

Preface

Within this volume, the reader receives an overview of the results of research done by the members of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration at the University of Szeged. Established only twelve years ago, our faculty employs many young scholars still searching for their identity. This characteristic has also contributed to the fact that our institute does not have a dominant area of research, or workshops with isolated focus. When publishing a collection of articles, the intention is to provide an opportunity for readers – whether they are colleagues or students – to have an overview of research activity of our faculty in recent years. Some of the writings in this collection have already been presented at Hungarian or international conferences.

The articles in the volume reflect the various interests of our faculty members, but also show the directions of developing cooperation within the faculty. Historically in our institute, each researcher or team worked on their own field of expertise. Lately, however, our group started to look for the opportunity to collaborate between marketing, management, and economic psychology by using the synergies within the diverse group of people working under the same umbrella.

The following writings are not only different in their subject field, but also in their methodology. Theoretical articles and statistical problem-solving can be found, and most of them include both the theory related to the problem on hand and its analysis using empirical – qualitative and quantitative – methods. The works in the volume were selected by the research field – however, as the increasing amount of co-authored articles show, the bordering line between these fields is becoming less distinct; researchers working at our faculty are interested in each other's work.

The first chapter of the book focuses on certain special issues in the field of *marketing*. The article on pricing elaborates on the increasing role that prices play in theory, but the author also gives practical advice to different organizations, pointing out that the application of traditional pricing methods is insufficient in today's competitive environment. The following three writings discuss three specific applications of marketing in different fields. The first article is about the newly deregulated markets of utilities, relationship marketing and enhanced communication methods. The second presents the results of empirical research done by the authors in Hungary using lifestyle segmentation methods, with a detailed description of the resulting segments. The third article discusses collaborative filtering – a new method that focuses on customers with similar preferences instead of product features. This operates under the assumption that customers, whose purchase patterns have been similar in the past or whose opinion on certain products and services were similar, would be more likely to be interested in the same offers in the future.

In the field of *management* science, two writings analyse the increasing importance of relationships, though from a very different standpoint. The first is suggesting a new model to measure the performance of relationships between industry and academia, using the dimensions of processes, enablers, and results. The second piece is looking into the networking of small and medium sized enterprises, researching the motivations of cooperation using primary sources. In spite of their obvious differences, the two articles come to similar conclusions on the effectiveness of network relationships.

In the third chapter, there are two writings from economic psychologists with tight links to the fields of marketing and management. The first is an analysis of the communication in physician-patient relationships, with special attention to mutual interest of minimizing risks in the process. The authors consider risk communication as a possible means of reducing risks in healthcare services. The second study looks at patient cooperation in the same process, as one of the most important aspects of patient-centered communication, finding that in Hungary, the paternalistic communication style still seems to be the norm.

Our last chapter presents the results of different disciplines. A methodological study discusses a new modelling opportunity of multicollinearity during econometric analysis. Another article analyses the employment situation of recent university graduates, verifying the relationship between someone's success on the labour market and their opinion of their alma mater. A third writing studies employee attitudes toward trainings at multinational companies, confirming the high value of learning at these organizations, also identifying certain cultural limitations when it comes to the application of the acquired knowledge.

Given the diversity of subjects in this volume, there is anticipation by this faculty that something will provoke interest and be applied in betterment of individual and corporate work environments.

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Editors