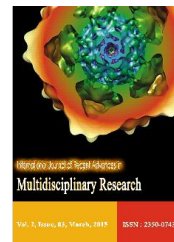


International Journal of Recent Advances in Multidisciplinary Research
Vol. 02, Issue 03, pp.0253-0256, March, 2015



Research Article

GENERALIZED DARWINISM FOR AN EVOLUTION THEORY OF MARKETING RESEARCH: SURVIVAL FOR THE FITTEST OF MARKETING KNOWLEDGE

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 27th December, 2014

Received in revised form

15th January, 2015

Accepted 26th February, 2015

Published online 31th March, 2015

ABSTRACT

Green The purpose of this paper is to propose how can a generalized view of Darwinism can be capitalized on to argue for an evolution theory of marketing research. It is argued that the stages of variation, selection and replication in Darwinism thinking are analogous in conjunction to the encoding, application and decoding phases of evolutionary marketing research. This research concludes that such triangulated should lead to enhanced academic comprehension of marketing phenomena, insights and outlooks.

Keywords:

Generalized Darwinism,
Evolution Theory,
Marketing Research Process.

INTRODUCTION

Rationale For Generalized Darwinism in Marketing

The large statue of Charles Darwin, overlooking the bay where the great scientist stepped ashore on Chatham, now San Cristobal, the most easterly of the Galapagos islands inspires the discussion of the ways in which evolutionary theory can contribute to our understanding of social sciences in general and marketing theory in particular (Barnett, 1996 and Vollmer 2010). It seems barely possible that careful observation of finches, mocking birds and tortoises could fundamentally change the way scientists think about the world, but in the 19th century it did. The Galapagos, 700 miles from the mainland of Ecuador, contain Flaura and Fama that differ from those of the rest of the world and differ, but less, from island to island. The genius of Darwin was to apprehend the process by which this pattern came about. Evolution is a process with three phases variation, selection, and replication. Changes happen, a few of these changes yield advantage, and such changes tend to be reproduced in subsequent generations. The extra ordinary outcome- so far -reaching in its implications that Darwin hesitated to publish his ideas-is that designs of extra ordinary complexity and efficiency can be achieved without the aid of one single superior masters of design. Designs can emerge beyond the comprehension of any individual (Chiou and Pan 2008 and Saad and Gill 2000).

That insight and the mechanics of variation, selection and replication are relevant to many problems other than the origin of species. By analogy, modern marketing theory and practice have developed as a result of the variation that comes from experiments in products and marketing methods, the selection by customers and capital markets of adaptation and innovations that add value (and the expulsion of those that don't) and the replication by competitors of strategies that succeed (Daniels and Martin 1999 and Gunn 1969).

Nevertheless, evolutionary thinking has made little progress in social sciences with special reference to economics, business and marketing and encountered vigorous resistance in other social sciences. One source of difficulty is the character and token of those who favor such intellectual extension and theoretical universality. Herbert Spencer, the 19th century philosopher of social sciences who coined the expression "survival of the fittest" seems a ludicrous figure in modern eyes, however he was highly influential in his time. Spencer saw social evolution as a process of progressive advance through natural selection which is an idea developed by eugenicists, who advocated selective breeding to improve the quality of human stock/inventory. Eugenics was comprehensively discredited when the Nazis took the argument to murderous extremes (Kundsen 1999 and Mulcohy 2003). Even today, the idea that human behavior might have biological organs is tainted by those fascist and racist associations.

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When EO Wilson the distinguished biologist applied the insights he had gained from the study of communities of ants to human social organization. His lectures were picketed and he was doused with water at a meeting of the American association for the advancement of science. But the demonstrating opponents had little understanding of the points at issue to describe evolution as "survival of the fittest" is in a sense accurate but also profoundly misleading. The process of evolution is one of "adaptation" rather than "improvement" (Satter, 2009, Matthews 1984 and Marks 2001).

The Galapagos tortoises survived for millions of years, not because tortoises are the master race, but because they are suited to a location characterized by mud, plentiful vegetation and a dearth of mammalian predators. The match of fitness between capabilities and environment is the key to the success, of the tortoise. These can be viewed as generalized Darwinism which questions the origin of knowledge not pieces which makes it quiet promising an evolutionally potential for marketing with special tips for marketing research. It's also the key to the successful marketing strategy the effectiveness of institutions and for personal development, and the evolutionary mechanisms of adaptation-oriented variation, selection and replication are as much at work in areas of human activity and social sciences like marketing as on the Galapagos. Evaluation of marketing is an arguable process of trial and error that receives regular feedback and tends to reproduce success of marketing initiatives. That is equivalently a fair description of how a market oriented organization aligns its productive capabilities with customer profiles needs, buying behaviors and perceived values (Marion, 2006 and Largeton 1979).

Reflecting at the sight of Darwin's statue on a remote pacific island with unique vegetation and wild life is an invitation to marketing humility. What worked best on one Galapagos Islands was not necessarily what worked best on another and the rationales and reasons might neither be obvious nor sensible. It has taken 20 years of observation by Peter and Rosemary Grant, a century after Darwin; to understand properly what the 19th century sage had seen when he observed the island finches (Sammut-Bonnici and Wensley 2002). Marketing Theorists, who believe they fully and ultimately understand complex marketing phenomena, generally know less than they think. Evolution is smarter than we as marketing scholars are and we need to be smart to understand the amplification of that deep observation based philosophical underpinning (Wolsky 2010 and Stoelhorst 2007).

An Evolution Theory of Marketing Research – Theoretical Postulates

On the other side of the argument introduced by this research, an emerging state-of-the-art, critical and innovative evolutionary perspective on modern marketing research thought could be devised to lead to configuring the marketing research process as a scientific transformation process as proposed by Kortam (2006). This proposed process is viewed as concerned with examining an positively handling ill-informed marketing issue and analytical gaps in marketing theory and practice. Based on that vision, the marketing research process can be, arguably, conceptualized as consisting of three main consecutive phases.

First, an encoding of concepts phase aiming to encode marketing problems and opportunities into scientific terms in the form of marketing research hypotheses/ questions. The essence of this encoding process through carrying out exploratory problem/opportunity definition activities to formulate research hypotheses/ questions. The main concern here should be the comprehensive coding of all the concepts constituting the specific particular aspects of the problem/opportunity under research. Second, an application of marketing research method phase which seek rigorously and verifiably implement the scientific process and adopt tools of marketing research. The main angle of this phase is to reach scientifically-grounded marketing solutions to solve coded marketing problems or seize encoded opportunities. The main concern of this phase is hung upon the strict and systematic conduct of the conclusive marketing research activities of sampling plan and design, development of measurement scales, data collection, preparation and analysis. Third, a decoding to context phase, which mainly involve translating scientific marketing solution to defined problems and opportunities into actionable marketing decisions and policies.

The conclusive marketing research activities of this phase are the so interpretation of analyzed and reporting these interpretations with a view to ward augmenting and promoting research findings and recommendations. The main concern of this phase is to come up with insightful, far-reaching, precise and creative interpretation of findings that are useful within the context in which marketing organization is encountering such problems/opportunities operate. As a wrap up, this configuration argues that the value added of marketing research rests on comprehensive coding of marketing research inputs, a rigorous application of marketing research process and a realistic and action oriented interpretation of marketing research outputs. Such evolutionary synergy-oriented systems' perspective of marketing research activities is argued to assist in making marketing research more adaptable and thus more valuable to specific settings such as generalized Darwinism highlighting survival of the fittest of intellectual knowledge through the processes of variation, selection and replication thus emphasizing robustness of marketing intelligence which applies only to knowledge and declining the disgrace of any biological superiority (Kask 2013 and Kortam *et al.*, 2012).

Conceptual Framework

It is argued by this research that encoding marketing problems into scientific terms should expand variation of marketing ideas. The comprehensive and unstructured nature of the encoding phase should be expected to allow for a wider range of marketing ideas and dimensions to emerge, thus creating a large pool of marketing potentials and horizons. This should lead to the recognition of the multidimensional and highly stochastic nature and essence of most marketing phenomena. Therefore the carve Lanier and skewness of lines expressing a marketing phenomenon would safeguard it against any straight line bias or conventional stereotypical thinking. The application of scientific research methods to reach scientific marketing solutions should result in a selection of the fittest of the large pool of marketing ideas created by the encoding phase. The rigor and imperial substantiation of this phase ought to produce highly grounded and strictly screening process relying on highly scientific standards.

Consequently ruthless exclusion and inclusion process of marketing ideas will take place for filling the principle of "survival of the fittest" of those ideas. This phase and its highly regulars selection mechanism emphasis the relativity of marketing truth. This reflection implies that a marketing insight is asset of interrelated conceptual configuration and empirical test that links several points of comparison. Thus these linkages keep marketing insights away from the superficial description of being on one point only leading to unsafe generalizations about the justifications of the levels and extensions of marketing variables.

Decoding of scientific marketing solutions into actionable marketing descions and polices should give room for an increasingly accelerated and dynamic replication process of variation and selection .the intensively relevant features of the decoding phase open more venous for future marketing research that aims to generate even greater varieties of marketing ideas at the replicated encoding phase. On the other hand the decoding phase revels more appropriate standards of selection bringing about even more reguess screening and subsequent survival of only the fittest of the fittest of marketing ideas at the applications phase. These replications eventually result in more proudly elaborate and sophisticated understandings of the essence of marketing phenomena. Further more greaterdeapth of marketing insights will materialize as more insightful linkages between points of signals are discovered as aresult of such replications. Ultimately this leads to developing angle expressions of the future outlook of marketing phenomena that moves away from over simplified sharp angel extrapolation into more for sightful anticipation of thesuchphenomena.

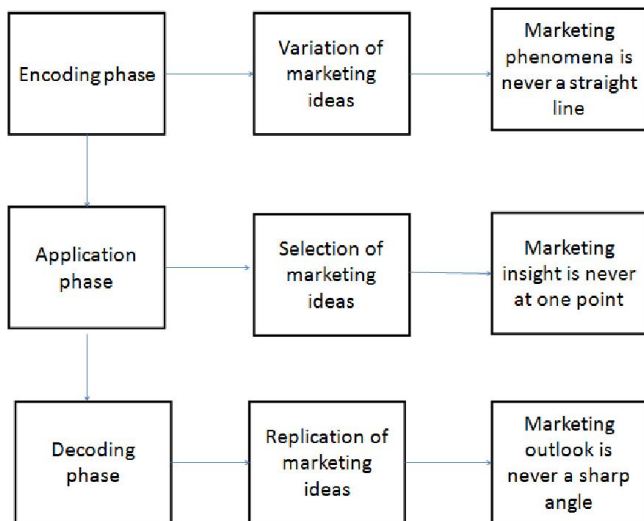


Figure 1. depicts the proposed framework of this research based on the above argument

Research propositions

The proposed conceptual framework advocates the following research propositions:

- **R1:** the encoding phase of the evolution of marketing research contributes significantly and positively to creating a variation of marketing ideas that improves the nonlinear description of marketing phenomena.

- **R2:** the application phase of the evolution of marketing research contributes significantly and positively to the selection of the fittest of marketing ideas that leads to developing a multi-point marketing insight of marketing variables.
- **R3:** the decoding phase of the revolution of marketing research contributes significantly and positively to the replication of the variation and selection process in a way that determines the more future oriented angel that provides a more accurate outlook of marketing phenomena and variables.

Future Empiricism- A Conclusive Embark

It is quite challenging to find an empirical marketing research institutional platform and applied context to test this multi-fasted research propositions. Panels are argued to be a very comprehensive, regulars and relevant testing ground for the arguments made by the proposed conceptual framework. The representativeness of the profile and size of a panel grantees a minimum level of variation of marketing ideas generated by the diversity of the members of this panels. The common substantial size of the panel and the evident dispersion or variation of the perception and altitude of its sampling units that will cater for regress application of scientific marketing research method and subsequent objective selection of the fittest of marketing ideas.

The relevance of panels to most commonly examined marketing phenomena and variables and the long term commitment of its sampling units to data collection should allow for more effective replications as a consequence of the decoding phase. The super panel of a world-class multinational marketing research agency will be used through a structured questionnaire measuring the signals and indicators of each phase of the marketing research evolution process in conjunction with the counterpart phases of intellectual Darwinism and there outputs in the form of understandings, insights and outlooks of marketing phenomena and variables. A confirmatory factor analysis and eventually path analysis will be used to test the research propositions to understand the underlying dimensions of the marketing research constructs coined out of intellectual Darwinism perspectives and the arguably evolving phases of the evolution process of marketing research.

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