Netnography as a tool for understanding customers: implications for service research and practice

Kristina Heinonen and Gustav Medberg

Department of Marketing, CERS – Centre for Relationship Marketing and Service Management, Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

Purpose – Understanding customers is critical for service researchers and practitioners. Today, customers are increasingly active online, and valuable information about their opinions, experiences and behaviors can be retrieved from a variety of online platforms. Online customer information creates new opportunities to design personalized and high-quality service. This paper aims to review how netnography as a method can help service researchers and practitioners to better use such data.

Design/methodology/approach – A systematic review and analysis were conducted on 321 netnography studies published in marketing journals between 1997 and 2017.

Findings – The systematic review reveals that netnography has been applied in a variety of ways across different marketing fields and topics. Based on the analysis of existing netnography literature, empirical, theoretical and methodological recommendations for future netnographic service research are presented.

Research limitations/implications – This paper shows how netnography can offer service researchers unprecedented opportunities to access naturalistic online data about customers and, hence, why it is an important method for future service research.

Practical implications – Netnographic research can help service firms with, for example, service innovation, advertising and environmental scanning. This paper provides guidelines for service managers who want to use netnography as a market research tool.

Originality/value – Netnography has seen limited use in service research despite many promising applications in this field. This paper is the first to encourage and support service researchers in their use of the method and aims to stimulate interesting future netnographic service research.

Keywords Qualitative research, Ethnography, Netnography, Service research, Method, Internet research

Paper type General review

Introduction

Understanding customers is a key aim of service marketing research and an important requirement for successful service business practice (Gummesson *et al.*, 2014). On a daily basis, customers interact with service providers, such as retailers, restaurants, retail banks, health-care providers, government services, non-profit organizations and telecommunications companies (Anderson *et al.*, 2013). However, due to rapid advancements, especially in information technology, the context in which service is delivered, experienced and evaluated is changing (Ostrom *et al.*, 2015). Today's service customers are increasingly active online before, during and after interactions with service providers, which creates large masses of information about their activities and experiences (Berthon *et al.*, 2015; Wuenderlich *et al.*, 2015). Much of this information is publicly available and presents new opportunities for more personalized, higher quality service (Rust and Huang, 2014).

Collecting and analyzing such extensive data, however, is one of the main challenges in today's service marketing research and practice (Aksoy, 2013; Baron and Russell-Bennett, 2016).

This paper explores how the method termed *netnography* can help service researchers analyze available online data. Netnography is acknowledged as a useful research tool for collecting and analyzing online customer information (Kozinets, 1999; Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Catterall and Maclaran, 2002). Originally developed as a response to customers' increasing internet use (Kozinets, 1997), netnography is based on an ethnographic research approach to studying and understanding consumption-related aspects of customers' lives online (Kozinets, 2006). In today's environment of digitalization, netnography is more relevant than ever before (Simmons, 2008; Tikkanen *et al.*, 2009; Rokka, 2010). Even though netnography has already been used

for some service-related research (Yang and Fang, 2004; Brown and Patterson, 2009; Medberg and Heinonen, 2014), the method has much more to offer service researchers. The development of new technology not only creates new digital forms of service but also affects customers' current service usage. Through netnographic inquiry, researchers can gain new perspectives on traditional service or explore new types of digital service (e.g. online streaming of entertainment, online storage space or online gaming).

As the number of internet users continued to increase around the world, and more parts of individuals' lives began occurring online, the popularity of netnography increased rapidly among both researchers and practitioners (Kozinets, 2015). Two recent reviews of netnography (Bartl *et al.*, 2016; Costello *et al.*, 2017) reflect and underscore the deep interest in the method. However, while these reviews provide a good general overview of the netnographic literature across disciplines, there has been no focused systematic analysis of how netnography has been used in marketing research and what opportunities exist for service researchers. Moreover, while Bartl *et al.* (2016) and Costello *et al.* (2017) focus on how netnography should be used, the aim of the present study was, rather, to illustrate the actual use of this method and possible avenues for its future use.

The purpose of this research, therefore, was to conduct a systematic literature review of the contextual (research field), conceptual (research topic) and procedural (methodological application) varieties of netnographic marketing research. As the aim was to identify and present what opportunities exist for service researchers, the point of departure for the review and analysis was a service marketing perspective. Service marketing literature can be divided into the classic service management theories, which focus on services from an exchange perspective (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988), and the more recent service perspective, which focuses on processes of value creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008). In this review across research fields, topics and methodological applications, the identified netnographic marketing studies were categorized into traditional services, a service perspective or none. The results of this extensive review and analysis have yielded empirical, theoretical and methodological recommendations for future netnographic service research.

The comprehensive analysis and recommendations herein are intended to inspire and support service researchers in their use of the method. Moreover, there is a need for further delineation of the practical relevance of netnography for service managers. As methodological guidelines had been scrutinized previously (Kozinets, 1998, 2002, 2010; Langer and Beckman, 2005), the current study was not aimed at developing or refining the netnography method. Instead, the objectives were to analyze the applications of netnography in marketing research and to encourage service researchers to use the method. To this end, three research questions were formulated to guide the review and analysis:

RQ1. In what marketing research fields has netnography been used?

RQ2. What marketing research topics have been researched with netnography?

RQ3. How have marketing researchers applied netnography?

An extensive review was conducted on 321 articles using netnography that were published over the past two decades (1997-2017). The review indicated that the use of netnography had increased substantially since the publication of the first articles in the late 1990s. This paper is written in the spirit of other articles in the marketing discipline that investigated methodological issues and recommendations, such as agent-based modeling (Rand and Rust, 2011), critical incident technique (Gremler, 2004), visual methods (Pain, 2012) and structural equation models (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

The two main contributions of this paper are:

1 its presentation of a contextual (research field), conceptual (research topic) and procedural (methodological application) overview of the body of netnography studies in marketing; and

2 its empirical, theoretical and methodological recommendations for service researchers seeking new ways of understanding customers.

The focus is on the notion of customers in a broad sense – that is, as marketplace actors including consumers and individuals. For simplicity, the term "customer" (as opposed to "consumer", for example) is used in this paper.

The remaining parts of the paper are structured as follows. First, the method of netnography is briefly presented. Then, the methodology of the systematic literature review undertaken in this paper is outlined. The next section describes the findings of the study. Finally, conclusions are drawn and discussed in the last section of the paper.

Netnography

Ethnographic enquiry has traditionally been used to gain a deep understanding of marketplace cultures and actors (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). Over the past two decades, however, the internet has created unprecedented opportunities for customer insights (Bickhart and Schindler, 2001; Catterall and Maclaran, 2002; Puri, 2007). When Kozinets (1997, 1998) developed netnography in the 1990s, customers' online presence was limited to virtual communities of enthusiasts discussing common interests and forming their own cybercultures. Today, customers are constantly connected to the internet through computers and an array of mobile devices; the younger generations especially share many of their opinions, experiences and everyday activities online. Thus, the evolution of netnographic research is closely linked to the evolution of the internet and information technologies (e.g. social media, internet of things, social networking sites and mobile technology). The abundance of traces left by customers on various online platforms is valuable data for researchers and managers (La Rocca *et al.*, 2014; Baron and Russell-Bennett, 2016).

Netnography is closely related to other qualitative research methodologies for the online environment, such as digital ethnography, online ethnography, virtual ethnography and cyber-ethnography (Ward, 1999; Tunçalp and Lê, 2014; Hjorth *et al.*, 2017). Although some researchers regard netnography and the above terms as synonyms (e.g. Grincheva, 2014), the more established view is that netnography is a distinct research method, with its own set of methodological guidelines (Caliandro, 2014). Digital ethnography, online

ethnography, virtual ethnography and cyber-ethnography, however, are not characterized by any specific practices and thus they are considered much more general approaches to online research (Lugosi *et al.*, 2012; Kozinets, 2018).

Netnography offers several benefits over other research methods. First, netnographic data are often described as rich and naturalistic, with the ability to accurately depict the lived realities of customers (Kozinets, 2002; Sandlin, 2007; Rokka, 2010). In contrast to ethnography, netnography can be conducted in an unobtrusive manner, offering researchers a view of customers' everyday lives (Giesler and Pohlmann, 2003). Especially in the case of sensitive research topics, the unobtrusiveness of netnography might be necessary to elicit relevant data (Langer and Beckman, 2005; Keeling *et al.*, 2013). Second, netnography is an adaptable and flexible qualitative method that has proven useful in various research settings (Kozinets, 2015). Netnography is also compatible with other research methods, such as interviews (Walther and Sandlin, 2011), ethnography (McGrath *et al.*, 2013) and even surveys (Adjei *et al.*, 2010). Finally, netnography has the advantage of being faster, simpler and much less expensive than traditional ethnography (Kozinets, 2006).

Yet, there are some limitations related to netnography. A main concern is the authenticity and quality of the data material (Xun and Reynolds, 2010). Owing to the difficulty of establishing the demographics of informants, a netnographic approach might be unsuitable for research that is sensitive to factors such as age, ethnicity or even gender (Mkono, 2013). Moreover, as with traditional ethnography, netnography faces limitations in regard to generalizing its findings to customer groups outside the online platforms or online communities studied (Kozinets, 1998, 2002). There has also been considerable debate regarding the ethical codes of conduct for netnographic studies (Rokka, 2010), and no consensus has been reached (Mkono and Markwell, 2014). For example, it is unclear whether netnographic research should always be conducted overtly (Catterall and Maclaran, 2002; Kozinets, 2002) or whether it can also be conducted covertly (Langer and Beckman, 2005).

Methodology

A systematic review approach was chosen to analyze the use of netnography in marketing research. Originating in the medical sciences, systematic or evidence-based literature reviews have increasingly been adopted by researchers in other disciplines to reduce bias and provide a comprehensive body of knowledge (Bryman and Bell, 2011). A systematic review investigates the literature on a particular subject with explicit and transparent methods that follow a standard series of stages (Mulrow, 1994). Consequently, systematic literature reviews are regarded as more objective, unbiased and trustworthy than traditional narrative literature reviews (Egger *et al.*, 2008).

The methodology of this review follows the general guidelines for conducting systematic literature reviews in business research (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; Denyer and Tranfield, 2006) and examples of previous systematic reviews in the field of marketing (Tähtinen and Halinen, 2002; Gremler, 2004; Helkkula, 2011). The main steps of this study were as follows:
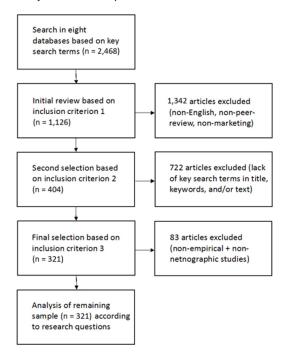
- Define search terms.
- Identify the databases and search engines.
- Determine and apply inclusion criteria.
- Repeat the filtering process to ensure a representative article selection.

The search for articles for this review was conducted in January 2018. To identify and gather all the marketing studies using netnography, the descriptors "netnography OR netnographic" were used in the literature search. The following databases were searched to identify relevant articles in the marketing field: ABI/Proquest, Business Source/EBSCO, Emerald, ScienceDirect/Elsevier, JSTOR, SAGE, Springer Link and Wiley Online. These databases provide a large selection of peer-reviewed marketing journals; thus, they were deemed appropriate for this study. The database search generated a total of 2,468 unique citations that matched the key search terms (Figure 1).

The first criterion for an article's inclusion was publication in English in a peer-reviewed journal within the discipline of marketing. The review of marketing journals was done in light of the American Marketing Association (AMA)'s (2013) definition of marketing: "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." In practice, this meant including marketing journals in the same way that previously published reviews of marketing journals did (Baumgartner and Pieters, 2003; Sullivan Mort *et al.*, 2004; Hult *et al.*, 2009). During this stage, the 2,468 citations were narrowed to 1,126.

The second inclusion criterion was the presence of the term *netnography* or *netnographic* in the title, keywords and/or article text. The search terms were deliberately delimited to these keywords; other possible descriptors, such as "digital ethnography," "virtual ethnography," "online ethnography" or

Figure 1 Systematic review process

Search in eight databases based on key search terms (n = 2,468)

Initial review based on inclusion criterion 1 (n = 1,126) → 1,342 articles excluded (non-English, non-peer-review, non-marketing)

Second selection based on inclusion criterion 2 (n = 404) → 722 articles excluded (lack of key search terms in title, keywords, and/or text)

Final selection based on inclusion criterion 3 (n = 321) → 83 articles excluded (non-empirical + non-netnographic studies)

Analysis of remaining sample (n = 321) according to research questions

"cyber-ethnography", were not included because these latter terms are more general ones than "netnography" and can refer to many uses of qualitative online data (Lugosi *et al.*, 2012; Kozinets, 2018). As a result, 404 articles published between 1997 and 2017 were selected for review.

In the following filtering process, all the articles were carefully read by the authors and a final inclusion criterion was established: for an article to be included, it had to be an empirical study fully or partly using the netnography method. In this step, 11 conceptual articles and an additional 72 studies that were not labeled as netnographies were identified. The final selection of articles for further review resulted in 321 articles, which were later analyzed according to the research questions.

More specifically, the analysis focused on:

- the research field within marketing to which each article belonged;
- the marketing topics that the authors had researched; and
- the ways in which the authors had applied netnography.

The analysis process followed an open coding approach with categories emerging from the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The coding of the articles was done by both authors of this review, who continuously compared results, discussed disagreements and refined the identified categories of research fields, topics and ways of applying netnography. In addition, in line with the adopted service marketing perspective, the analysis included a categorization of all the identified articles according to whether they involved traditional services, a service perspective or none of them. A service perspective was defined as an implicit or explicit focus on value (co-)creation through the customer lens (Edvardsson *et al.*, 2005). This part of the analysis followed a process resembling the previously described article coding procedure.

Findings

Not surprisingly, the analysis revealed a rapid growth in the use of netnography by marketing researchers. As illustrated in Figure 1, it took approximately 10 years after the first netnography publication for the method to become widespread. Since 2008,

there has been a rapid increase in netnography publications in the marketing field. This trend implies that netnography has established itself as a recognized qualitative methodology among marketing researchers. Due to societal trends, social media and the continuous expansion of the internet's reach, a continuous increase in the usage of netnography may be expected in the years ahead, before a potential flattening in the curve of publications per year (Figure 2).
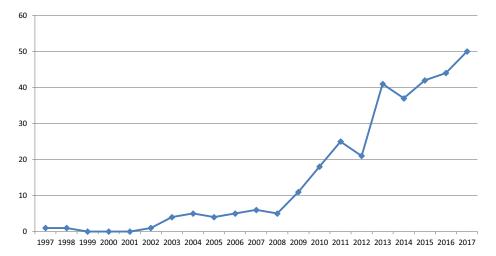
Marketing research fields

The categorization of netnography according to marketing research fields revealed that almost half of the articles in this review were consumer research studies, whereas studies within the areas of branding, general marketing and tourism represented about one-fifth each (Table I). In addition, the extent to which these netnographic studies across different fields of marketing research involved traditional services, a service perspective or none of them was analyzed. Slightly above half of the studies did not have a service perspective or were not conducted in a services context. Instead, these studies often focused on product-, brand- or culturally related aspects of consumption. Furthermore, about a quarter of the studies conducted in a services context were in a tourism, restaurant, health care or financial services setting. The remaining one-sixth of the studies had a service perspective in the sense that they used service-based theories or concepts, such as co-creation or co-production.

Consumer research

Netnography has been applied in the study of various phenomena related to both consumer culture and consumer behavior. Since the introduction of netnography by Kozinets (1998, p. 366) for studying "the consumer behavior of cultures and communities present on the Internet," all types of consumers have become increasingly active online. Today, many consumption-related behaviors and activities are reflected online. For example, Giesler and Pohlmann (2003) used netnography to understand the meanings and activities surrounding the file-sharing system Napster.com, which the authors conceptualized as a community based on a culture of sharing music. Another example is a study of what makes

Figure 2 Number of marketing studies using netnography (1997-2017)

Table I Fields of netnographic marketing studies

Field	No. papers (n = 321)				Article examples (involving service, services, or none)
	Service (%)	Services (%)	None (%)	All (%)	
Consumer research	23 (7.2)	21 (6.5)	93 (28.9)	137 (42.6)	Füller et al. (2007), Kozinets (2002), Närvänen et al. (2013)
Branding	14 (4.4)	3 (0.9)	50 (15.6)	67 (20.9)	Schau et al. (2009), Oakes et al. (2013), Brown et al. (2003)
Marketing (general)	17 (5.3)	11 (3.4)	32 (10.0)	60 (18.7)	Chandler and Chen (2016), Keeling et al. (2013), Cocker and Cronin (2017)
Tourism	2 (0.6)	51 (15.9)	4 (1.3)	57 (17.8)	Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier (2009), Hamilton and Alexander (2017), Luo et al. (2014)
Total	56 (17.5)	86 (26.7)	179 (55.8)	321 (100.0)	

online shoppers delay their online purchases, indicating that delays result from negative attitudes and experiences of online shopping, perceived risk and price, *locus* of control and purchase task complexity (Negra et al., 2008).

Branding

In addition to consumer research, netnography is a popular method for studying and understanding brand-related phenomena. Different online platforms have become important for firms' branding activities. For example, much of firms' present brand management is conducted online through social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (Laroche et al., 2013). The internet, with its ability to connect people around the globe, has also become the main arena for customers' brand-related expressions, discussions, opinions and experiences (Edelman, 2010). Therefore, netnography has been used by marketing researchers to explore firms' online branding strategies (Tynan et al., 2010; Rosenthal and Brito, 2017), as well as customers' involvement and engagement with different brands online (Colliander and Hauge Wien, 2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014).

Marketing (general)

Netnography has also been used in several marketing areas outside of consumer research, branding or tourism. For example, several studies in this review focused on the management of companies' marketing resources and activities. Moraes et al. (2014), for example, explored how companies use social media to promote their products and services. Netnographic enquiry has also been used to illustrate how social media changes the ways in which salespeople work and interact with their customers and co-workers (Rollins et al., 2014). Moreover, health-care and medical services is a popular context for netnographic marketing studies (Liang and Scammon, 2011; Keeling and Laing, 2015). Netnography offers the option of covertness, which is sometimes necessary for approaching sensitive, health-related topics. Langer and Beckman (2005), for example, used netnography to gain deep insights into customers' opinions, motives and concerns regarding cosmetic surgery.

Tourism

An abundance of online sites and forums devoted to travel have emerged during the past decade. Consequently, netnography has become a popular method among marketing researchers focusing on hospitality and tourism. Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2012), for example, used TripAdvisor's (the world's largest travel site) discussion forum to explore how tourists perceive risks associated with four popular destinations. Such online platforms provide a wealth of information about customers' experiences and opinions about travel and destinations. Netnography has, thus, proven to be a natural

methodological choice for numerous studies on tourism experiences (Hsu et al., 2009; Mkono et al., 2013; Rageh et al., 2013). Blogs have also been used as sources of customers' stories about tourism and travel (Woodside et al., 2007).

Marketing research topics

Netnography has been used to study various marketing research topics that cut across the previously discussed marketing research fields (Table II). Netnographic enquiry is being increasingly used for studying all sorts of marketing topics, not only phenomena that exist exclusively online (e.g. online communities and e-word of mouth [e-WOM]). This review revealed that research on consumption experiences, and particularly destination branding, was often centered around services, while studies on co-creation frequently adopted a service perspective. For example, the topics of consumer identity, brand management and brand communities were rarely explored within a services context or from a service perspective.

Online communities

Online or virtual communities have been at the center of netnographic studies ever since the inception of netnography as a research method. Kozinets' (1997) seminal article about the subculture surrounding the television series *The X-Files* and its related online fan communities introduced the idea of the online community as a valuable source of information about consumers and their cultures. However, not all netnographic studies on online communities are aimed at understanding explicit consumer culture phenomena. Thomas and Peters (2011), for example, explored the role of the popular wedding online community Brides.com in brides' wedding dress purchase decisions. Moreover, Keeling et al.'s (2013) study of an online community of breast cancer sufferers illustrated how the community members negotiated their understandings of health-care services and medications. As online communities have become more popular and diverse, the customer information that marketing researchers can elicit from them has increased.

Consumption experiences

As customers share more of their experiences online, marketing researchers have found netnography to be increasingly useful for exploring these consumption-related experiences. Netnographic studies have researched a broad variety of consumption experiences in many different contexts. For example, Hamilton and Hewer (2009) explored the appeal of the experiences provided by salsa dancing through a netnographic analysis of an online salsa forum that attracts people from all over the world. In recent years, social media has grown in importance as a communication platform for

Table II Ten most popular marketing topics to be researched using netnography

Topic	Topic examples	No. papers (%)	Service focus (%)	Article examples
Online communities	Cyberculture, knowledge sharing, consumer learning	47 (14.7)	Service: 21.3 Services: 19.1 None: 59.6	Laing et al. (2011), Stewart Loane and D'Alessandro (2014), Rokka and Moisander (2009)
Consumption experiences	Experience creation, experience dimensions	41 (12.8)	Service: 2.4 Services: 78.1 None: 19.5	Kerrigan et al. (2014), Guesalaga et al. (2016), Hamilton and Hewer (2009)
Brand communities	Brand relationships, anti-brand, social networks	28 (8.7)	Service: 25.0 Services: 0.0 None: 75.0	Hassan et al. (2016), – Weijo et al. (2017)
Brand management	Product placement, brand ambiguity, luxury branding	23 (7.2)	Service: 13.0 Services: 8.7 None: 78.3	Brown and Patterson (2009), Quester and Fleck (2010), Nelson et al. (2004)
Co-creation	New product development, challenges, open innovation	21 (6.5)	Service: 95.2 Services: 0.0 None: 4.8	Kelleher et al. (2011), – Gatzweiler et al. (2017)
Consumer identity	Identity construction, negotiation, and adaptation	17 (5.3)	Service: 0.0 Services: 17.5 None: 82.5	– Pentina and Spears (2011), Hemetsberger (2005)
Authenticity	Perceived authenticity, authenticity negotiation	16 (5.0)	Service: 0.0 Services: 43.8 None: 56.2	– Mkono (2012), Hartmann and Ostberg (2013)
Anti-consumption	Motive, stigma, activism, freeganism, simple living	13 (4.0)	Service: 30.7 Services: 0.0 None: 69.3	McArthur (2015), – Nguyen et al. (2014)
Destination branding	Destination image formation, online destination image	12 (3.7)	Service: 0.0 Services: 100.0 None: 0.0	– Dwivedi (2009) –
e-WOM	Influence, trustworthiness, communication channels	10 (3.1)	Service: 10.0 Services: 30.0 None: 60.0	Andreassen and Streukens (2009), Liang and Scammon (2011), Ertimur and Gilly (2012)
Other topics	Value, decision-making, emotions, storytelling	93 (29.0)	Service: 10.7 Services: 19.4 None: 69.9	Medberg and Heinonen (2014), Wu and Pearce (2016), Kjellberg et al. (2015)
Total		321 (100.0)		

customers who want to share experiences and express opinions. Misopoulos *et al.* (2014), therefore, could successfully use Twitter to identify critical elements of customers' service experiences in the airline industry.

Brand communities

Netnography has also become a tool for marketing researchers seeking to understand different brand-related phenomena from within these brand communities. For example, in an ethnography of three brand communities – Ford Bronco, Macintosh and Saab – Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) discovered the importance of internet forums for brand communities. Since then, much research has been conducted on brand communities online with the help of netnography. Examples include co-creation (Cova *et al.*, 2015), value creation (Schau *et al.*, 2009), social networks (Zaglia, 2013), brand meaning creation (Broderick *et al.*, 2003) and rivalries within and between brand communities (Ewing *et al.*, 2013) and anti-brand communities (Hollenbeck and Zinkhan, 2010).

Consumer identity

The phenomena of construction, negotiation and adaptation of consumers' identities have all been researched through netnographic enquiry. Netnography is a suitable method for studying different phenomena related to consumption and identities, as anonymous online environments are spaces in which consumers often feel comfortable sharing private reflections on themselves. For example, Pentina and Spears (2011) conducted a netnography of blogs and websites to explore what motivates young adults to acquire tattoos and their association with self-identity construction and the need for self-expression. Similarly, Lindblad and Ostberg (2011) used online forums in which Swedish youth communicate and interact to explore how identity among young consumers is largely formed by delimitations of what they do not identify with. As the authors pointed out, the internet offers an interactive space for consumers to construct and display their subcultural identities.

Brand management

Companies' efforts to analyze and plan how customers perceive their brands have expanded in scope as internet usage has developed rapidly over the years (Christodoulides, 2009). At the same time, the internet has become an important source of customer insights into brands and branding. Hence, marketing researchers have used netnographic enquiry to understand how customers perceive companies' brand management efforts. Nelson *et al.* (2004), for instance, analyzed electronic game players' online discussions about the effectiveness and appropriateness of product placement in computer games as a way for companies to promote their brands. Interestingly, many electronic game players accepted brands in games if they added realism.

Authenticity

In a world that many perceive as increasingly superficial, customers are seeking authenticity in products and services (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). Tourist attractions are typical examples of market offerings that customers tend to evaluate on the basis of how "genuine" or "real" they are. Netnography is useful in revealing the phenomenon of authenticity in the marketplace, such as how customers' discussions online play a role in the creation (or destruction) of the perceived authenticity of a product or service (Corciolani, 2014). Mkono (2013), in turn, used tourist reviews from TripAdvisor to explore what tourists at restaurants in Victoria Falls perceived as authentic African culture. As authenticity is largely a socially constructed phenomenon, today's online environment opens up new opportunities for researchers to understand customers' roles in the co-creation of the authenticity of market offerings.

Anti-consumption

Over the past decade, marketing researchers have started showing more interest in anti-consumption movements and subcultures. The phenomenon of anti-consumption is largely triggered by what many perceive as unsustainable consumption practices in many developed countries. Many of these movements are organized around online communities or forums in which members can discuss and share their thoughts. To uncover how such a group copes with the stigma attached to its practices (e.g. dumpster diving and consumption of disposed food), Nguyen *et al.* (2014) performed a netnographic study of three online Freegan forums. These online forums enabled the authors to access rich details about Freegans' belief systems and illustrate how these stigmatized individuals redirect stigma toward the normative culture as a stigma management strategy. Netnography has also been used to shed light on the complex mix of ideological, economic and psychological motivations of Freegans (Fernandez *et al.*, 2011) and their collective identity construction process (Pentina and Amos, 2011).

Co-creation

In recent years, the co-creation of value has been a popular and much-discussed topic within marketing theory. Value co-creation refers to the customer's participation in the creation of a firm's offering (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). As the internet has grown in importance as a platform for interaction and dialogue between customers and firms, netnography has also proven to be a useful research method for studying and understanding the phenomenon of co-creation. Netnographic enquiry has been used, for example, to explore how companies – through an open innovation approach – seek to co-create value with customers in online crowd-sourced communities (Kelleher *et al.*, 2011), how firms and customers co-create value in the luxury market (Tynan *et al.*, 2010) and ways in which co-creation can go wrong within online innovation communities, thus resulting in conflicts (Gebauer *et al.*, 2013).

E-word of mouth

The traditionally powerful phenomenon of e-WOM has become even more potent with the unprecedented possibilities of WOM spreading across the internet in seconds to millions of customers worldwide. Consequently, several marketing researchers have applied netnography in the study of e-WOM. Liang and Scammon (2011), for example, adopted netnography in their study of e-WOM on health social networking sites and revealed that more-informed community members provided less-informed members with advice, guidance and support. As e-WOM has a powerful effect on customers' choices of products and services, marketers often try to control and influence e-WOM. Kulmala *et al.* (2013) used netnography to study six popular Finnish fashion blogs to

understand this conflict between naturally occurring e-WOM and marketing-influenced e-WOM. As netnography provides guidelines for researching online phenomena, it has become a popular and successful research method for studying e-WOM.

Destination branding

The internet has become the main tourism marketing channel for states, municipalities, organizations and companies involved in the tourism industry. Today, managing and promoting a destination's online image is an important step in attracting tourists, especially international visitors, who tend not to have any previous experience of the region (Lund *et al.*, 2018). The internet, however, is not a one-way communication channel and encourages people to share experiences and opinions; this is particularly true for social media. Hence, netnography has been used to explore the resulting challenges of using the internet for destination image formation. Dwivedi (2009), for example, found that customers actively construct destination images via online travel message boards and that such destination images can be in sharp contrast to the "picture postcard" images promoted by destination-marketing organizations.

Other topics

Other marketing topics that have been explored with netnography include customer value (Medberg and Heinonen, 2014), customer-to-customer (C2C) interaction (Ekpo *et al.*, 2015), customer motivations (Wu and Pearce, 2016), customer tribes (Hamilton and Hewer, 2009), decision-making (Cross and Gilly, 2014) and cross-cultural consumption (Nelson and Otnes, 2005). Many of these marketing topics have been explored in service contexts or are relevant for service researchers in other ways. As Kozinets (1998) pointed out, netnography is not only limited to the study of online communities and cybercultures but also constitutes a useful tool for exploring various marketing topics. Today, valuable information related to most marketing topics can be found online. Marketing researchers have, therefore, found netnography to be a relevant tool for accessing and making sense of this online information. Marketing researchers have also applied netnography in many different ways in their studies on manifold topics, as will be discussed next.

Methodological applications

Marketing researchers have used netnography in various ways. Table III summarizes the applications of netnography in the analyzed articles in terms of the role of the researcher, use purpose, domain of data collection, content included, analysis and combination with other methods. These themes of variations in netnography's application emerged from the analysis of the reviewed articles and are not based on Kozinets' (2002, 2006, 2010, 2015) guidelines for netnographic studies. This is especially relevant because the research's aim was to illustrate the actual use of the method, not its intended use. The various applications are presented in the order of how frequently they appeared in the reviewed articles, with passive observer being the most common role of the researcher, exploratory research the most common use purpose, and so on. Netnography is a diverse and all-encompassing method that is used in various ways for different purposes (Table III). However, this study did not consider the percentage of total

papers associated with each form of application, as a netnographic study typically uses several of the presented forms of application, making calculating the percentage of total papers for each form of application irrelevant.

Role of the researcher

In netnographic marketing studies, researchers are either passive observers or active participants in the online forums they choose for data collection. Passive observers usually lurk around forums without informing the community about the research being conducted, while active participants often notify the community members about their research activities. As discussed earlier in this paper, arguments for overt and covert research strategies can be found in the netnography literature (Kozinets, 1998; Catterall and Maclaran, 2002; Langer and Beckman, 2005). This literature review, however, evinced that the vast majority of netnographic marketing studies adopt a passive observer position. This may not come as a surprise, as this position is the simplest, most convenient and most unobtrusive netnographic research approach.

Use purpose

Most of the reviewed articles used netnography as an exploratory research method or as a pilot study. For example, O'Sullivan *et al.* (2011) used netnography to explore how brand communities emerge, and Ismail (2011) adopted netnography to develop measurement scales for a large-scale quantitative study of customer experience and its dimensions. Moreover, many netnographic marketing studies seek cultural understanding of the studied phenomena. The in-depth nature of netnographic data enabled Leipämaa-Leskinen (2011), for example, to understand how meanings of body and identity are constructed in social interaction online when dieting. Finally, netnography has been used for illustrative purposes. Mkono *et al.* (2013), for example, used netnographic studies to provide illustrative examples of touristic food experiences.

Domain of data collection

Multitudinous online domains have been used to collect data in netnographic marketing studies. Unsurprisingly, common domains are online discussion forums and social networking sites (Broderick *et al.*, 2003; Braunsberger and Buckler, 2011; Rosenthal and Brito, 2017). In addition, review sites for tourism, travel destinations, restaurants, products and services (Yang and Fang, 2004; Oakes *et al.*, 2013; Baka, 2016) are popular domains for data collection for netnographers. The above-mentioned online platforms are customer-dominated, in the sense that users generate the content, but netnographic data can also involve company websites (Mkono, 2012) and other online platforms where firms generate the content (Sigala, 2012). Hartmann and Ostberg (2013), for example, included content from the official website of Swedish guitar manufacturer Hagstrom in their analysis of discursive struggles over brand authenticity.

Content included

Netnography allows marketing researchers to collect rich, timely and continuous naturalistic data (Rokka, 2010). Netnographic data are typically text-based, such as customers' online comments, discussions and reviews (Black, 2011). More in-depth textual data can often be found through online platforms, such as Web diaries (Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2011) and

Table III Overview of netnography's use in marketing research

Application	Description	Article examples
Role of researcher	Passive observer	Quinton and Harridge-March (2010)
	Active participant	O'Sullivan *et al.* (2011)
Use purpose	Exploratory research	Chan and Li (2010)
	Pilot study	Gebauer *et al.* (2013)
	Cultural understanding	Kozinets and Handelman (2004)
	Illustrative example	Kozinets (2002)
Domain of data collection	Online discussion forum	Laing *et al.* (2011)
	Review sites	Yang and Fang (2004)
	Social networking sites	Habibi *et al.* (2014)
	Non-commercial websites	Hemetsberger (2005)
	Corporate websites	Hartmann and Ostberg (2013)
	Blogs	Mikkonen *et al.* (2011)
	E-mail	Gabl and Hemetsberger (2012)
Content included	Text	Langer and Beckman (2005)
	Pictures	Croft (2013)
	Videos	Luedicke (2006)
Analysis	Thematic analysis	Muñiz and Schau (2007)
	Content analysis	Füller *et al.* (2008)
	Discourse analysis	Hong and Kim (2013)
Combination with other methods	Interviews	Walther and Sandlin (2011)
	Ethnography	McGrath *et al.* (2013)
	Observation	Broderick *et al.* (2003)
	Introspection	Ekpo *et al.* (2015)
	Surveys	Adjei *et al.* (2010)
	Experiment	Keinan and Kivetz (2011)
	Diaries	Takhar and Chitakunye (2012)

blogs (Gannon and Prothero, 2016). However, netnography is not limited to textual online data, and many netnographic marketing studies also include pictures and videos. Luedicke (2006), for example, downloaded and analyzed 200 pictures and 40 min of video content in his netnography on the role of social environments for the Hummer brand community. Similarly, Brown and Patterson (2010) included photos, podcasts and videos in the netnographic part of their study on the Harry Potter brand phenomenon.

Analysis
The present review illuminated that the most common analysis approach in netnographic marketing studies is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves coding and categorizing the data for emerging patterns and themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Spiggle, 1994). For example, Kozinets (1997) identified three foundational themes constituting the X-Philes subculture: "shared aesthetic tastes, shared experience of awe and mystery, and a shared drive to consume the symbols related to *The X-Files*" (p. 471). Netnographers also use qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis frequently. With qualitative content analysis, netnographers try to understand what information is conveyed, for example, on online discussion forums (Hvass and Munar, 2012; Podoshen, 2013). Netnographers using discourse analysis are more interested in the cultural meaning structures underlying customers' online communication (Hemetsberger, 2005; Watson *et al.*, 2008) or how the language is used to construct customers' realities (Mikkonen *et al.*, 2011; Hartmann and Ostberg, 2013).

Combination with other methods
More than half of the netnographic studies in this review combined netnography with other qualitative or quantitative methods. In fact, Kozinets (2002) suggested that marketing researchers who seek to generalize netnographic findings could also use other methods (e.g. interviews, focus groups, surveys or traditional ethnographies) for triangulation. A good example of this is Fisher and Smith's (2011) study on value co-creation in brand communities, in which the authors combined netnography with ethnography and traditional interviews. Other studies have used netnographic enquiry as a complement or pre-study to larger quantitative studies. Chan and Li (2010), for example, used a netnographic study to understand reciprocity in C2C interactions in online communities and then validated their findings with a quantitative survey.

Implications for service research

The findings of this systematic review and analysis show that netnography has been used in different ways to research a variety of topics across different marketing fields. This review also reveals that service researchers have adopted netnography. Research in the service context, however, has used the method to a limited extent compared to, for example, consumer research. At the same time, services generate around 70-80 per cent of gross domestic product in most developed countries (CIA World Factbook, 2016) and reflect the typical type of everyday consumption discussed online by customers (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). Basically, all sorts of service experiences

that customers openly and publicly share online can be used as input for netnography. Netnographic enquiry can help further service researchers' understanding of restaurant eating practices, for example, through online dietary discussion groups. Moreover, online forums devoted to personal finance can be used to explore how customers integrate different financial services and online tools into their personal financial management.

Netnography can also give service researchers insights into research topics beyond traditional services. The recent service perspective on business views service – rather than just intangible products – as the supportive process in which value is created for customers (Grönroos, 2008; Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Gummesson et al., 2010). From this service perspective, goods and services are merely resources designed to support customers' everyday lives. Through explorations of online discussions, netnography can effectively assist service researchers in their studies on customers' expectations and experiences of such supportive activities. In fact, almost any online space that reveals anything about customers' value creation processes should be an interesting research context for service researchers. Hence, netnography offers service researchers and practitioners unprecedented opportunities to access naturalistic online data about customers, making it an important method for future service research.

For service researchers interested in netnography, the following section presents the empirical, theoretical and methodological recommendations. The recommendations emerged from continuous discussion between the authors regarding under-researched areas within the netnographic marketing literature, with a focus on what is particularly interesting from a service marketing perspective. Generally, the recommendations relate to the ongoing discussion about future service research priorities (Table IV) initiated by Ostrom et al. (2015).

Empirical recommendations

This review reveals that the method of netnography has been used in different empirical contexts, such as tourism (Martin et al., 2007), health care (Liang and Scammon, 2011) and financial services (Medberg and Heinonen, 2014). There is, however, considerable potential for the use of netnography in other areas of business. The following discussion presents empirical contexts that are particularly interesting for service researchers.

Sustainability

There are surprisingly few netnographic studies on sustainability. Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) defined sustainable marketing as marketing efforts that are competitively and ecologically sustainable. This area of marketing is particularly interesting for service researchers, as services often play an important role in developing sustainable business solutions (Ottman et al., 2006). In this context, Belz and Peattie (2012) discussed three types of services: product-related, use-oriented and result-oriented. Product-related services optimize product use (e.g. courses on ecological driving). Use-oriented services replace ownership of products (e.g. car-sharing). Result-oriented services replace ownership and operation of products, and customers only pay for

the outcome (e.g. public transportation). In other words, a sustainable future economy will involve a transformation from sales of physical products to sales of services. Many new services are accessible via the internet and are frequently discussed by customers online. Netnography provides service researchers with tremendous opportunities to study this transformative process and its implications for customers and society.

Business-to-business

Netnography is frequently used in business-to-consumer (B2C) contexts, but no netnographic studies were identified in the context of business-to-business (B2B) marketing. This is not surprising when considering that consumers are much more prone to sharing their consumption stories online than, for example, employees or managers. In addition, accessing internal corporate online communication is difficult without the permission of the company. Despite these challenges, the B2B sector is an area for netnographic enquiry that should be explored, as it would offer service researchers many interesting topics to study. A netnography of a B2B service provider's intranet or internal chat could, for example, enable a deeper understanding of professional service managers' mind-sets and internal marketing efforts. Furthermore, online communities of practice, in which service professionals learn from each other in the specific domain of interest, is a promising area for future netnographic studies. Such professional online communities could reveal much about, for example, employee behavior and team dynamics in professional service contexts. Similar to traditional ethnographic studies in business contexts (Watson, 2011), a netnographic approach would have the potential to capture things of relevance that other methods would not.

International contexts

Netnography has been used extensively for studying tourism, but only a few studies have focused on other service-related international and/or cross-cultural phenomena. At the same time, the world is becoming increasingly globalized. Despite not explicitly studying international or cross-cultural phenomena, many netnographic studies have collected data from customers of different nationalities and cultures. Examples of this are netnographic studies exploring online reviews written by people throughout the world (Hamilton and Wagner, 2011; Pan and Zhang, 2011). The availability of cross-national websites and international social media platforms creates unprecedented opportunities for netnographic studies on topics related to service experiences among customers of different nationalities, regions and cultures. For example, online discussion forums that transcend national borders may provide an integrative perspective of different cultures and cultural meanings of services and service brands.

Digital technologies

Technological advancement and digitalization create an array of new online research contexts for service researchers. This study shows that almost all netnographies have been conducted on traditional areas of the internet, such as online communities, review sites and social networking sites. New digital technologies, including wearables, smart services and mobile apps, can generate valuable customer information for service researchers and practitioners (Wuenderlich et al., 2015). Such

Table IV Recommendations and service research priorities

Recommendations	Service research priority (Ostrom *et al.*, 2015)	Connection between recommendations and service research priorities
Empirical recommendations		
Sustainability	Improving well-being through transformative service	Netnography allows service researchers to study the emergence of sustainable and transformative services
B2B	Understanding organization and employee issues relevant to successful service	Netnography can help service researchers generate new insights about professional service providers and their customer relationships
International contexts	Understanding service in a global context	Netnography enables service researchers to learn about service experiences in different cultural contexts
Digital technologies	Leveraging technology to advance service	Netnography allows service researchers to examine how smart services and the Internet of things can enhance the customer experience
Theoretical recommendations		
Online conflicts	Enhancing the service experience	Netnography allows service researchers to participate in, and learn from, the activities and sometimes diverging opinions in online customer communities
Service ecosystems	Developing service networks and systems	Netnography enables service researchers to study actors and relationships within service ecosystems
Customers' mental models	Understanding value creation	Netnography can aid service researchers in understanding service customers' mental models and their activities as resource integrators
Online decision-making	Enhancing the service experience	Netnography allows service researchers to explore customer journeys across complex service offerings, touch points, and channels
Methodological recommendations		
New methodological combinations	Understanding value creation	By combining netnography with other methods, service researchers may generate an additional dimension of understanding of value creation
Non-text content	Understanding value creation	By including non-text content in their netnographic analyses, service researchers can elicit a more complete picture of value creation activities
New domains of data collection	Leveraging technology to advance service	By exploring new social networking sites and apps, service researchers can find new and interesting domains of netnographic data collection
Longitudinal netnographies	Enhancing the service experience	By undertaking longitudinal netnographies, service researchers can explore the dynamics of customers' service experiences over longer periods of time

digital technologies extend the boundaries of netnography and service research. As more personal devices get connected to the internet and to each other, opportunities for generating detailed customer insights increase (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2012). Such data are likely to be more difficult to retrieve unobtrusively than information from traditional areas of the internet (e.g. public online discussion forums). Seeking informed consent from the people being studied, therefore, becomes more important than ever before (Kozinets, 2002). In addition to obtaining permission to access data from people's smart devices, service researchers can equip selected informants with such technology for use in their everyday lives and still elicit naturalistic data.

Theoretical recommendations

This study reveals that netnography has been used to investigate a variety of online and offline marketing phenomena, such as online communities (Thomas and Peters, 2011), consumption experiences (Hamilton and Hewer, 2009) and brand communities (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). The analysis results indicate that as the method of netnography develops and matures, even more marketing research topics will be studied through netnographic enquiry. Next, service-related topics that have yet to be explored through netnography, and thus present opportunities for service researchers, are discussed. The topics also touch on societally important issues that have implications for how society functions beyond the consumption setting.

Online conflicts

Most of the reviewed netnographic studies focused on customer conformity and similarity within specific online forums. The traditional online brand community is a typical example of a context in which members share opinions, interests, rituals, practices and subcultural traits (Kozinets, 1997; Schau *et al.*, 2009). However, conflicts also arise in such online communities (Sibai *et al.*, 2014), and if researchers move out of these often tightly knit communities, online conflicts among customers become even more common. In particular, social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube reveal a variety of conflicting opinions about common products and services. As Bou-Franch and Blitvich (2014) indicated, these online platforms offer researchers unprecedented access to the unfolding of conflicts. In addition to online conflicts between customers, conflicts arise between customers and service providers (on various online platforms). As a counterweight to the many studies on the heterogeneous practices of online communities, more netnographic research should be done into the different types of conflicts online. Such disagreements can help service researchers understand how customers' service experiences differ, the reasons for this diversity and the consequences.

Service ecosystems

Netnographic studies often focus on how customers relate to a particular product or brand. In reality, however, products and brands are intertwined in, and dependent upon, large service ecosystems. A service ecosystem refers to a relatively self-contained, self-adjusting system of resource-integrating actors that are connected by shared institutional logics and mutual value creation through service exchange (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). An example of a service ecosystem is a network of health-care providers. However, the research on service ecosystems is still in its infancy (Chandler and Lusch, 2014; Vargo *et al.*, 2015). Hence, more knowledge is needed of, for example, how customers make sense of the service ecosystems that surround them and how their perceptions and experiences might differ from those of other actors (e.g. firms and governments) involved in these systems. In addition, the relationships between customers' own networks (e.g. families, organizations and communities) and service ecosystems require further research (Epp and Price, 2011). As the structures of such networks and service systems often are visible online, netnography is a useful tool for this area of service research.

Customers' mental models

Much of the netnographic research has focused on different aspects of consumer culture and behavior. However, there are also opportunities for netnographic research into consumer psychology, and especially into service customers' mental models. The current knowledge of customers' mental models is essentially limited to the work of Christiansen and Olson (2002), who demonstrated that mental models are a mix of cognitive (i.e. beliefs) and emotional (i.e. feelings) components and are activated by different consumption situations. At the same time, the mental models of business managers have attracted considerable research attention (Santos and Garcia, 2006; Maignan and Lukas, 1997; Gary and Wood, 2011). Moreover, research in the B2B service setting has demonstrated that the mental models of sellers can differ substantially from those of buyers (Strandvik *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, an important avenue for future research would be to explore possible discrepancies between the mental models of service customers and service managers in B2C markets. Netnographic data can greatly assist in such studies, as they reveal what customers think, feel and do, as well as the reasoning behind this.

Online decision-making

Despite the fact that much of customers' decision-making has moved online, very few netnographic studies have been conducted on online-related aspects of customers' decision-making processes. An exception is a study by Hernandez and Vicdan (2014), who explored blogs and video-gaming websites to gain deeper insight into the factors that influence the decision to pre-order new video games. Yet, there is wide recognition among marketing scholars that online forums, review sites, social media, mobile devices, smart services, wearables and similar options are increasingly changing the process of customer decision-making. Key questions that netnographic research could help answer are, for example, how the current digitalization changes decision-making and service customers' journeys to purchase, how customers manage online information overload and the influence of omnichannel marketing on their decision-making processes. Online decision-making is becoming an increasingly important area for service providers to understand and manage; hence, more netnographic studies on this topic are encouraged.

Methodological recommendations

This review of netnographic studies shows that marketing researchers have used netnography in various ways. Several

themes of variation in how netnography has been applied emerged from the analysis; they include the role of the researcher, use purpose, domain of data collection, content included, analysis and combination with other methods. The review indicated that the use of this method has transformed from the original principles developed by Kozinets (2015). Indeed, some flexibility may be needed, as the main aim of a study should always guide its research design (Patton, 2002; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). To that end, there may be alternative ways of designing future netnographies. In the following section, therefore, methodological recommendations are offered for service researchers who are planning to conduct netnographic studies.

New methodological combinations

Netnography has been combined with several methods, such as ethnography (McGrath *et al.*, 2013), interviews (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2005), observation (Podoshen, 2013) and surveys (Chan and Li, 2010). In today's world, with the increasing dynamism and online social interaction, it often makes sense to combine traditional offline methods with netnography. Such combinations can generate insights beyond what the original methods themselves could produce. However, there are many research approaches that have not yet been combined with netnography. Netnography could be successfully combined with, for example, grounded theory, narrative research, action research, case studies, focus groups, feminist research and critical research. In an increasingly digitalized world, where the lines between offline and online experiences are blurred in numerous ways, many studies using these research approaches could benefit from including a netnographic dimension in their research. As mixed-methods approaches have proven to be useful in marketing (Bahl and Milne, 2006; Harrison and Reilly, 2011), more such netnographic research is encouraged.

Non-text content

As pictures and videos gain popularity as means of online communication, future netnographers should also explore and use this type of non-text content. Analyzing online communication, not only through text but also through pictures and video, can give researchers a larger and more complete picture of the phenomenon under study. Kedzior (2014), for example, gathered all of these types of data from "second life" in his study on customers' experiences of digital worlds. Moreover, photos and videos produced and shared online by customers themselves provide great opportunities for service researchers to understand different service offerings from the customer's perspective. When reporting such research findings, it is important to also include the visual data and find a suitable balance between images and text (Ball and Smith, 1992). Audio material is also worth considering. In addition to text, videos and photos, Healy and Beverland (2013) collected digital audio recordings from relevant websites in their study on the furry subculture. The use of textual, visual and audio sources of data allowed the authors to gain a holistic view of this subculture's online behavior.

New domains of data collection

Most netnographic marketing studies are conducted on traditional online discussion forums. As the uses of the internet have evolved over time, so have the domains of data collection

for netnography. For example, different review sites now constitute an important source of information for service customers and have become useful domains for data collection in netnographic studies (Hamilton and Wagner, 2011; Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2012). Moreover, as the social media trend continues to grow, many social networking sites have developed into very interesting platforms for netnographic research. Facebook has been used in some netnographic studies (Kelleher *et al.*, 2011; Ewing *et al.*, 2013; Habibi *et al.*, 2014), but service researchers would benefit from closely examining other social networking sites, such as Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr. In addition, mobile apps, such as Snapchat, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, offer new and interesting domains for netnographic data collection. The mobile context becomes increasingly relevant for netnographic research as mobile internet use grows rapidly across the world.

Longitudinal netnography

Netnographic studies typically identify one or more appropriate online domain (s) for data collection and then follow what happens on the selected domain (s) for a relatively short period of time (e.g. weeks) or retroactively collect a stream of messages, postings, reviews and other content. Russell and Schau (2014) and Weijo *et al.* (2014) are among the few researchers in this review that adopted a long-term longitudinal research approach. Considering that many online platforms facilitate following how service experiences evolve over time (e.g. medical treatment or financial advice/negotiation), it is surprising that more service researchers have not seized this opportunity. Service researchers should, therefore, consider undertaking longitudinal netnographies. Longitudinal research offers the possibility of capturing and understanding changes in customers' processes, but it is seldom used because of the time and cost involved (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Online longitudinal studies, however, require far fewer resources than traditional offline longitudinal studies. Finally, netnography can constitute a valuable longitudinal part of a traditional qualitative study or complement an offline longitudinal study.

Implications for service practice

This review and analysis of netnographic marketing research also has several implications for service managers. As customers bring their offline identities, values, meanings and other characteristics online (Dumitrica and Gaden, 2009), netnography makes a valuable contribution to the market research toolbox for companies. Netnographic enquiry allows service firms to access unelicited and naturalistic data from a variety of online platforms, such as internet discussion forums, review sites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest (Croft, 2013; Healy and Beverland, 2013; Podoshen, 2013). Furthermore, networked gamespaces, instant messaging chats and new forms of mobile communication technologies (e.g. smartphone apps) are interesting places for future netnographies (Kozinets, 2006). Many of the newer online platforms offer large amounts of visual data. Pictures and videos can be powerful complements to traditional textual online data. Hence, netnography is a flexible method that can be adapted for market research in most virtual arenas.

By observing and interacting with customers online, service firms can generate novel customer insights (Kozinets, 2018). Traditional methods, such as focus groups, surveys and interviews, can often be leading and might not always be optimal for revealing the customer's logic regarding the service in question (Heinonen *et al.*, 2010, Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). Conversely, netnographic research provides a window into the everyday lives and realities of customers (Kozinets, 2015). Such insights are particularly important for two areas of business: innovation and advertising. Successful service innovation and development require a thorough understanding of customers' explicit and implicit needs (Griffin and Hauser, 1993; Leonard and Rayport, 1997). Netnography can help service providers learn about how customers use products and services in the course of their everyday routines and consequently uncover needs that customers themselves may not recognize. Similarly, successful advertising is grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the target group, and netnography provides a unique way for service firms to learn about the language, meanings and practices of the groups of customers with whom they want to communicate (Kozinets, 2006).

Netnography can also be a useful tool for scanning the environment in which a business is operating. Netnographic enquiry can be particularly suitable for service firms endeavoring to understand and address phenomena such as conflicts, tensions, resistance and activism related to their operations or brands. Many customers express their ideological or political convictions through consumption (Izberk-Bilgin, 2012) and often use the internet to raise awareness of why they choose or reject certain products and services (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2015). Besides enhancing service providers' understanding of such phenomena, netnography can provide a tool for initiating an online dialogue with dissatisfied customers. Research has shown that responding to online criticism in a responsible way is a much more successful strategy than remaining passive (Fournier and Avery, 2011; Xia, 2013). Through netnographic enquiry, service firms can also learn much about markets they are considering entering. Transcending nearly all geographical borders, the internet is an important tool for international market research. For companies already operating globally, netnographic research can be a way to gain deeper insights into, for example, cross-cultural differences in perceptions of their brands and services.

However, it is also important for companies to recognize the challenges associated with netnographic research. Table V summarizes several key questions to be considered before using netnography. Netnography takes more time and requires more skill than traditional customer satisfaction surveys, feedback forms or online polls. Kozinets (2006, p. 282) even stated that "it takes an experienced and adept ethnographer to be a good netnographer." Moreover, it is important to emphasize the risk of irritating or angering people (King, 1996). Netnographic research ethics is complicated by the fact that the internet is neither public nor private and contains not only text and data but also digital "copies" of people's identities and selves (Kozinets, 2015). Customers may become upset or feel that their privacy has been violated if companies use their online texts, pictures and discussions without securing their permission. To avoid such problems, Kozinets (2002, 2015) recommended that researchers disclose their presence and obtain permission before quoting any

Table V Considerations for managerial use of netnography in market research

Key questions	Considerations
What research should be done?	What is the research objective? What information is needed? What other methods could be used instead?
How should the research be done?	Should netnography be combined with other methods? Is passive observation sufficient, or is active participation preferable? How will the data be collected and analyzed? Is textual information sufficient, or should other types of data be retrieved?
Where should the research be done?	Which are the most suitable online domains for data collection? What are the pros and cons of different online domains? Should there be triangulation across different domains or in-depth study of one domain?
Who should do the research, and who should be researched?	Who should be responsible for data collection and analysis? Do existing staff have sufficient knowledge about ethnography? Should existing or potential customers be studied? Should actors other than customers be studied?
When should the research be done?	When in time should the study be conducted? What should be the length of the study? Should it be a one-time collection of data or a long-term longitudinal research process?

specific postings. Even if companies rarely publish collected data, practitioners should still be as transparent as possible in any researched online environment.

Controversies regarding the use of netnography

This study indicated that many marketing researchers have diverged from the original intentions of netnography. Very few of the reviewed studies followed the methodological guidelines outlined by Kozinets (2002, 2006, 2010, 2015). Although only studies that used the label "netnography" were included in this review, the sample contained a broad set of applications of the method. Netnography has been used in various ways, and this has resulted in a dilution and diversification of the principles of netnography. Some studies were strongly focused on ethnography with some online elements (e.g. O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2011; McGrath *et al.*, 2013), whereas other studies were more strongly focused on quantifying online textual data (e.g. Yang and Fang, 2004; Pan and Zhang, 2011). Kozinets (2015) also noted this fragmentation of netnography.

There are also several ethical dilemmas and challenges related the research domain, participation consent and privacy that researchers need to consider (Roy *et al.*, 2015). Perhaps most debated is Kozinets' (2002) ethical guidelines that a netnographer should always:

- fully disclose his/her presence and intentions;
- ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of informants;
- seek and incorporate feedback from online community members; and
- seek permission from community members before directly quoting any specific postings in the research.

Langer and Beckman (2005), for example, maintained that such guidelines make sense for studying private online communication, but are far too rigorous for researching publicly available internet forums. If anybody can participate in the online communication without any restrictions, it can be defined as public communication and hence is comparable to content analysis of conventional mass media, such as newspapers and magazines (Langer and Beckman, 2005).

In other words, researchers intending to use netnography must be aware that there are few shared criteria for applying and interpreting netnography. This situation creates problems for ensuring quality in research and causes confusion. Therefore, a critical issue for future research is to raise awareness of the diverging adherence of prior studies to the original principles of netnography (Kozinets, 2002). A key challenge for service researchers is, thus, to understand the guidelines of netnography and the ongoing debate about the diverse applications of netnography. Future studies must establish how the principles can be adapted and adopted for service research.

Conclusions

This study involved analyzing 321 netnographic marketing studies published between 1997 and 2017 and providing a comprehensive overview and synthesis of the use of netnography in marketing. In doing so, this study adds to and extends previous research on netnography as a research method (e.g. Kozinets, 1998, 2002; Sandlin, 2007; Bartl *et al.*, 2016; Costello *et al.*, 2017). While Costello *et al.* (2017), for example, focused on how netnography should be used and emphasized Kozinets (2002, 2006, 2010, 2015) methodological guidelines, the focus here was on mapping out what has been done under the label of netnography in the field of marketing and what future opportunities exist for service researchers.

The findings of this study reveal an increase in the popularity of netnography in marketing research, which arguably reflects the intensified online activity of customers (Dumitricia and Gaden, 2009). Customers' lives are increasingly moving online, and netnography provides a useful tool for service researchers who wish to follow customers into the digital world (Kozinets, 2006; Rokka, 2010). As the first generation of "digital natives" grows up to become the customers of tomorrow (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008; Thomas, 2011), the interest in, and need for, netnography among service researchers should continue to increase.

This study reveals that a variety of marketing research fields and topics have been researched through netnography over the years. More than a quarter of these studies were carried out in a services context and about one-sixth involved a service perspective. Unsurprisingly, different aspects of online consumer behavior and culture have been atop the netnographic research agenda. The findings also show a diversity of ways in which marketing researchers have applied netnography. This variation in netnographic studies shows a flexible qualitative method with multiple uses for marketing researchers. On the basis of this review and analysis, this article has presented and discussed marketing fields, marketing topics and methodological applications that provide fresh avenues for netnographic service research.

In addition to empirical research, there should be more methodological research on netnography. As evident from this review, concurrently with the increased use of the method, marketing researchers have strayed from Kozinets' (2002, 2006, 2010, 2015) methodological guidelines. Today, the scope of what is labeled as netnography is much broader than originally envisioned by Kozinets and involves both overt and covert research strategies (Langer and Beckman, 2005). According to Costello *et al.* (2017), researchers who adopt a passive non-participatory approach often miss opportunities for co-creating knowledge in online communities and social media spaces. Hence, there is a need for a renewed discussion of the methodology of netnography. It is also important to remember that different research questions require different netnographic approaches. For example, none of the recommended marketing topics could be explored with a "one-size-fits-all" netnographic research design. Therefore, more discussion on when certain types of methodological applications are and are not suitable is encouraged.

To conclude, it is noteworthy that this study faced certain limitations. Even though systematic literature reviews are regarded as more objective than traditional literature reviews (Egger *et al.*, 2008), there is still room for the researcher's subjective influence. For example, when using the descriptors "netnography OR netnographic" in the literature search, some relevant articles may have been excluded if they used similar but different keywords, such as "digital ethnography," "virtual ethnography," "online ethnography" or "cyber-ethnography". Furthermore, including additional databases in the search might have generated more netnographic marketing studies to analyze. Finally, the decision to include only articles written in English and published in marketing journals means that interesting netnographic studies in conference papers, doctoral dissertations and book chapters and in other languages might have been overlooked. Despite its limitations, this study provides a platform for future netnographic service research.

References

Adjei, M.T., Noble, S.M. and Noble, C.H. (2010), "The influence of C2C communications in online Brand communities on customer purchase", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 38 No. 5, pp. 634-653.

Aksoy, L. (2013), "How do you measure what you can't define? The current state of loyalty measurement and management", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp. 365-381.

American Marketing Association (AMA) (2013), "American marketing association's definition on marketing", available at: www.ama.org/AboutAMA/Pages/Definition-of-Marketing.aspx (accessed 14 April 2018).

Anderson, J.C. and Gerbing, D.W. (1988), "Structural equation modeling in practice: a review and recommended two-step approach", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 103 No. 3, pp. 411-423.

Anderson, L., Ostrom, A.L., Corus, C., Fisk, R.P., Gallan, A.S., Giraldo, M., Mende, M., Mulder, M., Rayburn, S. W., Rosenbaum, M.S., Shirahada, K. and Williams, J.D. (2013), "Transformative service research: an agenda for the future", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 8, pp. 1203-1210.

Andreassen, T.W. and Streukens, S. (2009), "Service innovation and electronic word-of-mouth: is it worth listening to?", *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 249-265.

Bahl, S. and Milne, G.R. (2006), "Mixed methods in interpretive research: an application to the study of self concept", In: Belk, R.W. (ed.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*, Edward Elgar, Northampton, MA, pp. 198-218.

Baka, V. (2016), "The becoming of user-generated reviews: looking at the past to understand the future of managing reputation in the travel sector", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 53, pp. 148-162.

Ball, M.S. and Smith, G.W.H. (1992), *Analyzing Visual Data*, SAGE Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

Baron, S. and Russell-Bennett, R. (2016), "Editorial: the changing nature of data", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 30 No. 7, pp. 673-675.

Bartl, M., Kumar Kannan, V. and Stockinger, H. (2016), "A review and analysis of literature on netnography research", *International Journal of Technology Marketing*, Vol. 11 No. 2, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJTMKT.2016.075687.

Baumgartner, H. and Pieters, R. (2003), "The structural influence of marketing journals: a citation analysis of the discipline and its subareas over time", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 67 No. 2, pp. 123-139.

Belz, F.M. and Peattie, K. (2012), *Sustainability Marketing: A Global Perspective*, 2nd Ed., John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

Bengtsson, A., Ostberg, J. and Kjeldgaard, D. (2005), "Prisoners in paradise: subcultural resistance to the marketization of tattooing", *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 261-274.

Berthon, P., Pitt, L., Kietzmann, J. and McCarthy, I.P. (2015), "CGIP: managing consumer- generated intellectual property", *California Management Review*, Vol. 57 No. 4, pp. 43-62.

Bickhart, B. and Schindler, R. (2001), "Internet forums as influential sources of consumer information", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 31-40.

Björk, P. and Kauppinen-Räisänen, H. (2012), "A netnographic examination of travelers' online discussions of risks", *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 2-3, pp. 65-71.

Black, I.R. (2011), "Sorry not today: self and temporary consumption denial", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 10 No. 5, pp. 267-278.

Bou-Franch, P. and Blitvich, P.G.-C. (2014), "Conflict management in massive polylogues: a case study from YouTube", *Journal of Pragmatics*, Vol. 73, pp. 19-36.

Braunsberger, K. and Buckler, B. (2011), "What motivates consumers to participate in boycotts: lessons from the ongoing Canadian seafood boycott", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp. 96-102.

Broderick, A., Maclaran, P. and Ma, P.Y. (2003), "Brand meaning negotiation and the role of the online community: a mini case study", *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 75-103.

Brown, S. and Patterson, A. (2009), "Harry potter and the service-Dominant Logic of marketing: a cautionary tale", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 25 Nos 5/6, pp. 519-533.

Brown, S. and Patterson, A. (2010), "Selling stories: harry potter and the marketing plot", *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 27 No. 6, pp. 541-556.

Brown, S., Kozinets, R.V. and Sherry, J.F. (2003), "Teaching old brands new tricks: retro branding and the revival of Brand meaning", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 67 No. 3, pp. 19-33.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2011), *Business Research Methods*, 3rd Ed., University Press, Oxford, UK.

Caliandro, A. (2014), "Ethnography in digital spaces: Ethnography of virtual worlds, netnography, and digital ethnography", In: Sunderland, P. and Denny R. (eds.), *Handbook of Anthropology in Business*, Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, pp. 738-761.

Catterall, M. and Maclaran, P. (2002), "Researching consumers in virtual worlds: a cyberspace odyssey", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 228-237.

Chan, K.W. and Li, S.Y. (2010), "Understanding consumer-to-consumer interactions in virtual communities: the salience of reciprocity", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 63 Nos 9/10, pp. 1033-1040.

Chandler, J.D. and Chen, S. (2016), "Practice styles and service systems", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 27 No. 5, pp. 798-830.

Chandler, J.D. and Lusch, R.F. (2014), "Service systems a broadened framework and research agenda on value propositions, engagement, and service experience", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 6-22.

Chhabra, D., Woojin, L., Zhao, S. and Scott, K. (2013), "Marketing of ethnic food experiences: authentication analysis of Indian cuisine abroad", *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Vol. 8 Nos 2/3, pp. 145-157.

Christiansen, G.L. and Olson, J.C. (2002), "Mapping consumers' mental models with ZMET", *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 19 No. 6, pp. 477-501.

Christodoulides, G. (2009), "Branding in the post-internet era", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 141-144.

CIA World Factbook (2016), available at: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/ (accessed 5 June 2016).

Cocker, H.L. and Cronin, J. (2017), "Charismatic authority and the YouTuber: unpacking the new cults of personality", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 455-472.

Colliander, J. and Hauge Wien, A. (2013), "Trash talk rebuffed: consumers' defense of companies criticized in

online communities", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 47 No. 10, pp. 1733-1757.

Corciolani, M. (2014), "How do authenticity dramas develop? An analysis of afterhours fans' responses to the band's participation in the Sanremo music festival", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 185-206.

Costello, L., McDermott, M.-L. and Wallace, R. (2017), "Netnography: range of practices, misperception", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 1-12.

Cova, B., Pace, S. and Skålén, P. (2015), "Brand volunteering: value co-creation with unpaid consumers", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 465-485.

Croft, R. (2013), "Blessed are the geeks: an ethnographic study of consumer networks in social media, 2006-2012", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 29 Nos 5/6, pp. 545-561.

Cross, S.N.N. and Gilly, M.C. (2014), "Consumption compromises: negotiation and unification within contemporary families", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 67 No. 4, pp. 449-456.

Denyer, D. and Tranfield, D. (2006), "Using qualitative research synthesis to build an actionable knowledge base", *Management Decision*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 213-227.

Dubuisson-Quellier, S. (2015), "From targets to recruits: the status of consumers within the political consumption movement", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 39 No. 5, pp. 404-412.

Dumitricia, D. and Gaden, G. (2009), "Knee-high boots and six-pack abs: autoethnographic reflections on gender and technology in second life", *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 4-23.

Dwivedi, M. (2009), "Online destination image of India: a consumer based perspective", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 226-232.

Edelman, D.C. (2010), "Branding in the digital age. You're spending your money in all the wrong places", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 88, pp. 63-69.

Edvardsson, B., Gustafsson, A. and Roos, I. (2005), "Service portraits in service research: a critical review", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 107-121.

Egger, M., Smith, G.D. and Altman, D. (2008), *Systematic Reviews in Health Care: Meta – Analysis in Context*, BMJ Publishing Group, London, UK.

Ekpo, A.E., Riley, B.K., Thomas, K.D., Yvaire, Z., Henderson Gerri, G.-R. and Munoz, I.I. (2015), "As worlds collide: the role of marketing management in customer-to-customer interactions", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 68 No. 1, pp. 119-126.

Epp, A.M. and Price, L.L. (2011), "Designing solutions around customer network identity goals", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 75 No. 2, pp. 36-54.

Eriksson, P. and Kovalainen, A. (2008), *Qualitative Methods in Business Research*, SAGE Publications, London.

Ertimur, B. and Gilly, M.C. (2012), "So whaddya think? Consumers create ads and other consumers critique them", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 115-130.

Ewing, M.T., Wagstaff, P.E. and Powell, I.H. (2013), "Brand rivalry and community conflict", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 4-12.

Fernandez, K.V., Brittain, A.J. and Bennett, S.D. (2011), "Doing the duck': negotiating the resistant-consumer identity", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 45 Nos 11/12, pp. 1779-1788.

Fisher, D. and Smith, S. (2011), "Cocreation is chaotic: what it means for marketing when no one has control", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 325-350.

Fournier, S. and Avery, J. (2011), "The uninvited Brand", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 193-207.

Füller, J., Jawecki, G. and Mühlbacher, H. (2007), "Innovation creation by online basketball communities", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 60 No. 1, pp. 60-71.

Füller, J., Matzler, K. and Hoppe, M. (2008), "Brand community members as a source of innovation", *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, Vol. 25 No. 6, pp. 608-619.

Gabl, S. and Hemetsberger, A. (2012), "Collective authentication", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 40, pp. 553-560.

Gannon, V. and Prothero, A. (2016), "Beauty blogger selfies as authenticating practices", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 50 Nos 9/10, pp. 1858-1878.

Gary, M.S. and Wood, R.E. (2011), "Mental models, decision rules, and performance heterogeneity", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 6, pp. 569-594.

Gatzweiler, A., Blazevic, V. and Piller, F.T. (2017), "Dark side or bright light: destructive and constructive deviant content in consumer ideation contests", *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, Vol. 34 No. 6, pp. 772-789.

Gebauer, J., Füller, J. and Pezzei, R. (2013), "The dark and the bright side of co-creation: triggers of member behavior in online innovation communities", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 9, pp. 1516-1527.

Giesler, M. and Pohlmann, M. (2003), "The anthropology of file sharing: consuming napster as gift", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 30, pp. 273-279.

Gilmore, J.H. and Pine, B.J. (2007), *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.

Gremler, D. (2004), "The critical incident technique in service research", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 65-89.

Griffin, A. and Hauser, J.R. (1993), "The voice of the customer", *Marketing Science*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 1-27.

Grincheva, N. (2014), "The online museum: a placeless space of the civic laboratory", *Museum Anthropology Review*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 1-21.

Grönroos, C. (1984), "A service quality model and its marketing implications", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 36-44.

Grönroos, C. (2008), "Service logic revisited: who creates value? And who co-creates?", *European Business Review*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 298-314.

Guesalaga, R., Pierce, M. and Scaraboto, D. (2016), "Cultural influences on expectations and evaluations of service quality in emerging markets", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 88-111.

Gummesson, E., Lusch, R.F. and Vargo, S.L. (2010), "Transitioning from service management to service-dominant logic – observations and recommendations", *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 8-22.

Gummesson, E., Kuusela, H. and Närvänen, E. (2014), "Reinventing marketing strategy by recasting supplier/customer roles", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 228-240.

Habibi, M.R., Laroche, M. and Richard, M.-O. (2014), "Brando communities based in social media: how unique are they? Evidence from two exemplary Brand communities", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 123-132.

Hamilton, K. and Alexander, M. (2017), "Spatial, temporal and social dimensions of a 'destination-in-motion'", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 51 Nos 11/12, pp. 2101-2117.

Hamilton, K. and Hewer, P. (2009), "Salsa magic: an exploratory netnographic analysis of the salsa experience", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 36, pp. 502-508.

Hamilton, K. and Wagner, B. (2011), "An exploration of spectacular consumption at the movies: Mamma Mia!", *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 375-390.

Harrison, R.L. and Reilly, T.M. (2011), "Mixed methods designs in marketing research", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 7-26.

Hartmann, B.J. and Ostberg, J. (2013), "Authenticating by re-enchantment: the discursive making of craft production", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 29 Nos 7/8, pp. 882-911.

Hassan, M., Mydock, S., III, Pervan, S.J. and Kortt, M. (2016), "Facebook, self-disclosure, and Brand-mediated intimacy: identifying value creating behaviors", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 15 No. 6, pp. 493-502."

Healy, M.J. and Beverland, M.B. (2013), "Unleashing the animal within: exploring consumers' zoomorphic identity motives", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 29 Nos 1/2, pp. 225-248.

Heinonen, K. and Strandvik, T. (2015), "Customer-dominant logic: foundations and implications", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 29 Nos 6/7, pp. 472-484.

Heinonen, K., Strandvik, T., Mickelsson, K.-J., Edvardsson, B., Sundström, E. and Andersson, P. (2010), "A customer dominant logic of service", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 531-548.

Helkkula, A. (2011), "Characterising the concept of service experience", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 367-389.

Hemetsberger, A. (2005), "Creative cyborgs: how consumers use the internet for self- realization", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 32, pp. 653-660.

Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K.P., Walsh, G. and Gremler, D.D. (2004), "Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: what motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 38-52.

Hernandez, M.D. and Vicdan, H. (2014), "Modeling word of mouth vs. media influence on videogame preorder decisions: a qualitative approach", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 401-406.

Hjorth, L., Horst, H., Galloway, A. and Bell, G. (2017), *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Hollebeek, L.D. and Chen, T. (2014), "Exploring positively-versus negatively-valenced Brand engagement: a conceptual model", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 62-74.

Hollenbeck, C.R. and Zinkhan, G.M. (2010), "Anti-Brand communities, negotiation of Brand meaning, and the learning process: the case of Wal-Mart", *Consumption Markets & Culture*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 325-345.

Hong, S. and Kim, C.-H. (2013), "Surfing the Korean wave: a postcolonial critique of the mythologized middlebrow consumer culture in Asia", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 53-75.

Hsu, S.-Y., Dehuang, N. and Woodside, A.G. (2009), "Storytelling research of consumers' self- reports of urban tourism experiences in China", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 12, pp. 1223-1254.

Hult, G.T.M., Reimann, M. and Schilke, O. (2009), "Worldwide faculty perceptions of marketing journals: rankings, trends, comparisons, and segmentations", *Global Edge Business Review*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 1-23.

Hvass, K.A. and Munar, A.M. (2012), "The takeoff of social media in tourism", *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 93-103.

Ismail, A.R. (2011), "Experience marketing: an empirical investigation", *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, Vol. 10 No. 3, pp. 167-201.

Izberk-Bilgin, E. (2012), "Infidel brands: unveiling alternative meanings of global brands at the nexus of globalization, consumer culture, and Islamism", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 39 No. 4, pp. 663-687.

Kedzior, R. (2014), *How Digital Worlds Become Material: An Ethnographic and Netnographic Investigation in Second Life*, Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki.

Keeling, D. and Laing, A. (2015), "Health communities as permissible space: supporting negotiation to balance asymmetries", *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 303-318.

Keeling, D., Khan, A. and Newholm, T. (2013), "Internet forums and negotiation of healthcare knowledge cultures", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 59-75.

Keinan, A. and Kivetz, R. (2011), "Productivity orientation and the consumption of collectable experiences", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 935-950.

Kelleher, C., Whalley, A. and Helkkula, A. (2011), "Collaborative value co-Creation in crowd-Sourced Online communities–acknowledging and resolving competing commercial and communal orientations", *Research in Consumer Behavior*, Vol. 13, pp. 1-18.

Kerrigan, F., Larsen, G., Hanratty, S. and Korta, K. (2014), "Gimme shelter': experiencing escape through the Musicalisation of running", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 147-166.

King, S.A. (1996), "Researching internet communities: proposed ethical guidelines for reporting of results", *Information Society*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 119-127.

Kjellberg, H., Azimont, F. and Reid, E. (2015), "Market innovation processes: balancing stability and change", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 44, pp. 4-12.

Kozinets, R.V. (1997), "I want to believe: a netnography of X-philes' subculture of consumption", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 470-475.

Kozinets, R.V. (1998), "On netnography: initial reflections on consumer investigations of cyberculture", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 366-371.

Kozinets, R.V. (1999), "E-tribalized marketing? The strategic implications of virtual communities of consumption", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 252-264.

Kozinets, R.V. (2002), "The field behind the screen: using netnography for marketing research in online communities", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 61-72.

Kozinets, R.V. (2006), "Click to connect: netnography and tribal advertising", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 46 No. 3, pp. 279-288.

Kozinets, R.V. (2010), *Netnography. Doing Ethnographic Research Online*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Kozinets, R.V. (2015), *Netnography: Redefined*, 2nd Ed., Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Kozinets, R.V. (2018), "Netnography for management and business research", In: Cassell, C., Cunliffe, A. and Grandy, G. (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods*, SAGE, London, pp. 384-397.

Kozinets, R.V. and Handelman, J.M. (2004), "Adversaries of consumption: consumer movements, activism, and ideology", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 691-704.

Kulmala, M., Mesiranta, N. and Tuominen, P. (2013), "Organic and amplified eWOM in consumer fashion blogs", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 20-37.

La Rocca, A., Mandelli, A. and Snehota, I. (2014), "Netnography approach as a tool for marketing research: the case of dash-P&G/TTV", *Management Decision*, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 689-704.

Laing, A., Keeling, D. and Newholm, T. (2011), "Virtual communities come of age: parallel service, value, and propositions offered in communal online space", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 27 Nos 3/4, pp. 291-315.

Langer, R. and Beckman, S. (2005), "Sensitive research topics: netnography revisited", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 189-203.

Laroche, M., Habibi, M.R. and Richards, M.-O. (2013), "To be or not to be in social media: how Brand loyalty is affected by social media", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 76-82.

Leipämaa-Leskinen, H. (2011), "Cultural analysis of dieting consumers' construction of bodies and identities", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 360-373.

Leonard, D.A. and Rayport, J.F. (1997), "Spark innovation through empathic design", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 75 No. 6, pp. 102-103.

Liang, L. and Scammon, D.L. (2011), "E-Word-of-Mouth on health social networking sites: an opportunity for health communication", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 10 No. 6, pp. 322-331.

Lindblad, E. and Ostberg, J. (2011), "The cultural role of stigmatized youth groups: the case of the Partille Johnnys of Sweden", *Research in Consumer Behavior*, Vol. 13, pp. 127-143.

Luedicke, M.K. (2006), "Brand community under fire: the role of social environments for the HUMMER Brand community", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 33, pp. 486-493.

Lugosi, P., Janta, H. and Watson, P. (2012), "Investigative management and consumer research on the internet", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 24 No. 6, pp. 838-854.

Lund, N.F., Cohen, S.A. and Scarles, C. (2018), "The power of social media storytelling in destination branding", *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, Vol. 8 (June), pp. 271-280.

Luo, X., Songshan, H. and Brown, G. (2014), "Backpacking in China: a netnographic analysis of donkey friends' travel behaviour", *Journal of China Tourism Research*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 67-84.

Lusch, R.F. and Vargo, S.L. (2014), *Service-Dominant Logic: Premises, Perspectives, Possibilities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

McAfee, A. and Brynjolfsson, E. (2012), "Big data: the management revolution", *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 61-69.

McArthur, E. (2015), "Many-to-many exchange without money: why people share their resources", *Consumption Markets & Culture*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 239-256.

McGrath, M.A., Sherry, J.F., Jr. and Diamond, N. (2013), "Discordant retail Brand ideology in the house of barbie", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 12-37."

Maignan, I. and Lukas, B.A. (1997), "Entry mode decision, the role of managers' mental models", *Journal of Global Marketing*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 7-22."

Martin, D., Woodside, A.G. and Dehuang, N. (2007), "Etic interpreting of naïve subjective personal introspections of tourism behavior: analyzing visitors' stories about experiencing Mumbai, Seoul, Singapore, and Tokyo", *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 14-44.

Medberg, G. and Heinonen, K. (2014), "Invisible value formation: a netnography in retail banking", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 6, pp. 590-607.

Mikkonen, I., Moisander, J. and Fuat Fırat, A. (2011), "Cynical identity projects as consumer resistance – the scrooge as a social critic?", *Consumption Markets & Culture*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 99-116.

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994), *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Misopoulos, F., Mitic, M., Kapoulas, A. and Karapiperis, C. (2014), "Uncovering customer service experiences with Twitter: the case of airline industry", *Management Decision*, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 705-723.

Mkono, M. (2012), "A netnographic examination of constructive authenticity in Victoria falls tourist (restaurant)

experiences", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 387-394.

Mkono, M. (2013), "African and Western tourists: object authenticity quest?", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 41, pp. 195-214.

Mkono, M. and Markwell, K. (2014), "The application of netnography in tourism studies", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 48, pp. 289-291.

Mkono, M., Markwell, K. and Wilson, E. (2013), "Applying Quan and Wang's structural model of the tourist experience: a Zimbabwean netnography of food experience", *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 5, pp. 68-74.

Moraes, C., Michaelidou, N. and Meneses, R.W. (2014), "The use of Facebook to promote drinking among young consumers", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 30 Nos 13/14, pp. 1377-1401.

Mulrow, C.D. (1994), "Rationale for systematic reviews", *Bmj (Clinical Research Ed.)*, Vol. 309 No. 6954, pp. 597-599.

Muñiz, A.M., Jr. and O'Guinn, T.C. (2001), "Brand community", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 412-432.

Muñiz, A.M. and Schau, H.J. (2007), "Vigilante marketing and consumer-Created Communications", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 35-50.

Närvänen, E., Saarijärvi, H. and Simanainen, O. (2013), "Understanding consumers' online conversation practices in the context of convenience food", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 5, pp. 569-576.

Negra, A., Mzoughi, N. and Bouhlel, O. (2008), "E-procrastination: a netnographic approach", *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 103-109.

Nelson, M.R. and Otnes, C.C. (2005), "Exploring cross-cultural ambivalence: a netnography of intercultural wedding message boards", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 58 No. 1, pp. 89-95.

Nelson, M.R., Keum, H. and Yaros, R.A. (2004), "Advertainment or adcreep game players' attitudes toward advertising and product placements in computer games", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 3-21.

Nguyen, H.P., Chen, S. and Mukherjee, S. (2014), "Reverse stigma in the Freegan community", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 67 No. 9, pp. 1877-1884.

O'Sullivan, S.R., Richardson, B. and Collins, A. (2011), "How Brand communities emerge: the beamish conversion experience", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 27 Nos 9/10, pp. 891-912.

Oakes, S., Dennis, N. and Oakes, H. (2013), "Web-based forums and metaphysical branding", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 29 Nos 5/6, pp. 607-624.

Ostrom, A.L., Parasuraman, A., Bowen, D.E., Patrício, L. and Voss, C.A. (2015), "Service research priorities in a rapidly changing context", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 127-159.

Ottman, J., Stafford, E. and Hartman, C. (2006), "Avoiding green marketing myopia", *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, Vol. 48 No. 5, pp. 22-36.

Pain, H. (2012), "A literature review to evaluate the choice and use of visual methods", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 303-319.

Palfrey, J. and Gasser, U. (2008), *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*, Basoc Books, New York, NY.

Pan, Y. and Zhang, J.Q. (2011), "Born unequal: a study of the helpfulness of user-Generated Product reviews", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 87 No. 4, pp. 598-612.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1985), "A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 49 No. 4, pp. 41-50.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1988), "SERVQUAL: a multiple-Item Scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp. 12-40.

Patton, M.Q. (2002), *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, 3rd Edition, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Pentina, I. and Amos, C. (2011), "The Freegan phenomenon: anti-consumption or consumer resistance?", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 45 Nos 11/12, pp. 1768-1778.

Pentina, I. and Spears, N. (2011), "Reasons behind body art adoption: what motivates young adults to acquire tattoos", *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 73-94.

Podoshen, J.S. (2013), "Dark tourism motivations: simulation, emotional contagion and topographic comparison", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 35, pp. 263-271.

Prahalad, C.K. and Ramaswamy, V. (2004), "Co-creating unique value with customers", *Strategy & Leadership*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 4-9.

Puri, A. (2007), "The web of insights – the art and practice of webnography", *International Journal of Market Research*, Vol. 49 No. 3, pp. 387-407.

Quester, P.G. and Fleck, N. (2010), "Club med: coping with corporate Brand evolution", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 94-102.

Quinton, S. and Harridge-March, S. (2010), "Relationships in online communities: the potential for marketers", *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 59-73.

Rageh, A., Melewar, T.C. and Woodside, A. (2013), "Using netnography research method to reveal the underlying dimensions of the customer/tourist experience", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 126-149.

Rand, W. and Rust, R.T. (2011), "Agent-based modelling in marketing: guidelines for rigor", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 181-193.

Rokka, J. (2010), "Netnograpic inquiry and new translocal sites of the social", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 381-387.

Rokka, J. and Moisander, J. (2009), "Environmental dialogue in online communities: negotiating ecological citizenship among global travellers", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 199-205.

Rollins, M., Nickell, D. and Wei, J. (2014), "Understanding salespeople's learning experiences through blogging: a social learning approach", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 43 No. 6, pp. 1063-1069.

Rosenthal, B. and Brito, E.P.Z. (2017), "How virtual Brand community traces may increase fan engagement in Brand pages", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 60 No. 3, pp. 375-384.

Roy, N., Gretzel, U., Yanamandram, V.K. and Waitt, G.R. (2015), "Reflecting on ethics in netnographic research", 2015 ANZMAC Conference: Innovation and Growth Strategies in Marketing, Sydney, *University of New South Wales*, *Australia*, pp. 347-353.

Russell, C.A. and Schau, H.J. (2014), "When narrative brands end: the impact of narrative closure and consumption sociality on loss accommodation", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 40 No. 6, pp. 1039-1062.

Rust, R.T. and Huang, M.H. (2014), "The service revolution and the transformation of marketing science", *Marketing Science*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 206-221.

Sandlin, J.A. (2007), "Netnography as a consumer education research tool", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 288-294.

Santos, M.V. and Garcia, M.T. (2006), "Organizational change: the role of managers' mental models", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 305-320.

Schau, H.J., Muñiz, A.M. and Arnould, E.J. (2009), "How Brand community practices create value", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73 No. 5, pp. 30-51.

Schouten, J.W. and McAlexander, J.H. (1995), "Subcultures of consumption: an ethnography of the new bikers", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 43-61.

Sheth, J.N. and Parvatiyar, A. (1995), "Ecological imperatives and the role of marketing", In: Polonsky, M.J. and Mintu Wimsatt, A.T (eds.), *Environmental Marketing*, The Haworth Press, New York, NY, pp. 3-20.

Sibai, O., de Valck, K., Farrell, A. and Rudd, J. (2014), "Keyboard warriors in cyberfights: conflicts in online communities of consumption and its effects on community resources", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 42, pp. 697-698.

Sigala, M. (2012), "Social networks and customer involvement in new service development (NSD): the case of www.mystarbucksidea.com", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 24 No. 7, pp. 966-990.

Simmons, G. (2008), "Marketing to postmodern consumers: introducing the internet chameleon", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 42 Nos 3/4, pp. 299-310.

Spiggle, S. (1994), "Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 491-503.

Stewart Loane, S. and D'Alessandro, S. (2014), "Empowered and knowledgeable health consumers: the impact of online support groups on the doctor-patient relationship", *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 238-245.

Strandvik, T., Holmlund, M. and Edvardsson, B. (2012), "Customer needing: a challenge for the seller offering", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 132-141.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998), *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd Edition, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Sullivan Mort, G., McColl-Kennedy, J.R., Kiel, G. and Soutar, G.N. (2004), "Perceptions of marketing journals by senior academics in Australia and New Zealand", *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 51-61.

Tähtinen, J. and Halinen, A. (2002), "Research on ending exchange relationships: a categorization, assessment and outlook", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 165-188.

Takhar, A. and Chitakunye, P. (2012), "Rich descriptions: evoking informant self-reflexivity in marketing and consumer research", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 28 Nos 7/8, pp. 912-935.

Thomas, M. (2011), *Deconstructing Digital Natives – Young People, Technology and the New Literacies*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Thomas, J.B. and Peters, C.O. (2011), "Which dress do you like? Exploring brides' online communities", *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 148-160.

Tikkanen, H., Hietanen, J., Henttonen, T. and Rokka, J. (2009), "Exploring virtual worlds: success factors in virtual world marketing", *Management Decisions*, Vol. 47 No. 8, pp. 1357-1381.

Tranfield, D., Denyer, D. and Smart, P. (2003), "Toward a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 207-222.

Tunçalp, D. and Lê, P. (2014), "(Re)locating boundaries: a systematic review of online ethnography", *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 59-79.

Tussyadiah, I.P. and Fesenmaier, D.R. (2009), "Mediating tourist experiences – access to places via shared videos", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 24-40.

Tynan, C., McKechnie, S. and Chhuon, C. (2010), "Co-creating value for luxury brands", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 63 No. 11, pp. 1156-1163.

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2004), "Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 68 No. 1, pp. 1-17.

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2008), "Service dominant logic: continuing the evolution", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 1-10.

Vargo, S.L., Wieland, H. and Akaka, M.A. (2015), "Innovation through institutionalization: a service ecosystems perspective", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 63-72.

Walther, C.S. and Sandlin, J.A. (2011), "Green Capital and social reproduction within families practicing voluntary simplicity in the US", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 36-45.

Ward, K. (1999), "Cyber-ethnography and the emergence of the virtually new community", *Journal of Information Technology*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 95-105.

Watson, T.J. (2011), "Ethnography, reality, and truth: the vital need for studies of 'how things work' in organizations and management", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 202-217.

Watson, P., Morgan, M. and Hemmington, N. (2008), "Online communities and the sharing of extraordinary restaurant experiences", *Journal of Foodservice*, Vol. 19 No. 6, pp. 289-302.

Weijo, H., Bean, J. and Rintamäki, J. (2017), "Brand community coping", *Journal of Business Research*, doi: org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.10.054.

Weijo, H., Hietanen, J. and Mattila, P. (2014), "New insights into online consumption communities and netnography", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 67 No. 10, pp. 2072-2078.

Woodside, A.G., Cruickshank, B.F. and Dehuang, N. (2007), "Stories visitors tell about Italian cities as destination icons", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 162-174.

Wu, M.-Y. and Pearce, P.L. (2016), "Tourism blogging motivations: why do Chinese tourists create little lonely planets?", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 537-549.

Wuenderlich, N.V., Heinonen, K., Ostrom, A.L., Patrício, L., Sousa, R., Voss, C. and Lemmink, G.A.M. (2015), "Futurizing smart service: implications for service researchers and managers", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 29 Nos 6/7, pp. 442-447.

Xia, L. (2013), "Effects of companies' responses to consumer criticism in social media", *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 73-100.

Xun, J. and Reynolds, J. (2010), "Applying netnography to market research: the case of the online forum", *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 17-31.

Yang, Z. and Fang, X. (2004), "Online service quality dimensions and their relationships with satisfaction: a content analysis of customer reviews of securities brokerage services", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 302-326.

Zaglia, M.E. (2013), "Brand communities embedded in social networks", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 2, pp. 2016-2223.

Further reading

Brown, S. (2012), "World's largest metaphor hits iceberg: travelling in trope on TITANIC", *Research in Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 14, pp. 353-369.

Brown, S. (2014), "I'm buying Jack! fooling around an ambiguous Brand", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 108-121.

Cervellon, M.-C. and Wernerfelt, A.-S. (2012), "Knowledge sharing among green fashion communities online: lessons for the sustainable supply chain", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 176-192.

Cova, B. and White, T. (2010), "Counter-Brand and alter-Brand communities: the impact of web 2.0 on tribal marketing approaches", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 26 Nos 3/4, pp. 256-270.

Dellarocas, C. (2003), "The digitization of word of mouth: promise and challenges of online feedback mechanisms", *Management Science*, Vol. 49 No. 10, pp. 1407-1424.

Ferguson, R. (2008), "Word of mouth and viral marketing: taking the temperature of the hottest trends in marketing", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 179-182.

Gurrieri, L. and Cherrier, H. (2013), "Queering beauty: fatshionistas in the fatosphere", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 276-295.

Healy, J.C. and McDonagh, P. (2013), "Consumer roles in Brand culture and value co-creation in virtual communities", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 9, pp. 1528-1540.

Key, T.M., Boostrom, R.E., Jr., Adjei, M.T. and Campbell, D.A. (2013), "Watch out: themes in timepiece communities of counterfeit consumption", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 307-317.

Larsen, H.G. (2014), "The emerging shanghai city Brand: a netnograpic study of image perception among foreigners", *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 18-28.

Lu, D. (2011), "Emic interpretations of global gaming destinations: travel blog stories about experiencing Macau, Las Vegas, and Monaco", *Advances in Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 5, pp. 111-152.

Martin, D. and Woodside, A.G. (2011), "Storytelling research on international visitors: interpreting own experiences in Tokyo", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 27-54.

Palmer, A. and Huo, O. (2013), "A study of trust over time within a social network mediated environment", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 29 Nos 15/16, pp. 1816-1833.

Patterson, T. and Brown, S. (2009), "Never tickle a sleeping bookworm: how readers devour Harry Potter", *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 27 No. 6, pp. 818-832.

Phil, C. (2013), "In the borderland between personal and corporate brands – the case of professional bloggers", *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 112-127.

Phil, C. (2014), "Brands, community and style – exploring linking value in fashion blogging", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 3-19.

Podoshen, J.S. and Hunt, J.M. (2011), "Equity restoration, the holocaust and tourism of sacred sites", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 32 No. 6, pp. 1332-1342.

Podoshen, J.S., Venkatesh, V. and Jin, Z. (2014), "Theoretical reflections on dystopian consumer culture: black metal", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 207-227.

Pongsakornrungsilp, S. and Schroeder, J.E. (2011), "Understanding value co-creation in a co- consumed Brand community", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 303-324.

Radford, S.K. and Bloch, P.H. (2012), "Grief, commiseration, and consumption following the death of a celebrity", *Journal of Consumer Culture*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 137-155.

Richardson, B. (2013), "It's a fix!' the mediative influence of the X factor tribe on narrative transportation as persuasive process", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 122-132.

Yazıcıoğlu, E.T. and Borak, E. (2012), "A coke is a coke?' Interpreting social media anti – Brand rhetoric and resolution", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 40, pp. 561-566.

Scaraboto, D. and Fischer, E. (2013), "Frustrated fatshionistas: an institutional theory perspective on consumer quests for greater choice in mainstream markets", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 39 No. 6, pp. 1234-1257.

Scaraboto, D., Carter-Schneider, L. and Kedzior, R. (2013), "At world's end: exploring consumer-marketer tensions in the closure of adverworlds", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 29 Nos 13/14, pp. 1518-1541.

About the authors

Dr Kristina Heinonen is a Professor of Service and Relationship Marketing at Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland, and the Director of the Centre for Relationship Marketing and Service Management (CERS) at Hanken. Dr Heinonen holds a Fulbright Research Fellowship from the University of Massachusetts Boston and an Adjunct Professorship at University of Tampere. She is an internationally recognized expert on service marketing and management and she has had a significant influence on the advancement of service research, especially in the areas of value creation, service technologies, and customer experience. She has authored more than 50 scientific articles in leading scientific journals and 70 conference publications. Dr Heinonen is on the scientific committees of leading service research journals and academic conferences.

Dr Gustav Medberg is a Postdoctoral Researcher at CERS, Centre for Relationship Marketing and Service Management, at the Department of Marketing at Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland. His main research interests include service logic, service marketing and management, value creation and destruction and qualitative research methods. Dr Medberg has authored journal articles, book chapters and conference papers on these topics. He also regularly serves as a reviewer of several marketing and service research journals. Gustav Medberg is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: gustav.medberg@hanken.fi