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Iconic studies relevant for research in marketing and the Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science

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Iconic studies relevant for research in marketing and the *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science*

市场营销中相关标志性的研究和全球营销科学学报 (JGSMS)

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Here, an “icon” refers to a study widely and critically admired, a study symbolizing a movement or field of activity; iconic marketing studies offer exceptional contributions to marketing theory and/or data collection, and/or data analysis, and/or interpretations/implications of qualitative and/or quantitative empirical findings. This article identifies antecedent conditions associated with achieving iconic status in research in marketing and proposes 10 tenets useful for identifying and planning iconic studies in marketing. The study reviews examples of iconic studies in the marketing literature. The study also addresses a few telling mistakes that researchers in the marketing discipline frequently make. The study of iconic research is helpful for crafting high-quality theory and planning high-quality research designs, as well as increasing vigilance and skill in identifying truly exceptionally high-quality studies and studies that are plainly just bad. The essay briefly reviews 10 *JGSMS* articles appearing also in this virtual issue as possible candidates for the achievement of iconic status in marketing.

Keywords: experiment; icon; marketing; research; survey; theory

这里，“图标”是指受钦佩的广泛研究，研究象征着 一个运动或活动领域；标志性的营销研究为以下活动提供了杰出的贡献，营销理论、数据收集、数据分析和对实证结果的定性分析和定量分析的解释。本文确定了实现市场营销研究标志性地位的前期条件。并提出了用于识别和规划营销中标志性研究的十个原则。此研究回顾了营销文献中标志性研究的例子。研究还强调了研究人员经常在市场纪律中犯的错误。标志性研究在制作高品质的理论和策划高质量的研究设计，以及在提高警惕和技能识别真正的高质量研究是非常有帮助的。本文简要的回顾了十篇JGSMS文章，文章极力的实现在营销中标志性研究地位。

关键词：实验；图标；市场营销；研究；调查；理论

1. Introduction

This article suggests that the study of iconic studies relevant to advancing marketing knowledge is beneficial. The study here asks and provides answers to the following questions: what are examples of iconic studies relevant to the marketing discipline? What are the ingredients of these iconic studies? What tenets, if any, follow for generalizing from such icons? How does identifying icons relevant for research in marketing help to improve the quality and usefulness of future studies in marketing? The answers here may be helpful for achieving exceptionally high quality and usefulness in crafting and testing marketing theory. The article serves to introduce a curation of 10 articles appearing in the

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Journal of Global Scholars in Marketing Science (JGMS) that exhibit exceptionally useful knowledge/insights into the marketing discipline.

Following this introduction, section two briefly reviews a few studies that are iconic in their contributions relevant to the marketing discipline. Based on the ingredient recipes associated with these iconic studies, section three offers research tenets helpful for identifying and doing iconic studies in marketing. Section four reviews 10 articles selected from JGMS issues; several of the articles in this first virtual collection of JGMS articles include a number of ingredients found in iconic contributions. Section five concludes with a few recommendations for using recipes consisting of the ingredients frequently appearing in iconic studies, and suggestions as to which ingredients to avoid using when planning research in marketing.

2. Ten iconic studies relevant to the marketing discipline

Certainly, almost all scholars in marketing are able to identify a few journal articles and books that were particularly enlightening and/or useful in explaining, describing and predicting marketing behavior. Certain articles are shockingly good readings, and usually such articles provide compelling insights into two or more of the following topics: theory, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, data reinterpretation, and implications for marketing management practices and/or public policy. This section briefly reviews a few of these iconic studies.

2.1 *The multi-trait–multi-method matrix*

Several contributions by Donald T. Campbell might come to mind here as shockingly good, useful and relevant for marketing. For example, Campbell and Fiske (1959) show how to test for convergent and discriminant validation by using multi-trait and multi-method matrixes – a procedure that is adaptable and highly beneficial for confirming the quality of positivistic data, even though it is not used often enough. The benefits of collecting confirming/disconfirming evidence within one study by using two methods is a huge insight gleaned from reading Campbell and Fiske (1959); research on firm behavior can put this idea into practice by collecting data from two sources – for example, interviewing two executives in the same firm separately – while consumer research can put this idea into practice by interviewing two household members separately about behaviors relevant for both persons. Though citations are neither necessary nor sufficient for iconic identification, the 13,500 citations of the Campbell and Fiske study as of January 2015 are one indication of the study's great value.

2.2 *Reforms as experiments*

While several of his articles and book chapters qualify as iconic studies, Campbell's 1969 "Reforms as Experiments" is another shockingly good study. Campbell (1969) contends that programs of social reform are not effectively assessed; he presents "nine threats to internal validity" and extremely useful steps to build into a study to overcome these threats. The study by Campbell (1969) is a major step forward in providing useful, accurate solutions to the complex problem of how to validly measure the impacts of new social reform programs/actions longitudinally. Measuring impacts longitudinally (in the years before, during and after a program is introduced and eliminated) has direct relevance in marketing studies of new products and brand model market introductions.

At this point the reader might well think, “Wait a minute, these two studies are not marketing studies!” However, references to Campbell (1969) and Campbell and Fiske (1959) are pervasive in the marketing literature and their usefulness for many studies in marketing is very clear. It is best to adopt a broad view of what constitutes iconic studies in marketing.

2.3 True field experiments in marketing with sales as the dependent variable

Eskin and Baron (1977) is a third example of an iconic study. They report a field experiment whereby the effects of price and advertising expenditures on new-product sales were examined across four test-market experiments. For proprietary reasons, Eskin and Baron (1977) name the products in the tests A, B, C and D. All experiments involved two levels of advertising expenditure tested across cities and two or three price levels tested across stores within a city. Mean sales results over a 24-week period are reported for each treatment combination. The study is valuable in particular for several reasons, but here are two. First, such field experiments with sales as the dependent variable are rare in marketing; this fact may however be surprising to non-marketing scholars, since the core proposition of marketing is that firm actions impact human behavior. True field experiments with treatment and control groups are designed to control for all sources of invalidity – in many ways they are the research designs most useful for examining the core proposition of marketing.

Second, Eskin and Baron (1977) report a negative price-advertising interaction effect on sales: they found that

Previously less-favored marketing alternatives might become more attractive in light of such a finding; for example, this is the case for product B. Before test market results were obtained, the top ranked alternatives for an introductory marketing plan were a low price/low advertising strategy and a high price/high advertising strategy. A profitability study based on the test market results yielded as best alternatives a low price/high advertising strategy and a high price/low advertising strategy. Both of these combinations produced substantially higher expected profits than either of the two preferred originally (Eskin & Baron, 1977, p. 507).

Citations of the Eskin and Baron (1977) article totaled 113 as of 19 January 2015 – certainly a high number of citations relative to the average number of citations per article in the relevant journal. However, an article or book with a hundred or so citations rather than a thousand suggests that a high citation count is neither sufficient or necessary for identifying the contribution as an iconic study.

2.4 Information-processing model of executive decisions

Howard and Morgenroth (1968) offer the use of historical research of case files in a firm to craft an isomorphic model of retail pricing decisions by a petroleum firm. They take the unusual step of testing the predictive validity of their model on additional samples of pricing decisions. This study is an excellent example of using company documents and not asking questions using five or seven-point scales to construct binary flow models of decision routines. They find that the price decreases are more complex than price increases and offer explanations as to why. By avoiding reliance on oral or written answers to questions, the study is exceptional in its avoidance of issues relating to “telling more than we can know” (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) and “self-generated validity” (Feldman & Lynch, 1988).

Howard and Morgenroth (1968) is an early example of marketing of testing for predictive validity with hold-out samples. Thus, the study avoids the telling shortcoming of reporting only the fit validity of their model. High fit validities for models built using isomorphic or regression analysis tools are easy to achieve, and inadequate. Armstrong (2012) and Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009) provide convincing evidence that fit-validity-only tests are inadequate and frequently indicate inaccurate predictions of the behaviors/decisions of cases in hold-out samples. Howard and Morgenroth (1968) provide asymmetric decision recipes for high price and low price decisions. Theory and research built on asymmetric tests, versus symmetric tests such as correlation and regression analyses, recognizes the need to craft research designs using propositions based on complexity theory and avoid symmetric views of causes and effects in reality (cf. Ragin, 2008; Wu, Yeh, Huan, & Woodside, 2014).

2.5 Statistical power and effect size in marketing research

Most studies in marketing that make use of statistics for analyses may lack sufficient statistical power and fail to discuss the effect size of their findings. Sawyer and Ball (1981) is a landmark contribution in increasing attention to statistical power and effect size issues. They review the factors that affect statistical power and effect size in research designs. They cite many examples of marketing and consumer research to illustrate the potential difficulties of failure to consider explicitly and report statistical power and effect size.

While Sawyer and Ball (1981) do not cover all major issues and offer solutions for all topics relating to data analysis using statistics, what they do cover is exceptionally useful and important reading, especially for early career marketing scholars. Early, mid and late career researchers alike are likely to find themselves using Tables 1 and 2 in Sawyer and Ball (1981) to check on the effects sizes of their findings and estimate if their sample sizes in their studies have adequate statistical power. Sawyer and Ball (1981) is a wonderful contribution!

2.6 Homo heuristicus: why biased minds make better inferences

Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009) is a revolutionary, iconic contribution in two respects. First, Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009, p. 107) provide substantial evidence to support the conclusion that “Homo heuristicus has a biased mind and ignores part of the available information, yet a biased mind can handle uncertainty more efficiently and robustly than an unbiased mind relying on more resource-intensive and general-purpose processing strategies”. This conclusion and evidence refutes the current/traditional logic that assumes that the rationale for heuristics is a trade-off between accuracy and effort, where effort is a function of the amount of information and computation consumed. The traditional logic is that an accuracy–effort trade-off occurs in decision-making; that is, information and computation cost time and effort, and therefore minds rely on simple heuristics that are less accurate than strategies that use more information and computation. Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009) demonstrate that no such trade-off occurs.

Second, Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009) rely on testing for predictive validity in demonstrating the greater power of simple heuristics versus symmetric tools such as regression analysis in accurately estimating outcomes for additional samples of cases. The illusions of regression analysis because of over-fitting of models are points emphasized by Armstrong (1985, 2012) that most researchers continue to ignore. Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009, p. 118) go beyond pointing out the severe limitations of regression

analysis following their statement that “achieving a good fit to observations does not necessarily mean we have found a good model, and choosing the model with the best fit is likely to result in poor predictions. Despite this, Roberts and Pashler (2000) estimated that, in psychology alone, the number of articles relying on a good fit as the only indication of a good model runs into the thousands.” Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009) test the predictive validities of competing simple versus complex statistical modeling approaches to demonstrate convincing the “less [information] is more [accurate]” effect. The time has arrived to stop using regression analysis only in analyzing data from surveys and experiments; the time has arrived to use asymmetric simple configural models – time now especially to test for predictive validity and not just fit validity. Reading McClelland (1998) on his steps in applying this recommendation is also worthwhile.

2.7 *When the recipe is more important than the ingredients*

Building in part on prior work by Fiss (2007, 2011), Ordanini, Parasuraman, and Rubera (2014) propose that new service adoption does not depend on individual service attributes but on specific configurations of attributes – that is, a new service represents a bundle of interlinked attributes, and its value derives from the perceived appeal of the “gestalt” of attribute levels present in the bundle. While not referring to complexity theory directly, what makes this study iconic is Ordanini et al.’s recognition and modeling of/showing how both positive and negative relationships of the same variable on high scores of an outcome variable can and do occur for the same data set – a central tenet of complexity theory (Woodside, 2014).

Our study’s findings confirm that individual service attributes have complex trade-off effects and that only certain combinations of attributes act as sufficient conditions for [new product] adoption. Moreover, the composition of these combinations differs in terms of coproduction requirements, implying that new service attributes and coproduction requirements have to be properly aligned to elicit adoption intentions. The findings also show that QCA offers richer insights about new service adoption than do conventional techniques such as cluster and regression analyses. (Ordanini, Parasuraman, & Rubera, 2014, p. 135)

Ordanini et al. (2014) confirm the equifinality tenet in complexity theory – that is, different configurations (i.e. recipes) of high scores in complex antecedent conditions indicate the same solution: high scores in an outcome condition. In their study the outcome condition is the adoption of new service innovations. Note that recipes represent cases and not variables; thus, recipe models show that a case that has a high membership score for one or more particular recipes indicates a high membership score in an outcome condition. Different recipes might include a high score for X (a given independent variable) in one recipe and the negation of X (low score for X) in a different recipe with both recipe models indicating a high score in Y (the outcome condition).

Recipe thinking, modeling and asymmetric testing represent stepping beyond symmetric tests (e.g. correlations, multiple regression analyses, and structural equation models). Asymmetric recipe models are more isomorphic/realistic with regard to how humans go about processing information to reach conclusions and make choices in reality than is symmetric thinking and testing. Humans seek the presence of certain (high/low) combinations of conditions in specific recipes in evaluating contexts and making decisions, rather than weighting variables and adding the weighted variables together to create a score to indicate a low, moderate or high score for an outcome variable. When testing on additional samples of cases, decisions made by humans using asymmetric models are more accurate than those using symmetric models for problems having

objective outcomes (see Gigerenzer & Brighton, 2009). Asymmetric recipe modeling is case-based modeling; symmetric MRA/SEM is variable-based modeling. Asymmetric modeling offers several advantages in providing an enriched and deep view of the complexities of realities, including recognition of the need to model the negation of outcomes separately from high scores in an outcome condition; a core tenet of complexity theory is that causes for a negative outcome differ from causes for a positive outcome. Ragin (2008) is a particularly useful source for increasing the knowledge of recipe modeling in order to move from traditional symmetric-based theory-building and testing to asymmetric-based theory-building and testing.

2.8 Self-generated validity and other effects of measurement on belief, attitude, intention and behavior

Feldman and Lynch (1988) demonstrate the severe shortcomings of asking questions:

Belief, attitude, or intention can be created by measurement if the measured constructs do not already exist in long-term memory. The responses thus created can have directive effects on answers to other questions that follow in the survey. But even when counterparts to the beliefs, attitudes, and intentions measured already exist in memory, the structure of the survey researcher's questionnaire can affect observed correlations among them (Feldman & Lynch, 1988, p. 421).

Earlier (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) and later additional iconic studies (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999) confirm the severe limitations of asking questions and relying on verbal and oral responses to questions as principal estimates of reality. Reading these three articles is an eye-opening, shocking and highly informative experience for early career marketing scholars.

The dominant logic in PhD dissertations in marketing includes collecting verbal (written and/or oral) survey responses using five-point or seven-point scales, analyzing these data using MRA/SEM and reporting fit estimates of the models without testing for predictive validity using additional samples. The principal recipe of this dominant logic usually includes one-time cross-sectional surveys with responses by one person per firm or household, with a useable response rate of 10–25%. This combination appears frequently in many journal submissions and articles published in journals – a pity, and a pity especially given that alternative research genres and substantial improvements are possible and can overcome some of the severe weaknesses integral to the dominant logic.

Here are Feldman and Lynch's (1988) suggestions for improving research designs and moving away from using only the traditional verbal survey studies: (1) extensive pretesting of the subject population, including both interviews and behavioral observation, to help determine the beliefs, attitudes and intentions that are spontaneously formed or pre-exist; (2) determining the terms and constructs naturally used by respondents to express both cognition and affect, and the ecological form of behavior – this is a standard procedure in cross-cultural research; (3) employing experiments to infer inputs dominant in the absence of prior questioning; (4) conducting field experiments that systematically assess the degree to which, for example, question placement and form influence obtain reliability and validity; (5) determining the extent to which different subgroups of the population differ in susceptibility to measurement effects of the sort they discuss – for example, on the basis of individual differences in prior knowledge and involvement. Evans, Rozelle, Lasater, Dembroski, and Allen (1970) offer an iconic study that compares the impacts of different persuasive treatments to motivate teenagers to brush their teeth.

Their findings indicate a substantial disconnect between self-report change and actual behavior change:

Criterion measures of information, anxiety, intention to behave, self-report of behavior, and a new chemical indicator of actual tooth-brushing behavior were administered precommunication, immediately postcommunication, 5-days postcommunication, and 6-weeks postcommunication. Results suggest that elaborated recommendations and positive affect were most effective in changing actual behavior, but that high fear and recommendations only were the most effective in changing reported behavior. Effects of all conditions were attenuated over time (Evans et al., 1970, p. 220).

When a researcher does rely principally on verbal survey responses, he/she can take some or all of the following steps to measure and reduce the biases inherent in the verbal survey method: first, ask two to three persons in each firm/household to complete the survey independently and report the answers for high, moderate and low agreement cases separately (e.g. Cheng, Chang, & Li, 2013); second, build in steps to achieve a 50 + percent useable response rate – for example, make four attempts to reach cases selected to answer the survey (e.g. Woodside, Frey, & Daly, 1989); third, interview respondents twice or more to confirm and deepen their responses. Cox (1968) is a classic study in adopting this procedure, with the researcher interviewing two respondents 18 times each on the same topics. Relevant here is a commentary by Chris Rock, the American comedian and observer of human nature: paraphrasing Rock here, “when you meet a person for the first time, you are not meeting that person but her/his representative”. Respondents are much more likely to provide meaningful, possibly truthful/accurate responses during a second meeting/interview. never rely solely on verbal responses; build in field observations (e.g. perform Mintzberg’s (1979) “direct research” in your research design or “get out”, as Woodside (2011) recommends – quality is more important than quantity in survey responses, but work hard to achieve both; fifth, ask respondents open-ended “think-aloud” (Van Someren, Barnard, & Sandberg, 1994) questions in responding to different scenarios, contexts and/or problems – never rely solely on five-point or seven-point responses; sixth, use two versions of your verbal surveys with different wording or questions early in the survey, thus converting your study into an experiment on survey questions; seventh, if you have a sponsor financing the study, avoid identifying this sponsor by name in the survey – incorporate collecting information about a few brands/firms in the survey to avoid identification of the sponsoring brand/firm. Response rates decline and summary statistics can change dramatically when the respondents learn that a given brand/firm is sponsoring the study (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2003).

2.9 Historical method in marketing research with new evidence on long-term market share stability

The great value in using the historical method includes exposing myths (e.g. Golder & Tellis, 1993), detecting decreasing research quality to achieve the findings a researcher desires (lying: for an example of such detection see Golder, 2000) and estimating how increases and decreases in objective brand quality affect perceived quality in both the short and long term (Mitra & Golder, 2006). Similar to anthropology, the historical method is “the process of collecting, verifying, interpreting, and presenting evidence from the past” (Golder, 2000, p. 157). The historical method is highly commendable for its focus on uncovering truth and analysis of multiple sources of data in doing so; however, only a few marketing PhD dissertations are likely to focus on applying the historical method. Hopefully reading Golder and associates’ contributions and becoming active in CHARM,

the Conference on Historical Analysis & Research in Marketing, will dramatically increase the use of the historical method. Many members of CHARM serve on the editorial board of the principal journal on historical research in marketing, the *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*. Starting in 2014 and continuing in 2015 and beyond, CHARM hosts a doctoral workshop at its annual global conference each May.

Golder (2000) presents shocking evidence that an article appearing in *Advertising Age* (1983) was able to increase incompetency in many marketing textbooks – and to do so for decades. Golder (2000) examines the supposedly well-documented tenet that market share leaders maintain their sales leadership for decades; however, the author dug into the past and the following excerpt indicates misrepresentation nurturing incompetency:

Because the *Advertising Age* study serves as the basis for much of the conclusions about long-term leadership, it is critical that the principles of the historical method be applied to this document. This analysis raises several concerns. From the standpoint of the criteria of external criticism, there is no author listed for this article. The source of the article's findings is the president of a small communications design and marketing research firm. His expertness cannot be determined. Also, it is not clear why the study was undertaken. Furthermore, the study is far removed from the time of the 1923 data on which its results depend. On the basis of the criteria of internal criticism, the objectivity of this study is questionable. The study claims to show that long term success is due to well-managed promotions and contemporary graphic presentations. Although no evidence on these factors is presented, it seems clear that increased use of these factors would benefit the source's firm. Another concern is that the *Advertising Age* results depend on a book published in 1923.

The original 1923 book reveals a startling finding about the commonly referenced data that "19 out of 25" market leaders maintained their leadership for at least 60 years. Although this finding of long-term leadership has been widely reported in marketing textbooks and journals and in mass-market publications, it is based on a biased sample of categories. The original 1923 study was not done on 25 categories, but rather on 100 categories (Hotchkiss and Franken 1923). The sample of 25 categories was selectively chosen to demonstrate long-term leadership. Therefore, the *Advertising Age* study is dramatically flawed, and the reports of long-term leadership are overstated. (Golder, 2000, p. 162)

Golder (2000) goes on to provide an objective answer, using multiple studies, to the question of whether or not marketing leadership is sustained across decades. His main finding is that more of the leading brands in 1923 failed than remained leaders. He also analyzes and provides explanations for an instance where a brand leader in 1923 was the brand leader for nine decades (Wrigley's chewing gum). Thus, the answer to the question is complex: sustainable brand leadership does occur, but occurs rarely, and the main effect of brand sales leadership and time is negative, not positive. Golder and Tellis (1993) and Mitra and Golder (2006) are more advanced readings on applying the historical method in marketing and are almost as exciting to read as Golder (2000). Note that Golder (2000) does not just uncover lying, but goes on to uncover and report details of truth. Applying the historical method offers the opportunity to craft a highly insightful study as well as avoiding the low research quality dominant in most marketing PhD dissertations – the one-time, self-report survey with useable response rates below 25%.

2.10 The high forecasting accuracy of role-playing and the pervasive embrace of social irresponsibility in management

Role-playing (RP) is a research genre rarely used in research in marketing, but is substantially more accurate than alternative forecasting methods in inferring outcomes that actually do occur in management decision-making and conflicts (Green, 2002, 2005; Green & Armstrong, 2007a, 2007b, 2011). For example, Green and Armstrong (2011)

report that when groups of novice participants adopted the roles of protagonists in the nine conflicts and interacted with each other, their group decisions predicted the actual decisions with an accuracy of 60%. “Role thinking” (placing oneself in the shoes of a decision-maker) works poorly:

We tested the effect of role thinking on forecast accuracy. We obtained 101 role-thinking forecasts of the decisions that would be made in nine diverse conflicts from 27 naval postgraduate students (experts) and 107 role-thinking forecasts from 103 second-year organizational behavior students (novices). The accuracy of the novices’ forecasts was 33% and that of the experts’ was 31%; both were little different from chance (guessing), which was 28%. The small improvement in accuracy from role-thinking strengthens the finding from earlier research that it is not sufficient to think hard about a situation in order to predict the decisions which groups of people will make when they are in conflict. Instead, it is useful to ask groups of role players to simulate the situation (Green & Armstrong, 2011, p. 69).

Armstrong (1977) demonstrates the high accuracy of role-playing in generating a highly irresponsible management decision and later denial by the role-playing participants that they would actually make such a decision, even though the instructions in the role-playing exercise included the statement “act as you would act if you were in the role of the person described.” “That isn’t me! That is just the role that I was playing” is phraseology that expresses the rationale of the participants in making the irresponsible decision. Armstrong then goes further. Neither of the following two revisions in the role-playing alone reduced socially irresponsible behavior: adding persons playing roles of additional stakeholders or distributing social accounting data. Significant reductions in socially irresponsible decision-making occurred only when the two additions were introduced in combination. “These results are relevant to those advocates of social accounting who are concerned with changing the method of accounting alone” (Armstrong, 1977, p. 204).

Given the pervasive embrace of irresponsible behavior by executives in the finance industry in the first decade of the twenty-first century, resulting in \$20 trillion in damages paid (Ferguson, 2013) following the deregulation of this industry, Armstrong (1977) and Green’s body of work offers highly valuable information regarding ways to reduce corruption and sleazy behavior – see the Academy Award winning documentary, *Inside Job* (Ferguson, 2011) – by executives in the financial industry. New regulation and regulatory agencies (e.g. the U.S. Congress Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau created in 2008) are likely to be marginally effective – insufficient, though necessary – steps in reducing irresponsible decision-making in the financial industry. Certainly, research undertaken via role-playing and experiments on executive or household decision-making in testing forecasting accuracy, increasing responsible decision-making and reducing the occurrence of irresponsible management is worth considering – more so than the dominant research genre of self-report surveys using five-point and seven-point scales with response rates below 25%.

3. Tenets for identifying and doing iconic studies in marketing

Few or no PhD students or early career researchers seek to do bad research. Lack of skills, knowledge, experience and coaching on how to do good research, as well as on how to avoid bad research, likely play substantial roles in bad research production. Constructing combinations of multiple ingredients is likely necessary to avoid doing bad research. Learning details about a few (e.g. five to eight) research genres is one ingredient likely to help move a researcher away from doing bad research – possibly a necessary but insufficient step. Checklists are often helpful for improving behavior (Gawande, 2009) –

Table 1 is a partial checklist of tenets that are helpful especially for early career marketing and management scholars in identifying iconic studies and planning studies to possibly achieve iconic status.

Reading articles on how to do good research is likely to be helpful for avoiding doing bad research as well as for doing good research. For example, Carlsmith, Ellsworth, and Aronson (1976) recommend building “critical tests” into a study’s design – that is, empirically examining the accuracy of differing predictions of alternative theories within the same contexts. A critical test focuses on comparing the efficacy of two or more theories empirically – a substantial step beyond testing whether or not one theory is informative empirically. Critical testing is in use far less often than the dominant logic of advocating a set of hypotheses then designing research that is likely to confirm these hypotheses. Armstrong, Brodie, and Parsons (2001) find that the substantial majority (74%) of articles appearing in six leading marketing journals craft and examine advocacy hypotheses; meanwhile, 13% use critical tests and another 13% are exploratory studies. In the same article, Armstrong et al. (2001) find that most (82%) of marketing scholars find critical

Table 1. Checklist of tenets for creating recipes to plan, perform, and write an iconic paper in marketing.

Issue	What to do	Exemplar
Study a topic of high importance?	Study big news topic (e.g. obesity: firm corruption) or issues confronting firm or consumer in everyday life (e.g. fashion)	Golder and Tellis (1993)
Offer surprising findings?	Applying complexity theory to show how X relates to Y positively, negatively, and not at all in same data set.	Wu et al. (2014)
Test for predictive validity, not only fit validity?	Test MRA or QCA models with additional samples or split your data set into two subsamples; model each: test model from sample 1 on data in sample 2, and visa versa	Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009)
Achieve construct validity?	Use multiple item scales and two distinct methods for each construct	Campbell and Fiske (1959)
Do, build in, replications?	Build in a replication in your own study: study 2 to 20 industries and report findings for each; study2 to 10 customer segments; do own meta-analysis	Woodside et al. (1989)
Study behavior across time periods?	Collect same data in different weeks, months, years for same firms, consumers: model through time	Campbell (1969)
Models match asymmetric nature of reality	Learn how to create asymmetric models	Ordanini et al. (2014)
Sufficient statistical power to estimate effect size?	Use large sample size per study and per cell (property space); use theoretical sampling (insure groups with large difference; use 3–5 levels (range 0.5 to 8.0) for key treatment conditions	Sawyer and Ball (1981)
Avoid self-generated validity?	Go beyond using single-shot, cross-section, self-reports; use two to three distinct research genres: perform critical tests	Evans et al. (1970); Hsu, Woodside, and Marshall (2013)
Cause controversy?	Perform critical tests of opposing theories: achieving controversy is one of the objectives of the Centers of the Max Planck Institute	Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009)

tests to be highly informative and 18% find studies advocating particular hypotheses to be highly informative; none find exploratory studies to be highly informative. Armstrong et al. (2001) conclude their article by bemoaning the findings of their audit of hypotheses in research in marketing and suggesting increasing the use of critical tests (what they refer to as competing hypotheses testing). Building critical tests into your study is one step toward good research and away from bad research – but this statement is not to imply all advocacy hypotheses studies are bad research.

Relevant for identifying and doing iconic studies in marketing, Armstrong (2003, p. 69) offers suggestions for “discovery and communication of important marketing findings”. He suggests three criteria are useful for identifying whether findings are important: replication, validity, and usefulness (a fourth criterion, surprise, is also relevant in some contexts), and adds that “According to Rosenthal and Rosnow (1984, p. 9), ‘Replicability is almost universally accepted as the most important criterion of genuine scientific knowledge.’ Leone and Schultz (1980) claim that replication is the key to generalizations in marketing” (Armstrong, 2003, p. 70). Yet marketing journals rarely publish replication studies, and few studies include replications in their research designs. A meta-analysis of replication studies indicates that most provide conflicting or only partial support of the original studies’ findings (Armstrong, 2003).

Replications using additional samples to test the accuracy of findings in an initial study are useful for testing the predictive validities of models in the initial study. For example, applying empirical regression models or fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) models created/fitted from the data from one sample to test their accuracies on predicting dependent/outcome variables in additional sample is testing for predictive validity – a step that is rarely taken (Gigerenzer & Brighton, 2009) but is a huge step toward doing good research. Cross-predictive validation is possible using hold-out samples and/or additional samples in a study. Researchers should build additional independent samples into the designs of their studies – a highly useful ingredient in performing good research.

Though no audit appears to be available, Armstrong’s (2003) impression is that predictive validity tests are rarely used in marketing. Gigerenzer and Brighton (2009) and Roberts and Pashler (2000) describe the severe shortcomings of performing only fit-validity tests and the need for predictive validity tests, despite their rarely being done in most behavioral science and management disciplines. Doing only fit-validity testing is taking a step toward bad research; including predictive validation of models using additional samples is a step toward good research.

Regarding Armstrong’s (2003) third criteria, few marketing scholarly studies appear to be useful: “Miner (1984) examined 32 well-regarded theories in organizational behavior and concluded that only 4 had been shown to be useful. Few papers in marketing journals would fall into the category of having findings that are useful. Examine the abstracts of papers from these journals. One must look hard to find studies that seem useful, especially, I believe, in the more prestigious journals” (Armstrong, 2003, p. 71). Before starting a study, perhaps asking the following questions might be helpful for answering the usefulness criterion for a research study: what do we know? How do we know it? Are there circumstances/contexts in which the opposite of what we know to be true is also true? What can/should we do differently from what is being done now if the findings confirm the hypotheses? What can/should we do differently from what is being done now if the findings disconfirm the hypotheses?

Surprising findings are likely to appear when using asymmetric versus symmetric tests. “Scientists’ tools are not neutral” (Gigerenzer, 1991, p. 19). Symmetric tests are more

often two-plus steps away from reality; asymmetric tests are closer to reality. Woodside, Prentice, and Larsen (2015) offer very different and surprising findings using asymmetric tests on the same data that Prentice and Woodside (2013) report when using symmetric tests. The findings in Woodside et al. (2015) and Wu et al. (2014) support complexity theory tenets; Prentice and Woodside (2013) offer surprising findings as well; the findings are also less complex than those of Woodside et al. (2015). Ordanini et al. (2014) also report findings using both asymmetric and symmetric tools – the findings are surprisingly different and insightful. A useful point here is that applying both symmetric and asymmetric tools to craft and test theory is taking a step toward good research. Relying on a single tool for analysis is taking a step toward performing bad research.

3.1 What can we generalize from the ten iconic studies?

While $n = 10$ represents a small sample, some generalizations are possible. Nomological validity should be a big issue in planning studies. Consider asking: do the questions posed and answers learned in each of the ten iconic studies apply to my study? Asking this question is a useful step toward a good research design. Nomological validity refers to a system of relationships that should and should not occur among variables in a study if the researcher is using several distinctly different constructs. The multi-trait–multi-method matrix addresses the question of whether or not high nomological validity occurs among the constructs if you include a system of constructs in your study.

Reading the brief reviews of the 10 iconic studies should give pause to those planning a study that has the ingredients of the dominant research design in marketing PhD dissertations: heavy reliance on five-point or seven-point self-report scales; one-shot cross-sectional design; one respondent per household/firm; no second interviews of the same respondents; no surveying with additional samples; only using symmetric tests and not using asymmetric tests; use of advocacy hypotheses and no critical tests of hypotheses of competing theories; useable response rate below 25%; and no independent confirmation of beliefs by observation.

Along with planning a study that can provide very useful findings, achieving high validity in constructing constructs, wording questions, testing for model fit and forecasting using additional samples may be the most important tenets to consider when thinking about iconic studies in marketing. Two big mistakes to avoid if you do plan on using MRA/SEM for your principal tool for crafting theory and empirically testing theory are, first, testing only for fit validity and not testing for predictive validity using additional samples, and second, testing only using MRA/SEM and not crafting and testing theory using asymmetric thinking and tools (e.g. fsQCA).

4. The first virtual curation of JGMS articles

The principal selection criteria for the 10 JGMS articles for this first virtual curation include: the newness of the topic/findings; achieving variety in the selection; offering highly informative information on the method, analysis, findings and usefulness of the study; and the contribution of the study to theory. This section briefly introduces each article. The introduction suggests strengths and weaknesses to look for in each article. The articles appear alphabetically by the lead author's surname and the studies include several strengths associated with iconic contributions in marketing.

4.1 Creative networks in Florence and Paris: empirical results on project networks

The objective of Donvito, Aiello, and Ranfagni (2013) is to propose an innovative representational model of creative networks in geographical territories that is suitable for analyzing the process of the management of creativity. The empirical research involves the cities of Florence and Paris, which are historically distinguishable by high creativity. This study is highly original, makes use of compelling references in the literature and offers rich insights based on nitty-gritty details of the two networks. Its reporting on two networks is a valuable strength of the study. The study is exploratory and readers interested in the literature or interfirm networks might wish for a formal modeling approach building on the work of Stephen P. Borgatti and associates (e.g. Borgatti & Foster, 2003).

4.2 Modeling links between the decision-making process and luxury brand attachment

Godey et al. (2013) extend analysis of the factors influencing consumer purchase of luxury goods. They examine the effects of brand and country of origin (CoO) on purchase decisions (n = 1103). The authors provide separate findings for seven countries – a major strength. The study does not test the models for predictive validity, relies heavily on self-reports and use of student respondents and does not include asymmetric modeling – these are weaknesses of the study.

4.3 Cause-related marketing and green practices in the hotel industry

Ham and Choi (2012) compare the effect of cause-related marketing specifically for green practices with a baseline condition which includes no such strategy on hotel consumers' attitudes and visit intentions. This study is a laboratory experiment with 50 participants assigned randomly to each of two groups. The treatment group received surveys with CRM (cause-related marketing) descriptions, while the control group simply received a basic hotel advertising description. The participants reviewed the stimuli and afterward answered survey questions. The experimental stimuli featured a picture of a hotel on a background that included the hotel brand name, headlines and body copy (description of the advertisement). The stimuli were operationalized as a CRM strategy for hotels. The brand names of hotels were fictitious, thereby attempting to reduce any bias which might be induced by participants' previous experiences. The CRM advertisement stated the hotel's green practice efforts in the body copy. Hence, the only difference between the two advertisements was the presence or absence of a description of the hotel's green practice efforts.

The use of a "true experiment" (i.e. treatment and control groups and random assignment of participants to two or more groups) is a strength of this study, as the study goes beyond self-report survey research. Using the absence of CRM information rather than using placebo information and not incorporating "behavioroid" dependent variables are weaknesses of this study. Behavioroid metrics would include asking participants to sign up to receive free literature about the hotel in the advertisement they were assigned to read; asking each participant to write a story about an imaginary future visit to the hotel and make up something exciting that happened during the visit; or asking each participant to agree to be contacted with coupons and offers to visit the hotel. Behavioroid metrics are attempts to get closer to behavior than seven-point scaled intention questions (Woodside, Wilson, van der Walt, & Brodie, 1989).

4.4 Marketing mix elements influencing brand attitude strength: global vs. domestic specialty private apparel (SPA) brands

Kim and Park (2013) explore marketing mix ingredients that influence brand attitude strength in some contexts to understand commonalities and differences in strategic brand management between the domestic and global fast fashion brands currently marketed in Korea. This study provides a very useful review of literature on SPA brands and research on “fast-fashion” – brands in the industry in which there is very quick-response marketing practice. The study focuses on young consumers aged 18–32 who were the target market for SPA brands. Through snowball sampling, 276 usable survey responses were obtained from participants who resided in Seoul (34.3%), Chungcheong (47.8%) and Gyeonggi (14.6%) metropolitan areas in Korea. Respondents were asked to choose a brand which they had previously purchased and answer questions regarding marketing mix elements, brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Of the respondents, 48% (n = 132) responded to global SPA brands and 52% (n = 144) to domestic SPA brands.

Weaknesses of the study include not performing asymmetric configural testing to learn the impact of marketing mixes as recipes – a very do-able step; rather, the study focuses only on estimating the significance of net effects of ingredients in marketing mixes. Not performing predictive validity testing via hold-out or additional samples is a second weakness.

4.5 Consumer innovativeness and consideration set in consumer decision process for globalized new products: a three-country empirical study

Using laptops as their product category of interest, Kim, Di Benedetto, and Hunt (2012) investigate the role that culture plays in facilitating the relationship between consumers’ general and domain-specific innovativeness and their decision-making as characterized by the size and composition of their consideration sets. They surveyed respondents in the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the United States. They asked respondents to list up to five products that they would consider for this product category. To evaluate the composition (heterogeneity) of the consideration set, they assessed degree of overall similarity among all pairs in the consideration set, using paired comparisons with five-point Likert-type scales, where five represents “highly similar”. They build a theoretical model based on the literature on consumer innovativeness and in particular domain-specific innovativeness (DSI and general innovativeness (GI), develop research hypotheses from this theoretical model and collect data from respondents in representative major metropolitan areas of the three countries. A total of 614 complete and valid surveys (omitting incomplete responses) were obtained from the three-country sample of 800 individuals (overall response rate was 76.8%). At the country level, they obtained responses as follows: China, 183 valid surveys out of 250; Korea, 241 out of 300; US, 190 out of 250 (the country response rates were 73.2, 80.3 and 76.0%, respectively). The total sample was 61.4% male and 38.6% female, and comprised 57.3% college students, 10.7% college graduates and 32% non-students.

The use of three samples from three different countries is a major strength of the study. Kim et al. (2012) built in replications of the findings for many of their hypotheses by using three samples. Weaknesses of the study include not describing steps in the procedure for data collection – exactly where were survey participants approached? The hypotheses are overly simplistic, another weakness of the study. Contrarian case analysis (Woodside, 2014) would show that the hypotheses for some cases opposite to those tested in the study are supportable. The first four hypotheses in the study are as follows:

H1: The size of the consideration set is (a) relates negatively to DSI; and is (b) unrelated to GI. H2: Country differences moderate the relationships between the size of the consideration set and (a) DSI; (b) GI. H3: The heterogeneity of the consideration set is (a) relates negatively to DSI; and is (b) unrelated to GI. H4: Country differences moderate the relationship between the composition of the consideration set and (a) DSI; (b) GI.

Testing for recipes (Ordanini et al., 2014; Woodside, 2014) and not just regression analysis would deepen and enrich the findings and insights of this study. Kim et al. (2012) do not examine the predictive validity of their models; taking this step would increase the value of the study.

4.6 New shopper typology: utilitarian and hedonic perspectives

Kim, Lee, and Kim (2011) classify retail shoppers based on utilitarian and hedonic shopping orientations, and profile shopper groups in terms of demographic characteristics and shopping outcomes. The data for this study were collected via online survey in the United States. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the measurement model of shopping orientations. A cluster analysis identified groups of retail store shoppers ($n = 987$) based on shopping orientations. The study reveals four distinct retail shopper types represent the consumers in the new millennium: hedonic, utilitarian, demanding and apathetic shoppers.

The study includes useful literature and goes back to Stone's (1954) classic typology. The new typology promises to be useful. A weakness of Kim et al.'s (2011) study is its not examining the consistencies of the four-cluster solution; randomly creating three subsamples ($n = 329$) and running cluster analysis on each would help answer this issue. Kim et al. (2011) do not mention a few very important prior studies that relate directly to theirs, such as that of Childers, Carr, Peck, and Carson (2001) – the relevant literature includes 1500 + citations of the Childers et al. (2001) study as of January 2015. Noting this shortcoming should encourage researchers to search Google.com/scholar before submitting their papers to be sure that they do not overlook important references. In this case, searching for “retailing shopping typology” generates Childers et al.'s (2001) study as the second entry. Certainly, not all references need to be discussed in a new paper, but Childers offers an ingredient that appears often in iconic studies – a high citation count.

4.7 What's going on in SNS and social commerce? Qualitative approaches to narcissism, impression management, and e-WOM behavior of consumers

Park and Kang's (2013) study aims to examine consumers' narcissism, impression management and e-WOM behavior in social networking sites (SNS) and social commerce. Focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted and a diverse pool of information on experiences and perspectives on social commerce and SNS was collected. Park and Kang (2013) conducted five focus-group interviews with 3–5 participants in each FGI and 10 in-depth interviews at the participants' preferred location, such as a cafe they named, their house or their school campus. The interviews took 2–3hours each. The size of their focus groups, at only 3–5 participants, was smaller than usual due to difficulty getting appropriate participants who were available at the same time and in the same place. Therefore, they conducted a total of five FGIs. To select participants and interviewees, they asked several questions of the people who were interested in this research (e.g. how often they log in to social networking sites and social commerce sites, check new postings, upload postings and purchase social commerce products).

Park and Kang's (2013) consideration of how their findings relate to the literature on narcissism and impression management is a strength of the study. Not collecting actual behavior information by looking at behaviors completed on the participants' cell phones is a weakness; asking participants to show the researchers how they go about using social networking sites would have increased the contribution of the study.

4.8 Consumer behavior in green marketing for a luxury brand: a cross-cultural study of the US, Japan and Korea

Park, Ko, and Kim (2010) propose and test an integrative model of relationships among luxury brand value, brand image, customer satisfaction with green marketing activities, brand attitude and purchase intention. The subjects selected for the present study were undergraduate and graduate students residing in New York, US; Tokyo, Japan; and Seoul, Korea. The focus of the study is on one brand, Louis Vuitton. The survey was conducted in winter 2009–10 and 200, 121 and 203 questionnaires were collected from the US, Japan and Korea, respectively. The findings support all seven hypotheses in the study, four of which were as follows: H1: Luxury brand value has a positive effect on luxury brands' image. H2: Luxury brands' image has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with green marketing activities. H3: Satisfaction with green marketing activities for luxury brands has a positive effect on the brand attitude after the green marketing activities. H4: Satisfaction with green marketing activities for a luxury brand has a positive effect on the change of purchase intention after the green marketing activities.

The survey of respondents in three cultures is one of the study's strengths. The use of self-reports and symmetric tests only are two of the weaknesses of the study. The use of student participants only is another weakness of the study. The hypotheses are overly simplistic; the value of the study would have increased if Park et al. (2010) had included contrarian case analysis (Woodside, 2014) and attempted to model cases supporting hypotheses directly opposite to the ones in their theory.

4.9 When customers create the ad and sell it – a value network approach

Using a value network approach, Pihl (2013) explains the role of vigilante marketers in their interaction with firms seeking to impose managerial control and influence processes of co-creation of brand values. A netnography of the content produced by 18 market-leading fashion bloggers in Sweden was conducted during 2009. This study reveals that these fashion bloggers are part of an emergent value network and realized the value that they co-create for brands using various forms of vigilante marketing. The findings challenge the notion of vigilante marketing as an independent and unpaid activity, illustrating how a value network approach can facilitate study of the borderlands emerging between consumers and producers. For this study, a total of 26 Swedish firms offering blog platform services to Internet users were identified (see Table 3). Within this group of actors, three different categories of firms can be distinguished: (1) firms that have specialized in providing blog platforms (specialist); (2) traditional media companies that have integrated blog platforms into their websites (traditional media); and (3) companies in the IT sector that have explored the possibilities of expanding their businesses or developing their technological know-how by developing blog platforms (explorer).

Pihl (2013) offers a highly original study that conjoins historical analysis, co-creation, advertising and fashion marketing. Pihl (2013) avoids the severe problems of survey-based self-reports by using naturally occurring self-reports and communications among

consumers in social media. The study reports on professional commercial bloggers and how they go about earning commissions. The reader is left with a great desire for a more lengthy report than that which Pihl (2013) provides. The lack of in-depth use of narrative theory and analysis of the communications among brand executives, PCBs and unpaid users of social media is a weakness of the study. It would be wonderful if the author could engage in and report a participant observer study on this topic!

4.10 Brand-proneness versus experiential effect? Explaining consumer preferences towards labeled food products

Trigui and Giraud (2012) analyze consumer preferences towards labeled food products on the basis of a consumer scanned data panel. This study is based on single-source data: a consumer scanned data panel was used to record purchases and preferences and the purchases of 612 panelists were observed over a one-year period. After in-shop hedonic tests, consumers involved in the panel were invited to investigate attitude and purchase measurement. Finally, a price/preference test followed by a conjoint analysis test was conducted with the same consumers in order to learn the main attributes expected by them and to measure the weight and attractiveness of typicality elements in consumer perceptions, such as price, label, brand and region of origin of the chosen product.

The combination of naturally occurring data, a conjoint experiment and survey data results in a unique and insightful study. Not reporting detailed findings of the scanned data and how these data associate with the conjoint and survey data is a weakness of the study.

5. Closing comments: checklists and recipes for identifying and planning good studies and avoiding doing bad in marketing

Pilots and surgeons make use of checklists to ensure they execute procedures accurately and completely (Gawande, 2009). The quality of marketing scholarship is likely to increase with the adoption of “what-to-do” and “what-to-avoid-doing” checklists in designing and implementing research designs in marketing. This essay reviews several iconic studies relevant for research in marketing and, based on the ingredients in the recipes of these studies, offers an initial checklist that is helpful especially for early career marketing scholars.

Scholars in marketing often get stuck in the habit of using one research genre almost exclusively in their professional careers, such as self-report survey studies coupled with MRA/SEM data analysis (a research genre with severe limitations, as this article has described). Reading and gaining experience in the use of a few distinctly different research genres will likely increase a researcher’s skills in creating theory, data analysis, interpreting findings and writing articles. Going beyond the rote use of symmetric tests (e.g. correlation, regression, analysis of variance) affects the crafting of theory as well as providing evidence supporting deeper and richer insights into theory/data. Consider embracing complexity theory, performing contrarian analysis and modeling multiple realities (Woodside, 2014) in planning your next study or PhD dissertation.

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