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# Review

## Eclecticism of Marketing: Strength or Weakness?

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## Eclecticism of Marketing: Strength or Weakness?

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### Abstract

Marketing has evolved and emerged as a distinctive field of professional endeavor. Although there has been a considerable growth in its thoughts and theories, it still suffers from a lack of theoretical maturity. Scholars argue that as a young discipline there is still room for future exploration between its theory and practice. In an effort to expand the works of previous theorists and historians, this paper sets out to deepen the epistemology of marketing genealogy. Specifically, the paper offers clearer insights on the multidisciplinary nature of marketing, assesses whether this approach strengthens or weakens the influence of marketing as a field of knowledge, and finally explores the affiliate disciplines that dominate in marketing research studies at the moment. Using a broad review of the literature in the form of a historical survey, we traced cross-disciplinary exchanges of principles, concepts, and theories. The paper argues that the body of knowledge known as marketing evolved and emerged from different but interrelated fields. And it is this eclectic approach that strengthens the foundation of marketing as a social, behavioral, and managerial field. This paper, therefore, offers strong educational values to inform teaching, enrich, acquaint, and/or update marketing students, theorists, and historians, and serve as a springboard for future debate.

**Keywords:** Marketing; Multidisciplinary nature of marketing; Eclectic nature of marketing; Marketing thought and theory; Marketing history.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a relatively new discipline that has evolved and emerged as a separate field of professional endeavor. It was initially touted to be primarily concerned with the exchange of goods and services (i.e., buying and selling), distribution, and advertising (Bagozzi, 1975; Kotler, 1972; Alderson and Miles, 1965; Hunt, 1991). However, overtime, practice and theories have spanned and broadened its conceptualization and operationalization. Although there has been a considerable growth in its thoughts and theories, it still suffers from the lack of theoretical advancement. And for a young discipline, the relationship between theory and practice must be especially important (O'Driscoll and Murray, 1998). O'Driscoll and Murray (1998) argue that "any academic discipline with a closely associated area of professional endeavour is profoundly affected by the relationship between its theory and practice" (p. 391). In the case of marketing, one of the rare areas that have failed to generate extensive theoretical debate is its multidisciplinary nature. As an emerging discipline, it has undoubtedly borrowed and adapted concepts, theories, and principles from different disciplines to explain or elaborate situations, guide decisions, and inform practices. O'Driscoll and Murray (1998) contend that "marketing has always been a borrowing discipline, particularly from economics and from the behavioural sciences. Borrowing continues and, in some areas, is needed if markets and marketing are to be adequately explained and managed" (p. 406). Baker (2008) is of the view that most of the disciplines that marketing is founded on are all theoretically acceptable based on their own rights.

Nevertheless, previous studies have been unable to offer clear insights on the interdisciplinary nature of marketing and disciplines that have helped in developing the body of knowledge known as marketing.

Most of the studies that attempted to address this gap succinctly identified economics, psychology, and sociology (see, e.g., Sheth and Gardner, 1982; Bartels, 1962, 1965; Shaw, 2009). We believe that there are more disciplines that have not been given the needed credit for their contributions to the field of marketing. Moreover, marketing is a dynamic field and as such, there is a need to continually reappraise and revise its ideas (Baker, 2008), including its theoretical standpoints. We argue that the appropriateness of marketing texts in this area of research is very shallow; a few of them that covered this area failed to give a clear picture of the concepts and theories that have been borrowed and adapted from other fields. We lay this blame squarely at the feet of marketing historians; their inability to have a consented view on the development of marketing thoughts and theories has provoked disjointed opinions on how marketing evolved (see, e.g., Ogba, 2012; Brownlie *et al.*, 2008). Accordingly, they have failed to deepen understanding on disciplines that have contributed to the theoretical advancement of the marketing body of knowledge. This flaw in marketing inquiry has made it quite vulnerable to the degrading influences of other fields (Holbrook, 2005). Therefore, this underlines the urgency of this paper, not just for theorists, but for marketing students. Brownlie *et al.* (2008) echoed that “students are the conduit of this knowledge to the real world, and are taught by academics who share their research and research articles with the students in the course of their teachings” (p. 466). The argument put forward by Ghoshal (2005) seems to suggest that if scholars fail to truly seek and understand this knowledge gap in a time frame that will help them to prepare marketing students better [...], the gap between learning and textbooks will become unbearable.

This paper, therefore, explores the multidisciplinary nature of marketing, and how it has borrowed and adapted concepts, principles, and theories from other academic fields to build and develop its knowledge base. In addition, the paper aims to find out if the eclecticism approach degrades the influence of the marketing field or strengthens it and, finally, to find out the discipline among the affiliate fields that dominates in marketing research studies. We do not aim to take an omniscient stand in this discourse; rather, the paper reflects our discoveries, interests, and concerns. We expand this understanding, anchoring all debate on consumer behavior. This is because all marketing activities are centered on consumers (Kotler and Armstrong, 2009; Jones and Monieson, 1990). “Consumer behaviour is seen not only as an instrument of the marketing manager, but as a legitimate exploration into the nature of consumption and society” (O’Driscoll and Murray, 1998, p. 398). Therefore, all thoughts and decisions should be centered on consumers, and incorporating concepts, theories, and principles from other disciplines into the marketing domain should be done to gain better insight and advance understanding on how consumers behave in the marketplace. The following headings highlight different disciplinary perspectives and their period of integration in marketing studies.

## 2. IN THE BEGINNING: THE EARLIEST “BIRDS” IN MARKETING THOUGHTS AND THEORIES

Economics, philosophy, and psychology are among the earliest disciplines that contributed to the theoretical advancement of marketing knowledge. Sheth and Gardner (1982) posit that “the first axiom of consensus stemmed from the belief that marketing was essentially an economic activity, and that it was a subset of the discipline of economics...” (p. 52). They also acknowledged that “psychology has brought a more scientific bend to marketing theory and practice through the process of borrowing both theory and research methodology...” (p. 55).

### 2.1. Economical Perspective

In terms of economics, the most recurrent borrowed concepts are the “needs and wants” and “utility and rationality” theories. Human needs are explained as a state of deprivation, while wants express the vehicle through which the needs are met (Kotler and Armstrong, 2009). So part of the marketing activity is to identify and anticipate these needs and engineer their solutions. The needs and wants concepts reflect the micro definition of marketing put forward by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) as a process of identifying and anticipating a consumer’s needs [...] (CIM, 2009), and a macro definition identified as an economic and social process through which societal needs are met [...] (Busch and Houston, 1985). The type of utility

supposedly created (by marketing) is an expressed view of economics discipline (Kotler and Armstrong, 2009). Bartels (1965) explained that utility creation is a common treaty in the economics field. In this regard, time and place utilities have been expressed as types of economic value and were later supplemented by two more utilities: form and possession utilities (Bartels, 1965).

Relevant to the marketing field of knowledge are the opportunity cost concept, theory of supply and demand, price theory, theory of the firm and resource-based view, market structure, etc. The opportunity cost concept has been used to explain the rationality theory. This concept gives marketing organizations insight on how consumers [rationally] prioritize and disburse their funds, evaluate alternatives, and make decisions to maximize benefits. This assertion underpins the theory of reasoned action (TRA) used in social psychology to explore consumer behavior. Furthermore, the theory of supply and demand explains how organizations can protect their assets, and how managerial actions can help to create barriers to imitation (Peteraf, 1993). The price concept that is primarily seen as the economic value of a product and quantified in monetary terms has evolved in the marketing discipline to mean more than just a monetary tag given to a product. Marketing research studies have also increased in the area of organizational marketing structures (Murray and O'Driscoll, 1996, 1997), the resource-based theory (Coase, 1937), and transaction costs (Williamson, 1985). These areas shed light on how resources are allocated within a marketing organization and across organizational portfolios. They have also provided the much needed theoretical platform for scholarly research on internal marketing processes, marketing competence, and the manner in which marketing organizations deploy resources to gain a competitive edge.

## 2.2. Philosophical Perspective

The general idea about philosophy is to understand fundamental problems of man. Thus, it questions and aims to find answers on issues concerning the nature of existence, knowledge, truth, reason, values, morality, etc. (Teichman and Evans, 1999; Grayling, 1998). Before specialization, other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and economics were all unified subjects under philosophy (Shapin, 1998). Irrespective of their current separation as professional fields, some key philosophical notions are still rooted in these fields. A particular interest in the diverse nature of philosophy and marketing is rooted in the phenomenology subfield of philosophy. This subfield "represents the interpretative study of human experiences" (Rodrigues, Correia, and Kozak, 2011, p. 103). That is to say, human beings interpret their experiences just the way they perceive it. It is therefore not surprising that concepts such as perception, image, customers' experience, values, and ethics have all been approached from a philosophical standpoint.

## 2.3. Psychological Perspective

Psychology remains a forerunner in the marketing field. It has been of immense contribution to the marketing body of knowledge more than any discipline, including economics. In fact, most of the theories and concepts in consumer behavior research studies are rooted in psychology. As noted earlier, "it has brought a more scientific bend to marketing theory and practice through the process of borrowing both theory and research methodology ..." (Sheth and Gardner, 1982, p. 55). This is not unwarranted because psychology deals extensively with human minds and behavior, as well as the feelings and thoughts underlying man's consciousness and subconsciousness (Fernald, 2008; Soon *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, as marketing activities are centered on consumers, it suits to expect the relevance of psychology in understanding consumer behavior. Among the relevant areas, the three subfields of psychology—the behavioral, social, and cognitive psychologies—have all dominated marketing thoughts and theories. The sociopsychology, which is an amalgamation of sociology and psychology (see, e.g., Kruglanski and Van Lange, 2012; Klemke, Hollinger, and Kline, 1980) exemplifies how a consumer operates within a group, and how the group interacts to influence such a consumer's covert (like thinking) and overt behavior. The cognitive psychology taps from both the rationality theory in economics and the philosophical reasoning in the philosophy discipline to explain how a consumer operates within a logical structure to process information and make decisions based on that (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). On its own part, the behavioral subfield deals with interactions in a natural setting (such as in a market place). It uses a systematic approach to investigate consumer behavior with detailed focus from the past, present, and controlled natural settings (see, e.g., Klemke *et al.*, 1980).

A summary report of a few psychological theories that have helped to reshape and advance marketing thoughts and theories are the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) and the

heuristic-system model (HSM) propounded by Chaiken (1980). Both models have been used by marketing scholars to examine and explain how consumers process a variety of persuasive messages and how the messages influence their attitude in online and offline settings (see, e.g., Chan and Ngai, 2011; Cheung *et al.*, 2009; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). TRA (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and its successor, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991), are other theories relevant in consumer behavior research in marketing. TRA is used to gain deeper insight on the relationship between a customer's attitude and their behavior. It is used as a predictor of customers' behavior in a variety of situations, and it fundamentally draws on customers' preexisting attitude to predict future behavior, which may be actual behavior or behavioral intention (Alsaggaf and Althonayan, 2018). Just as TRA draws on consumers' attitudes and subjective norms to predict behavior and intentions, the TPB describes how behavior is formed. Citing Ajzen (1991), Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) posit that TPB models "one's attitude towards a behaviour, coupled with prevailing subjective norms, and with perceptions of behavioural control factors, all serve to influence an individual's intention to perform a given behaviour" (p. 595). This means that TRA and TPB are both useful in modeling behavioral antecedents, and it has been employed to explore behavior in different settings such as smoking (Babrow *et al.*, 1990), ethics (Flannery and May, 2000), online activity (Izogo and Jayawardhena, 2018), and e-WOM (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012).

Other psychological theories include the user gratification theory (UGT) used to examine why and how customers select different media to fulfill (satisfy) specific needs (Katz, 1959; Abrantes *et al.*, 2013), the attribution theory (Heider, 1958) used to assess whether or not a consumer will adopt a behavior or cause of action based on casual influences or benefits sought after (Chan and Ngai, 2011; Saunderson, 2010; Folkes, 1988), and finally the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory used to model how environmental (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) and non-environmental (Wu and Li, 2018; Izogo *et al.*, 2017; Kim and Lennon, 2013) psychological shopping factors (known as stimulus) affect consumers (known as organism), which in turn result in some sort of behavior (known as response) toward the service provider. These theories and many more have been extensively applied by marketing scholars to gain deeper insights on consumer behavior.

### 3. CONCEPTUALIZING THE LATTER BIRDS IN MARKETING THOUGHTS AND THEORIES

Among the latter disciplines that have helped in deepening the understanding of marketing thoughts and theories are sociology and anthropology, cultural anthropology, management, mathematics, and statistics.

#### 3.1. Sociological and Anthropological Perspective

Although it is arguable that sociology should be among the earliest birds, its importance at the time was only relevant in sociopsychology-related models. It was not until the paradigm shift to the relationship marketing (RM) era in the late 70s to early 80s that its relevance and urgency were announced in advancing marketing thoughts. Subsequent redefinition of marketing around relationships, and the aspect of meeting societal needs were noted within this era. As a discipline, sociology uses scientific means to study the society: its patterns of social relationships, interactions, and cultural makeup (Ashley and Orenstein, 2005). In this regard, it develops a body of knowledge that explains social order/disorder, acceptance, and changes. Thus, it shapes the application of social reforms, policies, and welfare (Giddens *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, as man (i.e., consumers) and the society are beneficiaries of marketing activities (CIM, 2009; Busch and Houston, 1985), it seems plausible to expect that the field of sociology will help advance understanding on the interacting components of society: how they relate with one another and how a relating unit makes decisions based on the influence of other units.

It is imperative to note that some theories and concepts identified in fields, such as psychology, cultural anthropology, and economics, are phenomenal to sociology (Klemke *et al.*, 1980). As noted earlier, the amalgamation of sociology and psychology into sociopsychology underscores the study of a consumer's behavior in a social network (Kruglanski and Van Lange, 2012), which in recent times has become a pronounced area of research in marketing. Consequently, in essence, the knowledge of sociology provides strong theoretical basis for exploring key consumer behaviors in marketing research. For instance, the social network paradigm that fundamentally outlines and examines how a consumer relates, connects, and is structured in a social relationship (Chan and Ngai, 2011; Granovetter, 1976) has been used to expand the RM theory.



The social exchange theory (SET) put forward by Homans (1958, 1961) has been helpful in understanding the social behavior of humans in economic undertakings, and how relationships evolve and develop when mutual benefits are met (Lee *et al.*, 2010; Blau, 1964). Therefore, social knowledge has advanced understanding on why and how a consumer makes decisions based on peer pressure, how children use the “pestering” behavior to influence their parents’ decisions (i.e., family buying decision), and how social status or class can influence some types of behavior (Vergara, 2013)—this also explains the power politics theory also known as the political elites or power elite theory (French and Raven, 1959). Other key concepts in sociology that are grounded in marketing research include ethnography, participant observation (Tadajewski, 2014), and netnography—useful in studying both the interaction and experience that occur in an online setting and the influence of policies on market-driven actions (Kozinets, 2002).

### **3.2. Cultural Anthropological Perspective**

Culture has received marketing attention due to the intrinsic nature of consumer behavior. As a discipline, culture is deeply rooted in beliefs, norms, customs, and values. Hence, it aims to explain people’s way of living, and how it affects their decisions and experiences (Ingold, 1994). More often than not, these beliefs are handed down from one generation to another. Therefore, cultural anthropology helps people to comprehend the world around them. This perspective becomes quite useful in explaining attitude and behavioral models in socio and behavioral psychology. It also helps to provide answers to some fundamental questions in the marketplace, such as customers’ preferences, tastes, acceptance, or rejection of a product, as well as how purchase and consumption-related behaviors are modulated.

### **3.3. Managerial Perspective**

This field is interested in how organizational resources are deployed to achieve corporate goals or objectives (Stoner, 1995). The core center of management is rooted in the six management functions: planning, directing, commanding, coordinating, controlling, and organizing. These management functions have been incorporated into marketing studies and practice (Jones and Monieson, 1990). Although these functions apply in all marketing resource control areas, the dominating area where it is used is in actualizing the agenda of the marketing mix concept. This has necessitated the study of marketing management as a separate module in marketing (see Kotler and Armstrong, 2009). Bartels (1965) explains that [...] marketing management is not just seen as an area of decision making, but also as a general management and as a coordinative management task [...]. Ogba (2012) argues that the major task of marketing management is to utilize the elements of the marketing mix in a balanced combination, such that it can help an organization to “actualize its intentions which may include profit making, market expansion, customer retention, or even intention to control the market and outperform competitors” (p. 13).

### **3.4. Mathematical, Statistical, and Research Methodological Perspective**

We took the liberty of discussing these three areas under the same heading because they quite relate to and complement one another. The marketing discipline overtime introduced the scientific approach as found in other scientific studies in exploring knowledge and expanding theories. Bartels’ (1965) study of “Development of marketing thoughts” outlined that scientific inquiry has always been part of marketing, but unlike in recent times, results have always been the focal point, while methodology has been undermined. Bartels noted that this was essentially due to the fact that scholars were in a hurry to develop the marketing field because of the increased pace of market expansion, the cyclical economic fluctuations, and the effect of the post-world war adjustment. In recent times, the complexities associated with the marketing environment, sophisticated nature of consumers’ tastes, as well as constant changes in technology and innovation have necessitated the need to employ a rigorous methodological process of inquiry in finding solutions to marketing problems. Peter (1981) is of the opinion that scholars who seek to develop constructs have to borrow from other constructs and theories relating to them [...], especially formally tested scientific theories, because “such theories cannot develop unless there is a high degree of correspondence between abstract constructs and the procedures used to operationalise them” (p. 133). Hence, there is a need to employ the methodological process of inquiry. The application of the “tenets of anthropology, sociology and psychology to the research needs of business” (Tadajewski, 2014, p. 311) is most useful in this regard. This has necessitated the emergence of the Marketing Research subfield, which uses social and behavioral science

methodology in undertaking research findings. The call by marketing bodies, such as the Marketing Science Institute (MSI), and the intellectual users corporation like the Ford Foundation, for marketing research output that “conform to the norm of the hypothetic-deductive method,” and with larger samples have prompted the move by marketing researchers to embrace experimental testing that could be explained, translated, and/or interpreted through some form of mathematical or statistical techniques (Tadajewski, 2014, p. 311).

In this regard, mathematical symbols and statistical concepts, such as validity, reliability, confidence interval, beta alpha, correlation analysis, coefficient of determination, mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, that are fundamental in pure scientific studies have gained grounds in marketing research to help to bridge gaps between theories and practices, and also validate concepts, which are crucial for theory testing and development (Peter, 1981).

#### 4. THE RECENT BIRDS IN MARKETING THOUGHTS AND THEORIES

The recent disciplines along the chains of development in marketing thoughts and theories are information technology (IT), biology, finance, and accounting.

##### 4.1. Information Technological Perspective

Changes in technology have helped to reshape the means and manner of doing business today. The unrelenting swing in the world of technology, coupled with the fast pace in information sourcing, attributed to the advent of the internet, has prompted dynamism in the business world and greater attention to solid business relationships (Oraedu *et al.*, 2018). This is not surprising as marketing has been recently redefined as more of relationships practice (O’Malley and Tynan, 2008; Grönroos, 2006) and has embraced the dot-com world as a medium of creating value, sustaining relationships, and building a competitive edge. O’Malley and Tynan (2008) believe that the support of technology has made the practice of customer relationship management (CRM) more effective [...], as technology has made it possible for marketing firms to manage the streams of interaction touch-points in the entire relationship episodes (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh, 1987). Today, the e-commerce marketing research and practice is characterized by concepts such as database marketing, cross marketing/selling, web 2.0, 3.0—used in building brand communities, crowd-sourcing, e-retailing, e-marketing, omni-channel, mobile advertising, direct marketing/selling, and self-service technology (SST) such as automatic teller machines (ATM). This has also prompted academic researchers to explore users’/customers’ acceptance of technological systems using the widely known technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, 1989, Davis *et al.*, 1989). Additionally, attitude-behavior theories such as TRA and TPB, information processing models like ELM, social network theories like SET, and other sociopsychological theories have been applied to examine users’ experience, motivation, attitude, and behavior toward online-related platforms. Traditional concepts in marketing such as word-of-mouth (WOM) communication have also emerged in the internet context as online WOM or e-WOM. The Netnography technique used in social anthropological research has also experienced frequent use in online settings (Kozinets, 2002).

##### 4.2. Biological Perspective

Biology was earlier mentioned in Bartels’ (1962) study of “the development of marketing thought” as a discipline that has contributed to marketing thoughts and theories. However, Bartels was unable to offer deeper insight as he could only give superficial report about its evolutionary approach to human’s behavior. Recent developments in the marketing and business world have made concepts predominantly used in the biological field more pronounced and heavily cited in marketing research. As a matter of fact, the environmental sustainability research (see, Griskevicius, Cantú, and Van Vugt, 2012) and the latest attempt into sensory experiences (SENSE) (see, Schmitt, 1999) emerged from the field of biology. Both research areas are rooted in the evolutionary approach to behavior. “An evolutionary approach suggests that just as the forces of natural selection can shape morphological features, such as the shape of our hands, those forces also shape behavioural and psychological tendencies” (Griskevicius *et al.*, 2012, p. 116). Hence, humans inherit behaviors that enable them to adapt to the same environment from which their ancestors evolved (Griskevicius *et al.*, 2012). The move toward the sustainability marketing behavior is rooted in the environmental or conservative subfields in biology. This subfield of biology emerged due to the increasing awareness of

environmental degradation and the effect of man's activities on the ecosystem. Tracing the move for sustainability practice and research, Bridges and Wilhelm (2008) observed that it was the 1972 United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, that led to the 1987 Brundtland Report: Our Common Future (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It was this report that created the blueprint for protecting the ecosystem (Bridges and Wilhelm, 2008), and sustainable practice was featured as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 8). In recent times, emphasis has been on business/marketing activities that are not anti-environmental and do not compromise man's future well-being. Based on this, terms such as green marketing, recycling, reuse, consumer cynicism, altruism, sustainable consumption, ethical consumption, and customer inertia have appeared in marketing literatures as contemporary issues. Accordingly, the bioengineering subfield of biology has gained entrance into marketing practice to spur the design and production of ecofriendly products.

The SENSE marketing in the Experiential Marketing, though partly rooted in cognitive biology with interest on sensory systems, incorporates the interdisciplinary fields of psychology, cognitive science, and sociology (Schmitt, 1999). Building on the thoughts in evolution biology, Schmitt (1999) revealed that it should be reasoned that customers think like animals "whose physical and mental apparatus for generating sensations, thoughts and feelings evolved by natural selection to solve the problems faced by their evolutionary ancestors" (p. 59). Such problems, like differentiating from one company or brand to another, or the need to activate motivation, are triggered by the sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell sensory systems (Schmitt, 1999). In addition, emotional feelings used in advertising are often directed to consumption-related experiences such as fantasies, fun, enjoyment, joy, and happiness (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

#### 4.3. Financial and Accounting Perspective

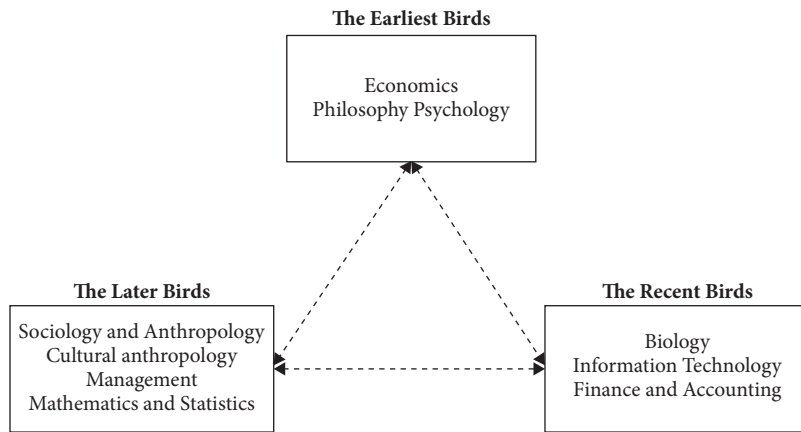
The epistemology of finance in expanding marketing thoughts and theories was essentially on facilitating the exchange process. Although there is not much documented view on this, marketing historians seem to suggest that the credit and loan financing, which are key elements of financial and accounting management today, have been allied as close subjects of marketing (Hollander, 1966, 1960). This argument was equally presented in books titled *Retailing merchandising, planning and control* by James L. Fri, and Seligman's *Economics of installment*, both of which are cited in Bartels (1965). These studies were among the few that unraveled the importance of credit and loan financing in retail and consumer markets. Finance is widely considered to be a marketing function because it facilitates exchange processes. For instance, Bartels (1965) argues that retail credit and consumer loan credit experienced rapid changes in marketing thoughts [...]. Greater attention was given to the use of installment credit, which later became a promotional tool, especially in selling consumer durable goods such as automobiles (Bartels, 1965). This view seems to suggest that the focus has always been to facilitate the exchange process—that is the transfer of ownership. Although this is undeniably true, recent events seem to suggest that the exchange process goes beyond that. Cross-disciplinary issues and emerging problems have called for the need to explore and apply other concepts prominently used in the finance and accounting management disciplines to the marketing research domain. For example, the quest to promote accountability, efficiency, and synergy for marketing spending has prompted research in the area of returns on investment or marketing investment (Pauwels and Reibstein, 2010). The clarion call by scholars and MSI to explore shareholders' value, cost, and returns on investments (ROI), how ROI can be measured and how it can be used to enhance performance, how to quantify ROI, how customers allocate their share of wallet, how to build the right asset, how marketing better links to finance—including measuring returns on expenses (ROEs), etc. (Marketing Science Institute, 2016, 2018; Pauwels and Reibstein, 2010), all highlight the relevance of finance and accounting as an essential discipline in widening the focus of marketing thoughts and theories.

## 5. DISCUSSION

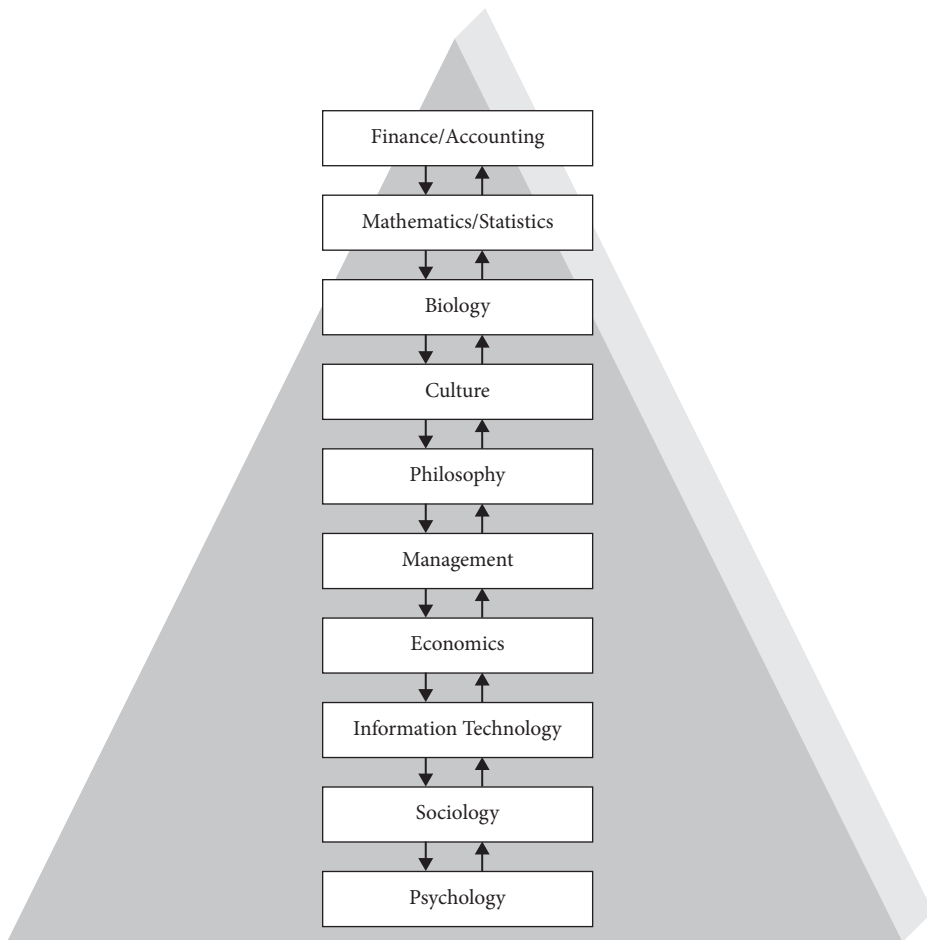
This paper sets out to explore how marketing has borrowed and adapted concepts from other cognate disciplines to deepen its knowledge base, and also examine the chains of disciplines that dominate today's marketing studies. In addition, the paper explores whether this eclecticism approach degrades or strengthens



**Figure 1. Affiliate Disciplines Based on Their Period of Integration and Relevance in Marketing Studies.**



**Figure 2. From the Bottom, the Dominating Influence of Affiliate Disciplines in Recent Marketing Research Studies.**



the influence of the marketing field. To achieve these objectives, the study utilized the historical survey in the form of review of extant literatures and complemented with the self-discovery approach. These two methods of inquiry have been employed in previous studies with similar aim (see, Shaw, 2009; O'Driscoll and Murray, 1998; Jones and Monieson, 1990). We found that the marketing body of knowledge we have has evolved and emerged from different but interrelated disciplines. Among the foundational disciplines classified as the earliest birds in this paper are Economics, Philosophy, and Psychology. This is accompanied by Sociology and Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, Management, Mathematics, and Statistics, all classified as the latter birds (see Figure 1). It is undeniable that the sporadic changes in technology and the fast pace of information sourcing, which has been heightened by the easy access of the Web, have helped to redefine and refine the means of doing business today. Accordingly, this has necessitated the application and study of IT systems as a means of offering seamless experiences, both in offline and online settings, and as a supportive discipline in furthering marketing practice. Furthermore, greater attention on sensory experiences in recent times (SENSE marketing) and the move to protect the ecosystem and preserve it for future generations (sustainability marketing) have made the biological field relevant in marketing thoughts and theories. This is essential because the study of these areas is rooted in the evolutionary approach to behavior (see, e.g., Griskevicius *et al.*, 2012; Schmitt, 1999; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). These two disciplines, in addition to the financial and accounting fields, were classified as the recent birds that are advancing the knowledge of marketing thoughts and theories (see Figure 1).

A priori, scholars believe that economics concepts and theories dominate the marketing field (Sheth and Gardner, 1982). However, periodic innovations and changes in the marketplace have resulted in the redefinition of marketing around relationships and value, thus broadening the conceptualization and application of marketing knowledge. In contrast to what has been put forward, we argued that psychology and sociology dominate more in building up the marketing field of knowledge (see Figure 2). All marketing activities are targeted toward consumers (see, e.g., Kotler and Armstrong, 2009; Sheth and Gardner, 1982), and as psychology aims to understand why people (consumers) behave the way they do, and sociology explores how social networks evolve and interact to influence some types of behavior, it suffices to expect that the knowledge from these fields would be most profitable in deepening the epistemology of marketing theories and practice. Additionally, IT, which has transformed the wave of business transactions from the brick and mortar setting to a "low touch," spatial, customized, and self-service system, has provoked the need to tweak the existing tenets of marketing theories, formulate entirely new ideas, or accommodate concepts and theories from other fields to propel marketing studies and practice. Finally, we believe that the eclecticism approach in marketing offers it strength rather than weakness. In fact, the multidisciplinary approach is probably its greatest strength. This is because, it serves to integrate existing knowledge from other fields to explain or elaborate situations, guide decisions, and inform practices. In a manner that seems to eulogize the strength of marketing, Peter (1981) revealed that one of the fundamental aims of social science is to provide theoretical explanation for behavior [...]. Marketers achieve this by borrowing and adapting "developed constructs and theoretical prepositions relating to them" (p. 133). Most of the concepts or theories borrowed and adapted from these other fields are operationalized and often subjected to further scientific tests to ensure high degree of correspondence before conclusion and generalization.

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