

# Academy of Marketing Science





**DIRECTOR**

**Harold W. Berkman, Ph.D.**

Professor of Business Administration  
C. W. Post Center, Long Island University

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AND EDITOR**

**Jane K. Fenyo, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor English  
C.W. Post Center, Long Island University

**STAFF**

Stanley Malaga, Comptroller  
Barry R. Armandi, Circulation  
Sharon Hecht, Assistant to Director  
Joan McCarthy, Assistant to Director

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

**Harold W. Berkman, Ph.D.**

Professor of Business Administration  
School of Business Administration,  
C. W. Post Center, L.I.U.

**Jane K. Fenyo, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of English,  
C. W. Post College, C. W. Post Center, L.I.U.

**Peter M. Banting, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of Marketing  
McMaster University

**A. B. Blankenship, Ph.D.**

Professor of Marketing,  
Bowling Green State University

**Natalie Calabro, Ph.D.**

President American Statistical Association  
Associate Professor of Marketing and  
Operations Research, Graduate School of  
Business, St. John's University

**Adel I. El-Ansary, Ph.D.**

Professor of Marketing and Business  
Business Administration  
The George Washington University

**Norbert Lloyd Enrick, Ph.D.**

Professor of Administrative Sciences  
Kent State University

**Douglas K. Hawes, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Marketing  
The University of Wyoming

**V. H. Kirpalani, D.Sc.**

Chairman, Graduate Studies  
Sir George Williams Campus,  
Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

**George J. M. K. Korey, D.Sc. Econ.**

Vice-President, Administration and  
Dean of External Programs, Ryerson  
Polytechnical Institute, Toronto, Canada

**Peter LaPlaca, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of Marketing  
University of Connecticut

**Robert H. Luke, Jr., Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of  
Business Administration,  
College of the Virgin Islands

**Vincent J. Mott, Ph.D.**

Professor of Marketing,  
School of Business,  
Seton Hall University

**John E. Pearson, Ph.D.**

Dean of Business Administration  
Texas A&M University

**Robin T. Peterson, Ph.D.**

Professor of Marketing  
New Mexico State University

**Bert Rosenbloom, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of Marketing  
Drexel University

**Randolph E. Ross, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Marketing  
McMaster University

**John K. Ryans, Jr., D.B.A.**

Associate Dean, Graduate School of  
Business Administration  
Kent State University

**A. Coskun Samli, Ph.D.**

Professor of Marketing  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
and State University

**Ivan R. Vernon, D.B.A.**

Assistant Professor of Marketing  
Baylor University

**Herb Young**

President, C B S Import Corporation

# Marketing as a Pluralistic Discipline: The Forestalling of an Identity Crisis

**Zohrab S. Demirdjian, M.B.A.**

*Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge*

The realization that marketing is a dynamic phenomenon is hardly ever contested by scholars or practitioners. Despite such a consensus, many marketers seem to feel uncomfortable with the growing complexity and changing nature of the field. The quibble has often been over an either-or position. Since Paul D. Converse first raised the question of the scientific status of marketing in 1945, debates have sparked among marketers as to whether the discipline is a science or an art (Bartels 1951; Hutchinson 1952; Buzzell 1963; Taylor 1965; Weiss 1962). More recently a variation of the same theme has revolved around the question of whether marketing is a social process or a business activity (Kotler and Levy 1969; Luck 1969).

Whenever a new paradigm has been proposed, especially to supplant rather than to supplement an existing one, controversy has arisen among marketers. Proposed new directions have typically raised the hue and cry of some scholars warning that marketing has reached or is heading toward an identity crisis (Sweeney 1972, p. 3 & 9; Dawson 1971, p. 71) and eventually to the dilution of the discipline into an amorphous state (Luck 1969).

Somewhat sympathetic with keeping the traditional boundaries of the discipline, Tucker argues in a recent *Journal of Marketing* article (1974) that the Kotlerian Generic Marketing, which proposes a new approach to expand the frontiers of the discipline (1972), seems unlikely to "...either provide a springboard for a vigorous new marketing theory or, on the practical level,

widely improve the performance characteristics of a great variety of social institutions." Tucker further contends that "... there are many research directions that are intimately related to the major questions of our era, yet all within the 'normal' limits of the discipline" (1974, pp. 33 & 35). Thus the tendency has been to find security within the familiar walls of a marketing bastion. Any venture beyond the traditional limits of the discipline has been looked upon by most scholars as either threatening to its identity or impractical for improving its thought and theory.

The purpose of this article is to show that by adopting a pluralistic perspective, confusion about the identity of marketing can be prevented. The following section highlights the background of two major debates surrounding the discipline. Given this framework, a new perspective is proposed to facilitate understanding of the multifaceted nature of marketing. Finally, a scheme is presented to portray the branching out of marketing into various dimensions as a means of forestalling an identity crisis.

### THE MAJOR DEBATES CONFRONTING THE DISCIPLINE

One of the aforementioned debates that has been discernible in the literature has to do with the scientific status of marketing, whereas the other one has dealt with the scope or domain of marketing. As is evidenced in the following paragraphs, scholars have been inclined to argue the debates using a uni-dimensional approach.

#### Science Vs. Art Controversy

On the issue of the "science or art" controversy, scholars have founded their arguments on a narrow view of marketing causing their conclusions to be uni-dimensional. For instance, Kenneth D. Hutchinson, in "Marketing As a Science: An Appraisal" (1952), concluded that marketing was not a science, but rather an art or practice.

On the other hand, Weldon J. Taylor, in "Is Marketing a Science? 'Revisited'," inferred that marketing was a science since the new concept of science did not necessitate predictable results from experimentation, but rather, fruitful schemes which would lead to new useful concepts (1965, p. 53). The main implication is that a field does not cease to be scientific when its relative degree of predictability is open to question.

Of late, the either-or position again appeared in the literature. Goldstucker, Greenberg, and Bellenger report in a recent article a research whose purpose

was to "determine how marketing managers view the basic nature of marketing: as *an art or a science*" (1974, p. 38). (Italics added)

#### Business Activity Vs. Social Process Controversy

New paradigms to expand or contract the boundaries of the discipline have also generated debate among marketers. Some critics, for example, have argued that marketing would face an identity crisis if the scope of study went beyond traditional line.

In their widely quoted 1969 article, Kotler and Levy proposed a broadening of the concept of marketing to apply the discipline's technology to non-business organizations. Luck criticized Kotler and Levy's thesis in his "Broadening the Concept of Marketing—Too Far" (1969), charging that it would divert marketing from its true purpose and dilute its content. Luck maintained that marketing was a business technology and that any other perspectives would "lead to confusion regarding the essential nature of marketing" (1969, p. 53). Even Bartels expressed a certain amount of skepticism about the broadening concept of marketing in one of his latest writings (1974, p. 76).

In 1972, Sweeney questioned marketing's identity crisis by arguing that unless marketing were regarded as a social system, it would be facing such a crisis. Sweeney contended that perspectives deeming marketing to be a technology or distribution system were not sufficient concepts of marketing. By the same logic, however, marketing from one perspective, such as a social system, is also a narrow approach. What is needed is an acceptable, but yet flexible, base which can contain the various facets of the evolving scope of the discipline, and at the same time delineate the multi-faceted nature of marketing.

### A PLURALISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE DISCIPLINE OF MARKETING

"Is marketing a science or an art?" and "Is marketing a business activity or a social process?" Responses to both questions imply that only polar positions can be assumed, but such a perspective is restrictive and hampers the maturing of the discipline.

A major hindrance to the development of marketing thought has been the failure of scholars to formally dichotomize the field for purposes of study as has been done in most disciplines. Using the mature approach employed by many disciplines, marketing could be divided into "science" and "art"

components.

### Dichotomy of the Nature of Marketing

After delineating the subject matter which constitutes the field, the next step in the pluralistic approach would be to indicate marketing's "dual personality." For example, psychology is the study of human behavior. It is a pure or conceptual science. On the other hand, the corollary field of clinical psychology is an art that applies the scientific techniques of psychology. Assumptions, hypotheses, and theories of psychology and other related fields are applied in the practice of clinical psychology whose purpose is primarily to ameliorate a particular individual's personal adjustment as a member of society. Thus, clinical psychology is concerned with solutions to practical problems and its emphasis is upon those data which have more immediate application (utility).

In the same vein, marketing, one of the younger members of the social science family, ought to be divided into a conceptual science and an art as is done with other fields of science illustrated in Table 1.

One half of the dichotomy in the field of marketing could be looked upon as an art (a technology) and be called MARKETRY, representing the applied activities of the discipline. —ry is a suffix of abstract nouns denoting practice such as in husbandry, surgery, dentistry.

The other half of the dichotomy could be to view marketing as a conceptual science and label it MARKETOLOGY. —ology is also a suffix denoting a study of, or a branch of knowledge such as in Anthropology, Geology, Sociology. As for the term marketing, it could remain to mean as a collective word referring to MARKETOLOGY and MARKETRY together, or simply it could remain to designate the parent field of marketing without distinguishing between science and art of the discipline.

MARKETOLOGY could be tentatively defined as the study of marketing phenomenon as a social process from the macro level. Conceptual science is concerned with developing valid and coherent descriptions, explanations, and predictiveness regarding phenomena; it encourages research for understanding of the "what" and "why" aspects of the marketing phenomenon. The Marketing Science Institute is an endeavor of MARKETOLOGY.

On the other hand, MARKETRY would be concerned with the application of models and theories of MARKETOLOGY to practical problems with an emphasis on the "how" and "when" and "where" aspects of marketing.

In summary, the discipline's propensity toward the unidimensional perspective leads one to make a forced choice of either accepting or rejecting marketing as a science. But when we employ a dual perspective to the field, we

TABLE 1  
SOME CONCEPTUAL SCIENCES AND A FEW OF  
THEIR CORRESPONDING APPLIED ARTS

Conceptual Science	Corresponding Applied Art (Representative Application or Technology)
Anatomy	Dentistry, Surgery
Anthropology	Anthropometry, Clinical Anthropology, Development Anthropology, Forensic Medicine, Legal Anthropology
Botany	Agronomy, Forestry, Horticulture
Physics	Aeronautical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering
Psychology	Clinical Psychology, Education, Industrial Psychology, Psychiatry
Sociology	Attitude Survey, Human Resource Development, Juvenile Delinquency, Opinion Pole, Rural Sociology, Social Welfare
Zoology	Animal Husbandary, Veterinary Medicine

dichotomize marketing into two dimensions: MARKETRY as an applied art or technology which is not a pure science, and marketing as MARKET- OLOGY which is a conceptual science. In accepting the two dimensions much of the "science vs. art" debate is obviated.

Furthermore, delineation of the nature of marketing into its proper dimensions offers a derivative solution to the question, "Is marketing a social process or a business activity?"

### Dimensions of the Scope of Marketing

Generically, marketing should be looked upon as a social process; however, compressing many of the natural manifestations of the field into one perspective is also too narrow an approach. It seems that the tendency of some scholars is to countervail the natural offshoots of a growing science by denying these manifestations as part of the field.

The ramification of a field of study into different areas of specialization is a sign of healthiness and growth. Such viability should not be constructed as an oncoming identity crisis; instead, it should be encouraged. Take, for example, physics, which is regarded by many as a mature science. Over the years physics spawned various applied areas such as aeronautical engineering, civil engineering, electrical engineering and so on. Each of these areas have a distinct identity within the general field of physics. By the same token, marketing scholars should view marketing as a combination of separate, yet distinct, identities that fall under the umbrella of the parent field.

Table 2 portrays such a proposed ramification for marketing. Table 2 shows that the dichotomy deals with the dual nature of the discipline. MARKET-  
OLOGY, a science, views marketing as a social process; fundamentally, it is involved in theory construction, basic research, and in the advancement of science in general to increase our understanding of the marketing phenomenon.

While MARKETRY, an art (technology), is a business activity, the various dimensions of MARKETRY indicate the enlarging and evolving scope of the applied part of the discipline. The right hand side of Table 2 shows the three main areas in which marketing technology is being either applied or proposed for application. The three main areas are the business organization marketing, the non-business organization marketing (social marketing), and generic marketing.

In the business organization marketing, marketing technology has been used almost exclusively in the goods and services market. The applied dimensions of marketing in goods and services market are in the form of channel of distribution, consumer behavior, logistics, market research, etc.

Of the three types of economic markets, namely, goods and services market, labor market, and money market, marketing theory and technology concentrate predominantly on the first market. One marketing scholar maintains that labor market and money market are useful potential areas for generating marketing know-how in order to enhance the general performance of marketing in our society; presently, marketing has no technology available in either of these markets. One possible dimension of the labor market would be the accumulation and application of marketing knowledge and techniques of

TABLE 2  
A PLURALISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE NATURE AND  
SCOPE OF THE MARKETING DISCIPLINE

AS A SCIENCE (Social Process)	AS AN ART, TECHNOLOGY (Business Activity)
<b>MARKETOLOGY</b>	<b>MARKETRY</b>
Involved in:	Dimensions:
A. Theory Construction (Including General Theory, Sub-theories, Metatheory, Theory in Comparative Marketing)	A. Business Organization Marketing
B. Basic Research (In all dimensions of MARKETRY)	1. Goods & Services Market
C. Advancement of Science in General	Channel of Distribution Consumer Behavior Logistics Market Research Etc.
	2. Labor Market
	3. Money Market
	B. Non-Business Organization Mar- keting (Social Marketing)
	Political Marketing Educational Marketing Religious Marketing Government Marketing Etc.
	C. Generic Marketing
	Same dimensions as the ones listed under business & non- business organization market- ing

the economic utilization of human resources; as for the money market, a probable dimension would be in the form of know-how about the consequences of consumer's income changes (Tucker 1974, pp. 34-35).

The primary intent of including the labor and money markets is not to advocate or support the concept, but rather to show how the pluralistic approach is adaptable in allowing the discipline to grow without getting caught in an iden-

tity crisis due to unidimensional perspective.

In the area of non-business organization marketing, the dimensions of MARKETRY are emerging in the specialized technologies of political marketing, educational marketing, religious marketing, government marketing, etc.

Finally, in the area of generic marketing (marketing between an organization and all of its publics as proposed by Kotler in 1972), the dimensions of MARKETRY could be the same as the ones listed under the two main areas of business and non-business organization marketing.

Thus MARKETRY is divided into various dimensions to reflect the natural ramifications of the dynamic discipline. As marketing matures, it is unnatural to try to keep the field as an "all trunk and no branches" discipline. A glimpse at the history of science indicates that such a metamorphosis is the way of all fields of scientific inquiry.

In summary, the dichotomy (MARKETOLOGY and MARKETRY) and the dimensions of marketing help clarify the multi-faceted character of the field. MARKETOLOGY is a science and studies marketing as a social process, whereas MARKETRY as an art (applied technology) is an activity involved in the application of knowledge—generated by MARKETOLOGY—to business and non-business organizations.

By virtue of this multi-dimensional perspective to marketing, it will be easier to incorporate new theories and practices as legitimate parts of marketing in general. For example, if we were to consider marketing unidimensionally as a business organization activity, how would we be able to account for the marketing practices of non-business organizations which are increasingly applying marketing technology in achieving their enterprise goals, as is the case of the phenomenon called "Social Marketing?" (Kotler and Zaltman 1971, p. 5).

Moreover, by allowing a flexible scope of marketing, Tucker's recent observation of annexing the labor market and money market, in addition to the goods and services market, as part of the marketing domain can easily be achieved as is shown in Table 2. Since knowledge of the workings of the labor and money markets would enhance our understanding of the consumer behavior better (Tucker, pp. 34-35), any additional insight would keep the discipline viable and increase its importance as a substantially contributing member of the social sciences. But a unidimensional perspective would deny the discipline from breaking new grounds in theory and practice. Who, be it an ego-involving scholar or a practitioner, would want a marketing "bondage?"

## CONCLUSION

In view of the major debates pertaining to the nature and scope of marketing, a pluralistic perspective was proposed. Marketing was divided into MARKETOLOGY as a conceptual science and MARKETRY as a technology which in turn was branched out into dimensions to preserve the natural manifestations of the field by expanding its scope. In this way, we were attempting to provide a means for forestalling an identity crisis in a young, but changing and maturing discipline, namely that of marketing.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>A rigorous review of the literature seemed to indicate that no one has before used the terms Marketry and Marketology. Robert Bartels (1959), however, has employed "marketologist" as one version of the latter word—in a different context from the subject of this article.

## REFERENCES

- Bartels, Robert. 1951. "Can Marketing Be a Science." *Journal of Marketing* 15 (January) 319-328.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1959. "Sociologists and Marketologists." *Journal of Marketing* 24 (October) 37-40.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1974. "The Identity Crisis in Marketing." *Journal of Marketing* 38 (October) 73-76.
- Buzzell, Robert D. 1963. "Is Marketing a Science?" *Harvard Business Review* 41 (January-February) 32 ff.
- Converse, Paul D. 1945. "The Development of the Science of Marketing: An Exploratory Survey." *Journal of Marketing* 10 (July) 14-32.
- Dawson, Leslie. 1971. "Marketing Science in the Age of Aquarius." *Journal of Marketing* 35 (July) 66-72.
- Goldstucker, Jac L., Barnett A. Greenberg, and Danny N. Bellenger. 1974. "How Scientific Is Marketing?" *MSU Business Topics* 22 (Spring) 35-43.
- Hutchinson, Kenneth D. 1952. "Marketing As a Science: An Appraisal." *Journal of Marketing* 16 (January) 286-293.
- Kotler, Philip and Sidney J. Levy. 1969. "Broadening the Concept of Marketing." *Journal of Marketing* 33 (January) 10-15.
- \_\_\_\_\_. and Gerald Zaltman. 1971. "Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned

Social Change." *Journal of Marketing* 35 (July) 3-12.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1972. "A Generic Concept of Marketing." *Journal of Marketing* 36 (April) 46-54.

Luck, David J. 1969. "Broadening the Concept of Marketing—Too Far." *Journal of Marketing* 33 (July) 53-57.

Sweeney, Daniel J. 1972. "Marketing: Management Technology or Social Process?" *Journal of Marketing* 36 (October) 3-10.

Taylor, Weldon J. 1965. "Is Marketing a Science?' Revisited." *Journal of Marketing* 29 (July) 49-53.

Tucker, W. T. 1974. "Future Directions in Marketing Theory." *Journal of Marketing* 38 (April) 30-35.

Weiss, E. B. 1962. "Will Marketing Ever Become a Science?" *Advertising Age* (August 20) 64-65.

---

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ZOHRAB S. DEMIRDJIAN is instructor of Business Administration and a doctoral candidate in Marketing at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. He received his B.S. in 1969 and M.B.A. in 1971 from Arizona State University, Tempe. Mr. Demirdjian has taught at U.S. Air Force Base, Nouasseur, and has held various managerial positions in a number of small and large firms. He has written several papers in marketing and management. He is presently co-authoring a basic marketing communications textbook.

## Instructions for Contributors JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF MARKETING SCIENCE

Address manuscripts to the Editor, Dr. Jane K. Fenyo, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, School of Business Administration, C. W. Post Center, L.I.U., Greenvale, New York 11548. Manuscripts should be approximately 4,000 words or about 13 double-spaced typewritten pages. Shorter articles are also acceptable. Submit ribbon original and two clear copies on standard white paper (not "erasable"). Leave wide margins and double-space all material including indented passages, references, tables. Author should retain a copy. Cover page should contain title, author's name, and institutional affiliation. Tables should be numbered, each typed on a separate page and, where appropriate in the text, a circled guideline inserted "table 1 about here." Draw all figures with India ink on white board, each on a separate sheet. Retain the original for the printer and send copy with the manuscript. Keep figures to a half page (4" wide by 3½" deep) or less. Avoid all italics, subscripts, and superscripts throughout manuscript. Manuscripts must include 150 word abstract on a separate page and 100 word vita, entitled ABOUT THE AUTHOR, written as a paragraph on a separate page.

### DOCUMENTATION

Avoid all footnotes, if possible. Limit footnotes to substantive comments and do not use for documentation. If any footnotes must be used, number consecutively and append on a separate page. Use author-date in parenthesis for citations within text. Do not use *ibid.*, *op. cit.*, or *loc. cit.* Append a reference list for full documentation. Avoid all italics.

### CITATIONS WITHIN TEXT, examples:

"Jones' latest proposal (1960) has been questioned (Brown 1962) and strongly defended (Farber 1964, p. 603; Marino 1965b) for . . ."

(If author's name has just been given, the date in parenthesis is sufficient. If several citations are needed, separate by semicolon and list alphabetically. Give page only if necessary. If two or more works by an author have the same year, distinguish by a, b, after year.)

"Some investigators have found (Greene et al, 1965; Smith and Goldman 1969) that . . ."

(Use "and" for two authors and "et al" for three or more, but include all names in the reference list following the text.)

### APPENDED REFERENCE LIST

List authors alphabetically with their publications in chronological order. For articles, give last name of author first, year of publication, title of article within quotation marks, journal title, volume number, month in parenthesis, pagination. For monographs, give last name of author first, year of publication, title of book, place of publication, publisher. Examples:

Berman, Samuel A. 1966. *Marketing and Resource Allocation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Third edition.

Jones, Joseph P. and Scott, P. J. 1961. "Price Policies and Statistics." *American Economic Review* 120 (May) 834-39.

Marino, John L. 1964. *Media in 1962*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

----. 1965a. *Marketing and Media*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

----. 1965b. "Media and Cosmetics." *Journal of Advertising Research* 34 (June) 316-30.