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Research Data in Marketing Journals

**ABSTRACT**

Our objective is to assess the geocentricity of research data in a selection of continentally based leading academic marketing journals. The assessment considers a six-year period, namely 2000-2005. The content analysis consisted of 811 published contributions. The empirical findings may be illustrative to other academic journals in the field of marketing. The assessment is summarised on an aggregated level and per journal title. The journal sample consists of the Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ), the European Journal of Marketing (EJM) and the Journal of Marketing (JM) – a cross-continental assessment. We contend that the selected journals should not be considered to be dramatically different in any particular sense in the area of academic marketing journals. On the contrary, together they may be quite representative of several others as well.

**INTRODUCTION**

The assessment of academic journals has been going on for several decades in economics (e.g. Hawkins, Ritter and Walter, 1973; Danielsen and Delorme, 1976). In management, it has been also concern for decades (e.g. Stahl, Leap and Wei, 1988). In marketing, it has been a topic of assessment for about two decades (e.g. Jobber and Simpson, 1988; Luke and Doke, 1987; Fry, Walters and Scheuermann, 1985). Polonsky and Whitelaw (2005) raise the concern what is assessed in the ranking of journals. Mostly, two areas have been used to assess journals in academia (e.g. Mason, Steagall, and Fabritius, 1997; Kim, 1991). One is citation-based (e.g. Baumgartner and Pieters, 2003; Jobber and Simpson, 1988), while the other is perception-based (e.g. Brown and Becker, 1991; Luke and Doke, 1987). There are other less frequent assessments used, such as the one of Polonsky, Jones and Kearsley (1999) who assess journals of marketing based upon accessibility. Czinkota (2000), Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft (2005) and Svensson (2005) assess the ethnocentricity in reputable journals of marketing. Furthermore, Day and Peters (1994) assess variety of journals based upon quality indicators in academic publishing. N.N. (2006a) assesses the research data collection of marketing journals. In addition, Emerald (Emerald Management Reviews, 2004) used differentiating factors to assess academic journals. Consequently, there are various assessment approaches in literature of marketing journals. In fact, most of them provide ranking lists of marketing journals (e.g. Hawes and Keillor, 2002). The fundamentals of these lists are doubtful (Uncles, 2004; Polonsky, 2004). The assessment of marketing journals have seldom addressed the geographic origin of research data (e.g. Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft, 2000; N.N., 2006b).

The geocentricity of research data may well be overlooked in the assessment of marketing journals. We argue that it is an important one that needs to be raised in the ongoing debate of journals. The practice of marketing is worldwide – a practice that varies across continents. Furthermore, marketing phenomena are multi-faceted. Therefore, the development of marketing theory should be derived from different sets of geographic research data. Our objective is to assess the geocentricity of research data in a selection of continentally based leading academic marketing journals.

**FRAME OF REFERENCE**

**Assessment of Academic Journals**
Hawes and Keillor (2002) argue that higher status is usually attributed to journals that are theoretical, scholar-oriented, highly quantitative or technical in nature. However, the assessment of journals is often based on single variables, such as perception (Luke and Doke, 1987) and citation (Jobber and Simpson, 1988). There is an ongoing assessment of how marketing journals are perceived and how they have been ranked by different sources (e.g. Bakir, Vitell and Rose, 2000; Clark, 1985; Fields and Swayne, 1991; Ganesh, Chandry and Henderson, 1990; Niemi, 1988; Petry and Settle, 1988; Pol, 1991; Spake and Harmon, 1998; and Trieschmann, Dennis, Northcraft and Niemi, 1999).

The assessment of academic journals has a strong emphasis on the perceived rank and quality of selected academics rather than the fundamentals applied in research, such as research data. Armstrong (2004) argues that the research in marketing journals does not provide much useful knowledge. In addition, McKenzie, Wright, Ball and Baron (2002) conclude that the readership of research produced by marketing faculty does not gain the readership of practitioners. November (2004) contends that marketing practitioners should ignore research in marketing. This is not surprising, because the publishing of research adheres to academic criteria used in journals. The primary readership is not intended to be the practitioners, but scholars. Furthermore, the outcome of marketing research is affected by the non-response rate and the generalisability of the sample and the subsequent findings (Blair and Zinkhan, 2006), which in turn affects the applicability to marketing practitioners.

There have been different characteristics considered in the assessment of academic journals. One of them is the compilation of aggregated lists. For example, Harzing (2000-2006) compiles journal quality lists that are updated periodically. The current list contains 16 different rankings of 861 journals. It is a collation of journal rankings from a variety of sources and they are reported separately. Consequently, the list is based upon a large number of cross-disciplinary journals, all of which also include marketing journals. Thus the list is derived from different sources and consists of different (various) ranking lists that are aggregated into one table. It applies a top-down approach, where a limited assessment usually underpins the compilation of each journal-ranking list. Contrary to Harzing (2000-2006), Emerald (Emerald Management Reviews, 2004) applied a bottom-up approach, where the assessment generates the compilation of four separate journal-ranking lists. These were cross-disciplinary journal rankings, including marketing journals that were provided and continuously updated by Emerald. It also used a broader – as well as a profounder – approach to assess journals across disciplines. It was based upon the foundation that research efforts published was independently assessed based upon four variables, namely research implications, practice implications, originality and readability. Each research effort was assigned one, two or three asterisks across these criteria, all of which were used to calculate the annual average score on each variable for each journal. Annually, this database compiled a journal ranking of the top 400+ management journals in the world across different disciplines. Unfortunately, this unique assessment approach in creating separate journal ranking lists was discontinued at the end of 2004.

**Rankings and Lists of Journals**

Academic journals of marketing have continuously increased during the last decades (Baumgartner and Pieters, 2003). Cabell (1997-98) has listed more than 550 journals of marketing. One reason for the increased number of marketing journals is that they position themselves into sub-disciplines or sub-areas (Baumgartner and Pieters, 2003; Malhotra, 1999). Another reason is that there is also a need among scholars to publish their research (e.g. Moxley, 1992). Publishing in peer-reviewed journals is a standard way through which
academics communicate their research (Mort, McColl-Kennedy, Kiel and Soutar, 2004). Therefore, books have been published to facilitate and to provide guidelines to publishing in academic journals (e.g. Lester and Lester, 2005; Booth, Colomb and Williams, 2003; Rozakis, 1999; Day, 1996).

The assessment of journals may be based upon a range of variables (e.g. Beed and Beed, 1996; Hawes and Keillor, 2002; Jones, Brinn and Pendlebury, 1996; Parnell, 1997; Rice and Stankus, 1983; Zinkhan and Leigh, 1999). For example, Parnell (1997) provides a taxonomy of journal quality variables based upon expert opinion surveys, citation counts, or a combination of both variables. Rice and Stankus (1983) provide variables of journals in such terms as: citation analysis of the journal (e.g. Social Sciences Citation Index), acceptance rate of the journal (e.g. Cabell’s Directory), sponsorship of the journal (e.g. American Marketing Association), objective of the journal (e.g. methodological approaches and readership) and fundamentals of the journal (e.g. authors, editor(s), review board, and their affiliations).

There are ranking lists of journals that are based upon a range of perceptions (e.g. Mylonopoulos and Theoharakis, 2001; Van Fleet, McWilliams and Siegel, 2000; DuBois, 2000; Trieschmann, Dennis and Northcraft and Niemi, 2000; Nisonger, 1999; Hult, Neese and Bashaw, 1997; and Enomoto, 1993). Informal lists are also used in business schools (Brumbaugh, 2002). The access to formal ranking lists appears to be important when research is evaluated (e.g. Theoharakis and Hirst, 2002; Van Fleet, 2000; Hult, Neese and Bashaw, 1997) as academics in the UK and Australia are being driven to publish in higher quality journals.

In literature, there has been an ongoing interest and discussion of marketing journals. (e.g. Mort, McColl-Kennedy, Kiel and Soutar, 2004; Theoharakis and Hirst, 2002; Hult, Neese and Bashaw, 1997). Historically, most research efforts to rank marketing journals have been based upon scholars in North America (e.g. Fry et al., 1985; Luke and Doke, 1987; Hult, Neese and Bashaw, 1997). Recently, a few other research efforts have been done in the Asian Pacific Region (e.g. Mort, McColl-Kennedy, Kiel and Soutar, 2004; Polonsky, Jones and Kearsley, 1999; Polonsky and Waller, 1993). Theoharakis and Hirst (2002) performed a worldwide survey. In addition, Easton and Easton (2003) focused on the UK.

There have been numerous attempts at journal rankings or the assessment of them (Hawes and Keillor, 2002). A few principal approaches of journal assessment are used. One approach is based upon citation analyses (e.g. Baumgartner and Pieters, 2003; Jobber and Simpson, 1988). The citation index is often interpreted to be unbiased and a true reflection of the ranking of journals, however for various reasons, this approach may bias the evaluation of journals. For example, journals from some regions may be missing (e.g. Nobes, 1995). Day and Peters (1994) argue that the citation index is dangerously flawed in that it is heavily biased towards high circulation journals, suffers from a single-item syndrome and that there is no direct correlation with quality per se. There may also be delayed effects (e.g. Jobber and Simpson, 1988). In addition, databases tend be restricted to a selection of journals (e.g. Neway and Lancaster, 1983), which may exclude a variety of other journals. For example, journals published in languages other than English tend to be excluded (e.g. French, German and Spanish journals or other languages). Uncles (2004) states that there are imperfections of journal rankings due to: the problem of journal selection, the problem of respondent familiarity, and the problem of respondent confusion. In addition, Polonsky (2004) raises the questions why rank journals and how should journals be evaluated.
Another approach is based upon perceptual assessment to underpin journal rankings (e.g. Brown and Becker, 1991; Luke and Doke, 1987). The perceptually-based journal assessment may vary and be biased for any number of reasons. They may be influenced by institutional and individual demographics (e.g. Hult, Neese and Bashaw, 1997). For example, research has often focused on leading institutions (e.g. Theoharakis and Hirst, 2002), or active researchers/Deans/Heads of Schools (e.g. Mort, McColl-Kennedy, Kiel and Soutar, 2004; Brown and Becker, 1991). The objective or focus of the assessment may have an impact too (e.g. Polonsky and Waller, 1993), as may regional variations (e.g. Danielsen and Delorme, 1976; Theoharakis and Hirst, 2002) and the journal’s focus (e.g. Danielsen and Delorme, 1976; Hawkins, Ritter and Walter, 1973). None of these studies have been based upon the geocentricity of research data.

**METHODOLOGY**

The sample that we have used in the assessment is restricted to three academic journals in marketing during a six-year period. They have been selected to represent different research communities in marketing and the leading marketing journal located in the continents of Australia, Europe and North America. The journal sample consists of the Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ), the European Journal of Marketing (EJM) and the Journal of Marketing (JM). Our assumption is that the characteristics of research data may vary between continents.

The editorial descriptions of the selected marketing journals were examined. The data was retrieved from the official homepage on the internet of each journal. An initial browsing of the sample was performed to get insights into each journal. Based upon the outcome of this procedure the time frame of assessment of the variables was limited to the beginning of 2000 to the end of 2005. Each contribution in the selected marketing journals was assessed into different categories according to the variables in Table 1. The collected data was quantified and the variables have been used in cross-tabulations to facilitate comparisons between journal characteristics and research data. All contributions published during the period January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2005 were examined. In total, the content analysis consisted of 811 contributions in the selected sample of the three academic marketing journals.

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<th>Assessment Variables</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) journal title</td>
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<td>b) year of publication (i.e. volume)</td>
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<td>c) issue of publication (i.e. number)</td>
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<td>d) editorial description</td>
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<td>e) empirical versus conceptual contributions</td>
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<td>f) national versus international research data</td>
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<td>g) continental belonging of research data</td>
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<td>h) continental author affiliation of empirical research data</td>
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*Table 1: Variables in the Tri-Continental Assessment.*

Citations, perceptions, accessibility and other variables used in literature are variables that focus on an outside-in approach of the journal content. They represent mostly single and aggregated variables to be used for journal rankings purposes. We have chosen to focus on different variables constituting academic marketing journals that have not been used in most of the previous research efforts in literature (see Table 1). These variables reflect an inside-out
approach. Consequently, our assessment of the selected academic marketing journals is limited to a selection of principal variables, such as empirical versus conceptual research, national versus international research data, continental belonging of research data, and continental author affiliation of empirical research data.

**EMPIRICAL FINDINGS – RESEARCH DATA IN MARKETING JOURNALS**

The empirical findings presented in this section are based upon the content analysis of 811 published contributions between 2000-2005 in the three selected journals (i.e. AMJ, EJM and JM) according to the assessment variables in Table 1.

*Please note that all tables have been left out due to space constraints!*

**Empirical versus Conceptual Contributions**

During the period 2000-2005 in the selected journals, 531 out of 811 contributions (i.e. 65.5%) are based upon empirical research data. 280 contributions (i.e. 34.5%) are not based upon empirical research data. There are different empirical and conceptual contributions published. Six aggregated approaches may be identified, such as those based upon quantitative, qualitative or triangular research designs (i.e. empirical contributions), reviews (i.e. includes general reviews, literature reviews, research agendas and conceptual contributions), commentaries and book reviews. Contributions based upon empirical research designs are to a large extent included in AMJ, EJM and JM. 15% is a compilation of general reviews, literature reviews, research agendas or conceptual contributions. Approximately one tenth (9.1%) is based upon commentaries and another tenth (10.4%) is based upon book reviews. Consequently, the selected journal proffers empirical research efforts, but they are also forums for other kinds of contributions.

**National versus International Research Data**

During the period 2000-2005 in the selected journals, 474 out of 531 empirical contributions (i.e. 89.3%) are based upon research designs that are limited to national research data (i.e. 58.4% of all contributions including the non-empirical ones). Only 57 out of the 531 contributions (i.e. 10.7%) are based upon research designs that comprise the collection of international research data (i.e. 7.0% of all contributions including the non-empirical ones).

**Continental Belonging of Research Data**

During the period 2000-2005 in the selected journals, the total number of contributions that are based (i.e. in part or solely) upon European research data was 222 (i.e. 41.8%). 192 contributions (i.e. 36.2%) are based upon (i.e. in part or solely) North American research data, 114 contributions (i.e. 21.4%) involve Australian research data, 62 contributions (i.e. 11.7%) use Asian research data, two contributions (i.e. 0.4%) apply African research data and one contribution (i.e. 0.2%) includes South American research data.

Consequently, the continental belonging of research data is heavily restricted to European, North American and Australian research data followed by Asian ones. African and South American research data are rare in the selected journals.

**Share of National Belonging of Research Data**

During the period 2000-2005 in the selected journals, 191 out of the 531 contributions (i.e. 36.0%) are solely based upon European research data. 166 contributions (i.e. 31.3%) are solely based upon North American data and 93 (i.e. 17.5%) are solely based upon Australian research data. 38 (i.e. 7.2%) have only used Asian research data. Only one contribution (i.e.
0.2%) is solely based upon African research data. No contributions are solely based upon South American research data. In sum, 489 contributions out of 531 (i.e. 92.1%) have a unique continental belonging of research data.

**Continental Author Affiliation of Empirical Research Data**
During the period 2000-2005 in the selected journals, the relative share of international research data varies to some extent between the continental belonging of author affiliations. The share of international research data of European author affiliations is higher than the others (i.e. 5.8%), which is followed by the North American ones (i.e. 4.1%), Australian and Asian ones (i.e. 3.4% and 2.1%). The few African and South American author affiliations have only used national research data.

There are, however, substantial differences between the share of international research data in relation to the national ones of the author affiliations. For example, 11 out of 41 (i.e. 26.8%) of the Asian author affiliations (i.e. 26.8%) have used international research data. They are followed by the Australians (i.e. 18.2%), the Europeans (i.e. 15.1%) and the North Americans (i.e. 11.1%).

**Number of Contributions per Journal Title**
During the period 2000-2005, 811 contributions were published in AMJ, EJM and JM. EJM published the amount of 453 contributions. In this respect, it is by far the largest journal of the three selected ones of the current review across continents. JM published approximately half the amount of contributions to EJM, namely 244. AMJ published 114 contributions in the same period. The latter may be due to that it is a newly established journal. As a matter of fact, AMJ had volume 13 in 2005, while EJM and JM had volumes 39 and 69 respectively.

**Empirical and Conceptual Approaches of Contributions per Journal Title**
There is significant association (Pearson Chi-Square: Sig: 0.00**; Value: 101.914; df: 10) between the approaches of contributions published and the journal titles – in AMJ, EJM and JM. For example, there are more quantitative research data and commentaries than expected in contributions of JM, while the qualitative research data and reviews are less than expected. The other categories of JM are as expected. There are less quantitative research data, book reviews and commentaries than expected in contributions of EJM, while there are more qualitative research data and reviews. The other categories of EJM are as expected. There are less quantitative research data and reviews in contributions of AMJ than expected, while there are more qualitative research data, book reviews and commentaries. The other categories of AMJ are as expected.

JM has more than two thirds of the contributions based empirical research data (70.5%), while EJM has less than two thirds (64.9%) and AMJ has a bit more than half of its contributions based upon empirical research data (57.1%). When it comes to reviews, EJM has more than one fifth (21.4%) of its contributions in this category, while AMJ has only 7.9% and JM has 6.5%. On the contrary, AMJ has almost one fifth of the contributions (18.4%) dedicated to commentaries, where EJM has only 5.3%. JM has 11.9% (that includes a series of eight brief commentaries on another contribution in 2004). AMJ includes a larger share of book reviews (16.7%) in relation to JM (11.1%) and EJM (8.4%).

There is significant association (Pearson Chi-Square: Sig: 0.00**; Value: 43.883; df: 4) between the categories of empirical research contributions published and journal titles AMJ, EJM and JM. For example, there are more quantitative and less qualitative research data in
JM than expected. AMJ and EJM have less quantitative and more qualitative research data than expected. The triangular research data are as expected in AMJ, EJM and JM.

9 out of 10 contributions in JM have quantitative research data (89.5%), while EJM and AMJ have less than two thirds (64.3%) and (63.1%) respectively. In addition, most of the triangular research data have quantitative research data. This means that almost 96.5% of the empirical research contributions in JM include quantitative research data. EJM has almost 73.5% and AMJ has nearly 72.3%. Interestingly, AMJ and EJM are almost identical when it comes to the share of the different categories of empirical research data.

National versus International Research Data per Journal Title
During the period 2000-2005, there is no significant association (Pearson Chi-Square: Sig: 0.175; Value: 3.489; df: 2) between the categories of research data (i.e. national and international) and journal titles (i.e. AMJ, EJM and JM). However, the share of international research data is largest in AMJ (i.e. 15.4%) followed by EJM (i.e. 11.6%) and JM (i.e. 7.6%). Consequently, the three journals are dominated by national research data.

Continental Belonging of Research Data per Journal Title
During the period 2000-2005, there are differences between the selected journals regarding the continental belonging of research data. For example, 79.1% of the contributions in JM have used North American research data. 14.1% and 4.7% are European and Asian research data. Australian research data is represented by 1.6% and South America with 0.5%. No African research data have been used in published contributions in JM. 72.2% of the contributions in AMJ have used Australian research data. 13.9% and 11.1% are European and Asian research data. North American research data is represented by 2.8%. No African and South American research data have been used in published contributions in AMJ. 56.1% of the contributions in EJM have used European research data. 17.9%, 13.6% and 11.8% are European, Asian and North American research data. African research data is represented by 0.6%. No South American research data have been used in published contributions in EJM.

Continental Author Affiliation with Empirical Research Data per Journal Title
During the period 2000-2005 in the selected journals, there are differences between the continental author affiliations with empirical research data and the journal titles. For example, 80.5% of the author affiliations in JM are North American, while 14.9% are European. Only 3.1% and 1.5% of them are Asian and Australian ones. There are no continental author affiliations from Africa and South America. 71.4% of the author affiliations in AMJ are Australian, while 18.2% are European. Only 7.8%, 1.3% and 1.3% of them are Asian, North American and African ones. There are no continental author affiliations from South America. 54.1% of the author affiliations in EJM are European, while 17.4%, 16.5% and 11.2% are North American, Australian and Asian ones. Only 0.6% and 0.3% of them are African and South American. Consequently, EJM has a broader representation of continental author affiliations in contributions with empirical research data. JM and AMJ are narrower in this sense.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS
In this final section, we summarize and present a number of concluding thoughts and reflections based upon the empirical findings of the selected journals for the period 2000-2005 shown.

Aggregated Level
On an aggregated level, a clear majority of the contributions in the selected journals are based upon empirical research data. It is quite obvious that empirical research data are proffered in the assessed marketing journals. We believe that this outcome is expected as they are all research oriented, but they also provide space for other contributions that may advance the understanding, knowledge and unity of the research community of marketing, such as the conceptual ones addressing research proposals and literature reviews.

The empirical research data is to a very large extent national. Only a minute part of the contributions are based upon international research data. We believe that it is a bit surprising that the selected journals do not have more international sets of research data, as they all aspire to be international journals. Probably, there are not enough research efforts based upon international research data taking place in the research community. Accordingly, this may be a dilemma in part beyond reach of the journals, but it should be encouraged!

Furthermore, the continental belonging of research data is predominantly European and North American, followed by Australian and Asian ones. Remarkably, there is almost no African and South American research data in the assessed journals. We believe that the lack of worldwide availability and representation of research data affects our current knowledge and understanding of the marketing phenomena. There is evidence in some fields of marketing that culture impact the marketing context but, we do not know much about these underrepresented continents, nor based upon current publication rates are we ever likely to know.

The share of national belonging of research data in contributions is concentrated to the same country. Only a minor share consists of a mix of national research data. The continental author affiliation of empirical research data is also dominated by European and North American ones, followed by Australians and Asians. The South American and African author affiliations are very rare.

**Journal Title Level**

On a journal title level, EJM is the largest – and AMJ is the smallest – journal of the three selected ones based upon the number of contributions. EJM publishes an impressive amount annually. In fact, it publishes four times the amount in AMJ and twice the number in JM. We believe that the volume of EJM is a fundament to enhance the possibility to gather a wider representation of continental research data, which would favor the worldwide research community.

The empirical contributions published in AMJ, EJM and JM are the ones based upon either quantitative, qualitative or triangular research data. However, triangular research data is not very frequent, but quantitative research data is dominant. When the different contributions are divided into journal titles a different distribution appears, namely that JM stands out to be heavily focused on quantitative research data. EJM has a broad focus on both quantitative and qualitative research data, as well as reviews. AMJ has a focus on quantitative and qualitative research data, as well as book reviews and commentaries.

There are only minor differences between national and international research data in the selected journal titles. The use of national research data is very high in AMJ, EJM and JM. JM has only a very small part of its publications using international research data, while AMJ has the largest share of international research data followed by EJM.
The continental belonging of research data per journal title is extremely narrow in JM and AMJ, while EJM is broader. Likewise, the continental author affiliation with empirical research data per journal title is narrow in JM and AMJ, while EJM is broader. Accordingly, EJM has a better representation than AMJ and JM. We believe that EJM’s distribution better reflects the image of a journal that strives to be international. In addition, we contend that being an international journal is not only about having an international readership, but it is also about having an international representation of contributions (i.e. both authors and content). In that sense, EJM is the leading one, but in other aspects JM is perceived as the primary international marketing journal. We pose the query – Why? How is it that it seems to be a narrow journal, (in various aspects) yet it is perceived as more international than other journals that appear to better fulfill the criteria of internationalization? One reason may well be that JM built its reputation and prestige when the world of marketing theory was the USA, but now it needs to be recognized that the USA is only one part of a worldwide marketing community.

Tentatively, these empirical findings may be illustrative to other academic journals in the field of marketing. In fact, we contend that the selected journals should not be considered to be dramatically different in any particular sense in the area of academic marketing journals. On the contrary, together they may be quite representative of several others as well.

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