

# Editorial

## Compartmentalized Reviews and Other Initiatives: Should Marketing Scientists Review Manuscripts in Consumer Behavior?

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Effectively solving problems requires proper organization. Like other academic disciplines, our discipline must organize around our fundamental problems rather than around our procedures (i.e., tools, approaches, methods). Only that organization ensures healthy debate and constructive communication on relevant research questions.

Three initiatives might help foster a transition from a procedure-based to a problem-based organization. One initiative is compartmentalized reviews. Rather than only assigning reviews based on the technical procedures used in a manuscript (e.g., experiments), we assign at least one reviewer, whose expertise is in the problem domain (e.g., advertising), to review only that part of the manuscript (e.g., relevancy to advertisers). Another initiative is to avoid dichotomous certification (i.e., correct or incorrect) for procedures. All procedures yield evidence that forms a multidimensional continuum from circumstantial to overwhelming. Sometimes, precision in stating the conclusion is more important than precision in the procedure. Finally, research streams on marketing questions are essential—no one article is definitive. To foster these streams, *Marketing Science* must encourage (to some degree) articles that expand on research previously published in *Marketing Science*. When *Marketing Science* publishes an article, it has some obligation to give some priority to manuscripts that build on the same topic (i.e., not to label them as “incremental”).

(*Organization of Marketing; Reviewing; Referees; Research Streams*)

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### 1. Some History

In the 1960s and 1970s, many marketing academics had concerns that new doctoral students in our discipline lacked the proper training in the necessary procedures to tackle the difficult and important problems facing our discipline. In fact, back in 1959, the Ford Foundation chose forty management school faculty

members to improve the training of American business educators (Gordon and Howell 1959, Pierson 1959). They were sent to Harvard University for a year of study that focused on mathematics.

Although there was common agreement regarding the fundamental problems of marketing (e.g., improving advertising, making selling more effective, creating methods for developing new products, achieving better resource allocation across the product portfolio, and increasing the “value-added” for distribution

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and the marketing function), many senior faculty felt progress was hindered by insufficient knowledge of how consumers respond (e.g., consumer behavior), how to estimate response functions (e.g., statistics), how to optimize control variables (e.g., management science), how to relate sales to profits (e.g., economics), and many other fundamental problem domains. Academics required deeper knowledge of research procedures (e.g., tools, approaches, and scientific methods) found in numerous basic disciplines.

At the outset of the twenty-first century, the pendulum, as they say, "swung to the other extreme." In fact, the focus shifted to procedures and borrowed ideas, leading to a transformation of the entire discipline. Indeed, our discipline has, perhaps, one of the strangest and, some would argue, dysfunctional, organizations possible. Rather than organizing around our fundamental problems, we are organized around procedures. Rather than organizing around marketing problems such as adding more value to selling, advertising, distribution, and other marketing activities, we often classify research based on the type of data or procedures used. (Please see Shugan 2002c for a discussion of how we need to focus on relevant information and compelling evidence, rather than merely on the type of data employed.) We are organized around technical procedures for answering research questions rather than around the research questions themselves.

The review process is one culprit perpetuating and exacerbating this severe problem. When *Marketing Science* receives an article on, for example, how to better use sales representatives (e.g., see the excellent article Godes 2003), we rarely assign reviewers who are experts in sales. Instead, we often become mystically enamored by the byzantine procedures used in a manuscript (e.g., game-theoretic methods, latent class models, etc.). Consequently, there is an inordinate emphasis on refining the procedures to the so-called state of the art. Meanwhile, the substantive implications for the intended audience receive less weight.

It is important that all articles focus on problems of interest to some particular audience, such as consultants, educators, investors, market research professionals, popular news media, practitioners (e.g.,

managers), and so on. (Please see Shugan 2003 for a discussion of other possible audiences and effective ways to reach them.)

Some articles in *Marketing Science* must focus on the fundamental problems of the marketing discipline. The fundamental problems are research questions where someone would first look to the marketing literature for answers (how to predict consumer response, how to improve selling efforts, how to make advertising more effective, how to construct promotional campaigns, how to organize the marketing function, and many more). For example, we should view the research by Iyer and Pazgal (2003) as part of the literature on how to more effectively sell on the Internet rather than as the literature on "applications of game theory." Drèze and Bell (2003) is an exemplary example. They answer at least the following research question: "Should manufacturers and retailers prefer scan-back or off-invoice trade promotions?", and procedures are only used to answer the research question. Their keywords focus on the problem and not the procedures used to solve the problem. Xie and Shugan (2001) study how marketing managers can use new technologies to implement new marketing strategies such as advance selling. We should focus on what research produces, rather than on the procedures used.

## 2. Correct Organization Is Critical

Correct organization is essential for solving any problem effectively. Most academic disciplines continue to evolve toward better organization. The marketing discipline should do the same. Like other academic disciplines, we should avoid organizing around procedures, approaches, methods, or tools. Instead, we should organize around fundamental marketing problems. Although different perspectives spawn healthy debate and creative resolutions, the requisite for these benefits is constructive communication. Organization around fundamental problems is absolutely necessary for that critical communication to occur. We have many researchers working on very similar issues (e.g., consumer response to marketing activities) who are unaware of each other's findings. We also have some research endeavors that make no effort (i.e., no cites

to the marketing literature and no discussion of marketing implications) to relate their findings to other research in marketing in the same or related substantive research domain.

When scrutinizing the organization of other disciplines, we observe more functional and efficient organizations. The extant and evolving organization of most disciplines reflects their fundamental research questions. For example, the discipline of finance organizes around problem domains such as financial markets (e.g., asset pricing, risk management, hedging, futures markets), commercial banking, and corporate finance (e.g., initial public offerings, privatization, dividend policy decisions). The discipline of economics organizes around problem domains such as macroeconomics (e.g., monetary policy), public economics (e.g., voting, environmental policy), and industrial economics (e.g., regulation). The discipline of physics organizes around problem domains such as astrophysics, atomic and molecular physics, condensed matter physics, optics, and nuclear physics. The discipline of chemistry organizes around problem domains such as organic, inorganic, and physical chemistry. Interdisciplinary endeavors also organize around problems rather than around procedures. For example, consider chemical physics, photochemistry, nanotechnology, and organometallic, biophysical, bioorganic, and bioinorganic chemistry.

In contrast to these other disciplines, academic marketing and, more importantly, some marketing journals are organizing around technical procedures rather than around research questions. We often classify researchers by their procedures (e.g., mathematical models, experimental, statistical, using consumer surveys, and so on) rather than by the topic of their research (e.g., developing competitive strategy). We need more of a functional organization to solve fundamental marketing problems and answer the corresponding research questions. We should have researchers who specialize in problem domains rather than in procedural domains.

When various audiences (e.g., managers, public policy makers, consultants, etc.) seek answers to important research questions in marketing, they should easily find a literature focused on the research question. For example, when one wants to know how

to identify competitors (e.g., Leeflang and Wittink 2001), it should be unnecessary to first decide on whether one wants game theory articles, multivariate statistics (e.g., Rothschild et al. 1991), latent class analysis (e.g., Bockholt and Dillon 1997), experimental studies (e.g., Neelamiegham and Jain 1999), articles with consumer surveys (e.g., Clark and Montgomery 1999), or articles employing econometric models (Blattberg and Wisniewski 1989). Researchers should be well aware of each other's findings despite the use of different procedures. Researchers should build on each other (or demarcate each other's findings) and provide complementary answers concerning when particular strategies work, when they do not work, and when different measurement tools are effective for providing quantitative answers (e.g., the optimal quantity of coupons, the optimal value of a discount, the optimal frequency, etc.).

Creating an organizational change is also exceedingly difficult, but it is essential.

### 3. Compartmentalized Reviews

One initiative that might help mitigate this difficult problem is the use of compartmentalized reviews. For example, *Marketing Science* might receive a manuscript on coupons redemption using procedures from experimental consumer behavior. Usually, the review team for that manuscript would consist of an expert in experimental methods who would ensure proper control, proper randomization, avoidance of problematic effects (e.g., demand effects, subject effects, test-interaction effects), and so on. That expert might have little or no background in coupon research. Of course, research procedures must be sufficiently precise to fully justify the stated conclusions. However, a perfect implementation might overlook the most critical variables in coupon redemption, such as whether targeted consumers are first-time or repeat buyers of the couponed product. An expert reviewer in coupon usage, who might employ an entirely different research procedure to study coupons, might be able to identify this critical problem and suggest an easy remedy.

Currently, potential marketing reviewers often refuse to review manuscripts that employ techniques

that they fail to use. With compartmentalized reviews, in some cases, we could use different reviewers for different parts of the manuscript. *Marketing Science* might, when necessary, ask one reviewer with an expertise in the procedures to determine if the procedures were employed with sufficient precision to justify the conclusions. *Marketing Science* might ask another reviewer with an expertise in the substantive domain (related to the conclusions) to evaluate the relative novelty and potential impact of the results. Hence, when manuscripts attempt to answer particular research questions, the review team could include experts on the set of problems related to the research question, rather than on just the approach taken. The review team for a manuscript that attempts to answer the following research question, "When should the most highly skilled salespeople sell the best products?", for example, should consist of an expert on salespeople, rather than merely experts on game-theoretic procedures, nonparametric procedures, or whatever other procedures are used.

Manuscripts that use laboratory experiments to predict consumer response to price promotions (e.g., Chen et al. 1998) might have one reviewer who might lack expertise in laboratory experiments but have considerable knowledge of research found in the price promotion literature not employing experimental methods. Manuscripts that identify when particular strategies will improve profits (e.g., Desiraju and Shugan 1999) might have one academic reviewer and one practitioner reviewer. Similarly, manuscripts based entirely on empirical (theoretical) analysis might have a reviewer from the related theoretical (empirical) domain.

Having two evaluations would help the area editors make better compromises between relevancy of the findings and precision in the procedures. Some manuscripts with pristine and highly precise procedures, but lacking remarkable findings, might now fail to dominate manuscripts employing less precise methods but producing startling and useful findings. The editor and area editor might conclude that the interesting findings justify publication despite the fact that imprecise procedures will require abundant caveats and considerable future research to precisely demarcate the relevant conditions when the findings

are appropriate. Startling findings could possibly initiate entire future research streams that might solidify the findings or qualify the conditions surrounding those findings.

There are certainly glaring disadvantages associated with compartmentalized reviewing. Continuing to demand that manuscripts achieve extreme precision on technical procedures while adding substantial requirements regarding relevancy to external audiences with force majeure, we might kill critical areas of academic research. Aggravating the situation, different philosophies of research have evolved surrounding different procedures. Some philosophies have the erroneous belief that better models only have more parameters and a mistaken belief that simplifying assumptions are undesirable. Some philosophies, for example, have a preoccupation with model assumptions and overlook model predictions. We must fully appreciate strong assumptions that lead to strong testable or observable implications (Shugan 2002b). It is no arcanum that eliminating the distracting details of reality is a critical component of prediction and an essential contribution of modeling itself (Shugan 2002b).

Area editors must recognize that philosophies differ. Many researchers using experimental consumer behavior tend to emphasize the adequate demonstration of an effect and elimination of alternative explanations through a series of experiments. Many researchers using management science models tend to emphasize the utility of the consumer behavior predictions to a particular firm. Many researchers using game-theoretic methods for predicting consumer behavior tend to emphasize the consistency of the theory with aggregate qualitative observations.

With compartmentalized reviews, the Area Editors and the Editor will have the nontrivial, but workable, burden of removing these disadvantages. We must remember that the academic literature is a network of interlinked manuscripts where each manuscript enhances the value of other manuscripts. The weaknesses of one manuscript become the strengths of another. For example, early research on adapting psychometric techniques, such as conjoint analysis, to predicting buyer behavior in marketing settings (e.g., Green and Rao 1971, Green and Srinivasan 1977) was

able to transform the original psychometric method into an effective marketing tool. However, the original research had many glaring weaknesses, including imprecise measures of fit, no consistent error theory, and so on. Although the conjoint tool was obviously effective, it lacked numerous procedural virtues of simple techniques such as ordinary regression analysis. Much precision was lacking (e.g., no standard errors, unknown asymptotic properties, atheoretical measures of model fit, etc.). Moreover, early applications focused on consumer choice rather than on firm profits and failed to consider market expansion made possible by, for example, a new product's introduction.

These weaknesses of early research articles became the strengths of subsequent research articles. Subsequent articles focused on combining conjoint analysis with other data and tools to solve important managerial problems (e.g., Danaher 2002, Ofek and Srinivasan 2002). Other research focused on the collection of better data (e.g., Sandor and Wedel 2002, Jedidi et al. 2003) and better procedures for estimation (Yang et al. 2002). It would have been foolish to reject the original articles because they lacked sufficient precision.

We often require research streams (Farley et al. 1998), rather than research articles, to answer all aspects of a research question. We should treasure the original path-breaking research on the conjoint methods and understand that 30 years of research will create the necessary precision (or refute the original research). Just as the precision of computers, navigation systems, and medicinal instruments has improved, so will the precision of path-breaking research. Provided that the conclusions of the research are justified under some conditions, we must recognize the frequent compromise between greater precision and greater relevancy. For example, it might be far more valuable to establish an imprecise (but undeniable and unexpected) relationship between new product success and seasonal introductions (Krider and Weinberg 1998) than to establish a precise but standard price-demand relationship.

That brings us to the second initiative, which involves the evaluations of both procedures and impact.

#### 4. Evaluation of Procedures: Using a Multidimensional Continuum Rather than a Dichotomy

In the past, *Marketing Science* has asked expert reviewers to certify the procedures used in manuscripts as "not wrong." However, the term "wrong" might be inappropriate and misleading. The term implies a dichotomy between wrong and not wrong. No such dichotomy exists. Manuscripts adopt different procedures with different levels of precision. Consequently, diligent researchers produce different gradations of evidence for their conclusions. Perhaps a truly wrong method provides no support for its conclusions. Other methods provide some-to-overwhelming support.

We must understand that, unlike arithmetic or algebraic calculations, procedures transcend being either right or wrong. In fact, most computers round numbers; many statistical tests use asymptotic approximations; no market exhibits demand that is exactly linear in prices; and few (if any) markets are comprised of buyers who are exactly uniformly distributed in their tastes. All aspects of measurement and analysis involve error and approximation. Indeed, if there were no error, there might be little need for statistical procedures or, for that matter, scientific procedures in general (Griliches 1985).

Certainly, no published manuscript should have arithmetic, algebraic, or factual errors. There is a true dichotomy for bona fide errors. Moreover, journals such as *Marketing Science* must invariably demand the highest levels of precision and rigor found in marketing journals.

However, we must faithfully remember that we should measure precision on a multi-dimensional continuum. There are different degrees of precision and different dimensions for measuring precision. There is a difference between wrong procedures (i.e., certainly yielding unjustified conclusions) and less precise procedures that yield more qualified or less than definitive findings. Manuscripts need only use procedures that produce sufficient evidence to support the stated conclusions, given the stated caveats. Remembering that felony prosecutions only require a preponderance of evidence rather than absolute precision, we should allow research procedures that

provide less than certain conclusions. For example, although it is admirable and certainly desirable to have the best estimates for standard errors, the original research in conjoint analysis provided accurate out-of-sample predictions with no estimates of in-sample standard errors. Today, we have higher standards for that research stream but only because subsequent research solved many of the problems of the early research. We must ensure that our standards consider all the dimensions of the procedures and whether the defects are conservative (i.e., work against the manuscript's conclusions) or provide an alternative explanation for the manuscript's conclusions.

All data contain known and unknown defects (Griliches 1985). More precise procedures account for more of the known defects. Not accounting for defects causes weaker conclusions that require myriad caveats. However, it is impossible to account for all known defects. No manuscript, for example, can correct for all known defects in data (e.g., omitted marketing-mix variables, unobserved heterogeneity, endogeneity, nonlinearities, missing data, multicollinearity, etc.). Moreover, methods that account for defects often make strong assumptions that sometimes go without testing. In fact, testing multivariate distributional assumptions is often extraordinarily difficult.

Unfortunately, facile research can quickly construct one example of how a defect in the analysis can potentially impact the conclusions. In contrast, it is extraordinarily difficult for one research article to demonstrate that a defect, variable, or some other factor seldom has a significant impact on the conclusions. That is another reason why we require streams of research, as well as why we should publish individual research articles that produce useful, but less than definitive, answers to research questions.

More precise procedures in measurement do yield more significant figures, but less precise procedures can still be extraordinary useful. For example, observing only that it is raining is useful but imprecise. Using satellite data is more precise but still less accurate at measuring rainfall rates than land-based rain gauges. Water equivalents might provide still more precise measures of cumulative precipitation than inches of rainfall. As it turns out, however, the

best measurement tool (i.e., the measuring tube and the tipping bucket rain gauges) depends on the conditions (i.e., thunderstorms or drizzle, respectively). Hence, even precision in measuring rainfall requires a multidimensional continuum.

Despite a lack of extreme precision and clear limitations, simple data analyses can easily make a discovery or produce a creative answer with sufficient, but less than definitive, evidence to warrant future investigations. For example, were we to observe that retail promotional effectiveness seemed to dramatically differ on rainy days and sunny days, despite inadequate controls for all other explanations, that finding could initiate more precise future research that might involve better measures of rainfall, as well as a more precise treatment of the impact of rainfall on sales and theories for linking the two observations. Manuscripts need not be self-contained. Provided that a manuscript supplies sufficient evidence for the stated conclusions, the stated conclusions need not be definitive. If we require unnecessary levels of precision in procedures, we not only hamper progress by preventing publication of interesting findings but also we hamper future research that might extend and qualify that interesting finding.

We can also apply this argument to the choice of variables in theoretical analytical models. As Shugan (2002b) notes, when viewing geographic maps as models of terrain, "despite similarities, [highway] maps of the same geographic region often dramatically differ. Only some maps show local attractions. Only some show every street.... No map is all-inclusive, because all-inclusive maps are unreadable and lack the value of modeling, i.e., simplification. These maps provide different models or parsimonious paramorphic representations (Einhorn et al. 1979) of the same geographic reality.... Each map is useful for only some objectives, and no map dominates all." We should avoid thinking of inclusiveness (i.e., including more parameters or complexity into a model) as a desirable trait; our goals should be better prediction (either to test theories or determine actions) and producing better marketing decisions. Our goal is not to reproduce all the details of the real world.

Initiating change is also difficult, but change is essential. One step in the correct direction is for journals to shift their focus from emphasizing proficiency and meticulousness in the use of procedures to the benefits of the research for specific marketing audiences. Although the validity of research conclusions requires precision in methods, precision is both multidimensional and measured on a continuum (rather than being a discrete property). More precision might produce more compelling conclusions, but less precision might produce tentative conclusions that are still noteworthy. A procedure might increase precision on one dimension but decrease precision on another. For example, laboratory experiments have excellent controls but sometimes at the cost of external validity (Winer 1999). At some point, the additional precision in the methods might be unproductive, given the fundamental limitations of the observations or the topic itself.

## 5. What About New Methods for Analyzing Data?

Most of the prior discussion dealt with research manuscripts attempting to provide substantive conclusions of interest to some external audience. However, *Marketing Science* always warmly welcomes manuscripts that develop new or improved methods that facilitate marketing decision-making, including, at least, making more accurate predictions and extracting valuable information. For example, Arora et al. (2002) develop a method for identifying segments by developing the demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral profiles of consumer groups most likely to increase consumption, enter the market, or switch brands because of a price-cut decision.

Developing special methods for making marketing decisions and related applications are a critical part of research in marketing. Certainly, some marketing problems require either the adaptation of extant methods developed by a basic discipline (specializing in advanced method development) or the creation of entirely new marketing methods.

For example, the development of new products requires methods for measuring consumer responsiveness to nonexistent products. Evaluation of advertising copy requires methods for linking individual

consumer response measures to aggregate sales. Construction of sales presentations and associated material for salespeople requires methods for predicting customer objections and misperceptions. Of course, we should first exhaust the extant tools and develop new tools only when extant tools are unsuitable. The tools we develop for marketing applications would usually be less general but more powerful because they would exploit the special features of marketing problems.

*Marketing Science* has recently published many articles providing new methods adapted to the special needs of marketing managers and other marketing audiences. For example, Steenburgh et al. (2003) provide an excellent method for analyzing massively categorical variables used in direct-marketing campaigns. Moe and Fader (2002) present an outstanding method for using advance purchase orders to forecast new product sales in entertainment marketing.

These articles, and many others, develop methods for solving problems that more often occur in marketing contexts. In these situations, knowledge of the context provides an advantage and allows stronger assumptions than appropriate in basic disciplines that seek more generic tools. For example, by adapting conjoint analysis to a marketing context, it evolved into a far different tool than the original psychometric tool (Cattin and Wittink 1982). Hence, focusing on specialized marketing contexts allows stronger assumptions that often produce specialized results. For example, we use conjoint analysis to forecast market shares for new products and forecast competitive reactions (e.g., Choi and DeSarbo 1994), rather than using conjoint analysis to decompose preference data.

Rigor and precision are critical criteria for evaluating new methods. When new methods compete with existing methods, the new method should approach or exceed the existing state of the art. The level of precision is a far more critical issue. Hence, when developing new methods, achieving precision at levels of the current state of the art is more crucial.

For manuscripts involving improvements in methods, the desirability of compartmentalized reviews depends on the manuscript's objectives. When the objective is, for example, better predictions or more

accurate estimation of parameters, the demonstration of these objectives is sufficient for publication. Bucklin and Srinivasan (1991), for example, provide a method to estimate cross-price elasticities from rich survey data and then validate their method by comparing their aggregate predictions with actual purchase behavior. However, when the primary objective of a method is to provide decision makers with easier-to-use methods or provide decision makers better insights (e.g., Griffin and Hauser 1993), it would be useful to have a decision maker as a compartmentalized reviewer.

Moreover, although new methods must demonstrate some superiority over extant methods, again we should measure precision on a multidimensional continuum, rather than on a dichotomy. One method, for example, might provide better predictions when assumptions are met, but another method might be more robust to violations in the assumptions. One method might, for example, provide better unconditional predictions than another but fail to include decision variables. New methods need not excel on every conceivable dimension. We might tolerate some deviation from the state of the art on some dimensions when a new method excels on other important dimensions. For example, if we had an analytical model that could analyze the qualitative content of advertisements and predict the impact of the analyzed advertisements with some degree of precision, that model might be publishable without state-of-the-art methods of estimation, without the most elegant mathematical development, and without employing the currently popular remedies for the possible defects in the data. Articles need not be definitive; future research is most often desirable.

Finally, we must remember that producing better methods is not necessarily consistent with adding additional parameters or features. As noted earlier, it is far easier to find situations when additional parameters matter, compared to providing a demonstration that additional parameters fail to improve predictions in most situations. Hence, we must actively fight the trend toward models evolving to higher levels of complexity and, often, lower levels of model usage. We need to move away from complexity as a goal. We already have the complexity of the real world.

We model to remove complex distractions that are not central to the phenomena under study (Shugan 2002a). The long-term goal is better predictions and the revelation of information that will definitively impact someone's decisions (Shugan 2002b).

That brings us to the third initiative, which involves giving preferential treatment to some manuscripts.

## 6. Fostering Research Streams in Marketing

Despite previous arguments that the added burden imposed on authors by compartmentalized reviews is partially offset by putting more weight on the contribution of the manuscript (in contrast to the procedures), we might still need a catalyst to nurture research streams in marketing with the potential for ultimately significant impact. No article is final; Research streams are essential to advance knowledge (Farley et al. 1998). As Lehmann (2003) states: "While a single study proves nothing, as part of a mosaic, it contributes to knowledge."

It is evident that network externalities are critical for research streams to quickly develop and flourish. We must continue to build on the excellent foundation created by past research in *Marketing Science* and other leading marketing journals. There might be one or more small incremental contributions before the next major contribution. If we fail to publish the small steps, the big steps might never follow. The widely cited article by Alba and Hutchinson (1987) provides an example of a big step following many small steps.

Moreover, given that prospective authors are well aware of the looming danger of being rejected as incremental, the review process regrettably forces unfortunate authors to either casually dismiss past research or contradict it. Consequently, many promising research streams never develop. We expunge a series of small incremental contributions that might have eventually led to a major advance.

Moreover, there are regrettably some articles in *Marketing Science* that fail to cite any research in marketing or make any other attempt to relate their results to a marketing audience. If all our articles took this dubious strategy, the consequence is evident: Research in *Marketing Science* would never be



read, recognized, or further developed. It would be the downfall of *Marketing Science*. In addition to planting seeds, we must also provide care and the proper environment for them to grow.

If we fail to read, respect, or further develop our own research, research streams might die before we learn their eventual contributions. If we fail to respect the potential audiences for our research, our journals will become irrelevant. Remember, the relative value of our students (whose only advantage is knowledge of the marketing literature) and, possibly us, over students of other disciplines is the value of our research.

Research in marketing journals must be overwhelmingly more relevant to marketing audiences than research in the journals of other disciplines. That is our major (and possibly only) comparative advantage. Otherwise, publishing in marketing journals would be unattractive and unnecessary.

To prevent these looming dangers, we must nurture streams of research in marketing. We must actively publish more research articles that build upon previously published research in marketing. Extensions and replications are critical (Hunter 2001, Mick 2001), but few journals want to publish them.

It seems that after publishing an article, a journal has an obligation to nourish subsequent articles, rather than branding them as incremental. Consequently, after publishing an article, we should look more favorably on subsequent research that takes the next step.

At *Marketing Science*, we are particularly unfriendly to minor extensions because, as a leading journal in marketing, we want every article to provide a significant new contribution. That effectively leaves us with a difficult dilemma.

One possible solution is to nourish articles that expand on marketing articles previously published *Marketing Science*. By giving some preferential treatment to research articles of that type, we foster promising research streams without overallocating space to more incremental research.

This initiative will have no impact on high-impact articles, regardless of whether they represent entirely new topics to *Marketing Science* or not. Only when reviewers question the incremental contribution will

we give preferential treatment to research that extends previously published articles in *Marketing Science*.

This initiative will also provide authors a differential advantage for publishing in *Marketing Science*, because their research will be nurtured, read and, more likely, used.

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