

Editorial

The last issue of *Marketing ZFP – Journal of Research and Management* in 2024 includes three manuscripts from both recognized and early-career researchers. They address current challenges and possible theory-based solutions for companies from a marketing perspective. The first two manuscripts deal with challenges for retailers in times of severe consumer climate setbacks and increasing competition. The authors discuss the interrelations between customer experience dimensions as well as customer goals and needs when shopping online and offline. They use quantitative and qualitative approaches based on categorization theory and the jobs-to-be-done framework. The third article – written in German – discusses how startup initiation and survival in Northern Germany is supported by politics, business, and science.

To be more specific, in the first article, entitled “Reciprocal Effects of Cognitive, Affective, and Social Customer Experience on Customer Loyalty and Word-of-Mouth in Omnichannel Fashion Retailing”, *Nils Fränzel and Bernhard Swoboda* discuss an up-to-now under-researched phenomenon in shoppers’ customer experience (CX) at omnichannel retailers: the mutual dependencies of the affective, cognitive, and social CX dimensions. The independent influence of these CX dimensions on consumer behavior is well known. However, if these dimensions are interrelated, omnichannel retailers should take this into account when designing consumer journeys. The authors apply categorization theory rationales to analyze whether reciprocity exists among these dimensions and how reciprocally linked dimensions influence customer loyalty and word-of-mouth. A sample of 528 consumers evaluated leading German omnichannel fashion retailers over time. The longitudinal data are analyzed using cross-lagged panel models. The results show that the cognitive CX dimension largely determines the affective and social dimensions and occupies a central position because it benefits less from the latter two dimensions. The affective and social CX dimensions are mutually dependent.

The second article, written by *Alexandra Rese and Daniela Wolfschmidt*, entitled “In the Aftermath of the Pandemic: A Jobs-to-be-done Perspective on Stationary Retailing”, intends to help stationary retailers and city centers stay competitive. The pandemic has not only temporarily limited the possibility and convenience of visiting downtown retailers, but it has also further accelerated the structural change in retail towards online channels. The authors investigate this trend in more detail with a focus on the following research questions: How has consumer behavior changed due to the pandemic and which changes might be permanent in the long term? Which

goals do customers pursue when visiting the city center post-pandemic? Which differences do exist regarding demographics? To answer these questions, they employ the jobs-to-be-done framework, a rather new methodology that mainly consists of specific in-depth consumer interviews, coding, and aggregation. The underlying idea is that consumers pursue various jobs when buying products or services. Understanding these functional, personal, or social jobs is assumed to be a helpful starting point for product and service improvement. The methodology’s application in this article leads to valuable insights: The pursued jobs that consumers want to be done are closely interconnected. Consumers want to support local retailers with their shopping visits, but at the same time have functional and social motives, such as product inspection and a pleasant shopping experience.

The third article, written by *Janis Denk, Michel Clement, Maik Hammerschmidt, Nils Winterberg, Jan-Philipp Perperhowe, and Thorsten Wiesel*, analyzes “The Startup Funding Ecosystem in Northern Germany”. The authors put together a large database of startup support activities (e.g., incubators, financing offers, funding programs, consulting services, events) in the federal states of Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, and Schleswig-Holstein. These states generate 41.1 % of Germany’s gross domestic product. Secondary research and interviews with 71 experts from various fields ensured data completeness and validity. More than 2,500 support activities could be identified. The large number demonstrates how important these activities are seen by politics, business, and science: They help promising future wealth creators to emerge and to survive the difficult initial phases. The authors link these support activities with the actual number of start-ups in the federal states and find out that these figures and their relation are unevenly distributed. In their detailed analysis, they develop interesting implications for politics, business, and science.

With issue 4 in 2024, we publish our last issue as Editors-in-Chief of *Marketing ZFP – Journal of Research and Management*. We are happy to hand over responsibility for the next two years to our successors, Professor Martin Klarmann and Professor Udo Wagner. The editorial task was very inspiring and we would like to thank those who submitted and reviewed articles for their great commitment to this journal with the vision of building a bridge between theory and practice.

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