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Editorial

The focus of this issue is international retail management across a variety of subject and sector areas. The topics include assessing frontline employees' averted or direct gaze, the competitive position of the company Inditex in the period 1990-2013, the influence of consumer demographic and personality characteristics on fashion shopping proneness (FSP), the state of the retail sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the qualities of a small Swedish town centre.

The first submission by Andersson, Wästlund and Kristensson concerns the effect of frontline employees' averted or direct gaze on consumers' evaluation of the encounter. Research demonstrates that in normal interactions, a direct or averted gaze affects people's evaluation of others. The question was whether this finding would hold true in commercial interactions. Three experiments were conducted using a written scenario with a photograph among a total sample of over six hundred participants. The research showed that consumers' social impression of the frontline employees mediated the effect of the employees' gazing behaviour on consumers' emotions and satisfaction with the encounters. The findings also showed that averting gaze had a negative effect on consumers' first impression of the frontline employee, which affected consumers' satisfaction with the encounter. Finally the findings also showed that a direct gaze had a negative effect on encounter satisfaction when consumers sought to purchase embarrassing products.

The second contribution by de Jorge Moreno and Carrasco investigates the competitive position of the company Inditex in the period 1990-2013 as a case study, identified by academics and professionals as a successful company. The analysis has focused on the comparison of Inditex with its competitive environment. The methodology used to achieve the objectives was Data envelopment analysis (DEA) for the analysis of efficiency and Tobit regression to determine the factors explaining efficiency. We have used additional methodologies such as social networks or cluster analysis. The individual company analysis reveals that the average efficiency level by years for the period 1990-2013, is relatively high 88.8 percent. The determinants of efficiency have been the resources of the company in terms of assets whose relationship with is U-shaped curvilinear, where the minimum value (trend change) is produced between years 2002 and 2003. The degree of internationalization of the firm, is positively related to efficiency. As the company increases its expansion, experience and skills, it increases in efficiency. Finally, the effect of liberalization of textile trade in 2005 had no influence on the efficiency levels.

The global fashion industry is growing at a rapid pace and developing nations such as India are emerging as major contributors to the same. The third contribution by Roy and Sethuraman investigates the influence of consumer demographic and personality characteristics on fashion shopping proneness (FSP) in India. Data was collected from over 550 respondents using the mall intercept survey method and hypothesized relationships were assessed using multiple regression and structural equation modelling. The findings showed that demographics accounted for only 9% of the variance in FSP while personality characteristics accounted for 46% suggesting being agreeable, extroverted, open-minded, and stable are all positively associated with fashion shopping. With respect to demographics, managers could target young females as the primary segment for fashion clothing but cannot ignore young males and older females. With respect to personality, managers can appeal to agreeable, extroverted,

open-minded personalities by linking novelty, fun, relaxation and recreation with fashion buying.

Retailers and suppliers are facing the challenge of reconfiguring systems to accommodate increasingly mobile customers expecting multichannel options supporting quick and secure digital payment. The objective of the fourth paper by Nandonde and Kuada is to describe the state of the retail sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, to point out the lack of information on some critical issues and to raise some questions about relevant topics for researchers and practitioners in the retail area for the African market. This theoretical paper is a comprehensive review of the literature and integrates the fragmented body of knowledge on the area of retail internationalisation and food marketing. Four major topics were identified in the urban agri-food retail business in the African continent. Firstly large global retailers in Africa's food sector, secondly the internationalisation of African food retailers, thirdly the procurement practices of international retailers and finally the food-buying behaviour of Africa's middle class. This paper provides guidance as to how scholars can advance the study of retail internationalisation in Africa, not only through further empirical and conceptual research but also by developing usable prescriptions for agribusiness value-chain actors on the continent.

The purpose of the final contribution by Wahlberg is to explore the qualities of a small town centre and how such centres can enhance their attractiveness. A convenience sampling procedure was used to administer a web survey to visitors of a small Swedish town. Importance-performance analysis and statistical methods were used to analyse quality attributes and quality dimensions. Correlation analysis was run to measure the relationship between centre attractiveness and shopping loyalty. The variety of retail outlets is what is most valued by visitors to a small town centre, followed by the provision of events and non-commercial activities and the design and maintenance of the physical environment in the centre. Surprisingly, the interpersonal behaviour has less impact on the perceived attractiveness than the aforementioned quality dimensions. Visitors' shopping loyalty is significantly related to the perceived attractiveness. Traditional town centres have been integral to the surrounding societies, providing ancillary services beside retailing. When retail moves to out-of-town retail locations, this could lead to the erosion of interpersonal communications and central services for citizens.

Submission Summary

Title	Author 1	Author 2	Authors 3 & 4	First Submitted	Revised Date	Final Acceptance
The effect of gaze on consumers' encounter evaluation (See IJRDM-03-2015-0034.R3)	Pernille K. Andersson	Erik Wästlund	Per Kristensson	5 th March 2015	10 th December 2015	15 th December 2015
Efficiency, internationalization and market positioning in textiles fast fashion: The Inditex case. (See IJRDM-04-2015-0064.R3)	Justo de Jorge Moreno	Oscar Rojas Carrasco		30 th April 2015	9 th Nov 2015	3 rd January 2016
Fashion shopping proneness: Integrating demographic and personality factors in the Indian context (See IJRDM-12-2014-0162.R5)	Subhadip Roy	Raj Sethuraman	Rashmita Saran	4 th December 2014	1 st December 2015	3 rd January 2016
International firms in Africa's food retail business – emerging issues and research agenda (See IJRDM-12-2013-0224.R7)	Felix Adamu Nandonde	John Kuada		15 th March 2014	12 th January 2016	13 th January 2016
Small town centre attractiveness: Evidences from Sweden (See IJRDM-08-2014-0121.R3)	Olof Wahlberg			26 th August 2014	14 th November 2015	14 th January 2016