1 THE PHILOSOPHY FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING THEORY AND RESEARCH

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Abstract

In marketing, there had been a simmering debate about its scientific status during the 1950s and 1960s but the Fall 1983 issue of the Journal of Marketing marked the start of this particular episode. This article provides the philosophy foundations of marketing thought at two centers of early development. In particular is to evaluate scientific realism view and relativistic/contructionist view. The author explores the nature of realism and relativism as it is currently being discussed in the philosophy of science. Scientific realism argues that truth is appropriate goal for marketing theory and research and that science can come to know the real word, though not with certainty. They argue that there is no grand theory of science. Relativists have long argued that there is no single method or approach to science. After addressing a fundamental premise of the entire debate, the author concludes that philosophically oriented marketing theorists need to further demonstrate the value of their work for practicing marketing scientists.

Key words:
Philosophy, Marketing Theory, Marketing Research

INTRODUCTION

What philosophy dominates marketing? For over ten years, Shelby Hunt and Paul Anderson have conducted a debate on the appropriate epistemological and methodo-logical for marketing and consumer research (Kavanagh, 1994). Hunt's (1991) book has asserted that no single philosophy dominates marketing. The fact that no philosophical "ism" dominates the entire marketing discipline does not imply that there are not choice to be made. Therefore, each individual marketing researcher will, by necessary, have a personal "philosophy" about research. Such personal philosophies may, or may not, be totally consistent with some formal philosophical "ism." Furthermore, each marketing academician is a member of the marketing, academic community, which is itself a subgroup within the university community. As such, these broader communities both guide and constrain, for good or for ill, marketing academicians in their teaching, research, and service activities.

Again, what philosophy dominates marketing? According to Hunt, to even begin to address this question requires a recognition of the many different research programs, traditions, or "schools" of thought in marketing. Sheth, Gardner and Garret (1988), Dharmmestha (1999) identify twelve such "school of thought": commodity, functional, functionalist, regional, institutional, managerial, buyer behavior, activist, macro-marketing, organizational dynamics, system, and social exchange. Unfortunately, Sheth, Gardner, and Garret do not explore the dominant philosophy issue. One way to approach this question would be to examine individual research programs in marketing and identify their underlying characteristic. In this regard, we should keep in mind that logical positivism and logical empiricism hold that all the "theoretical" term is a theory must be defined in terms of "observable." On the other hand, scientific realism holds that "theoretical" terms may denote a real existence and, therefore, our measures are reflective, i.e., they reflect the presence or absence (or level of) some unobservable, but genuinely existing, entity.

Anderson (1983) first criticized Shelby Hunt's previous contribution (1976, 1983) which he labeled as positivist and he advocated an alternative, relativist stance, a position

which was supported by a number of other marketing academics writing at this time (e.g.,

Despande, 1983; Hirschman, 1986; Peter and Olson, 1983; Zinkhan and Hirscheim, 1992). Anderson (1986) accepts the metaphysical notion that there may be a single social and natural reality, but rejects the premises that there is single knowable reality waiting out there to be discovered via the scientific method.

Hunt was leading an attack on all forms of relativism, including Anderson's critical relativism. He maintains that all forms of relativism are self-refuting and he now, moving away from his previous logical empiricist position, advocates scientific realism (1990). In his article (1992), Hunt point out his understanding of marketing, a view that is strongly influenced by the epistemological beliefs that he has consistently expressed until now.

As show above, there are two different perspectives as an appropriate philosophy of science to guide marketing theory and research. Each perspective maintains its arguments so that encourages a continuing debate about the scientific status of marketing.

The purpose of this paper is to examine several issues related to philosophical foundation of marketing, both theory and research. In particular is to evaluate scientific realism view and relativistic/ contructionist view. In the first section of this paper start with review of the pursuit of truth is an appropriate goal for marketing science. The second section contains a debate on the appropriate epistemological and methodological foundation for marketing. In the final section attempt to reconciliation of epistemology perspective to support their argument.

Marketing Truths and Marketing as a Science

All theory and research efforts have underlying philosophical foundations and in recent years the foundation of contemporary social science have increasingly been questioned, producing a "crisis literature" (Hunt, 1990). Though the crisis literature challenges many different aspects of social science's philosophical foundations, the appropriate role of the concepts "truth" has received much attention. A similar crisis literature has developed within marketing and consumer behavior and it, to, has had questioned the role of "truth."

Consistent with the views of the 16'hh and 17'h century founders of modern science, all the major schools of thought in philosophy of science in the first six decades of this century held the pursuit of truth in high regard, including the classical realism of Moore and Russell, the pragmatism of Peirce, the logical positivism of Schlick and Neurath, the logical empiricism of Hempel and Nagel, and the critical rationalism (falsificationism) of Popper (1959). Though differing greatly in numerous respects, all these philosophical "isms" held that it is possible for science to develop genuine knowledge, or truth, about the world.

According to Hunt, traditional image of science was dramatically in 1962 by Kuhn's Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Though Kuhn did not use the term "relativism" in his original work, it implied several different versions of relativism, including what normally were referred to as ontological (reality) relativism and conceptual framework relativism (Krausz and Meiland 1982; Muncy and Fiske 1987). Hunt argues that his version of a fallibilistic and critical realism offers

middles ground position between direct realism and relativism. Key contentions associated with this perspective are that some of our perceptions are more accurate or closer to the truth than others and that the job of science is to develop genuine knowledge about the world. Both of those positions imply that there is an immutable truth that scientists can study. Over some reasonable time span (say, 10 millennia), such may be the case for some natural sciences. For example, as sixteenth century astronomers struggled to understand the motion of the planets, the planetary orbits themselves were not changing (from decade to decade). In deed, if they had been, physicists might still be without adequate theories to predict events within our solar system. However, Zinkhan and Hirschheim (1992) argue that it is exactly such a situation that a marketing scientist must face. The objects marketers attempt to understand are in a constant state of flux (from generation to generation, for example), and any marketing truths that are discovered are not immutable.

The work of many philosophers suggests that any philosophy abandoning the goal of truth ultimately must choose between incoherence and irrelevance (e.g., Newton-Smith 1981; Walkins 1984). Hunt cite the work of Adler (1985) and Harre (1986) can help us understand how so many scholars, in both philosophy and marketing, generate philosophies producing unintelligible discourse.

In addition, from the relativistic perspective, truth is a construction, a concept designed to a particular type of belief held in a particular context. To state that a proposition is true is to state a subjective belief that one holds about proposition. The idea that truth can be determined universally and independently of human construction and beliefs about uninterpreted reality is viewed as impossible (Peter, 1992). In sum, " Truth is a subjective evaluation that cannot be properly inferred outside the context provided by the theory (Peter and Olson, 1983).

Is Marketing a Science?

Differing perception of the scope of marketing have was shown to be a primary factor in the controversy over this question. Hunt's (1991) answers this question with considers the discipline of chemistry - unquestionably a science. Using chemistry as an illustration, three observations will enable us to clarify the distinguishing characteristics of sciences. First, a science must have a distinct subject matter, a set of phenomena, which serves as a focal point for investigation. The subject matter of chemistry is substances, and chemistry attempts to understand, explain, predict, and control phenomena related to substances. Hunt asserted that the subject matter of marketing is transaction. Marketing might then be viewed as the science of transaction – their structure, their properties, and their reactions with other phenomena. Given this perspective, the subject matter of marketing would certainly overlap with that of other discipline, notably economics, psychology, and sociology. The analysis of transactions is considered in each of these disciplines. Yet, only in marketing is the transaction the *focal point*. To the extent that the transaction is the basic subject matter of marketing, marketing would seem to fulfill this requirement.

Second, every science presupposes the existence of underlying uniformity or regularities among the phenomena, which comprise its subject matter. The discovery of these underlying uniformity yields empirical regularities, lawlike generalizations, laws, principles, and theories. Hunt offers two grounds to point out these characteristics, that is - one a priori and one empirical. Marketing is a discipline investigating human behavior.

Since numerous uniformity and regularities have been observed in other behavioral science, there is no a priori reason for believing that the subject matter of marketing is devoid of uniformity and regularities. The second ground for believing that the uniformity exist is empirical, in the past four decades; the quantity of scholarly research conducted on marketing phenomena probably exceeds the total of all prior research in marketing. Efforts in the consumer behavior dimension of marketing have been particularly prolific. In short, who can deny that there exist uniformity and regularities in the subject matter of marketing? I, for one, cannot.

Hunt (1992b) states that many people believe marketing is both an applied discipline and a professional discipline. Such a view is not new, nor is it radical. In short, many in the discipline would agree. Hunt does not agree with this viewpoint. The term "applied" is commonly associated with consulting

research and this is not the only type research that marketing academics should be doing. Rather than already being a professional discipline. Hunt argue that marketing is at a point where it aspires to be such a discipline.

In most recent work, Zyman (1999) asserts that marketing itself is not an art, and it's not mysterious. It is about as mysterious as finance, which is why you need to start with strategy. In reality, marketing is more science than art, and any marketer who wants to succeed in the future is going to have approached it in a systematic and logical way. If you agree that the ultimate goal of marketing is to maximize profit, to sell as much product as possible, to as many people as possible, as often as possible, and at the highest prices possible, then you must approach in this way. You have to be scientific. To understanding the scientific world we need to overview the role of scientific realism and scientific relativism/constructionists in marketing.

Essential Doctrine of Scientific Realism

Scientific realism traces its heritage to the classical realism at the turn of the century, when philosophers such as Moore (1903) and Russell (1929) debated advocates of Hegelian idealism's central tenet is that the world does not exist independently of its being perceived and whatever is known is relative to the mind that knows it (Hunt, 1991).

Hegelian idealism provides the intellectual foundations for modem version of relativism (Suppe 1977). Opposing idealism, Russel and Moore's classical realism held that the world exists independently of its being perceived, arguing that Hegelian idealism (1) confuses the mental act of perceiving with the object of that mental act, (2) produces unintelligible speech, and (3) appears to be sophistry rather than genuine belief.

An essential doctrine of modem-day, scientific realism is the classical realist view that the world exists independently of its being perceived. Hunt uses Burrel & Morgan, (1979) references as example of postulates that the world external to individual cognition is a real world made up of hard, tangible and relatively unmutable structure. That is, contra Olson's relativism, there really is something out there for science to theorize about. To hold that otherwise make nonsense of science. Hunt cites Stove (1982) to hold that science does not "touch base" with some reality separate from its own theories is to make totally inexplicable the enormous success of science over 400 years. However, scientific realism does not embrace "naive" or "direct" realism.

Scientific realism is also a critical realism, contending that the job of science is to use its method to improve our perceptual (measurement) processes, separate illusion from reality, and thereby generate the most accurate possible description and understanding of the world. Is short, scientific realism propose that (1) the world exists independently of its being perceived (classical realism), (2) the job of science is to develop genuine knowledge about the world, even though such knowledge will never be known with certainty (fallibilistic realism), and (3) all knowledge claims must be critically evaluated and tested to determine the extent to which they do, or do not, truly represent or correspond to that world (critical realism).

Figure I is a graphic representation of the realist view of science. Basically, scientists through their processes of evaluation and testing produce genuine knowledge about the world. Those knowledge claims cannot be known with certainty and are fallible, but apparently, according to Hunt's third proportion, the extent to which they truly do or do not represent or correspond to the world can be determined (Peter, 1992). Surely such a view of science seems plausible and inviting. Science is viewed as being capable of judging knowledge claims and ruling on whether Or not they conform to the world. If science could be conducted that way, many relativists would likely be converted to accepting scientific realism.

McMullin (1984) succinctly states that the fourth and final tenet: "The basic claim made by scientific realism . . . .is that the long-term success of a scientific theory gives reason to believe that some thing like entities and structure postulated by the theory actually exists.' Though this fourth tenet may appear rather obvious or innocuous, it runs directly counter to not only the relativism and irrationalism advocated by Kuhn and Feyerabend, but also the logical positivism of Schlick, the logical empiricism of Hempel, and the falsificationism of Popper. Hunt (1992a) called this fourth tenet "inductive realism" and, before examining its implications, must explicate it in more detail.

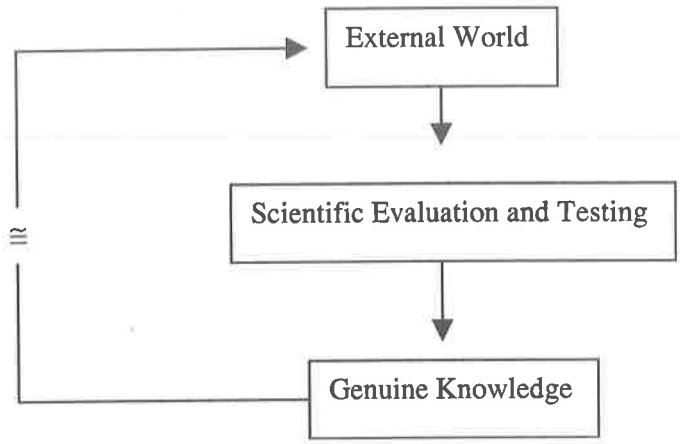

FIGURE I
Scientific Realism's View of Reality

Source: Peter, J.P (1992: p.73)

Hunt states that theories can be successful in many ways. Inductive realism focuses attention on the explanatory, predictive, and pragmatic success of a theory. Therefore, the phrase long-term success in the tenet identifies a theory that over some significant period of time has demonstrated its ability to explain phenomena, predict phenomena, or be useful in solving pragmatic problems. By long-term success giving reason the tenet does not imply 'know with certainty," that is, the tenet specifically adopts fallibilism and avoids the philosophers' fallacy. By "something like the entities," the tenet reject the view of direct realism that the entities posited in the theory are (or must be) exactly as posited by the theory. Finally, by "something like the structure," the tenet claims that the success of a theory in explanation, prediction, and the solving of practical problems (usefulness) gives us reason to believe that the relationship among the entities in the theory.

Implication of Scientific Realism

What does scientific realism imply? To answer this questioned, I cite the Hunt's (1991) book and his article (1992a) that provides some implication. Throughout his article, Hunt is concerned with what he call for reason and realism in marketing. First, some parts of the actual workings of science are totally incomprehensible and irrational if not viewed from a realist prospective: Many research programs require scientific realism (Leplin, 1986). If a scientist does not believe that viruses exist, then such activities as engaging in experiments to determine the size, shape, and structure of "nonexistent viruses" is irrational. Second, realism gives the practicing scientist prescriptive warrant for engaging in certain kinds of research activities. For example, the belief that viruses exist (ontology realism) and that they have caused smallpox and polio (epistemological realism) gives warrant for the practicing scientist to attempt to discover if there is a virus that may cause another disease.

Third, many of the attacks on scientific realism seem to be either attacks on strawmen caricatures of scientific realism, or unintelligibly incoherent, or fundamentally misguided. It is very curious and highly suspect that antirealist rely so heavily on the difficulty of realistically interpreting one scientific theory (i.e., quantum mechanics) and then generalize (in a monumental act of inductive hubris) that the entire universe of scientific theories should, therefore, be treated in a nonrealis fashion. Fourth, scientific realism occupies a kind of "middle ground" among varying

philosophical systems. At one extreme is the "naive realism", characteristic of the Newtonian of the 19* century, which held that science had at its disposal method which, when followed rigorously, would inevitably lead to the objective of truth-with-certainty and that the existing scientific theories had (essentially) achieved this objective. At the other extreme lies the various versions of relativism/ constructivism and their attendants: nihilism and skepticism. Between these two positions lie scientific realism and logical empiricism.

Applied to marketing and social science, scientific realism maintains that, to the extent that there are theories that have long-run success in explaining phenomena, predicting phenomena, or assisting in the solution of pragmatic problems in society, we are warranted in believing that something like the postulated entities and their structure of relationship exists, that is, they truly represent or correspond to some reality external to the theorist (Hunt, 1990)

Most research programs in marketing are at least consistent with scientific realism, for example, cognitive theories in consumer behavior, power and conflict theories in channel distribution, and portfolio theories in product management. Behavior modification theory in consumer behavior, a major exception, is positivistic in orientation because it admonishes the researcher to stay at the "observable" level of actual behaviors.

Because Bagozzi (1980, 1984) has been prominent advocate of realism, many marketers seem to associate scientific realism only with his advocacy of LISREL. But, though such modeling techniques require realism, scientific realism does not imply any specific mathematical or statistical technique or more strongly, mathematical/statistical techniques at all.

In particular, Hunt point out that scientific realism emphasizes the testing of marketing theories as a means for establishing their success. Therefore, theories comprising such diverse concepts such as "attitude," "intentions," "market segments," "purchase behavior," "channels of distribution," "information search," "perceived risk," and so forth give us warrant for believing (to the extent such theories are successfully) that these entities have a real existence and the theories comprising these entities truly "say something" about the world.

Scientific Realism: An Alternative View

Scientific realism is proposes as a vehicle for marketing to become a science. Hunt discusses scientific realism is such a light and points out that there are many varieties of realism. Zinkhan and Hirschheim (1992) discuss a different version of realism; a version not described by Hunt and one they feel is more appropriate for describing marketing phenomena. This version of realism is called "the realist view of science" (Manicas and Secord, 1983) or "transcendental realism" (Bhaskar, 1979). In contrast to the standard positivist view, which holds that science aims to study lawful properties consisting of events and their causes, scientific realism views the aim of science to be the production of knowledge about "real structure which endure and operate independent of our knowledge, our experience, and the conditions that allow access to them" (Bhaskar, 1975).

Thus, science aims at discovering lawful processes, but the laws are about the causal powers of structures that exist and operate in the world. Under this conception, laws do not describe the patterns of events; rather, they set limits on the types of action possible. Causes are found in the natures of things, in their structural properties that create powers or liabilities (Zinkhan, 1987).

Scientific realism in this context is more than an ontological stance in that it adopts a particular epistemology as well. This version of realism agrees with Kuhn that knowledge is a social and historical product, and thus accepts the inevitability of the hermeneutic circle. In fact, the hermeneutic circle underlies all of human knowledge. Realism accepts the hermeneutic circle as nonvicous and inevitable (Zinkhan and Hircshheim, 1992). Because there can be no reinterpreted given, the task of science is to invent theories that aim to represent the world. In that way, science generates its own rational criteria that determine which theories are to be accepted or rejected. Crucially, it is possible for those criteria to be rational precisely because, on reality term, there is a world that exists independently of cognizing experience. The theories that result form the rational criteria may be wrong - after all, they are based on the known world rather than the world itself- but, nonetheless, not anything goes (Laudan, 1977). Again,

they are what the community agrees on and are based on a community standard of what constitutes "valid" or "believable" knowledge claims. The scientific realist view provides an approach to causation that is very effective in describing (marketing) phenomena that act as enabling or inhibiting agents, rather than as primary causes.

Relativism: Another Perspective for Marketing

In this section I examine one of the philosophy of science, that is, relativism. "Relativism" is a term of art from philosophy. All genuine forms of relativism have two these: (1) the relativity thesis that something is relative to something else and (2) the non- evaluation thesis that there are no objective standard for evaluating across the various kinds of "something else" (Siege, 1988). Hunt.(1994) lists of five forms of relativism are especially significant:

1. Cultural relativism holds that (a) the elements embodied in a culture are relative to the norms of that culture and (b) there are no objective, neutral, or non-arbitrary criteria to evaluate cultural element across different cultures.
2. Ethical relativism hold that (a) what is ethical can only be evaluated relative to some moral code held by an individual, group, society, or culture and (b) there are no objective, impartial, or non-arbitrary standards for evaluating different moral codes across individuals, groups, societies, or cultures.
3. Rationality relativism holds that (a) the canons of correct or rational reasoning are relative to individual cultures and (b) there are no objective, neutral, or non-arbitrary criteria to evaluate what is called "rational" across different cultures.
4. Conceptual framework-relativism holds that (a) knowledge claims are relative to conceptual frameworks (theories, paradigms, worldviews, or Weltanschauugen) and (b) knowledge claims cannot be evaluated objectively, impartially, or non-arbitrarily across competing conceptual frameworks.
5. Constructionism is the same thing as reality relativism, which holds that (a) what comes to be knows as "reality" in science is constructed by individuals relative to their language (or group, social class, theory, paradigm, culture, world view, or Weltanschauugen) and (b) what comes to count as "reality" cannot be evaluated objectively, impartially, or non-arbitrarily, or non-arbitrarily across different languages (or groups, etc.). Closely related to relativism, subjectivism is the thesis that there is something basic to the human condition - usually something about human perception and/or language - that categorically prevents objective knowledge about the world.

Peter (1992) also is depicted of the relativistic/ constructionist position on the nature of reality. Unlike scientific realism's interpretation of relativism, the relativistic view has in problem with the possibility of an external world that is independent of the scientist. However, the difference in the relativistic perspective is that no interpretation of that world can be made independently of human sensation, perceptions, information processing, feeling, and actions. As shown in Figure 2, the interpretation is encapsulated in the scientist's worldview and research paradigm, which limit the interpretation to a particular perspective. At this stage, it is a private, mental interpretation of reality.

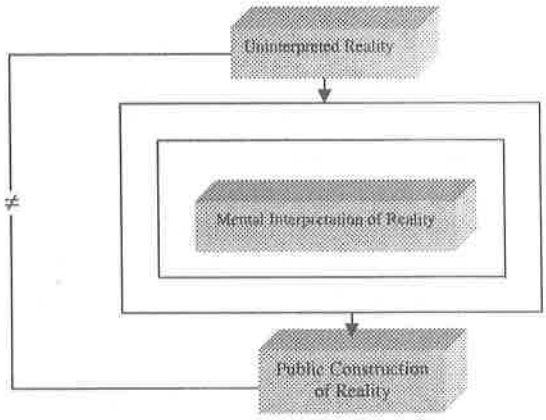

FIGURE 2
Relativistic/Constructionist View of Reality

Source: Peter, J.P (1992: p. 74)

According to Peter, an adequate philosophy of science must not only recognize that human sensations and perceptions are part of science, but also account for their role in the development of scientific knowledge. Hunt's interpretation of scientific

realism fails to do so. But Hunt's opinion states why relativism, constructionism and subjectivism are minority views within the philosophy of science consider how these "ism" would respond to the following questions: " Does the sun revolve around the earth or does the earth revolve around the sun?" Relativism answers: " First I must know whether you subscribe to the paradigm of Copernicus or Plotemy, for these paradigm ~ like all paradigm – are incommensurable and, therefore, there is no truth to the matter independent of the paradigm you hold".

Although relativism is minority views within the philosophy of science, Anderson (1983) proposes that marketing science should adopt a "relativistic stance." He proposes that marketing should seek recognition from society that marketing is science for both altruistic and self-serving reasons. The altruistic reason is that "an important goal of any area of inquiry with scientific pretensions is to insure that its knowledge base is widely dispersed through the greater society as a whole. The self-serving reason is that "as marketing improves its scientific status in society, the knowledge it generates will be more acceptable within the society and that additional resources will be made available for further development of its knowledge base.

In 1986, Anderson developed his original work and advocated critical relativism to distance him form "nihilistic" relativism and solipsism, philosophical position which Hunt (1991) was quick to attack. Critical relativists point out that many different cognitive aim have "figured prominently in the history of natural and social science (Anderson, 1986). Critical relativism entails "axiological relativism" (cognitive value relativism) because: "Whether those aims are themselves worthy of pursuit will be judged differently by various research programs. However, no independent arbiter of the merits of an anxiology can exist as long as the axiology is neither Utopian nor inconsistent with the practices of the program (Anderson, 1988a). Truth (genuine knowledge) and falsity (nongenuine knowledge) are thus absent form the lexicon of critical relativism. Not only truth absent in critical relativism, it is an inappropriate objective for science and marketing and consumer behavior would do well to abandon it (Anderson, 1988b). Critical relativism's case against truth stems from two general arguments, the argument from the falsity of realism and the argument from Utopian (see Hunt 1990).

Toward a Reconciliation and Implications

For marketing academician seeking a reconciliation of philosophical position in marketing theory, several similarities can be found between scientific realism and relativistic views. For example, scientific realism rejects logical positivism, logical empiricism, and falsification as acceptable philosophies for marketing. Meanwhile, relativist in marketing have long rejected those philosophies. Scientific realism argues that there is no grand theory of science. They have long argued that there is no single method or approach to science. Both perspectives also view the long-term success of theories as an important criterion for judging them. However, scientific realism considers long-term success as a measure of truth and contact with reality, whereas the relativistic perspective views it as one type of usefulness.

On the other hand, the mainly disagreements between the two views relate to the nature of reality, the nature of truth, and the value of the concept of incommensurability (see Peter, 1992). Scientific realism suggest that the extent to which knowledge claim truly correspond to the real world can be determined, though not with certainty. The relativistic view suggests that the science can create useful theories or interpretation of reality, but has no independent method for evaluating the closeness of the theory reality.

Scientific realism argues that truth is an appropriate goal for marketing science, though absolute truth is unattainable. Relativist argues for the attainable goals of various forms of usefulness as determined by the scientific community. Scientific realism rejects view accept it as a useful concept.

Scientific realism is also a critical realism, contending that the job of science is to use its method to improve our perceptual (measurement) processes, separate illusion from reality, and thereby generate the most accurate possible description and understanding of the world. Given the difference in basic assumptions

about the nature of reality, scientific realism and relativism are unlikely ever to be fully integrated. As we see there is long debate between Hunt and Anderson as well as Peter. Each author maintains their argument, for instance. Hunt argues that many marketing researchers already have accepted scientific realism. In particular. Hunt point out that scientific realism emphasizes the testing of marketing theories as a means for establishing their success.

Meanwhile, because empirical testing cannot determine truth as correspondence to reality, the relativistic view argues that marketing scholars should place less emphasis on traditional empirical research. If we are to advance marketing knowledge, we must make our theories and models explicit and we must carry out integrated research programs with an aim to discovering underlying causal structures and generative mechanism. We need theories that really explain, rather than merely describe (Zinkhan and Hirschheim, 1992).

Perhaps I agree with Peter, he suggest rather than confusing with debating long abandoned views of science, marketing scholars are now concerned with more current views and creating new view of science. The debate over views of science has been a healthy one for marketing in that it has forced marketing theories to think carefully about what they believe and why they do so. Rather, marketing scholars should invest more of their time and effort in the creation and development of new, useful theories for the field. Many marketing scholars have conducted effort in the creation and development of new thinking.

Recently, for example, Sheth and Sisodia (1999) offer to us a tantalizing mixture insight and foresight to marketing thought and practice at the dawn of the 21" century. By focusing on lawlike generalization in marketing, Sheth and Sisodia exhort marketing; scholars to (re) consider a basic building block for marketing theory development and an invaluable referent to marketing practitioners. They conclude the following: (marketing is context~driven discipline, (2) the context for marketing is changing radicall: due to electronic commerce, market diversity, new economics, and coopetition, and (3) a marketing academics, we need to question and challenge well-accepted lawlike generalization in marketing.

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