

THE ELUCIDATION OF MARKETING TRENDS AND A POST-POSITIVIST APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR – A REVIEW

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore recent trends in marketing and major factors that influence consumer buying behaviour. The study of consumer behaviour and the consumer market has evolved significantly over the years. Marketing was often studied under positivist philosophical theory until the 1980s when a post-positivist trend emerged. The problem is to isolate the key factors influencing consumer behaviour, explaining the significance of each factor within the overall consumer market from the point of view of marketing as a social science as well as a commercial practice. From there it will be important to assess the value of the marketing models that have been used, within the very large body of marketing knowledge that has accumulated since the 1960s. It is important to trace the trends in marketing from that time to the present and to consider likely tendencies in the future. To stress interpretivist schemes, it is useful to consider whether positivism was responsible for a wrong path in marketing, or whether it may have not been the positivist statements that were made but the tendency for many models to be conceived with certain assumptions taking the place of variables in the building of models. It is crucial to review the image of the consumer, often as a marketing target, in a changing light where the consumer became a responsible interlocutor who provided feedback and even worked as a collaborator. Findings from this study highlight that it will be very important in drafting text and discussing issues to concentrate on the development of proto-models that may elucidate the relative strength of possible factors, and economically distribute the overall aims of models to balance and refine individual factors that empower marketing campaigns. This study also recommends numerous directions for future research related to consumer behaviour

Keywords: Behaviour, Consumer, Consumer Behaviour, Influence, Marketing, Marketing Trend, Post-positivist approach

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of consumer behaviour emerged as a “distinct field during the 1960s, and it is characterized by two broad paradigms, the positivist and the non-positivist paradigms” [42][52]. Positivist research involves human behavioural and physiologic processes with fiscal, situational and intellectual information. In this approach, these viewpoints are denoted as ‘traditional’ as they pre-exist the expansion of the phenomenological or non-positivist paradigm[42][53]. The positivist paradigm is dominant, emphasizing the sovereignty of human dogma or any natural theology, and a realisation of the objective reality that can be exposed by scientific techniques [38]. The positivist paradigm is based on experience, knowledge and reason from evidence gained through experiments describing past present and future. The assumption of rationalism is therefore fundamental to this traditional perspective[31].To advance a framework for researching consumer behaviour, the positivist paradigm is an important part of the evolution of the field, and it is assumed that each different paradigmatic feature has influenced this discipline.

From the scope of the literature surveyed, any taxonomy of the marketing discipline would be enormous if it was conceived in semantic terms. To approach such a body of knowledge in an objective, efficient and economical way would be far beyond the capacity of a paper such as this. Rather, we have attempted to answer this specific question: How should we approach marketing and consumer behaviour in a productive way? This question required an heuristic method [13][37]. Identifying factors influencing consumer behaviour has the potential to direct future training function for the current generation of market watchers in achieving useful goals [40]. A list of such factors will also easily focus on the choice of words used—often possibly synonyms of each other—with little guarantee that there is any precise or coherent relationship among identified factors [34]. It will be very important to enunciate the nature and purpose of each factor carefully.

2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Since the 1960s, there has been interactions and shifts between developing technological [29]and intellectual currents. These began with marketing models that became objects of criticism [22]. Then there was the advent of postmodernism and post-structuralism; information and communication technology, the Internet, the mobile phone and finally social media [3][59]. This generated a fledgling marketing discipline, dominated by markets and influenced by academics and interdisciplinary collaborations [26].

A façade of positivism used traditional and behaviouralist perspectives to build models of consumer behaviour in marketing, based on a priori economic theory

assumptions [53], and those models followed deductive paths of thought and became entrenched in marketing theory so that further findings could be interpreted in their terms [27][41]. It is also informative to examine the chronology of marketing theory. The 1960s-70s marketing establishment was the first tier, followed by the period between 1980-2000 [22] when an interpretive train of thought with critical academic influence was able to question many existing interpretations of marketing. Finally, from 1980 to 2019, the beginnings of a period of open enquiry, including research into consumer opinion and direct co-operation with consumers [45]. Since 2000 there was a spate of enquiries into the elements of consumer behaviour affairs, in contexts of historical background and ongoing interdisciplinary enquiry, emphasising consumer feedback and consumer collaboration[18].

1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To identify the marketing models that have been used, that are based on accumulated assumptions or have been tested.
- To investigate the marketing factors that influence consumer decisions and build trust in a marketer-consumer relationship.
- To identify the marketing theories and post-positivist approach that will define consumer behaviour.

2. METHODOLOGY

The key to the methodology of this paper was to understand how to carry out heuristic research into consumer behaviour, and related areas including consumer decision making. It was not to seek semantic building blocks to construct a cognitive taxonomy of marketing. Nor, in what is manifestly a continuing process, could the paper even try to have the last word on interpreting developments in marketing and consumer behaviour to the present.

This paper is a literature review of the developments around significant factors influencing consumer behaviour in the field of marketing [50], where there has been a rapid production of fragmented, interdisciplinary knowledge. It is not a chronological account, but it is based on a background chronology. Clearly marshalling evidence for such a review must be selective, yet it is crucial that when particular research emerges that points another way, it must be taken into account, lest conclusions of the review become seriously flawed [50]. Pachauri [38] critically assesses developments in marketing theory and practice as seen from various sources. A tentative picture shows that in the 1960s-70s the fledgling marketing discipline, mainly dominated by marketers, used behaviourist models to target consumer attitudes and behaviour [22]. In those years a façade of positivism used traditional and behaviourist perspectives to build models of consumer behaviour in marketing, based on flawed a priori assumptions from economic theory [45].

Following deductive paths of thought, those models became entrenched in practical marketing thinking, which were observed well into the 1990s [45].

Erasmus et al. [18] gave a critical account of the traditional models of consumer decision-making, characteristic of a rational consumer behaviour model developed in the 1960s to 1970s, by marketers. There were criticisms of their lack of theoretical content, their assumption that consumer decision-making behaviour is entirely rational, and their generalised conclusions without research justification [18]. Nonetheless, these models persisted to the end of the 20th century in the form of logical positivism, becoming textbook models. In the years between 1980-2000, critical academic influence stimulated a more open, interpretive train of thought that questioned many existing interpretations in marketing [38]. Not only did the Internet go online in the mid-1990s, but the mobile smartphone enabled research into consumer opinion and an enhanced direct relationship between marketers and consumers. From the turn of the century there has been a spate of articles studying the elements of consumer behaviour [29], in the context of historical background and ongoing interdisciplinary enquiry, emphasising consumer feedback and consumer collaboration. The role of the blog became significant [29], as social network sites became a focus of attention for both marketers and consumers [8]. Social networks then made privacy an issue, together with the importance of trust in sharing information in the virtual community [16]. In a kind of social exchange among consumers and between marketer and consumer, the trust necessary in business-to-business exchanges became a reality in both understanding and influencing consumer attitudes [47].

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

A great deal is now known about the psychology, sociology and economics of consumer behaviour, yet it is still difficult to find cogently argued sets of factors that have influenced consumers for the last 50 to 60 years [45]. Definite insights into the nature of marketing to consumers have been made, certain lessons have been learned, and various theories have been floated. All this comprises a huge body of knowledge, but without a firm encompassing guidebook there is a gap between theory and practice [34]. Ultimately what marketers need and what the public want is an accurate knowledge of marketing and a realistic understanding of consumer thinking and behaviour, expressed in precise and understandable terms.

4.1 THE STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The Internet provides an enormous amount of background on marketing. Articles are available on various sites, including Google, Google Scholar, and academic databases. Wikipedia writing on consumer issues is also substantially correct and extremely helpful in understanding the process of consumer thinking [58]. Wikipedia is *the* major collaboratively written, bilingual free-content encyclopaedia. Analytical

results of a survey on knowledge found that “internal self-concept-based motivation significantly influenced individual knowledge-sharing intention. Furthermore, both information and system quality have significant effects on individual attitude towards Wikipedia —no doubt influencing the intention to share knowledge via Wikipedia” [58]. Arenas-Gaitán et al. [1], identified four complex, new issues in marketing – 1) the adoption of new technologies, 2) the co-creation of value in virtual environments, 3) factors that influence marketing behaviour, and 4) different elements of post-purchase behaviour. Loken[36] reviewed theory-based pragmatic study through the period 1994–2004. Studies on categorisation include experiential research on “brand categories”, where the main goals are organising frameworks and stimulation bases for findings, and self-paced learning. Loken’s[36]research into various inferences, cognitive and/or experienced, are kept in mind throughout this paper.

In the 1940s and 50s, consumer behaviour studies and Wikipedia noted separate subdisciplines in the area of market research. Consumer behaviour is an interdisciplinary social science based on concepts that examine how social factors such as emotions, attitudes and preferences affect consumer buying behaviour [46]. Formal studies have investigated characteristics of individual consumers in an attempt to comprehend consumers’ needs and consumption. These characteristics include demographics, personality, lifestyles [15], and behavioural variables such as willingness to provide recommendations, brand support, usage occasion, loyalty, usage rates [33]. Influences on reference group such as family, community, culture and society have also been a subject of investigation over the years [11].

Popular literature on consumer issues suggest that consumer decision theory is an approach built on positivist theory, although its propositions and conclusions go far beyond the sphere of formal positivism [42]. Nevertheless, marketing is a practical field, where survival depends on palpable success in promoting products. In this context it is not surprising that marketing organisations have their staff concentrate on the factors that they consider most effective to promote messages in marketing. In their paper, ‘Factors affecting consumer buying behaviour,’ Ramya and Ali [42]set out factors influencing consumer buying behaviour, to show how marketing and other stimuli pass through the buyer’s Black Box and manifest in buying decisions. Although a specific buyer Black Box is not analysed, the range of factors acting on the buyer is specifically enumerated. Ramya and Ali [42]analysed determinants of consumer behaviour in two diagrams, shown below.

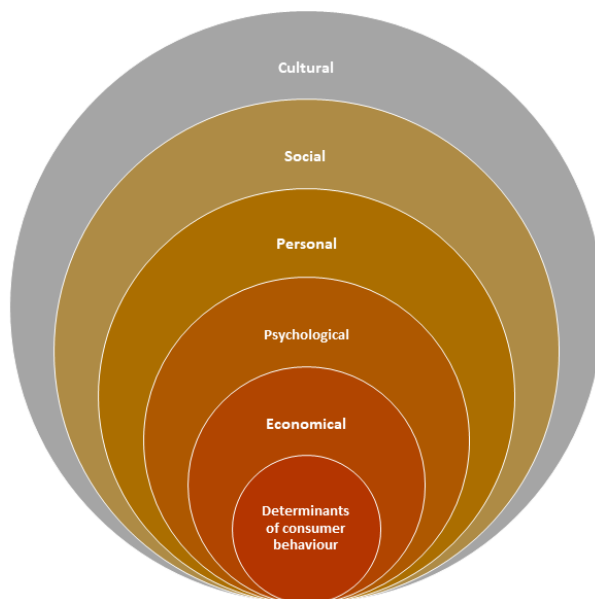


Figure 1. Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour (Concept: Ramya & Ali [42])

Ramya and Ali [42] believe that for a successful consumer-oriented market, service providers must focus on the psychological elements of their consumers, with factors affecting buying behaviour and consumer satisfaction at the centre. These authors argue that consumer buying behaviour is the gateway to marketing success. However, to focus on how consumer decisions are influenced, the provenance of all factors must be questioned. Not only in relation to whether they are deductively acquired, but also in relation to the question of cultural universality—something that will often involve ethnic minorities, as well as mainstream consumer communities [35].

A serious problem with both diagrams is that they are a priori statements on what happens in the mind of a consumer. They are evidence of deductive reasoning to break down what is happening in the mind of the consumer, and determine how consumer thinking and decision making come about. It is difficult to say more than that this is an example of a mind map, representing the way some marketers think, however true some aspects of the diagrams may be. Voramontri and Klieb[55], wrote about the effects of social media marketing on consumer behaviour and product performance, and saw the black box model as one of the most used theories. The Black Box model [42] includes three main aspects of consumer behaviour: external stimuli, individual characteristics and consumer response – seen as controlling controllable elements in the marketing mix. The key point of this black box model is consumer decision[42], however, it is only part of the decision-making process. Generally, in the case of fast-moving consumer goods that are usually purchased without complex process of analysis, the search for information and evaluation of alternatives becomes less necessary[55].



Figure 2. Model of buyer behaviour (Concept: Ramya & Ali [42])

According to Brown [10], the Black Box model [42] involves external stimuli, individual characteristics and consumer responses, subject to impact by the marketing mix and ways of presenting alternatives within the multifactorial environment. Brown[10] also believed that personal and psychological characteristics could not be significantly impacted by the marketer without specifically designed approaches [10]. We can, no doubt, live with the 'black box' mystery [42], however psychology is saying more about the way people think and act.

Cooper and Hawkins [14] developed a consumer choice task that conforms to Systems Factorial Technology (SFT) requirements. Systems Factorial Technology (SFT) seeks to uncover the mental architectures that generate decisions. By discriminating between mental architectures, we can identify classes of decision strategies. Cooper and Hawkins [14] found that the majority of consumers make decisions before processing all the available product information. Consumers tend to acquire statistically accessible quality information in series and graphically accessible information in similar. Extending Systems Factorial Technology (SFT) outside its class area of application in perceptual processing, offers a moderately simple method for examining customer decision mechanisms and strategies. The implications of Cooper and Hawkins' [14] findings will be discussed separately. Suffice it to say, the lack of clarity concerning people's decisions emphasises the difficulty for marketers to be sure of the validity of their surmises concerning consumer thinking. Examining case studies in business-to-business marketing research, Beverland and Lindgreen[6]note that researchers have employed case studies as flexible ways to study complications in industrial markets from a positivist point of view. To apply these findings to consumer thinking, one point stands out: case studies should reflect varying interpretations of marketing theory and the theory of consumer responses, and they should offer accurate, not idealised observations, a priori generalisation about the nature of marketing [6].

Harrison and Reilly [25] took case studies as a methodology further through their examination of mixed method designs that differ from narrow studies and achieve more credibility in marketing research. Quantitative research emphasises the relationship among variables, and questions of 'who, where how many, and how much'. In contrast, qualitative research answers the questions of 'why and how', aiming to understand the meaning of individual and group experiences [25]. Mixed method research has the potential to offset weaknesses in quantitative and qualitative research, and avoid situations where either a positivist or an interpretivist frame is imposed on data [25]. Following Wicker's [56] review article and his conclusion that attitudes perhaps do not foresee behaviour, social anthropologists have needed to advance the prognostic influence of attitudes. Wicker's [56] review provides evidence to support the postulated existence of steady, fundamental behaviours in consumers that impact their facial and verbal expressions and behaviours. In recent years, researchers have attempted to advance unified models of behaviour that include social norms or intentions, and the Theories of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour [2].

In 2015, Badgaiyan and Verma [4] evaluated the impact of situational factors on psychological behaviours that drive consumer buying habits. In all nine situational variables for the concepts 'urge to buy impulsively' and 'impulsive buying behaviour' were identified in the following categories: five personal factors such as time, cash, savings, family and credit card use; and four in-store factors including customer-friendly environment, responsive sales staff, store promotion, and store music. Data were collected from 508 customers visiting a mall and investigated with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Twenty-three propositions were observed, and thirteen were supported [4]. Gender and store music did not impact impulse buying behaviour, and age was inversely related to impulse buying, but other variables significantly affected. With particular reference to the Indian market, family members positively influenced purchasing outcomes. These findings provided useful insights for theorists and marketers alike.

Marketing is a practical field and its success directly relates to sales. Therefore, marketers must ensure that staff concentrate on the most effective promotion messages for their product or service. Bray [9] agreed that consumer behaviour is influenced by a wide range of factors. The concept that consumer behaviour and consumer decisions are influenced by marketing has been discussed since the 1950s [1]. Pachauri [38] sees consumer behaviour emerging as a distinct field in the 1960s in the positivist paradigm, including behavioural, intellectual, economic, motivational and situational views. In the positive paradigm, there is an objective reality that can be exposed by science, and the world is rational, ordered and has a past, present and future [38]. From the 1980s, post-positivism developed in a paradigm that accepted the symbolic and subjective experience, where customers construct meanings were based on shared exclusive social knowledge [53]. There may be considerable value in embarking on the study of marketing and consumer

thinking without a definite framework or substantial knowledge[1]. Particularly since the tech age and the explosion of marketing information around consumer behaviour, reactions and attitudes [1](Bay, 2008). Nonetheless, technology has brought with it a new level of complexity.

Victor et al. [54], discussed enabling online retailers to make simultaneous price variations of high scale and proximity but noted that it is still necessary to consider consumer behaviour as soon as it is evident to active pricing situations. This research investigated the factors that influence consumer buying behaviour when it comes to online buying decisions. The researchers surveyed 178 consumers in India to identify, measure and classify twenty-seven research items into seven factors. These factors were used to identify customer awareness of dynamic pricing in a shopping experience where private concerns, buying strategies and fair price perceptions occur with general intentions and self-protection intentions [54]. Furthermore, these factors significantly influenced customer behaviour and perspective buying decisions[28]. Considering the high growth trajectory, the authors noted that it is vital to understand consumer behaviour and consumer reaction to dynamic pricing, and to address concerns for privacy concerns[1]. It is vital for consumers to realise that online pricing is not necessarily deceitful. This can only be achieved through increased awareness of the positive aspects of dynamic process pricing that will help consumers to see this as a win-win solution for buyers and sellers. This kind of awareness may successfully respond to attitudes of reprisal, and encourage safety procedures, such as avoiding certain online channels or the spreading adverse comments. Misplaced attitudes are not only detrimental to the brand, but they can also impact the general effectiveness of the medium [1][38]. This kind of writing by Victor et al. [54] is in response to recently emergent online dynamic pricing. It is not the kind of approach in Ramya and Ali [42], where the marketer goes out into the world equipped with a number of priority concepts which are to fit into a preconceived program of factors in consumer attitudes and prospective behaviour[1][46]. Rather, to observe reasonably large number of outside factors[47], and as this article has done narrow them down to a rational, viable program of action--this is an ad hoc method which, though no doubt it will be successful, need not be locked into a taxonomy of results or elevated to the level of a theory.

Customers search for reliable information to evaluate a product or service to determine whether it will meet their requirements. The major focus of marketing and sales companies is how they can boost their buyers' eagerness to purchase. Hervé and Mullet [28] studied the impact of age with a sample of 160 French adults aged between 18 and 90. They noted that factors such as price, durability and suitability influence consumer behaviour when it comes to buying clothes. Their study showed that younger consumers focus on lower prices, middle-aged consumers focus on suitability, while durability was most important for older consumers [28]. The conclusions drawn from this study were limited to price, durability and suitability,

which are only a small selection of the factors intrinsic and extrinsic to the salesperson that effect customers buying decisions. Hervé and Mullet [28] investigated how distinct knowledge was combined to make decisions, but it only allowed up-to six factors to be studied at one time. In practice, marketers, consumers and researchers alike must gain inspiration, understanding and information from both positivist and post-positivist resources [42].

The behavioural decision theory segment of the literature covers a wide range of publications proffering concrete identification of specific factors often stated in an arbitrary manner. One group included choice models, economic psychology, and consumer search strategies [47]. Another group included consumer information processing, with a theoretical base of social and cognitive psychology, and empirical consumer psychology[12]. A third group included postmodernist, post positivist and interpretivist work[36].

4.2 A POST POSITIVIST APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

This paper would not go so far as to agree with Pachauri's [38]view that the evolution from positivist to post-positivist thinking and practice is the key to understanding the development of marketing practice and theory. It was not positivist thinking that flawed the hidebound models of consumer behaviour rather it was flaws in their logical construction. Pachauri's [38]view of these old models has been largely discarded and the succeeding post-positivist trend has enabled deeper insight into a leavening process within the marketing discipline that has coincided with and doubtless been influenced by postmodernism [6][21]. In a move to post positivism on consumer thinking, Pantano[39]conducted an inter-disciplinary study linking marketing and psychology. The study examined consumer perception of Calabrian local products and the influence of the Magna Græcia culture on buying behaviours. The results were used to identify a new model of marketing strategies and territorial communication for regional development. Krotov[32], described current thinking around adopting and diffusing innovations as 'linear and deterministic,' even though future technologies are inherently uncertain. Krotov[32]set out two assumptions in this paper. The first was that a new technological innovation undergoes certain phases in its adoption. The second was that the features of new technology would disable the scopes traditionally appreciated by consumers, many of whom may be incapable of changing from one consumer segment to another [32]. Although it is impractical to make precise judgements about impact of new technologies on existing technologies, Krotov[32] suggests that carefully researched alternative future trajectories might be effective. At this point it seems that post-positivist research will continue [38], and there are indications that critical reasoning may act as an add on.

Goulding [23] demonstrates the value of three methodological perspectives on marketing': grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology in affirming the

validity of a post-positivist view of marketing research. Ethnography is a valid way of understanding the phenomenon of consumer behaviour within marketing [1][18]. By contrast, phenomenology has the advantage of qualitative research and theory based on existed knowledge, around consumption or decision making [12]. Grounded theory might also have a very considerable learning value for those who begin work and research in the marketing field. Grounded theory is envisaged as a prelude to entry into research; where relevant literature is part of an inaugural technique of data collection, analysis and interpretation [23]. As the research process evolves, the student increases in critical knowledge of existing literature, while concentrating on fresh sources and acquiring growing conceptual insight [48]. Whatever reserves of artificial intelligence may in future be drawn upon, research participants who have long been acquainted with the parameters of the marketing world will remain a very valuable resource in the field.

The work of Max Weber (1864-1920) was an early indication of developing post-positivism in the social sciences with the notion of 'understanding' as an allegorical theory[6][23]. His work laid the basis for interpretivist social science, which makes sense of social order. Together with a constructivist approach where social construction of reality is seen not as objective but is collaborative construction of knowledge through values, concepts, beliefs, ethnicity and norms of participants ('actors'). Methodologically this requires a degree of empathy with the actors. It requires a component of reflexivity around the developments through which hypotheses are made to constitute social reality [21]. These elements were extremely influential in developing social science research in the 20th century, as well as activities with symbolic interactionism, social constructionism, and feminist and postmodern approaches in the social sciences [6][21]. Of all these approaches, the numerous, constructed characters of the social world pressure the need for reflexivity as fundamental to research and social engagement. In the mid-20th century, a post-positive approach was linked to phenomenology. Kuhn's philosophy of social science acknowledged the production of scientific knowledge in both the natural and social sciences [6]. From phenomenology emerged an agenda for social study where knowledge and social realism not only developed from specific rationalisations, but they connected constructively and collaboratively among subjects (Alfred Schutz (1899-1959)). Therefore, the social production of knowledge should be the object of study, along with the consequent social distribution of knowledge [21].

Fox [21] summarises his view as follows: a post-positive vision criticises the ontological and epistemic foundations of the theories of knowledge. Rejecting positivist claims to distinguish a sole social reality, and seeing reflection as the only method for realism, and constructing a vision that recognises our ability to know the world is controlled by the need for clarification of data by researchers [6]. In this constructivist perspective, the purpose of research is exploratory and transformational [6]. Although this says a great deal about the background to post-

positivism, constructivism does not need to go so far as to question the reality of what is marketed to consumers in society [6]. Rather, in accordance with movements such as feminism—which demands respect for *other* individuals—marketing would benefit from an affirmation that the aim of the discipline is to accept related requirements in the field of social science. It would also benefit from accepting that monetary rewards should be appropriate and in line with social welfare rather than a matter of striking it rich. Above all marketing would benefit from losing the profit-based idea that marketing means showing consumers what to like, in order to appease manufacturers and satisfy sales representatives.

IBM has been working hard on initiatives to involve consumers in assessment and evaluation of products [7]. In addition to benefiting IBM growth, these initiatives have the potential to ensure better distribution of innovative techniques and to highlight consumer satisfaction instead of fighting off constant attacks on consumer bank accounts [7]. We are in an era where those in the field of marketing must recognise the post-positivist aims of understanding and respecting the status and personality of the consumer. Such understanding will fuel the discovery of innovations that actually raise the level of social consumption through education and cultural understanding, in addition to feeding material concerns. Easton [17] criticises the current 'textbook model' of marketing knowledge, as generally prescriptive, based on fast-moving consumer goods, and western economies. According to Easton [17], little effort has been made to develop contingent variables with theoretical or empirical support. The result, in the process of teaching marketing, has been to proceed on the basis of certain assumptions rather than question the reasons for such arrangements of knowledge. A critical realist perspective could lead to questioning the nature of marketing phenomena and a more flexible and open approach to the realities of marketing [17].

4. DISCUSSION

Erasmus [18] pointed out that the discipline of consumer behaviour originated in the 1960s. Based on economic theory, it was often asserted that customers act realistically to achieve maximum gratification in obtaining goods and services. Nonetheless, over time, evidence has shown that customer decision-making is multifaceted and cannot be generalised over a range of consumer goods [1][18]. Despite this knowledge, the same old consumer decision models and theories of the 1960s continued in vogue. The lesson is, 'traditional models should not be the norm to organising research and interpret research findings [18]'.

Firat [20] argued that a scientific orientation to understanding consumer behaviour and marketing more broadly, requires that all possible variables are not constants or givens. It cannot be assumed that the parameters of study now will not change in the future—even if they were accurately described to begin with. The choice of only one product or only one brand, or a combination of product and brand, implies a certain

bias that may affect the results of a study and imply adherence to a particular ideology. To claim that a particular aspect in marketing is a 'need' similarly implies a possible bias, because needs and perceptions of needs must change [1][18]. When consumers are powerless or limited to choices such as brands, consumption patterns that they don't understand, or the marketing system with its technological and managerial orientation, we see the continuation of the potential connection found in the capitalist economies today [18][20]. This issue demands further research into the macro-societal conditions that relate to demand and supply and satisfy consumer needs. Moulding and changing variables will direct us to better understand scientific marketing and consumer behaviour disciplines [20].

A rationale for using specific shopping scripts. A script [19] can offer useful insights into consumer behaviour. It has the advantage of containing a sequence of events from the point of view of the consumer, and it could link expectations with proactive planning as well as situational decision-making. Shopping scripts could contribute to ongoing theory in consumer buyer behaviour, and current haphazard assistance to consumers could be directed more effectively [19].

Subjective consumer knowledge. Sangwan et al. [44] found that consumers in India tend to be vocal about their searches for product information and share their experiences and recommendations with one another. The authors noted that consumers with high confidence in social outcome and higher subjective knowledge perception are likely to share information with peers. Online marketers can assign such consumers increasingly effective roles as influencers and experts in online communities. In particular, sharing the latest information with high confidence consumers before a formal product launch can enhance their pride and intention to share such subjective knowledge [44]. Stewart [49] showed that despite the expansion of approaches to consumer behaviour in recent years, research has focussed on a narrow range of phenomena. Some approaches tend to further fragment the field of consumer research. When the choice of theories, concepts and methods are narrow, the general field of consumer behaviour remains elusive. Stewart [49] noted one particular gap: the absence of longitudinal studies on consumer decision making, almost never begin with a naïve consumer. We tend to study consumers who have a very long history, so we are looking at a well-developed processes rather than developmental ones. This approach introduces significant biases into our way of thinking about consumer decision making. Therefore, Stewart [49] recommended that we look more broadly at this area to avoid simplification of the consumer's cognitive decision process [49].

5. FINDINGS

This review of the literature revealed the following results:

- (1) **Proposition:** From the 1960s [18], marketing models containing positivist statements were constructed and gained currency, but they were increasingly criticised, because they were based on untested assumptions [53]. There was a movement from positivism to post-positivist interpretivism.

Finding: Marketing models ostensibly based on positivist statements and untested assumptions were constructed from the 1960s and gained currency to the present. From the 1980s, post-positivist interpretivism became popular and contributed to many imaginative marketing procedures that were more relatable to consumers.

- (2) **Proposition:** From the 1980s, under postmodernism [45], the early rigid conceptions of marketing became obsolescent. This was noted in the '4 Ps' and textbook prescriptions of marketing activity within a legacy of semantic taxonomy. The subjective experience of consumers, the reasons for their decisions and the need for their trust became a clear focus for ongoing marketing studies [34].

Finding: Marketers originally viewed consumers as a business target. There was a movement from utilitarianism to symbolic sociocultural perspectives and a mutual marketer-consumer relationship. Overall consumer feedback and dialogue were emphasized.

- (3) **Proposition:** From the late 1990s [45] to the early years of the present century, the aim of finding factors that influence consumer behaviour were seen as a way to build a database of semantic knowledge [57]. Nowadays, identifying factors in consumer behaviour has become a part of a methodology aimed at improving marketing research and practitioner education, and finding precise theoretical solutions to problems [57].

Finding: Academic research has increasingly challenged inadequate theories and applied scientific research methods. So far there is no universal marketing theory for consumer behaviour, but questions on consumer behaviour are routinely researched in the context of improved theory, experimental results and accumulated evidence.

- (4) **Proposition:** At first marketers viewed the consumer as a business target, but gradually consumer feedback and dialogue were emphasized [24]. There was a movement from utilitarianism to symbolic sociocultural perspectives, and a mutual marketer-consumer relationship [30].

Finding: This paper has shown that rigid conceptions of marketing without scientific basis are obsolete. The subjective experience of consumers, the reasons for their decisions and the need for their trust has become a clear focus

for ongoing marketing studies. Consumers themselves can have a say in their relationship with marketers and their own representatives.

- (5) **Proposition:** Marketing was increasingly influenced by academic research, based on marketing as a social science [51]. By the turn of the century, factors influencing consumer behaviour were intensively researched in a context of improved theory, experimental results and accumulated evidence [57].

Finding: Researching specific factors of consumer behaviour can build knowledge of marketing and disciplines such as psychology. Identification of such factors and their context also contributes to marketing theory. In current theory and practice, identifying specific questions and finding answers are part of a methodology aimed at improving marketing research and practitioner education, rather than semantic database building.

- (6) **Proposition:** A dialogue and collaborative relationship between companies and consumers has been initiated by IBM [5]. This may signify an active future for innovation in marketing.

Finding: IBM's innovative process of dialogue and their collaborative relationship between companies and consumers is particularly impressive as a low-key approach that has been extensively researched. While these initiatives are in IBM's best interest, they also address broad social and economic aims.

6. CONCLUSION

Those of us working in marketing require usable strategic aims. However, at present there is enormous stress on conclusions made from the analysis of social media material, and as such marketing is set to change in unexpected ways. We have already witnessed the unexpected tendencies that came with the advent of the Internet. Indeed, following developments in marketing not only helps us to understand history, but it enables the extrapolation of new tendencies. In this research paper, the lesson is to work beyond the "traditional models" in conducting research for future study. Researchers should look more broadly at this area to avoid simplification of the consumer's cognitive decision process. A well-developed scientific enquiry to study the macro-societal structures rather than developmental ones will direct us to better understand scientific marketing and consumer behaviour disciplines. Shopping scripts can offer useful insights and contribute more effectively to ongoing theory in consumer buyer behaviour.

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