Editorial

With research from Australia, India, USA and Europe the retail focus of this issue of *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* includes papers on conceptualisation of the shopper as behaviourally distinct from the consumer, gender differences in store loyalty and differences with age, how retail websites can engage customers during the course of website navigation, environmental management initiatives in the furniture retail area and trusting beliefs with purchase intention, uncertainty avoidance, a firm's reputation and price fairness.

The motivation for the first paper by Jones and Runyan was to explore a conceptualisation of the shopper as behaviourally distinct from the consumer. We seek to identify elements foundational to shopper behaviour, using insights from the extant literature. A path-to-purchase framework is proposed, and tested. The framework is further explored as a method for improving shopper segmentation. Over 300 articles associated with the shopper are examined using a bibliometric methodology. Our findings reveal five stages through which shoppers' progress in pursuit of purchase resolution. The exploratory study reveals the positive influence of each stage one on another. Additionally, shopper perception of the importance of the recipient and the occasion moderate relationships associated with purchase outcomes. The framework is suited for both industry and academia to better address shopper needs and the conflicting messages which result from the overlay of consumer behaviour on a shopper.

The second paper by Audrain-Pontevia and Vanhuele examined gender differences in store loyalty and how those differences evolve with age. Data for the study were collected in a survey of over 32,000 shoppers in more than 50 grocery stores belonging to the same chain. In total, 20 satisfaction items were factor-analysed, resulting in four satisfaction factors. A logistic regression with store exclusivity as the dependent variable was then run to test the research hypotheses. This study found that men were more loyal than women to the store chain, while women were more loyal than men to individual stores. Women's loyalty was more influenced by their satisfaction with interaction with store employees, while for men loyalty was more influenced by satisfaction with impersonal dimensions. Store loyalty increases with age, an effect that cannot be explained solely by declining mobility and cognitive impairment. This research examines declared behavioural practices rather than actual behaviour. However, in view of the high frequency of purchases in the retail category examined, and also because of the large sample of over 50 different stores, declared practices should be highly correlated with actual behaviour.

A customer's visit to a retail website is a critical "moment of truth" during which contemporary retailers attempt to simultaneously, during a single web navigation, capture customers' attention, build rapport and prompt them to act. The third paper by Demangeot and Broderick considers how retail websites can engage customers during the course of website navigation. A conceptual model of website customer engagement underpinned by relationship marketing and communication knowledge shows how perceptions of the website's exploration and sense-making potential can activate consumer engagement, and is then empirically tested. Using survey data, measures of the four dimensions of engagement (interaction engagement, activity engagement, behavioural engagement and communication engagement) and of three drivers were

developed and validated. The model is tested empirically using structural equation modelling. The results support the process conceptualisation of engagement, which identifies organismic as well as conative stages, and show the distinct roles played by perceptions of informational exploration, experiential exploration and sense-making in activating engagement. The study also provides online retailing practice with an organising framework enabling online retailing managers to consider how, depending on their product category and their size, they might (re)design their website to optimally produce customer engagement.

The purpose of the fourth paper by Zutshi, Creed, Holmes and Brain is to present an overview of environmental management initiatives in the furniture retail area. The specific aim is to present reflections of participants implementing environmental initiatives in an Australian furniture retailer in alignment with a secondary snapshot of environmental initiatives from other furniture retailers. Primary reflections from the retailer's manager and external consultant, both involved in the implementation of environmental initiatives are enriched with secondary review of environmental management system trends and examples from regions active in the designer furniture sector, including Europe, Southeast Asia and North America. An integrated view has been distilled around environmental impact in the furniture supply chain and consumer pressure to minimise the impact. Stakeholders require furniture retailers to improve efficiency and profitability amid the countervailing market demand for environmental sustainability. Retailers may seek competitive advantage through effectively applied and communicated environmental management. The voluntary adoption of systems, international standards and innovative practices that conserve natural resources are amongst the key to success. A live case example of Australian experience is added to the knowledge base for the global retail furniture industry.

The fifth paper by Sahi, Sekhon and Quareshi empirically models trusting beliefs with purchase intention, uncertainty avoidance, a firm's reputation and price fairness. The research is based on a sample of more than 200 internet customers in India. In understanding our data and the relationships that emerged, we use a range of tools including CFA and SEM. To validate our work we also examine alternative models. The study reveals that trusting beliefs are negatively influenced by an uncertainty avoidance culture and positively influenced by a firm's reputation and a customer's price fairness. Moreover, purchase intentions are significantly enhanced by trusting beliefs in an online environment. The paper shows how the internet, as a channel is influenced and thus how it can be managed. In making our contribution we provide guidance in terms of operational activity to engage with potential customers. By using a developing market for our empirical foundation, the findings are also applicable to markets displaying similar characteristics.

Neil Towers