

*Journal of Financial Services Marketing***Special Issue: Academy of Marketing Conference 2016: Radical Financial Services
Marketing**

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We are pleased to present in this special issue research from those who presented at the Academy of Marketing conference 2016 (AM2016) hosted by Newcastle Business School. The current issue is the third in an ongoing series which began with a special issue from the Academy of Marketing Conference 2014 in Bournemouth published in 2015. Authors were invited to submit work for consideration from across the wide range of conference tracks and thus represent several different marketing perspectives. However, the theme of that conference was radical marketing which is defined as spanning “both the traditional and truly innovative”. Thus in this issue we present a range papers that consider radical financial services marketing.

The term radical marketing can be interpreted in two inter-linked but apposite ways. The Latin word “radix” means roots so radical financial services marketing draws upon the “roots” of established marketing theory to provide an incremental “green shoot” development in thought and practice. However the use of the term radical also can denote political radicalism which focuses on challenging and changing traditional structures and value systems in response to societal change and thus represent a revolutionary change in thought and practice.

In this issue we have two papers that are “rooted” in the established theory of service quality to offer “greens shoot” thinking on the impact of culture upon the evaluation of financial services by customers. Yalley and Agyapong develop a new instrument (GhanQual) that offers a crossvergence perspective on measuring service quality. Crossvergence theory (Ralston et al 1997) argues that convergent and divergent value systems can be blended and GhanQual unites multicultural and culturally specific approaches to service quality management. This paper provides a starting point for developing further crossvergent approaches to financial services marketing measurement. In the second paper Abdullrahim and Robson use an extended SERVQUAL model to identify and compare the importance of service quality to British Muslim consumers with an Islamic

or non-Islamic bank account in a non-Muslim country. They identify five dimensions of service quality that differ in structure and content from the original scale and also in the degree of importance placed upon them by customers. The results provide insight into bank choice and evaluation amongst Muslim customers living in a non-Muslim cultural context.

Trust is another concept which is firmly established with the marketing discipline, and in particular within financial services marketing where trust and confidence may only be established as a result of experience and where asymmetries of information and expertise means that customers have to place trust in the capability and professionalism of employees (Harrison 2000). In their paper Moin, Devlin and Mckecknie examine how trust in financial services varies according to individual trust disposition. The detailed and systematic analysis provides a strategic segmentation of the mass consumer market and offers useful insights to financial services marketers charged with designing financial products and developing trust building strategies.

The final two papers in this special issue are radical in their focus on alternative and new ideas of financial services marketing in a time of significant social change. Unsecured consumer debt in the UK (which includes credit cards and car loans) grew by 10.8% in the year to November 2016 to £192.2bn, the fastest rate of growth in more than 11 years (Bank of England 2017). Taking a radical approach to what can be considered a financial service, Lomax and Edwards examine customer perceptions of pawnbroking, which to some might be considered an “unmentionable” financial service. They find that amongst non-users of the service there is minimal understanding of the service delivery process, latent stigma and stereotyping by media sources. However users report service satisfaction and independent evaluation by BBC Moneybox find this service to more cost-effective than an unauthorised bank overdraft or payday loan. The implications of their work are that consumers disassociate themselves from pawnbrokers largely to due to ignorance. This ignorance will only be rectified if the information flow concerning unmentionable products such as pawnbrokers is increased and this barrier removed. Reframing the terminology used to describe the industry could also help to change current society perceptions.

Our final paper by Brown et al offers a radical innovation in modelling consumer choice between alternative credit sources. Using Critical Consumer Theory (Arnould and Thompson, 2005) as a theoretical lens they explore how UK consumers manage and select

alternative credit sources (i.e. payday loans, logbook loans, pawning). Based on their empirical findings they develop the Orbit of consumer Credit Choices showing how consumers migrate between different categories of credit sources as they exhaust one source and move to the next. This research presents a new and radical perspective on debt consumption as orbit rings depict the non-linear movement between the different credit sources were chosen in preference to the widely accepted linear 'spiral of debt' .This research also acknowledges the impact of emotions on decision-making as consumers move between and select credit sources.

The research is authored by academics at all stages of their career ranging from doctoral students, early career researchers and esteemed academics which indicates the depth and breadth of the financial services marketing discipline and the important role played by the Journal of Financial Services Marketing as an outlet for disseminating this knowledge. All the submissions were accepted after a double-blind peer review based on rigour, validity and their focus upon contemporary and important themes for financial services marketing. We would like to extend our thanks and acknowledgements to our panel of anonymous reviewers for their knowledge, skill, patience and dedication to this issue as we recognise all face considerable demands upon their time. We look forward to the 2017 Academy of Marketing Conference at Hull University Business School and to enjoying a further round of stimulating and insightful financial services marketing research.

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