

From Theory to Practice: Advances and Challenges in Marketing and Communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Academic discussions have increasingly focused on the dynamic relationship between theoretical marketing concepts and practical marketing applications. Kannan and Li (2017) analyze how digitalization transforms marketing approaches through the combination of conventional and digital resources to boost customer participation. The authors demonstrate how analytical insights guide both theoretical development and practical marketing strategy execution. Ferrell et al. (2021) present findings from a large survey that show how marketing thinking has progressed through five decades by moving from transactional to relational paradigms. The authors develop an integrative framework that combines digitalization and globalization trends to show how adaptive strategies must link theoretical concepts with practical implementation. Kumar et al. (2021) examine personalized marketing communications in the digital era through their study of artificial intelligence and big data analytics for creating customized customer experiences. The research shows that technology implementation enables better marketing strategies, which lead to stronger consumer relationships. Szymkowiak et al. (2020) used social media data to show its impact on music sales and artist popularity, thus demonstrating the necessity of integrating digital practices into modern marketing strategies.

Given this theoretical and practical framework, we invite readers to explore all the articles in this special edition, which present the results of studies conducted by researchers from institutions in Portugal, China, Australia, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Spain, Romania, and Brazil.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUE

In this twenty-fourth edition of IJMCNM, readers will have access to eleven research papers that address various relevant topics in communication and marketing:

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1. Exploring Tribal Fan Behavior and Digital Marketing in Sports Crises, an article written by *Ana Lima* and *Lia Soares*, researchers from Portugal. The research examines how digital marketing strategies help maintain tribal fan consumption patterns during sports organization crises. The research based on football data shows that digital platforms enable fans to preserve their emotional bonds and collective identity during unstable times, yet crises reduce the anticipated advantages of digital marketing strategies.

2. The relationship between loneliness and short-form video addiction: A moderated mediation model, an article written by *Cui-xia Zhao*, *Rui-mei Liu*, *Fang-ying Song*, and *Xiao-xuan Chen*, researchers from China and Australia. This work examines the link between loneliness and addiction to short videos (such as those on social media platforms TikTok or Reels), examining the fear of missing out (*FoMO*) as a mediator of this relationship and interpersonal contact efficacy as a moderator. Using a sample of university students, the authors conclude that loneliness is positively associated with addiction to short videos and that FoMO significantly mediates this relationship. Additionally, interpersonal contact efficacy acts as a moderator: higher levels of this efficacy mitigate the effect of loneliness on FoMO, while lower levels reinforce the effect of FoMO on video addiction. These findings contribute to understanding the psychological mechanisms behind the excessive use of short video platforms.

3. The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Customer-Brand Relationship: A Post-COVID-19 Analysis, an article written by *Shanza Noreen*, *Qazi Ahmed*, and *Muhammad Arsalan Nazir*, researchers from Pakistan and the United Kingdom. This study investigates the effects of social media marketing activities on customer-brand relationships after the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors examine content freshness together with active brand presence and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) while studying the electronic brand experience as a mediating factor. The authors use survey data to show that post trends combined with active brand online presence and eWOM create positive effects on customer-brand relationships, which become stronger when customers have positive digital brand experiences. The research indicates that brands need to invest in new digital marketing strategies to build customer relationships because they must adapt to post-pandemic consumer behavior changes.

4. Exploring Live Stream Shopping (LSS) on Instagram within the Scope of Flow Theory: A Netnographic Study, an article written by *Burak Ili*, a researcher from Turkey. This netnographic research explores the shopping experience via *live streaming* on Instagram, analyzing it through the lens of *flow theory*. The author studies Turkish users' interactions with live shopping sessions and identifies hedonic factors, such as discounts, campaigns, and *fear of missing out*, encourage impulsive purchases during live broadcasts. The results show that users experience a state of *flow* characterized by high engagement and enjoyment during these live commerce sessions, which can lead to greater engagement and a positive response to real-time marketing strategies on social media.

5. Analysis of publications on Twitter about Shakira - BZRP Music Sessions #53, an article written by *Daniel C. Muntean*, *Juan A. García*, and *Natalia Simón*, researchers from Spain. This study analyzes Twitter posts about the song “Shakira - BZRP Music” Sessions #53 during the

week following its release (January 2023). Using content analysis and social media analytics (including the collection of approximately 295,000 *tweets* via Brandwatch and stratified sampling), the authors identify the main interests, sentiments, and types of messages shared by users. The results highlight three thematic communities in the online debate: a community around Gerard Piqué (focused on associated businesses, such as the Kings League, and mentioned brands like Casio), a community around Shakira (with a musical focus and mentions of Latin American figures and the Renault brand), and a community around Bizarrap (focused on the music itself, with the participation of record labels, digital platforms, and *influencers*). The study offers an in-depth understanding of how a viral music event mobilizes different groups and narratives on social media.

6. The Impact of Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty: A Systematic Literature Review, an article written by *Albérico Rosário* and *Joaquim Casaca*, researchers from Portugal. This article presents a systematic literature review, based on 96 articles published between 2012 and 2022, on the impact of relationship marketing on customer loyalty. The authors identify key factors that characterize the influence of relationship marketing on loyalty, such as corporate image and reputation, customer recommendation behavior, service quality, customer satisfaction, and trust. The review highlights that effective relationship marketing initiatives, including personalized communication, loyalty programs, and online customer communities, tend to strengthen long-term loyalty. Some limitations in the existing literature are highlighted (e.g., the concentration of research on specific databases and business areas), and future directions are suggested, such as the incorporation of advanced personalization strategies and the use of artificial intelligence to deepen the customer-brand connection.

7. Insights into the Efficiency of the Elaboration Likelihood Model in Shaping the Attitudes toward Face Mask-Wearing: Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic, an article written by *Iuliana-Raluca Gheorghe*, *Ovidiu Popa*, *Velea*, and *Consuela-Mădălina Gheorghe*, researchers from Romania. The researchers used the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) to evaluate social health marketing campaign effectiveness in changing mask use attitudes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors developed a model that includes both the central pathway (quality of arguments) and the peripheral pathway (attractiveness of images, social presence, and usefulness of information) in mask use communication. The model explained 36.5% of the variance in attitudes toward mask use through structural equation modeling with a satisfactory fit. The study revealed no significant statistical difference between self-benefit and other-benefit focused messages regarding their ability to create pro-mask attitudes. The research offers valuable insights to health policymakers and social marketers by demonstrating that future campaigns should focus on delivering high-quality information regardless of their egoistic or altruistic content to encourage positive health behaviors in future crises.

8. Blind Faith: A Study on the Interrelations among Credibility, Trust, and Non-Exposure to the Media, an article written by *Isabel Neira*, *Marta Portela*, *Martín Vaz Álvarez*, and *José Miguel Tüñez López*, researchers from Spain. The authors analyzed 27,424 individual observations from Eurobarometer 90.3 data across 28 European countries to determine media trust determinants

for written press, radio, television, internet, and social media. The research demonstrates that public trust in media directly correlates with how people view journalistic credibility. Traditional media channels such as press, radio, and TV receive increased trust from their audiences through regular exposure without any negative impact on audience trust in other media channels. People who get their news mainly from social media platforms and digital sources tend to trust traditional media less. The research provides crucial insights about how people perceive news reliability based on their information consumption patterns, while demonstrating that traditional media gain trust through content quality but digital media build trust based on user behavior, leading to increased public doubt.

9. Trade Fair and Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review, an article written by *Elisabete Barbosa Parodi* and *João F. Proença*, researchers from Portugal. The research analyzed 31 peer-reviewed studies through inductive thematic analysis, which revealed two primary research axes: (1) Trade fairs act as innovation catalysts by driving company innovation through knowledge sharing and market performance enhancement, and (2) Fair organizers innovate their service formats and technological integration, and participant engagement strategies to create value. The study reveals that fairs maintain practical value for different industries, yet academic research about their connection to innovation remains limited, which creates opportunities for future development. The authors propose multiple research opportunities for the future, which include studying fairs as short-term innovation systems and integrating digital tools such as data analysis and artificial intelligence, and virtual reality into fairs, and developing institutional support models to boost innovation diffusion through fairs.

10. Service and Delivery Time: The Dynamics of Purchasing Luxury Products Online, Using Iramuteq Software, an article written by *Diogo Ricardo Pinto Bastos*, *Álvaro Miguel da Costa Cairrão*, and *Téucle Mannarelli Filho*, researchers from Portugal and Brazil. This study examines the purchase process of luxury products between physical stores and online platforms through an analysis of customer service and delivery time variables. The authors employed exploratory qualitative research to conduct semi-structured interviews with 20 Portuguese consumers while analyzing textual data through Iramuteq software. The research shows that luxury e-commerce growth has not led consumers to abandon physical stores because they value the better service and instant product delivery that traditional stores offer. The survey participants did not encounter significant delivery problems when buying luxury items online, but they preferred the service quality of traditional stores. The research demonstrates that luxury online sales remain in their initial adoption phase while physical retail continues to operate alongside them. The research identifies two new research directions, which include artificial intelligence applications for enhancing online service quality and comprehensive investigations of luxury consumers' digital environment expectations.

11. The Growth Mindset and Talent Attraction: A Case Study of LMA, an article written by *Ricardo Mena*, *Lara Alves*, *Luís Swab*, and *Mafalda Ferreira*, researchers from Portugal. This case study article examines how adopting a growth mindset (*mindset*) can improve talent attraction at a technology company (LMA Tech) in Portugal's competitive IT market. Through in-depth

interviews with internal leaders and external professionals, the authors explore the relationship between growth mindset principles and the *Employer Value Proposition* (EVP) of the company. The results indicate that practices associated with a growth mindset, such as promoting continuous learning, adaptability, and constructive feedback, reinforce the EVP and positively influence potential candidates' perception of the employer brand. However, the study highlights a significant challenge: the difficulty of assessing intangible characteristics, such as growth mindset, during the recruitment process. This work contributes to filling a gap in the literature by reconceptualizing the growth mindset in the context of *employer branding*. *Branding*, advocating that organizations adopt practices that foster a culture of learning, resilience, and sustainable engagement, to better attract and retain talent.

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