

Innovative research methodologies in marketing research

Introduction

Research methodologies are one of the foundational pillars of academic activities. Especially in the social science area, pursuing different methodologies and developing innovative research methods are necessary to explore theories and advance our theoretical knowledge from different perspectives. To ensure validity and reliability, it is paramount for researchers to triangulate a conclusion or an interpretation with different research methodologies. Many prior studies present a mismatch theory (Woodside, 2016), suggesting that a research method cannot and should not be used to address all research problems. Researchers and academics are therefore urged to understand both theory and different research methods.

The articles in this special issue present different research methods. This includes genetic algorithm, fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), consumer behavior experiment, psychophysiological methods, and neuromarketing techniques to appropriately address a wide range of research questions. These articles aim to provide the readers with an in-depth understanding of the recent advancement and potential applications of these research methodologies in the field of marketing research.

Contributions to this special issue

Nine articles are tabled for this *APJML* special issue. The papers in this special issue present the alignment and usage of different research methods to address, explore, or validate theories in marketing.

Zhe Zhang and Yue Dai examined genetic algorithm to classify customers in the context of customer relationship management. The results demonstrate that in comparison to a single decision tree, the proposed combination method improves the predictive accuracy and optimizes the classification rules, while maintaining interpretability of the classification results in the context of customer relationship management.

Symmetric variable hypothesis testings, such as multiple regression analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM), are one of the most predominant methods used in business research (Woodside, 2015). In the research of Honglei Liu, Shangjin Kim, Huanzhang Wang, and Kyung Hoon Kim, they applied the use of SEM to examine 210 firms in China to explore the effects of market uncertainty, entrepreneurship, different corporate sustainability dimensions on the overall performance of Chinese firms.

Like other research methods, symmetric testing has its shortcomings, and asymmetric approach can overcome these limitations (Woodside, 2015, 2017). Yang Sun, Helen Huifen Cai, Rui Su, and Qianhui Shen used fsQCA to examine why consumers purchase low-quality products in short life cycle products (fast fashion and smart phone industries). In this research, it explains how the different configurations lead the consumers to purchase low-quality products and provides a different perspective from a methodology angle.

Consumer behavior is an important field in marketing research. Hyo Jin Eom and Zhenqiu Lu used invariance testing to examine the measurement of consumers' perceived value across groups of consumers in four different shopping contexts. The paper illustrates the importance of equivalence and invariance of a measurement, and provided insights into the use of invariance testing in consumer studies. Furthermore, experimental design has been a predominant and critical research method featured in most of leading consumer research journals (Bruwer and McCutcheon, 2017). Advertising and consumer



engagement-related topics have recently attracted great attention in the literature (Wang and Genç, 2019). Zhiying Jiang, Chong Guan, and Ivo de Haaij used online experiment with eight versions of mock video to demonstrate that marketing practitioners should monitor and operationalize the content and appeal congruity.

Past research has also highlighted the limitations of self-reported measures such as surveys and interviews in measuring fleeting and unconscious consumer responses such as emotions. Addressing this, Billy Sung, Nicholas Wilson, Jin-Ho Yun, and Eun-Ju Lee present a review on neuromarketing and psychophysiological techniques to examine the conceptual and methodological contributions of neuromarketing and explain the various tools used in and design of neuromarketing research. Furthermore, Gabriel Levrini and Walter Nique used facial electromyography and skin conductance responses to demonstrate that music evokes a positive priming effect for consumers' emotional responses. Moreover, Cheon Cha, Minah Suh, and Eun-Ju Lee demonstrated the use of fNIRS to examine neural responses toward YouTube music and predict objective performance measures for music such as online popularity and number of daily hits. Finally, Letizia Alvino, Rob van der Lubbe, and Efthymios Constantinides applied the use of electroencephalogram to infer consumer preference toward wine from brainwave data.

A note of appreciation

The special issue editors appreciate Ian Phau, Editor-in-Chief of *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* for develop this special issue. Also, gratitude the effort works of all the reviewers. Finally, thanks to the authors for contributing their high-quality research to this special issue.

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About the Guest Editors

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Guest editorial

Dr Isaac Cheah is a Senior Lecture in the School of Marketing at Curtin University, Australia. His areas of research include: country image (brand origin, country of ownership, ethnocentrism, and regiocentrism), advertising appeals (nostalgic appeals), and branding issues (brand extensions, brand personality, brand image, and sustainable consumption).

Dr Billy Sung is a Senior Lecture in the School of Marketing at Curtin University, Australia. His research to date is based on the study of emotion and the application of psychophysiological methodology in multiple disciplines including psychology, marketing, health, nursing, and robotics. He also leads the Consumer Research Lab at Curtin University that specialise in the use of neuromarketing and biometric measures to conduct market and consumer research.

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