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MARKETING: PRACTICING THE ART OF SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Success is not an accident but an incident , an incident which is a summation of hard work, perseverance and learning. Success in a dynamic industry of marketing is mistaken to be an accident. Which leaves us at point of cross roads, one which leads towards art and the other towards science. As to where should the bus of marketing be going. The debate on whether marketing is an art or science here becomes inevitable. The paper revisits the various schools of thought of arts and science to critically analyse scientific realism, logical positivism, historic relativism and logical empiricism. The paper analyses Marketing from the point of view to qualify it as art of science. The paper proposes a general theory of marketing as Resource Advantage Theory.

Key words: Resource Advantage Theory, Scientific realism, Logical positivism, Historic relativism and Logical empiricism.

1. INTRODUCTION

From the time marketing was born, practitioners have taken an insightful view on marketing being an art or science and how could the current marketing thought constitute the theory for the subject. An attempt at the theory of marketing was made as early as 1968 in subcomponent theory, which is averse to hierarchical theory which is significant in the field of science. A lot of researchers have argued that marketing is field of science, prominent among them are Bartels (1951), Taylor (1965) Zinkhan and Hirschheim (1992) and Kotler(1972). However researchers have argued that body of marketing disharmonize with science as well. They are Alderson and Cox (1968) Anderson (1994) and Buzzell (1963).

Before we argue upon whether marketing is science, it's crucial to establish what embodies science. The research conducted on science has explained it as subjugated to replication which strengthens the practitioner's ability to explain, which can effectively be controlled and adds to the existing tacit and explicit knowledge. Many criteria's have been postulated by researchers for a body to be called science. Important among them is the need for the subject to be grounded on centralised theory and many other additional secondary theories. Another criterion is the ability of the body of already existing classified knowledge

to unearth homogeneity and inconsistencies. This implies marketing to be a science. But researchers who argue that marketing is not science point to the lack of a general theory. However, a study of literature advocates that Resource Advantage Theory, may be accepted to be the general theory which is based on competition.

The Resource Advantage theory borrows from the Austrian and Schumpeterian economics (Hunt and Lambe, 2000). This theory describe the modern industry the light of the current economy. It put forths the reasons for disparity among companies and brands competing in the same segment (Hunt 1997). Origin of digression in product quality, innovation and productivity (Hunt and Morgan 1997d). The type of competition (Hunt and Duhan, 2001). How competition adds to the knowledge by analysis (Hunt 2000c).The attributes of competition which is adaptable (Hunt and Duhan 2001) and the expansion of the national economies (Hunt, 1995).

The theory takes a pragmatic approach towards the knowledge externalised to the economists and the industries along with the marketing professionals (Hunt 1997a, 1997b).It encloses the various types of the interchanges, costs and shared knowledge. RAT may be taken as a theory that is general to marketing as it agrees to Hunt's (1991) and Bartels's (1967) formula of what a general theory should be. According to Buzell, there need to be certain qualities of a general theory. RAT satisfies that as it accurately predicts future market happenings. Also RAT makes its findings crystal clear which allows it to qualify as a general theory of marketing. Only Cavusgil, 1997 and Hodgson 2000 have thrown challenges at this theory. Hence marketing qualifies as science where Resource Advantage Theory is considered its central theory. The development of other theories which will compliment the marketing science will develop from RAT.

2. MODERN DAY SCIENCE IS GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS OF THOUGHTS

2.1. Logical Positivism

This theory advances approximately on the conviction of using verifactionism to calculate how significant the declarations are. Words that attest logic acknowledges significance. Insubstantial acknowledgements contemplate absurdness as they fall short of impartiality. The theory holds that science is factual and asserts on correct computation and testing of hypothesis.

This model favours causative tools of research. Verification theory forms the elementary belief of this model. The thesis or hypothesis can be accurate if it can be factually reaffirmed (Chalmers 1999). This basis constitutes difficulties for logical positive theory owing to absence of aforesaid dictums as unquestioned veracity due to its impotence to substantiate it factually. Subsequently, the logical theorist repudiated the verifiability basis and made emendation to their theory to harbour liberal views for non factual discoveries.
Peter and Olson, 1983.

- Science observes the proper nature of truth.
- Science is independent of PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technological) factors.
- It is non discriminatory.
- Knowledge is complete and progressive.
- It is adept at bringing out universal laws.
- Science generates theories that approach realism.
- Science is logical since it adopts rationality.

2.2. Scientific Realism

This theory argues that independent establishments submitted by scientific enquiry are the actual establishments globally and the characteristics that are assigned to them approximated by the scientific theories. The basis of argument of scientific realist is that scientific enquiry is mainly theory free and this scientific enquiry can be done even when applicable phenomenon is not observable. Simply put, Scientific Realism is good sense and sound judgement that directs that scientific methods can be wrong and more importantly imprecise.

This theory rejects pragmatic philosophy syndicated in the rational positivism and the theorisation of majority scientific judgment shares outline of empirical uniformity. Rrealism assumes that scientific approach may be roughly right even though it could not reach a conclusion from the known evidence. However the argument against this theory is that it lacks the skill to illuminate the fast forward movement experienced by scientific knowledge during the time of transformation (Chalmers 1999).

- Lakatos, 1977,1978
- Human creativity decides the path of science.
- The argument against this theory is by factual truths.
- Distinction of science from deceptive science is possible in realm of notions only.
- Knowledge of science is not complete.
- Development of science is by benefaction of facts by substitutes.
- Proposition depends on certainty or scientific conclusion in the context of research.
- Science develops with honesty.
- If the objective of science is fact, it must be stable.

2.3. Logical Empiricism

Logical positive theory conjunctures that science is impartial and places stress on painstaking computation and hypothesis testing. Also relativism maintains intuitive and imaginative facets of science. This theory lies in between two ends. According to this theory, scientific advancement in any direction begins with immaculate scrutiny of actuality. The belief here is to bestow the researcher with impression of actuality from where they can rationally initiate priori model of process to be explored. Empirical testing of hypothesis attained from the model should support the hypothesis on which corroborative illustrations are maintained. Hypothesis that can grapple precise testing is confirmed to be authentic(Popper 1959). Here science flourishes gathering numerous proclaiming examples acquired in a broad range of situations and states(Anderson 1983).

The theory argues that all plans come from observation of facts. Comprehension of actuality is mere general statements of specific exemplars. The general statements may not be perfectly right. The theory argues that knowledge evolution is accompaniment exercise that appears from agreeable proof of verifiable cognizance.
Hunt, 1983, 1991.

- Right description of verity is not certitude. Science attempts to know the real world.
- Practices of science advocates knowledge postulation to be independent of PEST.
- Exhaustive neutrality not feasible but science is effective in upholding its knowledge.
- Scientific knowledge is not complete but is complete.
- Science is lucid as it develops our grasp of the world.

2.4. Historic Relativism

The above school of thought believes that knowledge is better understood through patterns, structures and theories. Kant's analytical evaluation of cause developed this theory. Relativist have put forward a suggestion that practical contact with actual state of things may deny entry to empirical truths and theoretical constructs (Chalmers 1999). It is related to the conceptual framework relativism. It is opposed to the thought that task of science was to simplify the essence of science. It argues that scientific theory accepts cognitive relativism.

However, critics of Historical relativists have said that Historical Relativism is distant from truth (Popper 1966). Also there is an argument put forward that historical relativist do not give logical and consistent grounds for authentic, fundamental and systematic attributes of scientific change.

Laudan, 1990, Peter, 1992

- Verity is created by science.
- Science is intuitive.
- Science is sociable can only be understood in its surroundings.
- Science is comparable.
- Science generates purpose that is situation independent.
- Facts are subjective to the context.

To establish different perspectives actuality, science is sighted as a mechanism by relativism. Advocates of relativism maintain that the field of science intuitive. Hunt (1983, 1991) argues that scientific examination with relativist perspective is self contradictory. The theory believes that science can only be deciphered in its surroundings. Empirical investigation into theory construction is illogical as researchers generate and explain specifics to grant accuracy to their conceptual claims. This makes empirical research invalid.

From the point of view of scientific realism, marketing cannot be called a science. A fully fledged science should contain scientific programmes with additional theories (Lakatos 1978). Marketing has a string of empirical adaption's, no binding objectives nor continuity which stops it from being called science. The scientific exploration in the marketing sphere is not concerned with theory in fact finding and collection of data (Jacoby, 1978).Scientific abstraction is preferably difficult to track in marketing (Leone and Schultz, 1980). So from the point of scientific realism, marketing as a science is at a developmental stage.

But from the positivist point of view, science has postulates that's closer to reality.(Peter and Olson 1983). It may not be right for marketing as it is concerned with locating and comprehending facts than progression of complete rules from incident of facts (Peter and Olson, 1983). Probably, significance on demonstrating rules and theorems may not expand marketing subject. Importance given to statistics devoid of theory will leave us with incoherent and useless things (Jacoby, 1978). Progress of theory is significant in scientific enquiry of marketing; logical positivism may not be suitable analytical viewpoint.

Logical empiricist presumes that righteous science develops from researchers certifying theories. The inspection of facts is succeeded by empirical testing. This increases the likelihood of an incident obtained from a series of observation. The similarity to the truth of the majority of marketing occurrences contributes logical empiricism as the best outlook for a scientific enquiry. Thus, marketing may be central to the continuum.

The selection of historical perspective should be forecast on some basis. A philosophical perspective must provide the following to the discipline (Hunt 1991):

a) Stimulate theory and methodological pluralism which curtails the chances of conceptual short sightedness.

b) Provide a model for quality assessment of research programs and add to the promotion of marketing as a science.

c) Recommend goals that impart effective scale for estimating possible research methods.

d) Explain the restoration of marketing science compatible with the present composition of the subject.

On the lines of logical empiricism, (Hunt 1991) argued that the main objective of science is to construct theories to describe, forecast, comprehend and control the event. Science should have clear subject characteristics, collection of facts which acts as a director for exploration. Finding the hidden equalities between these events produces factual uniformity, principles and theories. By these events, science gives understanding of the society by construction of generalisation regulating the societies behaviour. (Chalmers 1999)

Hunt (1983) identifies marketing as behavioural science trying to demonstrate exchange relationships between the customer and marketer. According to Hunt 1) Customers show behaviours that complete exchanges. 2) Marketers show behaviours that complete exchanges. 3) Organisational structure exhibits behaviour that complete exchanges. 4) The behaviour of completing exchanges among customer, marketer and organization impacts society.

Hunt(1983) explains the directing research requirements related to principles 1) What makes a consumer buy a product at a particular place and decide on when he buys and how he buys. 2) What are the reasons marketers select a particular price, place and promotion. 3) The reasons behind an organisation choosing a particular marketing function to complete exchanges and what will be the outcome 4) What is the impact of customers, marketers and organisations behaviour on the market.

These questions will be influential on the researcher guide to inspect association in marketing environment. Also, the theory which is a outcome of the above questions must meet the criteria of specification adequacy, sufficiency of characteristics used in categorization, Mutual exclusiveness of categories, combined exhaustiveness of category, and Utility to the marketing community set by Hunt (1991).

Logical empiricism identifies the base of understanding in experience and the foundation of science in experiment and observation(Kuhn 1962). These theorists argue that all the understanding starts from observation, which leads to empirical generalisation amid observable things (Hunt 1991). By following logical empiricism researchers can take up varied marketing concepts and find empirical basis for them for the purpose of generalisation. According to Hunt (1990, 1991) empirical knowledge is prone to errors and a rational verifiable knowledge can be attained by observation. Even though, evidence is required to reinforce the contention that illustrative knowledge adds to the facts which helps decision making (Hunt 1991).

In the area of marketing, instinctive hypothesis are developed or by the procedure of elucidation (Hunt 1991). These models can be tested empirically. The model which passes repeated test, it can be confirmed to become a theory (Popper 1959). On being confirmed as a theory, it is used to derive other additional theories. It will have to overcome infrequent problems but will continue as a theory until proof is provided disproving it. The RAT theory for example is challenged but the proof opposing the theory in insufficient. However, if the proof is sufficient, a new theory will be emerging (Kuhn 1962). In the field of marketing, knowledge comes from observation leading theory which gives meaning to observation. In agreement with Bagozzi (1984), science and knowledge will show an upward trend beginning with information to premise for understanding. So, by logical empiricism, scientific interview in marketing by experimentation, inspection and training may result in developing the discipline. The logical empiricism may direct the scientific enquiry in marketing (Hunt 1983,

1991). Possibly logical empiricism may be the right method for marketing research. Even though most of the researches follow logical empiricism as the most important in marketing theory, the subject is full of articles developed from the perspective of reasserting that assumptive models are suitable (Cliff 1983). Researchers want to confirm a theory more than oppose it. According to Cliff (1983), facts that reject a theory are far less than the ones accept a model. The scientific advancement may improve with the presence of other competing models. The substantiating the model fit does not guide the scientific enquiry. Wegner, Uchino, Fabrigar, Macallum have proved that there are many alternative models that will be equal fit to the models already existing.

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