Abstract

This special issue of the *Journal of Business Research* deals with a wide range of marketing research subjects. The papers pertain to the marketing–sales relationship, sport participants’ satisfaction, importance–performance analysis, country of origin, internet banking, tourism and travel, and management leadership style. The ten papers in this special issue were selected from the papers presented at the 8th International Forum on the Sciences, Techniques and Arts Applied to Marketing, Academy and Profession, held at the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, November 24–25, 2005.

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1. Introduction

The articles in this special issue of the *Journal of Business Research* include the best papers presented at the 8th International Forum on the Sciences, Techniques and Art Applied to Marketing, Academy and Profession, held at the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, November 24–25, 2005.

These articles cover a wide range of the different aspects of marketing research, such as the relationship between marketing and sales, the satisfaction of participants at sporting events, the graphic representation of multi-attribute models, the influence of the country of origin on consumer behavior, the identification of users of internet banking in the European Union, the importance of the information available at tourism destinations, the relationship quality-satisfaction in the spa-tourism environment, the impact of the liberalization of air tariffs and the effects of the personal and cultural values in management leadership style.

Notwithstanding the diversity of the subjects considered, the different articles all share the quantitative approach to empirical investigation. By favoring quantitative techniques over qualitative ones in marketing research, these articles follow what is today the predominant methodological current in the USA and the majority of European countries.

2. Marketing–sales relationship

Companies create superior customer value by offering them benefits that outweigh the costs they have to bear during the life cycle of the product or service. Superior customer value creates a competitive advantage if companies are able to financially benefit from the exchange in the long term. Successful companies create such value more efficiently and effectively than their competitors do (Slater and Narver, 2000). The companies’ capacity to create superior customer value depends on their abilities to co-ordinate marketing and sales activities. By adopting this perspective and elaborating on literature that deals with marketing capabilities and the marketing–sales relationship, Guenzi and Troilo proposed a model of antecedents to superior customer value creation. According to the authors, an effective relationship between marketing and sales, long-term orientation, and sales people’s customer-orientated selling all positively impact superior customer value creation. In addition, Guenzi and Troilo’s results suggest that superior customer value creation has a positive impact on market performance.

3. Sport participants’ satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction has received a lot of attention in marketing research because of its influence on consumer
behavior. The literature on consumer satisfaction focuses primarily on people as cognitive beings, whereby the outcome of a comparison process between expectations and perceived performance leads to satisfaction. Recently, some authors have proposed that the consumer’s evaluative judgments originate in cognitive and affective aspects of the acquired product’s stimulus (Oliver, 1997). The study by J.A. Martínez and L. Martínez deals with two competing models of satisfaction. The first model suggests that emotions act as a mediator between cognitive evaluations and overall satisfaction. In the second model, emotions act as independent variables that, together with a cognitive construct, explain more about satisfaction than either construct would on its own. The authors tested the two models using data from a runner’s satisfaction in a yearly race. The findings show that emotions are independent of the cognitive evaluations of the service.

4. Importance–performance analysis

The work by Abalo, Varela and Manzano deals with the graphical representation of the multi-attribute models developed previously by Martilla and James (1977) through the Impor-
tance and Performance Analysis (IPA). Here, the authors concentrate on one of the main problems of the IPA, the calculation of the importance of the attributes, and propose the adoption of an ordinal measurement of the importance based on preference results. To resolve the difficulties brought on by ordinal measurement in the incorporation in the IPA graphic, Abalo, Varela and Manzano present an algorithm that facilitates transforming the obtained frequencies into a metric score adapted to the desired scale. The authors applied the proposed algorithm to a sample of health service users.

5. Country of origin

Many studies have shown that the products’ country of origin (COO) can influence consumers’ perception about them. Consumers tend to evaluate products more favorably when the products originate in countries bearing a positive image or perception. Marketing and consumer researchers have made significant efforts to obtain a better understanding of COO influences on consumer decision-marketing. The next two studies deal with COO for food products.

The first study explores the role of food origin as a source of meaning for consumers and as a determinant of consumers’ current food choices in Finland. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods, Loumala shows that Finnish consumers associate partly overlapping, partly distinct, cognitive, affective and normative meanings with Swedish, German and French food. The results of a real food choice experiment reveal that activating domestic origin cognitively actually results in the favoring of foreign food products while activating domestic origin effectively leads to the favoring of domestic food products. The author emphasizes that generalization of the findings will require further research with larger and more diverse samples.

The second study, by Ozretic-Dosen, Skare and Krupka, is a report on the consumer attitudes of young Croatians towards a foreign and domestic product of a single low-involvement food product category. Although the results show a considerable level of importance given to COO and brand in the purchasing and consumption of the product, young Croatian consumers make functional quality the dominant factor.

6. Internet banking

Technology is having a profound effect in the services sector, frequently substituting personal interaction in the supplying of these services. The consensus of opinion is that new technologies permit users to utilize these whenever and from wherever they wish, without the need for inter-personal relationships. Banking is one of the sectors in which new technologies will play an important role for its clients, mainly through the electronic banking services.

The study presented by Martínez, Ortega y Román refers to the identification of the users of the internet banking services in the European Union, from a perspective different from that based on their socio-demographic characteristics, i.e. through their attitudes and perceptions towards the financial and internet services. The results of the study suggest that the clients with the most contracted services are the ones most likely to adopt internet banking. A positive attitude towards financial products and services also favors the adoption of internet banking. The authors also indicate that confidence in the internet is fundamental for clients to accept the use of banking on the internet.

7. Tourism and travel

Tourism constitutes a modern social phenomenon linked to the growth of transport and purchasing power. In parallel, tourism has become a major industry that contributes strongly to the local and national economy. As such, tourism represents an important field of study that has attracted the attention of researchers from a wide range of disciplines, such as marketing, economics, geographics, business, anthropology and the social sciences (Pearce, 2003). Within this framework are two works related to tourism activities and another linked to air travel.

The first study analyzes the importance of the information available at tourism destinations. This topic has until now received very little attention from the tourism research literature (Rompf and Ricci, 2005). Using survey data from two large samples of international and domestic tourists, Ortega and Rodriguez examine the perception of two different forms of information represented by pamphlets available in the hotel reception areas and a 10/15-min film available on the hotel room TV. The results show the great importance that both groups of tourists attribute to the above-mentioned forms of information at tourism destinations. This importance proves to be far greater than that which the tourists attribute to 13 services habitually offered by hotels.

Inside the stream of research on quality and satisfaction in the field of services, Alen, Rodriguez and Fraiz develop these constructs and examine their reciprocal relationship in the area of spa-tourism and treat both constructs as resulting variables of behavioral intentions. The empirical findings suggest that
perceived quality turned out to be an antecedent of satisfaction and that a converse relationship did not yield satisfactory results. The authors also suggest that satisfaction and service quality have a direct impact on behavioral intentions, word of mouth communication and price sensitivity.

The third article deals with airline price liberalization in the Philippines. Manuela’s article builds on the empirical framework employed by different authors (Rietveld et al., 2002) to estimate the impact of liberalization on airfare using econometric analysis. The results show that most passengers benefit from lower fares. The author emphasizes that Philippine domestic airline passengers are better off under liberalization because of the downward pressure on price as a result of the prevalence of discounts and promos due to competition produced under that regulation.

8. Management leadership style

Personal and cultural values play an important role in the mediation of management leadership style. The success and failure of organizations depend upon flexibility and adaptability to markets, requiring their managers to possess appropriate leadership styles. Acknowledgement of the managers’ personal values and their cultural antecedents is necessary to understand effectiveness and influences of management leadership style, mainly in different cross-cultural contexts.

Byrne and Bradley analyze the role of personal and national culture in leadership style. The authors collected data on CEOs in three EU countries using Schwartz’s (1992, 1994) framework, identifying four research questions: 1) Does a plurality of successful leadership styles exist? 2) What differences exist between the influence of personal and national culture on leadership style? 3) What effect has management leadership style on firm international performance? 4) What are the quantifiable mediative roles of personal and cultural values on management leadership style? The results of the study by Byrne and Bradley confirm that the mediation effects of personal values and cultural values on manager leadership style are different. Cultural values are the most influential values in the mediation process. Protecting the environment is the personal value with the most influence on personal and cultural values in the context of international performance.

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