Editorial

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Published online: 3 March 2020
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Since this is the first issue of the Italian Journal of Marketing (ITJM), we need to explain the journal's positioning, the contributions expected from authors, their implications for submissions, the ways in which the journal aims to contribute to the general debate on marketing, and its relevance for society.

First of all, ITJM is the Italian Marketing Association's (www.simktg.it) official journal and the reason for the title specifically referring to this culture. The journal, established in 2020, is the successor of *Mercati and Competitività*, the Association's previous official journal. *M&C* was published for almost 15 years (2004–2019). It was a double-blind review journal, originally published in Italian, and its official language switched to English rather recently. *M&C*'s evolution proves that the Italian marketing scholars have become increasingly committed to the international debate on marketing theory and research. Not only does the role that individual scholars play in international journals support this statement, but also the Italian Marketing Association's institutional-level decision to promote its journal as an international outlet and to use the services of an international publisher as we did with ITJM, a Springer journal.

ITJM is therefore an international outlet open to contributions by scholars from all corners of the world. As such, we aim to publish new and thought-provoking articles offering both theoretical contributions and methodological rigor, and are open to all theoretical and methodological approaches. Since marketing research can contribute to making business and society more effective, the journal aims at identifying academic marketing research that is relevant for decision-makers at profit, not-for-profit, and public institutions.

Furthermore, we are also interested in papers that address interesting and relevant issues from a contextual perspective (see Askegaard and Linnet 2011 for a consumer research perspective), which is a way of describing and interpreting phenomena that considers their specific historical, geographical, and cultural contexts as a relevant dimension from a methodological and theoretical point of view. In this sense, the industry structure, historical background, corporate history, and cultural roots play

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different roles in different areas. Examining relevant marketing phenomena from a local perspective and comparing them to more general frameworks offer interesting opportunities for theory testing and development. This is the kind of contribution we at ITJM greatly appreciate.

We at ITJM expect contributions from a mainly theoretical point of view that will improve extant and/or new theories' ability to interpret marketing-related phenomena accurately. Theoretically speaking, we believe that ITJM papers should challenge extant literature: following Tellis (2017), we are interested in publishing papers that partially or fully refute academic and professional audiences' assumptions (see also Moorman et al. 2019b). Challenging extant theories can be a matter of theory per se or of empirical evidence (new methods, new data, or both) that raises three basic questions:

- Which theory? Starting with Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007), there is extensive empirical evidence on how to contribute to theory building and testing. In marketing and related fields, such contributions often depend on theories borrowed from other disciplinary fields. However, in a recent paper, Zeithaml et al. (2020) argue that this is not necessarily so.
- Which methods? The journal is open to any data collection and analysis methodology. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods are equally valued as long as they are rigorously applied. We also appreciate case studies: brands, companies, clusters, and categories of any kind are interesting subjects for this journal. Moreover, we also appreciate contributions by theoretical papers that do not present any empirical evidence. Literature reviews are gradually changing and new resources (bibliometric data and data analysis tools) are available for more reliable analyses (Siddaway et al. 2019).
- Which data? Marketing research is based on empirical evidence, which very often consists of primary data. Reliable evidence from primary data can be very expensive and often difficult to replicate. Moreover, a huge variety and amount of data have recently emerged from the Web (Balducci and Marinova 2018). Scholars are developing tools and methods for collecting and analyzing these data, and contribute to marketing theory by making use of larger databases than in the past.

Finally, we at ITJM believe that relevance is extremely important—from an academic and a practice perspective. Academically speaking, we would like to contribute to the marketing debate by means of papers that approach actual, significant, and substantial issues; those that prove useful for other scholars in terms of meeting the rapidly changing environment with realistic descriptions and reliable interpretations (Moorman et al. 2019a); and those that do not rely on extreme sophistication and specialization, which often turn into elitist jargon and argumentation, as the provoking article by Tourish (2019) on management and organization research has shown.

As far as practice is concerned, we would like to publish papers that deal with relevant phenomena and produce meaningful and actionable outcomes. This is particularly important given the current dialectical interaction between the daily, analogic, local, and contextual dimension of corporate marketing processes and their more

general, digital, and global dimension. This divide depends from the specific regime in which business processes are embedded: cultural, historical, and even structural conditions. Marketing problems are often trapped between these dimensions and, as marketing scholars, our responsibility is to provide implications that fit both, since marketing professionals from all kinds of institutions (private, public or mixed) face the same challenge—managing apparently ordinary routines despite the ever changing environment.

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