

Further Thoughts on the Marketing Trifold: The Case of Marketing Orientation

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Marketing instructors are faced with an array of subject material from a wide variety of sources. These sources can be broadly grouped into three spheres of influence: the researcher, the teacher, and the practitioner. This article considers these three influences as elements along two dimensions, contribution and conduct. It explores the problems faced by instructors as they attempt to present a balanced view of a specific topic in class. This marketing trifold, as it has been termed, is illustrated using the concept of marketing orientation and is equally applicable to other theoretical concepts.

Trifold: split or divided into three by deep clefts or notches
—*The New Collins Concise English Dictionary (1982)*

Marketing instructors operate with a set of widely agreed fundamental marketing principles that are influenced by three sources of marketing knowledge: researchers, teachers, and practitioners. Researchers report conceptual and applied research findings at conferences and in academic journals. Teachers present the simple mechanics of each area of the theory using an array of pedagogical tools such as textbooks and case studies. The third key influence comes from practitioners and their experiences of implementing the principles. When presenting marketing concepts, instructors need to decide how to combine the inputs from the three influences to produce a balanced account. It is entirely possible that this balance may change according to the nature of the audience. Furthermore, it is likely that the difficulties associated with achieving this balance will apply to many areas of marketing theory (Dibb and Stern 1999).

The key resource for the majority of marketing instructors is the textbook, yet it is unclear that this source provides an adequate balance between the three influencing factors. Little has been published about the lag between material in academic journals and its appearance in mainstream marketing textbooks. However, it seems that two key constraints may be broadly responsible for the nature and scope of marketing texts; heterogeneity in courses and students, and academic need for economies of scale. To cater for this readership and

usage on many different types of courses, texts have a tendency to be encyclopedic in character. Most cover many topics, sometimes in relatively little depth. This tendency toward the encyclopedic is supported by academics wishing to recommend just one text and by students who may lack the resources to purchase more than one book. The ability level of students using a particular text may be quite diverse, and so there is a tendency for key concepts to be simplified. Introductory marketing courses use "Principles of Marketing" texts with more advanced courses building on the knowledge base. More advanced "Marketing Management or Strategy" texts are used in capstone courses that provide the opportunity to incorporate more intellectually challenging material based on current research ideas. It seems, however, that instructors may not always be proactive in providing it (Harvard Business School 1997).

Research and administration pressures cause faculty members to try to optimize developments in the courses they teach. This, in turn, means that frequent and major changes to course content and method are not usually in the instructor's best interests and, as a result, course content, style, and textbooks may change relatively slowly. Faculty members are under increasing pressure to publish in learned journals, especially since formal appraisal of output has increased in Europe and the United States. This causes academic research to take precedence over the writing of textbooks. Three basic reasons dictate that groundbreaking research very rarely appears first (or at all) in textbooks. First, the sheer volume of research published means that only a small proportion could practically be included. Second, the increasing demands from

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publishers to reduce the revision cycle time put extra pressures on authors and encourage the development of contemporary examples at the expense of detailed review of concepts. Even the brand-leading text by Kotler (1997) has reduced its revision cycle time to 3 years from its original 5 years. Third, one of the objectives of the standard text is to inform the reader about proven (as opposed to the latest) research. Some marketing instructors accept that texts cannot cover all relevant up-to-date research details and therefore they develop reading lists of articles to accompany their courses. Although many texts recommend additional readings, these cannot adequately replace the efforts of individual academics in identifying and consolidating the most up-to-date and relevant journal publications.

The purpose of this article is to (1) illustrate the overlaps and imbalances that exist in the subject matter presented by researchers, instructors, and practitioners through journals, textbooks, and practical evidence and (2) to examine the teaching implications. The term *trifid* has been adopted to refer to the influence of the material presented by researchers, instructors, and practitioners.

A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSING THE TRIFID

Dibb and Stern (1999) provide a basis for two dimensions of trifid analysis that can be used in a discussion framework. The first dimension, termed *contribution*, relates to the activities of the researcher, teacher, and practitioner. The second dimension, termed *conduct*, is the structure for organizing these activities. The framework helps the instructor evaluate the material being presented to a class against the key learning objectives.

The *contributing dimension* considers what is contributed by members of the trifid:

- The researcher would be concerned with the question "Is it true?"
- The teacher would probably ask, "Does it make sense?"
- The practitioner would be interested in "Does it work?"

These appear to be straightforward questions. However, they can and do generate a very large body of information. By adding a second dimension, it is possible to present a more organized overview of the evidence that might arise.

The *conduct dimension* considers the organization of the activities conducted in the marketing trifid:

- Theory: What are the underlying assumptions for the assertion?
- Process: What guidelines or rules might help in modeling the assertion?
- Application: In what ways can the assertion be implemented?

The contribution and conduct dimensions can be used to construct a framework for describing the contrasts and overlaps between the influencing factors that affect marketing teaching (see Table 1).

As with any such two-dimensional framework, it is important to consider the most appropriate way to discuss the matrix (top to bottom or left to right). In this particular case, the comparisons between material from the researcher, teacher, and practitioner sources can be most clearly illustrated by organizing the discussion around the conduct dimension, reviewing each of the theory, process, and application aspects in turn. For each of these aspects, the researcher, teacher, and practitioner perspectives (contribution dimension) are considered.

Having devised the dimensions for the framework, it is necessary to consider the nature of the source material that will make a contribution to it. Each element of the contribution dimension must be examined. The researcher sources used in the framework refer mainly to the reporting of research findings about marketing orientation in academic papers, conference proceedings, and specialist books. The teaching sources include marketing texts that teachers use to explain the principles of marketing orientation to their students. The selection of texts used in this review includes a number of leading books adopted at undergraduate and MBA teaching levels. Finally, the practitioner sources refer to books and articles that are aimed primarily at practitioners trying to make marketing orientation principles work in practice.

Table 2 provides an illustration of the teaching and practitioner texts used in the analysis. In total, 11 texts were analyzed to elicit the ways in which marketing orientation was covered. Five are leading European texts, 2 are American, and 4 are practitioner-oriented books. The table shows how each of the texts explicitly covers topics that contribute to an understanding of marketing orientation. The wide variation in coverage is indicative of the kinds of problems facing the instructor. While the relatively small sample of textbooks analyzed in this article is primarily based on European texts, they are representative of the leading texts used in both the undergraduate and postgraduate marketing syllabi, in both the United States and Europe.

The need to include tangible references in the classification scheme means that published sources alone have been used. However, it is important to acknowledge that marketing teachers are also exposed to a variety of nonpublished sources that influence what and how they teach. Thus, most will attend academic conferences or workshops where discussions take place about marketing orientation research. Some of the principles learned may then be directly applied in their teaching. While it is difficult to incorporate these

TABLE 1
UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRASTS AND OVERLAPS BETWEEN
MARKETING ORIENTATION RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND PRACTICE

<i>Conduct</i>	<i>Contribution</i>		
	<i>Researcher Is It True?</i>	<i>Teacher Does It Make Sense?</i>	<i>Practitioner Does It Work?</i>
Theory	1	2	3
Underlying assumptions	Examine the behavioral components (customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination) Consider decision criteria (long-term focus and profitability) of marketing orientation	Review of the marketing concept and marketing orientation Simple examination of the components of the marketing concept based on assumed links with business performance	Marketing orientation believed to improve business performance Focus on implementation of marketing orientation to allow benefits to be achieved
Process	4	5	6
Modeling the assumptions	Seek to understand the link between marketing orientation and profitability Normative approaches to achieving the link	Little attempt to critically appraise marketing orientation and business performance link Emphasis on process/components of marketing management as route to marketing orientation	Developing a marketing-oriented organization is key Stepwise approaches to planning that help bring about marketing orientation
Application	7	8	9
Testing the assumptions	The roles that marketing activities, organizational characteristics, and conditions play in achieving marketing orientation	Checklists designed to ensure that marketing management components are in place Description of factors conducive to effective implementation	Key role of effective implementation in achieving marketing orientation Quality function deployment (QFD), Total Quality Management program as route to market-driven management

nonpublished sources within the article, it is important to acknowledge that they exist.

APPLYING THE TRIFID TO MARKETING ORIENTATION

Each element of the conduct dimension is now taken in turn and discussed with reference to each trifold member (the contribution dimension). The trifold is illustrated using an example from the marketing orientation literature. This topic is chosen because of its close relationship to one of the fundamental principles of the discipline, the marketing concept. According to Narver and Slater (1990), companies that become marketing oriented can enjoy increased profitability. In presenting this assertion to students, it is assumed that the instructor who teaches marketing orientation would benefit from a critical understanding of the contributions to the debate by the researcher, teacher, and practitioner. In addition, it has been the focus of recent research that attempts to measure the organizational benefits of embracing a marketing orientation. It is also of interest because it appears to be a difficult concept to implement in practice (Simkin 1996).

Theory: What Are the Underlying Assumptions/Rationale for the Assertion?

Researcher ("Is It True?")

The research literature considers the rationale for marketing orientation in terms of various behavioral components and decision criteria (see Table 1, cell 1). Thus, there is a growing body of evidence that indicates that businesses that are marketing oriented enjoy better performance than those that are not (Day 1994; Greenley and Oktemgil, 1996; Hamel and Prahalad 1994; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Narver and Slater 1990). Narver and Slater's (1990) examination indicates that marketing orientation comprises a number of behavioral components (customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination) and decision criteria (long-term focus and profitability). In a similar review, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) also identify certain key themes, including customer focus, coordinated marketing, and profitability. However, this research suggests that one of these themes, profitability, is an outcome, rather than an aspect, of marketing orientation. Kohli and Jaworski go on to

TABLE 2
TEXTBOOK AND PRACTITIONER BOOK COVERAGE OF MARKETING ORIENTATION TOPICS

	Kotler et al. (1996)	Dibb et al. (1997)	Kotler (1997)	Day (1990)	Doyle (1994)	Baker (1996)	Jobber (1995)	Durö (1989)	McDonald (1995)	Levinson and Godin (1994)	Johansson and Nonaka (1996)
Marketing concept	y	y	y	y	y	y	y		y		y
Marketing orientation					y	y	y		y		y
Marketing philosophy	y			y	y	y	y				y
Marketing planning	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	
Marketing process	y		y			y	y	y	y	y	
Marketing defined	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y		y
Marketing-oriented organization		y	y	y			y	y			
Marketing-oriented strategic planning		y	y								
Market driven				y			y		y		
Customer orientation	y		y	y	y		y				y
Customer focused	y			y	y		y				y
Customer driven				y	y				y		
Customer-oriented organization			y	y	y						

NOTE: The table shows where the relevant text refers explicitly to the topic listed; however, this does not imply that blanks in the table mean that the topic is ignored; but if covered, it is done implicitly or using other terminology.

consider the impact of environmental moderators, such as market and technological turbulence, on marketing orientation. Wong (1993) reviews the debate about the role of marketing and the effect of marketing orientation on business profitability (Deshpande and Webster 1989; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Webster 1988). In this sense, Wong (1993) apparently agrees with the concerns of Whittington and Whipp (1992) about the "technological effectiveness" of marketing. She goes on to identify a corporate-wide lack of confidence in marketing as a function, which she attributes to the discipline's lack of professionalism.

It is interesting to note the differing perspectives of those working within the researcher stream. In particular, it seems that active researchers in the area choose to conceptualize the market orientation construct differently, and this results in various operationalizations. This can lead to specific research foci where there are more differences within a research stream than there are between competing streams. The implication is that the teacher must decide how to handle intraparadigm differences in addition to those occurring between paradigms.

Teacher ("Does It Make Sense?")

An insight into the teacher view of the underlying rationale for marketing orientation can readily be gleaned from marketing texts. Many of these texts begin with introductory chapters that jointly review the marketing concept and marketing orientation (see Table 1, cell 2). The texts are then structured around the components of the marketing concept. This approach is justified on the basis of an assumed link between the adoption of the marketing concept and business

performance. Although all of the texts reviewed for this article make some reference to either marketing or customer orientation, both the level of discussion and use of terminology are variable. For example, the following are just some of the terms used by authors in the explanation of the marketing concept and marketing orientation: *marketing concept*, *marketing orientation*, *marketing philosophy*, *marketing process*, *marketing defined*, *market driven*, *customer focus*, *customer orientation*, and *customer driven*. This makes it difficult to directly compare the discussion in different texts. (Indeed, it seems that this problem with terminology is a feature shared by marketing orientation sources of all types.) Baker (1996) provides clarification of the confusion about terminology for teacher sources. He presents a three-way classification of marketing definitions first proposed by Crosier (1975). This classification scheme indicates that definitions of marketing can be grouped into (1) those that see marketing as a process, (2) those that view marketing as a concept or a philosophy of business, and (3) those that emphasize the notion of marketing orientation.

The underlying rationale in the texts reviewed is that "the central aim of any organization is to define the needs of a target market and to adapt products or services to satisfy these needs more effectively than competitors" (Hutt and Speh 1992, p. 5). This helps to justify the structuring of the texts around the elements of marketing management, which are essentially geared to achieving marketing orientation. Perhaps the most extensive treatment of marketing orientation in its own right is provided by Jobber (1995). He uses the term interchangeably with customer orientation and states that "marketing-oriented companies recognize the importance of

building relationships with customers by providing satisfaction and extracting new customers by creating added value" (p. 4). The discussion that follows is supported by three key studies that examine the links between marketing and business performance (Hooley and Lynch 1985; Hooley, Lynch, and Shepherd 1990; Narver and Slater 1990).

Most texts revisit the notion of marketing orientation in subsequent chapters. For example, when discussing the importance of understanding buyer behavior or when considering strategic and marketing planning (see Dibb et al. 1997; Kotler 1997).

Practitioner ("Does It Work?")

As shown in Table 1, cell 3, the results of case study analysis and findings published in practitioner-oriented publications suggest there are clear-cut benefits associated with adopting a marketing orientation (Kotler and Andreason 1987; Levitt 1960; Webster 1988). Practitioner-oriented marketing books, such as that of Johansson and Nonaka (1996), Durö (1989), and Levinson and Godin (1994), also emphasize the need to be marketing or customer oriented. However, once again, the terminology used to explain this notion is quite variable. While some of the same terms appearing in the research literature and textbooks are applied, their usage is less clearly defined. For example, Johansson and Nonaka (1996) suggest that good marketing practice is linked to true customer orientation, while Levinson and Godin (1994) state that

in order to sell a product or a service, a company must establish a relationship with the consumer. It must build trust and rapport. It must understand the customer's needs, and it must provide a product that delivers the promised benefits. (p. 4)

Although the style and use of terminology may be less formal than is found in research publications and textbooks, the sentiments are, nevertheless, the same. A more formal explanation of marketing orientation is provided by McDonald (1995):

The marketing concept: providing goods or services for which there is a known customer demand, as opposed to selling what the company likes to produce. By focusing on customers and their wants the company is better positioned to make a profit. The company is then said to be market-led or to have a "market orientation." (p. 13)

Despite the apparent benefits that marketing orientation can bring, some industries report difficulties with implementation. In the wine industry, although the benefits of marketing orientation may be recognized, confusion about how to achieve it is widespread (Sharp 1991). Some difficulties have seemingly arisen because of the need for careful management of both customer and company needs and for a balance be-

tween the two to be achieved. Two of the more strikingly interchangeable terms in the books surveyed in Table 2 are market driven and customer driven, and while for some the distinction may be merely semantic, others differ. The view of Johansson and Nonaka (1996) is that market-driven companies explicitly analyze customers and competitors and that this distinction is one that has practical importance.

Process: What Guidelines and/or Rules Might Help in Modeling the Assertion?

Researcher ("Is It True?")

While marketing orientation research embraces a wide variety of techniques and constructs, articles published in marketing journals have tended to focus on the link between market orientation conduct and business performance (see Table 1, cell 4). The emphasis therefore is on validating the discourse inherent in the marketing concept, with the result that the profile of other marketing orientation research is low. However, some research considers the additional question of how the link between marketing orientation and business performance can be achieved.

Research from the United Kingdom in particular attempts to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful companies using various discriminating factors. An important element in this body of research has been the extent to which marketing orientation and performance are linked. For example, Doyle, Saunders, and Wong (1992) compare and contrast U.K., Japanese, and U.S. businesses and find that the conflict between long-term search for market share and short-term financial returns play an important role in determining success. In a continuation of this work, Wong and Saunders (1993) use cluster analysis to identify a typology of firms based on marketing strategy and activities. This research highlights the merits of balancing a marketing orientation and a product focus.

Other research by Hooley, Lynch, and Jobber (1992) also suggests a link between business performance and marketing orientation, in terms of the emphasis given to marketing activities, level of marketing training, nature of marketing organization, and extent of formal marketing planning. However, Baker, Black, and Hart (1994) and Hart and Diamontopoulos (1994) question the relationship between competitive performance and marketing information and report partly contradictory findings.

Teacher ("Does It Make Sense?")

Having explained the underlying rationale and potential benefits of marketing orientation, the texts generally make little attempt to critically appraise the link between marketing orientation and business performance. Instead, there is usually a tacit acceptance that marketing orientation should be sought and the focus switches to how this can be achieved (see

Table 1, cell 5). At this point, the notion of marketing orientation usually becomes wrapped up in a debate about how the needs of the target market can best be satisfied. This involves the development of an appropriate product/service and marketing program that is able to reach the defined target audience. The process of marketing management is usually touted as the route to achieving the required marketing orientation (Baker 1996; Dickson 1994). Doyle (1994) defines marketing management as follows:

Marketing management can be defined as the process of identifying target markets, researching the needs of customers in these markets and then developing the product, price, promotion and distribution to create exchanges that satisfy the objectives of the organization's stakeholders. Implicit in this definition is competitiveness. Customers have choices—normally there will be several competitors seeking to attract them. So the organization's ability to meet its objectives requires it to offer superior value to the competition. (p. 39)

Although the notion of marketing orientation is not mentioned explicitly within the definition, the essence of what the marketing management process aims to achieve is consistent with the marketing orientation concept. In this sense, the texts are describing a series of broad steps that implicitly help bring about a marketing orientation. Although the detail of the definition varies according to the preferred text, the components of marketing management remain essentially the same. For example, Dickson (1994) and Dibb et al. (1997) each discuss marketing management in terms of understanding customers, studying competitors and market trends, using the understanding that results to develop appropriate marketing programs.

Practitioner ("Does It Work?")

The need for a marketing-oriented organization is seen as paramount by practitioner writers, who stress the importance of planning in achieving this aim (Piercy 1992). The level of detail in the guidance that they offer varies from the very simple "If you don't have a plan, how will you know when you get there?" (Levinson and Godin 1994, p. 1) to the more complex. At the complex end of the continuum are a number of stepwise models that have been developed to assist the practitioner with the formal process of developing a marketing orientation (see Table 1, cell 6). Payne (1988) suggests five stages to improving marketing orientation: understanding cultural and organizational aspects of the situation, identifying a marketing champion, carrying out a needs analysis, designing a program of marketing training, and organizing appropriate support activities. Some authors link the process of developing marketing orientation to strategic or marketing planning. For example, Watzke and Mindak (1987) indicate that help in applying marketing concepts is available for public sector managers through the development of a market-

ing-oriented strategic planning model. The proposed model comprises four parts: relevant external environmental factors; marketing planning activities in relation to mission, goals, resources, portfolios, and growth strategies; opportunity analysis; and internal environmental forces.

Greenley and Matcham's (1990) investigation of businesses servicing the incoming tourism sector reinforces the role of sound planning in developing marketing orientation. Their research findings suggest that low levels of marketing orientation in the business may be linked to the widespread lack of formal marketing planning.

Application: In What Ways Can the Assertion Be Implemented?

Researcher ("Is It True?")

A range of material considering the role of marketing activities, organizational characteristics, and business conditions for bringing about marketing implementation is presented in the researcher literature (see Table 1, cell 7). Some of this evidence relates directly to the issue of marketing orientation. A typical example is found in the work of Hooley and Lynch (1994), who indicate that successful businesses (which tend to be more marketing oriented) are more heavily involved in formal marketing activities, including planning, marketing research, training, and the development of a marketing strategy.

A particularly comprehensive list is compiled by Piercy (1998), who suggests that the following issues are important in an implementation sense:

- *Participation* and involvement of organizational members in different stages and aspects of implementation (Giles 1991; Reid 1990)
- *Strategic understanding in the organization*, reflecting a willingness and ability to embrace new ideas while "unlearning" old ones (Cespedes 1991; Martin 1993)
- *Learning organization*, acknowledging the importance of the learning process (Garvin 1993; Slater and Narver 1994)
- *Cross-functional management*, looking at and dealing with the differences in information flows and measurement approaches across functions (Cespedes 1995)
- *Career pathing and management development* or the use of human resource initiatives to broaden perspectives (Jick 1992)
- *Internal marketing*, and the role that it plays in implementation (Gronroos 1983; Gummesson 1991; Piercy 1992)

As can be seen from Piercy's (1998) list, different authors have chosen to emphasize particular conditions that aid implementation. Thus, Slater and Narver (1994, 1995) have focused on the learning aspects of the organization, indicating that this may be more important than the extent to which an organization is marketing oriented. They define a learning establishment as one that uses its expertise to understand any group or body (in addition to customers and competitors) that

may have an impact on its search for more satisfied customers. Cravens et al. (1997) also highlight the need to create an environment of organizational learning. Referring to the work of Piercy (1995), these authors cite the importance of creating and maintaining an organizational culture and building critical processes designed to create superior customer value. Cravens et al. (1997) go on to explain the benefits of developing a shared vision of the market among organizational members and suggest that this too helps implement marketing orientation.

Teacher ("Does It Make Sense?")

Successfully applying a marketing orientation requires a sound implementation program (see Table 1, cell 8). Some texts identify factors that are conducive to effective implementation. Others suggest checklists for ensuring that the necessary components of marketing management are carried through (Kotler 1997). Bonoma (1984) contends that marketing strategy and implementation can be diagnosed according to the appropriateness of the strategy and the excellence of implementation. Bonoma goes on to identify four levels of activity that determine the effectiveness of implementation. These include marketing actions (effective management of the marketing mix elements), marketing programs (integration of individual marketing mix elements into a complete program), marketing systems (organizational structures in place to monitor, control, and facilitate activities), and marketing policies (marketing managers' interpretation of corporate policies).

When considering the theory, process, and application of marketing orientation, the standard marketing texts are found to differ in their coverage and approach. While virtually all explicitly describe and emphasize the importance of both the marketing concept and planning, other elements pertaining to marketing orientation are less widely and explicitly addressed. This does not mean that the authors omit consideration of the issues, but some are implicitly addressed. Furthermore, there are different terms used (sometimes interchangeably), which could cause confusion to those who seek definitive solutions to marketing problems. In addition, there are differences in approach between marketing education in North America and Europe and Australasia. In the United States, introductory marketing courses need to cover a wide syllabus and tend to be supported by encyclopedic texts. While some instructors may encourage using one of the excellent supplementary texts that are available, any critical evaluation of marketing tools and concepts tends to reside in advanced marketing courses for the specializing student. The European pedagogical tradition tends to encourage a critical appraisal at an early stage in undergraduate learning, and so it was expected that European texts might address more of the framework elements.

Practitioner ("Does It Work?")

Achieving marketing orientation in practice is apparently linked to the effective implementation of relevant marketing analyses and planning activities (see Table 1, cell 9). According to Norris (1991), the use of tools such as strategic planning, marketing research, and formal measures of product and service performance indicate the degree to which organizations are marketing driven. Not surprisingly, the role of management in achieving implementation is also important. Market-driven management plays a key role in ensuring that the necessary marketing skills are developed and is also vital in refocusing management culture. Indeed, George, Frilling, and Court (1994) suggest the key role of marketing throughout the entire organization.

Other authors have also identified the link between implementing marketing orientation and changing the organization's view of the market. Thus, a practical study by Harris (1999) has identified that the process of bringing marketing principles and planning into the organization can be severely inhibited by a range of entrenched organizational cultural values. Similarly, Lichenthal and Wilson (1992) suggest that attitude change is needed across all functional areas simultaneously. Other authors also link difficulties implementing the marketing concept to the interaction between organizational members. According to Mohr-Jackson (1991), the way marketing orientation is defined plays an important role in how it is implemented. A particular difficulty may relate to an over-emphasis on the external customer, while the internal customer, the employee, is ignored.

These kinds of sentiments have resulted in major developments in so-called total quality programs. For example, Philips International (United Kingdom) has seen its quality program as an important boost to its competitive position but stresses the need for clear management commitment and cooperation by all employees (van Ham and Williams 1986). Another quality program variant, quality function deployment (QFD), is helping companies like Ford Motor Co. and Toyota become more customer focused (Johansson and Nonaka 1996). QFD is a planning, communication, and documentation approach that encourages cooperation across functions (Vasilash 1989).

OVERLAP IN THE TRIFID FRAMEWORK

Given the heterogeneity of marketing experience in class membership, questions remain about how the instructor creates a balance between the sources of knowledge that are available in a general and specific sense. The marketing trifid provides a potentially helpful framework by considering the overlaps between its elements.

Theory Overlap

Research is more concerned with understanding theoretical constructs and demonstrating links with performance. Teaching and practice are connected by the explained rationale for marketing orientation, although the nature of the explanation and terminology used are different. For example, the benefits of marketing orientation are emphasized for practitioners and the characteristics of marketing-oriented businesses are considered. In textbooks, the explanation is less explicit in the sense that marketing orientation is defined and the role of marketing management in achieving such orientation is stressed. The practicalities of achieving marketing orientation receive relatively little consideration in the texts analyzed.

Process Overlap

In this example, research and teaching show some common ground through the links between business performance and marketing orientation. Both sources are interested in understanding how the two are connected, but research sets out to demonstrate and measure this more explicitly. The overlaps between the teaching and practice views of process issues are also revealing because these sources are generally content to take for granted that marketing orientation (although they may not use this precise term) makes good business sense. Thus, in textbooks, the linkage between business performance and marketing orientation is shown implicitly through the importance attributed to the marketing management stages. It is arguable that such a stance raises questions about whether texts are sufficiently critical in how they tackle this issue. For practitioners, little emphasis is given to demonstrating the link between business performance and marketing orientation. Instead, the application of simple stagewise models geared toward marketing orientation is considered. Such models offer basic guidance on the route to achieving marketing orientation.

Application Overlap

Teaching and practice are connected through their more explicit consideration of implementation issues. Textbooks consider measuring the effectiveness of implementation and describe formal programs for implementation. Often these programs form particular stages in strategic or marketing planning models. Practitioners highlight the roles of market-driven management and interdepartmental communication in achieving implementation. Research tends to focus on the conditions necessary to bring about implementation. Research is linked with the practitioner view in terms of the emphasis on the role of the business organization and other conditions ensuring that implementation takes place. Research is also connected with textbooks through the atten-

tion given to marketing planning type models in achieving implementation of marketing orientation.

Balancing the Trifid

The review of the theory, process, and application elements used by researchers, instructors, and practitioners identifies a diverse mix of source material. It is therefore important to begin this discussion by acknowledging the multifaceted nature of research, teaching, and practice in this area. This means that instructors seeking to balance the trifid must deal with intraparadigm differences in addition to those occurring between paradigms. For example, an instructor who reviews what researcher sources say about the underlying assumptions for marketing orientation (theory) must decide how to rationalize the different stances of Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990). The same instructor might then go on to consider a mix of inputs from teaching and practitioner sources, which may either contradict or confirm the stance from the researcher sources. This observation is important because it shows that any discussion of imbalances between research teaching and practitioner sources should not obscure the differences occurring within each type.

While acknowledging these intraparadigm differences, it is useful to explicitly consider the imbalances in how research, teaching, and practitioner sources address the different aspects of marketing orientation. If the role of the instructor is merely to instruct or impart a credible view about the topic as an expert, then the imbalances may not matter. If, however, the objective is to facilitate learning, then in the role of counselor (Law and Wensley 1979), explicit consideration of the imbalances is a prerequisite. For example, recent research emphasis has been on attempting to provide validation for companies adopting marketing orientation. Textbooks, whether written for the student or the practitioner, take these research questions as read. While textbooks written for those studying marketing do explore the underlying theoretical assumptions, there is an inevitable time lag before up-to-date research ideas appear. Practitioner sources are less likely to explore the basic underlying assumptions, as shown in the following quote from Davidson (1987): "The practice of marketing is almost as old as civilization, and its validity has been proved over and over again" (p. 29).

Practitioner sources assume that marketing orientation helps optimize profitability and provide stepwise models to help marketers achieve it. Academic texts consider process issues in terms of the components of marketing management activities that are consistent with a marketing-oriented approach. Researchers, however, are still trying to establish and test the links that may exist between marketing orientation and profitability.

In application terms, textbooks focus on the provision of implementation checklists ensuring that marketing management activities are evaluated. Practitioner sources devote considerable attention to the organizational manifestations of marketing orientation. Researchers as yet have attached relatively little importance to alternative approaches for implementing marketing orientation.

Overall, researchers tend to be focused on understanding the underlying behavior determinant of marketing orientation (theory). Textbooks emphasize the aspects associated with marketing management activities (process). Practitioner sources are primarily concerned with making marketing orientation happen (application).

TEACHING IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This article has looked at the issues faced by instructors in balancing the activities of researchers, teachers, and practitioners in relation to how they present marketing orientation. This approach suggests that marketing instructors need to address the existence of contrasts and overlaps between what is researched, reported in textbooks, and practiced by professionals. However, this approach also suggests that the job of balancing these inputs includes dealing with contrasting material from *within* each of the three sources. Assuming that the instructor has dealt with these intraparadigm contrasts, the next step is to consider the similarities and differences between each of the researcher, teaching, and practitioner sources. This understanding can then be used as a basis for devising appropriate combinations of the trifold elements when designing courses. Although there is no obvious reason why the teaching stance should vary according to audience, it also seems reasonable that instructors might choose to vary the exact balance of material from each element. Thus, an instructor preparing course material for an audience of business executives might rely more heavily on case material from practitioner sources than for an audience of doctoral students. In most cases, irrespective of the nature of the course, a textbook will rarely provide sufficient coverage and insight into all elements of the trifold.

If it is assumed that textbooks provide instructors with their first point of reference, then this type of source can be used as a point of comparison for the inputs from research and practice. The key contrasts and overlaps arising when comparing these inputs have already been discussed. It is clear that textbooks provide reasonably comprehensive coverage of marketing orientation theory. However, when compared with other sources, the primary emphasis of textbooks is on process issues. This contrasts with research sources, which tend to emphasize the underlying theoretical assumptions, and practitioner sources, which focus on application issues. This variation in emphasis is not particularly surprising considering the differing objectives and target audiences of these

sources. For example, researchers will begin by tackling the theoretical assumptions that underlie their area of interest. This is reflected in the conference proceedings and refereed journal articles that researchers write. As time passes, the focus of their research will probably shift away from theoretical questions toward application issues. At this time, the content of research publications will shift to reflect this change.

This raises important questions about how knowledge flows from one type of source into another and about the inevitable time lag between research being undertaken and then appearing in mainstream marketing texts and practitioner sources. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to address this issue in detail, a simple analysis of the references cited in the textbooks reviewed shows that the time lag between publication of key research articles and inclusion in texts is a minimum of 3 years. This finding emphasizes the need for instructors to combine material from different sources.

Even assuming that instructors are willing and able to use a combination of material from research, teaching, and practitioner sources, an additional problem is the variability in terminology between the sources. As demonstrated, marketing texts use a wide range of terminology to encapsulate the marketing orientation concept. For example, the terms market orientation, marketing orientation, market driven, market focus, customer orientation, and customer focus are used almost interchangeably by authors. There may even be a low level of consistency within a particular text, with terminology used loosely and without clear definition. If anything, the situation is even more marked in practitioner sources.

Further research is needed to consider both issues of knowledge flow and consistency of terminology. First, it is feasible to compare the dissemination of research knowledge from journal articles to mainstream and specialized texts. Second, the variety of definitions within research, teaching, and practice may cause problems and warrants further attention.

In conclusion, this article has started to unravel the complexities faced by marketing instructors when developing their courses. Dealing with these complexities requires the instructor to consider exactly what is taught and how to balance material from different sources. The question of what is taught is linked to concerns about the lack of professional ideology (Whittington and Whipp 1992) and involves the instructor using available evidence to question the effectiveness of the principles being delivered. This endorsement of marketing's practices and tools can then be transferred to practitioners so that they become both knowledgeable and proficient in applying basic marketing tools (Wong 1993). In transferring this knowledge, the instructor must then consider the balance between the three areas of the marketing trifold—the contribution of researchers, teachers, and practitioners.

Although marketing orientation has been used here to illustrate contrasts between research, teaching, and practice,

the instructor is faced with similar problems when teaching other marketing principles. A number of theoretical areas, such as market segmentation and buyer behavior, have already been evaluated, and more are under consideration. The contribution of the marketing trifold to this analysis is that it identifies the areas of influence for consideration and shows where contrasts and overlaps may occur. In this sense, the purpose of this article has not been to identify good or bad teaching practice but to highlight the breadth and variety of information with which instructors must deal.

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