
Editorial

Demetris Vrontis

Department of Marketing,
University of Nicosia,
School of Business,
46 Makedonitissas Avenue,
1700 Nicosia, Cyprus
Email: vrontis.d@unic.ac.cy

Evangelia Siachou

Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences,
Department of Economics,
University of Athens Master of Business Administration Program,
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens,
1 Sofokleous Street, 105 59, Athens, Greece
Email: esiachou@econ.uoa.gr

Biographical notes: Demetris Vrontis is the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research and a Professor of Strategic Marketing Management at the University of Nicosia, Cyprus. He is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the *EuroMed Journal of Business*, an Associate Editor of the *International Marketing Review*, an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Business Research* and a Consulting Editor of the *Journal of International Management*. He has wide editorial experience and has successfully edited over 60 guest editions in top tier journals. He is the President of the EuroMed Academy of Business, which serves as an important and influential regional academy in the area of Business and Management, and the Managing Director of Gnosis: Mediterranean Institute for Management Science. He has widely published in about 300 refereed journal papers, 45 books and 60 chapters in books, and has presented papers to over 80 conferences around the globe.

Evangelia Siachou holds a PhD in the field of Knowledge Management from Athens University of Economics and Business. She has several years of teaching experience. In 2016, she joined the Open University of Cyprus as Tutor and currently serves as Coordinator of the Managing Organisation Module in the MBA Program. As of Fall 2019, she is a Visiting Professor of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) and in the Executive MBA Programs of the Department of Economics of National Kapodistrian University of Athens. She also teaches at Hellenic Open University. She has been awarded twice with the Emerald Literati Award.

The six papers in this special issue provide a variety of perspectives of self-directed voluntary actions undertaken by organisations and stakeholders aiming at achieving sustainable business success. Scholars based in various geographical areas and from various academic institutions and universities shed light on self-directed voluntarism by

approaching it as a consumption behaviour; the adoption of voluntary standards; the measurement and evaluation of effective business excellence; an antecedent to positive reinforcements; or a social trend and tendency that is linked to social media and other means of communication.

These different perspectives reflect the authors' various perceptions from different angles. However, they develop a common understanding of the integral role of self-voluntary initiatives in all business functions enabling organisations of different types and sizes operating in almost all industries to achieve sustainable success.

Raquel Rebouças (Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Paraíba and University of Minho, Portugal) and Ana Maria Soares (School of Economics and Management, University of Minho, Portugal) co-authored the first paper, 'The consumption behaviour of beginner voluntary simplifiers: an exploratory study', which looks at voluntary life simplification. The authors conducted an empirical qualitative study aiming at understanding the values, motivations and the meanings of this consumption. Data collected from in-depth interviews with the critical incident technique and focus groups indicated factors which caused respondents to pass from non-voluntary simplifiers to beginner voluntary simplifiers and which explain the beginner voluntary simplifiers' decision process. Factors include critical incidents (e.g., product disposal; life-changing events; dissatisfaction with maternalism); motivations (e.g., self-control; social and environmental reasons; coherence); barriers (e.g., complexity; lack of information; lack of time); values (fair prices; durability; emotional attributes); meanings and associations (humanity; belongings; freedom; peace); marketing outcomes (e.g., sustainable products; avoidance of sales; second-hand products). The authors provide interesting practical implications and identify avenues for future research to focus on public policies and the importance of promoting responsible consumption.

The second paper, 'Driving forces affecting the adoption of certifications in the forest-based industry: a systematic literature review' is co-authored by Emanuela Lombardo (University of Palermo, Italy), Antonio Galati (University of Palermo, Italy), Demetris Vrontis (University of Nicosia) and Maria Crescimanno (University of Palermo, Italy). It provides a systematic literature review of the factors affecting the adoption of two main certifications (Forest Stewardship Council and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification), in the forest-based industry. These two certifications are found to be important mechanisms enabling sustainability in the forest-based industry. The authors systematically reviewed a total of 55 papers and provide descriptive outcomes as well as thematic concepts which unpack the drivers affecting the choice to adopt these certifications: the marketing mechanisms; the political contexts; and the signalling, learning, moral, and legal mechanisms. The authors also summarise the standards of these two certifications. This study captures the main reasons driving all interested parties in forest-based industry to adopt voluntary standards, and provides implications for both theory and practice. The authors also direct future research by recommending areas that are currently under explored and necessitate scholarly research attention.

The third paper, 'A qualitative study and a measurement and evaluation of public relations social media campaigns in Cyprus', is co-authored by Marcos Komodromos (Department of Communications, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus), Andreas Masouras (Neapolis University, Paphos, Cyprus), and Nicholas Nicoli (Department of Communications, School of Humanities and Social

Sciences, University of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus). The study focuses on public relations social media campaigns that were designed and launched in Cyprus. By conducting 86 in-depth, semi-structured web-based interviews with public relations practitioners based in Cyprus, the scholars identified both financial and non-financial indicators to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the social media campaigns. At the same time, they revealed numerous barriers which might prevent practitioners from measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of their social media campaigns. The scholars applied the excellence theory to support the proposed relationships under study, resulting in mechanisms and strategies which can significantly enable practitioners to design and launch effective social media campaigns.

The fourth paper, 'The behavioural perspective of cause-related marketing: a conceptual framework of behavioural antecedents and outcomes', is co-authored by Nair R. Suja (co-entrepreneur of Educe Micro Research, Bengaluru, India), Riad Shams (Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University, UK), Evangelia Siachou (National Kapodistrian University and Hellenic Open University), and Demetris Vrontis (University of Nicosia). It offers an interdisciplinary approach to the consequences and antecedents to cause-related marketing. The authors applied the organisational behaviour modification theory to reveal what shapes desired consumers' behaviours towards cause-related offerings. At the same time, they unpacked the consequences of ethical consumerism for organisations' stakeholders. To conceptualise the modification of consumers' behaviour, the authors achieved a comprehensive review of the existing literature and organised it around four foci, i.e., the cause-related marketing conception; its antecedents; its effectiveness; and the consumers' scepticism towards cause-related marketing actions undertaken by contemporary organisations. The authors provide implications for both theory and practice and call for the emerging research in cross-country contexts.

The fifth paper, 'Giving power to those having less power: NGOs, YouTube and virality', is co-authored by Aikaterini Avgeropoulou and Yioula Melanthiou from the University of Nicosia. The authors focus on the contemporary needs of NGOs to make use of tools that are available free-of-charge, such as platforms like YouTube, for developing viral content to increase customer awareness. By applying the method of netnography, the authors examined linkages between consumer behaviour theory, viral marketing, and videography/cinematography to reveal the urgency of NGOs to achieve engaging content by using free social media. NGOs contribute remarkably to the development of society, yet they are dealing with inadequate resources. The authors propose a 'synesthetic framework' that provides an understanding of the creation of holistically visual YouTube campaigns, thus, enabling NGOs to achieve effectiveness and efficiency of their valuable operations. The authors provide implications for both theory and practice, and stress the importance of giving power to those who have less power by engaging their stakeholders in their actions

The last and sixth paper for this special issue, 'Employee social media usage in the workplace: internal marketing's new found friend', is co-authored by Georgia Sakka, Ioanna Papisolomou, Alkis Thrassou and Naziyet Uzunboylu all from the University of Nicosia. The study tackles a topical issue, in which organisations view employees as internal customers and recognise employees' ability to identify new opportunities for further organisational development by using social media. The study offers a comprehensive review of social media and its applications, as well as its applicability to user engagement. By departing from the traditional view of social media for marketing,

the authors support its great potential for employee engagement. The study supports the importance of internal marketing, whose main antecedent is the use of social media by employees, and is moderated by internal communication and employee satisfaction. The merits of the proposed framework are conceptualised in the four positive employee and organisational outcomes: increased productivity; job satisfaction; decreased turnover and absenteeism; and word-of-mouth. The study's theoretical and practical implications provide new insights into internal marketing and suggest the necessity for employees to undertake self-directing actions to upgrade organisational operations, actions, and factors affecting organisational routines, tasks, and activities.

The studies in this special issue attempt to explore self-acting voluntary behaviours and develop theoretical models. They develop emerging research in self-directed voluntary behaviours for sustainable business success, which calls for an empirical investigation to explain direct relationships, underlying mechanisms, and boundary conditions.

Future research might expand the applicability of the proposed frameworks/models to conduct research in different settings and geographical areas based on either qualitative or quantitative data, or both, and using various methodologies. Scholars might attempt to shape self-acting voluntarism by identifying a self-acting voluntarism mindset; by identifying potential barriers to self-acting voluntarism in various business contexts at both an individual and organisational level; by testing the role of various organisational characteristics for promoting self-acting voluntarism; or, most importantly, by examining its various functions and their promises to sustainable business.

We hope that this special issue will advance our understanding of self-directed voluntarism, which can take place at either an individual or an organisational level, reflecting either individual or consumers' actions or organisational holistic attempts. At the same time, we also believe that the studies that are included in this special issue increase our awareness that voluntary actions at all levels are necessary for organisations in various industries to achieve sustainability in business, to respect diversity, as well as to promote the requirement for interdisciplinary research for sustainable business success.