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RESEARCH IN MARKETING STRATEGY

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Abstract

Marketing strategy is a construct that lies at the conceptual heart of the field of strategic marketing and is central to the practice of marketing. It is also the area within which many of the most pressing current challenges identified by marketers and CMOs arise. We develop a new conceptualization of the domain and sub-domains of marketing strategy and use this lens to assess the current state of marketing strategy research by examining the papers in the six most influential marketing journals publishing such papers over the period 1999 through 2017. We uncover important challenges to marketing strategy research—not least the increasingly limited number and focus of studies, and declining use of both theory and primary research designs. However, we also uncover numerous opportunities for developing important and highly relevant new marketing strategy knowledge—the number and importance of unanswered marketing strategy questions and opportunities to impact practice has arguably never been greater. To guide such research, we develop a new research agenda that provides opportunities for researchers to develop new theory, establish clear relevance, and contribute to improving practice.

INTRODUCTION

Developing and executing marketing strategy is central to the practice of marketing. Recent reports regarding the top challenges facing marketers (Table 1) reveal numerous questions within the domain of marketing strategy including: (i) how to create organizational structures that better enable development of marketing strategies that help navigate and adapt to changing customer and firm needs; (ii) how to choose the optimal set of marketing strategies to drive outcomes given competing priorities and myriad internal and external stakeholders; and (iii), how to lead enterprise-wide executives in developing and implementing strategies that create greater customer centricity and engagement. As a result of its centrality to practice, marketing strategy is also a key area of business school pedagogy, pivotal in marketing theory explanations of firm performance, and a focus of inquiry among academic researchers. However, while there has been a growing research interest in the general field of strategic marketing (i.e. marketing-related phenomena and decisions that are important to understanding the long-term performance of product/brands, SBUs, and firms), it is unclear how much of this research relates to marketing

strategy—the central construct within the field of strategic marketing.[1]

Since developing and executing marketing strategy is central to what marketers do in practice, research germane to understanding these activities is key to establishing the relevance of the academic discipline of marketing. Better understanding the state of marketing strategy knowledge is also important for developing theoretical understanding in marketing. For example, knowing what theories have been drawn on in past research and which aspects of marketing strategy have received little attention is a pre-cursor to any attempt to develop indigenous marketing theory. Systematic analyses of the use of different research approaches and methods in a particular domain, and how these have changed over time can also uncover insights for the development of new approaches and methods. As a result, periodic reviews of research in a domain are useful in consolidating knowledge and enabling cumulative knowledge development (e.g., Palmatier, Houston & Hulland 2018).

The last major review of research in marketing strategy was undertaken by Varadarajan & Jayachandran (1999). Clearly, much has happened in the worlds of both practice and research in the past twenty years, making the present study needed and timely. This study therefore undertakes a comprehensive review of the strategic marketing literature since 1999, with three specific objectives: (a) to develop a framework through which to assess the current state of research conducted within marketing strategy; (b) to illuminate and illustrate the "state of knowledge" in core sub-domains of marketing strategy development and execution; and (c), to develop a research agenda identifying aspects of marketing strategy that require greater.

In addressing these objectives, this study makes a number of contributions to strategic

[1] We follow Varadarjan's (2010) distinction using "strategic marketing" as the term describing the general field of study and "marketing strategy" as the construct that is central in the field of strategic marketing—just as analogically "strategic management" is a field of study in which "corporate strategy" is a central construct.

marketing knowledge. First, we show that marketing strategy research published in the major journals over the past nineteen years (1999-2017) has primarily focused on either marketing tactics or marketing-related inputs (resources and capabilities) to marketing strategy and their performance outcomes (both directly and under different external and internal environmental conditions), with relatively little research in the core domain of marketing strategy. If our understanding of marketing strategy before 1999 was complete—and no significant changes had occurred since that time—this may not be a significant problem. However, clearly neither of these conditions is true. The relative lack of attention to marketing strategy during this period should be viewed as a particularly significant gap in marketing knowledge since marketing strategy is the central construct in the field of strategic marketing and in practice marketers spend most of their time engaged in marketing strategy-related activities.

Second, we develop a new conceptualization of marketing strategy, identifying four key sub-domains (i.e., content-formulation, content-implementation, process-formulation, process-implementation). This provides a new framework that can be used to assess the state of the field, identify critical knowledge gaps, and direct future research. In this study, we use it as a lens with which to assess and calibrate which marketing strategy sub-domains—and issues within each domain—have received more or less attention. For example, we show that while marketing strategy implementation appears to be an area of relatively strong research coverage, most studies in this sub-domain are marketing-mix models examining linkages between one or more marketing program elements and performance outcomes while controlling for the remaining elements of a brand or firm's marketing program. Conversely, we find that very few marketing strategy studies have focused on the processes by which marketing strategy is developed.

Third, building on such insights we identify a new research agenda for future marketing

strategy research. Synthesizing existing knowledge within a domain of inquiry and identifying research gaps is an important stage of cumulative knowledge development in any field (e.g., Palmatier, Houston & Hulland 2018). Such cumulative knowledge building in marketing strategy is essential since its centrality to marketing practice makes research in marketing strategy of particular importance in establishing the relevance of academic research and its utility and legitimacy to practicing managers. We therefore use relevance to practice as one of the lenses used to identify and prioritize a new research agenda for marketing strategy.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we develop a new integrated conceptual model of marketing strategy to guide our review. Next, we describe the journal sample and review procedure adopted. We then present and discuss the descriptive statistics arising from our review. Within the sub-domains of marketing strategy identified, we next present exemplar studies and briefly synthesize existing knowledge. We then discuss the implications of the review findings for marketing theory and practice. Finally, we develop a research agenda for future research in marketing strategy.

– Insert Table 1 Here –

CONCEPTUALIZING MARKETING STRATEGY

A necessary first step in reviewing research in any domain is to clearly establish its external boundaries and identify important internal boundaries among sub-domains. In accomplishing this, we draw initially on Varadarajan's (2010) exploration of the conceptual domain and definition of marketing strategy:

> *"Marketing strategy is an organization's integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices concerning products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources in the creation, communication and/or delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby enables the organization to achieve specific objectives." (Varadarajan 2010, p. 119)*

In line with this, the marketing literature broadly indicates that a firm's marketing efforts impact its marketplace and economic performance through the formulation and implementation of specific patterns of resource deployments designed to achieve marketing objectives in a target market (e.g., Katsikeas et al. 2016; Morgan 2012). This formulation-implementation dichotomy perspective suggests that goal-setting and marketing strategy development systems are used as future-oriented decision-making frameworks to define desired goals and identify and select marketing strategy options that may enable these goals to be accomplished, followed by a period of enactment in which firms seek to operationalize the intended marketing strategy decisions to achieve the desired goals (e.g., Morgan et al. 2012; Noble & Mokwa 1999; Piercy 1998).

From this perspective, marketing strategy formulation involves managers making explicit "what" decisions regarding goals and the broad means by which they are to be accomplished in terms of target market selection, required value offerings and desired positioning, timing, etc. (e.g., Kerin et al. 1990; Slater & Olson 2001). Conversely, marketing strategy implementation concerns "doing it" in terms of translating these broad "what" marketing strategy decisions into a set of detailed and integrated marketing tactics and accompanying these with appropriate actions and resource deployments to enact them (e.g., Slater et al. 2010; Varadarajan & Jayachandran 1999). While the literature has consistently distinguished between strategy formulation and implementation, both the marketing and strategic management literature also suggests that they are interdependent, with implementation (what a firm is able to do) shaping and constraining marketing strategy content decisions over time (e.g., Cespedes 1991; Moorman & Miner 1998).

A second "dichotomy" evidenced widely in the strategic management literature (e.g. Farajoun 2002; Mintzberg & Lampel 1999; Van de Ven 1992), and to a lesser extent in the marketing literature (e.g., Frankwick et al. 1994; Menon et al. 1999; Walker & Ruekert 1987), is

between strategy content and strategy process. From this perspective, marketing strategy content concerns the specific strategic decisions (e.g., what and how many segments to target, what the firm's value proposition needs to be to achieve required sales) and integrated tactical marketing program decisions (e.g., the required sales-force incentive plan, channel selection and merchandizing platform design, marketing communication media selection, etc.) made. Conversely, strategy process concerns the organizational mechanisms leading to these marketing strategy decisions (e.g., situation assessment, goal-setting, top-down vs. bottom up strategic planning process, planning comprehensiveness, etc.) and those used to make and realize decisions regarding how they are enacted (e.g., marketing mix planning, budgeting, internal communication, organization re-design, performance monitoring and control systems, etc.).

We use these two common "dichotomies" as a framework (see Figure 1) for establishing the external boundaries of the domain of marketing strategy and to identify important sub-domains within the marketing strategy construct.[1] Identifying these sub-domains within the broad domain outlined in Varadarajan (2010) allows us to refine his original definition of marketing strategy. We therefore define marketing strategy as encompassing the strategy decisions and actions (what) and strategy-making and realization processes (how) concerning a firm's desired goals[2] over a future time-period, and the means through which it intends to achieve them including selecting target markets and customers; identifying required value propositions; and designing and enacting integrated marketing programs to develop, deliver, and communicate the value offerings. We use this definition of marketing strategy and the sub-domains it encompasses in the conceptual framework developed as a lens through which to

[1] Following the strategic management literature (e.g., Mintzberg 1994; Pascale 1984), marketing strategy has also been viewed from an "emergent" strategy perspective (e.g. Hutt, Reingen & Ronchetto 1988; Menon et al. 1999). Conceptually this is captured as realized (but not pre-planned) tactics and actions in Figure 1.
[2] These may be at the product/brand, SBU, or firm-level.

identify and examine recent research in marketing strategy (see Figure 1).

– Insert Figure 1 Here –

Our new definition of marketing strategy also allows us to identify and capture studies examining strategic marketing phenomena related to—but not directly encompassing—marketing strategy. As shown in Figure 1, the most important categories of these related phenomena deal with: (i) *inputs* to marketing strategy including resources such as market knowledge, brand portfolios, financial resources, etc. and capabilities such as NPD, CRM, etc.; (ii) *outputs* of marketing strategy including customer "mind-set" and behavior outcomes and marketplace and economic performance; and (iii) *environmental factors* distinct from marketing strategy but that may impact marketing strategy phenomena and their relationships with other phenomena including internal factors such as organizational culture, size, etc. and external factors such as market characteristics, technology turbulence, competitive intensity, etc.

REVIEW OF MARKETING STRATEGY RESEARCH

Journal selection. To ensure the representativeness and high quality of studies included in our review, we examined the ten most influential marketing journals in Baumgartner & Pieters's (2003) study of journal influence, and identified the six of these that publish research in the field of strategic marketing (*Journal of Marketing (JM), Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), Marketing Science (MKS), Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS), Journal of Retailing (JR)* and *Industrial Marketing Management (IMM)*). The remaining four "top ten" journals are either not typical outlets for strategic marketing research (*Journal of Consumer Research, Management Science*, and *Advances in Consumer Research*) or are managerial and provide little detail regarding theory or research method (*Harvard Business Review*). We replaced the lowest ranked (10th) journal on this list, *Industrial Marketing Management (IMM)*

with *International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)* as this journal has grown significantly in stature over the past fifteen years and is now considered the top non-U.S. based marketing journal (Kumar et al. 2017; Roberts et al. 2014).

Thus, we include six journals in this review: *JM*, *JMR*, *MKS*, *JAMS*, *JR*, and *IJRM*. We first obtained digital copies of every article published in these six journals from their official websites during the 1999 thru 2017 period. Each article was examined (title, abstract, keywords, hypotheses/conceptual framework, etc.) and initially coded where appropriate into one or more of the four broad categories shown in Figure 1 (i.e., marketing strategy, inputs, outputs, and environment). Articles with "marketing strategy", "strategy", or any other keywords or similar concepts listed in Figure 1's marketing strategy conceptualization such as "goals", "strategic/marketing planning", "marketing mix", "integrated marketing program", and "segmentation/targeting/positioning", etc. were retained for further additional analysis.

Article selection criteria. Four primary criteria were then used to screen studies for inclusion in our analysis: (i) the focus of the study must be on strategy (vs. individual tactics) as specified in Figure 1, either as a primary objective or as part of a wider research design; (ii) the study should be of marketing (vs. purely management) phenomena; (iii) the unit of analysis is at firm-, SBU, brand- or product-level (or product or brand portfolios), rather than at individual-level (e.g., salesperson or consumer/customer); (iv) the study was published during the 1999-2017 period, because the last widely-cited review of marketing strategy was undertaken by Varadarajan & Jayachandran (1999). To avoid "double counting" we exclude empirical meta-analytic papers in our review sample.

We excluded tactical marketing papers that focus only on one or two of aspects of the "4Ps" marketing program (e.g., advertising or pricing) without at least controlling for the other

aspects of the marketing program. This is because as per our marketing strategy conceptualization, only studies dealing with (or at least controlling for) all aspects of the marketing program can provide useful strategic (vs. purely tactical) insights. We also excluded purely methodological papers such as studies of new segment identification methods and studies focusing on individual employee or consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Finally, studies examining industry-level development and strategy were not included in our review.

Three experienced researchers independently examined all of the published articles to determine if it should be coded as a marketing strategy paper, with an accompanying rationale for each paper's inclusion or exclusion following the above four criteria. Average interrater agreement was 96% and all remaining discrepancies were discussed to reach consensus. A total of 257 marketing strategy articles remained in the review sample after this filtering process. Each of these papers were then further examined and coded according to the specific aspects of marketing strategy covered and the theory and methodological characteristics of each study.

Coding procedure. Following procedures recommended for literature review papers (e.g., Katsikeas et al. 2016; Lipsey & Wilson 2001), we developed a protocol for coding each of the key aspects of marketing strategy (i.e., first coding single aspects such as "formulation" vs. "implementation", and "content" vs. "process"; then composite aspects such as "formulation-content", "formulation process", "implementation-content", "implementation process", and "hybrid"). We first, created a document specifying the definitions, keywords, and examples for each aspect of marketing strategy. Second, two experienced marketing strategy researchers independently coded a randomly selected set of 60 articles (10 from each journal) using this draft protocol to assess the accuracy and thoroughness of the evaluative criteria and made revisions and improvement. Third, we pretested the revised protocol using two additional expert judges,

who independently evaluated another 10 randomly selected articles from each journal. Full agreement was attained, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of our coding scheme.

Three experienced researchers then coded each of the 257 eligible articles, under the supervision of the lead investigator, who had extensive knowledge of marketing strategy and coding procedures. Interrater agreement ranged from 86%-100% and all discrepancies were discussed to reach consensus. Finally, the lead investigator also coded another 10 randomly selected articles from each journal, and the results were fully consistent with those of the three coders, enhancing confidence in the reliability of the evaluation procedure in this study.

Following this, two experienced researchers also coded the key theory and methodological characteristics of each study in terms of: (i) the primary research approach of paper (i.e., conceptual/qualitative/empirical/analytical); (ii) data type (i.e., primary, secondary or both) for empirical papers; (iii) data analysis approach (analytical, regression, time series, structural equation modelling-SEM etc.); and, (iv) argumentation approach (e.g., single theory, multiple theories, conceptual development/grounded theory, and logic or data-driven approaches) following a coding scheme. Interrater agreement on this coding was high (97%).

Descriptive Analysis of Marketing Strategy Papers

As defined in Varadarajan (2010), strategic marketing refers to the general field of study while marketing strategy refers to the organizational strategy construct that is the principal focus of the field. Thus, while all marketing strategy-focused papers are within the field of strategic marketing, not all strategic marketing research concerns marketing strategy. We follow this distinction. For example, in their study examining the influence of research in the field of strategic marketing Kumar et al. (2017) focus on papers that examine all strategic marketing issues, decisions, and problems, which include but is not limited to marketing strategy.

Conversely, our study focuses on research examining issues that fall within the more specific domain of marketing strategy (Figure 1), which is the construct at the heart of the conceptual domain of the field of strategic marketing (Varadarajan 2010), and is where most CMOs and marketers spend most of their time and effort in practice.

To provide insight into the relative frequency of different types of marketing strategy-related research we also identified and coded papers that do not focus directly on marketing strategy but do focus on the related areas of (i) inputs to marketing strategy, (ii) outputs of marketing strategy, and (iii) environmental factors (internal and external to the firm) that may affect marketing strategy and its relationship with other phenomena. These include studies focusing, for example, on the impact of possession of marketing-related resources/capabilities on performance, the value of internal environmental factors such as organizational culture, or the role of external factors such as market dynamism on the marketing capability-performance relationship. We also coded studies focusing on relationships involving individual tactical actions covering specific marketing mix elements (without directly controlling for the remaining marketing mix areas). For example, Bruce et al. (2012) examined the impact of word of mouth and advertising on demand. Following Figure 1, this was therefore coded as a study of a specific marketing tactic rather than within the domain of marketing strategy.

As summarized in Table 2, almost 95% of the papers published in the six most influential journals publishing strategic marketing research during the 1999-2017 period are “non-strategy” papers i.e. they do not examine phenomena within the marketing strategy domain delineated in our review framework—even though some of these examine phenomena that are within the general field of strategic marketing. In fact, the largest category of papers published in these journals (36%) contains studies of marketing tactics that examine one or two individual

marketing program elements such as advertising (e.g., Fang et al. 2016), product and price (e.g., Slotegraaf & Atuahene-Gima 2011; Steiner et al. 2016), channel (e.g., Gooner et al. 2011; Samaha et al. 2011), and selling (e.g., Gonzalez et al. 2014; Harmeling et al. 2015) without examining or explicitly controlling for the remaining marketing mix elements.

The second largest category of papers published in these journals during this period (15%) deal with marketing strategy-related inputs (6%) (e.g., marketing resources and capabilities) (e.g., Grewal et al. 2013; Luo & Homburg 2008), outputs (9%) (positional advantages and performance outcomes) (e.g., Katsikeas et al. 2016; Morgan & Rego 2006; Rego et al. 2013), or both (e.g., Gonzalez et al. 2014; Homburg et al. 2011; Rego et al. 2009). A further 6% of all papers published in these journals focus on internal (i.e. organizational) (e.g., Samaha et al. 2014) or external (e.g., market, technology, etc.) environmental phenomena (e.g., Song et al. 2008: Varadarajan et al. 2008)—with the majority focusing on external vs. internal environmental factors (262 vs. 40 papers).[3]

While not by a large margin, research on marketing strategy (as delineated in Figure 1) comprises the smallest number (less than 6% of all published papers) of the different types of strategic marketing papers coded in our review across the six journals we examine (vs. Tactics, Internal/External Environment, Inputs, and Outputs). However, we also observe large variance across the journals covered. Notably, *JM* (9.8%) and *JAMS* (8.6%) are the outlets for a much higher percentage of marketing strategy papers as a percentage of all the papers they publish than the remaining four journals—and jointly published the majority (57%) of the combined total marketing strategy papers published across the six journals. More specifically, as shown in

[3] These strategic marketing but "non-strategy" coding areas are not mutually exclusive. For example, many papers in this non-strategy category cover both inputs/outputs and environment (e.g., Kumar et al. 2016; Lee et al. 2015; Palmatier et al. 2013; Zhou et al. 2005), or specific tactics, input/output, and environment (e.g., Bharadwaj et al. 2011; Palmatier et al. 2007; Rubera & Kirca 2012).

Figure 2, during this period *JM* has published the greatest number of marketing strategy studies (n=81 or 32% of the combined total across the six journals), followed by *JAMS* (n=63 or 25%). However, the trend lines showing the ratio of marketing strategy vs. all other types of papers published in each of the six journals over the 1999-2017 period are clearly downwards. This trend line is particularly steep for *JM*, with *JAMS* averaging a higher ratio of marketing strategy vs. other types of papers published than *JM* over the past eight years (2010-2017).[4]

– Insert Tables 2 & 3 & Figure 2 Here –

Table 2 suggests some balance across the individual aspects (i.e. formulation vs. implementation and process vs. content) covered in the marketing strategy research studies we identify. However, the more granular breakdown in Table 3 categorizing the marketing strategy papers published by the four sub-domains of marketing strategy (i.e. formulation-content; formulation-process; implementation-content; implementation-process) in our framework (and captures papers covering more than one sub-domain as "hybrid"), reveals a clear dearth of research in the formulation-process sub-domain. This may be due to the lack of secondary data on such difficult-to-observe phenomena. Published papers in this domain therefore tend to be conceptual or use qualitative, survey, or other primary data collection methods.

While "process" papers in the implementation sub-domain also deal with difficult-to-observe phenomena, there are a greater number of studies in this sub-domain as researchers are able to use secondary marketing mix data along with policy and field experiments to build normative models of how managers can make and execute marketing program decisions. For example, Sun & Li (2011) used call history from a DSL service to show how firms can learn

[4]The relative drop in marketing strategy studies published in *JM* may be a function of the recent growth of interest in the shareholder perspective (Katsikeas et al. 2016) and studies linking marketing-related resources and capabilities directly with stock market performance indicators. Such studies typically treat marketing strategy as an unobserved intervening construct.

from customer-call center interactions to improve resource allocation decisions, and Petersen & Kumar (2015) conducted a large-scale field experiment to investigate product return data and develop a process by which managers can make better marketing resource allocations.

Table 3 also suggests that while *JM* and *JAMS* tend to publish studies within and across all four sub-domains of marketing strategy, the other three journals tend to skew toward or away from certain sub-domains. For example, 58% of the marketing strategy papers published in *MKS* and 44% of those in *JMR* during this period have been in the implementation-content area. This is mainly a result of marketing mix modeling studies being located in this sub-domain of marketing strategy research. Conversely, *MKS* published no hybrid papers, and *JMR*, *IJRM*, and *JR* published no papers in the formulation-process sub-domain of marketing strategy.

As shown in Table 4, the vast majority (202) of the 257 marketing strategy papers in our sample are empirical in nature, with some balance between primary (109) and secondary (78) data used, but few (15) using both primary and secondary data. However, an examination of the numbers by year indicates a recent decrease in the use of primary data and increasing use of secondary data. Table 4 further reveals the relatively small number of conceptual/theoretical (35), qualitative (8), and analytical (12) marketing strategy studies published in the six journals since 1999. To the extent that empirical papers tend to test existing theory, and conceptual and qualitative approaches are more often used to develop theory, this suggests that theory development in published marketing strategy research is rare. While the numbers of papers published by year are small in each of these areas, an examination of the numbers by year since 1999 generally indicate a growth in the proportion of papers that are empirical and a drop-off in the number that are conceptual/theoretical. We also observe some variation across the six journals in this realm, with *JM* and *JAMS* dominating conceptual/theoretical work in marketing

strategy theory development and publishing a greater number of qualitative papers (while still very few in number) than analytical papers in the theory-building domain.

For the non-conceptual/theoretical and qualitative papers published, we also coded the primary analysis approach used (Table 5). This shows that regression-based analysis models dominate, with structural equation modeling (SEM) approaches a distant second. While time-series models are used less frequently overall, an examination of the by year numbers indicate that their use is increasing over time (in line with growing use of secondary data). We also observe a recent relative decline in the use of SEM (in line with the recent relative decrease in the use of primary data noted above).

To provide insight into the nature of the theoretical approaches adopted in the marketing strategy research in our sample, we also coded and analyzed the argumentation approach i.e. rationale used to identify the marketing strategy phenomena and variables examined and/or develop hypotheses regarding expected relationships between them, used in each study. Specifically, following a review of the papers in our sample we coded each as: (i) adopting a single theory lens; (ii) using multiple theories (typically in the development of hypotheses); (iii) developing theory through a grounded approach and/or conceptual development; or (iv), using atheoretical logical argumentation (usually in primarily data-driven studies).

– Insert Tables 4 & 5 Here –

Table 6 shows the use of these four approaches overall and also within the four primary sub-domains of marketing strategy. Overall, the most commonly-used is the logic and data-driven approach (48%), used disproportionately in the formulation-content and implementation-content domains (see Table 6). Collectively, the remaining three approaches—each of which is more theoretical—are used only slightly more frequently. Thus, close to half of all published

marketing strategy research in our sample is largely atheoretical in nature. However, examining trends in the by year data indicates some evidence of (i) a general shift away from theory development using grounded approaches and/or conceptual development to data-driven approaches, and (ii), a growing proportion of studies using multi- vs. single-theory lenses. The increasingly small numbers of marketing strategy papers developing new theory and/or conceptual frameworks may not be a cause for concern if there was already a strong base of indigenous marketing strategy theory. However, this is obviously not the case. In addition, there is arguably an even greater need for new theory in light of the dramatic changes in the marketing landscape driven by technology developments and usage in the recent past.

To provide greater insight into the specific theories being most often used to identify phenomena on which to focus in addressing marketing strategy research problems, and to predict relationships among constructs/variables identified, we also examined the specific theories used in studies employing a single-theory lens. This produced a list of almost 60 different theories employed (Table 7). The majority of these (69%) were used only in a single marketing strategy study published in this period. Only nine theories were used in five or more marketing strategy studies: *Institutional Theory*; *Resource-based View*; *Agency Theory*; *Contingency Theory*; *Performance Feedback Theory*; *Organizational Theory*; *Configuration Theory*; *Organizational Learning Theory*; and, *Structure-Conduct-Performance Theory*. Interestingly, this suggests that while theories from psychology and economics dominate behavioral and modeling research in marketing respectively, recent marketing strategy research draws mainly on strategic management theories, with some sociological (e.g., Institutional Theory) and economic (Agency Theory, Structure-Conduct-Performance) theory influences.

– Insert Tables 6 & 7 Here –

ILLUSTRATIVE RESEARCH IN DOMAINS OF MARKETING STRATEGY

To provide insight into the types of research and knowledge outputs that have been typical in the different sub-domains of marketing strategy, we next identify the most commonly studied topics and discuss exemplar studies in each of the four marketing sub-domains as well as some "hybrid" studies that capture more than one sub-domain. We also provide some high-level synthesis overview of overall knowledge in each area. Table 8 shows the most frequently studied topics in each of the four sub-domains of marketing strategy in the 257 published marketing strategy papers that we identified, and Table 9 details illustrative studies within each sub-domain, as well as some that cross sub-domains.

– Insert Tables 8 & 9 Here –

Formulation–Content Research

The strategy formulation-content sub-domain concerns the specific goals that a marketing strategy is designed to deliver and the major broad strategic decisions concerning how these are to be achieved. The most frequently studied issue in this sub-domain—examined in more than a quarter of all published studies—involves the intended (planned) strategy pursued by a SBU or firm. Studies of this issue have primarily used existing strategy typologies from the management literature (e.g., Miles & Snow's Strategic Archetypes, Porter's Generic Strategies, etc.) and primary survey research designs. For example, Slater, Hult & Olson (2007) examined how the type of strategy pursued by a firm (*Prospectors*, *Analyzers*, *Low Cost Defenders*, *Differentiated Defenders*) affects the firm's subsequent choice of target market and behaviors and its performance outcomes. Among other results, they show that Prospectors perform better when they target innovator and early adopter customers and exhibit technology-oriented behaviors and worse when they target early majority customers. Meanwhile Analyzers perform better when

they target early adopters and early majority customers and exhibit competitor-oriented behaviors. Overall, results of this and similar research show that decisions regarding intended strategy choices generally only explain performance outcomes to the extent that firm's marketing program choices and behaviors are consistent with the intended strategy.

However, some empirical research on this issue examines realized (vs. planned) strategy to identify strategy content decision(s). For example, Chandy & Tellis (2000) observed the types of innovations (radical or incremental) launched by a firm to identify the firm's marketing strategy content and examine the relationship between these marketing strategy innovation content decisions and firm size. In contrast to prior assumptions, they show that: (i) large firms engage in radical innovation (and do so more than smaller firms); and, (ii) that the "incumbents curse" (tendency to shift to more incremental innovations as firms become bigger and more established) varies across countries and over time. Similarly, Mizik & Jacosbon (2003) use the proportion of a firm's expenditures allocated to R&D vs. Advertising to infer firms' "strategic emphasis" toward value creation vs. value capture as routes to achieving desired strategic goals. They find that investors reward resource shifts towards R&D and away from Advertising.

Our analyses also reveal that in the strategy formulation-content domain, there has been much less focus on studying the goals that marketing strategies are designed to achieve. In one recent example of such work, Spyropoulou et al. (2017) examine the extent to which an SBU's strategic goal to establish a differentiated and/or cost-based advantage determines the subsequent achievement of such positional advantages at a later point in time. They find that while setting differentiation goals aids their subsequent achievement the same is not true for cost goals, and that market-based knowledge, marketing capabilities, and external market characteristics moderate the marketing strategy goal-positional advantage achieved relationship. This is

consistent with work on strategy decision content in suggesting that goals are linked to outcomes to the extent that firm resources, capabilities, and behaviors are aligned with the strategy content decisions and implementation requirements of the selected goals.

Formulation–Process Research

The marketing strategy formulation-process sub-domain concerns the mechanisms used to develop marketing strategy goals and identify and select the broad strategic means (i.e., market target(s), required value proposition, desired positioning, timing) by which these goals should be accomplished. With less than 6% of the published marketing strategy studies in our sample focusing on how managers develop marketing strategies, this is the least investigated of the four major sub-domains of marketing strategy—and by a big margin. As seen in Table 8, by far the most frequently studied aspect of marketing strategy formulation-content in the relatively few published studies has been the marketing strategy making (MSM) process. For example, Menon et al. (1999) used a discovery-based approach including qualitative and survey-based methods to conceptualize and develop measures of the MSM process, and primary data to empirically examine its antecedents and consequences. They find that innovative culture is an antecedent of MSM and that different elements of MSM have differing impact on outcomes.

More broadly within the MSM area of this sub-domain, much of the research that has been published is conceptual in nature. This may be because disentangling and assessing different aspects of the MSM process requires data beyond secondary sources, using primary collection approaches such as interviews, surveys, observation, and other mechanisms. One conceptual marketing strategy formulation-process paper, is the study by Dickson, Farris & Verbeke (2001). This study identifies and develops dynamic, mental model mapping techniques for marketing strategy development. The authors contend that in the MSM process, executives

should view the market as a moving video rather than the common practice of viewing it as a static snapshot. The study provides a normative process to help marketing executives improve their marketing strategy decision-making in this way.

While many papers in this domain are conceptual in nature, in an example of a novel empirical approach to understanding marketing strategy decision-making process, Montgomery, Moore & Urbany (2005) conduct three studies to assess the degree to which managers attempt to predict competitive reactions (strategic competitive reasoning) in making marketing strategy decisions. In the first, students interviewed managers involved in a strategic decision to understand the degree to which they employed strategic competitive reasoning in their deliberation. In a second study, they assess whether the results generalize by asking executives to make decisions in a simulated context. In study three, executives were asked to review and assess the accuracy of the results observed in the first two studies. The authors find that there is a relatively low use of strategic competitive reasoning in the MSM process due to several factors including: low perceived returns from anticipating competitive reactions; difficulty in accessing competitive information; and uncertainty in being able to accurately predict competitive behavior. With little empirical research conducted in the strategy-process domain, this type of novel approach to data collection provides an interesting roadmap.

Implementation–Content Research

In contrast to strategy formulation-content, which focuses on the direction and broad strategic choices leaders select to achieve desired outcomes, the strategy implementation-content sub-domain concerns the detailed integrated marketing program tactics decisions taken, and actions and resource deployments to convert these into a concrete set of realized actions. As shown in Table 8, almost half of the published work in this sub-domain has focused either on

developing analytical models or using secondary data and marketing mix modeling to understand the performance impact of marketing program decisions.[5]

Given the nature of the types of research most commonly conducted in this domain, it is difficult to synthesize as it tends to be contingent. For example, Hauser & Shugan (2008) develop models to identify a firm's optimal profit maximizing decisions in response to a rival's new product launch. They find that under specific conditions and assumptions, it is optimal to decrease investment in driving awareness, decrease distribution expenditures, and to potentially increase price. In another example, Bruce, Foutz & Kolsarici (2012) construct a dynamic linear model to study the effects of two marketing program tactics (word of mouth and advertising) on demand for different products across different launch stages. Controlling for other marketing program elements, they find that word of mouth and advertising both influence demand for new products but do so at different stages of the relationship between the company and consumer.

Most published research on this issue is empirical and focuses on the direct and interactive effects of marketing tactics and actions—often using expenditures in different tactical areas as indicators—across multiple marketing program components. However, research that examines all 4 P's simultaneously and dynamically to ensure relevant managerial insight is rare (12% of all marketing mix studies included in our sample). In one such study, Ataman, Van Heerde & Mela (2010) simultaneously examine the effect of all 4 P's on the performance of mature brands. This study broadens integrated marketing program research beyond previously typical considerations of advertising and/or price promotions to also include product and distribution programs and characteristics. The authors find greater elasticities for product and

[5] Since this concerns integrated marketing program design and execution, marketing mix studies contribute to knowledge of strategy implementation-content when all four major marketing program areas are either directly modeled or are controlled for in studies focusing on one or more specific marketing program components.

distribution than for advertising and price promotion, suggesting that the research emphasis on investigating price promotions and advertising typical in earlier studies should be expanded.

Conceptual and theoretical papers tend to be less common in the implementation-content area. However, one example of such work in the second most frequently studied area of this sub-domain (marketing actions/behaviors) is Bolton, Lemon & Verhoef's (2004) development of an integrated conceptual framework to help service organizations understand how marketing actions influence their customer assets. The authors create a customer asset management of services framework which integrates and links marketing instruments (promotions, reward programs, advertising) with customer perceptions of their relationship and subsequent customer behavior with its impact on the focal firm. By conceptually linking marketing actions with customer perception and actions, this study shows how short-term marketing actions may affect the lifetime value of firms' customers.

Implementation–Process Research

The marketing strategy implementation-process sub-domain concerns the mechanisms (e.g., budgeting, communication systems, performance monitoring, alignment and coordination processes, organizational structure design, etc.) used to identify, select, and realize integrated marketing program tactics designed to deliver marketing strategy content decisions. As revealed in Table 8, while there is generally a wider distribution of attention across topics in this sub-domain than in others, the most commonly studied issue is marketing organization design—the mechanisms by which required marketing tasks are accomplished. Research in this area has included both conceptual and empirical studies. For example, Homburg, Workman & Jensen (2000) use field interviews to explore marketing organization design and the broader shift toward customer-focused structures. They distinguish a new type of marketing organization that is more

customer-focused and identify the transitional steps taken as firms migrate toward this new type of structure in accomplishing required marketing execution tasks. In contrast, Vorhies & Morgan (2003) use primary survey data and secondary performance data in a single industry to examine the fit between a firm's strategy content and its marketing organization design. Drawing on configuration theory and utilizing a "fit as profile deviation" perspective, they find that marketing organization design-strategy content fit predicts both marketing effectiveness and efficiency performance outcomes.

Another relatively popular research focus of studies in this domain concerns marketing performance monitoring. For example, O'Sullivan & Abela (2007) use primary data and secondary performance data to study the impact of firms' marketing performance measurement ability. They find that this is positively related to subjective measures of marketing performance outcomes, CEO satisfaction with the marketing function, and objective stock price—and that the use of marketing dashboards does not affect these relationships. Likewise, Homburg, Artz & Wieseke (2012) use primary data to examine the comprehensiveness of marketing performance measurement systems (CMPMS) and find that this helps drive marketing alignment and market knowledge, which in turn positively predict performance. They also report that the strategy fit and "cause and effect" insight components of CMPMS matter more than the number and range of different metrics used.

Within the implementation-process sub-domain there is also a stream of research investigating how marketing's engagement with other functions impacts implementation efforts. For example, Maltz & Kohli (2000) combine prior research, interviews with managers, and survey-based evidence to investigate marketing's interactions with three functions that impact strategy implementation and the achievement of marketing goals. The authors identify six

integrating mechanisms that can reduce the interfunctional conflict that commonly impairs marketing strategy implementation. Additionally, they demonstrate differential effects across marketing's interactions with finance, manufacturing, and R&D.

Hybrid Marketing Strategy Research

While most published marketing strategy research in the journals we examined primarily examines only one of the four sub-domains of marketing strategy identified in Figure 1, some studies cover more than one area. Some of these are conceptual papers covering a broad domain of marketing strategy. For example, Morgan (2012) develops a meso-level conceptual framework which theoretically links firm resources and marketing capabilities to firms' marketing strategy decisions and marketing strategy implementation to positional, market, and financial performance outcomes. Consequently, the paper cuts across the formulation-content and implementation-content sub-domains of marketing strategy. Similarly, Varadarajan (2010) establishes a domain statement for the field of strategic marketing, distinguishing between key concepts such as the difference between strategic and tactical decisions (i.e., formulation content and implementation content) in the marketing strategy decision process.

Given the scope involved, there are relatively few empirical hybrid studies in our sample. In one such paper, Krush, Sohi & Saini (2015) investigate the impact of marketing's influence when capabilities are dispersed, rather than centralized, within the firm. Controlling for business strategy type (formulation-content), they examine how the type of marketing capability dispersion (implementation-content) chosen impacts marketing's influence and marketing implementation outcomes. This study finds that the form of marketing capability dispersion affects marketing's influence within the firm, which in turn affects customer responsiveness that drives marketing strategy implementation success and ultimately business unit performance.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Our descriptive and sub-domain content exploration of research published in the most influential marketing strategy journals over the past nineteen years reveals a number of new insights for marketing strategy research. First, is the relative (and increasing) rarity of research focusing on one or more aspects of the core marketing strategy construct at the heart of the field of strategic marketing. Our coding of research in these journals reveals that the focus of research attention in the recent past has been much more on individual marketing mix elements (i.e. individual tactics) than on the marketing strategies and integrated marketing programs with which individual marketing mix elements are associated. While knowledge of the impact of various individual marketing mix elements under different conditions is obviously useful (more knowledge regarding any type of marketing phenomena is generally a good thing), the relative emphasis in current research seems out of balance given the focus of practice on marketing strategy.

Second, in terms of theory building and theory use, our analysis suggests that almost half of the papers published in the last nineteen years have been logic or data-driven in developing arguments—and this trend is increasing. Of course, data-driven approaches are not necessarily bad, and managers are often very interested in observed relationships. In addition, finding "what" empirical relationships exist can lead to "why" propositions that can aid theory building. Likewise, logic is always a useful device for developing arguments that can be empirically tested. However, both approaches are insufficient for understanding "why?" relationships involving marketing strategy phenomena exist. This is problematic for researchers and the academic sub-discipline of strategic marketing since answering "why?" questions is the raison d'etre of any social science. However, it is also problematic from a relevance perspective. Well-crafted research in marketing strategy increasingly controls for many sources of variance in order

to isolate specific relationships of interest and rule out alternative explanations. This is good scientific practice, but also makes it increasingly difficult for researchers to derive generalizable and actionable practical implications for managers. This makes theoretical understanding of "why" relationships involving marketing strategy phenomena exist more valuable sources of guidance for managers than knowing "what" relationships exist under strict conditions.

In addition, among the theory-based marketing strategy studies published we find there are increasingly few theory-building papers, and a greater proportion of theory-testing papers. Clearly, theories used in marketing strategy need to be tested and their boundary conditions established. In doing so, we also observe some shift towards using multi- vs. single-theory lenses—which may be necessary to deal with the complexity that is typical (and increasingly so) of marketing strategy problems in practice. However, the paucity of new theory development in marketing strategy over the past nineteen years is alarming given the dramatic changes that have taken place in the world of marketing strategy practice. There has been much talk generally of the need for building indigenous theories in marketing (e.g., Yadav 2010). Behavioral and modeling researchers, while often contributing to theories in consumer psychology and economics rarely seek to build theory that is specific to marketing. Given that marketing is an applied discipline, marketing strategy researchers may be the best placed to build such indigenous marketing theory. Yet, it appears they are less and less likely to do so.

Third, in terms of data sources and analysis methods, our study shows that the use of qualitative approaches in published marketing strategy research is rare—and trending down toward zero. While marketing strategy research is defined by the domain of inquiry rather than the research method adopted, this may be problematic for knowledge development for a number of reasons. First, it is rarely possible to examine new marketing strategy phenomena empirically

without first being able to deeply understand their nature (you cannot measure something you cannot define). Yet, casual observation of the nature, magnitude, and rate of change in marketing practice suggests that new marketing phenomena are bound to be emerging. This suggests that marketing strategy research is increasingly lagging practice. Second, qualitative approaches are also necessary for observing many existing marketing strategy phenomena. For example, understanding marketing strategy implementation failures, influence in goal-setting, participation in marketing strategy decision-making, marketing strategy-tactic alignment, etc. will be extremely limited if only survey- or text-based measures are used.

In terms of quantitative data sources and analyses, we find a relative balance between primary and secondary (only and combined with primary) data used in published research in marketing strategy. However, the trends are clearly away from primary-only research and towards studies using secondary data. We also observe some mirroring of this in the level and trends of different analysis approaches used, with increasing use of time series and regression-based models and a drop in SEM. Again, this raises concerns with respect to the types and aspects of marketing strategy phenomena that are studied. For example, while researchers have made increasingly creative uses of secondary data to infer a number of marketing strategy phenomena it may be hard to study marketing strategy processes using such approaches—yet conceptually these comprise half of the marketing strategy construct. Newer techniques such as text analysis may open up new ways to study some process phenomena (e.g., mining archival documents concerning a firm's market analyses and marketing plans). However, there are likely to remain other process phenomena which may always need to be explored and empirically examined using primary qualitative, observation, and/or survey data.

In terms of causation, it is unclear whether the trends that we observe in published

marketing strategy papers are a result of increasing numbers of researchers not engaging in research designs of this type or that the major journals are simply less likely to publish marketing strategy research using such approaches. These two things are likely not independent. Reviewers, AE's and Editors being less likely to accept qualitative and primary research designs lowers the incentive for researchers to pursue them. Likewise, the fewer researchers employing such approaches, the weaker the "talent pool" of reviewers and AE's who can assess and constructively improve research using them. Irrespective of the cause, important marketing strategy phenomena may become increasingly under-researched unless the trends change.

A MARKETING STRATEGY RESEARCH AGENDA

In practice, not only is the domain of marketing strategy as delineated in our definition and review framework central to what marketers and CMOs do, but it is also the domain of many of the most important challenges facing them. With this in mind, we first identify areas within the sub-domains of marketing strategy that our review of research in the most influential journals over the past nineteen years suggest are under-investigated, managerially relevant, and present opportunities for theoretically interesting research. Second, drawing on some "bigger picture" conceptual questions and practice-based questions that have been overlooked in extant research we also identify some "hybrid" problems and questions that cross sub-domains. In each area we briefly highlight data sources and research approaches that may be appropriate. Finally, we also consider some research design issues for conducting such marketing strategy research.

Formulation-Content

The historical focus of published research in this sub-domain has been on strategy type and positioning, with significantly less research conducted on questions related to goals, business model design, timing, and specific stages of strategy formulation such as market selection.

Interestingly, many of the issues that practicing managers are grappling with concern the dynamic and changing role of marketing, such as how to lead change when goals are shifting, how to make trade-offs between short-term and long-term business needs, and how the shift in the CMO's role interacts with marketing strategy viability. In combination, we identify three key topic areas for additional research that are both under-examined in existing marketing strategy research, and of clear relevance to the challenges facing CMOs: *marketing strategy goals*; *the role of the CMO/marketing function*; and, *longer- vs. shorter-term emphasis in marketing strategy*. In Table 10A, we develop exemplar research questions and identify potential research approaches that may be particularly useful or appropriate in addressing these questions.

Formulation-Process

Within this sub-domain, the dominant focus of research has been the process of marketing strategy making generally, and mechanisms for specific stages of this such as market analysis and target market/customer selection. Significantly less research has examined questions related to who should take part in the MSM process, when and how they should take part, what contingencies may make different approaches more or less effective, and how communication mechanisms may be used during the MSM process. Ironically, many of the issues that practicing managers are grappling with align with these under-researched topics and questions. In Table 10B we therefore focus on three areas for additional research in this sub-domain that are both under-examined in existing marketing strategy research, and of clear relevance to the challenges facing CMOs: *planning participation*; *planning process design*; and, *planning enablers/inhibitors*. Again, we also develop exemplar research questions and identify potential research approaches that may be particularly useful or appropriate in addressing these questions.

Implementation-Content

As previously described, research in this sub-domain has been dominated by marketing mix studies, with significantly less research conducted on any other questions such as what resource deployments work best and under what conditions, what degree of alignment is achieved, and what performance outcomes are monitored. Again, a number of the most pressing challenges faced by marketers highlighted in Table 1 seem to fall primarily in such lesser-researched areas. In Table 10C we therefore focus on three areas for additional research in this sub-domain that are under-examined in existing marketing strategy research, and relevant to addressing these practical challenges: *marketing organization*; *integrated marketing programs*; and *marketing tactic enactment*. Key research questions in each of these areas and potential research approaches that may be useful in addressing these questions are also identified.

Implementation-Process

Prior research in this sub-domain has been more diffuse than in other domains. Interestingly, a number of the most pressing challenges faced by marketers highlighted in Table 1 fall in areas that many may consider "management" vs. "marketing". However, adopting such a perspective runs two risks: (a) assuming that management researchers are willing and able to answer such CMO questions; and, (b) assuming that the answers to such CMO questions will be the same as for a general manager. These are important and likely invalid assumptions. In Table 10D we therefore focus on three areas for additional research in this sub-domain: *marketing strategy adaptation*; *strategy realization processes*; and, *marketing organization design*. Key research questions in these three areas and allied research approaches are also identified. While marketing strategy researchers will need to be careful in framing some of these questions, they are marketing (vs. purely management) strategy questions—and ones to which CMOs need answers.

Hybrid

In addition to the "within sub-domain" questions, we identify two hybrid "across domain" areas that are either under-researched to date but theoretically very important, or that are both under-researched and an area of keen managerial interest: *Intended vs. realized marketing strategy "gaps"*; and, *marketing strategy alignment*. While the existence of intended vs. realized strategy gaps is conceptualized in the management literature, empirical verification of this and understanding why they may exist is almost completely absent in marketing strategy. We identify some exemplar questions and suggest some research approaches that may address this key knowledge gap. In addition, "alignment" is one of the most frequently used words in practice when managers talk about how they seek to implement intended marketing strategy. Yet, empirically we have little understanding of these phenomena. This is clearly an important gap in marketing strategy knowledge that is highly relevant to CMOs and other marketers.

In addition to the need to address such specific research questions, there are also broader approaches to studying marketing strategy research problems and questions that may offer new opportunities for knowledge development. For example, drawing on sociological and anthropological theories and approaches there is a large and growing field of research in strategic management labelled "strategy as practice" that considers the "doing of it" including the actors involved, the perspectives they hold, and tools that they use (e.g., Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Whittington 2006). How might such an approach inform marketing strategy research with respect to better understanding who does it, what they do, how they do it, and how this shapes strategy decisions, their implementation and outcomes? For example, how does what CMOs think that marketing strategy is vary across firms and why? When, why and with what consequences do CMOs use different perspectives and tools in developing marketing strategy

(e.g., complex formal plans vs. goals and improvisation vs. simple rules)?

While some of the work on "strategy as practice" is similar in nature to process research in terms of some of the process-related marketing strategy sub-domain and hybrid research questions highlighted earlier, it also has a stronger focus on the individuals and groups involved. Such an individual- and group-level focus also opens up potentially interesting new avenues for using other theories and research approaches to study marketing strategy. For example, psychology and behavioral economics researchers have shown that people have systematic (and predictable) biases in thinking and decision-making. Since humans (individually and collectively) make and execute marketing strategy decisions, how do such individual-level biases affect marketing strategy decision making and with what consequences? For example, do "blindspots" exist in managers' analyses of customers and competitors during marketing strategy making? What are the implications for designing marketing strategy-making and execution processes that recognize and limit such biases? Such an individual-level decision-maker focus may also allow researchers to begin to explore the "micro-foundations" of marketing strategy such as managers' strategic thinking skills.

This research agenda and these new approaches also suggest some important questions and implications for data sources and research method approaches that can be used to explore these areas of marketing strategy. For example, qualitative tools of observation are widely used in management research on strategy. Behavioral experiments can also be used with individual marketing strategy decision-makers. Simulations and games can provide insights into both individual-level and group-level marketing strategy phenomena.

In addition, new technologies are also opening up new data sources and analysis possibilities. For example, new text analysis tools and approaches enable new possibilities for

data collection of some important strategic marketing phenomena such as market orientation. New image analysis tools are also emerging. How can such tools be applied to some of the marketing strategy questions outlined here? There is also a rapid growth in tools and approaches for managing and analyzing unstructured data (Balducci & Marinova 2018). These may offer exciting opportunities for researchers to work with firms to collate and analyze previously untouched data sources such as presentation content topics, calendar appointments, email threads, workplace collaboration software content, etc. These may provide exciting new ways to gain insights into some of the problems and questions we identify in our new research agenda.

CONCLUSION

Marketing strategy lies at the conceptual heart of the strategic marketing field. It is also central to marketing practice and the area within which many of the most pressing challenges for marketers arise. Using a new conceptualization of the domain of the marketing strategy construct as a lens, we assess the current state of marketing strategy research. We uncover important challenges to marketing strategy research but also numerous opportunities for developing important and highly relevant new marketing strategy knowledge. The research agenda we develop provides opportunities for researchers to develop new theory, establish clear relevance, and contribute to improving practice. Since many of these cannot be adequately addressed with current publicly available secondary data, researchers need to become more eclectic and creative in their research designs, including emerging new technologies for data capture and analysis. Correspondingly, Editors, AEs and reviewers will need to become more open, eclectic, and skilled in evaluating such research designs. While there may be institutional obstacles in doing so, our research suggests the payoffs can be enormous—the number and importance of unanswered marketing strategy questions and opportunities to impact practice has arguably never been greater.

Figure 1
Review Framework

Marketing Strategy

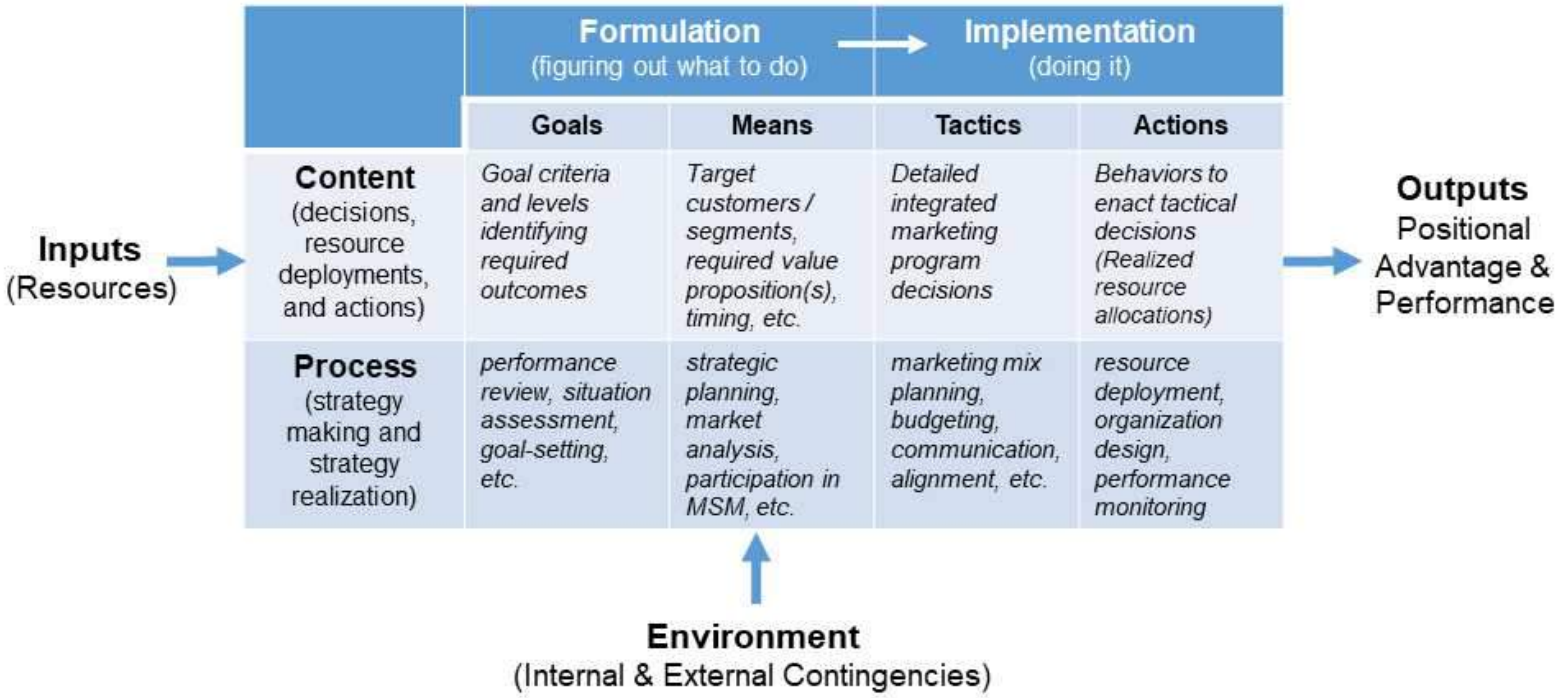

Figure 2
Marketing Strategy Papers Published by Journal

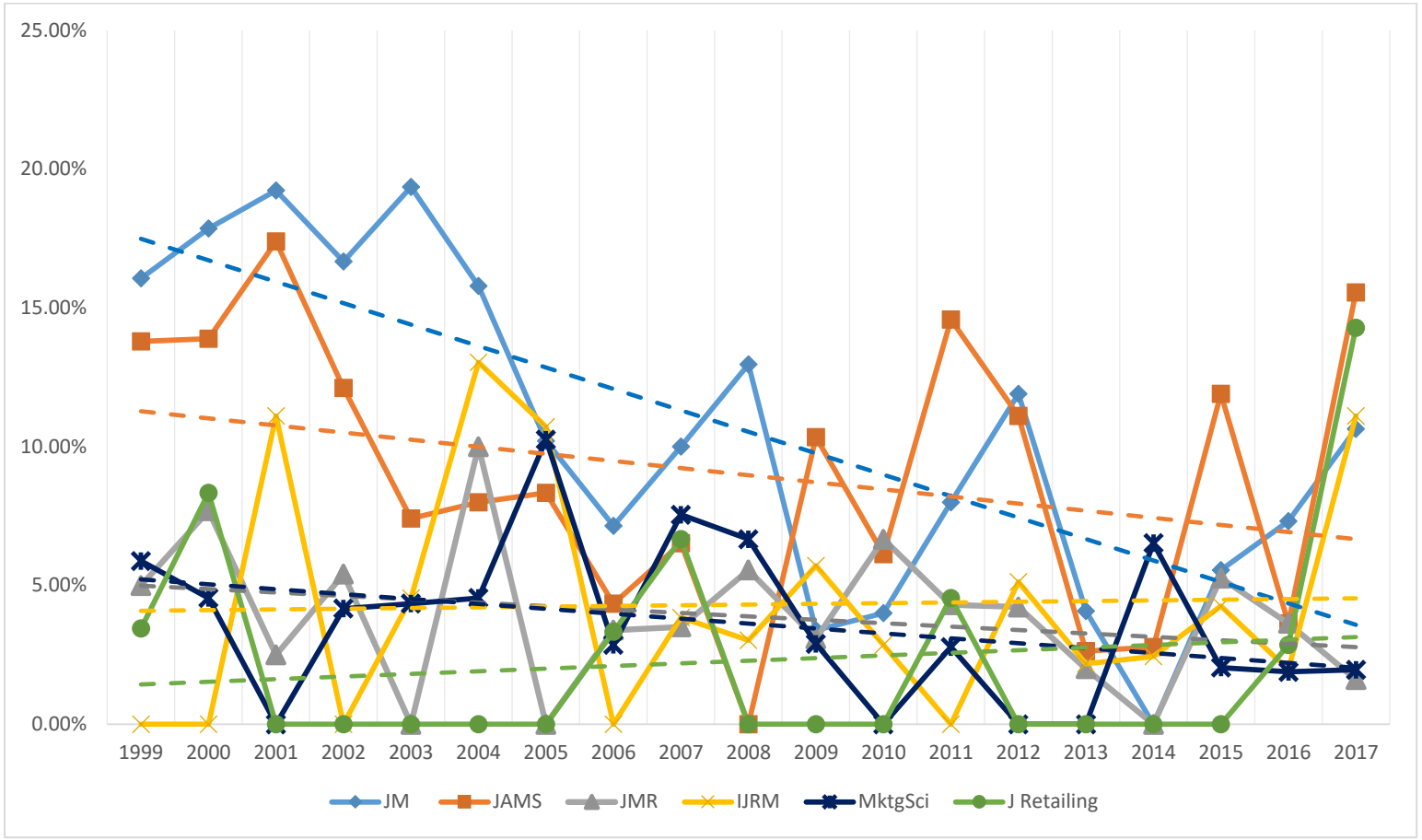

Table 1
Key Marketing Strategy Challenges Identified by CMOs

	Strategy Formulation (figuring out what to do)	**Strategy Implementation** (doing it)
Strategy Content (strategy decisions)	What is (or should be) the impact of shifting from a consumer-centric to a multi-stakeholder and data-driven model of marketing on marketing's strategic goals? (1, 2, 9) What is the best way to evaluate and make decisions about the trade-off between strategies that deliver short- vs. long-term marketing impact? (6) What does the changing nature of CMO/marketing's role (e.g., digital, analytics, omni-channel) mean for what marketing strategy decisions are viable? (1, 7)	What should we insource vs. outsource (e.g., digital, analytics, CRM, creative, content development, etc.) to best accomplish different marketing strategy goals? (6) What is the right allocation of resources (budgets and people) across traditional vs. new channels? (6) What new marketing communication options open up as communication shifts from a :30 ad world to a limitless content world (1, 6)
Strategy Process (strategy making and strategy realization)	How should marketing work with other functions and C-suite leaders (especially COO, CFO, CIO, Chief Digital Officer) to figure out what marketing strategy options are possible? (1, 4, 8, 9) What new approaches to developing brand strategy are required in a multi-stakeholder (vs. consumer centric) world? (9) When and how should marketing "manage upwards" (the CEO) to drive alignment to marketing strategy goals and strategy choices? (1, 4, 7) How can multi-touch attribution modeling be used to assess the ROI outcomes of past marketing strategy implementations to make better future marketing strategy decisions? (1, 3)	How can CMOs identify required talent for new marketing responsibility areas to enable strategy implementation (e.g., digital, analytics, technology, etc.)? (4,5, 9) How can marketing effectively lead culture change to force company adaptation to new consumer realities and technology? (1, 9) What are the most effective mechanisms to monitor and communicate implementation results to drive cross-functional alignment, support, influence, and credibility? (7) How should CMOs measure, review, and hold accountable managers in new areas of marketing responsibility to drive effective strategy implementation? (5)

Numbers in table refer to the following references: (1) Argyle Executive Forum (2014). *The data-driven CMO*. Retrieved July 27, 2017 from http://www.argylejournal.com/chief-marketing-officer/survey-reveals-the-data-driven-cmos-top-challenges-and-pain-points/; (2) CMG Partners (2016). *CMO's agenda: The CMO has arrived*. Retrieved January 5, 2017 from ; (3) Kador, J. (2011). *CMOs: Good to great*. Retrieved August 1, 2011 from http://chiefexecutive.net/cmos-good-to-great; (4) Korn Ferry (2017). *CMO pulse survey*. Retrieved July 19, 2016 from htttp://infokf.kornferry.com; (5) MacDonald, J. (2016). *The top challenges of today's CMO*. Retrieved July 29, 2017 from https://thegood.com/insights/top-challenges-cmo/; (6) Nanji, A. (2015). *CMOs' top goals and challenges*. Retrieved July 27, 2017 from http://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2015/28066/cmos-top-goals-and-challenges; (7) Whitler, K. A., & Morgan, N. A. (2017). Why CMOs never last. *Harvard Business Review*, July-August, 45-54; (8) Whitler, K. A., Boyd, D. E., & Morgan, N. A. (2017). The power partnership: CMO & CIO. *Harvard Business Review*, July-August, 55; (9) Yosie, T. F., Simmons, P. J., & Ashken, S. (2016). *Sustainability and the modern CMO: A New ball to juggle—or a key to juggling smarter*. Retrieved July 30, 2016 from http://www.corporateecoforum.com/ wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Sustainability-and-the-CMO_FINAL.pdf.

Table 2
Marketing Strategy and Related Strategic Marketing Papers Count Summary (1999-2017)

Journals	*A: Strategy Papers n (% of total strategy papers published)*	*B: Strategy Papers n (% of total papers journal published)*	*Marketing strategy formulation*	*Marketing strategy implementat-ion*	*Marketing strategy content*	*Marketing strategy process*	*Inputs*	*Outputs*	*Environment (External: Internal)*	*Individual Marketing Tactics (% of total papers journal published)*
JM	*81/257 (31.5%)*	*81/826 (9.8%)*	*38*	*57*	*49*	*44*	*90*	*151*	*55 (49:9)*	*347/826 (42.0%)*
MKS	*31/257 (12.1%)*	*31/886 (3.5%)*	*9*	*22*	*24*	*7*	*20*	*57*	*53 (52:1)*	*420/886 (47.4%)*
JMR	*41/257 (16.0%)*	*41/1020 (4.0%)*	*15*	*30*	*36*	*8*	*45*	*65*	*33 (30:5)*	*338/1020 (33.1%)*
JAMS	*63/257 (24.5%)*	*63/730 (8.6%)*	*31*	*47*	*37*	*35*	*85*	*102*	*68 (60:17)*	*251/730 (34.4%)*
IJRM	*27/257 (10.5%)*	*27/624 (4.3%)*	*10*	*22*	*17*	*14*	*32*	*42*	*55 (51:8)*	*177/624 (28.4%)*
JR	*14/257 (5.4%)*	*14/597 (2.3%)*	*6*	*10*	*10*	*3*	*14*	*25*	*20 (20:0)*	*159/597 (26.6%)*
Total	***257 (100%)***		***109***	***188***	***173***	***111***	***286***	***442***	***284(262:40)***	***1692***
Relative to all papers published in these journals (n=4683)	***257/4683 = 5.5%***		***2.3%***	***4.0%***	***3.7%***	***2.4%***	***6.1%***	***9.4%***	***6.1%***	***36.1%***

Note: Strategy paper *n* values indicate the number of strategy articles from each journal included in the analysis based on the search terms used. Total number of papers published in each of these journals (excluding editorials, book reviewers, special issue introductions etc.) during 1999-2017 period (JM=826, MKS=886, JMR=1020, JAMS=730, IJRM=624, JR=597). Papers coded as "marketing strategy" (formulation, implementation, content, process) are exclusive from all other types of non-strategy coding (input, output, environment, and individual tactics) but can be coded as covering more than one sub-domain of marketing strategy. Similarly, strategic marketing but non-strategy papers may be coded as covering more than one non-strategy area (e.g., input, output, tactics, etc.).

Table 3
Primary Domain of Published Marketing Strategy Research by Journal

Journals	*Total strategy papers in each journal*	Formulation-Content	Formulation-Process	Implementation-Content	Implementation-Process	Hybrid
JM	*81 (100%)*	17 (21.0%)	6 (7.4%)	17 (21.0%)	22 (27.2%)	19 (23.5%)
MKS	*31 (100%)*	6 (19.4%)	3 (9.7%)	18 (58.1%)	4 (12.9%)	0 (0.0%)
JMR	*41 (100%)*	11 (26.8%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (43.9%)	5 (12.2%)	7 (17.1%)
JAMS	*63 (100%)*	9 (14.3%)	5 (7.9%)	16 (25.4%)	15 (23.8%)	18 (28.6%)
IJRM	*27 (100%)*	5 (18.5%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (25.9%)	9 (33.3%)	6 (22.2%)
JR	*14 (100%)*	4 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (35.7%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (21.4%)
Total	***257***	**52 (20.6%)**	**14 (5.5%)**	**81 (31.5%)**	**57 (22.2%)**	**53 (20.6%)**

Note: Values indicate the number of strategy articles in each sub-domain from each journal. Percentages indicate the number of strategy papers in each sub-domain from each journal divided by the total number of strategy papers in each journal.

Table 4
Summary of Strategy Papers Types (1999-2017)

Journals	*Strategy Papers Total*	*Conceptual / Theoretical*	*Qualitative*	*Analytical*	*Empirical*	*Empirical: Primary Data*	*Empirical: Secondary Data*	*Empirical: Primary and Secondary*
JM	*81*	*8*	*5*	*2*	*66*	*38*	*21*	*7*
MKS	*31*	*0*	*0*	*4*	*27*	*4*	*22*	*1*
JMR	*41*	*0*	*0*	*3*	*38*	*11*	*22*	*5*
JAMS	*63*	*24*	*2*	*0*	*37*	*30*	*7*	*0*
IJRM	*27*	*0*	*1*	*2*	*24*	*20*	*4*	*0*
JR	*14*	*3*	*0*	*1*	*10*	*6*	*2*	*2*
Total	***257***	***35***	***8***	***12***	***202***	***109***	***78***	***15***

Note: Values indicate the number of strategy articles from each journal included in the analysis based on the search terms used.

Table 5
Summary of Top Four Methods Used in Marketing Strategy Papers (1999-2017)

Journals	*Strategy Papers Total*	*Analytical Models*	*Regression Models*	*Time Series Models*	*SEM*
JM	*81*	*2*	*50*	*9*	*20*
MKS	*31*	*4*	*16*	*13*	*0*
JMR	*41*	*3*	*28*	*13*	*7*
JAMS	*63*	*0*	*26*	*3*	*14*
IJRM	*27*	*2*	*15*	*1*	*9*
JR	*14*	*1*	*8*	*2*	*2*
Total	***257***	***12***	***143***	***41***	***52***

Note: Values indicate the number of strategy articles from each journal included in the analysis based on the search terms used. More than one method may be coded per paper.

Table 6
Argumentation Approach in Published Strategy Papers by Sub-Domain

	Single Theory	Multiple Theories	Conceptual Development / Grounded Theory	Logic, Data-Driven
Formulation-Content (n=52)	11 *(20.8%)*	1 *(1.9%)*	10 *(19.2%)*	30 *(57.7%)*
Formulation-Process (n=14)	2 *(14.3%)*	2 *(14.3%)*	4 *(28.6%)*	6 *(42.8%)*
Implementation-Content (n=81)	11 *(13.6%)*	9 *(11.1%)*	9 *(11.1%)*	52 *(64.2%)*
Implementation-Process (n=57)	16 *(28.1%)*	10 *(17.5%)*	11 *(19.3%)*	20 *(35.1%)*
Hybrid (n=53)	14 *(26.4%)*	11 *(20.8%)*	13 *(24.5%)*	15 *(28.3%)*
Total (n=257)	**54** ***(21.0%)***	**33** ***(12.8%)***	**47** ***(18.3%)***	**123** ***(47.9%)***

Note: Percentages indicate the number of strategy papers using each argumentation approach in each sub-domain divided by the total number of strategy papers in each sub-domain and for overall total, divided by the total number of strategy papers published in this period (n=257).

Argument Approach Trends

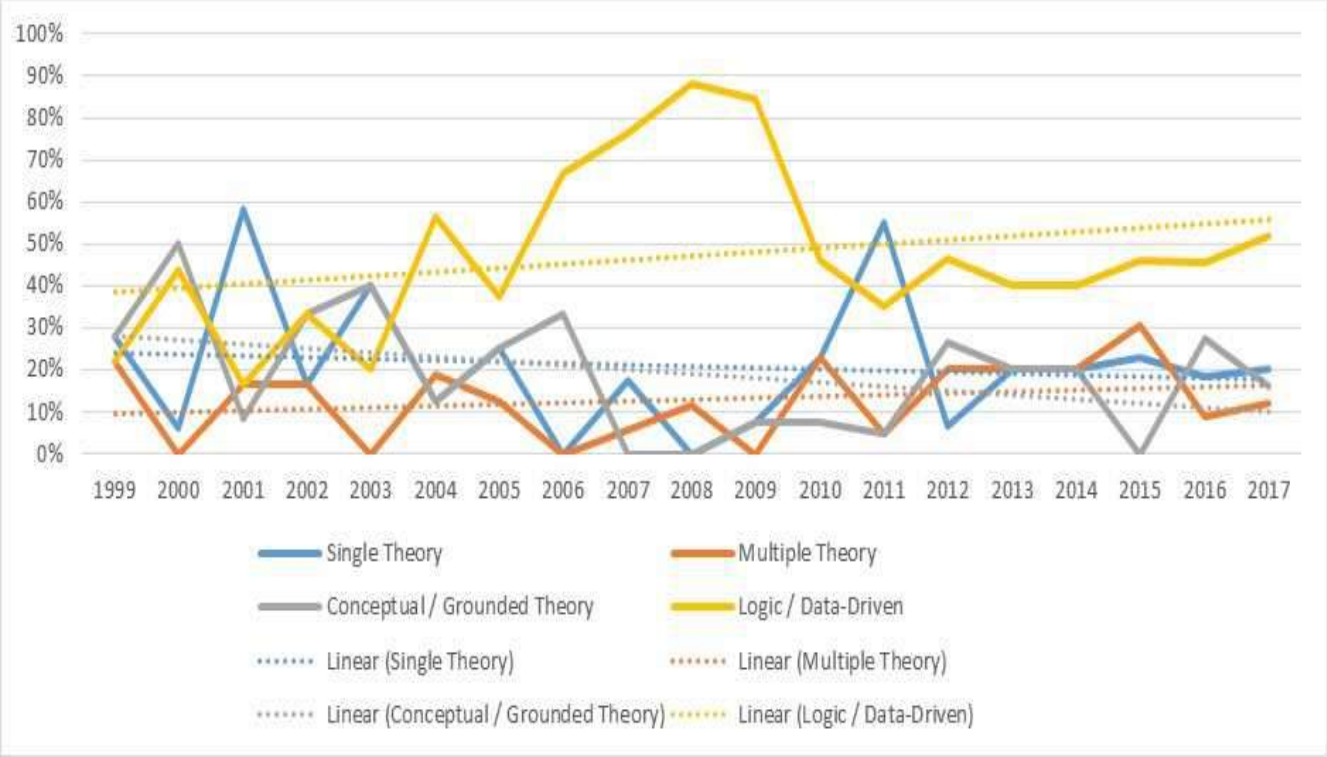

Table 7
Single-Lens Theories Applied in Marketing Strategy Research

Institutional Theory	Entry Deterrence Theory
RBV	Equity Based Compensation Theory
Agency Theory	Escalation of Commitment Theory
Contingency Theory	Evolutionary Economics
Feedback Theory	Financial Portfolio Theory
Organizational Theory	First-Mover Theory
Configuration Theory	Game Theory
Organizational Learning Theory / Learning Theory / Collective Learning Theory	Growth Theory
Upper Echelons Theory	Homophily Theory
Open Systems Theory	Industrial Organization / Economics Theory
Social Identity Theory	Inertia Theory
Transaction Cost Economics	Information Processing Theory
Control Systems Theory / Control Theory	Innovation Adoption Theory
Dynamic Capabilities Theory	Internal Processing Algorithms Theory
Information Economics Theory	Justice (distributive, procedural, interactional)
Knowledge Theory	Modernization Theory
Organizational Structure / Design	Network Externality Theory
Social Exchange Theory	Option Theory
Allocation Theory	Perception Theory
Attribution Theory	Power
Behavioral Theory of the Firm	Prospect Theory
Boundary Theory	Resource Dependence Theory
Cognitive Approach (Mental Models)	Structure-Conduct-Performance/IO
Collective Selection Theory	Self-Categorization Theory
Complementarity Theory	Signaling Theory
Customer Value Theory	Social Capital Theory
Diffusion Theory	Stakeholder Theory
Endogenous Growth Theory	Strategic Contingencies Theory
Strong Culture Theory	Strategic Reference Points

Table 8
Most Frequently Studied Topics within Marketing Strategy Sub-Domains

	Strategy Formulation (figuring out what to do)		**Strategy Implementation** (doing it)	
Strategy Content (strategy decisions)	**Themes**	**Percentage**	**Themes**	**Percentage**
	Strategy type	28.6%	Marketing mix activities / tactics	49.2%
	Value proposition / positioning	23.4%	Other marketing actions / behaviors	16.4%
	Target market(s) selected	13%	Resources deployed / allocated	10.9%
	Timing	10.4%	Alignment (degree / level / type)	7.8%
	Radical / Incremental innovation	6.5%	Performance review / monitoring	7.8%
	Strategic emphasis	6.5%	Other (e.g., responsibilities assigned, brand portfolio choices)	7.8%
	Business model design	5.2%		
	Other (e.g., strategic goals, market entry)	6.5%		
Strategy Process (strategy making and strategy realization)	**Themes**	**Percentage**	**Themes**	**Percentage**
	Marketing strategy making	41%	Organization design / structuring	24.5%
	Market analysis	15.4%	Process capability design	18.1%
	Performance assessment / review	10.2%	Resource deployment process	14.9%
	Situation analysis	10.2%	Performance monitoring / control	13.8%
	Target market / customer selection	7.7%	Alignment process / mechanisms	10.6%
	Other (e.g., strategy selection tools, gaining alignment in choices)	15.4%	Inter-functional interactions	9.6%
			Other (e.g., strategy change process, situation assessment)	8.5%

Table 9A
Representative Marketing Strategy Formulation-Content Studies (Illustrative Examples)

Author(s) (Journal)	Paper Type	Theory Approach	Data / Analysis	Primary Theme	Aim / Objective	Key Findings
Alden et al. 1999 (JM)	Empirical	Single-theory lens	Primary survey: scale development and testing	Value proposition / positioning	To develop and test a new construct, global consumer culture positioning (GCCP) as a positioning tool.	The authors develop a new construct—global consumer culture positioning (GCCP)—as a positioning tool, and find that a meaningful number of advertisements employ GCCP, as opposed to positioning the brand as a member of a local consumer culture or a specific foreign consumer culture.
Chandy and Tellis 2000 (JM)	Empirical	Data-driven	Secondary data: regression models	Radical / incremental product innovation	To reexamine the incumbent's curse using a historical analysis of a relatively large number of radical innovations in the consumer durables and office products categories.	Empirically examines the "incumbent's curse"—a belief that large, incumbent firms rarely introduce radical product innovations and instead solidify their market positions with relatively incremental innovations, while small firms are the ones that primarily create radical innovations. Present evidence suggesting the incumbent's curse is based on anecdotes and scattered case studies of highly specialized innovations. Results indicate that small firms and non-incumbents are slightly more likely to introduce radical product innovations than large firms/incumbents. However, the pattern has shifted recently. Large firms and incumbents are significantly more likely to introduce radical innovations than their counterparts. Thus, the results indicate that the incumbent's curse applies—but to an older economic period.
Varadarajan and Yadav 2002 (JAMS)	Conceptual	Conceptual development	N/A	Strategy type (competitive)	To define the domain of marketing strategy and provide a conceptual framework that defines the antecedents and consequences of marketing strategy in both the electronic and physical markets.	Competitive marketing strategy is uniquely focused on how a business should deploy marketing resources to achieve positional advantages in the marketplace. Develops a conceptual framework delineating the drivers and outcomes of marketing strategy in the context of competing in both the physical and electronic marketplaces. The proposed framework provides insights into changes in the nature and scope of marketing strategy; specific industry, product, buyer, and buying environment characteristics; and the unique skills and resources of the firm that assume added relevance in the context of competing in the evolving marketplace.
Frambach et al. 2003 (IJRM)	Empirical	Conceptual development	Primary survey: regression models	Strategy type (cost, differentiation, focus)	To understand the interaction between business strategy and market orientation on new product activity.	Develops a framework linking firms' relative emphasis on cost leadership, product differentiation, and focus strategies to firms' customer and competitor orientation as well as their new product development and introduction activity. Findings indicate that a greater emphasis on a focus strategy results in a decreased emphasis on customer orientation and that competitor orientation has a negative direct influence on new product activity and an indirect positive effect via customer orientation.
Choi and Coughlan 2006 (JR)	Analytical	Data-driven	Analytical economic models	Value proposition / positioning	To determine how a retailer can best position their private label products in terms of quality and features when competing against two national brands.	A private label's best positioning strategy depends on the nature of the national brands' competition and its own quality. When the national brands are differentiated, a high quality private label should be positioned closer to a stronger national brand, and a low quality private label should be positioned closer to a weaker national brand. When the national brands are undifferentiated, the private label differentiates from both national brands.

Table 9B
Representative Marketing Strategy Implementation-Content Studies (Illustrative Examples)

Author(s)	Paper Type	Theory Approach	Data / Analysis	Primary Theme	Aim / Objective	Key Related Findings
Lewis 2004 (JMR)	Empirical	Data-driven	Secondary data: dynamic programming models of behavior	Marketing actions and behaviors (loyalty program)	To model customers' response to a loyalty program and evaluate a loyalty program using data from an online grocery and drugstore merchant.	Loyalty programs encourage consumers to shift from single-period decision making to dynamic or multiple-period decision making. Through simulation and policy experiments, it is possible to evaluate and compare the long-term effects of the loyalty program and other marketing instruments (e.g., e-mail coupons, fulfillment rates, shipping fees) on customer retention. Empirical results and policy experiments suggest that the grocery/drugstore loyalty program studied is successful in increasing annual purchasing for a substantial proportion of customers.
Bolton et al. 2004 (JAMS)	Conceptual	Conceptual development	N/A	Marketing mix activities / tactics	To propose an integrated CUSAMS framework (customer asset management of services).	Develops the CUSAMS framework, which specifies the customer behaviors that reflect the breadth of the customer-service organization relationship. This framework establishes a set of propositions regarding how marketing instruments influence customer behavior within the relationship, thereby influencing the value of the customer asset. The paper further defines a research agenda that identifies critical issues in customer asset management.
Hauser and Shugan 2008 (MKS)	Analytical	Data-driven	Analytical economic models	Marketing mix activities / tactics (integrated program)	To provide recommendations on the strategy of response, enabling firms to better defend their position from attack by a new product.	Shows that for the profit maximizing firm in the face of a competitive new product entrant it is optimal to: 1) decrease awareness advertising; 2) decrease the distribution budget unless the new product can be kept out of the market; and 3) consider a price increase. However, even under the optimal strategy, profits decrease as a result of the competitive new product. Provides practical guidance to estimate the distribution of consumer tastes, the position of the new product in perceptual space, and develop competitive diagnostics to help the manager defending against the competitive attack.
Ataman et al. 2010 (JMR)	Empirical	Data-driven	Secondary data: multivariate dynamic linear transfer function model	Marketing mix activities / tactics (integrated program)	To consider the role of the integrated marketing mix (i.e., advertising, price, product, place) on the performance of mature brands.	The total (short-term plus long-term) sales elasticity is 1.37 for product and .74 for distribution. Conversely, the total elasticities for advertising and discounting are only .13 and .04, respectively. These results contrast with the previous literatures emphasis on price promotions and advertising. Further, the long-term effects of discounting are one-third the magnitude of the short-term effects. The ratio is reversed from other aspects of the mix (in which long-term effects exceed four times the short-term effects), underscoring the strategic role of these tools in brand sales.
Pauwels et al. 2011 (JR)	Empirical	Data-driven	Primary survey: SEM	Marketing mix activities / tactics	To investigate whether retailer investment in ancillary services insulates incumbents from new entrants.	Introduces the notion of "competitive service overlap" (CSO) that operationalizes service similarity. Shows that retailers are best served by offering many services and that particularly successful retailers have more unique service portfolios. Furthermore, the impact of uniqueness is most prominent when a grocery incumbent faces a discounter entrant (e.g., Kroger facing a Wal-Mart entry).

Table 9C
Representative Marketing Strategy Formulation-Process Studies (Illustrative Examples)

Author(s)	Paper Type	Theory Approach	Data / Analysis	Primary Theme	Aim / Objective	Key Related Findings
Rust et al. 2004 (JM)	Empirical	Data-driven	Primary survey and secondary data: regression model	Strategy selection tools	To develop a framework that enables marketers to make "what if" assessments of marketing ROI.	Develops a broad framework for evaluating return on marketing. Provide a new model of CLV, incorporating the impact of competitors' offerings and brand switching, and provide a method for estimating the effects of individual customer equity drivers. This enables firms to identify which driver has the greatest impact, compare the drivers' performance with that of competitors' drivers, and project ROI.
Venkatesan and Kumar 2004 (JM)	Empirical	Single theory lens	Secondary data: Markov models	Market analysis: customers	To evaluate the usefulness of CLV for customer selection and resource allocation.	Marketing contacts across various channels influence CLV nonlinearly. Customers who are selected based on lifetime value provide higher profits in future periods than do customers selected based on several other customer-based metrics. The analyses suggest that there is potential for improved profits when managers design resource allocation rules that maximize CLV.
Payne and Frow 2005 (JM)	Conceptual	Conceptual development, grounded-theory	N/A	CRM strategy development process	Develop a conceptual model to broaden understanding of CRM and its role in enhancing customer and shareholder value.	Identifies three alternative perspectives of CRM and emphasize the need for a cross-functional, process-oriented approach that positions CRM at a strategic level. Identify five key cross-functional CRM processes and develop a conceptual framework based on these processes: strategy development process, value creation process, multichannel integration process, information management process, and performance assessment process. Synthesizing CRM and relationship marketing concepts into a single, process-based framework provides insight into achieving success with CRM strategy and implementation.
Montgomery et al. 2005 (MKS)	Empirical	Conceptual development, grounded-theory	Primary survey: descriptive analysis	Market analysis: competitors	To examine whether managers attempt to predict competitive reactions.	Find evidence of managers' thinking about competitors' past and future behavior, but little incidence of strategic competitive reasoning. The relatively low incidence of strategic competitor reasoning is due to perceptions of low returns from anticipating competitor reactions more than to the high cost of doing so. Both the difficulty of obtaining competitive information and the uncertainty associated with predicting competitor behavior contribute to these perceptions.
Esper et al. 2010 (JAMS)	Conceptual	Multi-theory lens	N/A	Situation assessment	To understand the interaction between two processes through which the firm creates value for its customers: demand-focused and supply-focused processes.	Successfully managing the supply chain to create customer value requires extensive integration between demand-focused processes and supply-focused processes that is based on a foundation of value creation through intra-organizational knowledge management. Integrating demand and supply processes helps firms prioritize and ensure fulfillment based upon the shared generation, dissemination, interpretation and application of real-time customer demand as well as ongoing supply capacity constraints. Introduce a conceptual framework of demand and supply integration (DSI) and offer insights for managerial practice and an agenda for future research.

Table 9D
Representative Marketing Strategy Implementation-Process Studies (Illustrative Examples)

Author(s)	Paper Type	Theory Approach	Data / Analysis	Primary Theme	Aim / Objective	Key Related Findings
Ghosh and John 1999 (JM)	Conceptual	Single theory lens	N/A	Organization design / structure	To extend transaction cost analysis to address marketing strategy decisions closely.	Extends transaction cost analysis into a governance value analysis (GVA) framework, comprised of a 4-part model. Heterogeneous resources, positioning, the consequent attributes of exchange, and governance form all interact to determine success in creating and claiming value. Considers and illustrates the trade-offs that are made between these factors.
Homburg et al. 2000 (JAMS)	Qualitative	Conceptual development, grounded theory	Qualitative	Organization design / structure	To investigate key changes in marketing organization.	Changes in marketing organization are part of a more general shift: changes concerning primary marketing coordinators and an increasing dispersion of marketing activities. Introduce the concept of a customer-focused organizational structure that uses groups of customers as the primary basis for structuring the organization and identify typical transitions firms move through as they migrate toward a customer-focused organizational structure.
Maltz and Kohli 2000 (JAMS)	Empirical	Conceptual development, grounded theory	Primary survey: regression models	Interfunctional interactions / alignment	To investigate marketing's interactions with R&D, manufacturing, and finance	Combine insights from previous studies and interviews with managers to identify six integrating mechanisms proposed to mitigate interfunctional conflict (behavior that frustrates marketing initiatives). In addition, investigates the role of internal volatility (turbulence within an organization) in shaping manifest conflict. Argue and demonstrate that these mechanisms are differentially effective across the marketing-finance, marketing-manufacturing, and marketing-R&D interfaces.
Srinivasan et al. 2005 (IJRM)	Empirical	Conceptual development, grounded theory	Primary survey: SEM	Resource allocations	To investigate why some firms view recessions as an opportunity and others do not, and the impact of this view on performance.	Propose a new construct—proactive marketing in a recession. Firms that have a strategic emphasis on marketing, an entrepreneurial culture, and slack resources are proactive in their marketing activities during a recession, while the severity of the recession in the industry negatively affects proactive marketing response. In addition, firms that have a proactive marketing response in a recession achieve superior business performance even during the recession.
O'Sullivan and Abela 2007 (JM)	Empirical	Data-driven	Primary survey and secondary data: regression	Performance monitoring	To examine the effect of ability to measure marketing performance on firm performance.	The ability to measure marketing performance has a significant impact on firm performance, profitability, stock returns, and marketing's stature within the firm.
Sarin et al. 2012 (JMR)	Empirical	Data-driven	Primary survey: regression models	Alignment	To investigate the role of supervisors in implementing changes in marketing strategy.	Perceived outcome risk containment and outcome reward emphasis enhance primary appraisals. Perceived process risk containment and process reward emphasis enhance secondary appraisals. Salespeople's primary and secondary appraisals influence their change implementation behaviors, leading to successful change implementation, which depends on: (a) giving rewards to salespeople for implementing change; and (b) limiting salespeople's risks and recognizing them for their change-related efforts.

Table 9E
Representative Marketing Strategy Hybrid Studies (Illustrative Examples)

Author(s)	Paper Type	Theory Approach	Data / Analysis	Primary Theme	Aim / Objective	Key Related Findings
Noble and Mokwa 1999 (JM)	Empirical	Grounded theory development	Primary survey: SEM	Alignment	To identify factors that impact the implementation of marketing strategies.	Implementation is a vital component of marketing strategy making process; organizational, strategy, and role commitment are necessary for implementation success. Strategy and role commitment are positively related to role performance, which is positively related to implementation success.
Varadarajan and Jayachandran, 1999 (JAMS)	Conceptual	Single-theory lens	N/A	Other- strategy research overview	To provide an assessment of the state of the field of marketing strategy research.	Opportunity, competitor, and decision-making analyses are activities that businesses engage in to determine strategy content. How strategies are initiated in the marketing strategy process could explain if strategy formulation is intertwined with strategy implementation. Type of firm, structure, and skills affect strategy formulation.
Kyriakopoulos and Moorman, 2004 (IJRM)	Empirical	Data-driven	Primary survey: regression models	Marketing action/behavior; innovativeness of strategy	To explore how market orientation impacts exploitation and exploration marketing strategies.	A strong market orientation facilitates a complementarity of high levels of marketing exploration and exploitation project-level strategies which results in improved new product financial performance. Firms with a weak market orientation engaging in high levels of both strategies display a significant reduction in new product financial performance.
Atuahene-Gima and Murray 2004 (JM)	Empirical	Multi-theory lens	Primary survey: SEM	MSM - comprehensiveness	To examine antecedents and outcomes of marketing strategy comprehensiveness (MSC)	Comprehensiveness is a key feature of marketing strategy. Process rewards and extra-industry relationships are positively related to MSC; task conflict and avoidance hinder the development of MSC. Decision making embracing MSC is positively associated with performance when implementation speed is higher. Technological and market uncertainty, enhance and diminish the effects of MSC on performance, respectively.
Morgan 2012 (JAMS)	Conceptual	Conceptual development	N/A	Alignment	To delineate the role of marketing in explaining inter-firm performance differences.	Effectively developing and executing marketing strategy decisions concerning goals, target markets, value propositions, and timing (architectural capabilities) requires the acquisition, combination, and deployment of needed resources from inside and outside the organization, and monitoring customer and competitor responses to marketplace actions. These resources are cross-functional and time dependent.
Krush et al. 2015 (JAMS)	Empirical	Multi-theory lens	Primary survey: SEM	Performance monitoring / control and strategy types	To evaluate effects on the marketing function's influence when marketing capabilities are dispersed.	Marketing's influence may heighten or diminish, depending on the form of marketing capability dispersion. Different forms of dispersion impact strategic outcomes; dispersion can lead to strategic and relational outcomes as well as financial performance. The effects of customer responsiveness on business unit performance are fully mediated by marketing strategy implementation success.

Table 10
Future Research Agenda Priorities

Research Area	Exemplar Questions	Exemplar Data Sources
Formulation-Content		
Marketing Strategy Goals	1. Where do marketing strategy goals come from and who sets/influences the criteria, levels and referents? 2. What vehicles (i.e., written reports, tables, charts, dashboards, etc.) are used to communicate marketing strategy goals and how effective are these vehicles under different conditions? 3. How do shifts in organizational emphasis (e.g., from a consumer-centric to a multi-stakeholder model; from a less to a more data-driven culture) impact marketing strategy goal choices?	• Ethnography/Observation • Interviews and Survey • Text analysis of firm financial reports and analyst calls • Text analysis of marketing strategy goal vehicles (i.e., written reports, dashboards, presentations, etc.)
Role of the CMO/marketing function	1. What is/should be the role of the CMO/marketing function in developing marketing strategy? 2. What different combinations of CMO/marketing role type and organizational/marketplace characteristics impact marketing strategy options considered and choices made? 3. How are marketing strategy choices shared within and beyond the marketing organization to guide and co-ordinate subsequent actions?	• Comparative Case Studies • Qualitative interview insight and secondary data (e.g., marketplace, firm, organizational characteristics) • Interview & Survey
Longer- vs. Shorter-term emphasis in Marketing Strategy	1. How do/should CMOs evaluate and make strategic decisions regarding activities that have Shorter- vs. Longer-term horizons? 2. When should CMOs prioritize Shorter- vs. Longer-term considerations in marketing strategy choices (and vice versa)? 3. To what degree does CMO compensation structure impact prioritization of Shorter- vs. Longer-term strategies?	• Observation • Interviews • Simulations/Lab experiments • Compensation Data • Analytical models
Formulation-Process		
Planning Participation	1. Who is (or should be) involved in the process of developing marketing strategy? 2. Are there different levels and types of participation across firms and if so why and with what consequences? 3. What is the impact of cross-functional vs. marketing-only participation in affecting both strategy decisions and the effectiveness of the implementation of intended strategy?	• Ethnography/Observation • Interviews & Survey • Acquire planning process documents and text analyze and/or code data
Planning Process Design	1. What planning process design characteristics matter most in affecting different aspects of marketing strategy decisions? Under what internal and external conditions are different planning process designs more or less effective and efficient? 2. When and how does multi-touch attribution modeling of past actions feed into future marketing strategy making processes? 4. When, why, and how are planning processes changed, and with what consequences?	• Interviews & Survey • Multi-method integrating marketplace data, firm data, marketing department data, and planning process data • Ethnography/Observation
Planning Enablers/Inhibitors	1. What is the impact of spending more vs. less time in developing marketing strategy content on implementation timing, speed and effectiveness? 2. What financial and human resource "budgets" are typical in developing marketing strategy and what is their impact on marketing strategy content and implementation effectiveness? 3. When and how should marketing strategy goals and options/choices be "marketed" internally (upwards, downwards, horizontally)? To which other functions and under what conditions?	• Marketing Budget Analysis and Marketing Department Headcount Data • Comparative case studies • Interviews & Survey
Implementation-Content		

Marketing Organization Structure	1. In what ways do contemporary marketing organizations differ, why and with what consequences for marketing mix options and choices? 2. What impact does insourcing vs. outsourcing of different marketing mix activities have and under what conditions?	• Interview & Survey • Comparative case studies • CMO responsibilities listed in professional networking sites • Vendor client lists (e.g. market research, creative agencies)
Integrated Marketing Programs	1. How does traditional vs. digital execution and resource deployment mix affect marketing mix outcomes and what contingencies affect this? 2. What combinations of marketing mix tactics produce the best outcomes under different internal and external conditions? 3. What trade-offs exist in making marketing mix tactic choices (e.g., creativity vs. complementarity, complexity vs. enactment speed) how do managers make such trade-offs?	• Primary survey data collection across firms • Within-company study across SBUs • Interviews and Surveys • Simulation studies
Marketing Tactic Enactment	1. How long does it typically take for marketing mix resource deployment/action enactments to occur and what may affect the time-frames involved? 2. Are gaps between intended marketing tactic decisions and their realized enactment common? 3. What are the causes and consequences of such implementation gaps?	• Primary survey data collection across firms • Interviews • Comparative case Studies
Implementation-Process		
Adaptation	1. When and how are marketing program actions adjusted during implementation? What internal and/or external factors trigger such adjustments? 2. What is the role of performance monitoring and accountability processes in such adjustments? 3. What are the consequences of such adjustments on different performance outcomes and relative to planned goals and what factors affect the impact of the adjustments made?	• Observation of marketing teams across SBUs • Comparative case studies • Interviews and Survey data • Survey and Secondary performance data
Strategy Realization Processes	1. What the key processes by which CMOs manage the implementation of marketing strategy? 2. How are different change management processes used and with what results when new marketing strategies are being implemented? 3. How are marketing strategy implementation tasks allocated and assigned and how are individuals/teams held accountable for delivering on required tasks?	• Comparative case studies • Interviews & Survey data • Survey & Secondary performance data • Ethnography/Observation
Marketing Organization Design	1. How does marketing organization design affect marketing program design and execution? 2. How do CMOs identify required talent for new marketing responsibility areas to enable strategy implementation, and are some methods more effective than others?	• Ethnography/Observation • Interviews and Survey • Acquire planning process documents and text analyze data
Hybrid		
Intended-Realized marketing strategy gaps	1. How prevalent are intended-realized marketing strategy gaps and what is their magnitude? 2. What factors affect the size and nature of such gaps and how do they impact performance? 3. What causes intended-realized strategy gaps and how can any downside impact on performance be reduced?	• Text analysis of marketing strategy goals and secondary performance data • Cross sectional interviews and surveys • Longitudinal surveys and secondary performance data
Marketing Strategy Alignment	1. When, how and from whom should managers seek alignment during and after the development of marketing strategy decisions and integrated marketing program designs? 2. What internal and external factors affect the need for and impact of alignment from others to marketing strategy and integrated marketing program decisions?	• Comparative case studies • Cross-sectional interviews & Surveys • Single company observation of different marketing teams

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