IJRM special section introduction: EMAC distinguished marketing scholar papers

It has been my honor to serve as the Editor for the papers that follow, and it is indeed a privilege to provide some background and a brief introduction.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of EMAC in 2008, the EMAC President at the time, (the late) George Avlonitis observed that many professional societies similar to ours had awards for lifetime achievement in the profession and he felt EMAC ought to have one as well. The EMAC Executive Committee agreed and charged me to draft a protocol for such an award, which, after some discussion, became the EMAC Distinguished Scholar Award. I was privileged to Chair the Selection Committee for the initial two years of the award—2010 and 2011.

The protocol states:

This annual award is designed to be the highest honor that a marketing educator who has had extensive connections with EMAC can receive. The two main criteria for the award are: (1) Outstanding marketing scholarship as reflected in extensive, impactful research contributions and (2) Outstanding contributions to the European Marketing Academy.

The winner will receive the award at the annual EMAC Conference where the winner will present a research lecture at a special session in their honor. The winner will also *be invited to submit an associated research article to IJRM* and a shorter article to the EMAC Chronicle.

The criteria considered when evaluating nominees are:

Heaviest weight:
1. Research contributions
2. Contributions to EMAC

Important, but of lesser weight:
3. Teaching and mentoring
4. General creativity/innovativeness
5. Service to the marketing community and the public at large

The protocol goes on to discuss the nomination and the rigorous selection process; but note the italicized item above: the winner *is invited to submit a research article to IJRM*. The papers published here are four of those research articles. As submitted articles, they were subjected to rigorous (although normally constructive) review by the very top marketing scholars, with revisions expected and ultimate publication not guaranteed.

The protocol does not include a timetable, and these Distinguished Scholars, like the rest of us, have busy agendas and work on different schedules. In years past, it was not uncommon for IJRM not to publish an article in a given issue-year, either due to a delay in submission or revision or because the Scholar declined to submit an article. This year, we had the unusual precedent of having four (!) articles coming to closure at about the same time, providing the opportunity for the following special section. They represent the Scholars named from 2016 to 2019, as follows:

2016 Marnik Dekimpe (Tilburg University and KU Leuven): "Retailing and retailing research in the age of big data analytics". Marnik notes that the retail sector has for many years provided an excellent domain for research, given its general visibility and large volume of high-quality data. Marnik asks whether that attractiveness will continue as many of the trends that Roland identifies in his article (next) take hold, particularly the big data revolution. He addresses his question from five perspectives, retail managers, retailing researchers, public policy makers, investors, and retailing educators, providing interesting and challenging answers in each case.

2017 Roland T. Rust, (University of Maryland): "The future of marketing". In this provocative article, Roland identifies technological, socioeconomic and geopolitical trends that are inducing radical changes in the marketing function, providing challenges to marketing managers' ability to adapt in order to keep up. He focuses much attention on the technological domain, where he argues that artificial intelligence, big data and the expansion of networks are deepening the importance of relationships and making marketing's traditional 4P approach obsolete. Roland's observations have important implications both for researchers and for marketing educators, who wish to be relevant in our rapidly changing world.

2018 Donald R. Lehmann (Columbia Business School): "The evolving world of research in marketing and the blending of theory and data". In this paper Don reflects on the changes in academic research in marketing over the last fifty years, focusing on how to address the increased attention to theory and how to rationalize that increased attention with empirical model testing. He then presents a way to combine theory (intuition, expectations) with data to form a model. He then raises some concerns about the way research is typically conducted today. To my reading, one of his goals is to help guide academic marketing researchers to determine the best way to advance marketing knowledge.

2019: Eitan Muller (Stern School of Business, New York University and Arison School of Business, The Interdisciplinary Center (IDC)): "Delimiting disruption: Why Uber is disruptive, but Airbnb is not". Eitan addresses the issue of disruption, presenting a framework that follows diffusion theory and, in light of that framework asks: which of three major innovations of the last decade, namely iPhone, Uber and Airbnb is truly disruptive? He confronts and criticizes the current theory of disruption, noting the gap between the substantial literature on disruption in strategy journals and the almost complete lack of interest in marketing. His focus on "disruption"—a change in the behavior of major industry actors—leads both to a potential answer to the question above as well a rich set of research questions for marketing scholars.

Constrained as we all are by page limits on papers, EMAC Scholar papers vary in their breadth versus their depth: some drill down on a particular, important topic (Muller and Dekimpe in this case) and others provide a much broader perspective (as Lehmann and Rust do). But all are important contributions to our literature.

To my view, all marketing academics, PhD students and thoughtful marketing managers should read and discuss these EMAC Scholar papers. Hence, I will close this introduction with further recommended reading: the remaining five past EMAC Scholar papers:

2015 Gary L. Lilien (Penn State): "The B2B Knowledge Gap" IJRM Vol. 33, Issue 3, Sept 2016, 543–556, 323–334

2012 Gilles Laurent (ESSEC Business School): "Respect the Data!" IJRM Vol 30, Issue 4, Dec 2013. Pp 323–334.

2011 Sönke Albers (Kuhne Logistics University): "Optimizable and implementable aggregate response modeling for marketing decision support" IJRM, Vol 29, 2012, Issue 2, June p 111–122

2010 Peter Leeflang (University of Groningen) "Paving the way for "distinguished marketing"" IJRM Vol 28, Issue 2, June 2011 p. 76–88

2010 Berend Wierenga (Erasmus University): "Managerial decision making in marketing: The next research frontier" IJRM Vol 28, Issue 2, June 2011 pp 89–101.

To reiterate, it is a pleasure to introduce these four excellent, provocative articles. I hope you will enjoy reading and discussing them as much as I have!

Further reading

Albers, S. (2012). Optimizable and implementable aggregate response modeling for marketing decision support. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 29* (2), 111–122 June.

DeKimpe, M. (2020). Retailing and retailing research in the age of big data analytics. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 37*(1) March. (p. xx-xx).

Laurent, G. (2013). Respect the data! *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 30*(4), 323–334 December.

Leeflang, P. (2011). Paving the way for "distinguished marketing". *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 28*(2), 76–88 June.

Lehmann, D. R. (2020). The evolving world of research in marketing and the blending of theory and data. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 37*(1) March. (p. xx-xx).

Lilien, G. L. (2016). The B2B knowledge gap. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 33*(3), 543–556 September.

Muller, E. (2020). Delimiting disruption: Why Uber is disruptive, but Airbnb is not. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 37*(1) March. (p. xx-xx).

Rust, R. (2020). The future of marketing. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 37*(1) March. (p xx-xx).

Wierenga, B. (2011). Managerial decision making in marketing: The next research frontier. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol. 28*(2), 89–101 June.

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