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A Chasm to Cross:
From Research to Practice and Back

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Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Library of Congress Classification (LCC)
http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/lcco/lcco_h.pdf

Mission:	HF 5001-6182
Programme:	HF 5410-5417.5
Paper:	HF5410-5417.5

Journal of Economic Literature (JEL)
http://www.aeaweb.org/journal/jel_class_system.html

Mission:	M
Programme :	C 44, M 31
Paper:	M31

Classification GOO

Mission:	85.00
Programme:	85.03, 85.40
Paper:	85.40

Keywords GOO

Mission:	Bedrijfskunde / Bedrijfseconomie
Programme:	Marketing, Methoden en technieken, operations research Paper: Marketing, kwantitatieve methoden, toegepast onderzoek
Paper:	macro-economie, economische crises, econometrische modellen, financiering, obligaties, tijdreeksen

FREE Keywords
Paper: marketing research, marketing practice, impact, relevance, rigor, readability, intermediaries

Erasmus Research Institute of Management - ERIM
The joint research institute of the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM)
and the Erasmus School of Economics (ESE) at the Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
Internet: www.erim.eur.nl

ERIM Electronic Series Portal
http://hdl.handle.net/1765/1

Inaugural Addresses Research in Management Series
Reference number EIA 2020-081-MKT
ISBN 978-90-5892-572-5

Layout
PanArt

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Address delivered at the occasion of accepting the appointment as
Professor of Quantitative Marketing Strategy at the Erasmus School of Economics,
Erasmus University Rotterdam on Friday 14 February 2020.

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Erasmus University Rotterdam

Inaugural Lecture on Friday 14 February 2020. Prof.dr. Vardit Landsman

A Chasm to Cross:
From Research to Practice and Back

Abstract

Over the past decades we have witnessed an increasing divide between academic research in quantitative marketing and practice. In this address I review potential sources leading to this increased divide as well as solutions that have been suggested in the literature to bridge academics and practitioners. Many of the reasons leading to the divide are structurally inherent in the way academic institutions operate. However, the solutions I review involve both academic institutions and individual researchers aiming to increase the impact of their research on practitioners.

A Chasm to Cross:
From Research to Practice and Back

Samenvatting

De laatste decennia zien we een groeiende kloof tussen academisch onderzoek in kwantitatieve marketing en de praktijk. In deze rede bespreek ik mogelijke oorzaken van deze kloof en oplossingen die zijn voorgesteld in de literatuur om de kloof tussen wetenschap en praktijk te dichten. Veel van de oorzaken van de kloof zijn structureel inherent aan de manier waarop wetenschappelijke organisaties werken. Echter, de oplossingen die ik bespreek stimuleren zowel wetenschappelijke organisaties als individuele onderzoekers om de invloed van hun onderzoek op de praktijk te vergroten.

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1. Introduction

Dear Rector Magnificus of Erasmus University,
Dear Dean of the Erasmus School of Economics,
Dear family, colleagues, and students,
Dear distinguished guests,

I am honored to accept the appointment as Professor of Quantitative Marketing Strategy and to give my inaugural address entitled: **A Chasm to Cross: From Research to Practice and Back.**

To illustrate the difficulty that I aim to address in this talk, I will start by sharing a true personal story. A couple of years ago, a friend of mine who works as a marketing manager in a big international pharmaceutical company called me. She was preparing a presentation to convince the management of the company to allocate more resources to detailing efforts in the Netherlands and knew I was researching this area. Detailing is a promotion technique used by pharmaceutical firms to educate physicians about specific drugs through sales representatives. My friend asked me whether there were any academic papers she could use that examined the effectiveness of detailing visits. I was very enthusiastic about helping her. There are indeed several papers that investigate the effectiveness of marketing tools in the pharmaceutical industry that demonstrate that detailing is very effective for drug promotion. So, I sent her a few papers. She thanked me, and then I forgot about it for a few weeks. The next time we met, I asked her whether the articles had helped. She replied that they were informative, but she ended up not using them in her presentation. She found these papers long and complicated, with quite a few statistical techniques and fine-tuned questions, but without a clear message that she could use in her presentation. Naturally, she has not asked for more academic papers, and I doubt she ever will.

This story illustrates the gap between marketing practice and academic research in quantitative marketing. In my opinion, it represents, on one hand, the majority of academic papers and, on the other hand, the ability of managers to access these papers and gain insights from them. It leads to questions I had asked myself years ago when I started my PhD studies, while still working in the banking industry; "What is the purpose of academic research in quantitative marketing if marketing managers will probably never read it?" Should the fact that practitioners are not able to gain insights from our research bother us? If not managers, then who are these papers meant for? Does our research have any impact (and not in the academic, number of citations, sense)? And if so, where is that impact?

This question reminds me of the philosophical thought experiment: "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" Well, in the case of quantitative research in marketing, there are certainly other trees nearby that hear the fall and may even try to change the direction the tree falls and the sound that it makes. By this, I mean that papers in quantitative marketing are influenced, assessed, and read by other researchers in the field. But is this enough?

I am not the first to be concerned with this separation between academic work and practice, and marketing is not the only field to be affected by it. In fact, Rynes, Bartunek, and Daft (2001) claim that such a gap exists in nearly all fields where academic research and practitioners coexist. As early as 1970, John Little commented on the gap in management between academic research and practice: "The big problem with management science models is that managers practically never use them. There have been a few applications, of course, but the practice is a pallid picture of the promise." (Little 1970, p. B466). A lot has changed and improved since these lines were written, but clearly the example I started with demonstrates that there is still quite a way to go.

In recent years, more studies across different fields have raised similar concerns. Production and operations management research, originally an applied science, has been accused of being far-removed from the actual practice of management (Toffel 2016). Critics of research in accounting have asked academics to be more outward-looking and to strive for impact on practice (Swieringa 2019). Finance academics have been criticized for not doing enough in their research and academic teaching to promote good finance and minimize the bad (Zingales 2015). Even macroeconomists have reflected whether their field has become inconsistent with observed facts (Romer 2016). Similar calls have been heard in organizational studies, strategic management research, international management research, and political science (Kristof 2014; Toffel 2016).

In the marketing field, several studies are concerned with the separation between academic research and practice (Lehmann, McAlister, and Stealin 2011; Reibstein, Day, and Wind 2009; Lilien 2011, Roberts, Kayande, and Stremersch 2014; Stremersch and Winer 2018). Roberts et al. (2014), which from now on I will refer to as RKS, investigated the impact of marketing science articles on marketing practitioners. They gathered information on a sample of papers published in the top marketing journals and that scored highest in academic impact. They found that even in this sample of top academic papers, academic impact and impact on practice rarely occurred together. Figure 1 presents the relationship between academic and managerial impact from the sample of 100 papers.

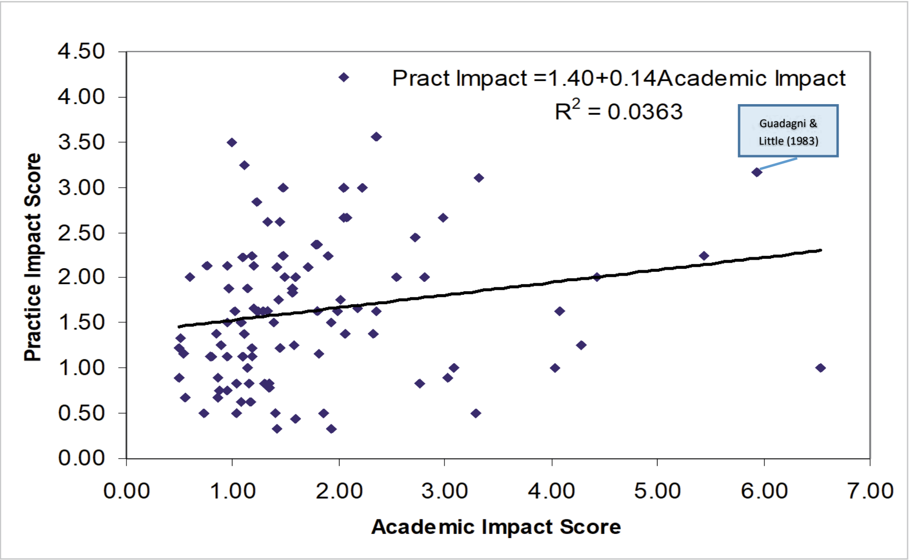

Figure 1 – Contrast of Academic and Practice Impact of 100 Selected Articles.
Source: Roberts et al. (2014)

In addition to the low correlation found between managerial and practical impact, this figure also reveals very low perceived levels of managerial impact. Even when looking at this sample of high academic impact papers in marketing, the median score of managerial impact is only 1.6 (on a scale of 0 to 5), with just six articles scoring higher than 3.

In what follows, I will share my thoughts regarding the sources of the gap between academic research and marketing practitioners. I use the term marketing practitioners to include all marketing professionals outside academia. I will then discuss potential approaches and tools that could either narrow the gap or help bridge it. Throughout, I will share examples from my research to demonstrate some of the points I make.

2. A missed opportunity

The diffusion of knowledge can be a slow process, even in homogenous groups with shared interests and needs (Rynes et al. 2001). It is therefore not surprising that academics and practitioners, who differ on many levels, experience difficulties learning from one another. However, in the quantitative marketing field the diffusion process seems even slower and "crossing the chasm" is very challenging. I will discuss three main reasons I think have led to this separation in our field, namely: (1) the readability of academic papers in quantitative marketing; (2) the problems being addressed; and (3) market dynamics.

Readability - Style, jargon, and sophistication

When I first started reading academic papers on quantitative marketing during my master's studies, I realized that it took a sufficient amount of knowledge, and patience, to decipher them. Our papers are written in a very specific style, laced with jargon and statistics. As in the example I started with, the writing style as well as the sophistication of the advanced econometric models used in our discipline may lead managers to avoid such papers altogether when searching for insights.

The readability of marketing papers experienced a steep decline in the 1970s and remained low despite attempts of top marketing journals to encourage higher readability (Sawyer, Laran, and Xu 2008). In fact, it seems that higher readability is not regarded positively by our peers. Reading ease was found to be negatively correlated with the likelihood of a marketing paper being cited (Stremersch, Verniers, and Verhoef 2007). Earlier studies found that academic papers that were easier to read were less likely to be considered of high quality and more likely to be rejected by journals (Armstrong 1980; Metoyer –Duran 1993). Together, these findings suggest that researchers prefer unique jargon and complex ideas to expositional clarity. Ideas that are described in simple ways are more likely to be rejected. Popularization has the side effect of being disqualified by experts.

Aside from readability, a large part of managers' difficulty with accessing quantitative marketing papers results from a trend over the last few decades to make new and more complex econometric methodologies the standard in quantitative marketing research (Lehmann et al. 2011). It is almost impossible to find new papers in journals such as *Marketing Science* that include relatively basic methodologies, such as simple regression analysis that managers are likely to be familiar with. This trend towards higher methodological complexity evolves in part from an ambition to account for complex factors that have the potential to bias the estimates (e.g., endogeneity or simultaneity). Another contributor to this trend is an objective to achieve higher accuracy, for example by modeling heterogeneity.

I sometimes have the impression that researchers in our field feel they have more to prove when it comes to method sophistication than researchers in other related disciplines, such as economics. Along the same lines, Lehmann et al. (2011) observed that there is a belief among many marketing researchers that underlying disciplines such as economics and statistics are more prestigious and should thus be emulated in terms of rigor and "sophistication." From my personal experience in publishing quantitative marketing papers, this trend also affects the review process, leading to higher complexity with every review round. In each round, the editor, area editor, and several reviewers can all raise issues that cause an econometric model to become more and more complex. Many times, however, this higher methodological complexity does not alter the main conclusions of the paper. Successful authors in top marketing journals share similar views. Lehmann et al. (2011) find that reviewers' requests to use a different or more complex model were associated with what they term "not-useful" reviews. Specifically, *Marketing Science* and the *Journal of Marketing Research*, the two top quantitative marketing journals, score higher than other journals on their tendency to use overly complex statistical methods and to be written too technically and in an overly academic tone. Eighty percent of *Marketing Science* authors agree with statements asserting that the review team is too involved in the review process and that it asks for more complex analysis than is necessary. Since the review process, as the route to publication, plays a crucial role in tenure and promotion decisions, not adhering to higher complexity requests is typically not an option. As a result, many papers end up with very (if not overly) complex models and thereby become less accessible to managers as well as to most other academics. Even within the field, marketing scholars have been split into smaller groups, each defined by a particular kind of complexity (Lehmann et al. 2011).

Another side effect of this trend to higher methodological complexity is that it may affect the definition of the research question and the strength of the claims in quantitative marketing papers. To be as accurate as possible, researchers may confine themselves to very finely defined research questions, which in turn can restrict big-picture insights. To conclude, quantitative marketing papers follow a pattern of reduced, narrowly specified, and fragmented research (Reibstein et al. 2009). This tendency is also evident from the decline in the impact factor ranking of quantitative marketing journals compared to other leading marketing journals (see Figure 2, taken from Stremersch and Winer 2018).

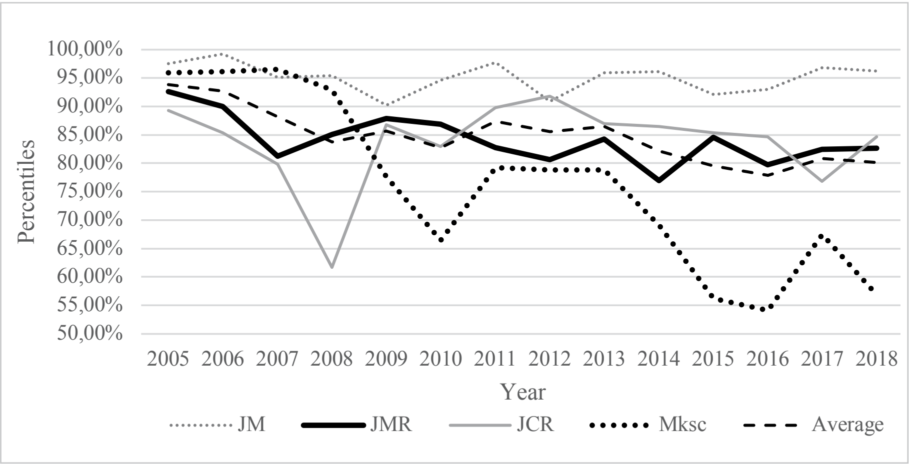

Figure 2 - Ranking of the Individual Top Journals in Marketing in Impact Factor Percentiles in Business.
Source: Stremersch and Winer (2018) – extended to 2018.

The problems being addressed

Not all research in quantitative marketing addresses questions that practitioners find valuable and interesting. This leads us to the question of research relevance. Over the years, management scholars have proposed several definitions of research relevance. Toffel (2016) defines relevance as addressing research questions that deal with problems found in practice and whose hypotheses connect variables practitioners can control and outcomes they care about.[1]

Are we spending enough time in the field to be able to ask the right questions?

Reibstein et al. (2009) observe that most papers in marketing begin with new methodology, data, or behavioral hypotheses and not with the question of whether and where these should be applied. By this, researchers avoid real world, ambiguous managerial problems, and at the same time, reduce creativity and relevance (Stremersch and Winer 2018). Naturally, in such papers, researchers dedicate much less time thinking about whether they address the right questions.

Our research should begin with the right questions. Good research must start with an important problem, which is then matched to the best combination of methodology, data, and theory (Reibstein et al. 2009). However, while this approach is most likely to lead to research that managers will find relevant and essential, it also seems to be the least prevalent in marketing. It requires an outward mindset and, as Professor Eitan

1 Vermeulen (2007) defines relevance as the ability to generate insight practitioners find useful for understanding their own organizations and situations better than before (see Nicolai and Seidi 2010 for a review of different forms of managerial relevance in academic papers).

Muller describes it, "living in the world, for a change." A researcher must observe phenomena that cannot be explained by Econ 101 and investigate them. I will come back to this outward looking approach later when discussing ways to solve the disconnection problem.

One potential reason for a narrow, inward focus is that groundbreaking, industry impacting studies are typically riskier and less likely to be published (Lehmann et al. 2011). Such papers are more likely to be more liked by editors than by reviewers and therefore take more time, if ever, to be published. In many cases, it is simply easier and safer for researchers in our field to opt for incremental questions or ideas than for something completely new.

Market dynamics

A third component leading to the gap between quantitative marketing research and practice is the discordance between the dynamic nature of many marketing-related situations and the rather lengthy process typically required to complete our research in quantitative marketing. To some extent, this evolves from the first two reasons already discussed.

This is not only a marketing problem. Society is changing rapidly. Real-world challenges evolve quickly and demand immediate solutions. Technology, and more specifically information and communication technologies, change the way companies create and capture value (Cascio and Montealegre 2016). The futurist, Gerd Leonhard, is known for saying that technology is exponential, but humans are linear (Leonhard and von Kospoth 2017). There is therefore an inherent misalignment between the speed of technological developments and our human ability to cope with these changes. In marketing, managers are increasingly under pressure to react to outcomes of these rapid technological advancements, such as changes in consumer tastes, in the competitive landscape, and even in regulations. Conversely, research in our field typically requires time. As a result, by the time some papers are published, the research questions are less, or no longer, relevant. We see examples in research on online advertising and social network sites, areas that evolve constantly. In other cases, when the question comes from a manager, the time it takes a researcher to answer that question is unacceptable by today's industry standards.

I will demonstrate this with another personal experience. When I just started my PhD, I was still working as head of a database and customer research team in a big Israeli bank. The bank was about to introduce new payment plans to its customers that were very different from the standard banking industry practice at that time. The new plans offered simplicity in commission payments that made it easier for customers to understand their monthly bills, but that also incentivized customers to use direct channels such as the bank's website. We knew these plans were different from what customers were used to and that it would take some time for customers to adopt them. The new plans were similar to mobile phone subscriptions, whereas the default payment method was more like a complex pay-per-use system. My team's task was to help define the set (or menu) of plans for customers to choose from. Our objective was to create a menu that would maximize the adoption of the plans and at the same time, shift transactions to direct channels. We then looked for a methodological tool that would help us do this in a more informed way. We used conjoint analysis to understand customers' preferences and tradeoffs, but this was not good enough for a completely new service. For a new service, unlike more mature services, there are two types of customers who do not adopt it. Figure 3 demonstrates this point. The first type is not ready to adopt an entirely new service because of its newness. The customer may not be aware of the new service, may not see the benefits of adopting it, or may consider it too risky at that point. This is the 'no-service' state in Figure 3. The second type wants to adopt the service, considers all the options, but cannot find a plan that suits her. This 'no choice' situation is similar to other brand choice circumstances in which a decision maker, after reviewing all options, decides not to choose any of the alternatives.

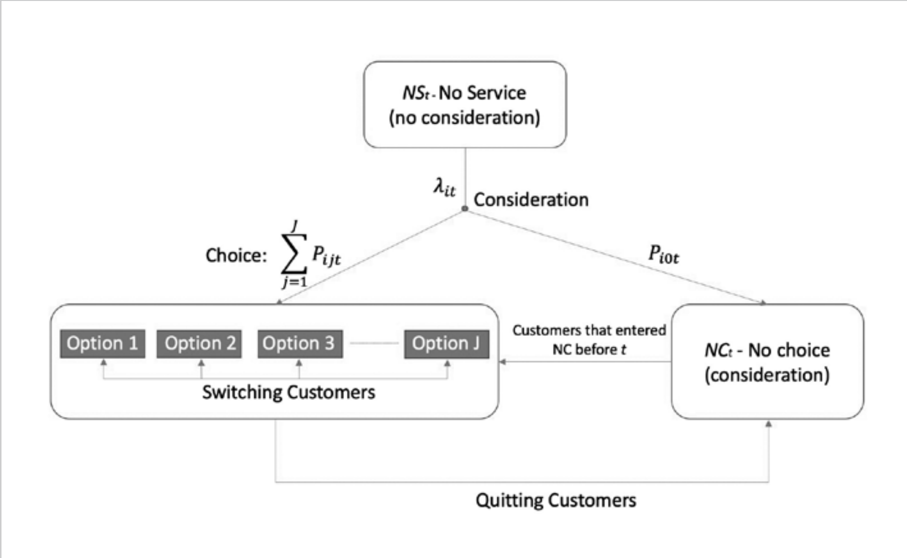

Figure 3 – Process Overview in the Adoption of a New Service.
Source: Landsman and Givon (2010)

We were looking for a tool that would account for the newness of the service and help us predict, for any menu of plans, the size of the pie (number of adopters) and its split across the plans. Figure 4 illustrates this point. This figure presents the evolution of adoption over time using data from the eventual adoption of the plans. It shows how the overall adoption (black line) is affected by the adoption rates for each plan in the menu (dotted or grey lines). We can see that the adoption rate increases when the composition of the menu changes (marked by the vertical lines in period 10 and period 19), indicating that the new plans became attractive for some customers who, until that point, opted not to choose a plan.

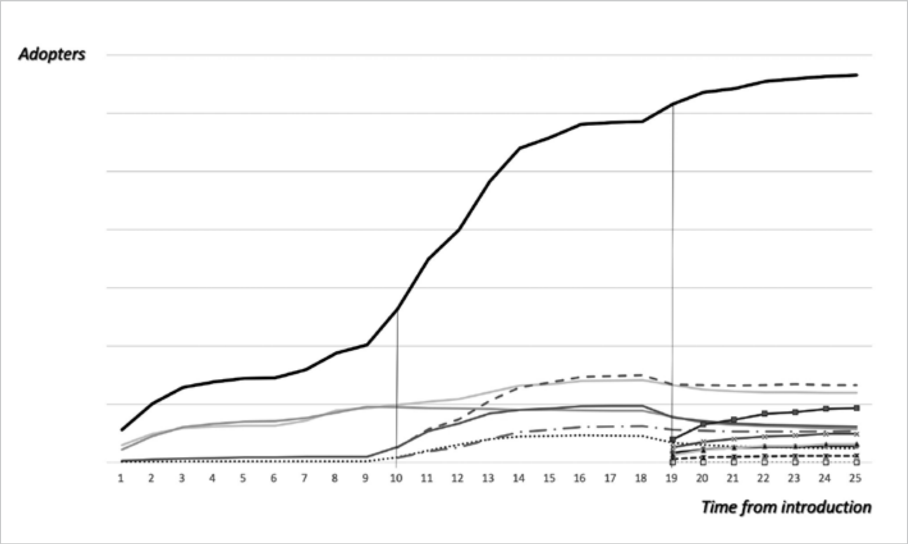

Figure 4 – Adoption of New Plans over Time.
Source: Landsman and Givon (2010)

Going back to the situation we were in, we could not find a methodology that would help us make such a prediction. I decided to tackle this problem in a PhD project and got permission from the bank to use the data. However, in the meantime, the new plans were introduced. By the time I completed the project, the adoption rate for the new plans was as high as 70%. My model was no longer needed. The paper was published a couple of years later. Ideally, other managers in similar situations would be able to use this model. This can be an example of how academic research in our field impacts practice. However, this brings us back to the gap, and the low likelihood that marketing managers will search for knowledge in quantitative marketing academic papers.

3. Ways to cross the chasm

In the previous section I described factors that contribute to the divide between quantitative marketing research and marketing practice. I hope I have convinced you that we are dealing with a difficult problem. To a large extent, the difficulty results from structural institutional characteristics inherent in academia, which are not easy to change. Stremersch and Winer (2018) review these structural limiters and point to three main issues that need resolution: (1) the performance measurements (metrics) used in promotion and tenure assessments; (2) faculty socialization processes; and (3) faculty rewards (incentives).

In what follows I will briefly describe six solutions, put forward by prior studies, which I believe will have the biggest impact. Some of these solutions demand institutional adjustments, yet others can be implemented by individual researchers aiming to reduce the gap between research and practice. The six solutions can be categorized into two types: (1) solutions that facilitate translation and access to academic research (solutions 1 to 4); and (2) solutions that increase research relevance (solutions 5 and 6).

Translation and access

In order to facilitate greater access to academic studies, we can either use a pull or push approach. In other words, we can either give managers the tools to search, read, and gain insights from our papers (i.e., a pull approach) or we can try to make the main content, insights, and implications of our papers more easily accessible to managers (i.e., a push approach).

1. Giving managers tools to process quantitative marketing papers

The first solution is part of the pull approach. According to this solution, researchers can encourage practitioners to learn advanced econometric techniques and be familiar with the topics, writing style, and outlets of academic research in our field. This solution is most likely to be relevant for master programs in management or economics.

Over the past few years, we have seen an increasing number of master programs that emphasize the quantitative tools available to marketing managers. In the Netherlands alone, an internet search shows at least 11 such master programs that are becoming very popular among students. At Erasmus School of Economics, we offer the Data Science and Marketing Analytics program. Other leading universities in this domain are Tilburg and Groningen. Graduates from these programs are likely to be much better equipped to read and understand academic research in quantitative marketing after they leave the classroom and become marketing practitioners. However, the underlying assumption in this approach is that such practitioners will have the time to search for and read these papers in order to maintain up-to-date knowledge on research advancements. The validity of this assumption is debatable.

2. Introducing academic research in the classroom

The following three solutions are part of the push approach. The central conjecture on which this approach is based is that it is not realistic to expect practitioners to actively search for solutions in academic papers in our field. Practitioners are likely to be interested in insights from fundamental studies or from an accumulation of knowledge that arise from research streams over time. The evolution of insight creation in academic papers, on the other hand, is typically incremental. New studies must build on the existing literature to progress towards more established, generalizable, and validated findings, which in turn can add substantially to practitioners' knowledge. Moreover, while impeding accessibility, the advanced quantitative models in our field enable us to deliver accurately validated insights, as mentioned above. Therefore, the following three solutions (Solutions 2-4) suggest comprehensible and actionable ways to bridge the gap and facilitate access to the insights of our research (Toffel 2016).

The classroom is an ideal platform for sharing academic knowledge with practitioners. Unlike the pull strategy, the idea behind this solution is to provide students directly with first-hand insights from the academic research in our field. Students who aspire to become practitioners and managers studying in executive programs can be exposed to updated findings and insights from our quantitative marketing studies in courses and seminars.

Academic journals can also play a part in this bridging mechanism by transforming papers they publish into easy-to-use classroom material. An interesting example is a recent initiative from the *Journal of Marketing* intended precisely to facilitate this type of knowledge bridging through academic teaching.[2] The program is called "Journal of Marketing Insights in the Classroom" and through it authors provide slides that describe their research. Professors can integrate these slides into classes and demonstrate the relevance of recent research findings to important marketing topics.

3. Meeting mangers where they seek knowledge (outside the classroom)

According to Nitin Nohria, Dean of Harvard Business School, managers are looking for professional insights in journals, such as the *Harvard Business Review*, in reports from consulting firms, such as the McKinney Global Institute, and in TED Talks and talks by managers in peer companies at industry conferences and networking events (Toffel 2016). Marketing practitioners also read the popular press and blogs. If researchers tap into these information sources, they could serve as building blocks for a translation mechanism that facilitates access to research insights for practitioners. Here are a few specific examples:

2 https://www.ama.org/journal-of-marketing-insights-in-the-classroom/

Present to practitioners. Practitioners do not come to our academic conferences. Take the yearly Marketing Science conference, for example. While the first Marketing Science conference in 1979 sought a 50/50 split between academics and practitioners, today almost no professionals attend. Therefore, in order to share research insights with practitioners, academic researchers should aim to present their work in practitioner conferences or in joint conferences and workshops sponsored by organizations such as MSI and ISBM precisely for this purpose (Stremersch and Winer 2018).

Contribute in non- or semi-academic outlets. Researchers should aim to integrate insights from their research into semi-academic articles in journals such as *Harvard Business Review*, the *Sloan Management Review*, and the *California Management Review*. The prestige of these journals as well as their large readership (HBR reached 340,000 paid subscribers in 2019)[3] make them a perfect platform to disseminate new research insights.

Academic researchers can also actively present their studies in popular media or be available for interviews on the topics in which they specialize. Academic journals as well as academic institutions can help such efforts. For instance, several leading marketing journals, including *Marketing Science*, have worked on the accessibility of the insights in their published papers by translating them into a journalistic style. Academic institutions also help facilitate media exposure by actively linking researchers with media outlets interested in specific topics.

4. Stimulating public debate

In some cases, academic research in quantitative marketing can have policymaking implications that stimulate public debate. Popular media outlets are likely to be interested in such policymaking implications. In such cases, once the insights from the academic research become public, they may affect practitioners indirectly through guidelines enacted by policymakers.

I will share an example from my personal experience. Using the same bank data I used for the PhD project I mentioned, Professor Itai Ater from Tel Aviv University and I started a new project in which we examined bank customers' plan choices. That is, we examined how customers actually chose from the menu of plans. We found that customers were systematically not making the optimal plan choice - the choice that would minimize payments to the bank. Rather, customers consistently chose plans that were too expensive, given their level of activity. Figure 5a presents the choice patterns of the new plans compared with the cost minimizing plans for first-time adopters.

3 https://www.hbs.edu/news/releases/Pages/harvard-business-reviews-paid-circulation-climbs-to-340000.aspx

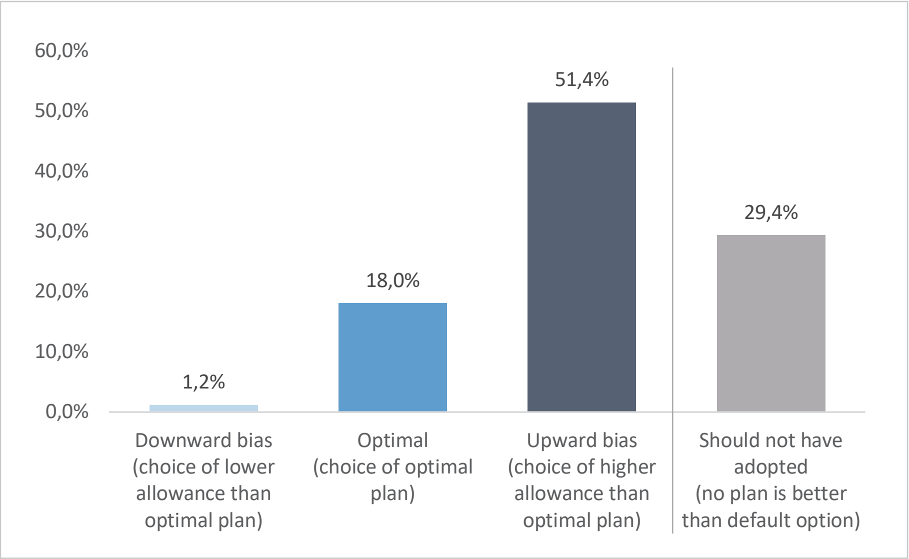

Figure 5a - Initial Plan Choice Compared with Optimal (Cost Minimizing) Plan.
Source: Ater and Landsman (2013)

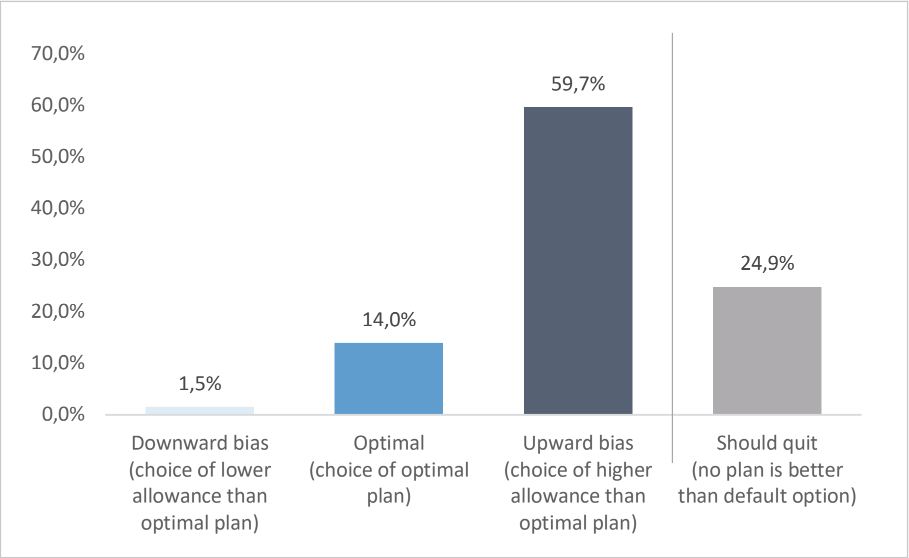

Figure 5b - Switching Choice Compared with Optimal (Cost Minimizing) Plan.
Source: Ater and Landsman (2013)

Because non-optimal choices can occur in the context of new services where customers are not yet experienced in making choices, we further checked whether customers learned from experience. We isolated the choices of customers who switched plans after the initial plan choice, assuming that experience should bring customers to their optimal plan. What we found is that customers did not tend to correct their initial non-optimal choice. Moreover, many customers who initially chose the correct plan later switched to a more expensive plan and ended up paying higher fees. Figure 5b shows the choice patterns of the new plans compared with the cost minimizing plans for switchers.

In two papers, we investigated and quantified this phenomenon and suggested theoretical explanations. However, the bottom line is that, although customers could have reduced their payments by 30% on average by choosing optimal plans, the revenue from the adopting customers increased by 9% on average with no significant change in the number of transactions. This represented significant gains for the bank. A couple of years later, most banks in Israel also adopted the new system with similar plans. Then, a newspaper article cited our papers and criticized the plan choice process. This initiated policy debates that eventually led to a decision by the central bank to force commercial banks to offer "plan simulators" to any customer interested in choosing a plan.

Increasing relevance

The four solutions mentioned above treat the problem as a translation task. They seem to assume that all content, once translated, will lead to an impact on marketing practitioners. Translation alone may not be sufficient, however, if the research itself is not relevant.

Albert Einstein stated:

"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on it, I would use the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes."

How can we make sure we dedicate enough thought to asking relevant questions that are indeed important for managers?

The following two solutions focus on ensuring research relevance. They do this by counteracting the inward-looking mindset of quantitative marketing researchers and encouraging engagement outside academia (Reibstein et al. 2009).

Universities increasingly recognize that they must embrace expertise and learning opportunities outside academia to strengthen their impact on society (Fitzgerald, Burns, Sonka, Furco, and Swanson 2016). Accordingly, higher education programs in applied research fields such as life sciences, engineering, and agriculture, design extensions outside university walls to bring their faculty closer to real-world problems (Swieringa 2019). This view corresponds with what Vermeulen (2007) terms the "second loop" or the loop of relevance (see Figure 6). The importance of a second loop is that it promotes communication with practitioners, whereas the first loop, centered in research rigor, is inward-looking within academic boundaries.

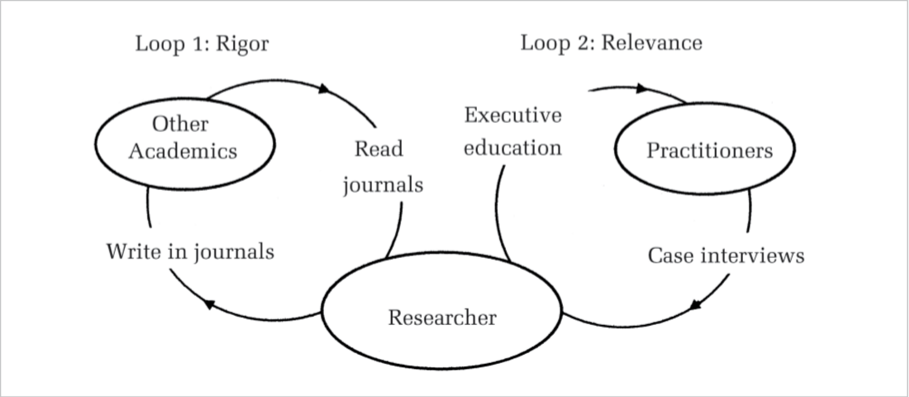

Figure 6 – Loops of Communication.
Source: Vermeulen (2007)

I will share one last example on how an outward mindset and direct interaction with managers benefited my own research and then I will describe the last two solutions. An idea for a project I recently published with Professor Stefan Stremersch evolved following a class discussion with executive MBA students. The topic was manufacturing firms that lay off large numbers of employees. From the class discussion, it was quite clear that the managers present, who were mostly from the automotive industry, did not expect any change in consumer demand following such collective layoffs. They also claimed that demand considerations were not part of restructuring discussions. Stefan and I then realized that hardly any academic papers have focused on how consumers react to collective layoffs. Not a single academic paper investigates what happens to sales following such layoffs. By comparison, there are at least nine papers, most of which are in leading journals, that investigate the sales consequences of product harm crises (e.g., Wynne and Hoffer 1976; Crafton, Hoffer, and Reilly 1981; Reilly and Hoffer 1983; Rhee and Haunschild 2006; Van Heerde, Helsen, and Dekimpe 2007; Zhao, Zhao, and Helsen 2011; Cleeren, van Heerde, and Dekimpe 2013; Liu and Shankar 2015). All of these papers find adverse effects on consumers and demand.

In just the past year in Europe there were 583 collective layoff announcements, affecting more than 278,000 workers (see Table 1) (Eurofound 2020). Given the scale of the phenomenon, the fact that managers were dismissive about the possibility that consumers would be affected by such announcements was surprising. However, such practitioners are likely to be exposed to, at most, a few collective layoff events by a limited number of firms. Academic research, on the other hand, can broaden this narrow perspective and view a managerial problem by using a large sample of observations.

Name	Cases of Job Loss	Total of Job Loss	Median Job Loss	Job Loss Percentage
Bankruptcy	67	25865	247	9.28
Bankruptcy/Closure	2	230	115	0.08
Closure	103	34050	200	12.22
Internal restructuring	358	203974	215.5	73.2
Merger/Acquisition	26	7767	166.5	2.79
Offshoring/Delocalisation	20	4312	180	1.55
Outsourcing	1	200	200	0.07
Relocation	6	2265	310	0.81
TOTAL	**583**	**278663**		**100.00**

Table 1 – A List Collective Layoffs by Type in Europe during the Year of 2019.
Source: Eurofound 2020

We decided to investigate this issue ourselves. We collected data on 205 collective layoff announcements by 20 big international automotive brands in nine countries over 15 years. We then checked, using a difference-in-differences specification, whether there was a significant change in sales, advertising elasticity, and price elasticity for the collective layoff brands in the collective layoff country. We found, contrary to the expectations of the managers in the executive education classes, that sales dropped significantly following collective layoff announcements. Sales for the collective layoff firm in the layoff country were on average 8.7% lower in the year following a collective layoff announcement than their predicted levels without an announcement. We also found that consumers became less sensitive to the advertising of a collective layoff brand and that they were more sensitive to prices of the brand following the announcement than they would have been without the announcement. At the same time, layoff firms typically decreased advertising spending in the collective layoff country compared to their predicted levels without the announcement, while they typically did not change prices.

These insights were new both to academic researchers and practitioners and can now serve as a reference for marketing managers in firms that (plan to) undergo collective layoffs.

5. Collaborating with marketing intermediaries.
RKS (2014) define marketing intermediaries as an important part of the "marketing science value chain." These marketing intermediaries could be market research agencies (e.g., ACNielsen or GfK), marketing and strategy consultancies (e.g., McKinsey or Bain), infrastructure vendors (SPSS), boutique vendors of model solutions (Management Decision Systems), or the marketing science division of a marketing organization (e.g., Novartis or General Mills). On one hand, these companies are closely connected to marketing managers and are therefore familiar with their dilemmas and their decision-making processes. On the other hand, they are also close to the academic world. They are more likely to employ researchers who are knowledgeable about the state of academic research in quantitative marketing and can invest time and effort into tracking recent developments. Thus, while such intermediaries have an important role in the translation task, they can also increase the relevance of research questions.

The paper by Guadagni and Little (1983) serves as a good example of the effectiveness of this collaboration type. According to RKS (2014), this paper has the highest dual impact (see top right of Figure 1). The paper was the first to build a useful model based on UPC scanner data that was very innovative in the early 1980s. In a commentary written on the 25th anniversary of its publication, Peter Guadagni and John Little reported that their collaboration with the consulting firm MDS allowed them to learn about an opportunity to study the problem that was, at the time, extremely relevant both to practitioners and to academic researchers. They also attributed a large part of the success of the paper at impacting practitioners to the fact that MDS later developed and sold applications based on the model they developed (Guadagni and Little 2008).

6. Encouraging external engagement
The sixth solution is at the academic institutional level. The idea is to promote direct engagement with practitioners by adding practice impact considerations to assessment procedures. In the marketing field there have been several calls to integrate an "impact on practice" element as a tenure and promotion criterion to incentivize researchers to adopt an outward mindset and increase research relevance (Reibstein, Day, and Wind 2009; Lilien 2011; Stremersch and Winer 2018). Marketing practitioners in many industries are quite advanced in their analytical and methodological tools. Academics do not have a monopoly on knowledge or on analytical and quantitative solutions. When I was teaching MBA students at Tel Aviv University, most of whom had computer science or engineering backgrounds, students shared quite impressive quantitative models developed in their companies. I also remember the level of sophistication used for marketing research and analytics in the bank at which I worked. Such companies do not wait for academia to give them tools and directions, but they can advance our field by sharing their dilemmas and their current ways of dealing with them. External engagement in marketing could take place through joint research projects with practitioners, by actually working in the industry (for example, during sabbaticals), or through consulting.

4. To conclude

In a *New York Times* article titled "Professors, We Need You!" Nicholas Kristof argues that "Some of the smartest thinkers on problems at home and around the world are university professors, but most of them just don't matter in today's great debate." (Kristof 2014 p.1). According to the article, part of the problem is an anti-intellectualism trend in American society. However, as noted by Anne-Marie Slaughter, a former dean at Princeton University, another issue is that academics in many disciplines are becoming "…more and more specialized and more and more quantitative, making them less and less accessible to the general public" (Kristof 2014).

Let's return to the example I started with, about my friend asking for academic papers to help with her presentation. Although this example demonstrates the frustrating nature of the situation, my claim in this talk is that we should not expect managers to look for and read the papers we write. My friend, like most managers, does not have the time to wade through mountains of papers in quantitative marketing to gain insights. This will never happen. Managers are more likely to be interested in big-picture conclusions based on an evolution of research streams or on breakthrough papers. If we think it is vital that managers access such insights, the burden of bridging the knowledge gap is on us academics, either directly or through intermediaries. I see this as part of our role as professors of marketing, just like executing research projects is.

5. Acknowledgment

I am giving this address two years after my promotion. It is no secret that I was struggling with the concept of an entire event centered on me. However, if there is one thing I am grateful for regarding my inaugural address, it is the opportunity to publicly thank the people who helped me get here. In the vibrant life we live, it is so important to have a chance to reflect and acknowledge the good people around us.

Dear Rector Magnificus, dear current Dean of the Erasmus School of Economics, dear Prof. Phillip Hans Franses, until recently, Dean of the Erasmus School of Economics.
It is a privilege to work at Erasmus University, an institution with such a strong reputation in the field of economics and business economics. I strive to contribute to the strength of this brand with my work. Throughout my employment here, I have enjoyed full support, which has helped me develop as an academic researcher. The fact that I am standing here now is one of many proofs of this.

Moshe Givon,
Moshik, my Ph.D. supervisor. You first hired me as a TA and later as a PhD student. I consider myself lucky to be your student.

Eitan Muller and Barak Libai.
I first met the two of you when I was a PhD student, and my office was next to yours. Eitan, I consider you my Israeli mentor. You introduced me to my other mentor, the Belgian one, whom I will get to next. Barak, I am glad you could not say no to an invitation from the Rector Magnificus. You are a true friend. The two of you, together with Roni Shachar, offered me the chance to go back to Tel Aviv University after my postdoc. An opportunity I will always be grateful for. I appreciate it that you came from Israel to celebrate with me today. Toda Raba!

Stefan Stremersch.
We have known each other for many years. When we first met, Danielle was just a two-week old baby, and now she is almost 14, as is our friendship. You are the most generous person I know. You have always been supportive and ready to give advice. You are the first I can count on to give me honest, to the point, feedback. The many stimulating, sometimes heated discussions we had over the years have led to six joint publications that I am proud of. I learned a lot from you and hope to learn much more. Thank you very much!

My colleagues in the marketing group at ESE
Benedict Dellaert, head of the Department of Business Economics and also head of our Marketing Group. I thank you for your calm and supportive leadership.

My friends Bas, Clement, Martijn, Michiel, Nuno, Radek, Stacey, Vardan, and Vijay. Dear Tulay. I am honored to be part of this group, full of talented and stimulating colleagues. I hope we will continue to grow as a strong and productive group.

My dear friends here
Cecilia, Bruno, Nathalie, Maarten, Efrat, Avi, Melanie, Bettina, and Peter. Thank you so much. You are my family here in the Netherlands. I cherish our friendship. The fact that you all were so readily willing to celebrate Valentine's Day in an academic institution already means a lot!

Dror
You are one of my earliest, and for sure the most beloved, academic achievements. I am happy that I found you when we were both young economics students at Tel Aviv University. That was more than two decades ago and I am still learning. The fact that I am here today and that I am who I am is mainly due to you. You balance me and at the same time, challenge me. I cannot imagine my life without you!

My dear **Danielle and Roni**,

You are my life!
I dedicate this address to you.

Ik heb gezegd (I have said)

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In this address she discusses the increasing divide between academic research in quantitative marketing and practice. She reviews the potential sources leading to this divide as well as solutions that have been suggested to bridge it.

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