

## **THE REVIEW ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING THOUGHT, CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS AND ITS CHANGING NATURE**

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**Abstract:** *This paper studies the history of marketing science as a discipline and discusses the development of early marketing paradigms throughout the different epochs. It also provides the snapshot of marketing definitions speculates on the innovative ways of marketing communication and possibilities for both businesses and customers.*

**Аннотация:** *В этой статье изучается история маркетинга как научная дисциплина и обсуждается развитие ранних маркетинговых примеров в разные эпохи. Также, приводятся образцы маркетинговых определений отражающих инновационные способы маркетингового общения и возможностей для бизнеса и клиентов.*

**Аннотация:** *Ушбу мақола, маркетинг тушунчасини фан сифатида ривожланиши тарихини, турли даврлардаги ривожланиши босқичларини ва унга берилган турли таърифларидаги ўхшашлик ва фарқларни шарҳлайди. Шунингдек, бугунги кунги инновацион коммуникация воситаларидаги жадал технологик ривожланишлар корхоналар ва мижозлар учун қандай имкониятларни яратаяётганлигини муҳокама қилади.*

**Key words:** *marketing thought, marketing concepts, marketing paradigms, marketing definitions*

### **Introduction**

Marketing science has evolved more than a century ago - during the 1900s. The first college courses in marketing were offered in 1901- 1902 at the Universities of Illinois and Michigan and the first text-books appeared in the years 1911 - 1915 [1]. Such scholars as Hollander et al. [2] and Enright [3] have explained that the contradictory dates for the evolution of marketing can be described by issues surrounding the approach that marketing has been defined - whether reference to ‘modern marketing’ as a professional practice including activities such as segmentation, product differentiation, positioning and marketing communications versus ‘marketing’ as a simple form of distribution and exchange. It is only during the early twentieth century that the study of the history of marketing as an academic field emerged and marketing concepts advanced into an academic discipline. The foundations of marketing discipline take its roots in American management literature between the 1950s and the 1960s, when some scientists started to explore some management practices and, above all, the origin of market success [4].

In this paper, we study the history of marketing science as a discipline and discuss the evolution of early marketing concepts. This will help us to understand how

the discipline have evolved as a science and to comprehend the baselines upon which marketing research practices have been documented as it progressed throughout the different epochs. We provide the snapshot of keywords that are used to define marketing to depict the central focus of the concept for many decades. Subsequently, we discuss the most recent emergence and advances of new technology that is transforming marketing by offering new ways of communication and possibilities for both businesses and customers.

### Literature review

Historians of marketing tend to distinguish between two separate branches of marketing history - *the history of marketing practice* and *the history of marketing thought*. Accordingly:

- (a) the *history of marketing practice* refers to an investigation into the ways that marketing has been practiced; and how those practices have evolved over time as they respond to changing socio-economic conditions.
- (b) the *history of marketing thought* refers to an examination of the ways that marketing has been studied and taught.

These two branches are usually profoundly separated and have very diverse origins. The history of marketing practice is based in management and marketing studies, while the history of marketing thought is based in economic and cultural history. This means that the two branches ask very different types of research questions and employ different research tools and frameworks [2]. Although the history of marketing thought, and the history of marketing practice are separate areas of study, they might cross over at different stages [4; 5;].

Marketing practitioners can be involved in the innovative activities that attract the attention of marketing professors who organise and publicise such practices. Concurrently, marketing academics frequently develop novel research approaches or models that are subsequently implemented by practitioners. Thus, advances in marketing theory enlighten marketing practice and vice versa. Therefore, the history of marketing will be inadequate if the academia is isolated from practitioners.

Marketing has been developed largely from the fields of economics, scientific management, psychology, and accounting. Several academics claim that marketing practices can be found in ancient times while others propose that modern marketing practices have emerged along with the rise of consumer culture in seventeenth and eighteenth century in Western Europe. Scholars of marketing science have undertaken substantial investigation into the evolution of marketing. However, up till now there is little agreement about when marketing first began.

The view of scientists on the classification of the development of marketing thought vary. Some researchers suggest that contemporary marketing was only fully understood after the industrial revolution in Britain from where it later penetrated to Europe and North America, when technological advances and production growths lead to the decrease of companies' individual customer interaction and issues with surplus goods [2].

Providing a modern definition of marketing, describe practices involved with it and brief review about major transformations in this field, would be logical step before moving to the analysis of the historical evolution of the marketing concept. Marketing

is defined by the American Marketing Association Board of Directors as *“the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”*. Majority of scholars discuss marketing as performance expressed by performing marketing practices such as market research, product research and development, design, pricing, distribution and advertising. Moreover, authors consider consumer behaviour, manipulations in price, packaging, mode of distribution and display of products, music, size of advertisings, and other marketing environment as a part of marketing practices, applied to affect firm’s performance.

Simultaneously, commercial architecture, branding, advertising and promotional activities, building relationship and customer loyalty as well as identifying consumption patterns, values, tastes, preferences, needs, desires, trend of consumer behaviour are a part of marketing implications. Additionally, cross-cultural research is also assumed as an essential part of marketing practice since the latter differs under the impact of people living in different countries.

In this paper we review the historical development of different thoughts on the evolution marketing as a scientific discipline. We provide comparative analysis of prevalent views of different scholars on the development of marketing thought, concepts, definitions and its changing nature.

### **Comparative analysis of the scientific thoughts on marketing**

Marketing has been practiced since ancient times and has been thought about almost as long. Yet, it is only during the last century that marketing ideas officially evolved into an academic discipline. The world’s society and the marketing field have experienced colossal changes equally throughout this time. The form of marketing practices is equipped with much enhanced technology and this growth initiating changes in several realms quantitatively, behaviourally and strategically on a global scale. Across the span of the last century, many thought-provoking insights on the domain of marketing and its broader relationships with society have been developed.

Therefore, it is meaningful to question what is the threat of being left behind. Based on the review of scientific thoughts of marketing across the last century, this article depicts a widespread description of the general course that has been taken by the body of marketing thought over the different stages of its evolution. The view of scientists on the classification of the development of marketing thought also vary. For instance, Wilkie and Moore [6] discuss the "4 Eras" of marketing thought development. Table 1 outlines the "4 Eras of Marketing Thought" since the field’s formal beginnings.

**Table 1.**

### **The "4 Eras" of Marketing Thought**

| <i>Era</i>   | <i>Distinctive characteristics</i>  |
|--|---|
| <i>"Pre-Marketing"</i><br><i>(Before 1900)</i>       | - No distinguishing field of study; issues are embedded within the field of economics.  |
| <i>I. "Founding the Field"</i><br><i>(1900-1920)</i> | - Development of the first courses with "marketing" in title.<br>- Emphasis on defining purview of marketing’s activities as economic institution.<br>- Focus on marketing as distribution. |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| II. "Formalizing the field" (1920-1950)                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of generally accepted foundations or "principles of marketing.</li> <li>- Establishment of knowledge development infrastructure for the field: professional association (AMA), conferences, journals (Journal of Retailing and Journal of Marketing).</li> </ul>  |
| III. "A Paradigm Shift-Marketing, Management, and the Sciences" (1950-1980)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Growth boom in U.S. mass market and marketing body of thought.</li> <li>- Two perspectives emerge to dominate the marketing mainstream: (1) the viewpoint and (2) the behavioural and quantitative sciences as keys to future knowledge development.</li> <li>- Knowledge infrastructure undergoes major expansion and evolution.</li> </ul>                                |
| IV. "The Shift Intensifies-A Fragmentation of the Mainstream" (1980-present) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New challenges arise in business world: short-term financial focus, downsizing, globalization, and reengineering.</li> <li>- Dominant perspectives are questioned in philosophy of science debates.</li> <li>- Publish-or-perish pressure intensifies on academics.</li> <li>- Knowledge infrastructure expands and diversifies into specialized interest areas.</li> </ul> |

Source: Adopted from Wilkie, W. L., & Moore, E. S. (2003). *Scholarly research in marketing: Exploring the "4 eras" of thought development. Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 22(2), 116-146.*

As indicated in Table 1, "Pre-Marketing" era (before 1900) is described as the period of public policy toward economic pursuits of central interest and laissez-faire versus government constraints.

The first era (1900-1920) of formal marketing thought began just in the beginning of the twentieth century, when the academics have started to pay more attention to this field of science which is known as "the area of market distribution". Therefore, the marketing domain began acquiring its own exclusive identity when professors at many universities across the United States autonomously started to introduce new courses to scrutinise several facets of the marketing system, including "distributive and regulative industries" (University of Michigan), "the marketing of products" (University of Pennsylvania), "methods of marketing farm products" (University of Wisconsin), and "mercantile institutions" (New York University) [7].

This era focused on value of distribution and the role of marketing agents was perceived as contributing to economic growth and efficiency. According to Wilkie and Moore [6] consumers' possibility to choose goods have increased significantly with the invention and mass production of handy packaged goods, supplied in new retail mode such as the supermarket. These social changes opened new prospects for manufacturers as well as carried diverse challenges requiring them to have more refined and mixed distribution systems and a more proficient comprehension of tools to stimulate mass consumer demand.

During Era II, the business schools began to develop on a widespread basis, the functional approach obtained extensive acknowledgment amongst marketing thinkers, and the textbooks was on the process of establishing the generally accepted marketing principles. Therefore, according to Wilkie and Moore [6], this era also continued with the emphasis on economic efficiency of marketing functions such as (1) physically supplying the market, (2) creating opportunities for exchange, and (3) auxiliary or facilitating functions.



Era III has witnessed the burst of significant new concepts. Specifically, marketing started to be seen from the managerial perspective and the quantitative and behavioural sciences have emerged into the marketing mainstream. A new think tank, the Marketing Science Institute (MSI) was formed in 1961, and in 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy announced the Consumer Bill of Rights within the framework of U.S. society [8]. According to this important declaration, consumers have the rights to expect product safety, to be fully informed, to have freedom of choice, and to have a voice in the rules for the marketplace. During this period consumer behaviour's impetus was enormously enhanced by the appearance of textbooks such as Gerald Zaltman's [9] *“Marketing: Contributions from the Behavioural Sciences”*; Engel, Kollat and Blackwell's [10] *“Consumer Behaviour”*; John Howard and Jagdish Sheth's [11] *“The Theory of Buyer Behaviour”*; and Harold Kassarian and Thomas Robertson's [12] *“Perspectives in Consumer Behaviour”*.

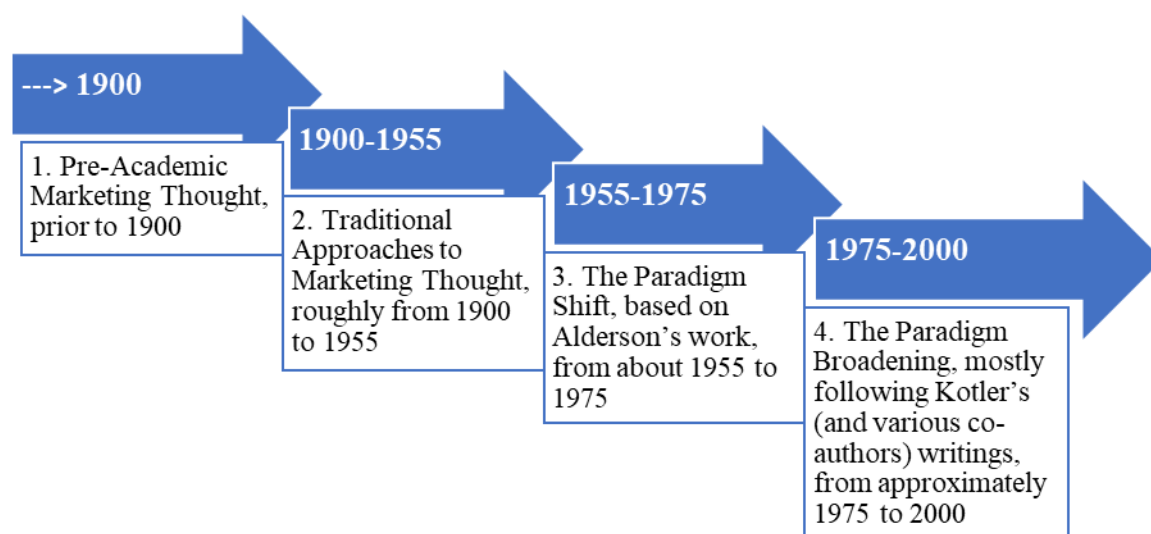
Wilkie and Moore [6] described the Era IV as a paradoxical evolution and comprehensive coverage of marketing and society. Accordingly, Era IV, which ranges from 1980 to present, takes the managerial perspective and the major focus of academic effort should be to improve the effectiveness of managers' marketing decisions. Era IV has witnessed such focal shifts as a massive globalisation of business education and business concepts. During this era new academics came into marketing field and entire blocs of nations (republics under former Soviet Union) have moved toward market-based economy and away from centralized command and control. The field of consumer research has advanced with the growth in computers, as it allowed for large-scale consumer surveys and the diffusion of new empirical research findings, their causes, and their implications.

Keith [13] also presented a new view on the evolution of marketing thought by dividing it into four eras such as *“production oriented era”* (1869-1930), *“sales oriented era”* (1930s), *“marketing oriented era”* (1960s), and the 4th era is *“marketing control”*. However, Keith's [13] historical theory of a marketing revolution has been criticised by several authors (cf. [14]; [15]; [16]. According to Fullerton [14], Keith [13] relied exclusively on his knowledge of Pillsbury's [17] history and cannot be generalised. Several scholars such as Fullerton [14] and Jones and Richardson [16] well documented that there is no evidence of sales-era and/or marketing-era ideas during the period Keith [13] referred to as the production era.

Shaw and Jones [5] also divide the development of schools of marketing thought into four periods that roughly parallel with Wilkie and Moore's [6] '4 Eras'. They are presented in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 1, Pre-Academic Marketing Thought, prior to 1900, is characterized as the debates held on macro-marketing issues such as how marketing was integrated into society by various thinkers dating back to the ancient Greek Socratic philosophers as Plato and Aristotle [19]. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Medieval schoolmen, from St Augustus of Hippo to St Thomas of Aquinas, wrote about micromarketing concerns, such as how people could practice marketing ethically and without sin [20]. Most scholars came to an agreement that marketing as an academic discipline emerged as a branch of applied economics. Several schools of economics, particularly the Classical and Neoclassical schools ([7], as well as the

German Historical and American Institutional schools [21], contributed to the development of marketing science at that time.



**Figure 1. Four periods of the development of schools of marketing thought [18]**

During the second period roughly from 1900 to 1955, traditional approaches to Marketing Thought were developed. At the turn of the 20th century business entities prospered in the United States. People started to migrate to cities massively, national brands and chain stores have emerged, free mail and package delivery services have appeared, and newspaper and magazine advertising have increased dramatically. The creation and expansion of the continent-wide railroad engendered ever-increasing trunk lines to even small cities, larger cities developed mass transit, and growing numbers of automobiles and lorries travelled on ever-expanding highways. These developments connected rural farmers through agents and brokers, and allied producers with intermediary traders, and wholesalers with vendors. As a result, not just small specialty stores ultimately could reach household consumers, but the new giant department stores and national mail order houses too [5]. These changes demanded substantial enhancements in market distribution system.

The first marketing courses in American universities were offered in 1902, along the boom of the academic schools of business at the end of the 19th century [7]. To organize marketing's distinct subject matter, pioneer scholars in the newly emerging discipline developed the first three approaches to the scientific study of marketing phenomena: (1) cataloguing functions; (2) classifying commodities; and (3) categorizing institutions.

Period three, approximately between 1955 and 1975, is called a Paradigm Shift (analogous to the expression used by Wilkie and Moore [6]). The paradigm shift from traditional approaches to modern schools of marketing thought evolved from more than a few stages of development. Throughout the Second World War, it was influenced by military achievements in mathematical modelling such as linear programming. Immediately following the end of a war, the shift in capacity from military production to consumer goods stimulated economic progress in the United States creating supply surpluses, and this has made business firms to think seriously about the demand

generation activities. The most significant source of the paradigm shift in academic thought, however, was the thinking of the leading scholar of his time – Wroe Alderson. Banking on his numerous articles (cf. [22]; [23] and presentations, marketing theory seminars, newsletters, and two seminal books (cf. [24]; [25], the paradigm shift gave rise to the most modern schools of thought eclipsing the traditional approaches, including: the marketing functions school, commodity school, the institutional school, the consumer behaviour school, and others. These schools characterise some perspectives of marketing overall, and can be a thought-provoking theme for a different discussion.

The fourth period, from about 1975 to 2000, is called the Paradigm Broadening. During this epoch, various academics from outside the field (particularly psychology) started conquering the marketing discipline with diverse types of empirical studies in consumer behaviour domain [26]. In other schools, the major push for extending the paradigm was again a well-known scholar Philip Kotler [27] and his various co-authors (cf. [28]; [29]. This drive led to a separation in three schools: marketing management, exchange, and consumer behaviour. This paradigm broadening has amplified the margins of marketing thought from its conservative focus on business activities to a wider perspective comprising all forms of human activity related to any generic or social exchange.

In his book, Bartels [30] also regarded marketing not merely as a business practice, but as a social institution. Accordingly, marketing is basically a means of meeting and satisfying certain needs of people in the development of market economy. Table 2 summarises Bartel’s [30] classification of the development of marketing thought.

**Table 2.**

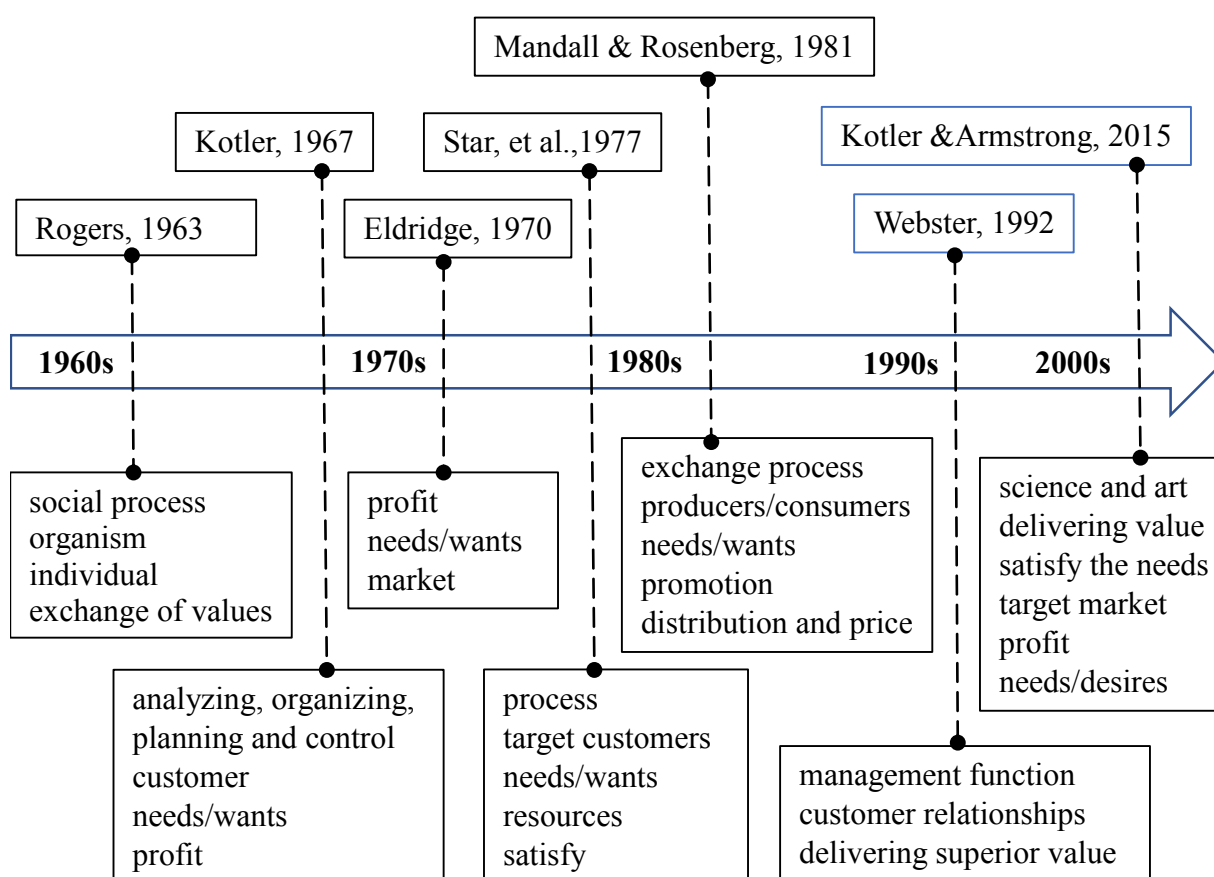
**Bartel’s (1976) classification of the development of marketing thought**

| <i>Year</i>      | <i>Periods</i>  |
|------------------|---|
| <b>1910-1920</b> | Period of conceptualization - many marketing concepts were initially developed, and concepts were classified, and terms were defined.   |
| <b>1920-1930</b> | Period of integration - principles of marketing were postulated, and the general body of thought was integrated for the first time.   |
| <b>1930-1940</b> | Period of development - specialized areas of marketing continued to be developed, hypothetical assumptions were verified and quantified.  |
| <b>1940-1950</b> | Period of reappraisal - the concept and traditional explanation of marketing was re-appraised in terms of new needs for marketing knowledge.  |
| <b>1950-1960</b> | Period of reconception - increasing emphasis upon managerial decision making, the societal aspects of marketing, and quantitative marketing analysis.   |
| <b>1960-1970</b> | Period of differentiation - as marketing thought became expanded, new concepts such as managerialism, holism, environmentalism, systems, and internationalism took on substantial identity as significant components of the total structure of thought. |
| <b>1970</b>      | Period of socialization - social issues and marketing became much more important, as the influence not of society upon marketing, but of marketing upon society became a focus of interest.   |

Source: Bartels, R. (1976). *The History of Marketing Thought*, Columbus, Ohio, Grid.

The scientific debates provided above confirm that the concept of marketing has been discussed and appraised frequently since marketing was acknowledged as a distinctive subject area. Many definitions of marketing have been introduced over the years as each generation tries to capture what marketing is and what it means to them. Over the past 70 years, description of marketing has been revised and redefined to fit new contexts such as not-for-profit, political and social sectors. In more recent years, the entry of new technology and interactive mass media to our everyday life, such as the television, internet, electronic scanning devices, mobile shopping, made it possible to apply different techniques in managing marketing activities and have brought with them more opportunities for re-defining marketing.

Gamble et al. [31] made comprehensive analyses of various definitions of marketing ranging from the 1960s to the present, and discussed each in the context of the sociocultural, technological and organisational changes. In Figure 2, based upon Gamble et al.'s chronology, we present a snapshot of the lexicon that used most frequently in several commonly cited definitions of marketing since its progression as a scientific discipline.



**Figure 2. The keywords used in marketing definitions through 1960s to 2015s**

The different classifications or paradigms have been proposed throughout the development of marketing thought. However, relying on the snapshot in Figure 2, we can see that “exchange” has arguably been the foundational construct in marketing for several decades. In the most recent definition Kotler and Armstrong [32] refer to it as



“the science and art”: *“The science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services”*.

The definition of marketing, which is approved by the American Marketing Association Board of Directors [33], is developed from the original meaning which referred literally to going to a market to buy or sell goods or services: *“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”*. In 2007, The Chartered Institute of Marketing [34] has proposed another definition of marketing for the first time in 30 years which currently describes marketing as *“the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably”*. According to this redefinition, marketing is not just about advertising or selling, but it is a key managerial activity that ensures producers of goods and services to predict and understand consumer wants/needs and match, or exceed them.

### **Conclusion and future research avenues**

To conclude, the changing nature of marketing might be characterised by the recent globalisation of markets and technological advancements. In this conceptual review of marketing thought, we saw that over the past decades, marketing academics and practitioners have witnessed major transformations in the field of marketing. Today, the global environmental issues have also shaped both business practices and public life throughout the world. The global environmental issues and the rapid advances in the technology is continuing to change the way we live, consume and communicate at fast pace.

These issues have shaped business practices and public life throughout the world by generating threats or opportunities such as green marketing, eco-friendly products, organic food, renewable energy etc. Keeping the environment safe is now a new concern of all stakeholders, governments, businesses, public and customers. It is extremely important to acknowledge that green marketing becomes a central focus with the threat of global warming. Modern customers are more careful to choose eco-friendly products to maintain the environment safe.

In addition to environmental factors, the rapid advances in the technology is continuing to change the way we live, consume and communicate at breakneck speed. Marketing is influenced by the development and popularization of several new innovative technologies such as augmented reality, virtual reality, personal digital assistants, big data, social media, Interest-based advertising, and the Internet-capable interconnected devices such as smart ovens, smart TVs. These promising new technologies may yield countless new opportunities for marketers. Marketing is influenced by the development and popularization of several new innovative technologies such as:

- Augmented reality - marketers are already racing to develop new AR apps or take advantage of AR games to find new ways to bridge the gap between the physical and virtual worlds.

- Virtual reality such as second-life can dramatically change advertisements and messages and online shopping capabilities.

- Personal digital assistants – the systems capable of communicating with users enabling us to rely on voice-based queries in finding a reliable information and performing functions both on the web and on-device content.

- Machine learning algorithms – Google’s RankBrain is a self-updating machine learning algorithm, capable of gathering and interpreting information about its own functionality and improving itself over time. It supports to better understand the semantics of user queries and produce search results that cater to a user’s perceived needs.

- Data visualization - Big data gives access to insane amounts of consumer data and insights about consumer behaviour which subsequently leads us to make tailored marketing campaigns.

- Marketing automation platforms that allow the scheduling and syndication of social media posts to software programs that can write content from scratch and sound like a human wrote it.

- The Internet-capable interconnected devices such as smart ovens, smart TVs, and appliances that can be remotely programmed and integrated into the same overall system can enable marketers to advertise a product as consumers are using a similar product, or communicating with consumers immediately within their homes.

- Social media gave marketers the chance to monitor and contribute to the conversations that consumers have online in real-time. The social-networking platforms such as Facebook, and widespread consumer adoption of “smart” mobile devices have transformed marketing communications, offering new ways to reach target customers, engage in public-relations, sell products, learn about consumer insights, and provide service to customers. Just as the rapid progress in mobile adoption has opened new ways of marketing communications for retailers, the social media also has changed how buyers share information with each other and interact with brands.

- Search engine optimization is one of the most important and cost-effective ways to attract customers on the internet.

- Interest-based advertising - behavioural targeting allows ads to be more relevant, valuable and thus persuasive to the consumer.

Based on the above speculations of the promising new technologies that may yield countless new opportunities for marketers, we assume that while creating value and customer satisfaction might stay as a central focus, marketing concept may develop further by broadening into the different new paradigms in the future.

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