

## Discovering A Transformational Science of Marketing in Corporate, Social And Knowledge Perspectives: Is Not It About Time That A Marketing Scholar Becomes A Nobel Laureate?

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**Abstract:** This paper is for marketers who strive to bring about a change in marketing to change this world. This paper aimed at fulfilling this far reaching end by configuring and devising a transformational philosophical logic. This logic is composed of transformational postulates reaching out to transformational edges of marketing as a science. Such process would be reflected within transformational domains to be magnified and streamlined by transformational edges of marketing theory and practice. Firstly, transformational postulates are illuminated by the backbone argument of pragmatic versus dogmatic marketing creeds. This gives rise to four subsequent core controversial arguments, contrasting the critical issues of empiricism, valorization, context specificity and multidisciplinary against their rival extremes of theorization, generalized universality, global transcendence, and original authenticity. Second, these heated intellectual polarizations take marketing ideologies on a journey of revisits and blurring, to reconsider transformational marketing edges consolidated in the boundaries of customer orientation, convergence marketing, value-based marketing, knowledge-based marketing, interdisciplinary marketing, and contextual marketing. Third, such revisits are expected to fulfill their full transformational potential when viewed through the lenses of transformational marketing domains including corporate, social and knowledge perspectives, which telescope (focus?) the transformational influences of marketing thought and practice. Fourth, and conclusively, the paper is a proactive endeavor to unleash the transformational leverages of marketing actions in order to perpetuate the transformational thrust of marketing research and practice through the deliberate adoption of, and capitalization on, transformational agendas, methodologies and deliverable outputs. Thus the authors propose a cohesive progressive philosophy of marketing science that optimizes its change-catalyst extremes in order to broaden the horizons of academic marketing breakthroughs and decision/policy initiatives. The aim is to justify a well-earned legitimacy for marketing scholars to be Nobel Laureates, for their contributions to transforming their economic, moral and scientific universes.

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### Introduction and Synthesis

This concept paper argues for a main controversy with four subsequent sequel controversies within the scope of three perspectives that should augment the credentials of marketing as a transformational scientific area of inquiry with wide range and far reaching basic and applied contributions to human knowledge and welfare of mankind. Subsequently this solid standing should boost marketing scholars on equal foot with their counterpart social scientists in their eligibility for Nobel prizes and other highly recognized and self actualizing scientific awards reflecting their dedication to and excellence in creating rigorous and fruitful transformational human knowledge. The main controversy that is argued to be pursued for anchoring this legacy for marketing science and scientists is that of pragmatic versus dogmatic discipline of marketing and four related subsequent controversies. These controversies in turn, are argued

to bring about their full conceptual and intellectual impact on making the marketing discipline an influentially transformational area of scientific inquiry, when viewed through three perspectives reflecting somehow diverse priorities for empirical and abstract marketing intelligentsia. These perspectives are corporate perspective reflecting business targets of entrepreneurs and their organizational settings, a social perspective raising public welfare and moral concerns toward marketing institutions and organizations and a knowledge perspective addressing the uses and implications of marketing knowledge processes and platforms to marketing trends and ideologies. The transformational influence of revisiting the above controversies through bearing the views of business entities, social inertias, and knowledge breakthroughs ought to serve as catalysts for real transformational marketing edges.

These controversies are arguably expected to serve as an effective vehicle for revisiting the boundaries of marketing science as envisioned through the three perspectives to make it more transformational in terms of its agenda, methodologies and quality of produced outputs. The paper concludes with a suggested research agenda as an impetus for embarking down the road map to make marketing thought transformational to earn its due place among contemporary and future world disciplines. This road map as expressed in the research agenda and its logically sequenced progression emphasizes a holistic transition of marketing thought and practice according to a crafted outlook looking to trigger an integrated stream of transformational marketing ideology and eventually a supportive best practice. The proposed paper's synthesis is depicted by Figure (1).

### Literature Review

Transformational marketing addresses the role of marketing in driving organizational, social, community and environmental change. In particular, transformational marketing encourages, facilitates and inspires investigations that are framed by a fundamental problem or opportunity to: move marketing from the back room to the boardroom (Kumar and Shah, 2004); respect, uphold, and improve life in relation to the myriad conditions, demands, potentialities, and effects of consumption (Mick, 2006); focus on research which carries significant implications for both theory development and social action (DeBerry-Spence, 2008 and Lai, 2010).

To that end, transformational marketing is the process by making marketing the catalyst for corporate and social change, and for advancing human knowledge to increase the welfare of human beings. Applying marketing thought and activities to the threats and opportunities of consumption (e.g. community networks, family coherence, ecological stability) could direct radical, new solutions and synergies to organizational and consumer behaviors (Broderick, 2010). In addition, placing interactive thinking at the core of marketing strategy and offering interactive channels as the foundation of marketing delivery should facilitate these solutions and create the potential to transform organizations, markets, societies and knowledge (Romani and Kumar, 2008).

Although transformative marketing research has an immediate practical perspectives and orientations, it does not forsake rigorous methodology or perceptible theory. In fact, it is mostly—if not only—through meticulous description and compelling explanation that the findings can lead

to constructive and actionable implications (Mick, 2006). This will be outlined and discussed in the next sections.

### The Need for Further Research

The question of why no marketing scholar has ever become a Nobel laureate is not a lust for fame and fortune but a serious scientific query that hammers the essence of scientific marketing knowledge. Any scientific discipline earns its due place as a breeding ground for Nobel laureates through its rigorous endeavors and broad scope paradigms that promises and strives to advance human knowledge, scientifically pursue human causes and welfare and ultimately seek the scientific truth that transform this world into a more virtuous and sustainable place for mankind to live and prosper (Gronroos, 2008 and Benton and Craib, 2001). There is a clear need for research into venues, platforms, perspectives, controversies and drives that possess the conceptual and empirical sense of direction into a clear transformational role and contributions.

### Aim of Research

This concept paper aims to devise each of the above controversy to revisit one or more of the above boundaries of marketing as a science within the three perspectives to enable it to produce scientific marketing theories and best practices that are characterized by significant transformational traits. These transformational traits include truthfulness, valid essence, relevance, universality, multidisciplinary, authenticity, localization and globalization. The paper will also seek to demonstrate that the arguably robust drive and action mechanism for making marketing transformational would be through: 1) adopting a more transformational marketing agenda, 2) developing more transformational research methodologies and 3) producing drastically transformational scientific marketing outputs.

### Conceptual Framework

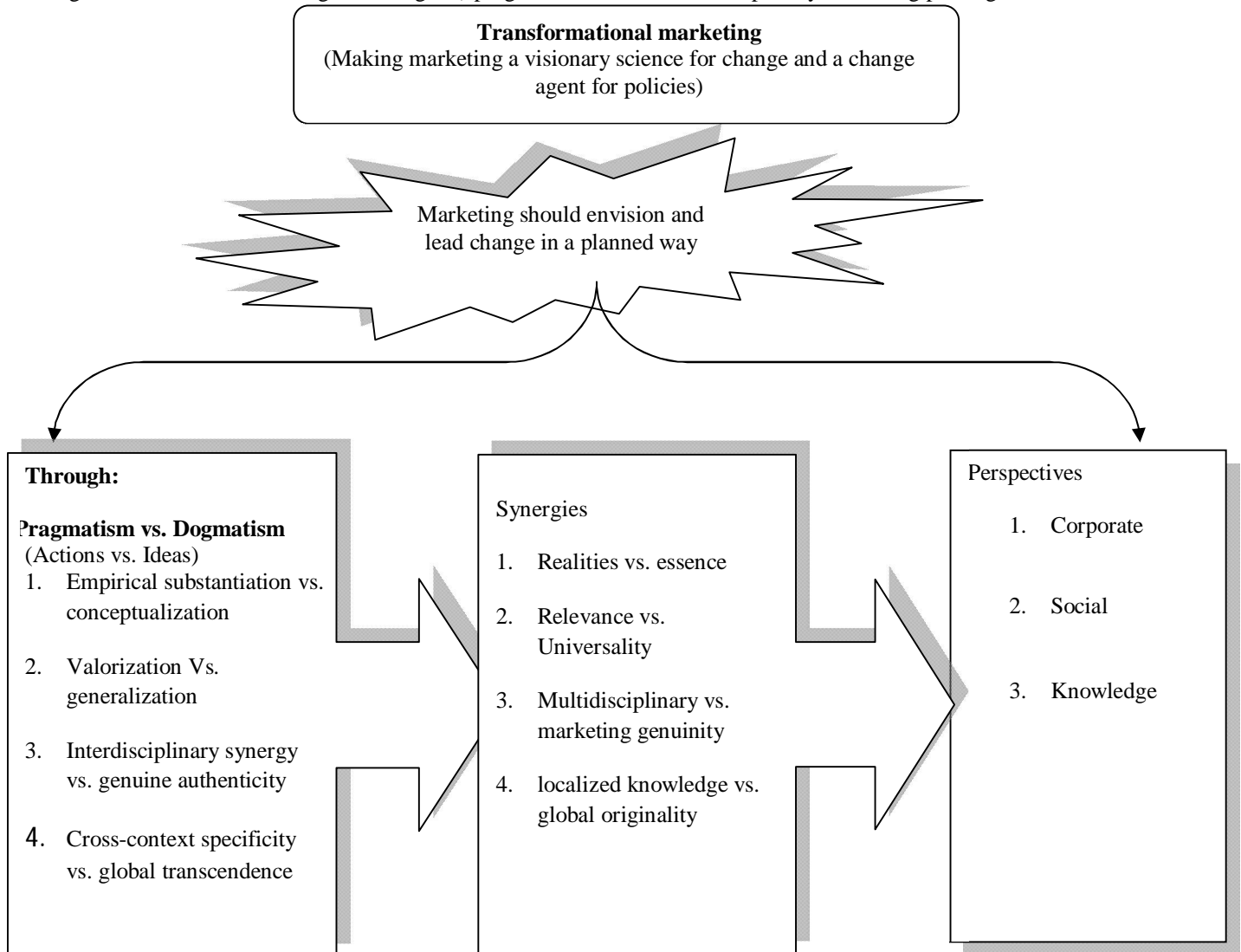
The logic of the proposed conceptual framework is hung up on three pillars, namely: 1) The main core controversy and its subsequent four transformational revisits of marketing controversies and their implications to marketing boundaries, 2) the three transformational perspectives as a breeding ground for these revisits, and 3) the synergistic functioning resulting from doing the revisits within the spectrum of the three perspectives and its expected transformational outcomes to marketing theory and practice. The configuration of the proposed conceptual framework for discovering a

transformational science of marketing is depicted in Figure (1).

**Pillar One: Core Controversies, Revisits and Boundaries for Transformational Marketing**

The main controversy that is argued to be pursued for anchoring this legacy for marketing science and scientists is that of pragmatic versus dogmatic discipline of marketing and four related subsequent controversies. The four subsequent controversies resulting from raising the main controversy of the pragmatic/dogmatic research creed and identity of marketing science are: 1) pragmatic empirical substantiation versus dogmatic conceptual framing for theorizing marketing phenomena, 2) pragmatic valorization versus dogmatic generalization of marketing knowledge, 3) pragmatic

interdisciplinary synergy versus dogmatic genuine authenticity of marketing discipline's contributions and 4) pragmatic cross-context specificity versus global human transcendence of scientific marketing findings and revelations. These controversies are arguably expected to serve as an effective vehicle for revisiting the boundaries of marketing science to make it more transformational in terms of its agenda, methodologies and quality of produced knowledge. The main boundaries of marketing discipline that are proposed by this paper as most influenced by raising the above controversies are namely; customer-orientation (which can be looked at as the mainland boundary for scientific premises of marketing) , exchange management, knowledge-based marketing, value-based marketing, convergence marketing and multi-disciplinary marketing paradigms.



**Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework for Discovering and Triggering Transformational Marketing**

**Core Revisit: Pragmatic versus dogmatic marketing – what orientation should marketing hold toward which customers?**

The genesis, mainstream, and frontiers of marketing science and all its paradigms can be comfortably classified as pragmatism-oriented. Nevertheless such pragmatic dominance of science in marketing is not something marketing scholars have to feel apologetic about. Pragmatic marketing has and still is bringing about significant contributions and even virtues to the long-standing and status of marketing as a science (Kortam, 2004). The pragmatic creed of research in marketing made scientific marketing thought and most of its implications a highly responsive discipline to problem-solving needs of rapidly changing marketing (internal/ micro and macro) and stakeholders (especially marketing decision makers) which mainly helped to reform academic understandings and managerial practices of marketing phenomena live up to the challenges imposed by evident constant environmental changes and sometimes turbulences.

It seems that it was commonly thought that if marketing scholars aimed to adapt their research to an established social/physical sciences theory or a human dogma, this is expected to invade the outputs of marketing knowledge an ideological and flavour. Such idealistic tone is then claimed to be somehow counterproductive and luxurious to the ever pressing pragmatic agenda and action-oriented demands of the marketing discipline's prime beneficiaries, i.e., marketing executives at the front lines and edges of marketing realities (Gronroos, 2008 and Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). On the contrary to this argument, this paper suggests that such strong pragmatic orientation of research in marketing could deprive it as a science from a more proactive and broad-scoped transformational role.

Dogmatic marketing is argued to have a strong orientation to future outlooks and a broader base of stakeholders. Highly regarded and recognized scientific theories and human/social dogmas concern themselves with sensing the future of universe and all various segments of mankind.

Consequently, if marketing scholars aimed to address more prevalent and widely accepted theories and dogmas, this should lead to a kind of customer orientation for the discipline of marketing that: 1) does not only address the nagging needs of present and potential customers and 2) adopt a broader definition of customers to include other influential and important stakeholders including external and internal customers, suppliers, distributors, governments and general publics. Admittedly, research in marketing can be easily found guilty of over-emphasis on reacting to short-term and acute

issues for the sake of one main group of stakeholders which is marketing decision makers. Other groups are only considered in the best interest of main group of stakeholders in many instances.

Dogmatic marketing is not mutually exclusive to pragmatic marketing since grounding marketing theories on practical evidence and scientific ideologies on equal foot are complimentary rather than competing methodologies (Benton and Craib, 2001). In the main, this can be attributed to that the proposed dual-identity and well-blended research creed is expected to add a transformational virtue to the already existing highly valued reformvirtue of the science of marketing. This transformational contribution should result from making research in marketing more proactive to anticipated, foreseen or prophesied deliberate environmental changes that affect a much broader base of stakeholders and their agenda's like the well-being rather than the satisfaction of external and internal customers (Gronroos, 2007), win/win situations for distributors and suppliers, public welfare for government social values for general public and peace of mind, joy and happiness for the world . It is pragmatic/dogmatic disciplines where "reality influences thought" and "thought creates reality" that devise scholarly work that combines present needs with future aspirations of mankind in an equitable methodology to cater to legitimate felt deprivations and reasonable ambitions of all various stakeholders' groups.

In order to enact and augment this research creed of transformational science of marketing, four main measures expressed as further revisits of boundaries of marketing science. These proposed revisits are supposed to serve as trade-off mechanisms that create the needed balance between strongly present pragmatism and vigorously promised dogmatism for scientific marketing paradigm. The expected ultimate destination of this paradigm shift in scientific marketing inquiries is giving transformational marketing a greater room in subtle and revolutionary research endeavors in marketing.

The implications of each revisit to one or more marketing boundaries are briefly explained below.

**Subsequent Revisit 1: Pragmatic empirical substantiation versus dogmatic conceptual framing for theorizing marketing phenomena – expanding the scope of knowledge-based marketing to embrace higher levels of abstraction.**

Pragmatic empiricism marketing has produced heavy reliance on positivistic methodologies producing highly supported and applicable yet myopic marketing knowledge. Thus, marketing discipline is rendered as a much more realistic reformer and a much less visionary transformer

(Chaston, 2004). Dogmatic conceptual marketing is supposed to produce more normative generalisable marketing knowledge across different settings over an extended period of time which leads to higher levels of abstraction in marketing theories. These new horizons of abstraction play a profound role in triggering a true futurology of marketing as a transformational science that manages promise/dream/change agencies thus improving its ranking among universally welcomed and rewarded privileged disciplines.

**Subsequent Revisit 2: Pragmatic valorization versus dogmatic generalization of marketing knowledge – Searching for new sources and constructs of marketing-attributed values.**

It can be obviously acknowledged that pragmatic marketing has made significant contributions to the measurement, creation and sustenance of marketing-attributed values from owners' and customers' perspectives. These values are often smartly and rigorously expressed in financial terms in shorter rather longer time horizons (Doyle, 2004 and Dubois *et al*, 2007). Dogmatic marketing would be expected to explore and move research in marketing attributed-values toward other social, scientific, universal and broadly human values reflected in more stochastic and possibly qualitative measures with longer-term outlook.

**Subsequent Revisit 3: pragmatic interdisciplinary synergy versus dogmatic genuine authenticity of marketing discipline's contributions – devising multi-disciplinary means to achieve exclusive ends of marketing discipline.**

It can be argued that pragmatic marketing has made significant contributions through offering marketing perspectives on other disciplines' phenomena and variables without equally drawing on other disciplines to shed novice light on marketing phenomena and variables (Gronroos, 2008 and Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). On the other hand, dogmatic marketing can capitalize on other disciplines' theories and constructs to produce really new and genuine insights and extensions of theoretical marketing propositions and conceptual frameworks.

**Subsequent Revisit 4: pragmatic cross-context specificity versus global human transcendence of scientific marketing findings and revelations – creating marketing convergences and exchanges beyond contexts of companies, industries, technologies, cultures and countries – reaching out to planet, galaxy and eternity horizons.**

Pragmatic marketing deserves substantial credit for producing highly adapted marketing knowledge to specific contexts which properly triggered and guided context-friendly specific exchange and convergence processes within each context (Gronroos, 2007). Dogmatic marketing ought to find ways to rise above context-specific levels of analysis to produce universally applicable marketing knowledge across all contexts. Consequently, improving the essence of exchange and convergence processes across all contexts. These research efforts holds an unprecedented promise of promoting a reciprocal and uniform science of marketing that goes beyond geographical, demographical, time, psychographic and other narrow divisions to broadest possible contexts hand to hand with other globally esteemed physical and social disciplines.

**Pillar Two: Perspectives on Transformational Marketing**

On the other hand, this conceptual framework proposes that the above revisits can only deliver their potential transformational influences when realized three main perspectives in which marketing phenomena and variables function and take place. These perspectives were deliberately selected from the various environmental perspectives through which marketing issues can be tackled.

There are three layers of environments, the internal environment to which the corporate perspective belongs, the micro environment to which the knowledge perspective belongs and the macro environment to which the social perspective belongs. This paper focuses on these three specific environments because they are expected to reflect transcending, sustainable leveraged transformational impacts as below illustrated and explained for each perspective.

This is mainly because corporate perspective represents important marketing organizational settings such as marketers, suppliers, distributors, business customers, government, media, etc. As a marketing guru once said, marketing has changed from a “field of dreams” to a “field of deals” (Kumar and Shah, 2004). To restore and/or create the genuine role of marketing as a science and an organizational function, marketing should be a transformational agent for corporations, for societies and for human knowledge in general. Specifically, marketing should shift from focusing on the tactical four Ps to create and/or facilitate the transformational initiatives and waves of corporate, society and scientific knowledge.

On the corporate frontier, marketing must aspire to participate in shaping the firm's destiny. Instead of doing things better, marketing must transform to do better things (Kumar *et al.*, 2009;

*Donthu et al., 2005*). In this line of reasoning, marketing should shift from implementation focus to strategic focus (Rust (a)*et al.*, 2004; Venkatesan and Kumar, 2004). Marketing, therefore, should help the organizations to seek strategic leadership by exploiting new business opportunities, redefine industry boundaries and reinvent the value network (Kumar *et al.*, 2009).

Accordingly, there are many transformational frontiers that marketing can lead this strategic agenda by focusing on: being market-driving rather than being market-driven, providing solutions rather than selling products (Kumar and Shah, 2004); building strategic segments rather than developing market segments (Crittenden, 2005; Reinartz and Kumar, 2000); creating value network rather than managing the supply chain (Rust (b)*et al.*, 2004; Romani and Kumar, 2008); seeking global distribution partners rather than creating branded bulldozers (Nwokah, 2008).

In this line of reasoning, marketing should be more strategic, more cross-functional, and more bottom-line oriented to be able to play this transformational role in organizations (Allee, 2008, Crittenden, 2005, Trim, 2004).

The Social perspective is selected due to its unique importance and sensitivity to marketing as a science advocating social exchange processes with highly controversial social implications like socially acceptable/friendly products, IMC, green marketing, macdonaldization, privacy, gender infringement, children fallacies, characters and celebrities social falsifications, patriotism/citizenship campaigns, political marketing, etc. It has long been argued that the role of the marketing function is to create utilities and values to customers and to society in large (Kotler and Lee, 2009). The marketing functions not only positively to firm performance and shareholders wealth, but also they have unique and significant implications to customer, society, community and environment. In fact, the marketing activities result in greater employment opportunities, income generating potential, and arguably more product alternatives, more choices within product categories, and better customer value (Kotler and Lee, 2009). Nowadays, there is an increased buzz that marketing can and must do more to augment individual customer value and societal welfare (Andreasen, 2002). To this end, some marketing scholars have introduced the concept of stakeholder marketing and proposed that marketing can be an agent of change to enhance societal welfare (Czinkota and Ronkainen, 2007). Others have undertaken transformative consumer research that focuses on improving consumers' welfare and quality of life (Mick *et al.*, 2011).

Marketing can play a special role in creating the potentials to transform markets, societies and environments through addressing the threats and opportunities of consumption (e.g. community networks, family coherence, ecological stability) (Broderick, 2010), engaging in interactive communication with customers, facilitated through changes in technology (Romani and Kumar, 2008), and offering interactive channels as the foundation of marketing delivery (Broderick, 2010). In this vein, the challenge for marketing scholars and practitioners alike is to consider marketing efforts from the lens of creating customer value, while simultaneously enhancing societal welfare. Therefore, there are many arenas that should be tackled by scholars to assist practitioners in achieving the aforementioned goal, such as how can firms be socially responsible and yet remain viable (Burke and Logsdon, 1996); how can firms serve underprivileged segments, and still make required returns rates (Mick *et al.*, 2011); how can marketers embrace new information technologies for commercial purposes, and yet respect the privacy of consumers (Malhotra *et al.*, 2004); how can firms develop more green products and processes, and how can marketers create user friendly products and/or advertising campaigns. These are but a few of the numerous arenas that are worthy of attention.

The third platform focuses on the knowledge perspective which embraces various technologies, philosophies, sources and disseminations of marketing knowledge such as students evaluations, eye tracking, CRM, data mining and warehousing, database marketing, internet marketing, SMS advertising, TV shopping, digital marketing research and intelligence.

In any competitive environment, knowledge is the principal source of competitive advantage. In marketing, attracting customers is the mission a business to accomplish, and the competitors are the forces it is encountering to fulfill its mandate. Without sufficient marketing knowledge of both customers and competitors, a business is severely hindered in developing marketing strategies to gain customers and grow market share.

A marketing knowledge advantage is necessary to develop a successful oblique strategy. Partial knowledge may seem an advantage, but often results in reactive strategies. A business with excellent customer knowledge but limited competitor knowledge will likely overreact to customer demands. Similarly, having excellent competitor knowledge without adequate customer knowledge will likely result in overreaction to competitors' moves.

Businesses that lack both customer and competitor knowledge are working with an inside-

the-box strategy as they make competitive moves from an in-house perspective with no real market knowledge. These businesses can make only blind attempts at success, usually in the end losing more ground than they hoped to gain. Other businesses with partial intelligence on customers or competitors are likely to employ reactive strategies, which is the normal response to customer and/or competitor pressures when a business sees only one dimension of the marketplace. An oblique marketing strategy requires superior customer profiling and superior competitor intelligence (Chaston, 2004).

With a marketing knowledge advantage, a transformational market-based strategy can be devised to achieve desirable gains without sustaining excessive losses. Such transformational market-based strategies that leverage a marketing knowledge advantage with respect to both customers and competitors can be implemented with a non-confrontational approach that keeps losses to a minimum. This is labeled as an oblique marketing strategy because it seeks to gain a competitive advantage without direct confrontation. A competitive marketing strategy with limited or partial marketing knowledge could be more easily drawn into a frontal attack strategy - a direct attack on a competitor's position leading to unjustified and unnecessary losses (Best, 2009).

The above analysis supports the preventive and initiative role of the knowledge perspective to transformational marketing.

### **Pillar Three: Synergy among Revisits and Perspectives for Framing and Functioning Transformational Marketing Logic and Inertia**

It is expected that making the four revisits within the three perspectives would lead to enacting the following theoretical and practical functioning for creating a sustainable thrust of transformations in marketing philosophic foundations and actions postulates, as follows:

- 1- The revisit of empirical substantiation versus conceptualization processes of marketing thought tackling the boundaries of customer-orientation and knowledge-based marketing will reflect solidly grounded marketing realities and deeper understandings of marketing essences thus resulting in transformational bases and postulates across all three perspectives.
- 2- The revisit of valorization versus generalization of marketing findings tackling the boundary of marketing values would demonstrate relevance of advanced marketing applications and universality of marketing theories thus allowing transformational frameworks across all three perspectives.

- 3- The revisit of interdisciplinary synergy versus genuine authenticity of scientific marketing truths tackling the boundary of multidisciplinary marketing capitalizes on multidimensional insights and genuine marketing contributions to result in transformational templates across all three perspectives.
- 4- The revisit of cross-context specificity versus global transcendence of marketing insights tackling the boundaries of convergence marketing and exchange management produces localized marketing solutions and global originality of marketing blueprints resulting in transformational drives across all three perspectives.
- 5- The road map and action mechanism of this framework focuses on devising the agendas, methodologies and outputs framework as vehicles for making and sustaining a transformational stream of scientific marketing thinking and theorizations across these three perspectives.

### **Conclusive Embarks And Research Agenda**

This research aimed to trigger a sparkle among marketing scholars, scientific communities and bodies to go down the long and promising road toward giving the science of marketing a new age of universally recognized and esteemed renaissance through transforming its research agenda, methodologies and output knowledge. With a view toward doing this, three possibly useful venues are proposed. First, starting a collective initiative for recognizing and defining of the universal crisis that the marketing discipline is going through. Second, deciding on the key controversies that need to be raised and critically and innovatively tackled to hit the roots of the crisis and pave the way for a road map for transformational marketing. Third, deciding on the action mechanisms for research in marketing to reflect the proposed solutions in individual and institutional research initiatives and projects constituting the new main stream and breakthroughs of the discipline of marketing. While concept paper advocates for the triggering and leveraging drives of agendas, methodologies and outputs, the horizons for transformational marketing is widely open for further views and reviews.

Consequently, The following proposed research agenda is viewed by the authors as a first step in this long yet rewarding journey in earning the discipline of marketing and its resulting practice its long due status as a science that makes a difference in human intelligentsia and destiny.

Research Stream One: Setting the Stage for Transformational Marketing Contributions through looking for more revisits, perspectives and embarks.

Research Stream Two: Examining a Corporate Perspective for Transformational Marketing

Research Stream Three: Examining a Social Perspective for Transformational Marketing:

Research Stream Four: Examining a Knowledge Perspective for Transformational Marketing:

Research Stream Five: Encompassing a Road Map For Transformational Marketing - The Transformational Roles of Agendas, Methodologies and Outputs for shifting marketers From Highly Profiled Backstage Slogans To Highly Valued Board Room Contributions.

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