

## Special Issue of the Journal of Services Marketing

### “Challenges and Opportunities for Services Marketers in a Culturally Diverse Global Marketplace”

#### Introduction

In the last couple of decades, rapid globalization has led to an increase in international travel, tourism and immigration, which in turn are creating a culturally diverse and complex global marketplace by bringing together customers and employees from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Sharma, Tam and Kim, 2009, 2012). This development offers new challenges and opportunities for services marketers because the culturally diverse customers and employees have significantly different expectations, perceptions and evaluations about service quality and its various dimensions (Etgar and Fuchs, 2011; Morales and Ladhari, 2011; Schoefer, 2010).

While the increase in the number of such intercultural interactions offer additional business opportunities to both local and global services marketers, it is also becoming difficult to design appropriate service offers to match the unique needs of culturally diverse customers and to deliver these through their service employees who may be used to a mono-cultural service environment. Interestingly, a similar phenomenon is already prevalent in multi-cultural societies such as United States, UK and Singapore among the developed countries and India, Brazil and South Africa among the emerging markets (Demangeot, Broderick and Craig, 2015).

Prior research on intercultural service encounters examines the role of cross-cultural consumer to consumer interactions (Johnson and Grier, 2013), emotional labour (Chuapetcharasopon, 2014), employee stress and coping (Wang and Mattila, 2010), preference for ethnic service staff (Baumann and Setogawa, 2014), attributions (Tam, Sharma and Kim, 2014) and intercultural communication competence (Ihtiyar and Ahmad, 2015). More recent research also explores the roles of moderators such as service role and outcome (Sharma, Tam and Kim, 2015), consumer ethnocentrism and intercultural competence (Sharma and Zhan, 2015) and personal cultural orientations (Sharma, Zhan and Su, 2016).

In this special issue, we plan to extend this growing research stream by inviting manuscripts that address the unique challenges and opportunities offered by the differences in the expectations, perceptions and evaluations of customers and service employees in their intercultural interactions in today's culturally diverse global marketplace. By doing this, we aim to help services marketing researchers look beyond the typical mono-cultural or cross-cultural views of customer-employee interactions that have been prevalent in services marketing literature. This special issue will also help services marketers recognize the importance of

understanding and accepting cultural differences between and among their customers and employees in multi-cultural societies and develop suitable strategies to manage these differences in their service design and delivery processes.

## **Scope**

We encourage both conceptual and empirical papers, using a variety of theoretical perspectives (e.g., socio-psychological, socio-economic, socio-cultural or anthropological) and methodologies (e.g., ethnographic, lab or field experiments, online or offline surveys, secondary data analysis or literature review and synthesis). We expect submissions with original theoretical contribution and not mere replications of established models and theories in new markets or cultural settings. The conceptual papers should not merely review but synthesize the relevant literature and identify important research gaps, in order to develop new or modified conceptual frameworks with testable propositions. We would like to receive submissions from all corners of the world so that we can learn from each other and help shape the future agenda for services marketing literature.

## **Topics**

Suggested topics include (but are not limited to) the following:

- How culture shapes customer and employee expectations, perceptions and evaluations in mono-cultural, multi-cultural and inter-cultural service encounters?
- Differences in the impact of personal cultural values and national cultural dimensions on customers and employees involved in inter-cultural service encounters.
- Implications for services marketers in terms of service design and delivery mechanisms in response to the cultural differences among their customers and employees.
- Interactions among cultural, socio-economic and demographic variables in their influence on diverse groups of customers and employees.
- Role of psychographic and socio-psychological processes such as attributions, stereotypes, cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation in inter-cultural service encounters.
- Differences in the influence of intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence in intercultural service encounters
- Cross-sectional versus developmental perspective of cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation; Impact of different stages of cross-cultural adjustment on culturally diverse customers and employees.
- Differences in marketing strategies adopted by local and global services marketers to understand and address the cultural differences among their customers and employees (e.g., standardization vs. customization, localization vs. globalization)
- Intercultural friction and conflict between service employees and customers and the resolution strategies; service failure and recovery in intercultural service encounters.

- How to foster trust and relationship in an intercultural service encounter setting?
- Role of internal marketing in creating a service culture among culturally diverse employees and their colleagues inside the service firm so that they could better deal with culturally diverse customers in intercultural service encounters.
- Implications of culturally diverse marketplaces for various elements of the marketing mix, including the core product or service, packaging, features, delivery process, employee selection and training, servicescape design etc.
- Role of human resources management (HRM) strategies and leadership in recruitment, training, and promotion of culturally competent frontline service employees.
- How to identify and develop new services to cater to culturally diverse customers; role of market research, service innovation and co-creation in new service design?
- How to address and leverage current themes of corporate social responsibility, environment protection and sustainability in the culturally diverse global marketplace?

### **Submissions**

All submissions should be made to the special issue identified on the ScholarOne Online Manuscript submission system <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jsmktg> . All submitted manuscripts should not have been published, accepted for publication, or be currently under consideration elsewhere. Manuscripts should follow the style guidelines available on the Journal of Services Marketing home page at: [www.emeraldinsight.com/jsm.htm](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/jsm.htm)

### **Key dates/deadlines**

30 Jun 2017 – Submission deadline

30 Apr 2018 – Complete final decisions and submissions

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