

The Impact of Academic Marketing Research on Practice

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Abstract

As an applied social science discipline, academic marketing research focuses both on consumption behaviors (in their broadest sense) as well as firm-side marketing level policies in order to optimize resource allocation and utilization. Part of the latter mandate is to generate findings that are useful for decision makers in tactical and strategic decisions. Notwithstanding this goal, practicing managers and academic researchers have been lamenting a substantial and potentially growing research-practice gap. At the same time, it is critical for universities to align the internal faculty reward system and the motivational structure for faculty with the overall objective to have an impact on firms and on society at large. Against the backdrop of these challenges, this special session's objectives are twofold:

First, within two presentations, we want to share current insight into the above challenges. In the first presentation, we aim to clarify empirically what makes marketing research relevant to managers (i.e. what are building blocks of relevant research?) and how researchers can increase the likelihood of generating such research (i.e. how does the genesis of relevant research happen?). We present qualitative findings from a comprehensive set of interviews with practitioners, researchers, and senior editors of important business magazines. The study's implications chart courses of action for researchers who want to have an impact on practice. In the second presentation, we look at the limiters of the faculty management system that restrict the impact of academic research in marketing and how this then may have an impact on business school health. Moreover, in response to these limiters, we offer three improvements for increasing the impact marketing can have on business school health.

Second, in a panel discussion with prominent researchers we shed light on the state and development of the marketing field with respect to relevance, its major journals and their stance towards the issue of relevance, and the responsibilities of researchers and managers to produce and adopt relevant research. The discussants have worked as managers, academics, and consultants, looking back on many years of experience of solving real-world business problems.

This special section contributes to the ongoing discourse about a possible research-practice gap in marketing. It discusses the gap's existence and causes, but also goes beyond institutional criticism and propositions to solve the dilemma "top-down". Rather, we also present and discuss possibilities for individual researchers who want to increase their projects' managerial relevance and improve the odds for practical impact.