

We are pleased to announce that Issue 1 (Volume 12) of the *Journal of Trade Science* is now available online. This first issue of 2024 comprises four empirical articles covering exciting topics, including pro-environmental behavior in coastal communities, motivations for studying hospitality and tourism courses, higher education service quality and online brand posts for promoting brand co-creation behaviors.

This issue begins with an article by Huy Van Le, Le Chi Cong and Mark A.A.M. Leenders, which examines coastal communities' participation in reducing single-use plastic bags (SPBs). Acknowledging that plastic waste substantially contributes to polluting oceans worldwide, they highlight the need to understand coastal residents' environmental awareness, responsibility, attitude and intention to reduce the use of SPBs. Using sample data from 721 coastal residents in an emerging country, their findings demonstrate that awareness of the impact of SPBs on the environment and human health enhances attitudes and intentions toward reducing SPBs. They also discover that awareness of the responsibility to protect the coastal environment strengthens the attitude–intention relationship. Based on these findings, they suggest solutions for coastal communities, local governments and businesses to encourage residents to reduce SPB consumption.

The following three articles focus on the higher education service industry context. An article by Paul Christopher Strickland and Vanessa Ratten explores the various motivations for students to study hospitality and tourism courses in Bhutan, where responsible tourism is vital for national wealth and sustainability. This article's findings reveal that the three most dominant motivations are attraction (e.g. high chances for interaction with more foreigners and foreign cultures), career opportunities (e.g. high employment rate and salaries) and status (e.g. becoming an expert in the field). Another important finding concerns students' strong desire to study abroad and visit foreign countries. Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United States of America and Australia are the most preferred options. These findings have practical and policy implications for attracting more students to study hospitality and tourism programs.

In the third article, Hoang Viet Nguyen, Tuan Duong Vu, Muhammad Saleem and Asif Yaseen conduct multiple studies to determine higher education service quality dimensions and examine how these dimensions affect student satisfaction and loyalty. Following a rigorous research process and using data from over 1,500 respondents, they highlight the complexity of higher education service quality in Vietnam, including academic aspect, nonacademic aspect, programing issues, facilities and industry interaction. Most of these higher education service quality factors positively influence student satisfaction, leading to student loyalty. Moreover, the university image moderates the satisfaction–loyalty relationship. This article provides a unique measure of higher service quality in Vietnam. It offers practical implications for promoting student satisfaction and loyalty, which is essential for the sustainable growth of higher education institutions.

The final article by Thanh-Thu Vo, Quynh Hoa Le and Linh N.K. Duong investigates the mechanism through which brand post characteristics (argument quality and quantity of posts) affect student responses and brand co-creation behaviors. Using a dataset obtained



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from a survey of 755 respondents, they validate a unique heuristic-systematic model, explaining the positive impact of argument quality and quantity of social media posts on cognitive and affective responses, thus enhancing students to co-create value for a university brand. The article's findings also reveal the significant moderating role of university reputation in the link between respondents' responses and co-creation behaviors. These findings can help brand managers successfully implement co-branding efforts and encourage students to participate in the co-creation process. This helps reduce information asymmetries and increase school connectivity, which is critical to providing high-quality education and promoting life-long learning (SDG4).

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. We would like to thank the authors for submitting manuscripts of high caliber. We would also like to acknowledge the reviewers and editorial board members for their timely reviews and invaluable contributions to the *Journal of Trade Science*. We wish you all a happy and prosperous year ahead.

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