

# Developments in Marketing Thought from an Educational and Training Perspective

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## Abstract

A systematic review was conducted on the issue of developments in marketing thought. A search protocol specific to the topic at hand was devised and then applied to open source search engine Google Search, rather than any one digital library to ensure maximum number of results. The search results thus gathered were subject to further filters to narrow down the total number of studies evaluated under the systematic review to 6. These studies were explored and the major observations were then analysed for a conclusions. It was evident from the systematic review that a majority of the scholarly work in the field of developments in marketing thought were historical in nature, rather than future-focused and that they had been conducted prior to 2009. As such, the advent of social media and the widespread use of the internet via smartphones, and the impact of these global factors on marketing thought had not yet clearly been evaluated.

**Keywords:** Marketing Thought, Education, Trend, Innovation

## Introduction

Theories and philosophies regarding marketing have existed for nearly as long as the concept of marketing has. In the past several decades, marketing has come to be considered more than a business practice and increasingly, a social institution in and of itself. (Bartels, 1976)

As the practice and use of marketing has advanced in the past decades, so too have the theories and philosophies that surround the practice. Moreover, marketing has been a rich area of study and debate due to its practical use as well as the study of it in academic settings such as schools, colleges and universities.

With the advent of new technologies that impact the sector, marketing thought has consistently had to develop and evolve in order to keep pace and incorporate these technologies into the practice of marketing. In this review, some of the scholarly work that explores the developments in marketing thought through the means of a systematic review. The aim of the review is to place these works in the context of the evolution of marketing thought.

## Marketing Thought

There has been debate over when exactly 'marketing thought' came into being. Historians have argued over whether marketing thought came into being in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when marketing became a recognized academic discipline, or well before then. There is agreement that marketing has long existed, well before the concept of marketing was defined and coined.

Since increasing scholarship on the history of marketing thought has come into being, there has been some attempt to segregate marketing thought into periods so that its evolution and developments can be charted.

## A Systematic Review of Developments in Marketing Thought

In order to conduct a systematic review on the topic of developments in marketing thought, a number of steps were followed. First, search criteria were developed based on the intent behind this article. Next, a search was conducted using the search terms developed through these criteria. Next, the relevant search results were then analysed for their value to the systematic review. Then, the narrowed down list of search results was sorted and described for the value they provided to the scholarship on the relevant topic. Finally, some observations were outlined based on the search conducted and results found.

### Selection Criteria and Review

As stated previously, the first step of the process was conducting the search. In order to enable this, key search phrases were formulated and selected. The intent behind this was to formulate search terms that would be varied but would provide the maximum number of relevant hits or results. Instead of using a database dedicated to scholarly work, or searching in a digital library such as JSTOR or Research Gate, these phrases were input into the Search function on Google. By using Google Search, the aim was to search for scholarly works from across various digital libraries and databases rather than just one. Once the search terms were input into Google Search, they were initially filtered using the 'Scholarly Articles' function. This narrowed search terms to only scholarly works and eliminated all others, such as news and magazine articles, videos and so on. Studies that did not pertain to marketing thought were eliminated from consideration. Care was taken to focus on those articles that in some way discussed developments in the field of marketing thought. While there was a nominal attempt to choose studies from recent years, it was quickly apparent that there was a paucity of studies on the subject of developments in marketing education in recent years, especially post-2010.

The following search terms were used: 'developments in marketing thought', 'evolution of marketing thought', 'history of marketing thought', 'different periods in marketing thought', 'eras of marketing thought', and 'innovations in marketing thought'.

Using these search terms on Google Search, a number of results were found. For each of the search criteria, due to the constraints of performing an analysis for a short review article and to avoid duplication of studies, search terms past the 3<sup>rd</sup> page of results on Google Search were not considered. As this review article is constrained to be a short one, no more than ... articles were selected to be further analysed as part of the systematic review. This was to enable a concise and succinct review, as well as final analysis and observations.

The studies are listed below by name as well as with a brief description of each of the studies as well as the conclusions that they reached.

1. 'A history of schools of marketing thought' – this study was performed by authors Eric H. Shaw and D.G. Brian Jones. The article primarily explores the history of marketing thought. While they contend that marketing has existed and been practiced by human beings since ancient times, according to the authors, it is only by the time of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that marketing has made several evolutionary strides. In this regard, the authors point to the fact that it is only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that marketing had become a discipline studied in an academic context. In order to chart the evolution of marketing thought, the authors examine ten different schools of marketing thought, stating that eventually, almost all theories, philosophies, arguments, concepts and problems regarding marketing

fall into one of these ten schools of thought. The authors found that at the very beginning of the period of study, i.e. the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the discipline was still in its infancy and the idea of traditional approaches to studying marketing was visible. These traditional approaches were comprised of the study of functions, commodities and institutions. After this, the interregional trade approach emerged. Going further along in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the authors observed that a paradigm shift or a major shift occurred at the mid-century mark. At this time, traditional approaches in marketing thought started to become outmoded and a number of new schools of thought emerged, including marketing management, marketing systems, consumer behaviour, macro-marketing, exchange, and finally, marketing history. Tracing the evolution further, Shaw and Jones state that more major changes took place in the 1970s, when several of the modern schools of thought on marketing that had emerged during the mid-century experienced what the authors refer to as ‘paradigm broadening’. The authors specifically state that this paradigm broadening was experienced by the following schools of thought in marketing - marketing management, consumer behaviour, and exchange. According to Shaw and Jones, at this time period, due to the ‘paradigm broadening’, the result was that marketing thought went from being part of the conventional domain of business practices and behaviour to being studied as part of the broader domain of all human social behaviour. The major conclusion that the authors came up with is that at the time of the writing of their work, i.e. the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the discipline of marketing thought was at a crossroads. (Shaw & Jones, 2005)

2. ‘From marketing mix to relationship marketing - towards a paradigm shift in marketing’ – This work is a conceptual paper by author Christian Gronroos of the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration. Gronroos posits that there have been negative consequences to the marketing paradigm dominating the discourse at the time of the publishing of this article in the early 1990s. The author explores the nature of the biggest marketing paradigm at the time, i.e. marketing mix management through his work. According to him, research has clearly revealed that a varied approach to marketing was necessary at the time. He concludes this by pointing out to research into industrial marketing, customer relationship economics and services marketing, that according to him asserts his assessment that a different approach to marketing was necessary. To strengthen his argument, Gronroos further explores evolving trends in business. These developments in this arena, such as strategic partnerships and networks, according to the author further support his argument. According to the author, the marketing mix paradigm was actually serving to constrain thinking and was preventing evolution of marketing thought. Therefore, the result was that marketing theory and the customer at home were the true victims of the marketing thought at the time. The author further suggests a new paradigm of marketing thought to explore for the future – relationship marketing, which would be based on the building and management of relationships and therefore would be the paradigm of the future. (Grönroos, 1994)
3. ‘An overview of The History of Marketing Thought’ – ostensibly a review of the seminal marketing work by Mark Tadajewski and Donald Gordon Brian Jones, this article by author Robert D Tamila, also functions as a review of available literature on the subject. Essentially, the author relies on a tried approach of reviewing all available research on the topic by searching previously published articles and searching through existing databanks for articles relevant to the research topic. Through this, the author is not only

able to review the book by Tadajewski and Jones but also construct a timeline of the major developments in history in the field of marketing thought. The main takeaway from Tamila's work is his key finding, which is that, at the time of the article's publishing, there was a dearth of literature exploring the biographical history of the pioneer practitioners of marketing thought, especially those who have had an enormous impact on the evolution of marketing thought as well as its current state. The author concludes by making practical suggestions for future research that this afore-mentioned under-researched area and gap needs to be addressed, as by researching the history of pioneers in the field of marketing thought, a lot of insight could be gained into the time periods that they worked in, the state of marketing thought at that time, and how the practitioner being studied contributed to the evolution of marketing thought. (Tamilia, 2009)

4. 'Scholarly Research in Marketing: Exploring the "4 Eras" of Thought Development' - this work is by authors William L. Wilkie and Elizabeth S. Moore. The authors' central contention is that marketing thought at the time of the writing of the article, was expanding on many fronts at once, be it quantitatively, behaviourally or strategically as a result of increasing globalization and the rapid advancements in technology that impacts marketing. At the same time, the authors are also interested in exploring the results of this expansions, in particular, the fallout and factors that have fallen by the wayside as these advancements have taken place. In order to do this, the authors first explore the four dominant eras of marketing thought. These are first, the production-oriented era that lasted until the 1920s, the sales-oriented era that lasted until the 1950s, third the marketing era and fourth the value-based or relationship marketing era. Alongside charting this evolution, Wilkie and Moore also chart how the treatment social factors or dimensions associated with marketing has also evolved at the same time. (Wilkie & Moore, 2003)
5. 'The evolution of relationship marketing' – This paper is by authors Jagdish N.Sheth and Atul Parvatiyar. The authors study the evolution behind the phenomenon of relationship marketing. In order to do so, first the explore the history of marketing and how various factors since the Industrial Revolution, such as the explosion of mass production and the emergence of a middleman between the goods producer and consumer, have influenced an increasingly transactional focus in marketing and marketing thought. Charting the evolution further, the authors explore the emergence of relationship marketing, and contend that an increasing amount of interaction with customers and consumers, even in the process of production, has rendered the exchange paradigm, inherent to marketing at the time, insufficient. The authors conclude that the need of the hour is a different paradigm of marketing, especially in light of the emergence of relationship marketing, and the new technologies at hand. Moreover, the authors believe that this new paradigm must focus more on process rather than on outcome, as well focus more the creation of value than value distribution. (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995)
6. 'Web-based marketing: The coming revolution in marketing thought and strategy' – This work by authors Arun Sharma and Jagdish N.Sheth deals primarily with the impact of the world wide web, or the internet, on marketing thought and strategy. The authors' central contention in the work is that the advent of the internet would fundamentally change the nature of marketing, marketing thought, and marketing strategy. According to the authors, at the time of the article's writing, the web-based markets that were present would not in any way, shape, or form, resemble the web-based markets of the future. In

regards to marketing thought, the article explores certain specific concepts, including reverse marketing, customer-centric marketing, effective-efficiency, adaptation, expectation management, marketing process focus and fixed cost marketing in order to place these concepts in context. Customer behaviours in these contexts, such as co-creation, universal availability, and moving from 'bricks to clicks' are also discussed. (Sharma & N.Sheth, 2004)

## Observations and Conclusion

Some observations were readily apparent from the systematic review. These are listed below in no specific order.

- The most important takeaway from the systematic review was that there was a true paucity of literature on the subject that is widely available.
- Moreover, it is evident that much of the research into this subject in terms of scholarly work, has been done before the 2000s. The latest papers that were available were from the mid-2000s era.
- Due to the lack of scholarly work performed in recent years, there are no conclusions that can be drawn on issues such as the true impact of the widespread use of marketing in the age of smartphones and easy access to the internet, where social media marketing falls into the evolution of marketing thought and what new innovations in marketing thought have taken place in the recent years.
- A majority of the literature reviewed explored the evolution of marketing thought from a historical perspective. This included studying the different schools of marketing thought, the different eras and how they evolved and the change from one school of marketing thought to another.
- Two of the works focused on the history of marketing thought, going over the evolution of marketing thought. One more focused on the history of marketing via the prism of the four eras of marketing thought since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Two of the works focused on specific types or schools of marketing thought. One focused on relationship marketing and another on the switch from marketing mix to relationship marketing. In both, the emergence of relationship marketing was the key factor that was studied.
- One of the articles focused explicitly on the impact of the internet or world wide web on marketing thought and strategy.
- Most of the works had a historical focus, with only some focus on the future of marketing thought. The notable exception was the final article reviewed which focused on how the advent of the web would change marketing thought and strategy in the future.
- The studies had a primary focus on Western economies and the marketing therein and no special geographic focus was paid to any part of the world apart from those fitting into that mould. Moreover, no country-focused studies were visible.

As with any work, it is vital that any limitations be outlined clearly for any reader to understand. This systematic review too had some limitations. One noteworthy hindrance was the constraints produced by creating a brief article. This meant that narrow selection criteria had to be applied to the search process in order to ensure a limited number of articles for study and evaluation through the systematic review. Therefore, only six studies were chosen to be highlighted and reviewed.

It is evident from the literature review that there needs to be more scholarly work done in the area of developments and innovations in marketing thought. A majority of articles available were written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century or in early 2000s. Since there, there have been many radical shifts in society that necessarily affect the thought and practice of marketing. Some of these shifts include the mass availability of the internet, the increasing prevalence of marketing in multiple languages, the use of the same marketing tools in multiple geographic contexts, the advent of social media, the emergence of viral or guerrilla marketing and emergence of smartphones, among others. All these factors have likely had an enormous impact on marketing thought and strategy, but there is no scholarly work to examine those impacts. Moreover, innovations having taken place in recent years in the field of marketing thought have not been highlighted or explored. This is a significant gap that must be addressed by researchers going forward.

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