

Guest Editorial

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Special Issue on Cross-Cultural Issues in Marketing Research

This special issue of *Academy of Marketing Science Review* focuses on “cross-cultural issues in marketing research.” Managerial decision making in marketing must be considered in a cross-cultural context today not only because of the globalization of markets and market activities, but also because of the increasing multi-culturalism affecting marketing practices in a number of individual countries. Marketing researchers must remain acutely aware of the special concerns inherent in cross-cultural research and consider corrective actions which can be taken to ensure the appropriateness of data collection and comparisons across different cultures.

To demonstrate the variety of issues within this exciting area of research, the following topics were provided to all potential authors in the call for papers: the appropriateness of the use of scales in other cultures, cross-cultural sampling frames and methodologies, questionnaire design and use in different cultures, non-response issues across cultures, the potential differences in cultural perceptions of respondents to various scaling structures, the nature of response styles and sets across cultures, acculturation/assimilation forces, the use of particular tools and techniques for data analysis in a multi-cultural context, and in particular, the creation of standards for cross-cultural data that ignore the existence of different emics.

There were sixteen articles submitted for the special issue, and six were finally chosen for inclusion. I am very grateful for the excellent efforts of the 21 reviewers, especially given the fact that multiple iterations were involved in an accelerated timeframe for the special issue. The list of reviewers is shown below:

Dr. Gerald Albaum, University of New Mexico
 Dr. Barry J. Babin, Louisiana Tech University
 Dr. Les Carlson, Clemson University
 Dr. Mark Case, Eastern Kentucky University
 Dr. Irvine Clarke, James Madison University
 Dr. Mahesh Gopinath, Old Dominion University
 Dr. Earl D. Honeycutt, Elon University
 Dr. Michael R. Hyman, New Mexico State University
 Dr. Kiran Karande, Old Dominion University
 Dr. Theresa Kirchner, Hampton University
 Dr. Russell N. Laczniak, Iowa State University
 Dr. Michael S. LaTour, University of Nevada - Las Vegas
 Dr. Yuping Liu, Old Dominion University
 Dr. Tarek Mady, American University of Dubai
 Dr. Vincent P. Magnini, Virginia Tech University
 Dr. Alma Mintu Wimsatt, Texas A&M - Commerce
 Dr. Sandra P. Mottner, Western Washington University
 Dr. Michael J. Polonsky, Victoria University
 Dr. B Ramaseshan, Curtin University of Technology
 Dr. Leona Tam, Old Dominion University

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Dr. Shawn P. Thelen, Hofstra University

The lead article, written by Lennora Putit and David Arnott from Warwick Business School, examines the nature of national culture. The authors discuss the difficulties inherent in using general measures of national culture when attempting cross-cultural comparisons. The authors suggest that the basic assumption that all nations are mono-cultural is problematic, and they argue that better attempts must be made by researchers to account for within-country variations. The authors posit a model for testing for micro-national (intra-national) cultural impact on consumer behavior through a framework that incorporates cultural variables into a consumer intentions model combining Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior and Parasuraman's Technology Readiness scale.

Klaus-Peter Wiedmann, Nadine Hennigs and Astrid Siebels from Leibnitz University of Hanover present a new examination of the nature of luxury and conspicuous consumption in a cross-cultural context in the second article. Given the global growth seen in the demand for luxury products, it is important for marketers to turn their attention to understanding how consumers define luxury and how this will affect their purchase behavior. The authors present a conceptual model which handles luxury value as a second-order latent construct comprised of four first-order value constructs (financial value, functional value, individual value and social value) which are affected by a series of nine antecedent values. The authors argue that this multidimensional luxury framework is a good foundation for assessing luxury values cross-culturally and can effectively be used to segment the global market for luxury products.

The third article is authored by Pia Polsa from the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, and she argues that there are many problems inherent in comparing qualitative data cross-culturally. In this article she examines the nature of equivalence in qualitative research when examining comparative data. Qualitative equivalence is addressed in terms of the following components: conceptual equivalence, functional equivalence, sample equivalence, contextual equivalence, researcher equivalence, and finally response equivalence. An illustrative example is provided involving face-to-face interview data. The author stresses the point in conclusion that cultures can and should indeed be compared qualitatively but not by using etic or universal variables.

Delonia Minor-Cooley and Jeff Brice from Texas Southern University look at the problems involving ethnic identification and its role in cross-cultural marketing in the fourth article. The authors suggest that there is a significant increase in the number of consumers who are identifying themselves as bi-racial or multi-racial, and that with the blurring of races and cultures, there is a need to examine the important role that ethnicity can play in target marketing. The article examines ethnicity from a number of perspectives and calls for the development of a measurement scale to allow researchers to properly examine the role of ethnicity in consumer behavior.

The fifth article, written by Gregory Kivenzor from BiFoS, LLC, examines and links tangible and intangible brand equity components to shed light on changing consumer psychology in Russia as it weathers the transition from a central-planned economy to a market economy. The author examines consumer choice from the perspective of the Russian consumer, but there are implications presented that are applicable to any global marketer looking to target consumers in these types of transitional economies.

Finally, Satyabhusan Dash and Kalyan Ku Guin from the Indian Institute of Technology along with Ed Bruning from the University of Manitoba turn to the development of long-term industrial marketing relationships between buyers and sellers across different cultures. The authors present a conceptual model which incorporates components of national culture as important moderators affecting the linkages between trust and commitment and the linkage between social bonding, structural bonding and commitment.

These articles are meant to shed new light on the complex nature of culture and its potential impact on marketing research. Too much research today is still suffering from the problematic pseudo-etic trap in which local research findings are overgeneralized to global levels and culture is treated as a simplistic post-hoc comparison mechanism. The point is to set the stage for more effective strategic cross-cultural research as opposed to the easier and troubling opportunistic international research with few effective controls and protocols.