

Georgia Southern University

Digital Commons@Georgia Southern

Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings

1-1-2019

Is Marketing Science Really Scientific?

Michael Latta

Coastal Carolina University

Ismet Anitsal

Tennessee Tech University, ianitsal@missouristate.edu

Michael McCall

Michigan State University

Stephen A. LeMay

Mississippi State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amtp-proceedings_2019



Part of the [Marketing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Latta, Michael; Anitsal, Ismet; McCall, Michael; and LeMay, Stephen A., "Is Marketing Science Really Scientific?" (2019). *Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings 2019*. 33.
https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amtp-proceedings_2019/33

This conference proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings 2019 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

Is Marketing Science Really Scientific?
Association of Marketing Theory and Practice
Conference of Association of Marketing Theory and Practice
Charleston South Carolina
March 22, 2019

Michael Latta
Coastal Carolina University
Ismet Anistal
Tennessee Tech University
Michael McCall
Michigan State University
Stephen A. LeMay
Mississippi State University

Thirty-five years ago, there was a special issue of the Journal of Marketing in Fall, 1983 concerning whether marketing is a science and what role theory plays in a marketing science. In that issue the following articles concerned with the definition of Marketing and its role in business appeared:

- Shelby Hunt asked the question of whether a general theory of marketing is even possible and what such a theory would be like if such a theory existed.
- Robert Bartels noted that marketing has been defined as having theory and practice, specialization and generalization, as well as established interests and global expectations over the years. In other words are we primarily practitioners or are we primarily scholars.
- John Howard notes that marketing provides a guide for strategic and operational planning by focusing on the customer which maximizes shareholder wealth.
- George D. and Robin Wensley emphasized marketing's role in creating competitive advantage and associated strategic issues to create a new paradigm for marketing.

Other articles were more directly related to the issue of marketing and science:

- Rohit Deshpande was concerned with marketing scientists being preoccupied with hypothesis testing rather than theory building and recommends using qualitative methods to build theories followed by using quantitative methods to test the validity of those theories.
- Paul Anderson wondered if marketing should be more scientific by being committed to theory-driven paradigms producing programmatic research to solve significant problems.
- Finally, Paul Peter and Jerry Olson answer the question 'Is Science marketing?' by claiming that science is a special case of marketing. They note that marketing scientists create theories which are like products with channels of distribution, promotion, and

prices. Marketing scientists who create these theories have objectives for doing so that fall into three types: noble, curiosity and self-serving.

The question here is: Is marketing a science and if so what makes it scientific?

In the end of all discussions asking 'Is marketing a science?' we must recognize there is no set of criteria for recognizing science from nonscience (Laudan, 1982). However if marketing scientists create useful knowledge, they have answered the question in the marriage of marketing theory and practice.

Journal of Marketing, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Autumn) 1983.

Laudan, Larry (1965), "On the Impossibility of Crucial Falsifying Experiment: Grunbaum on The Cuhemian Argument'," *Philosophy of Science*. 32 (July), 295-9.