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Editorial

Marketing, Communication and Consumer Behavior in an Era of Digital Transformation: New Perspectives on Technology, Culture and Strategic Engagement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recent progress in marketing, communication, and new media shows just how much technology, society, and competition have changed. Today, organizations succeed by understanding their customers, using digital tools, building strong engagement, and creating value through interactive relationships across many channels. Digitalization has transformed marketing strategies and the ways organizations and consumers connect, making data, technology, and interactive communication essential for creating value (Kannan & Li, 2017; Kumar et al., 2021).

New technology has broadened what marketing research can explore. Tools like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, influencer networks, social media, eWOM, and interactive digital ads are changing how people experience brands and make decisions. Recent studies in IJMCNM have looked at how eWOM affects Instagram users' travel plans and how video ads can create positive emotions and stories in tourism (Kamil & Aslan, 2024; Santos et al., 2024). These changes also raise important questions about trust, authenticity, transparency, privacy, and the ethical use of digital communication. At the same time, globalization means organizations must operate in more diverse markets, where cultural and institutional differences shape communication, consumer expectations, negotiations, and brand images. Because of this, today's marketing research brings together technology, behavior, relationships, and culture.

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This change matches the wider move in marketing from mainly transactional methods to approaches that focus more on relationships and technology (Ferrell et al., 2021).

This issue features fourteen peer-reviewed articles by researchers from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The articles discuss topics like consumer insights, technology adoption, digital advertising, virtual reality, influencer marketing, intercultural communication, educational tourism, social media marketing, service recovery, consumer psychology, logistics networks, international business, and advertising effectiveness. The authors use many different methods, such as structural equation modeling, systematic literature reviews, qualitative case studies, mixed methods, configurational analysis, semiotic analysis, and survey-based research.

The articles in this issue highlight how marketing strategy, communication, digital technology, consumer behavior, and competitiveness are becoming more connected. They provide both theoretical and practical insights to help organizations adjust to changing markets, build stronger customer relationships, communicate better, and create value.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUE

In this twenty-sixth regular issue of the IJMCNM, the reader has online access to fourteen research works addressing key topics in marketing, communication, and consumer behavior in an era of digital transformation:

1. **Nexus Between Consumer Insight and Competitive Advantage: Examining the Mediating Role of Technology Adoption in SMEs in Ethiopia**, by Tafese Niguse, Brehanu Borji, Zerihun Kinde and Shashi Kant (Ethiopia), examines the relationship between consumer insight, competitiveness and technology adoption in SMEs in Ethiopia;
2. **Evaluating the Effectiveness of SaaS Companies' Social Media Marketing Activities on Customers' Re-purchase Intention**, by Onder Kethuda and Ramazan Kaya (United Kingdom and Turkey), explores the impact of social media marketing (SMM) activities by software-as-a-service (SaaS) companies on customer behavior in industrial markets, focusing on repurchase intention and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM);

3. **The Impact of Cultural Differences on International Business: A Case Study in the Luxury Furniture Sector in the Iberian Market**, by Sara Gomes Carneiro and Isabel Cristina Martins Antunes (Portugal), contributes to the understanding of the impact of cultural differences in the Iberian market on business practices in the luxury furniture sector;
4. **Bridging Local Narratives and National Agendas: Communication Strategies for Educational Tourism in The New Capital City of Indonesia**, by Rina Juwita, Rahmawati Ana Ulfa, Zainal Arifin, Miftahur Rokhmah, and Muhammad Fauzan Noor (Indonesia), explores the role of strategic communication in local cultural narratives for nation-building through educational tourism in Nusantara, the newly established capital of Indonesia;
5. **From Offline to Online: An Empirical Analysis of Video Advertising Spending Behavior** by Oliver Budzinski, Nadine Lindstädt-Dreusicke, Victoriia Noskova, and Elke Theobald (Germany), explores the relatively underexamined area of drivers behind advertising managers' decisions on distributing video ads;
6. **Virtual Reality Advertising Effect on Consumer Experience and Brand Recall: The Mediating Role of Immersion**, by Shashi Kant, Vikki Sharma, and Rajesh Gupta (India), looks at how VR advertising affects how customers perceive a brand and how well they remember it, with an emphasis on how immersion plays a role;
7. **Influencer-Driven Interactivity: Shaping Followers' Lifestyles and Purchase Preferences with Perceived Usefulness as a Moderator**, by Saba Ishtiaq, Mirza Ashfaq Ahmed, and Muhammad Anwar Ul Haq (Pakistan), investigates the relationship between influencer interactivity and followers' lifestyles, and how these factors collectively influence purchase preferences;
8. **Communication through Cork Stoppers – The Portuguese Case**, by Hélder Brito Carrasqueira (Portugal), examines the messages printed on the cylinder of the cork. Every year, millions of bottles of wine are sold sealed with a cork;

9. **The Moderating Role of Self-Concept Clarity in the Relationship between Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence and Conspicuous Consumption**, by Özgür Kılınç, Serdar Yıldız, and Ali Arıcı (Turkey), analyses the relationship between susceptibility to interpersonal influence (SII) and conspicuous consumption (CC), and the moderating effect of self-concept clarity (SCC) in this relationship;
10. **Brand Activism and Consumer Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Value Alignment in the UAE Consumer Market Context**, by Hussein Khalifa, Iyad A.A. Khanfar, and Waseem Hussain (Egypt and Jordan), examines how brand activism (BA) affects consumer loyalty (CL) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), including the mediating effect of value alignment (VA);
11. **Stay away from Social Media While Driving: Social Media Addiction as a Traffic Safety Threat**, by Özkan Avcı and Çetin Murat Hazar (Turkey), determines which signs are used and what kind of messages are given in the advertisements prepared for not using social media while driving;
12. **Does Advertising on Social Networks Affect Impulsive Buying Behavior?**, by Inês Veiga Pereira, Joana Araújo, and Miguel Sousa (Portugal), examines the factors influencing consumer attitudes towards advertising on social networks, with an emphasis on hedonic navigation, perceived value, novelty, and the credibility of advertisements;
13. **From Service Failure Typologies to Configurational Recovery and Outcomes in Logistics Delivery Networks**, by Cansu Yildirim, Safiye Körükmez, and Nazlican Yilmaz (Turkey), deviates from existing views by proposing a configurational understanding of service failure and recovery in logistics delivery networks;
14. **Advertising and Consumers' Buying Behavior: A Literature Review**, by Nehawi Mohammed Jemal and Shimelis Zewdie Werke (Ethiopia), seeks to review the existing literature on the effects of advertising on consumer buying behavior.

All articles were evaluated through a rigorous double-blind peer-review process and reflect the scientific scope and quality standards of the IJMCNM.

3. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank all authors for submitting their manuscripts and all reviewers for their valuable and constructive contributions. The scientific relevance of the works published in this and previous issues of the *IJMCNM* continues to encourage high-quality submissions for future regular and special issues.

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