Editorial

With the third issue of *Marketing ZFP* in 2021, we are returning to our usual publication mode of individual issues. The three articles in this issue cover an interesting spectrum of marketing topics. The first two contributions are dedicated to empirical research on substantive marketing issues, while the third paper is a methodological state-of-the-art article. We begin this issue with a paper by *Heribert Gierl* in which he explores the effect of symmetry on likeability. The second contribution by *Dirk Fischer* and *Sandra Praxmarer-Carus* deals with brand experiences that can create the feeling of brand attachment. The final paper by *Nils Goeken*, *Peter Kurz* and *Winfried J. Steiner* extends the methodological article by Paetz et al. (2019) published in issue 41(4) of *Marketing ZFP* by focusing on hierarchical Bayesian conjoint choice models.

In the article "Symmetry and Likeability: Prior Research and Transfer to the Field of Advertising," *Heribert Gierl* focuses on the effect of symmetry on likeability. First, he gives an overview of the empirical research on the relationship between symmetry and likeability, which sheds light on the reasons for the contradictory findings on the direction of this effect. Studies using meaningless and simple objects as stimuli consistently show a positive impact of symmetry on likeability. The fact that symmetrical objects are more easily assigned to a mental category ("symmetry") than asymmetrical ones triggers a feeling of familiarity, which participants in turn explain by a higher level of sympathy towards the stimulus. Studies that have systematically manipulated logos, product designs or websites and placed participants in the role of experts to judge the respective design, have resulted in inconsistent findings. Whether symmetrical or asymmetrical objects evoke feelings of likeability depends on whether symmetrical or asymmetrical objects are used as a standard of comparison. Second, the paper presents results of an empirical study using symmetrically versus asymmetrically designed advertisements for established, fictitious and lesser-known brands of consumer goods. The findings reveal a mediating effect of symmetry on ad likability via perceptions of regularity. For established brands, however, increased liking of the advertisement does not simultaneously translate into increased product liking or purchase intention. Instead, new or rather unknown brands seem to benefit from symmetrically designed ads.

In the second paper titled "What Consumer Responses Make a Brand Experience Create Brand Attachment?" *Dirk Fischer* and *Sandra Praxmarer-Carus* explain that if brand experience is supposed to create the feeling of brand attachment, mental representations of the brand experience need to be available at times of brand-related needs and suitable for the construction of attachment. They infer that the extent to which a consumer's brand experience contains pleasure, arousal, and distinctiveness determines the attachment formation by that brand experience. Two studies were conducted, in which the authors show that the pleasure, arousal, and perceived distinctiveness that a brand moment evokes increases brand attachment. Furthermore, they confirm that pleasure, arousal, and perceived distinctiveness mediate the effects of different types of brand experiences on brand attachment. The more a brand experience contains pleasure and perceived distinctiveness, the more it creates brand attachment. Finally, they discuss their findings and recommend that marketers use the three experience responses as a guide when creating marketing activities intended to strengthen brand attachment.

The third paper is a methodological paper about "Hierarchical Bayes Conjoint Choice Models – Model Framework, Bayesian Inference, Model Selection, and Interpretation of Estimation Results" by *Nils Goeken*, *Peter Kurz* and *Winfried J. Steiner*. In this paper the authors focus on the use of Hierarchical Bayes (HB)-Multinomial Logit (MNL) models for measuring consumer preferences, which is today considered state-of-the-art in choice-based conjoint (CBC) analysis. There are currently two prominent HB-CBC modeling approaches embedding the mixture-of-normals approach in the logit choice framework: the more widespread Mixture-of-Normals (MoN)-MNL model and the approach recently introduced to marketing literature, the Dirichlet Process Mixture (DPM)-MNL model. In their contribution, the authors apply the standard HB-MNL model with its normal prior, the MoN-MNL model, and the DPM-MNL model to an empirical multi-country CBC data set and compare their performance in terms of goodness-of-fit and predictive accuracy. Their core finding from the empirical study is that a one-component DPM-MNL model is the preferred model for representing heterogeneity in this multi-country CBC study if predictive accuracy is the primary objective. However, the standard MNL model with its unimodal prior also performs competitively.

We wish all readers of this issue a very inspiring read.

Yasemin Boztuğ, University of Goettingen, Germany and Dirk Temme, University of Wuppertal, Germany

Editors-in-Chief