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Editorial: Marketing and Consumers in an Era of Disruption Caused by COVID-19 Pandemic | Ibrahim Sirkeci¹

Six months ago, nobody would think of a disruption in such a scale. COVID-19 pandemic starting in China, spreading across the grids of global human mobility (Sirkeci and Yucesahin, 2020) sent shock waves around the world and quickly brought life to a halt in many countries. Not only the anxiety and fear of a deadly virus spreading around but also the measures taken against it perhaps changed our lives as consumers, marketers, and researchers. The new norm is in progress as the old is troubled.

Marketing theory offers some insights into the potential impact of such disruptive events. COVID-19 pandemic with lockdowns across the world has definitely an impact on brand loyalty, switching behaviour as well as sustainability concerns among consumers. At the same time, organisations and marketers have felt a sudden need to switch to digital fully or partially depending on the sector and products and services offered. This is a process testing resilience. We will see some brands and organisations disappear while others shine. More agile and resourceful organisations are likely to survive and succeed, whereas those with limited ability taking the hit.

Airlines, tourism, out of home entertainment and hospitality industries have slumped under lockdown measures. It is important to recognise lengthy periods of lockdown are likely to lead to behavioural shifts. People will develop different interests and habits, although the current evidence is not conclusive (Tucker and Yu, 2020). Their return to these products and services are not guaranteed. "With social distancing keeping many people at home, we are seeing major shifts in behavioral trends" (Balis, 2020). Therefore, the troubling effect of the pandemic will be felt stronger. It is important to spend time now to join the bandwagon of creating entirely new businesses and business

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models which will emerge from this crisis irrespective of our reactions as individuals and organisations.

We are adjusting to the new reality or realities. The outcomes, reactions and responses are varying around the world. This is clear, for example, according to a McKinsey report², consumer optimism wildly varies between countries such as Japan and India. One sideline story here is the resilience of regional and national cultural differences. This will be reflected in performances during and after the pandemic and very likely to have a long-lasting effect.

Mark Kitson of *Marketing Week* urged marketers to prepare for long term effects.³ Another McKinsey report⁴ rightly pointed out the need to tap into consumer pulse, reactions and insights, to prepare for the future as the sense of trust and loyalty will be hard hit while consumers shop around in a rapidly changing marketing environment.

Many brands have also rushed to get where their customers are. For example, in the UK, some companies joined the effort in supporting the National Health Service⁵ (i.e. “associate your brand with good” as put by Balis 2020). Nevertheless, it is difficult to estimate how long it will take, for example, people to join the crowds in outdoor entertainment as was the case prior to the pandemic.

Communication channels are likely to shift. Although a big switch to online and social media marketing is expected, it will remain an open question until it happens. Another UK survey showed that COVID-19 crisis had forced about 85 per cent of marketing campaigns to change.⁶

Many marketers around the world have been working remotely from home since early February 2020. This is part of the new reality. They are pondering with questions about the ways in which organisations now should be talking to their customers? Where to spend marketing dollars? How to organise work across teams? What are the keys to ensure staying in business? What should be the stance(s) over the sustainability of the planet, clients, consumers, businesses, communities, and families? One thing is for sure that much more marketing research and thinking will be needed to assess the new reality and develop appropriate strategies to deliver in this

² <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/how-marketing-leaders-can-both-manage-the-coronavirus-crisis-and-plan-for-the-future>. Accessed: 14/04/2020.

³ <https://www.marketingweek.com/mark-ritson-marketing-covid-19/>. Accessed: 12/04/2020.

⁴ <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/adapting-customer-experience-in-the-time-of-coronavirus>. Accessed: 16/04/2020.

⁵ <https://www.marketingweek.com/brand-purpose-coronavirus-crisis/>. Accessed: 23/03/2020.

⁶ <https://econsultancy.com/stats-roundup-coronavirus-impact-on-marketing-ecommerce-advertising/>. Accessed: 10/04/2020.



environment. As Zoe Cheng, head of growth at Shanghai-based Cosmose stated amid this crisis, "there is no need to stop marketing".

This is why we have decided to run a **call for papers for a special issue on coronavirus pandemic** and its impact on marketing, markets and consumers. Please see below and check our website and share it with colleagues and students in and outside academia. We believe in the value of ongoing debate and engagement over this live disruption.

Transnational Marketing Journal is now celebrating its eight years. We have managed to build a quality standard and achieved success in reaching wider audiences and bringing interesting research and scholarship to an international audience.

In this issue of the Journal, we have articles dealing with a range of case studies from the airline industry to tourism and mobile phone services. Kelleci and Taşkın examine the role of crowdsourcing in Turkish defence and aerospace industry offering a systematic, empirical innovative assessment of crowdsourcing which has been a gap in the field. Wismiansi, Shihab, Hatta, and Tjandra reflect on one of the fastest growing start ups in Indonesia: Pegipegi, an online travel agent. This can be a good learning material for students of marketing. Masoud evaluates and discusses the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in mobile phone services in the Emirates. Key predictors of customer satisfaction through dimensions of service quality are identified and could be useful for marketing planners in this sector. Mohammed, Homaid, and Alaswadi studied the determinants of young consumers attitudes towards green products in Saudi Arabia. They argued that collectivist culture is the best predictor of green purchasing intentions of youth in this distinct market. Al Armoti, keeping us in the region, examined the impact of environmental context on entrepreneurship strategies in hotel and tourism industry. Heiets' article, in a way, compliments this discussion with a focus on the marketing strategies of Qantas and Thai airline companies in search of an optimum.

As usual, we invite all interested academics and practitioners in the field of marketing to submit their work to *Transnational Marketing Journal*. Articles with a clear international focus and substantial contribution are particularly welcome. If you are interested in and keen to lead scholarship in this field, we would like to hear from you to join as area editors or associate editors, or editorial board members.

We will be glad if you could please share the call for papers for our special issue copied below.

References

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Tucker, C. E. and Yu, S. (2020). The Early Effects of Coronavirus-Related Social Distancing Restrictions on Brands (1 April, 2020). Available at SSRN. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3566612>.

Call for Papers for Special Issue on “Coronavirus Pandemic and Disruptive Impact on Marketing and Consumers”

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This call for papers welcomes scholars to contribute to the special issue on the theme of coronavirus and its impact on markets, marketing, consumers and consumption. In March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the novel Coronavirus COVID-19 as a pandemic. The new virus accountable for an outbreak of respiratory illness has thought to be originated in Wuhan, the capital of the Hubei Province, China in November 2019. In a matter of a few months once a local epidemic took a global scale [due to human mobility](#). As the COVID-19 cases and death numbers have emerged across the world, regional and national lockdowns followed. Perhaps not the COVID-19 but the measures followed have had a significant impact on markets and consumers. In many countries, initial reaction to lockdowns was rushing to supermarkets to stock what is considered to be basic items. Predictably, the COVID-19 crisis adversely affected sectors beyond healthcare. While certain sectors had to close down for lengthy periods, lay off staff, others rushed to move their operations online. At the same time, some others saw sharp increases in their business volumes while also facing supply shortages. We are facing a global crisis where the vast majority of businesses are struggling to go “business as usual” and consumers are facing the challenges and a *lockdown* consumption culture seems to emerge.



Some industries had greater damage than others, as such, the legal restrictions and the closure of borders eliminated the functionality of airline, tourism and hospitality industries which are often, by nature, transnational. While some other businesses, such as, sportswear, sports equipment, cosmetic, fashion and many others took the opportunity to upscale by adapting and manoeuvring the digital landscape to render revenue. Consumers, on the other hand, are shifting their buying habits, increasingly exposed to substitutes, and new brands. We have already observed panic food and medical supply purchasing, spending more time at home reduced the interaction with bricks and mortar but increased the sales of online businesses.

The Editors of *Transnational Marketing Journal* invite researchers, scholars, practitioners and policy makers to submit their research articles, case studies, viewpoints, opinion pieces, debates, and reviews on this current crisis disrupting marketing as well as all realms of public and private. We aim to facilitate timely, swift and globally accessible research and informed perspectives on this critical global challenge.

The special issue aims to address the following, but not limited to:

- Media: polarisation, misinformation and the role of social media during the pandemic
- Macro Factors: Economy, Politics, Society and Technology
- Digital switch at haste: industries, consumers, markets
- Troubling promotions: advertising, PR, communication strategies in and beyond lockdown
- Environmental impact of the pandemic: How businesses are shifting patterns of activities and what are the outcomes of such actions.
- Value chain: scarcity, supply and distribution.
- Transnational scope: collaborative efforts, the best practices across borders.
- International competition and cooperation
- Brand loyalty, brand switching: substitutes, new markets, market entry opportunities
- Country and city case studies

Paper Submission

Submitted articles must not have been previously published or currently submitted for journal publication elsewhere. As an author, you are responsible for understanding and adhering to author guidelines

(<https://journals.tplondon.com/index.php/tmj/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>).

Submit online:

<https://journals.tplondon.com/index.php/tmj/author/submit/1>

Please read the guidelines before submitting your manuscript. Each paper will be subject to a double-blind review process. To facilitate timely discussion and contribution to the ongoing debates over COVID-19, accepted papers will be published on Early View online promptly, not waiting for the print edition.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries.

Important Dates:

Deadline of Manuscript Submission: 10 June 2020

Publication Date: 1 October 2020

Special Issue Editors:

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