



# The past and future of marketing theory and practice: a tribute to the 50th anniversary of the Academy of Marketing Science

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This special issue celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) and also marks the 10-year anniversary of the *AMS Review*. This anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on the historical progress of the AMS and the marketing discipline. Since its inception in 1971, the AMS has been a society that bridges marketing theory and practice. In fact, the Founding Fellow of the AMS, Harold Berkman, believed its goal was to link the marketing discipline and practitioners. Through its conferences and journals, the AMS has continued to achieve this goal. The *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)* and the *AMS Review* provide outlets for marketing theory that is relevant to scholars and practitioners.

*JAMS* is on the *Financial Times* Top 50 list of elite business journals and continues to be among the highest citation indexes of journals for both marketing and business. *JAMS* is devoted to the advancement of marketing and has the objective of focusing on research that provides a connection between research and practice. *JAMS* is targeting the highest quality research in the substantive domain of marketing. It is considered an ‘elite’ or ‘A level’ publication at most universities.

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Since this is the 10-year anniversary of the *AMS Review*, it is important to celebrate the success of this AMS journal. The *AMS Review* was launched in 2011. Starting a new journal is difficult, but the positioning of the journal sought to address a neglected area of marketing scholarship. As marketing journals become even more empirically driven, there appeared to be a need for an outlet to encourage conceptual/theoretical work in the field. Marketing theory courses have been vanishing from Ph.D. programs to make room for more coursework focusing on methodology. While the lack of theory development was being discussed by leading scholars, AMS decided to address this challenge by providing a visible and well-supported journal to showcase the theoretical foundations of marketing. As mentioned, AMS was founded to bridge the academic and practitioner worlds. This opportunity was discussed by the AMS Executive Council and Board of Governors and approved. It was hoped that the *AMS Review* could play the same role as the *Academy of Management Review (AMR)* for the Academy of Management. The Academy of Management investment into *AMR* took a significant amount of time and effort, but it ultimately created that top-level outlet for theory research and supported expanded theory development in management. To take on the leadership role in launching the *AMS Review*, potential editors were considered, and Vicky Crittenden and Bob Peterson were selected. Peterson had experience as an editor of the *Journal of Marketing Research* and *JAMS*. They faced an incredible challenge in creating awareness of the journal and attracting/mentoring high-quality publications. The backing by AMS was critical, as was the support of our publisher, Springer Nature. When asked about starting the journal, Crittenden said:

“This was one of biggest challenges I have faced as an academic. I knew the pressure was on Bob and me to lay the foundation for a successful journal launch. Working with such an esteemed colleague as Bob Peterson was intimidating in and of itself, knowing the AMS and broader marketing community of schol-

ars had their eyes on this launch made it all the more daunting. Bob and I worked hard to lay the groundwork for the success of the *AMS Review*, and we are forever appreciative of our esteemed colleagues who embarked on this theory development journey with us by contributing their theoretical thinking that enabled us to build strong Tables of Content for the early issues.”

They launched the journal with top scholars providing quality articles through the promotion of the journal at conferences and through social media and digital marketing.

Manjit Yadav served as Editor of *AMS Review* from 2014 to 2019. He is a leading scholar in advocating for articles on theory development and for the teaching of marketing theory in doctoral programs. In fact, he received the Shelby D. Hunt/Harold H. Maynard Award for his article, “The Decline of Conceptual Articles and Implications for Knowledge Development” in the *Journal of Marketing* in 2010. During his term as Editor, *AMS Review* was positioned as the premier marketing journal focusing on theoretical and/or conceptual articles. He worked diligently to position the journal for being indexed by SCOPUS. Manjit Yadav shared his thoughts on this editorship:

“Serving as Editor of *AMS Review* (*AMSR*) has been one of the most rewarding professional experiences of my academic career. Prior to starting my work at *AMSR*, I believed very strongly that our discipline needs a journal that is dedicated exclusively to theory development. During my term as Editor, this view was further reinforced. I also learned that this view is shared by a broad spectrum of marketing scholars all over the world. Despite the challenges involved in the development of high-quality theoretical contributions, I found a very supportive group of scholars who contributed generously to the mission of *AMSR*. As I reflect on my term as Editor, the generosity of these scholars makes me very optimistic about *AMSR* and its potential impact. The long-term success of *AMSR* will undoubtedly strengthen the marketing discipline.”

In 2019, Steve Vargo became Editor of *AMS Review*. In that year, he was named to the Web of Science Group’s Highly Cited Researchers for the sixth consecutive year. His research focus has been the “Service-Dominant” (S-D) Logic Framework. His current focus is upon advancing manuscripts that extend, compare or critically evaluate theories and suggest new, innovative theories. Comprehensive and integrative synthesis of research literature is encouraged to result in paradigm-shifting manuscripts and contributions. Under his leadership, the number of articles and downloads increased dramatically. Vargo shared his reflections on his time as *AMS Review* Editor:

“When approached about serving as editor of *AMS Review*, I was initially hesitant, since I had never harbored a strong desire to be a journal editor. However, given my previous, strong advocacy for more theory in academic marketing, I felt compelled to accept the position. Fortunately, I was able to convince Kaisa Koskela-Huotari (who had assisted Bob Lusch and me with the publication of an extensive book) to serve as assistant editor—something of a combination managing editor and associate editor. With the pipeline we inherited from Manjit Yadav’s editorship and great support from the academic marketing community, we have consistently been able to meet the goal given to us of 30 or more articles/commentaries per year, while maintaining quality. Both downloads and citations have increased dramatically. Likewise, participation in the *AMS Review*-Sheth Foundation Annual Doctoral Competition for Conceptual Articles (ADCCA) has been increasing with more winning entries eventually being published. Given that this has happened in the context of a pandemic, which has rendered person-to-person promotion of the journal impossible, it is quite gratifying. I think it is testament to the need and desire for more theory building in the marketing discipline.”

This special issue emerged to mark the progress of *AMS Review*’s contributions to marketing knowledge. The Call for Papers expressed concern for considerations for a shift to systematic and holistic perspectives on markets and marketing. Scholars have argued that the discipline is fragmented and has given rise to the need for re-institutionalization (Hunt, 2020). Ferrell (2018) points out the narrowing focus and its related impact on the marketing system (e.g., supply chain management) being taken over by other disciplines. The result has been a call to return to a macro-level perspective and develop an understanding about the systematic nature of value (co)creation through markets (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).

Articles in this special issue address the need for an integrative theory of marketing and re-institutionalization of marketing. Three articles support knowledge development through developing research propositions, methodologies of marketing literature, and how to measure the impact of marketing scholarship. In addition, the history of *AMS* is provided to commemorate 50 years of contributions to the marketing discipline.

In “Advancing Marketing Theory and Practice Guidelines for Crafting Research Propositions,” Wolfgang Ulaga, Michael Kleinaltenkamp, Vishal Kashyap and Andreas Eggert offer an integrative framework that outlines easy steps to guide scholars in developing research propositions. Under the broader goal of advancing marketing theory, this framework connects foundational premises, concepts, constructs,

research propositions, and hypotheses together. The authors believe that the proper development of effective research propositions is a key element in supporting the emergence of homegrown marketing concepts. They suggest researchers often feel uncomfortable writing propositions or lack the knowledge to accomplish the task due to a lack of coverage on the topic. To fill this gap, this paper offers guidelines to help marketing scholars.

First, the article provides a definition for research propositions and positions them within the broader set of the building blocks of theory development. The authors define research propositions as “novel statements specifying relationships between concepts.” Next, the authors discuss the nature of research propositions and provide a visualization to help scholars understand where research propositions are positioned in the theory development framework. Furthermore, the article outlines steps that can be taken (i.e., grounding, crafting, connecting, and simplifying) to write thorough research propositions to advance marketing theory and practice. Four criteria (clarity, consistency, conciseness, and contribution) are proposed to help scholars in evaluating outcomes achieved when writing research propositions. Finally, the article suggests how key stakeholders, such as Ph.D. students and other marketing scholars, can contribute to advancing knowledge and skills in this area.

In “Assessing and Enhancing the Impact Potential of Marketing Articles,” Elina Jaakkola and Stephen L. Vargo address the concern that the impact of marketing is declining by offering a set of criteria for assessing and enhancing the impact potential of marketing articles. The authors suggest there has been a shift from an *impact focus* to a *methods focus* in the discipline as it has matured and standards have increased. The authors propose that the development and institutionalization of a set of criteria for assessing and enhancing an article’s potential impact is a key element in the promotion of more impactful marketing research.

To support this goal, the authors review existing viewpoints on this topic, highlighting three complementary perspectives (i.e., scientific impact, business impact, and societal impact). They define impact as a goal for academic publications. Research impact is defined as “a change that research outcomes produce upon academic activities, the economy, and society at large.” Next, the authors highlight key drivers of impact potential that can inform the development of explicit criteria informed by the analysis of research articles and editorials that focus on impact and relevance, as well as by drawing from the professional experiences of the authors. These drivers are change potential and accessibility (i.e., how a publication’s message is communicated). The article culminates in an integrative set of criteria that can be used to evaluate and enhance the likely impact of articles submitted for publication. The key criteria for change potential are the relevance of change, the magnitude of change,

and the breadth of change while the criteria for accessibility are simplicity, clarity of writing, and actionability of implication. This list, though not exhaustive, serves as a first step toward developing a set of criteria for assessing and enhancing a research publication’s impact potential.

In “The Methodologies of the Marketing Literature: Mechanics, Uses and Craft,” Terry Clark and Thomas Martin Key explore what the literature is, how it is used, and its impact as a foundation for marketing theory and conceptual work. The authors contend that the literature is the least understood mode of development and expression of marketing ideas and theories. The authors provide a framework to help understand how literature functions in the research process and offer insights into how a better, more thorough understanding of the literature can affect the marketing discipline.

First, the authors explore how the literature fits into academic productions, including academic articles and dissertations. The authors suggest there are only three modalities academic disciplines use to develop and present ideas: logic; empirics; and the literature. According to the authors, the literature-based modality makes use of quotations, paraphrases, references, citations, facts, data and other secondary materials found in journals, books, and other sources of academic knowledge, to craft ideas, theories, and arguments. The authors look at the extent of the marketing literature by evaluating estimates for the total number of articles published in marketing journals. Next, the authors discussed the nature and uses of marketing literature, including citation-based reasoning, and the traditional formalized use of citations in academic marketing journals. This leads to a discussion on intertextuality (i.e., the ways articles are interlinked by citation, quotation, and allusion)—an expected and required element in academic writing—and the proliferation of concepts, scales, and measurement in the marketing literature. Finally, the authors discuss the power of the literature by looking at the most-cited marketing articles, most of which are literature-based, theory development efforts.

In “Toward an Integrative Theory of Marketing,” Atul Parvatiyar and Jagdish N. Sheth address the concerns that the marketing discipline is too fragmented and argues that this phenomenon results from the evolving contextual forces that continuously create new perspectives, paradigms, and schools of thought. The authors offer a framework of marketing that could become the basis for developing an integrative theory of marketing with views relating to the core marketing processes and how the changing contextual forces interactively impact these processes.

First, there is a discussion about the contextual forces at play. Four present-day megatrends are highlighted: (1) changing demographics; (2) digital economy; (3) emerging markets; and (4) globalization. Next, the authors explore the evolution of the marketing discipline and how many schools of thought have become either obsolete or absorbed by new

emergent schools of thought. The authors list four newer schools of marketing thought that have emerged in the past 30 years: (1) marketing strategy, (2) services marketing, (3) relationship marketing, and (4) international marketing. Next, the authors highlight a renewed interest in marketing theory development and suggest significant breakthroughs in this arena have been few. The article briefly looks at four notable theoretical perspectives as a foundation for the general theory of marketing before outlining a framework for an integrative theory of marketing. A conceptual framework and subsequent integrative theory would bring together the subdisciplines of marketing, according to the authors. The framework presented considers exogenous forces that shape marketplace behavior and endogenous activities and processes by which marketing creates value. This framework integrates the most dominant marketing thinking in a way that covers the broad discipline of marketing and offers directions and opportunities for future research.

In “Re-Institutionalizing Marketing,” Thomas Martin Key, Terry Clark, O.C. Ferrell, David W. Stewart and Leyland Pitt use a forward-looking context to address and reconcile current issues faced by the marketing discipline, including the fragmentation of marketing research, a focus on methodology rather than core marketing knowledge and theory, and the declining influence of marketing in business. The authors discuss the notion that marketing has been de-institutionalized due to its fragmentation and provide recommendations for addressing this challenge. The authors offer an agenda for change composed of actionable, practical ways to re-institutionalize the marketing discipline.

When considering the current state of marketing, the authors agree with previous literature that doctoral programs are a key component in driving change in future research coming out of the marketing discipline. This lays the foundation for the commentary’s agenda for change. With the field of marketing at a crossroads, the authors offer guidelines that serve as a beginning step in re-institutionalizing marketing. They offer many suggestions related to hiring practices (e.g., hiring marketing professors with marketing doctorates), doctoral programs (e.g., increasing the number of marketing-related seminars), project selection (e.g., selecting adventurous projects rather than “playing it safe”), methods (e.g., supporting diversity of methodologies), oversight by deans (e.g., focusing on impact rather than journal rankings), and discipline focus in the study of marketing (e.g., exploring new ideas). The commentary concludes with a snapshot of topics addressed in marketing. This is the result of a survey of the two leading marketing journals, the *Journal of Marketing* and the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. Most of the recently published articles related to consumer behavior, digital marketing, product, and branding topics, support the notion that consumer behavior has spun off from marketing and has become its own discipline.

The results of this analysis provide food for thought on the current and future state of the discipline.

In “A Bridge to Relevance: On the History of the Academy of Marketing Science,” Barry J. Babin, Julie Guidry Moulard and Jay D. Lindquist chronicle the major milestones of the first fifty years of the Academy of Marketing Science (AMS), as well as what the future holds for the Academy. A special emphasis is placed on the individuals committed to the Academy’s establishment, growth, and continuity—particularly AMS Founding Fellow and Distinguished Professor Harold W. Berkman—and on the Academy and Harold’s commitment that AMS’s journals and conferences offer research of practical relevance.

The article begins with Harold’s founding of AMS while a faculty member at C. W. Post (Long Island University, NY, USA) in 1971 and shortly thereafter the establishment of the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* in 1972. The tenacity and ingenuity of Harold, as well as *JAMS*’ first editor, Jane K. Fenyo, ensured AMS’s and *JAMS*’ survival. The five decades of AMS’s history are then recounted. Noteworthy events during the 1970s were AMS’s first Annual Conference in Akron, Ohio, in 1977, the adoption of the association’s Articles and Bylaws in 1979, and its first elected president, Ivan Vernon. The 1980s were a period of growth and internationalization for AMS. In 1983, the first World Marketing Congress (WMC) was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and a branding initiative established AMS’s and *JAMS*’s official color—international burgundy. The stature of AMS and *JAMS* within the discipline began to gain prominence with the appointment of Bill Darden as editor in 1988 and with the establishment of the AMS Distinguished Marketer Award in 1987, presented to Shelby Hunt. AMS’s reputation and internationalization further increased during the 1990s. *JAMS*’s upward trajectory was largely due to key editorial appointments, such as Bob Peterson and Parsu Parasuraman, as well as the creation of the Jagdish N. Sheth Award for the best *JAMS* article of the previous year in 1992. WMC continued in locations such as Istanbul, Turkey and Melbourne, Australia. By the 2000s, AMS’s global reach became apparent with half of its 1500 Fellows (members) residing outside of North America. Further, the decision to hold the WMC annually (rather than biannually) further solidified AMS’s international presence. In the 2010s, *JAMS* was named to the *Financial Times*’ “FT-50” list of top business journals (2018). Importantly, AMS filled a critical gap in the field by establishing *AMS Review* in 2011. AMS conferences also reached 500 attendees. In the 2020s, AMS held its first two virtual conferences due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, with O.C. Ferrell’s guidance, created the AMS Code of Publishing Ethics. Sadly, on December 7, 2020, AMS’s founder Harold Berkman passed away at 94. In AMS’s 50th year (2021), Barry J. Babin was named AMS’s Executive Director to lead AMS into its next half century.

In conclusion, we end with some comments from AMS's first President, Robin Peterson, in the first AMS Newsletter dated September 1978. Robin noted that "At the May Conference, many of the attendees mentioned two points: (1) 'From a professional standpoint this organization strives for the highest quality level' and (2) 'from a personal standpoint, this is a very friendly unaffected group.' Let's take steps to ensure that we maintain these assets." Over the past 50 years this tradition has been supported and enhanced by so many contributing Fellows who assumed leadership roles and advanced Harold Berkman's vision of what AMS could be.

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