

BASIC SCIENCE FOR MARKETING: THE ROUTE TO A MANAGERIALLY
RELEVANT MARKETING SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Managers protest the literature's irrelevance; academics seek release from the straightjacket of "managerial relevance" and, alarmingly, advocate doing nonmarketing (sic). The fact of specialization in production provides clues to a valid measure of managerial relevance. It also points to fundamental processes of resource allocation and use as the problem domain of marketing science and practice.

THE CALL TO NONMARKETING

The topic of basic marketing science may evoke shades of a question that marketing scholars have wrestled with for decades namely, "Is marketing a science?" (e.g., Alderson and Cox 1948, Bartels 1951, Baumol 1957, Buzzell 1963, Converse 1945, Hunt 1976, O'Shaughnessy and Ryan 1979, Taylor 1965) — a question that is too diffuse for present purposes, and places undue emphasis on the state of the discipline at some current moment. Taking a less time-bound perspective, our interest here is to inquire into the nature of basic marketing science: At the frontier of knowledge, which domains and problems would we expect marketing scientists to address? As a human enterprise, science has always had a practical orientation. If we ask directly about the substantive domains and problems to which marketing scientists lay claim at the frontier of knowledge we may, at the same time, shed light on marketing's status as science.

In its own right, the question of substantive domains and problems is on the table in any case. Recurringly, the decade of the eighties has seen the extraordinary exhortations by authors writing in the official publications of the American Marketing Association, and by conference speakers whose titles identify them as professors of marketing, that we should "adopt a nonmarketing (sic) perspective" for our science and scholarship. In urging their colleagues, in effect, to flee the discipline or to break with schools of business and set up an independent discipline of consumer behavior, authors' disclose their preferred disciplinary domains with varying degrees of specificity. Some have simply urged adopting a nonmarketing perspective, giving no or few specifics about the substance of an alternative (e.g., Anderson 1983, Olson 1981); others have indicated some of the features of an alternative focus that they would find congenial (Belk 1984, 1987a,b, Holbrook 1985, Sheth 1982).

On a couple of counts, this is an exceedingly curious phenomenon and, to a marketing practitioner, profoundly troubling. Surely it is a remarkable state of affairs in need of further exploring, that marketing academics would choose as their life's work a discipline so uncongenial that they publicly urge its abandonment. Second, hearing one's academic colleagues advocate exploring domains outside marketing, would normally be unexceptionable, but two considerations make it troubling here: (1) The recommendation is not put forward in the spirit of enriching the discipline of marketing, but in some instances has been linked to harsh words about the kind of influence marketing and the business connection supposedly impose. (2) Practitioners' well-documented protests about the professional irrelevance of the "marketing" literature notwithstanding (e.g., Cunningham and Enis 1983), academics continue to label their output marketing. As argued elsewhere (Fennell 1987a,c), what has passed for marketing in the discipline's literature is in fact selling, and not marketing. Given that marketing is already being denied its due treatment, its chances for

scholarly and scientific development approach zero, should the advocates of abandoning the discipline find a following. A marketing practitioner is understandably alarmed at the prospect of the discipline's scholars and scientists fleeing a domain they have never explored. Face-to-face discussions are no more reassuring than is the literature. The question: Who is going to do marketing's basic science? produces reactions ranging from silence, through bafflement, to a shrug, and one other: It wouldn't be basic science if it were relevant to marketing.

Accordingly, while practitioners might have taken heart in the good news that academics are themselves finally rebelling against the discipline they have fashioned, the context for recent recommendations to till other fields is troubling. Perhaps the only ground for optimism is this: The discussion is riddled with many instances of mislabeling and miscommunication, leading one to hope that the sides may not be as far apart as the rhetoric suggests. Indeed, it is just possible that rapprochement between academics and practitioners may be found on terrain that is both different from that which academics have taken to be marketing, and congruent with what marketing practitioners regard as marketing proper. Such terrain is discussed herein.

Plan for This Paper

First, the paper's central thesis is introduced namely, the flight from marketing, the absence of a strong tradition of basic marketing science, and a mistaken notion of the true nature of marketing are related aspects of a single problem i.e., absence of a coherent, grounded, sense of marketing's function. Two sections follow that discuss, respectively, the nature of marketing tasks and the implications of those tasks for authentic, as opposed to strawman, "managerial relevance." Division of labor and specialized production make marketing the science of resource allocation and use. Existing work in each of three aspects of resource allocation — motivation, selective attention, and action — is reviewed to illustrate the need for basic marketing science. Marketing's domain is further clarified in contrast to economics and consumer behavior. The analysis provides a criterion for judging the scientific status of the discipline and a common problem domain for academics and managers.

BASIC SCIENCE AND THE FLIGHT FROM MARKETING

The section explores the question: Whose responsibility is it to do the basic science on which the profession of marketing must be grounded? Reasons why some have urged abandoning marketing are considered, as is the role played by absence of an orientation toward basic science in delaying marketing's grasp of its essential place among the sciences.

Basic Science for Marketing: Whose Responsibility?

Speaking as a marketing practitioner, unquestionably not

¹ On both occasions when Holbrook (1985) quotes from my analysis of the academic-practitioner gap (Fennell 1982), readers unfamiliar with my paper would not guess I had argued for developing theory, and for fully exploring contexts of use in individual lives. Moreover, many of the desirable consequences Holbrook promises, upon rejecting "managerial relevance," are consistent with current business practice. See later for two points of disagreement.

only is there is room, but a crying need, for basic science -- conceptualizing and research -- in marketing. In key aspects of our day-to-day work, our practice suffers from the absence of a base of fundamental scholarship in the form of critical reflection and empirical science. For the moment accepting the truth of such a statement, it may not necessarily follow that marketing scientists are the ones to make good the deficiency. Authors who have urged their colleagues to adopt a "nonmarketing" perspective seem to disavow responsibility for doing marketing's basic science. Their remarks do not suggest that they plan to turn their back on doing basic science, only on marketing. On what other ground would a marketing scientist choose a domain of basic science? Why would a person trained as a scientist, choose marketing as an area of specialization if not to do basic work in the domain of marketing? Whose responsibility is it to do such research? Is responsibility an appropriate word? If no other discipline happens to have done it, can marketing scientists reasonably continue to designate "marketing" as their field, while turning a blind eye to the absence of basic marketing science? We return later.

Sources of Disaffection with "Marketing"

Among advocates of "nonmarketing," there are at least three lines of thinking: (1) The first urges adopting a nonmarketing perspective in order to gain stature among colleagues in other disciplines and/or because of dissatisfaction with the kind of work to be found in the marketing literature; (2) A second springs from chagrin at finding one's work denied publication on grounds that it lacks "managerial relevance." Understanding and sympathizing with such concerns is not difficult. It's not pleasant to be looked down upon by colleagues, to feel dislike for what one finds in the literature of one's discipline, or to fear that some arbitrary criterion of "relevance" may prevent publication of work one wants to do. Such concerns are common in many domains within and without the academic community. A marketing audience certainly knows that social psychologists go through public crises of identity at somewhat regular intervals. Moreover, our friends in other professions tell us of their disenchantment with medicine, or law, or politics. The phenomenon, then, of disciplinary dissatisfaction or anomie -- even stronger words would be appropriate -- is not unique to marketing. Only the suggested remedy of fleeing the discipline may be somewhat unique.

(3) In a third view, the notion of basic research in marketing is simply a contradiction in terms. Basic science that is "relevant" to marketing or to anything else, presumably, is a semantic impossibility. At first, such a position may seem unassailable, given a concept of scientist doing basic work just for inherent interest.² Yet, on reflection, the argument's unassailability evaporates. The "nonrelevance" of basic science likely derives from using experimental control to restrict the number of effective variables. Does it strain our sense of "basic science" to say we authorize spending tax dollars to support basic science to find a cure/treatment for cancer? In this sense, basic science that is relevant to marketing may be distinguished from basic science that is relevant to playing baseball.

Basic Work on Problems of Exchange

Consider exchange or exchange relationships (Bagozzi 1974, 1975, 1979, Kotler 1972). For those who construe marketing's proper domain as exchange, ample opportunity exists for critical reflection and empirical work on the nature of exchange, the circumstances in which it may be observed, its historical, developmental, and psychological origins,

In fact, such "intrinsically" interesting basic research is probably relevant to something, for example, to the impact on existing knowledge of the new information it may yield, to its potential to support or refute existing theories or views of the world. The point is developed later.

its occurrence as an intra (i.e., interrole) and interpersonal phenomenon, including rigorous clarification of distinctions among its various manifestations -- as found in exchanging one's resources for a changed state of being, swapping, bartering and, possibly, advocacy or social influence, to name but a few. Even preliminary work along such lines reveals that marketing and selling involve contrasting and mutually exclusive models of exchange, which authors have confounded, with disastrous consequences for the marketing discipline. Remarkably, Bagozzi (1975) shows awareness at some level of the marketing-selling distinction, which was not featured in Bagozzi (1974):

"It should be noted, however, that marketing is not solely concerned with influence processes, whether these involve manufacturers influencing consumers or consumers influencing manufacturers. Marketing is also concerned with meeting existing needs and anticipating future needs, and these activities do not necessarily entail attempts to influence or persuade" (1975, p. 35).

However, the primacy of influence processes in Bagozzi's thinking ("not solely concerned") speaks to a concept of "exchange" that is grounded in selling. Selling appears to have been sufficiently dominant to deny the separate and distinct treatment that each form of exchange warrants.

Indeed, when marketing professors have urged adopting a nonmarketing perspective, apparently without realizing it what they recommend abandoning is not marketing, but selling (Fennell 1987a,c). Consider an example of such confounding:

"Attention has been focused on how to 'hook' buyers rather than on understanding consumer behavior, since how and why people buy has more immediate and concrete implications for marketing management than do the questions of how and why people consume as they do" (Belk 1984, p. 163).

To the contrary, marketing management proceeds on the belief that it is only by understanding the characteristics of contexts of use -- the interrole exchange of one who is both user and producer exchanging resources for an improved state of being ("how and why people consume as they do?") -- that we may hope to guide the production of goods and services profitably in a competitive environment. This is what the marketing revolution was all about. It is troubling to see our hard won gains educating our corporate colleagues thus undermined in the discipline's literature.

In sum, even though authors who declared marketing to be the discipline of "exchange behavior" may primarily have been thinking of the activity of selling, it seems likely that solid, intensive, basic science, probing the fundamental nature of exchange, would eventually have uncovered two essentially different concepts of exchange consistent with the activities of marketing and selling, respectively. With that clarification established, authors would have been less likely to construe "marketing managerial relevance" as centered narrowly on buying rather than on elucidating the nature of contexts of use. The question remains to be answered: Why has a tradition of doing basic science not developed in marketing? Why, in a listing of eight provocative questions for further research (Bagozzi 1975 p. 39) do we search in vain for: What is the nature of exchange?

WHAT IS "MANAGERIALLY RELEVANT"?

When we remark that the literature is not "relevant," some marketing academics may think we are looking for information directly bearing on a decision we face:

"Academic studies ... lack generalizability or conceptual richness (though quite adequate for seat-of-the pants marketing decisions by businesspeople)." Reviewer #10 p. 2

Even if the marketing literature were in some degree useful

to practitioners, we would not normally expect to find in it information that we could use to help us choose among options in some decision we face. Division of labor and specialization are the reason.

Specialization in production has been around for centuries, and technological advances increase the possibilities for specialization. Large corporations are organized in brand management teams. In the professional life of team members, behavioral domains such as keeping in touch with friends (greeting cards), taking care of pets (dog food and accessories), taking care of one's hair (shampoo and others), paying bills (credit cards), going on vacation (vacation air travel to Europe) are figure, and the rest of the universe is ground. Syndicated services produce survey data, updated annually, on some 500 product categories, each of which represents the focal (professional) universe for scores of individuals. For better or worse, this is how "advanced" economies arrange to produce society's goods/services. Relative to each of these focal universes, producers confront, on the one hand, wide ranges of personal and environmental circumstances that go to make contexts of use and, on the other, many candidate ingredients, technologies, and designs. The outcome is a variety of brands of each product. Producers may thus respond to differing constellations of user-circumstances with selected bundles of characteristics that promise diverse consumer experiences (cf "product benefits"). When I speak or write about market segmentation in such terms, academic marketers sometimes comment in astonishment, "You're talking about customization!" Perhaps, but this is no more than customization by segment of demand i.e., tailoring brands to reflect gross differences in demand within a product category. A few years ago, Cabbage Patch Kids dolls bore witness to the fact that we are already in an era of individualization. Given computer-controlled production, the capability is in place to produce finely grained differences in the characteristics of an offering. Only more precise information on characteristics of contexts of use is lacking in order to transform individualization into customization proper.

The point at issue is this: Already, in conditions of productive specialization and, increasingly, as true customization develops, only studies that are as highly particularized as proprietary marketing research can be used to help make strategic decisions. Given the sheer number of product categories and the need for timeliness in regard to certain kinds of information, practitioners are unlikely to look to academic marketers to provide information that would decide our choice among some real-world options.

Similar considerations relate to the likely value of behavioral principles. We do not expect to be able to lift maxims of behavior or of marketing or advertising tactics directly from the literature and apply them in our work. What legitimate basis would we have for believing that an empirical generalization that weakly emerges across many, often poorly defined, behavioral domains should hold within the confines of our focal universe? Only empirical research in our focal domain (e.g., sending greetings to friends, feeding the dog, planning vacation travel to Europe, or paying one's bills) provides information for strategic planning. We know we shall have to do that research ourselves. What is it, then, that practitioners would like to see in the literature? My purpose is not to answer exhaustively but, in giving a partial answer, to discuss a few issues relative to basic science for marketing.

DOMAINS OF BASIC SCIENCE FOR MARKETING

When Kotler says: "The marketer is a specialist at understanding human wants ... and knows what it takes for someone for to act" (1972 p. 53), he reflects important aspects of a practitioner's thinking. He captured two of three domains that are critically important in marketing practice: We want to know about motivation ("human wants"),

engaging attention, and action ("what it takes .. to act"). An audience of academic marketers may be surprised to learn that what we would really like to have available is basic conceptualizing and research in these domains. If you give us ways to think about these topics, we are equipped to obtain current information in our focal behavioral domains that helps us specify and choose among strategic options.

It so happens that the three topics of motivation, attention allocation, and action are underdeveloped, neglected even, in mainstream psychology. Moreover, except for attention, what little psychology has to say on these topics is not cast in a manner appropriate to marketing tasks. Accordingly, we have here domains where virtually no relevant basic science exists, where the lack of basic work hinders marketers in doing our job, and where marketing scientists have not stepped in to fill the void. At issue here are questions such as the following: Does it make sense to speak of an absence of "basic" science that is "appropriately cast" for marketing tasks? Shall we accept the implication that marketing scientists should step in to do basic science only if no other discipline is doing relevant work? By whatever name, basic or applied, when are marketing scientists going to do the conceptualizing and research that marketing's assignment requires in the domains of motivation, attention allocation, and action?

"Appropriately Cast" for Marketing.

Does it dilute the basic nature of basic science to speak of casting the work in a manner "appropriate" to some domain of application? Let me be specific with regard to motivation. As discussed elsewhere (e.g., Fennell 1975, 1980), there is a position, forcefully held by some psychologists, that psychological science does not need the construct of motivation. Nevertheless, other psychologists do study motivation but, in at least two respects, their work is not cast as a marketer would want it cast:

(1) Assumption of Intraindividual Consistency. Motivation may be treated in the manner of a trait of personality, that is, what is said about the subject is derived from observations made across activities and over time.³ Consistency across activities and over time is, of course, an assumption in the domain of personality studies. If one is interested in doing basic behavioral science with marketing in mind, is there any reason to adopt such an assumption? If one has in mind the real-world context of creating goods/services one at a time and, correspondingly, the real-world behavioral fact that actions are produced one at a time, the answer is resoundingly, No!

Consider a different case, a student of action. For the intrinsic interest it offers, he or she wants to take a particular activity for example, shaving one's beard or playing music as a hobby, and study that activity, across individuals in some region of time and space e.g., the US in 1987. Or, consider a different case still, another student of action who is grappling with the concept of free will. At some point, the subject of motivation is bound to arise. Is it appropriate for these students of action to bring to their thinking about motivation an assumption of intrapersonal consistency i.e., consistency across different kinds of acts and over time? In the case of our student of shaving/music playing, there seems to be no good reason to introduce other activities. Similarly, for the student of free will, given that action occurs, if at all, at a point in space and time, it would seem only to complicate things, initially, if one were to use concepts designed to characterize across many actions and over time. Intrapersonal consistency in some form may emerge as a

³ Significant, though not essential to my main point is the fact that it is not characteristic of this research to specify or have the subjects specify which activities and periods of time are being studied or reported.

finding, but should it be built in as an assumption?

We have, then, three contexts for studying motivation: One dictated, in the first instance, by the exigencies of marketing's assignment in the real world; in the second, by interest in describing a domain of behavior; and in the third, by a topic for philosophic analysis. From all perspectives it seems inappropriate, in approaching the study of motivation, to take on an assumption of intraindividual consistency, which characterizes the domain of personality. On what basis would one say that having an eye to marketing's domain *ipso facto* rules out the possibility of doing "basic" work in motivation while relevance to other projects — such as empirical research on shaving or critical reflection on free will — does not?

(2) Resource Allocation: "What?" Before "How Much?" In another tradition, psychologists have studied motivation quantitatively. Consider instrumental conditioning in lower animals where psychologists manipulate "motivation" by varying hours of food or liquid deprivation, or intensity of electric shock. There are times when human beings are less or more hungry or thirsty, or suffer less or more physical pain of one sort or another. Perhaps such a quantitative approach is cast appropriately for marketing? Moreover, it proceeds in the absence of assumptions about intraorganismic consistency. But as regards motivation, is the quantitative dimension all that a producer needs to consider? Specialization of production means that producers are making output available that they themselves may never use. They are not producing to satisfy their own kinds of wants. Only the kinds of wants of those for whose use the output is intended enter the picture. Under a system of division of labor, the producer's first and overriding question is: What shall we produce? That question, then, specifies the context within which marketing's basic study of motivation must be cast. What does it mean to produce what others would make for themselves? It means understanding the process by which an individual's resources are allocated to doing the things he or she does, and understanding it well enough to intervene in that process and act for the individual. Before producers reach the quantitative question — the intensity of motivation in some instance — a more basic question must first be addressed namely, the substantive domain at issue. Which of the many personal and environmental systems are involved in any particular instance? This brings us to the second reason why existing work in motivation is not appropriately cast for marketing. It is marketing's distinctive perspective to see all three of the domains where basic work is needed — motivation, attention allocation, and action — as implicated in a process by which the individual's resources are allocated to a system that may need adjusting.

In sum, if one's task is to help producers make what users would make for themselves, one should understand the process by which humans' resources are allocated to doing what they do — a problem domain embracing motivation, attention allocation, and action. We have examined two reasons why existing work in motivation has not been cast appropriately for marketing's task. We have concluded that: (1) Unexamined assumptions and theoretical commitments are likely present as a scientist conducts even basic research. Accordingly, the orientations of basic scientists should reflect structural features of their problem domain.⁴ (2) Certain essential characteristics of marketing's task are incompatible with the theoretical commitments of those those who

⁴ Reason for marketing's basic science to be done by marketing scientists. Immersed in the discipline's problems, they could be relied upon to cast the work appropriately, even without being consciously aware that they are doing so or able to state the contextual elements they provide for.

⁵ Sadly, some urge retreat to selling: "Marketing management ...defined as...analysis, planning, and execution (cont'd)

have conducted basic work in motivation, which has been inappropriately cast for students of marketing.

Basic Marketing Science: Not Only by Default

So far, I have argued that it is not a contradiction in terms to speak of basic science for marketing, which I take to mean: In relevant domains of knowledge (e.g., resource allocation), research and conceptualizing appropriately cast for (i.e., bearing specialization in mind) marketing's assignment. Let me now ask: Who should do this research? If marketing-relevant domains have been neglected by other disciplines or studied in an inappropriate manner, who else but marketing scientists should do the basic work? In addition to motivation, the topic of conceptualizing action is one where what little work has been done is not particularly well cast for marketing. But what if, by chance, some other discipline has done work in a marketing-relevant domain and cast it appropriately? Do marketing scientists hold that nothing then remains for them to do? They may examine such work closely to establish if it has been cast appropriately for marketing's assignment, and begin to consider how the work may be taken farther. An interesting case in point is Berlyne's (1960) work, some of which is relevant to engaging attention. His work readily lends itself to the marketer's task of locating targets in media audiences (Fennell 1979). Insightful though Berlyne's work is, chances are good that the topic has more answers to give to those who question it artfully.

The idea is preposterous that marketing should be denied development through basic science. There is a domain of study properly called basic marketing science. Moreover, marketing scientists are the individuals who would both do basic marketing science, and be considered responsible, by society, for doing it. Should marketing scientists find that others have prepared the ground for them, they will be able to build on existing work, as scientists typically do. What distinguishes them as marketing scientists is the disciplinary perspective they bring to scrutinizing the existing body of scientific work. Discerningly as marketers, they screen that work for appropriateness and use it only if it is appropriately cast. Should it fail the test, they will create marketing's basic science out of whole cloth, if that's what it takes.

WHAT IS MARKETING'S PROBLEM DOMAIN?

"We are not students of some subject matter but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline." (Popper 1963 p. 67)

It is not hard to locate where marketers fit, in the family of the sciences. The problem to which marketers contribute arises from the facts of division of labor, and impersonal exchange-at-a-distance (Fennell 1986). The task of producing what people need in order to maintain their lives, and a decent quality of life, is no longer a concern only of individuals or families, but today involves society pervasively. Users and producers are separated, and marketers' job is to reestablish by human design the connection that division of labor, mass manufacturing and media severed. To sharpen our view, let us consider marketing in each of two contexts: economics and consumer behavior.

Economics. Placing marketing's function in the context of four topics that economists study (Figure 1), we may note that, in recent history, marketers have emphasized distribution (e.g., Cox et al. 1963), exchange (e.g., Bagozzi 1979), and consumption (e.g., Belk 1987, Holbrook 1985). Although the marketing concept formally lays claim to the domain of production, marketing scholars and scientists have been slow to follow.⁵ Including production within one's purview adds appropriate context for studying distribution, exchange, and consumption. It is marketing's particular contribution to see all four as elements in a

FIGURE 1 FOUR TOPICS STUDIED BY ECONOMISTS

PRODUCTION
DISTRIBUTION
EXCHANGE
CONSUMPTION

unitary system of want-occurrence and satisfaction. Accordingly, a marketing perspective prompts us to model the system first at the individual level. For example, consider a simple model of instrumental action (Figure 2, right of the dotted line): We enter the system at a point where change in the relation between individual and environment allocates the individual's resources to effecting counterchange. Here the individual is shown taking some action that produces an effect, but not necessarily counterchange. (For more complete discussion of this and related models, see Fennell 1985a). As shown left of dotted line, we may view these events as: (1) Conditions of resource allocation i.e., selecting personal/environmental systems that need adjusting, and (2) Conditions of resource use i.e., effecting, or trying to effect, an adjustment. This distinctively marketing perspective provides, as shown in Figure 3, a systematic context and ex ante focus for studying some traditional topics of economics.

Consumer Behavior. The kind of consumer research that, according to Belk (e.g., 1987) and Holbrook (e.g., 1985), will result from rejecting marketing managerial relevance, seems generally congruent with the nature of proprietary marketing research. Only three points may need clarifying: (1) Both authors hold that the managerial goal of designing a brand that (some) users choose repeatedly (in preference to other brands or home made alternatives), imposes an undesirable narrowness on the study of consumer behavior; the narrowness is not present when one may study products rather than brands.⁶ Among many issues implicated here, let me indicate just a few: (a) Rather than broad-narrow, the dimensions at issue are abstract-concrete and vague-precise. "Product" is an abstraction e.g., "bread"; technically, "brand" is a specific, real-world entity and concrete behavioral option. There is no physical entity corresponding to a product i.e., "bread" exists only in some specific form (e.g., white, whole grain, thin, crusty). One may claim to study nutritional value of bread versus cake, but in fact one compares the nutritional values of certain breads and cakes. Corresponding to a concrete behavioral option, a brand is (roughly) as "narrow" or "broad" as human action itself; (b) In fact, of course, what is significantly studied in marketing are behavioral domains (Fennell 1982a, 1985b) rather than brands or products. "Brand choice" is an (imperfect) index

FIGURE 2 A SIMPLE MODEL OF INSTRUMENTAL ACTION

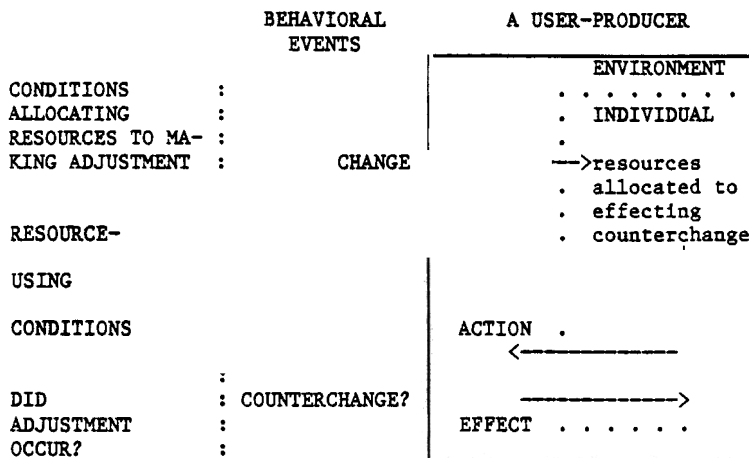


FIGURE 3 DOMAINS OF MARKETING AND ECONOMIC SCIENCE

DOMAIN OF MARKETING SCIENCE	ECONOMICS
CONDITIONS :	
ALLOCATING :	
RESOURCES TO :	
MAKING ADJUSTMENT :	CHANGE
RESOURCE- :	
USING :	PRODUCTION
CONDITIONS :	DISTRIBUTION
DID ADJUSTMENT :	EXCHANGE
OCCUR? :	COUNTERCHANGE (?) CONSUMPTION

of how well one understands the characteristics of (some) contexts of use. Considering degree of understanding, "brand" imposes a much tougher criterion than does "product." (Compare the relative difficulty of predicting product versus brand use: For product, one identifies the variables that explain using bread or coats; for brand, one identifies, within bread/coats, the variables that explain which kind is used).

(2) Both authors emphasize consumption. Note that consumer research divorced from a marketing perspective is constrained to study behavior in regard to the existing brand array. The thrust of marketing's study of consumer behavior is toward changing the brand array, to reflect features of contexts of use more closely, as understanding grows. After all, brands are only adjuncts to the things people do — instruments to effect individual purposes. This is why marketers would focus on contexts of use, rather than on consumption (Fennell 1985b, p. 120, 158).

(3) Research questions, other than those that marketers normally generate, can be posed around objects of consumption. It is fine that such problems should attract students, and have journals and conferences for their airing. However, claims of their greater worthiness, compared with topics marketers study, seem inappropriate. With "the dog-food level of things," Bellow (1975, see Belk 1987b) may have coined a striking phrase, as writers like to do. Dog lovers might find it curious, or sad, that he should have thought to turn one of humankind's happier associations into a metaphor for "petty, stupid, and dull." Did he know, one wonders, that caring for even a plant may prolong a human life? Why should there be any necessary association between the marketing domain and "lower" forms of human activity? "Things" are present at great and foolish moments. Human nature and activity are as they are. Within law and ethics, our job is to describe contexts of use, not to judge. Marketers, scientists and practitioners both, may find interest in all our subject matter. As behavioral scientists, marketers welcome a flourishing domain of consumer behavior, wherever located, and hope that some of its best students take marketing's assignment as their own.

IS MARKETING A SCIENCE?

Marketing is a science to the extent that its students strive to represent, and find order in, the domain of knowledge that is marketing's province. Marketing comprises problems of resource allocation and use, which flow from

⁵ (cont'd from previous page) of...activities concerning the pricing, promoting, and distributing of ideas, goods, and services." (Hirschman 1986, p. 433).

⁶ Elsewhere (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, p. 137), a product-brand discussion evokes the practitioner's distinction between "product benefits" and "brand beliefs."

division of labor and productive specialization. With a vast and largely unexplored domain as our province, it should be decades at least before we would seriously need to think of abandoning a marketing perspective. For both disciplinary anomaly and managerial relevance, my potent prescription is this: Take a five -- or ten -- year horizon, and do basic work in resource allocation and use.

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APPENDIX ISSUES OF FACE VALIDITY⁷

In general, treatments of the academic-practitioner gap have paid scant attention to validity, even face validity. The operational definition of "managerial relevance" seems to be: Ground stated by (academic) reviewer for denying publication to a manuscript.⁸ Similarly, in a paper promising "analysis of the academic/practitioner distinction" (Brinberg and Hirschman 1986, p. 161), the operational definition of "practitioner orientation to research" is: Research exhibiting stated features, conducted by academics and published in the academic literature. Given the tiny literature on the interface of academics and practitioners, it is surprising that the authors fail to refer, even briefly, to the extent to which their analysis addresses issues that marketing practitioners have raised. My work contains instances, closely paralleling Brinberg and Hirschman's examples, where I present a marketing practitioner's approach to published academic work. In three instances, the comments are fairly detailed: (1) On Bagozzi's (1983) work demonstrating causal modeling in the context of attempted social influence and (2) on work in consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (Fennell 1985a); (3) In the course of applying marketing thinking to persuasive tasks in nonbusiness contexts, for illustrative purposes I used the domain of live theatre. The approach (Fennell 1985b e.g., pp. 108-113) is available for comparison with a state of the art academic study (Andreasen and Belk 1981). Only Brinberg and Hirschman can speak to the extent to which they tried to take cognizance of the issues I raise. Meanwhile, I shall ask but two questions: (1) (If they do), on what grounds do the authors equate basic-applied with academic-practitioner? (2) On what grounds do they classify a study as exemplifying marketing, as distinct from selling, or psychology?

⁷ This appendix responds to reviewer requests to comment on Brinberg and Hirschman (1986), which appeared after my papers were written.

⁸ A companion paper to the present gave rise to my own story of rejection for managerial nonrelevance: Rather than just talk about basic marketing science, it seemed appropriate to deliver. My intent was thwarted when "lack of managerial relevance" was ground for rejecting a paper addressing psychological processes of resource allocation.