

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

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This special issue on “Marketing Research As Scientific Inquiry” aims at generating insights for building knowledge in the discipline of marketing through the application of rigorous conceptualizations and research methodology. The articles form a balanced exemplar of various research designs in marketing and incorporate sound conceptual developments, model development and data analysis techniques. They help in broadening the research issues in the field and also introduce interesting questions for future researchers. In addition the articles provide many implications for marketing practitioners and offer guidance in designing competitive strategies for the increasingly global markets.

The article by Akçura examines the role of brand saliences in consumer shopping behavior for groceries while comparing and contrasting salience versus price competition. The author suggests an empirical model that can filter the brand salience using sales and promotion observation at the time of purchase. According to the model, brand salience and price identify the sales. Brand salience is modeled as a dynamic function of advertising and promotion policies that increase brand awareness and purchase intention. The author finds that retailers may benefit from the high awareness of national brands to increase their store traffic and even cross-sell their private labels to customers. Consequently, the author argues that national brands should track the impacts of their brands’ saliences and account for the different impacts of price versus salience competition at the retail level. The model can be used in designing promotion strategies and engaging strategic alliances with retailers.

Çavuşgil, Kandemir, and Kim discuss the importance and the evolution of family conglomerates in emerging markets. The study has implications for policy makers, international companies as well as the managers of family conglomerates. Using an exploratory study of 19 family conglomerates in 8 emerging markets (Korea, Thailand, Phillipines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Turkey, Mexico, and India), the authors conclude that family conglomerates go through a life cycle where different drivers are emphasized during the evolution. Environmental factors such as government protection, work ethic, competition intensity as well as conglomerate specific strategies are important determinants for survival. Internationalization gains an important focus for family conglomerates in the growth and maturity stages. With the help of the internationalization process, family conglomerates can achieve professional structures that enable them to compete globally and face other world-class competitors.

The article by Gürhan-Canlı analyzes the role of brand extensions on family brand judgments. Using an experiment, the author argues that family brands with a high expected quality variation may not be that vulnerable when they have negative brand extensions. This is because customers do not update

their perceptions about the brand and the effect of information is limited under high variability. The finding has interesting implications for firms. For example, brands with a higher quality variation, such as private labels or newly flourishing domestic brands, when competing against well-established (multinational) brands, may be more courageous about trying and experimenting with new products. The author suggests that this may decrease their marketing costs and increase their competitiveness.

Finally, Koçaş analyzes the diffusion of price comparison in information intensive markets such as the Internet. The author employs a game theoretical framework to analyze a duopolistic competition where loyal segment sizes may be equal (symmetric duopoly) or different (asymmetric duopoly). After estimating a diffusion curve to identify the price-comparing market size using an online dataset, the author calculates the equilibria where firms quote prices from an optimal price distribution function and analyzes how price comparison shopping influences the price dispersions. The study concludes that the decline in prices may not be as fast as expected and other factors such as loyalty and brand name recognition may alleviate the pressure on prices. In addition, firms can obtain higher profits when they employ superior price discrimination while increasing price dispersions. Managers operating in markets where price comparison plays an increasing role while consumers are subject to many innovative price comparison techniques can use the model for scenario simulation and forecasting.

This issue marks the completion of 17 years of the publication of the *Boğaziçi Journal: Review of Social, Economic and Administrative Studies*. We hope readers find this special issue on the topic of “Marketing Research As a Scientific Inquiry” valuable and thought-provoking.

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