
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Ioannis Nanos is an Adjunct Lecturer at the International Hellenic University and Hellenic Open University. He holds a BSc in Business Computing, MSc and PhD in Information Systems. He has many years of teaching experience in undergraduate and postgraduate courses and vocational training programs, in the areas of information systems, e-commerce/e-business, supply chain management, information and communication technologies. Also, he has worked for many years as an independent business and ICT consultant to many small and medium enterprises and to academic institutions. For a period of three years, he was the CEO of the Central Market of Thessaloniki, a public authority/organisation responsible for the operation of the fruit, vegetable and meat wholesale market. He has published and presented papers in several national and international conferences and academic journals and he is a speaker in public events, conferences, forums, etc. about topics in his areas of interest.

Alexander Tsipoulanidis studied mechanical engineering with a focus on material flow and factory planning as well as industrial engineering with a specialisation on logistics/SCM strategy. He conducted his doctorate on the adaptation of classical lean principles in the non-production domains. He has approximately 20 years of international experience in new factory planning, factory restructuring, improvement of existing operations, technology implementation and supply chain and operations consulting. In the role of the Director Supply Chain Management, Manufacturing & Logistics, Group Operations, he was globally leading teams to conduct lean operations assessments within an international production network of 42 sites. Since 2012, he is a Professor of Supply Chain and Operations Management at the Berlin School of Economics and Law. His research and publications are centred around the combination of lean principles and advanced technology management to achieve supply chain and operational excellence at times of the digital transformation.

In the last two years and due to COVID-19 pandemic, commercial transactions as well as attitudes, behaviours and purchasing habits of millions of consumers around the globe have radically changed. At the same time, the need for physical and social distancing, the increasing worldwide smartphone and broadband adoption, together with the rapid growth of e-commerce and the dominance of social media, fuelled the formulation of a digital landscape with new marketing opportunities and challenges.

This special issue on 'Innovative technologies in the era of digital marketing and e-commerce' focuses on in-depth explorations of the main recent developments and contemporary approaches in theories, methodologies and applications of innovative technologies in the area of digital marketing and e-commerce.

The issue received substantially extended versions of papers that were selected from the International Conference on Contemporary Marketing Issues (ICMI) 2020, as well as research studies from scholars through an open call for papers. Out of a considerable number of initially submitted papers originating from researchers from many countries, seven were selected through a two-round blind review process.

All the papers included in this issue make significant contribution to the advancement of technology marketing practice and theory, through theoretical analysis and empirical research in various fields with emphasis on innovative marketing technologies and practices.

More specifically as follows.

In the first paper, 'The influence of consumer trust in consumer behaviour toward mobile payment applications amongst young professionals', the authors examine the impact of trust in the relationship between attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control toward intention to use mobile payment among young professionals. Their study is based on a theoretical framework designed according to the TAM and TPB model and an empirical research was carried out in a sample size of 211 young professionals. The analysis of the data collected shows that trust strengthens the relationship between attitude and intention to use mobile payment and perceived usefulness affects users' attitude toward mobile payment. Furthermore, users' attitude and perceived behavioural control has a positive and significant impact on users' intention to use mobile payment. The paper provides practical implications for professionals, in order to recognise and incorporate the important factors revealed from this study into their marketing strategy and business model.

The second paper, entitled 'Online shopping during the Covid-19 crisis: the impact of anthropomorphic virtual agents on consumers' psychological states' studies the use of artificial intelligence in e-commerce in order to create a richer online shopping experience. More specifically, the authors examine the anthropomorphic characteristics (human gestures, voice and conversational abilities) of virtual agents embodied into online shopping sites and measure their impact on users' psychological states and electronic word-of-mouth. To identify the variables that define the anthropomorphism of a virtual agent and the characteristics that could potentially make virtual agents more 'humanised', a qualitative study was first conducted and a research model was proposed. This model was tested through an experimental quantitative study – survey with 660 internet users, which were asked to visit an experimental online shopping site and interact with a virtual agent with anthropomorphic characteristics. The findings of the research confirm the power of the anthropomorphic characteristics investigated and their ability to influence consumers' psychological states and electronic word-of-mouth.

The third paper, entitled ‘Factors influencing purchase intention of smartphone: a case of Gen Z Malaysian consumers’, examines the factors influencing smartphone purchase intention among Gen Z consumers in Malaysia. According to the literature review, Gen Z consumers have several key differences comparing to previous generations and represent a consumer segment that has not been thoroughly researched yet. The theoretical framework proposed in this paper consists of four factors (brand, product features, price and convenience) that influence smartphone purchase intention and was tested through a quantitative research in a sample of 164 Gen Z consumers and by using PLS-SEM technique. The findings revealed that convenience was the most influential factor to smartphone purchase intention, followed by product features and price. These results imply that smartphone manufacturers and retailers should alter their marketing strategy, by incorporating ideas and technologies that can simplify and/or enhance the overall usage and customer experience. The paper serves as groundwork for researchers who wish to conduct a study in related fields in order to gain deeper insights of Gen Z. Moreover, it provides insights to professionals on what Gen Z consumers think and what influences them the most when it comes to purchasing a technology product such as a smartphone.

In the fourth paper, with the title ‘Impact of Alibaba’s Double 11 refund collapse event on consumer’s willingness to participate’, the impact of an unexpected event on a consumer’s future purchase behaviour in the online platform during an online shopping festival is explored. The study examined whether the consumer’s expectation mediates the relationship between the event novelty, event criticality, event disruption, and the consumer’s willingness to participate, based on the event system theory and the expectation confirmation theory. The structural equation modelling is adopted in this study to examine the data of 551 respondents in China. The findings suggest that the consumer’s expectation mediates the relationship between the event novelty, event disruption and the consumer’s willingness to participate. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between the event novelty and the event description. Thus, this study’s value indicates that an unforeseen event description directly associates with a consumer’s post-purchase behaviour, affecting a consumer’s expectation of future purchase behaviour.

The fifth paper, entitled ‘Brand community and its impact on brand love and repurchase intention in the fashion industry context’ studies the impact of various variables on brand love and how brand love affects repurchase intention within the online and offline brand communities’ context in the Jordanian culture. Through the literature review and based on the love mark theory and attachment theory, a comprehensive theoretical model is extended and developed to include four independent variables (inner self, social self, emotional attachment and sense of community) and two dependent variables (brand love and repurchase intention). A quantitative research was conducted, through an online survey with a sample size of 389 respondents. The findings of the research show that 3 out of 4 variables have a significant positive impact on brand love, whereas, one variable has no impact on brand love. The contribution of the paper is that it advances knowledge regarding the influence of several variables on brand love, thus resulting in increasing the customers’ repurchase intention. Moreover, it provides practical recommendations to marketing specialists in order to create an environment that will strengthen the emotional bond between customers and the brand.

The sixth paper, entitled ‘The use and effectiveness of social media marketing on firm’s performance and value creation on stakeholders: evidence from Greek B2B exporting firms’ analyses the role of social media marketing in B2B commercial relations and investigates social media marketing effectiveness on firm’s performance and stakeholder’s value. A quantitative research was implemented in a sample of 50 Greek B2B exporting firms, under a holistic framework which is based on four dimensions (scope, culture, structure and governance). Findings show that Greek B2B exporters have started to take advantage of social media capabilities and incorporate them in their digital transformation and marketing strategy. Also, based on these findings, the study maps the position of the Greek exporting B2B firms on each dimension, in terms of brand awareness and corporate credibility. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on social media marketing and international business by adopting a firm-level perspective and provides useful insights for practitioners, since it allows understanding of how to develop an effective social media strategy to succeed in international markets.

Finally, the seventh paper, entitled ‘Customer engagement model and consumer behaviour within omnichannel retailing’ focuses on the factors affecting customer engagement in omnichannel environment. After analysing the terms ‘customer engagement’, ‘customer experience’ and ‘omnichannel’, the authors shape the profile of the omnichannel customer and investigate the factors that affect customer engagement in an omnichannel environment through a quantitative research in a sample of 488 consumers. According to the findings, customer engagement is strongly and positively related to channel integration quality. Additionally, the study showed that several factors (store appearance, aesthetic design, customisation, minimisation of privacy risk as perceived by customers) can result on higher levels of customer engagement and their significance should be considered when a firm aims at increasing customer engagement. Furthermore, customer engagement is strongly and positively related to repurchase intention, positive word-of-mouth, loyalty and brand trust.

We believe that this special issue made a contribution to the dissemination of knowledge and scientific research in the area of technology marketing, adhering to the high standards of the *International Journal of Technology Marketing*. Moreover, we hope that the outcomes of the papers presented in this special issue will stimulate a creative discussion among academics and professionals and will provide the basis for further research.

We would like to thank all the authors for their significant contributions and all the reviewers who provided useful comments and suggestions for the improvement of the manuscripts. Finally, we are highly thankful to the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Peter Bican and to the Journal Manager, Alexandra Starkie for providing us the opportunity to handle this special issue and for their assistance and continuous support throughout the whole procedure.