## REVIEW ON THE EVOLUTION OF SCHOOLS OF MARKETING THOUGHT FROM 1980 – 2020

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#### Abstract

This paper reviewed the evolution of schools of marketing thought from 1980 -2020. It adopted desk research design to review a sample of 67 out of a population of 150 scholarly journal articles using the purposive sampling approach. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and pictorial diagrams. The findings reveal that research interest on the schools of marketing thought experienced very little research attention from inception, but it experienced progressive growth from 2001 to date. It was also discovered that there have been 67 publications written by 38 single authors and 29 multiple authors on schools of marketing thoughts from 1980 - 2020. It was further discovered that the ideologies and philosophies of schools of marketing thought have impacted marketing scholarship and business practices. Based on this, it is recommended that editors of top-ranking journals should develop contemporary themes on development of marketing thought to encourage more publications in this area.

**Keywords:** Marketing history, marketing theory, schools of marketing thought, desk research, descriptive research.

### 1. Introduction

The development of marketing thought has been an evolution of concepts and principles developed to promote marketing scholarship and business practices. History and philosophical thought concerning marketing as a field of study are well documented in academic literature. Marketing academics distinguish between the history of marketing practice and history of marketing thought. Robert Bartel (1976) is widely acknowledged as the first academic to promote history of marketing thought (Shaw & Tamilia, 2001). The publication of Robert Keith in 1960 was the pioneering work on the study of the history of marketing practice. The development of marketing thought chronicles how ideas about marketing developed unlike marketing history, which offers a comprehensive account of how marketing practice developed (Andrei & Bob, 2005). As expressed by Eric and Brian (2003), a school of marketing thought can be viewed as a way of demonstrating substantial body of knowledge advocated by many intellectuals concerning what, why, where, when and how marketing activities are carried out. From scholarship viewpoint, the history of

marketing thought is contemplated as a way of transferring the intellectual legacy of marketing discipline from one generation of scholars to others (Andrei & Bob, 2005). There are numerous versions of schools of thought in marketing literature; Beckman, William and Wayne (1973) promoted thirteen approaches, Sheth, Gardner and Garrett (1988) proposed twelve schools while Shaw and Jones (2005) delineated ten schools.

### 2. Statement of the Problem

The emergence and growth of marketing as a field of study is a 19<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon (Kotler, 2000), however, its activities date back thousands of years (Schwartz, 1973). Since the recognition of marketing as a domain of study, its concept and thought has undergone notable changes (William & Elizerbeth, 2009). In the study of numerous academic discipline, ideas and issues are deliberated and debated over time and most often these ideas cluster into fundamental issues that may be labeled as a way of organizing the field of study, and a method towards a better understanding of the discipline (Eric, 2015). Based on the aforementioned background, this study sought to review the schools of marketing thought from 1980-2020 with a view of determining their evolution and how each school of marketing thought influence marketing scholarship and business practices.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to determine the;

- i. Number of scholarly works that have been published on schools of marketing thought from 1980-2020.
- ii. Number of schools of marketing thought proposed by scholars from 1980-2020.

## 4. Research Questions

- i. How many scholarly works have been published on schools of marketing thought from 1980-2020?
- ii. How many schools of marketing thought have been proposed by scholars from 1980-2020?

### 5. Significance of the Study

Marketing researchers and practitioners can use the insights gleaned from this paper to understand the thoughts from school of marketing that have influenced the practice of marketing and gather a deeper understanding of the topic, how it evolved and endured over time.

### 6. Limitation of the Study

The main limitation encountered lies in the fact that a large number of publications from reputable journal outlets could not be downloaded due to site restrictions. Nevertheless, after extensive research a total of 150 scholarly

journal articles were successfully downloaded out of which 67 were found relevant to this study. This number was considered adequate for a study of this nature.

## 7. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study consist all scholarly journal articles related to school of marketing thought published in reputable online scholarly journal outlets from 1980 to 2020.

#### 8. Literature Review

## **Schools of Marketing Thought: Development**

The history of marketing thought discourses the approaches concerning how marketing has been studied and taught (Shaw, & Jones, 2005). According to Eric (2015), the development of schools of marketing thought can be categorized into four eras, namely, pre-academic marketing thought, traditional approaches to marketing thought, the paradigm shift, and the paradigm broadening. Bartels (1962) classified marketing history and thoughts in line with six strata: period of discovery, period of conceptualization, period of integration, period of development, period of reappraisal and period of re-conception. Bartels (1965) proposed periodization of marketing according to time frame along two categorizations: period of differentiation and period of socialization. Subsequently, Sheth and Gardner's (1982) proposed six broadening perspectives connected to: (1) macro marketing, (2) consumerism (3) systems approach (4) buyer behaviour (5) behavioural organization and (6) strategic planning. Table 1, further presents a summary of the schools of marketing thought.

# 9. Methodology

# Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature and adopted desk research design using secondary sources of information. In the opinion of Sauder, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), the foremost advantage of using desk research is speed, economy of data gathering and the depth of available data.

# Population of the Study

A total of 150 journal articles were downloaded and subsequently screened for relevance. To control the literature search, concepts searches was done using main notions and topics that are related to the phenomena under study. The search concepts used are: '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'.

## **Sample Size and Sampling Approach**

A total of constituted the sample size for this study. This study adopted the purposive sampling approach to select a sample of 67 scholarly journal articles that are relevant to the subject matter. In selecting the articles used, the inclusion and exclusion criteria was adopted. For an article to be included, four major criteria used are that the articles must be: (1) related to the schools of marketing thought (2) peer reviewed (3) written or interpreted in English language and (4) published within 1980 to 2020.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Electronic databases such as Google Scholar, Science Direct, JSTOR site, and Pro Quest among others were used to gather data. In order to conduct a systematic review on the topic of study; first, search criteria were developed based on the topical issues. Next, a search was carried out using the search terms developed through the first criteria. Subsequently, the relevant search results were reviewed for their relevance. Then, the lists were narrowed down through sorting based on the value they offered on the topic. Lastly, some observations were noted based on the search conducted and results found.

# **Method of Data Analysis**

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics consisting of frequency distributions, percentages and pictorial diagrams such as pie chart, trend chart, histogram, and bar chart.

# 10. Data Analysis

**Table 1. Classification of Schools of Marketing Thought** 

Authors	Number of Schools proposed	Name of Schools			
Maclaran, Miller,	2	Early			
Parsons, &		Modern			
Surman, 2009					
Jones & Saw,	2	Early Modern			
2002		Functional marketing management			
		Goods(products) marketing systems			
		Institutional Consumer behaviour			
		Interregional marketing Macromarketing			
		Social exchange			
		Marketing history			
Wilkie and Moore	4	1900 -1920 founding the field			
(2003)		1920-1950 formalizing the field			
		1950-1980 A Paradigm shift-marketing			
		management and the science			
		1980 – present The shift intensifies –			
		fragmentation of the mainstream			
Sheth and	6	Micromarketing			
Gardner (1982)		Consumption			
		System Approach			

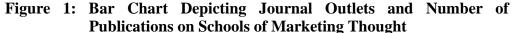
		Buyer behaviour
		Behavioural Organisation
		Strategic Planning
Shaw and Jones	10	Commodities
(2005)		Functions
		International trade
		Institutional
		Marketing management
		Consumer behaviour
		Macro-marketing
		Systems
		Exchange
		Marketing History
Sheth et al., (1988	12	Commodity
)		Functional
		Regional
		Institutional
		Functional
		Managerial
		Buyer behaviour
		Activist
		Macro marketing
		Organisational dynamics
		Systems
		Social exchange

Table 1 depicts schools of marketing thought proposed by seven scholars. Maclaran et al. (2009) and Jones and Saw (2002) proposed two schools each, Wilkie and Moore (2003) proposed four schools, Sheth and Gardner (1982) proposed six schools of marketing thought, Shaw and Jones (2005) proposed ten schools of marketing thought and Sheth et al. (1988) proposed twelve schools of marketing thought.

Table 2. Journal Outlets and Number of Publications on School of Marketing Thought

S/No.	Journal Outlets	Frequency	% of the Total
1	Journal of Marketing	7	10.4
2	Marketing Theory	10	14.9
3	Journal of Marketing Management and	1	1.5
	Consumer Behavior		
4	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	3	4.5
5	Journal of Macro marketing	9	13.4
6	Journal of Marketing Management	6	8.9
7	Journal of Historical Research in Marketing	15	22.4
8	Marketing Education Review	1	1.5
9	Journal of Consumer Marketing	1	1.5
10	Annals of Marketing Management & Economics	2	2.9
11	Journal of Business Research	1	1.5
12	European Journal of Marketing	1	1.5
13	Knowledge Horizons – Economics	1	1.5
14	Industrial Marketing Management	1	1.5
15	Asian Social Science	1	1.5
16	Journal of Management	1	1.5
17	European Business Review	1	1.5
18	Global Journal of Education and Training	1	1.5
19	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	1	1.5
20	Empirical Economic Review Journal	1	1.5
21	American Journal of Sociology	1	1.5
22	The Journal of Law and Economics	1	1.5
	Total	67	100

Table 2 depicts a total of 22 journal outlets that featured discussions and themes on schools of marketing thought. In aggregate a total of 67 articles were published by the 22 journal outlets. The Journal of Historical Research in Marketing published 15(22.4%) articles which is the highest, followed by Journal of Marketing Theory with 10 (14.9%) articles, Journal of Macromarketing with 9(13.4%) articles, Journal of marketing with 7(10.4%) articles, Journal of Marketing Management with 6(8.9%) articles, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science with 3(4.5%) articles, and Annals of marketing Management and Economics with 2(2.9%) articles. The remaining 15 journal outlets published 1 article each. The statistics highlighted in Table 2 is demonstrated on bar chart, pie chart and bar plot shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3 respectively.



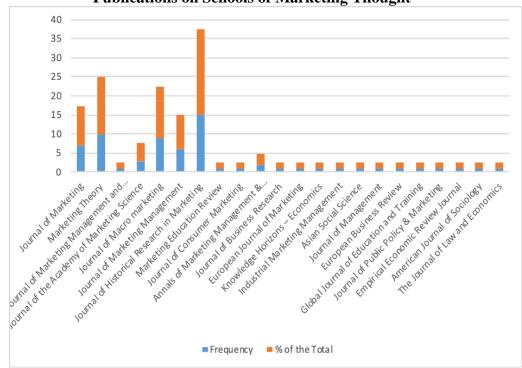
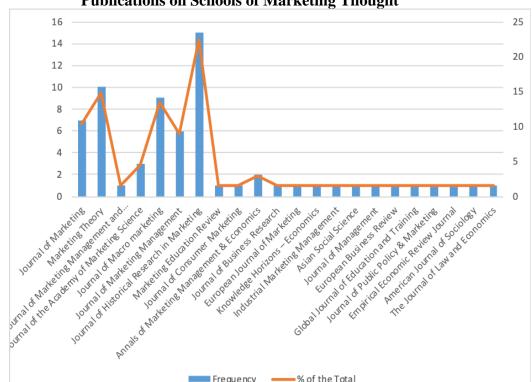


Figure 2: Pie Chart Depicting Journal Outlets and Number of Publications on Schools of Marketing Thought





Frequency

— % of the Total

Figure 3: Bar Chart Polygon Depicting Journal Outlets and Number of **Publications on Schools of Marketing Thought** 

Table 3: Journal Outlets and Number of Publication within 10 years Categorization

	Categorization	Periods of Publication			
S/No	Journal Outlets	1980- 1990	1991- 2000	2001- 2010	2011- 2020
1	Journal of Marketing	7			
2	Marketing Theory			8	2
3	Journal of Marketing Management and Consumer Behavior				1
4	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	1		1	1
5	Journal of Macro marketing	3	1	5	-
6	Journal of Marketing Management	1	1	2	2
7	Journal of Historical Research in Marketing	1	-	5	10
8	Marketing Education Review				1
9	Journal of Consumer Marketing				1
10	Annals of Marketing Management & Economics				1
11	Journal of Business Research				1
12	European Journal of Marketing				1
13	Knowledge Horizons – Economics				1
14	Industrial Marketing Management				1
15	Asian Social Science				1
16	Journal of Management			1	
17	European Business Review			1	
18	Global Journal of Education and Training				1
19	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing			1	
20	Empirical Economic Review Journal				1
21	American Journal of Sociology	1			
22	The Journal of Law and Economics	1			
	Total	15	2	24	26

Table 3, depicts journal outlets and number of publications within 10 years' categorization divided into 4. A total of 15 publications on school of marketing thought was published by the 22 Journal outlets between 1980 to 1990, a total 2 was published between 1991 to 2000, a total of 24 which is the second highest was published between 2001 to 2010 and a total of 26 which is the highest was published between 2011 to 2020. Out of the 67 publications within the forty years, the historical research in marketing recorded the highest (16), followed by marketing theory (10), Journal of Marketing (8), Journal of Marketing (8), Journal of Marketing Management (5), and Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (3). The remaining journal outlets published 1 article each within the periods. The statistics highlighted in Table 3 are demonstrated on trend charts shown in Figures 4 and 5 respectively as follows:

Figure 4: Trend Chart Depicting Journal Outlets and Number of Publication within 10 years Categorization

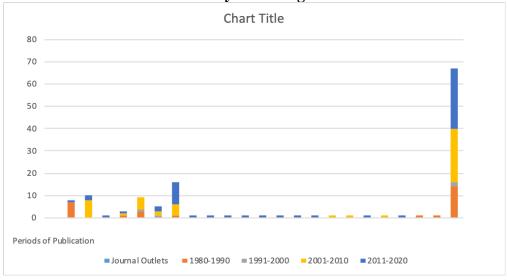


Figure 5: Trend Chart Depicting Journal Outlets and Number of Publication within 10 years Categorization

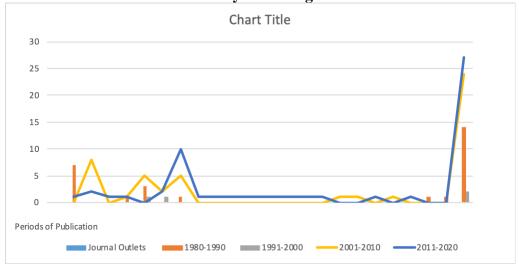


Table 4: Authors and Number of Publication related to Schools of Marketing Thought

Marketing I nought			
Authors	Number of	Number	% of Total of
A 1, (1002)	Publication	_	Publication
Arndt (1983)	1	1	1.49
Benton (1985)	1	1	1.49
Brian, & David (1990).	1	2	1.49
Brown, Hirschman & Maclaran (2001)	1	2	1.49
Charles & Iyiola (2017).	1	2	1.49
Cook, Emerson & Gillmore (1983)	1	3	1.49
Cunningham (2003)	1	1	1.49
Dowling (1983).	1	1	1.49
Enright (2002).	1	1	1.49
Eric & Brian (2005).	1	2	1.49
Eric (2009a; 2009b; 2010a; 2010b;2015)	5	1	7.46
Eric & Robert (2001).	1	2	1.49
Ferrell, Joe, Hair Jr. & Robert (2015)	1	4	1.49
Fox, Skorobogatykh, & Saginova (2005)	1	3	1.49
Fullerton (1988).	1	1	1.49
Giesler & Fischer (2017).	1	2	1.49
Herbert (2014).	1	1	1.49
Hollander, Rassuli, Jones & Dix (2005).	1	4	1.49
Hollander, Nevett & Fullerton (1990)	1	3	1.49
Hunt & Burnett (1982)	1	2	1.49
Hunt (1983; 2010; 2014).	3	1	4.48
Hunt & Edison (1995),	1	2	1.49
Jaroslaw (2015).	1	1	1.49
John, William & Clifford (2015).	1	3	1.49
Jones & Monieson (1990),	1	2	1.49
Karimov (2017).	1	1	1.49
Kassarjian (1989)	1	1	1.49
Kumar (2015).	1	1	1.49
Layton (2007; 2011).	2	1	2.98
Mark (2011; 2014).	2	1	2.98
Nicolau, Mușetescu & Mionel (2014).	1	3	1.49
Roberto & Wesley (2017).	1	2	1.49
Roman (2015).	1	1	1.49
Russell & Marie (2005).	1	2	1.49
Shapiro (2006)	1	1	1.49
Shaw & Jones (2005).	1	2	1.49
Shaw (1995)	1	1	1.49
Savitt (1980; 2009)	2	1	2.98
Savin (1900, 2009)	L	1	2.98

Shaw and Tamilia (2001),	1	2	1.49
Shelby (2017).	1	1	1.49
Sherry Jr. (2014),	1	1	1.49
Stigler & Sherwin (1985).	1	2	1.49
Syed (2018).	1	1	1.49
Tadajewski (2006; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2014)	5	1	7.46
Tadajewski & Jones (2014).	1	2	1.49
Tadajewski and Saren (2008)	1	2	1.49
Tamilia (1990; 2009).	2	1	2.98
Vargo, Koskela-Huotari, Baron, Edvardsson, Reynoso (2017).	1	5	1.49
Wilkie & Moore (2003;2006)	2	2	2.98
William & Elizabeth (2011).	1	2	1.49
Wooliscroft (2011)	1	1	1.49
Witkowski (2005).	1	1	1.49

Table 4, depicts the number of publications by scholars. Out of the aggregate publications on schools of marketing thought, a total of 38 were published by single authors. The remaining 29 publications on schools of marketing thought were published by multiple authors that range from 2 to 5.

### 11. Discussions

This paper employed the desk research approach to review a total of 67 peerreviewed journal articles on schools of marketing thought. One of the most important approaches about how marketing influence business practice is through articles in business and academic journals aiming at developing knowledge and business practices. We searched for relevant publications on schools of marketing thought. Our choice of academic and business journals is determined by journals which are 1) well reputed journals, 2) journal outlets that published a range of academic publications relevant to schools of marketing thought, 3) journals that discourse schools of marketing thought and practice from diverse perspectives. Analysis of the results reveal a number of important and significant findings, firstly, the analysis helps in developing a situation analysis of how marketing has influenced learning and both general/ specific marketing practices over time. Secondly, we find that though marketing took a longer time to takeoff compare with other social science discipline, nonetheless, the influence of marketing on scholarship and business practice has been consistently growing over time since its formal recognition. Thirdly, we discover that the influence of marketing scholarship on business practice is dynamic, a promising indicative that the idea of marketing as a discipline is ever evolving.

The findings provide a snapshot that echoes growing publications on the subject matter. The paper noted that research interest on the schools of

marketing thought experienced very little research attention from inception, but it experienced progressive growth from 2001 to date. A number of observations were readily obvious from the review of literature. One of the notable issues is that there was a paucity of academic literature on the schools of marketing thought. In addition, it is evident from the review that not much research into this subject matter was done before the year 2001, however, significant research attention was given subsequently. Furthermore, since scholarship on the history of marketing thought came into existence, there has been some effort to separate marketing thought into periods so that its evolution and developments can be charted.

### 12. Conclusions

This paper compares the focus of diverse schools of marketing thought and highlight how each schools of marketing influenced both knowledge and business practices. The ideologies and philosophies of schools of marketing thought is founded on how marketing has been thought and practiced. The two domains of schools of marketing thought have experienced significant development and changes aiming at improving and developing marketing scholarship and practices. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that there have been 67 articles written by 38 single and 29 multiple authors on schools of marketing thoughts from the year 1980-2020. Numerous scholars and business practitioners have advocated the need to understand the influence of marketing thought on practice (Rust, Tim, Gregory, Kumar, & Rajendra, 2004). Business practitioners mostly use the notions and framework of marketing as a tool for developing and proffering solutions to business problems. The review reveal that the evolution of marketing thought is largely from historical viewpoint characterized by contradiction and debate.

#### 13. Recommendations

Given the importance of a sound knowledge of schools of marketing thought for marketing practice, there is a need to identify the possible constraints on researchers' interest in conducting research in this area. It is therefore recommended that editors of top ranking journals should develop contemporary themes on development of marketing thought to encourage more publications in this area.

# 14. Suggestions for Further Studies

Most studies on school of marketing thought had a primary focus on Western or developed economies and the marketing therein with no special geographic focus on any part of the world aside from those fitting into that context. On this note, it is suggested that future research works on schools of marketing thought be conducted to accommodate the changing consumer demographic shift, globalization, changing business competitiveness, changing consumer

purchasing power, growing use of social media and the use of the identical marketing techniques in multiple geographic contexts among others. A consideration of these emerging trends would be beneficial for increasing journal readership and successively enhance the diffusion of knowledge, theories and techniques on schools of marketing thought.

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