

This issue includes a wide range of international retail and distribution management topics from the UK, India, Israel, Nepal, the USA and Thailand. They include conceptualising and operationalising the metrosexual lifestyle, implementation of supply chain management practices (SCMPs) in the retail industry, the impact of disabled service providers on customers' evaluations of service quality and behavioural intentions, trade-offs young consumers make when purchasing organic garments, concomitant perceived advantages and disadvantages of shopping online and in store, and retail coexistence for small family grocers.

With retailers selling products to and even opening stores for metrosexuals, they are now well recognised in many western countries. However, market sizing, measurement understanding their psychology remains understudied. In the first submission by Mitchell and Lodhia, the paper conceptualises and operationalises the metrosexual lifestyle and examines a number of its psychological correlates. Using a survey with two samples from the UK, a scale is developed to measure metrosexuality and validated using structural equation modelling. The findings identified that metrosexuality was found to have three dimensions: trendiness, concern with appearance and use of grooming practices, while its antecedents of gender-identity confusion and narcissism are mediated by masculinity and vanity. Metrosexuality is associated with lower levels of masculinity, but not with increased femininity and is slightly associated with homosexual orientation. On a practical level, a scale to measure their metrosexuality can be used to help retailers to measure and track the size for forecasting and targeting purposes as well as allowing retailers to better design environments and products for this market.

The second paper by Gandhi, Shaikh and Sheorey investigates the adoption and implementation of SCMPs on supply chain performance (SCP) and firm performance (FP) in the organised retail industry in a developing country like India. An empirical study was conducted on a sample size of 125 responses collected from the supply chain heads of organised retail firms in India. A theoretical model was developed depicting the relationship between SCMPs, SCP and FP. The theoretical model was tested using mediating multiple regression analysis. This research suggests that the SCMPs are positively related to the SCP and FP. Customer relationship management and supplier relationship management are reported as the most important SCMPs, which had the maximum impact on the FP in the organised retailing context in India. The research employed perceptual performance measures. Future studies can use actual performance parameters like profit and sales growth to better quantify the benefits of SCM in this context.

The third contribution by Rosenbaum, Baniya and Seger-Guttmann investigates the impact of disabled service providers on customers' evaluations of service quality and behavioural intentions. A qualitative analysis of online reviews from samples collected in a "dining-in-the-dark" restaurant in Israel, which employs blind waiters, and from a restaurant in Nepal that employs deaf servers was undertaken. Three quantitative analyses that use survey methodology were also used. Based on word clouds generated by online data, the findings show that customers treat the hiring of disabled service providers as the most prominent clue in their perceptions of organisational service quality. The quantitative results further illustrate that customers who hold more favourable attitudes towards disabled employees are more likely than other customers to spread positive word of mouth. Another analysis reveals that attitudes towards disabled employees



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are a separate construct from human compassion. Retail organisations may be able to obtain a competitive advantage by employing frontline disabled people through customer word-of-mouth communications. These communications are linked to positive organisational outcomes.

The fourth contribution by Rothenberg and Matthews aimed to identify the realistic trade-offs young consumers make when purchasing organic T-shirts. A full profile discrete choice design was used from over 180 US-based students. The data were analysed using a multinomial logit model and desirability indices. Price was the most important attribute to consumers followed by the place of production and then sustainability. Consumers were most willing to purchase T-shirts that are eco-friendly, made in America, made from wrinkle-free technology and cotton jersey knit fabric, and have a price of \$15. Although consumers were most willing to pay \$15, some were still willing to pay \$25 or even \$35 for the same eco-friendly T-shirt. Consumers in the current study were more willing to purchase eco-friendly as opposed to organic apparel. The findings suggest that retailers need to consider the language used when communicating with consumers. Also, consumers were more willing to purchase T-shirts made in America. Retailers may want to promote their domestic manufacturing through in-depth branding and promotions. In order to identify the attributes to be used in the current study, labels on T-shirts in stores were examined and then those attributes were verified in the literature. In addition, the inclusion of price as an attribute, rather than as a separate independent question, provides a more realistic view of young consumers' decision making.

Grounded on approach/avoidance behaviour theory the fifth contribution by Harris, Riley, Hand and Riley develops a typology of grocery shoppers based on the concomitant perceived advantages and disadvantages of shopping online and in store for a single cohort of consumers who buy groceries in both channels. A survey design was employed using a sample of more than 850 UK shoppers who had purchased groceries online and offline. The survey instrument contained items that measured the perceived advantages and disadvantages of grocery shopping online, and items relating to the perceived advantages and disadvantages of grocery shopping in traditional supermarkets. Cluster analysis was used to develop typologies of online and offline grocery shoppers. The inter-relation between the two typology sets was also examined. The results of the research provide several insights into the characteristics, perceptions and channel patronage preferences of grocery shoppers. In particular, profiling e-grocery shoppers on the basis of their concomitant perceptions of shopping online and in store suggests that the choice of whether to shop online or in store may be driven not by the perceived advantages of one channel vs the other, but by the desire to avoid the greater disadvantages of the alternative. These perceptions differ somewhat between different consumer groups. This study makes a noteworthy contribution by providing a profile of grocery shoppers based on their concomitant and often conflicting perceived advantages and disadvantages of shopping online and their perceived advantages and disadvantages of shopping in traditional supermarkets.

As a result of the growth of the modernisation of retailing, small family grocers have suffered because of the disadvantages of their limited operating resources in comparison to those of corporate chain retailers. The final contribution by Srichookiat and Jindabot uses the biological analogy of natural selection to illustrate how the idea of retail coexistence rather than mutually exclusive competition can work to the benefit of small family grocers. The inherent differences between chain retailers and small family grocers are examined and their inherent advantages identified. The appropriate strategies for small family grocers towards the particular market are then proposed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight small family grocers in Thailand. The findings identified that size and operational orientation are identified as the inherent differences that small family grocers

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can utilise to gain some inherent advantages over chain retailers in relation to the proposed segments. The establishment of a personal relationship with the customer is the key inherent advantage that is naturally facilitated by the individual orientation of the small family grocer. Within resource-advantage theory, inherent advantage is seen as a special case of a comparative advantage in resources. The different viewpoint inspired by the biological analogy that permits small family grocers to shift their mindset from retail competition to retail coexistence and to re-examine their own inherent advantages to serve the heterogeneous demand of consumers.

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**Professor Neil Towers**