Editorial

213

Editorial: A tribute to Dr Todd Morgan's research on the marketing/entrepreneurship interface

Introduction

Nothing ends here; our hopes and our journeys continue (President Ronald Reagan, 1986).

In April 2023, the EM scholar, Dr Todd Morgan (of Cleveland State University, USA), was killed from gunshot wounds in his home – he was only 41 years old [1] (Fox 8 News, 2023). While this paper serves as a tribute to Dr Morgan's research, it should be noted that he was a family man, with his children being his biggest priority in life, coupled with being a keen traveller and sportsman (Heritage Life Story, 2023). In a scholarly sense, he was an active member of the EM community, including being the Chair of the American Marketing Association's Entrepreneurial Marketing Special Interest Group (AMA-EMSIG) and a major participant at the Global Research Conference on Marketing and Entrepreneurship for numerous years (Appendix). In turn, he published his work (with several research teams) in outlets, like the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, Research Policy, the International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship, the Journal of Business Research, the Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing, the Journal of Business Venturing Insights and the Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing (see Morgan et al., 2015; Obal and Morgan, 2018; Morgan and Anokhin, 2020; Anokhin et al., 2023; Anokhin and Morgan, 2023). Hence, EM scholars (from around the world) are shocked and saddened by his untimely death. Indeed, such academics and doctoral candidates send their best wishes and condolences to his family and friends during this dark and difficult time.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of celebrating his life, the objective of this editorial is to provide a tribute to Dr Morgan's work on the MEI. That is, his career produced some exciting contributions to the existing understanding of EM behaviours (Kakapour *et al.*, 2016; Morgan *et al.*, 2020; Morgan and Anokhin, 2023; Obal *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, despite the tragic circumstances pertaining to his death, it seems decidedly appropriate to acknowledge his research, together with highlighting how his work will endure in the years to come – as academics and doctoral candidates continue to investigate the MEI. In other words, EM research is booming, with a surge of investigations being published on an ongoing basis (see, for example, Morris *et al.*, 2002; Hills *et al.*, 2008; O'Dwyer *et al.*, 2009; Jones and Rowley, 2011; Whalen *et al.*, 2016; Morrish and Jones, 2020; Lopes *et al.*, 2021; Crick and Crick, 2022; Crick *et al.*, 2023a; Hamzah *et al.*, 2023). Thus, this article serves as a guide on how Dr Morgan's work aligns with the evolution of the MEI – leading to fulfilling certain underresearched aspects of this domain.



The authors would like to acknowledge the helpful comments from Dr Wesley Friske (of Missouri State University, USA) for his insights about Dr Morgan's work on the MEI. These points were infused into this editorial. In addition, the authors appreciate the constructive feedback from an anonymous editorial board member of the *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship* (who served as a referee). Such insights were used to improve the narrative of this study.

Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship Vol. 26 No. 2, 2024 pp. 213-227 © Emerald Publishing Limited 1471-5201 DOI 10.1108/JRME-03-2024-167 To achieve this study's objective, the remaining sections of this paper are structured as follows. Firstly, the literature retrieval processes are explained. Secondly, the core themes of EM are briefly reviewed – to crystalise the elements of the MEI. Thirdly, Dr Morgan's research is summarised, with respect of the main facets of his work. In doing so, such articles are connected to other investigations within this discipline. Fourthly, the future development of Dr Morgan's research is covered, in terms of how his contributions to the EM community will be advanced in the years to come. Fifthly, this study is concluded. Collectively, the editorial team of the *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship* (the flagship outlet of the EM domain – where Dr Morgan was an Associate Editor) and colleagues from other scholarly communities hope that Dr Morgan is remembered over time. This includes members of the *Academy of Marketing's Entrepreneurial & Small Business Marketing Special Interest Group* (the sister organisation of the *AMA-EMSIG* based across the Atlantic Ocean) that knew of Dr Morgan's research on the MEI. It is anticipated that this editorial accomplishes this expectation by honouring him as a colleague and friend.

Literature retrieval processes

The subsequent processes were used to retrieve the sourced literature. Specifically, notable outlets were used to find studies surrounding the MEI (in line with Jones et al., 2011). Using respected journals from the Australian Business Deans Council list, this covered the Journal of Business Venturing, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, the Journal of Marketing, the Strategic Management Journal, the Journal of Small Business Management, Entrepreneurship & Regional Development: An International Journal, the International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship, the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, Industrial Marketing Management, the Journal of Business Research, the European Journal of Marketing, the Journal of Strategic Marketing, the Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship and more. Next, Dr Morgan's Google Scholar page was used to access his research on the MEI (linking with Montiel-Campos, 2018). This identified several famous scholars that have published articles in this discipline. Moreover, papers were accessed from different time periods – to acquire seminal and recent insights (following Crick, 2023). In short, these tools assisted the authors to draw upon the most accurate investigations that were needed to achieve the editorial's objective.

An overview of the MEI domain

Over the past 35 years, there has been a large quantity of research pertaining to the MEI (e.g. Morris and Paul, 1987; Miles and Arnold, 1991; Hills and LaForge, 1992; Stokes, 2000; Jones and Rowley, 2009; Gilmore, 2011; Roach *et al.*, 2018; Crick, 2019; Alford and Jones, 2020; Alqahtani *et al.*, 2023). More formally, EM is defined *as:*

[...] an agile mind-set that pragmatically leverages resources, employs networks, and takes acceptable risks to proactively exploit opportunities for innovation, co-creation, and delivery of value to stakeholders, including customers, employees, and platform allies. (Alqahtani and Uslay, 2020, p. 64)

Put another way, EM involves organisations (of different sizes) implementing a market orientation and an entrepreneurial orientation to achieve key goals, such as creating superior value for their customers and fulfilling certain industry-level opportunities [2] (Baker and Sinkula, 2009; Boso *et al.*, 2013; Morgan *et al.*, 2015; Crick *et al.*, 2021). That said, there are different perspectives on what EM is (and is not), including the facets that

comprise this body of knowledge (Hansen and Eggers, 2010; Jones and Rowley, 2011; Miles et al., 2015; Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019; Eggers et al., 2020; Karami et al., 2023).

On the one hand, EM is a seven-dimension construct, namely, the facets of proactiveness, risk-taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource-leveraging, customer intensity and value creation (Morris *et al.*, 2002; Kraus *et al.*, 2012). On the other hand, EM has been compared with a Venn Diagram, with two circles – denoting marketing and entrepreneurship, respectively (Hamzah *et al.*, 2023). In the latter situation, the intersecting region encapsulates the MEI. For clarity, there is not a universal way to define, conceptualise, operationalise and empirically assess EM activities (Gilmore, 2011; Harrigan *et al.*, 2012; Whalen *et al.*, 2016; Crick and Crick, 2016; Crick *et al.*, 2020; Hansen *et al.*, 2020). At any rate, EM encapsulates numerous sub-topics, such as internationalisation, networking activities (e.g. value co-creation and coopetition), strategic orientations, new product development, business models, digitalisation strategies, responses to global emergencies and much more (see, for example, Morrish, 2011; Gilmore *et al.*, 2013; Jones *et al.*, 2013; Gross *et al.*, 2014; O'Cass and Morrish, 2016; Gilmore *et al.*, 2018; Morrish and Jones, 2020; Crick and Crick, 2021a). An overview of Dr Morgan's research on the MEI is covered in the next section.

Dr Morgan's research on EM activities

Dr Morgan completed his doctoral studies in February 2015 (at Kent State University, USA) involving a collection of essays surrounding the drivers and outcomes of customer participation strategies in new product development processes (Morgan, 2015). Subsequently, he built upon this topic in a variety of capacities. Firstly, he published work pertaining to the interplay between an entrepreneurial orientation and a market orientation – including how there are potentially harmful effects on firm performance when these firm-wide activities are mismanaged (Morgan et al., 2015; Morgan and Anokhin, 2020). This led to other investigations about how entrepreneurs pivot their business models in responses to changes within their sectors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and other environmental forces (e.g. Morgan et al., 2020; Anokhin et al., 2021; Obal et al., 2023). In turn, he highlighted that there are probable dark sides of the MEI, such as owner-managers mismanaging their assets, the costs of these strategic orientations and how EM strategies are not necessarily performanceenhancing activities in volatile competitive business environments. This facilitated other articles pertaining to the benefits and drawbacks of EM behaviours (Crick et al., 2021; Crick and Crick, 2023; Amjad et al., 2023). This offered alternative perspectives on the vast array of earlier work that has focused mostly on the merits of the MEI (e.g. Matsuno et al., 2002; Parry et al., 2012; O'Cass and Morrish, 2016; Hansen et al., 2020; Karami et al., 2023).

Secondly, Dr Morgan conducted research involving customer participation activities, namely, owner-managers working with their customers to develop superior goods and services (e.g. Morgan et al., 2018a, 2018b; Morgan and Anokhin, 2023). This included how aspects of the competitive business environment can negatively impact entrepreneurs' ability to create value for their end users during these business-to-consumer marketing exchanges (Morgan et al., 2019). Networking is central to the MEI, in which numerous studies have indicated that if decision-makers join forces with key stakeholder groups (like customers, rivals, supply chain partners and beyond), they can learn new ways to operate more efficiently (Shaw, 1999; Boso et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2013; Crick et al., 2016; Whalen et al., 2016; Crick and Crick, 2021b; Alqahtani et al., 2023). Put another way, many entrepreneurs possess few resources and capabilities, meaning that networking is critical when operating with such limited assets (extending Westhead et al., 2001; Crick et al., 2023b). Hence, networks can overcome some of these challenges – by noting that there are

circumstances where owner-managers are not forced to operate on the basis of their own resources and capabilities (Crick *et al.*, 2022; Chaudhry *et al.*, 2023). Dr Morgan's work on networking (not least of which customer participation activities) has advanced these aspects of the MEI.

Thirdly, the other core area of Dr Morgan's research encapsulated the varied ways that entrepreneurs can boost their market-wide successes, such as through sustainability, organisational leadership and venture capital investments (Morgan et al., 2018a, 2018b; Obal et al., 2020; Anokhin and Morgan, 2023). The themes of the MEI do not clearly dictate how that decision-makers can increase their company performance. Instead, there is a large collection of investigations that have highlighted various routes that owner-managers can follow to operate within their competitive business environments, overcome adversities and cope with macro-level shocks (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic) (in line with Baker and Sinkula, 2009; Jones and Rowley, 2011; Miles et al., 2015; Morrish and Jones, 2020; Crick, 2022; Hamzah et al., 2023). To that end, there is not a single-agreed way that summarises the orchestration of EM strategies (Hansen et al., 2020). Yet, consistent with Dr Morgan's research, the literature involving the MEI has signified that decision-makers have different tools at their disposal to operate more successfully within their markets (Gilmore, 2011; Boso et al., 2012; Whalen et al., 2016; Alqahtani and Uslay, 2020; Crick et al., 2023a). The future development of Dr Morgan's research on EM is described in the following section.

Developing Dr Morgan's research on the MEI

Guided by a series of research questions, Dr Morgan's work can be developed in a variety of areas [3]. Firstly, based on his primary research interests, there are some aspects of the EM literature that can be extended in the years to come (following Morgan *et al.*, 2015; Obal and Morgan, 2018; Morgan and Anokhin, 2020; Anokhin *et al.*, 2023; Anokhin and Morgan, 2023). Therefore:

- RQ1. How can entrepreneurs pivot their business models to deliver enduring value to their customers (e.g. via new strategies and processes)?
- RQ2. How can owner-managers work with their end users (customer participation) to develop superior goods and services?
- RQ3. What are the pertinent advantages and disadvantages of firms implementing a market orientation and an entrepreneurial orientation at the same time?

Secondly, following an earlier point, networking is central to the MEI, in terms of the relationships that companies form with certain stakeholder groups to achieve their day-to-day and long-term objectives (Shaw, 1999; Boso *et al.*, 2013; Jones *et al.*, 2013; Crick *et al.*, 2016; Whalen *et al.*, 2016; Crick and Crick, 2021c; Alqahtani *et al.*, 2023; Chaudhry *et al.*, 2023). Indeed, networks was a key research interest of Dr Morgan – for which he focused on relationships between different stakeholder groups (Morgan *et al.*, 2018a, 2018b; Morgan and Anokhin, 2023). With this in mind:

- How can organisations manage efficient and effective networks with certain key stakeholder groups?
- Are decision-makers better served if they operate using their own resources and capabilities versus co-operating with their competitors (coopetition)?
- What are the likely dark sides of certain EM networks, in terms of how they influence company performance?

Thirdly, EM behaviours have predominantly been investigated in domestic arenas, *vis-à-vis*, organisations with internationalised business models (Jones and Rowley, 2011; Miles *et al.*, 2015; Sadiku-Dushi *et al.*, 2019; Eggers *et al.*, 2020; Karami *et al.*, 2023). That said, there is a growing body of work pertaining to internationalising the MEI [4] (Knight, 2000; Knight and Cavusgil, 2004; Mort *et al.*, 2012; Boso *et al.*, 2013; Hagen *et al.*, 2019; Felzensztein *et al.*, 2022; Crick *et al.*, 2023c). In fact, Dr Morgan conducted some work surrounding internationalised firms – and how they manage EM actions (see Morgan *et al.*, 2020; Anokhin *et al.*, 2021). Accordingly:

- Do decision-makers implement EM behaviours and activities differently internationally, *vis-à-vis*, domestically?
- What is the nature of the relationship between international forms of EM actions and company performance (e.g. likely moderators and mediators)?
- What are the underlying mechanisms that drive the link between international-level EM strategies, firm performance and other outcomes?

Fourthly, Dr Morgan was mainly known for his quantitative methodologies, such as surveys and statistical tools used to evaluate conceptual frameworks (Morgan *et al.*, 2016; Obal and Morgan, 2018; Morgan and Anokhin, 2023; Obal *et al.*, 2023). Nevertheless, there are a variety of research methods (qualitative and/or quantitative tools) that are available to the EM community – including recommended techniques that can advance this body of knowledge (Jones and Rowley, 2012; Rowley *et al.*, 2012; Crick and Crick, 2018; Eggers *et al.*, 2020; Alqahtani and Uslay, 2022; Alqahtani *et al.*, 2023; Crick, 2023). Thus, as this discipline continues to develop, there should be a focus on methodological factors – to supplement conceptual considerations. Henceforth:

- What is the best way to operationalise EM behaviours (i.e. to capture their nomological properties)?
- What epistemological perspectives and ontological stances are advantageous for investigating the MEI?
- What methodological challenges might EM scholars encounter when collecting (and analysing) empirical and secondary data on their chosen topics?

Fifthly, Dr Morgan had used different theoretical lenses in his research on the MEI (Kakapour *et al.*, 2016; Morgan *et al.*, 2018a, 2018b; Anokhin *et al.*, 2021). More broadly, EM scholars have used various theories to conceptualise EM behaviours, such as the resource-based view, the relational view, the dynamic capabilities lens, causation versus effectuation theory, the outside-in marketing perspective and so on (Hills *et al.*, 2010; Lehman *et al.*, 2014; Yang and Gabrielsson, 2017; Roach *et al.*, 2018; Crick, 2019; Crick *et al.*, 2023d; Hamzah *et al.*, 2023; Karami *et al.*, 2023). Consequently:

- What theory (or set of theories) is optimal for investigating conceptualisations that are related to the MEI?
- Are new theories needed to explain EM behaviours (i.e. established theoretical lenses might not be sufficient)?
- Do EM researchers need to draw upon non-commercial work (here, theories and logics) to improve their conceptualisations?

Sixthly, EM strategies have mostly been investigated in somewhat stable competitive business environments (Baker and Sinkula, 2009; Boso et al., 2012; Hansen et al., 2020;

Amjad *et al.*, 2023). That said, some work (including that written by Dr Morgan) has uncovered how different EM activities can be implemented during times of crisis (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic and other volatile market settings) (see, for example, Crick and Crick, 2020; Morgan *et al.*, 2020; Morrish and Jones, 2020; Anokhin *et al.*, 2021; Obal *et al.*, 2023). At any rate, more studies are need to be conducted to aptly evaluate such matters. Thus:

- How do entrepreneurs pivot their business models (and operations) in response to certain grand challenges?
- Are EM strategies implemented differently during times of crisis, vis-à-vis, in relatively stable markets and industries?
- How can decision-makers manage the MEI in volatile settings (e.g. global pandemics, wartime situations and supply chain shortages)?

Seventhly, there is a growing body of knowledge pertaining to educational aspects of the MEI (Peltier and Scovotti, 2010; Gilmore *et al.*, 2020; Crick and Crick, 2021e; McCartan *et al.*, 2023). This means that there is scope to incorporate Dr Morgan's research into EM classes in universities in various countries – to illustrate how certain theories and concepts apply (or do not apply) in practice (e.g. Morgan *et al.*, 2015; Kakapour *et al.*, 2016; Morgan and Anokhin, 2023; Anokhin *et al.*, 2023). To that end:

- How can the MEI be best-taught to university students in the present-day (considering contemporary issues in the commercial world)?
- Do EM behaviours need to be taught differently to non-subject specialists (e.g. engineering majors taking elective classes that are related to the MEI) versus commerce students?
- How can doctoral candidates conceptualise, operationalise and investigate (with empirical and secondary data) the MEI in their investigations (e.g. theses and associated journal articles)?

Eighthly, there is steady stream of research surrounding the MEI in technologically oriented businesses and industries around the world (Jones and Crick, 2004; Jones *et al.*, 2013; Yang and Gabrielsson, 2017; Alford and Jones, 2020). Indeed, Dr Morgan published some work on this topic, such as how owner-managers survive and grow within these rapidly developing markets via EM activities (see Obal and Morgan, 2018; Anokhin *et al.*, 2021; Obal *et al.*, 2023). That said, there is more work to be done in this area. As a result:

- Do the themes of the MEI apply differently to "high-tech" firms than businesses that are not focused on technology within their business models?
- Will technological advancements change how the MEI is conceptualised, operationalised and all-round studied (e.g. new types of companies and sectors are investigated)?
- What opportunities and challenges are likely to impact technologically oriented EM strategies (e.g. the rise of artificial intelligence – through channels, like ChatGPT)?

Although these factors do not serve as an exhaustive list, they provide a selection of illustrations where Dr Morgan's research on the MEI can facilitate future studies. This article is concluded as follows.

Concluding remarks

In the spirit of celebrating his life, the objective of this editorial was to provide a tribute to Dr Morgan's work on the MEI. This objective was achieved through undertaking a review of the literature surrounding EM behaviours – focusing on areas where Dr Morgan published his work before his untimely death. In conclusion, he published a variety of interesting investigations on the MEI (e.g. about strategic orientations, customer participation and networks). Indeed, his work is anticipated to be extended in the years to come – by EM scholars who are presently writing about such topics, together with academics and doctoral candidates of the future. To close, the authors of this editorial of the *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship* send their thoughts and prayers to Dr Morgan's family (especially his children) and friends during this extremely upsetting time. Furthermore, the EM community (namely, colleagues from the *AMA-EMSIG*, the *Global Research Conference on Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, the *Academy of Marketing's Entrepreneural & Small Business Marketing Special Interest Group*, the editorial board of the *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship* and beyond) will never forget his work – nor the man behind such studies. Rest in peace!

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Notes

- The details of Dr Morgan's death are currently (at the time of writing) being investigated by law enforcement authorities (Akron Beacon Journal, 2023). As such, the authors have not commented on the specific circumstances surrounding this dreadful incident.
- 2. A market orientation is the organisation-wide implementation of the marketing concept (Narver and Slater, 1990; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Cadogan et al., 2006; Cadogan, 2012; Crick, 2018). An entrepreneurial orientation is the "strategy-making processes that provide organisations with a basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions" (Rauch et al., 2009, p. 762). Collectively, these strategic orientations are well-established notions within the MEI (Covin and Slevin, 1989; Miles and Arnold, 1991; Knight and Cavusgil, 2004; Cadogan et al., 2009; Jones and Rowley, 2011; Eggers et al., 2013; Dai et al., 2014; Wales, 2016; Covin and Wales, 2019; Crick, 2021; Anderson et al., 2022).
- 3. For clarity, this editorial is used to highlight some critical areas where Dr Morgan's research on the MEI can be extended in the years to come. Clearly, and sadly, although Dr Morgan cannot comment on the accuracy of these factors (i.e. whether he would be interested in exploring such issues), the authors have strived to use his published research as a platform (together with research gaps pertaining to EM) for what such future research directions might look like. Moreover, the authors recognise that Dr Morgan currently has several papers under review in various journals (as informed by his surviving research team members from various projects), meaning that if/when such studies are eventually published, his work will endure in the future. Gratitude is expressed to the anonymous member of the Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship's editorial board for requesting more information on this matter during the review process.
- 4. Entrepreneurs internationalise for a variety of reasons affecting their choice of market entry modes, together with affecting their speed, scale and scope of their activities abroad (Crick et al., 2000; Crick, 2007; Sharma et al., 2018). Indeed, several stakeholders can help decision-makers when managing EM behaviours in international arenas, such as investors, trade associations, government policy advisors and competing businesses (Jones and Crick, 2004; Sraha et al., 2020; Crick and Crick, 2021d).

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Global Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship in San Diego, United States in August 2016 (Global Research Conference on Marketing and Entrepreneurship, 2023).



Global Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship in San Francisco, United States in August 2017 (Global Research Conference on Marketing and Entrepreneurship, 2023).



Global Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship in Boston, United States in August 2018 (AMA-EMSIG, 2023).



Editorial session at the *American Marketing Association Summer Academic Conference* – held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic in August 2021 (Centre for Service Management, 2021).



Global Research Conference on Marketing and Entrepreneurship in Whistler, Canada (and virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic) in August 2022 (AMA-EMSIG, 2023).

Figure A1.
The Global Research
Symposium on
Marketing and
Entrepreneurship
recently re-branded to
the Global Research
Conference on
Marketing and
Entrepreneurship.
Dr Morgan is circled in
orange