

MARKETING COLLOQUIA

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Jin Ho Yun

Marketing Doctoral Candidate

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

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BRANDS, BRAINS, AND THE MARKETPLACE

ABSTRACT:

Brands are a relatively new symbolic system, and how they and their associated companies are processed in the human mind and brain is not well understood. In two studies, I address two classic questions in consumer-brand relationships using multi-method approaches: (1) how consumers connect with a strong brand community and (2) how consumers associate a brand with a product category. In the first study, I provide evidence on the concept of brand homophily that governs our relationships with other consumers and loving brands. In the second study, I demonstrate that brain pattern similarity analysis can reveal the semantic associations of a brand and predict brand recall and market responses above and beyond traditional stated responses. These findings highlight the need to use multi-method approaches, in addition to surveys, to explain, measure, and predict consumer behaviors.