
Guest editorial: Introduction to special issue on “history of marketing in Spain”, part II

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This special issue on the “History of Marketing in Spain, Part II” presents a diverse range of research that sheds light on many aspects of Spain’s marketing practices using historical perspectives. The collection covers different topics, including the evolution of the world’s oldest advertising agency, the impact of home ownership on immigrant acculturation, the adaptation of marketing strategies in cultural institutions in countries which have inherited the Spanish tradition, the changing food preferences of Spanish consumers and the transformation of travel agency promotion. These studies offer insightful analyses of Spain’s marketing history and contextualise these developments within broader social, economic and technological changes. This special issue advances our understanding of the distinctive traits and implementation of marketing techniques in Spain by examining recent innovations and long-standing traditions.

Numerous methodological techniques are used in this issue of the papers, such as literature reviews, quantitative studies of large data sets, historical analyses and qualitative examinations of marketing tactics. This methodological diversity provides depth and breadth in comprehending the forces that have affected consumer behaviour, economic practices and cultural institutions, enabling a varied analysis of Spain’s marketing history. From the pioneering efforts of early advertisers to the digital transformations of the 21st century, these studies trace the evolution of marketing in Spain, stressing its uniqueness and connections to global trends.

In the first paper, Opeyemi Femi-Oladunni, Pablo Ruiz-Palomino and Israel Roberto Pérez-Jiménez, in their study “Assessing food preferences in Spain: a historical perspective including attributes and values,” aim to identify how Spanish consumers’ extrinsic food preferences have evolved. They examine the existing literature on food preferences in Spain, focusing on food-related attributes and values. The study conducts a synthetic review of academic literature on Spanish consumers’ preferences for these attributes and values from the mid-20th century to the 21st century. It also uses the key economic and social milestones that are most likely to influence actors in the food value chain to show how consumer preferences have evolved over the studied period. Among their findings, they observe how Spanish consumers’ preferences for food attributes broadened as the nation’s food sector and value preferences showed a similar pattern from the mid-20th century to the 21st century. Confidence, lifestyle, education (campaigns), socio-demographic factors and purchasing power have a strong influence.

The second paper by Carolina Serra Folch and Cristina Martorell Castellano, “Roldós y Compañía, the oldest advertising agency in the world”, reviews the history of the agency and highlights its founder, Rafael Roldos Viñolas, as an essential figure in the Spanish advertising industry of the late 19th century. In addition, the study examines the agency’s impact, notably through its involvement in Barcelona’s 1888 and 1929 exhibitions and its innovative urban advertising projects. A key milestone was the 1929 merger with Tiroleses, S.A., marking Spain’s first major agency merger, though its success was disrupted by the Spanish Civil War. In the late 20th century, the agency thrived amid global advertising growth and adapted to competition from North American firms by specialising in



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advertisement processing and media planning. This research seeks to position Roldos alongside international advertising pioneers and address the lack of scholarly work on Spanish advertising history.

In the third paper, “Contextualizing the “Spanish dream”: using critical HRM to understand immigrant homeownership in Spain, 2000–2009”, Mario Gonzalez-Fuentes, Jonathan Ross Gilbert, Robert F. Scherer and Carlos Iglesias-Fernandez focus on home ownership among immigrant groups in Spain, highlighting how it reflects consumer acculturation. Through 15,465 household microdata files from Spain’s National Immigrant Survey, the study examines factors influencing home ownership from 2000 to 2009. Findings show that foreign-born consumers used various resources to foster social identities, enhancing acculturation through home ownership. Marketing strategies targeting ethnic minority consumers, along with supportive government policies, reinforced the notion of the “Spanish Dream”, promoting housing market integration. Immigrant home ownership emerges as a reflection of personal and social investments, shaping consumer identities beyond mere economic factors.

In the fourth paper, Natividad Araque-Hontangas’ work “The promotion of Spanish travel agencies from the 20th century to the present” investigates the unexplored part of the historical evolution of travel agencies in Spain, from the end of the 20th century to the 21st century. Specifically, the study focuses on the change in marketing and public relations strategies based on the incorporation of information and communication technologies and, in particular, the use of the Internet. It conducts a qualitative analysis of the different strategies used by traditional agencies and online agencies in Spain from the mid-19th century to the present day. The results show how, at the beginning of the 21st century, traditional communication strategies have survived alongside other more innovative ones, while some have disappeared and been superseded by the new online travel agencies, which have created a particular conception of travel and its communication.

Finally, the last work, “Adaptation of marketing mix strategies in Mexican cultural institutions: an insight into prehispanic and novohispanic codices”, by Pedro Arturo Flores-Gómez and Héctor Hugo Pérez-Villarreal, focuses on the evolution of non-profit cultural institutions in Mexico and their relationship with Spain. This is done by analysing the four traditional elements of a marketing mix, even going so far as to examine marketing developments in the digital environment. To this end, emphasis is placed on the virtual exhibition *Códices de México: Memorias y Saberes* (INAH 2015), as well as marketing activities related to pre-Hispanic and pre-Hispanic and Novo-Hispanic codices between 2010 and 2022. The historical approach used to document the transition of non-profit cultural institutions in Mexico and Spain to the digital age sheds light on the joint efforts in the field of digital marketing around the Pre-Hispanic and Novo-Hispanic codices. It also illustrates the activities used by Mexican cultural institutions over the last two decades to disseminate knowledge about the codices.

The articles in this special issue collectively provide a complex picture of the History of Marketing in Spain, showing the dynamic interactions between tradition and innovation, local practices and global influences. These studies demonstrate how various factors, including economic development, technological innovations, demographic changes and cultural shifts, have impacted marketing strategies and consumer behaviours in Spain. These studies address significant gaps in our knowledge of Spanish marketing history and provide insightful information that can guide existing and future marketing strategies.

This special issue emphasises the importance of a historical perspective in marketing research. Through a complete analysis of the changes in consumer preferences, institutional adaptations and marketing techniques throughout time, we may better understand the

contextual elements that impact consumer behaviour and marketing efficacy. This historical approach provides a solid foundation for understanding contemporary marketing challenges and opportunities in Spain. As marketing is constantly evolving in the face of technological disruptions and changing consumer expectations, the lessons drawn from these historical analyses offer valuable guidance for practitioners and researchers alike, underlining the need for continuous adaptation and innovation in marketing strategies.

The authors believe that both special issues (Part I and Part II) could motivate further research in the field of History of Marketing in Spain, and the readers of JHRM will be engaged and fascinated by our proposals. Finally, The authors would like to thank the numerous reviewers who generously contributed their time and knowledge to develop these special issues.

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