-cultural understanding of brands, moving away from the traditional brand management and consumer- focused perspectives. However, socio-cultural approaches do not consider the differentiation of society and neglect the impact of societal macro-structures on brands and branding. Therefore, they are not fully equipped to understand brands in contemporary contexts where brands interfere in different parts of society. The paper proposes a Luhmannian social systems perspective on brands and provides an alternative approach to understanding what function brands have in society and how brands relate to different spheres of society. The paper advances the socio-cultural understanding of brands and branding by proposing a new conceptualization of brands as connectivity devices that enable connections among different functional social systems in society.

Subject Areas: *Branding, Theory and Philosophy of Marketing*

Track: Product and Brand Management