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Top versus leading journals in marketing: some challenging thoughts

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Abstract

**Purpose** – The objective of this paper is to discuss some criteria in order to distinguish between top versus leading journals in marketing. The aim is to stimulate the debate of the adequacy of those issues that dominate in the top marketing journals.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The authors discuss three groups of criteria, namely journal, article, and research. Each is discussed based on a set of dimensions: journal criteria – the editor, the editorial board, the editorial objective and the author affiliations; article criteria – research implication, practice implication, readability and originality; and research criteria – process, paradigm, representation, readership and contribution.

**Findings** – While the top journals in marketing are named, the analysis is meant to be of a more general nature rather than to question or lambaste a specific journal.

**Research limitations/implications** – There is an underlying quest for identifying and verifying the top academic journals in different research disciplines. As an extension to the discussion of top versus non-top journals, the authors raise another crucial issue, namely criteria to differentiate between top and leading journals in marketing.

**Practical implications** – These criteria are based on the authors' examination of the editorial descriptions and overall contents of six top journals in marketing. The criteria are also derived from a review of the literature on academic journals and academic publishing.

**Originality/value** – The discussion may stimulate and widen debate with respect to what constitutes a leading academic journal in marketing. The suggested list of criteria should be seen as a trigger for further discussion. It does not aspire to be complete, but a complement to the ongoing discussion of academic journals and academic publishing in marketing.

**Definitions and limitations**

The definitions of what characterises a top marketing journal are generally vague in the literature. They are often based upon single-item measures, such as perception (Luke and Doke, 1987) and citation (Jobber and Simpson, 1988). We have undertaken a longitudinal literature review of how marketing journals are perceived and how they have been ranked by different sources. Doing so, the *Journal of Marketing* (see www.marketingpower.com), the *Journal of Marketing Research* (www.marketingpower.com) and the *Journal of Consumer Research* (www.journals.uchicago.edu/JCR/home.html) are all considered to be top journals in marketing by various authors (e.g. Bakir et al., 2000; Clark, 1985; Fields and Swayne, 1991; Ganesh et al., 1990; Niemi, 1988; Petry and Settle, 1988; Pol, 1991; Polonsky...
and Whitelaw, 2005; Speke and Harmon, 1998; Trieschmann et al., 2000). By using Harzing’s (2000-2006) compilation of journal ranking lists, a few other marketing journals may be added, such as the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (see www.j-ams.org), the Journal of Retailing (see www3.babson.edu/publications/jr), and Marketing Science (see www.mktsci.pubs.informs.org). We do not suggest that the aforementioned journals comprise a complete list of top journals (e.g. re sub-disciplines of marketing), but that they are used merely as a fundament to support the topic addressed in this article.

There is an underlying quest for identifying and verifying the top academic journals in different research disciplines. In extension to the discussion of top versus non-top journals, we raise another crucial issue, namely the criteria to differentiate that which constitutes a top or a leading journal in marketing. Therefore, we discuss three groups of criteria to distinguish between top and leading journals:

1. journal;
2. article; and
3. research.

They have been derived from a variety of sources (Czinkota, 2000; Day, 1996; Easton and Easton, 2003; Homburg, 2003; Perry et al., 2003; Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft, 2005; Svensson, 2005, 2006, 2007). Each group of criteria is discussed based upon a set of dimensions:

- **Journal criteria** — the editor, the editorial board, the editorial objective and the author affiliations;
- **Article criteria** — research implications, practice implications, readability and originality; and
- **Research criteria** — process, paradigm, representation, readership and contribution.

The criteria are described and explained in detail later in the article. We raise two explicit questions to contribute to the discussion and debate of academic journals and academic publishing in marketing:

1. What are the criteria to distinguish between top and leading journals in marketing?
2. To what extent do the top journals in marketing belong to the category of leading journals in marketing?

We hope that this discussion will stimulate and widen debate in respect to what constitutes a leading academic journal in marketing. We believe that this topic is an important issue for the future wellbeing of the marketing discipline and its research community across the world. The top journals have an immense responsibility to preserve and strengthen the reputation of the marketing discipline in relation to other research disciplines and their research communities. In fact, the top marketing journals serve as a showcase, benchmark and/or flagship for scholars and practitioners of the marketing discipline. They are also the gateway to marketing theory and thought for other research disciplines and their research communities.

**Top versus leading journals in marketing**
We suggest a group of criteria to distinguish between top versus leading journals in marketing. This suggested list should be seen as a trigger for further discussion and debate. Consequently, the list of criteria does not aspire to be complete, but a complement to the ongoing discussion of academic journals and academic publishing in literature. In fact, it may be seen as a multi-item measure. A framework of criteria is introduced in Table I. It is based upon our examination of the editorial descriptions and overall contents of the selected top journals in marketing. It is also derived from a review of the literature on academic journals and academic publishing. Note that our underlying frame of reference and literature review may be partly found in Svensson and Wood (2007).

The criterion sample in Table I is divided into two categories. One of the categories refers to the characteristics of the examined top journals in marketing. The other category refers to the characteristics of research published in these journals. In addition, these two categories underpin the criteria to distinguish between top and leading journals in marketing.

Our aim is not to focus on a specific journal, but rather to stimulate the debate of the adequacy of those issues that dominate in the top marketing journals. The idea is also to let the readers reflect and decide on their own perceptions without the explicit influence or arguments provided. The reader can verify the basis for the discussion undertaken by performing an independent review of the selected top marketing journals, as we have done.

**Journal criteria**

When it comes to the journal criteria in Table I, some of the top journals in marketing tend to be governed by myopic views of research rather than broad-mindedness. In fact, they may well nurture and fortify the inertia and rigidity of the marketing discipline. We argue that there are a number of shortcomings in some of the selected top journals in marketing.

For example, the editors of our top marketing journals are invariably North Americans (6/6: 100 percent) (Svensson, 2005). A multinational composition of editors would broaden the understanding of the underlying cultural values of research efforts across the world. At present, there is a predominant contextual insensitivity: an academic xenophobia that replicates itself, exclusive primarily to other ideas from beyond the North American academic community. The editors also tend to be conservative rather than liberal in their views of what is judged as appropriate research. It has to be kept in mind that they are the initial gatekeepers (or obstacles!) before entering the blind review process that takes place in peer-reviewed journals. Furthermore, the editors appear to often seem cautious (or reluctant) to encourage the research community to be challenging in their research efforts and their thoughts. In other words, challenging thoughts and provocative research topics are seldom seen as the peer review process tends to cast them aside by virtue of them not fitting into the same genre as previous successful articles. Instead of celebrating the differences in research around the world, these differences are expunged in favor of homogeneous research with a North American focus.

The editorial boards of our top marketing journals mostly consist of academics affiliated to North American universities or organizations instead of having a worldwide representation (Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft, 2005; Svensson, 2005; Svensson and Wood, 2007). Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft (2005) have highlighted in their work that the editorial boards of the top six journals are comprised of members who are either American (89.8 percent) or
Canadian (2.6 percent). These boards are comprised ostensibly of individuals from North America (92.4 percent). In that sense, the editorial boards tend to be merely narrow-focused and North American centric rather than broad-focused and with an international perspective. There appears to be a lack of cultural sensitivity among them as well (Homburg, 2003; Easton and Easton, 2003). Consensus is easier to achieve by the selection of homogenous members of an editorial board, but it can create a reactive behavior rather than proactive initiatives in research efforts. In fact, only a minor part of many of these boards are representing the worldwide research community that flourishes outside of North America (Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft, 2005; Svensson, 2005; Svensson and Wood, 2007).

The editorial objectives of our top marketing journals (see the Appendix) are to some extent general (e.g. JCR, JM, JAMS and MS). There is a diffuse positioning, segmentation and targeting of the research of interest in some of the journals (e.g. JM, JAMS and MS). These journals are more articulated in terms of technicalities and methodology. Some of the journals are restricted to a specified area of marketing (e.g. JCR and JR). Marketing has become a wide research discipline that we contend goes beyond the reach of a single journal. We believe that a leading journal should strive towards being the best one in its field. It should be specialized into a sub-area. A broad-oriented journal may only achieve fragmentation in trying to play a leading role.

Finally, the author affiliations in published articles of our top marketing journals are to a large extent predominantly North American (Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft, 2005; Svensson, 2005). Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft (2005) found that in the top six journals, 89.5 percent of articles had at least one American author. We argue that a leading journal should be representative of the worldwide research community in the marketing discipline. In sum, the intra-continental or regional myopia in some of the selected top marketing journals – in terms of editorships, editorial boards, editorial objectives and author affiliations – should undermine their positions to be seen as the leading journals in the field.

Research criteria

When it comes to the research criteria in Table I, some of the top journals in marketing also tend to be governed by myopic views of research rather than by an approach that shows broad-mindedness (Czinkota, 2000; Easton and Easton, 2003; Homburg, 2003; Svensson, 2006, 2007). In the same way as for the journal criteria, they nurture and fortify the inertia and rigidity of the marketing discipline. The dynamics of the discipline are hindered and its evolution is slowed down, therefore, we argue that there are a number of shortcomings in some of the selected top journals in marketing.

For example, the research designs applied are stereotyped (Svensson, 2006; Svensson and Wood, 2007). There is a limited variety of different research designs. In addition, they may be seen as dogmatic and sometimes inappropriate in order to gain truly new and enduring insights into the field of marketing. In extension, this approach influences the format requirements (Czinkota, 2000; Easton and Easton, 2003; Homburg, 2003; Svensson, 2006), such as the writing style, the disposition and the content of sections and paragraphs. The format required is strict and constricting (Easton and Easton, 2003). We contend that a leading journal should allow flexibility and variability of format requirements to avoid look-alike articles. There appears to be a blueprint to follow that restricts constructive creativity.
and precludes one from performing and reporting research in the top journals in different ways.

Many research topics in the selected top journals appear to be nuances or repetitions of previous research (Svensson, 2006). It is often argued that this research provides innovativeness, but if so it is a rather marginal claim as these works stay within the accepted boundaries of the already established genre. To stray too far from the expected format runs the risk of the paper not being accepted for review, let alone progressing to publication. Thus, we argue that there is a lack of genuine innovativeness in some of the research published in the top journals in marketing. In addition, we wonder where the groundbreaking research efforts are to be found in these journals.

Accordingly, the research problems tend to be mainstream, rather than challenging. The perspectives addressed in different research efforts are mainly based upon unilateral perspectives. Bilateral and multilateral perspectives would improve the understanding of the complex marketing contexts that are usually ignored. This situation is due to the fact that current research approaches are based upon accepted and prescribed research procedures in marketing (Svensson, 2006). There is a lack of unorthodox approaches to carry through unique research to gain new insights into the discipline of marketing.

There is another dilemma, namely that the frame of references used tend to be intra-continentially derived in the sense that North American research efforts appear to be prioritized (Czinkota, 2000; Easton and Easton, 2003; Homburg, 2003). There appears to be an almost incestuous referencing of previous work from the journal in which the article has been published. For example, Day (1996) and Perry et al. (2003) address the issue of the citing of previous articles from the targeted journal in the newly published paper. North American articles appear to be based on North American references to the exclusion of other sources from around the world. The influence of intercontinental frames of reference would benefit the marketing discipline (Perry et al., 2003; Day, 1996), as invariably they may broaden the ideas of the discipline. Such a broadening of the frame of reference would introduce new possibilities for investigation into a system bound up in its own repetition activities that are based upon a narrow focus of cultural reference.

Another issue that is in evidence in the top journals in marketing is the skewed use of quantitative methods to explore marketing topics (Svensson, 2006; Svensson and Wood, 2007). It appears to be the prescribed way to report research, if one is seeking publication success. Svensson (2006) surveyed the contents from 2000 to 2004 inclusive of one of the six previously listed journals and he found that of the empirical work reported, 91 percent were articles based upon a framework of quantitative analysis. There is an immense lack of worldwide representation when it comes to empirical data that supports the development of theory (Svensson, 2007; Svensson and Wood, 2007). Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft (2005) in their study found that in the selected journals the data collected is to a large extent North American, with 82.9 percent including specifically USA data. In consequence, there is a deficient consideration of the impact of contextual parameters.

The analyses that are performed in the top marketing journals are predominantly multivariate and use complex statistical techniques instead of accepting a variety of different techniques (Svensson, 2006). The quality of input is not questioned when the output is reported (e.g. selection of non-representative samples and low response rates).
The *findings* tend to be non-valid across contexts and unstable over time (Svensson, 2006, 2007). Most research findings in the top journals in marketing therefore are *non-representative* to most contexts (Czinkota, 2000; Easton and Easton, 2003; Homburg, 2003, Svensson, 2007), which causes poor generalizability even though it is often argued within the articles that they achieve the opposite outcome. The *conclusions* drawn from such research efforts are highly context and time specific (Svensson, 2006). The journals should strive towards publishing articles that provide valid, reliable and generalizable findings and conclusions over time and across contexts.

**Provocative and challenging thoughts**

Finally, we provide some thoughts based upon the introduced framework of criteria in Table I. A crucial thought is that the selected top journals in marketing tend in part to be far from the leading journals, even though some of them explicitly aspire to be the leaders in the field. Therefore, we cannot state that all selected top journals in marketing match our suggested framework of criteria for leading journals. On the contrary, we contend that most of these so-called top journals in marketing may not fulfill the criteria to enable them to be judged as leading journals (see Table II).

When it comes to the *journal criteria* of our top marketing journals they are limited to an intra-continental and general focus. Homburg (2003) writes that the most prestigious US-based marketing journals are to some extent predisposed against manuscripts from outside of the USA. Furthermore, Pecotich *et al.* (1996) state that country of origin affects the evaluation of research quality. When it comes to the *article criteria* of our top marketing journals they are often limited to intrinsic research implications, weak practice implications, low readability and rare originality due to the writing and format requirements, technicalities and the use of complex quantitative methods. The content of the articles and the method of their expression mean that many non-academic readers would find the intent of the article hard to grasp, let alone be able to absorb its philosophical underpinnings. When it comes to the *research criteria* of our top marketing journals, they are limited to quantitative processes, dogmatic or mainstream paradigms, intra-continental representation, academic readerships, and make a contribution to the academic research community only (Svensson, 2005, 2006).

Some of these criteria are more or less pronounced. For example, Easton and Easton (2003) argue that non-US authors cannot compete on an equal basis since they face implicit and explicit barriers. Czinkota (2000) also believes that to get published in US journals, the author needs to move to the USA or work in the USA for some time. This reality seems not to have dawned on many non-American authors who strive for “the prize” of the elusive publication in a North American journal. It is even more worrying when one’s performance appraisal as a top academic researcher is predicated on being published in an “A” journal in one’s field. Tenure and promotion opportunities can be adversely affected by not achieving a “prestigious” publication. This type of requirement is almost impossible for the non-American author to satisfy and one could surmise even extremely difficult for the majority of North American academics. Yet as academics we promote this myth amongst ourselves of the “golden fleece” of achieving a top American journal publication. How well academics across the world have conditioned themselves to the “worth” of these journals and by default they reinforce the lack of worth of their own academic insights that are exclusive to North American thinking and context.
Speculatively, the specialized journals may be the leading ones in reality (i.e. beyond reputation, prestige and citation-indexes) as they consciously have targeted a specific sub-area of the marketing discipline and as such make a substantial contribution to the theory and the practice in that field. Some of the lower ranked/quality journals in specific sub-areas may actually be characterized as leading journals even though they often are overlooked or even ignored in the general discussion and the debate of identifying the top academic journals in the discipline. We argue that general-oriented journals may never be the leading ones whatsoever as they have too heterogenic an editorial objective – that is, they want to cover everything – and as a consequence their leading role is blurred or minimized.

We propose a few issues to be stressed for some of the selected top journals in marketing to be able to claim genuine leadership in the discipline. These issues are summarized in Table II. Hopefully, the issues raised may contribute to remedy the stated myopia, inertia and ethnocentricity reflected in the top journals in marketing.

The key to this transformation is the journal criteria, such as the editor, the editorial board, the editorial objective and the author affiliations. For example, the editorship should be based upon delegation of responsibility and authority to an intercontinental team of editors that possesses the competence and understanding of the cultural sensitivity in the underlying research values around the world. The editorial board composition should be based upon a multi-methodological and intercontinental team of reviewers. Both these issues have to be done and followed up thoroughly to avoid cosmetic and superficial actions. In addition, the positioning, segmentation and targeting of the editorial objectives of the top journals have to be re-evaluated and re-phrased. Furthermore, a worldwide author affiliation should be part of the process to restructure the journal criteria towards it being the leading one in its field. Worldwide contributions should be a matter of course for a leading journal in order to be able to reflect the worldwide research community and its diverse research efforts in marketing.

Another key in this transformation is article criteria. These issues can be framed into four groups (Emerald Management Reviews, 2005):

1. research implication;
2. practice implication;
3. readability; and
4. originality.

The research implications should move from intrinsic to extrinsic ones. The potential group of interest should be widened – that is beyond academia. The practice implication should be strengthened towards the practitioner arena to gain further extrinsic research implications in terms of applicability and usefulness in and to business. The readability of research has to be improved as the current focus on technicalities and the use of complex quantitative methods limits the likelihood of the dispersion of the contribution achieved among practitioners. Finally, originality should be stressed beyond repetitions and nuances of previous research. Groundbreaking – and to some extent counter-intuitive – contributions should be encouraged and provided in evidence beyond empty words of pronouncement from editors. The editorial boards should be given encouragement to widen their gaze. There is a world of active academic research out there outside of North America, which may
be able to contribute to a deeper, more diverse and challenging debate about the issues at the forefront of marketing thought.

The issue of research criteria is somewhat more diffuse to categorise. A debatable intent is provided. A crucial change should be the movement from mostly quantitative research processes as the final stage towards incorporating qualitative research processes as potentially part of the final stage. The outcomes of quantitative research processes have repeatedly indicated non-validity and unreliability across contexts and over time, therefore the generalizability of quantitative findings has turned out to be very rare. Qualitative research has not been given the chance to be the final stage in the process. There appears to be a strong conviction emanating from the top journals that human behaviour, human perception and human phenomena are always able to be quantitatively measured. Are they? The paradigmatic boundaries have to be extended beyond the current focus on dogmatic and mainstream approaches. In addition, the representation of research in top journals has to be re-oriented from the restrictions of being North American focussed towards worldwide accessibility and openness. The readership should also be broadened beyond the research community to include parts of the business community. There should be an evident relevance to business and its practices too.

In fact, there is a similar discussion going on regarding the failings of some business schools. For example, Bennis and O'Toole (2005) describe how prestigious business schools in North America lost their way by discussing the scientific model versus the professional model. We do not want our top marketing journals to lose their way too! We argue that it is not too late, but these journals may be at risk in the eyes of the worldwide research community in marketing. The editors (and their editorial boards) of our top marketing journals have the responsibility to avoid this happening.

The reputation as a leading international journal in marketing will not and should not be able to be achieved and/or maintained by the journal being prescriptive, format-driven and/or by having a geo-centric alignment with one part of the world. In the long run, an exaggerated self-confidence in its own excellence of that which constitutes a top journal may be harmful to the marketing discipline. Consequently, a different and scrutinized re-evaluation of the top journals in marketing should be performed to avoid a continuous myopia, inertia, and regimentation in the development of marketing theory and its application in practice. A diffusion of worldwide research knowledge surely would benefit the marketing discipline, than just “knowledge” entrenched in one dominant cultural paradigm. Therefore, we argue that there is a crucial difference between the top and the leading journals in the field. The top journals if they remain inert may well belong to the past, while the leading journals should be the future of the discipline.
### Table I: Criteria of top versus leading journals in marketing: a framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Top</th>
<th>Leading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor(s)</td>
<td>North American</td>
<td>Multinational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cautious</td>
<td>Encouraging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Board</td>
<td>North American</td>
<td>World-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narrow-focused</td>
<td>Broad-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial objective</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author affiliation(s)</td>
<td>North American</td>
<td>World-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research design</td>
<td>Dogmatic</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strict</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuance</td>
<td>Ground-breaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research problem</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>Challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives(s)</td>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td>Bilateral/multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Prescribed</td>
<td>Unorthodox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame of reference</td>
<td>North American</td>
<td>Intercontinental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Multiple methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>North American</td>
<td>World-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Multivariate</td>
<td>Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Non-valid</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-representative</td>
<td>Generalizable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>Context-specific</td>
<td>Across contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time-specific</td>
<td>Over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table II: Issues of proposition: from top to leading journals in marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>Towards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journal criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor(s)</td>
<td>Intra-continental</td>
<td>Inter-continental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial board</td>
<td>Intra-continental</td>
<td>Inter-continental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial objective</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author affiliations</td>
<td>Intra-continental</td>
<td>Inter-continental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Article criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research implication</td>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice implication</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readability</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Also qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradigm</td>
<td>Dogmatic/mainstream</td>
<td>Pragmatic/extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Intra-continental</td>
<td>World-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readership</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Also practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>Research community</td>
<td>Also business community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### References


Further Reading


Appendix. Editorial descriptions and objectives

The authors have examined the editorial descriptions of six top marketing journals. These descriptions are summarized in the following paragraphs in the alphabetical order of each journal.

The editorial description of Journal of Consumer Research (JCR) is brief (see www.journals.uchicago.edu/JCR/home.html). It is stated that it publishes scholarly research. This research should describe and explain consumer behavior. Empirical, theoretical, and methodological articles across various fields are of interest. The journal aspires to have a broad content. The target readership is academic, rather than managerial.

The editorial description of Journal of Marketing (JM) is much more specified than JCR (see www.marketingpower.com). It is stated that the main objectives are:

- to lead in the development, dissemination, and implementation of marketing concepts, practice, and information; and
- to probe and promote the use of marketing concepts by businesses, not-for-profits, and other institutions for the betterment of society.
The editorial description spells out that it is the leading journal in marketing. It is assumed to be positioned as a broad-based scholarly journal. In addition, it aspires: to publish thought-provoking articles; to bridge the gap between theory and application; to present new techniques, ideas, theories and illustrations. The readership is argued to be diverse (i.e. both practitioners and academics).

The editorial description of *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR; see www.marketingpower.com)* is restricted to the subject of marketing research, such as its philosophy, concepts, and theories to its methods, techniques, and applications. The editorial description expresses that it provides research at the forefront and cutting-edge information. In addition, it aspires to present new techniques for solving marketing problems, contribute to marketing knowledge based on the use of experimental, descriptive, or analytical techniques, and review and comment on the developments and concepts in related fields. The readership is technically oriented.

The editorial description of *Journal of Retailing (JR; see www3.babson.edu/publications/jr)* highlights a specialization in the processes of retailing and supply chain management. The goal is to publish research that expands the knowledge of retail marketing. There are numerous topics of interest as far as they are linked to retailing. The targeted readership is not expressed, but presumably it is mainly scholar-oriented even though it may be of interest to practitioners.

The *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS; see www.j-ams.org)* says that it is devoted to the study and improvement of marketing and serving as a vital link between scholarly research and practice. The articles are research-based in the domain of marketing. In addition, it aspires to present leading-edge issues and thought-provoking issues; challenge or shift dominant conceptual and methodological paradigms; attempt to change perspectives and/or cause a phenomenon to be viewed in a different light; and extend, in one fashion or another, the boundaries of the marketing discipline. The aimed readership is not mentioned, but it is probably directed towards technically oriented scholars rather than practitioners looking for managerial solutions.

The editorial description of *Marketing Science (MS; see www.mktsci.publ.informs.org)* is broad across many different topics of the marketing discipline. It is argued that the focus of the journal is to provide assistance for marketing decision-makers and a deeper understanding of marketing phenomena. It aspires to publish cutting-edge research, new insights and approaches to current marketing-related problems. Research is based upon rigorous scientific methodology. The readership is not acknowledged, but it should be targeted towards scholars.

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