I am delighted to begin my term as Editor in Chief of the Journal of International Marketing (JIM). Having begun processing new manuscripts as of July 2019, and with this issue representing the first for which I processed all the manuscripts, I would like to take this opportunity to share my vision for JIM and to introduce this special issue on the role of the digital environment in international marketing.

Vision for JIM

I am extremely fortunate to benefit from the solid foundation for JIM established by previous editors, and particularly my immediate predecessor, Constantine S. Katsikeas (Katsikeas 2019). As evidence of this foundation, the number of submissions JIM receives is currently on an upward trajectory, with 136–175 new submissions received annually over the past two years. The journal also enjoys reputational advantages based on its position within the AMA’s portfolio of journals, and it has an impact factor among the highest for journals focused on international marketing. My hope is to build on the foundation established by the previous editors, helping enhance its reputation for quality research at the intersection of marketing theory and practice. In short, my vision for JIM is that it become the preferred outlet for research focused on international marketing phenomena and for research focusing on innovative and managerially relevant issues in this domain. In this editorial, I elaborate on this vision and my approach to achieving it.

To encourage submissions, I aim both to maintain an author-friendly review process and to build on and enhance the journal’s reputation for quality. With the help of a strong editorial team, which currently includes 5 associate editors and 73 editorial review board members, I am committed to maintaining the current quick review time of 38 days on average for decisions, excluding submissions deemed unsuitable for JIM. In addition, one of the changes I have implemented is that the Editor in Chief now selects both the associate editor and reviewers, consistent with the process at other, premier outlets under the AMA umbrella. This change enables me to ensure consistency in the reviewer selection process across submissions and to closely monitor the overall quality of the reviews being submitted. Editorial review board members will also be given feedback on their reviews on an annual basis in an effort to encourage improvement where needed and recognize excellence in their review efforts for JIM.

In furthering JIM’s reputation, I aim to broaden the scope and volume of submissions. Specifically, I encourage submissions focused on important, timely, and relevant substantive domains not currently represented in a major way in the journal. This goal is similar to the scope of JIM’s peer journals at the AMA (Grewal 2017; Moorman et al. 2019b; Wiener, Ellen, and Burton 2018). My preference is also to publish work that pushes boundaries as opposed to offering an incremental contribution (an endeavor currently employed in Journal of Marketing’s “Challenging the Boundaries” series; Moorman et al. 2019a). Research that has the potential to enhance the interest of practitioners in reading and potentially contributing to JIM, enabling us to build on the relationships already in place among the broader marketing community, is also strongly encouraged. As part of these efforts to broaden the scope of content in JIM, I also aim to publish special issues on a regular basis and to target timely and highly relevant topics. Next, I introduce the current issue, focused on the role of the digital environment in international marketing, which represents the first of these special issues.

Introduction to the Special Issue

In this section, I introduce the five articles included herein. Each one addresses an issue that either has the potential to stimulate a volume of relevant and impactful future research or pushes the boundaries of current knowledge in the international marketing domain by empirically examining an issue related to the digital environment in international marketing. In planning this issue, I reached out to a diverse set of authors, from some of the more senior researchers in the international marketing field, in the case of Jagdish Sheth, Jan-Benedict E.M. Steenkamp, and P.K. Kannan, to other rising stars beginning to make their mark in this domain, with the goal of bringing distinct perspectives on this topic. While this group of scholars also varies widely in terms of their areas of specialization, all are working in areas related to the context of digital marketing phenomena and for research focusing on innovative and managerially relevant issues in this domain.

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marketing in an international environment. Renana Peres has developed a reputation for her expertise in agent-based modeling and the penetration of new products on social networks, and Felipe Thomaz’s intriguing work on the incorporation of social networks into the understanding of black markets has gained attention from both scholars and others across a wide range of fields. As emerging scholars in a diverse set of fields, Hyoryung Nam, Sunali Talwar, Liav Alter, Michal Elhanan, and Yuval Friedman add their unique perspectives to their respective author teams as well. While Nam and Talwar are both in the marketing field, Alter, Elhanan, and Friedman bring expertise in computer science, physics, and both statistics and cognition, respectively, to their author team.

Each of the articles underwent the standard JIM peer-review process. As a result, the author teams revised their articles based on the critical feedback they received during this process. I believe that the five articles provide outstanding coverage of the range of issues related to the role of the digital environment that are influencing international marketing. This issue offers a strong foundation for future research.

The first three articles examine the impact of digital trends on international marketing, either broadly, considering the domain as a whole, as in the case of the article by Sheth; for global brand building and management, in the case of the article by Steenkamp; or for our understanding of the customer journey in the international context, as in the article by Nam and Kannan. In his article, “Global Brand Building and Management in the Digital Age,” Steenkamp (2020) describes important implications of five core underlying digital trends for global brand building and management, and for each trend he discusses key marketplace changes currently happening. Sheth’s (2020) article, “Borderless Media: Rethinking International Marketing,” describes the evolution of social media and its influence on marketing in terms of five key dimensions of value creation. In the third article, “Digital Environment in Global Markets: Cross-Cultural Implications for Evolving Customer Journeys,” Nam and Kannan (2020) examine the especially pertinent issue of how technology usage by customers and the nature of customer journeys differ significantly across global markets. All three of these articles offer a range of relevant and compelling future research directions in international marketing.

The following two articles empirically address cutting-edge phenomena from the perspective of international marketing, exemplifying my goal of encouraging work that pushes boundaries. In their article, “Narrowband Influencers and Global Icons: Universality and Media Compatibility in the Communication Patterns of Political Leaders Worldwide,” Peres et al. (2020) tackle the timely issue of communication strategies of global political leaders and examine the universality of the communications approaches of over 60 world leaders across both social and traditional media. Felipe Thomaz’s (2020) article, “The Digital and Physical Footprints of Dark Net Markets,” focuses on the understudied yet increasingly prevalent issue of the operation of black markets and criminal activity on the web. His article further argues why such contexts are relevant for international marketing. These two impactful and novel studies both conclude with recommendations for extending research in the international marketing domain related to the issues they explore.

Conclusion
This special issue represents a first step toward my goal of delivering on JIM’s aims to publish scholarly, managerially relevant articles on international marketing and to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In addition, I expect the ideas put forth in these articles to help guide researchers in a direction that focuses on substantive domains not currently represented in a major way in JIM. Taken together, this set of articles offers an exciting roadmap for future research related to role of the digital environment in international marketing. I hope these articles will help inspire innovative and compelling research in the years to come.

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