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Editorial

Marketing, Sustainability, and Internationalisation: Strategies and Organisational Performance for Global Competitiveness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

International marketing is a multifaceted and dynamic discipline that requires a deep understanding of the variables influencing the performance of companies in global markets. This call for papers invites the submission of articles addressing these and other relevant topics to advance knowledge and practices in the field of international marketing.

Digital Strategies and Global Competitiveness

Digitalization is revolutionizing international marketing, enabling companies to expand their reach and enhance their global competitiveness. It is essential to explore the importance of investments in digital strategies, particularly for private-label manufacturers striving to maintain their competitiveness in the international market. Digitalization should not be viewed merely as an operational tool, but as a crucial strategy for strengthening companies' global presence (Silva et al., 2024). Complementing this perspective, digital orientation significantly impacts company performance, with relational capacity playing a critical mediating role. Building and maintaining robust relationships in a digital environment are key differentiators that can enhance the effectiveness of international marketing strategies (Silva et al., 2023b).

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Trade Fairs and Channel Integration

In addition to digital strategies, trade fairs remain a vital platform for promotion and networking in the international market (Geldres-Weiss et al., 2021). The integration of digital and physical channels in trade fairs can significantly enhance the effectiveness of global marketing activities, providing a diverse platform for interaction with clients and partners (Ncube et al., 2024; Silva et al., 2023a). The proactivity of the sales force at international trade fairs is also a critical factor for success, where competition is intense and networking opportunities are plentiful (Silva et al., 2021). The ability to create and manage effective networks is essential for maximising the benefits of these interactions.

Innovation and Competitive Advantage

Innovation plays a central role in strengthening the competitiveness of companies in global markets. Studies suggest that innovation, combined with a strong network of contacts and partners, can provide a significant competitive advantage in international contexts (Silva et al., 2022). Exploring new approaches and innovative technologies is crucial for maintaining relevance and leadership in increasingly competitive and globalised markets.

Competitive Intelligence and Information Management

Effective management of competitive intelligence is another highly relevant topic for international marketing. The effects of competitive intelligence and information management systems on the marketing strategy of exhibitors, highlighting that the ability to collect, analyse, and utilise strategic information effectively is crucial for success in competitive international markets (Silva et al., 2020; Silva, 2021). The ability to handle and interpret relevant data can provide valuable insights that guide strategic and operational decisions in global contexts.

In the editorial that follows, we outline the thematic structure of the selected papers and highlight their relevance for advancing contemporary debates in international marketing.

2. CONTENT OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

This special edition contains six articles which provide essential insights for developing marketing and internationalization knowledge while advancing sustainability and organizational performance studies through different methods across multiple geographical locations.

The six articles that make up this special edition offer a significant contribution to the deepening of knowledge in the areas of marketing, internationalization, sustainability, and organizational performance, based on diverse methodological approaches and distinct geographical contexts.

The issue opens with a study that examines how corporate sustainability initiatives shape consumers' perceptions of brands, with a particular focus on the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Using a theoretical model grounded in social psychology and green marketing, the authors demonstrate that elements such as trust, sustainable image, and symbolism positively influence purchase intentions, with brand evangelism being a central mediator. The findings offer valuable recommendations for managers and marketing strategists seeking to position their brands as socially and environmentally responsible.

The second article focuses on B2B relationships in an international context, proposing a validated model that highlights the importance of interdependence, trust, problem-solving, and investment as determinants of commitment, satisfaction and commercial results. Based on a sample of Portuguese companies, the research reinforces the idea that relationships based on trust and commitment generate mutual and lasting benefits, pointing to performance-oriented relational management practices.

The third contribution adopts a bibliometric and analytical approach to map the intersection between digitalization and internationalization. Using keyword co-occurrence techniques, the authors identify the main thematic axes of research in this emerging area, as well as consolidated, declining, and rising trends. The study provides a solid basis for future work by clarifying the predominant lines of research and suggesting opportunities for advancing knowledge in this strategic convergence.

The fourth article focuses on the challenges of globalization and its influence on relationship marketing and customer loyalty, with a focus on the automotive sector in Pakistan. The results show that cultural adaptation plays a key mediating role, enabling companies to strengthen emotional bonds with consumers and enhance loyalty. The study highlights the need to balance global strategies with sensitivity to the cultural specificities of target markets.

Continuing with the theme of internationalization, the fifth article analyzes the export performance of Ethiopian SMEs, exploring the effects of generic competitive strategies. The research reveals that cost leadership has a more significant impact on export success than differentiation, suggesting that resource constraints make the latter strategy less viable for many SMEs. The authors highlight

the importance of operational efficiency, without neglecting the gradual development of differentiating capabilities to operate in market niches.

Closing the special issue, the sixth article focuses on the capabilities that drive the export performance of Portuguese companies. By constructing and validating a scale that integrates dynamic, technological, marketing, and entrepreneurial orientation capabilities, the study demonstrates that these dimensions positively influence the financial, strategic, and perceived performance of companies in international markets. By operationalizing these capabilities as second-order constructs, the authors offer a useful tool for managers and decision-makers seeking to diagnose and strengthen the critical capabilities for internationalization.

Together, the articles gathered here offer a multifaceted and current perspective on the factors that influence the competitiveness and sustainability of companies in an increasingly global, digital, and demanding world.

3. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The six articles in this Special Issue offer a broad, multidimensional understanding of the transformations reshaping international marketing. These papers not only reflect current academic inquiry but also provide practical insights for professionals and institutions navigating an increasingly complex marketing landscape. The editorial team thanks the authors for their scientific rigor, the journal's reviewers and editorial board for ensuring academic excellence.

We hope this Special Issue will serve as both a resource and an inspiration for scholars and practitioners alike, fostering innovative thinking and responsible action in marketing and communication for years to come.

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