

THE UNIT TO BE CLASSIFIED:
PERSONS VS. BEHAVIORS

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SUMMARY

If marketers had found no classificatory approaches readymade in the behavioral sciences, how would they have construed "the consumer" for purposes of classification? In this paper, I argue that we should select our approaches to classification in the light of the task at hand. Classification systems for persons -- as opposed to behaviors -- have hitherto been stressed even though, in our central assignment as marketers, we address behaviors rather than persons. A classification system for behaviors is proposed and its implications are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

For too long, as marketers we have relied on available constructs and techniques to help us in our search for information. As our seminar theme so aptly conveys, we know that existing conceptualizations are not working well. Yet we continue to put our faith in borrowed concepts made elsewhere for other purposes. People create the constructs of science and who better than marketers to create constructs for guiding marketing analysis and research? Minimally, I suggest (1) that we pay more attention than before to the requirements of the marketer's tasks as we search for concepts to borrow and as a prerequisite to developing our own homegrown conceptual tools and (2) that we consider the possibility that we may need different classificatory systems depending on the task at hand.

In this paper, I am primarily addressing the question of concepts appropriate to the marketer's task of describing heterogeneous demand. One of the distinguishing features of marketing as behavioral science is its recognition of and emphasis on, heterogeneity. Yet it is most strikingly in our efforts to represent heterogeneous demand that we are aware of the inadequacy of our systems for classifying consumers. Our difficulty traces, I believe, to a single omission in our thinking -- the failure to take into account that ac-

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tion has two main classes of determinant namely, elements within the person and within the environment. Various confusions follow. We equate persons and actions, assuming that our universe is one consisting of persons and not, more appropriately, one of person-activity occasions. Confronting a universe of person-activity occasions we try to gain enlightenment by using constructs designed to characterize persons. In this paper I shall first address the question of the unit to be classified and then take up the question of an appropriate set of classes. Finally, I shall discuss some implications of my analysis.

THE UNIT TO BE CLASSIFIED

Marketing's essential assignment as a management function is to address the question: "What shall we produce?" The marketer's philosophical answer to that question is: "Make what the consumer wants to buy," an assignment that immediately calls for ways to describe consumer wants. As an aid to describing consumer wants marketers have tried, and found wanting, concepts from psychology and sociology such as traits, values, needs, attitudes, lifestyles, and social class. I suggest these concepts have been less than satisfactory because each involves a kind of aggregation that is not well suited to the marketer's task of want satisfaction. Although the concepts vary among themselves in their range and reference, all attempt a characterization of a person, or of a person in relation to the environment, that is too encompassing for the marketer's purpose. Take any of the instruments we use to classify people in terms of their traits, values, needs, etc., and consider the amount of abstracting we require our respondents to do in order to answer our questions. Inventory items typically require respondents to generalize about themselves. As they address each item in an inventory and conduct a quick mental review in order to answer, at best, our respondents may consider the specific activity or experience that is relevant to our product category of interest. But they presumably weigh that activity along with others before placing the checkmark that indicates what is characteristic for them. Why should we care what is characteristic for our respondents across their various activities and experiences when we are addressing a tiny and quite specific region of the person's total activity and experience? Rather than a characterization of persons across their activities and experiences what we need is information on one or a few activities over time.

Person: Actions in Space and Time

Let me illustrate the point in the following way. A person may be regarded as a succession of actions in space and time. The actions extend in time for the length of the person's life from birth to death (see Figure 1a). The marketer is not interested in all of these actions. At any one time, the marketer wishes to consider only a portion of the total stream of actions -- one that spans a period of weeks, months, or a few years. Furthermore, within even this restricted region, for any one product category of interest, a marketer is concerned with only a handful of the person's total actions.

To simplify the exposition, one day's actions are shown schematically in Figure 1a and, in Figure 1b, are classified for their relevance to the

FIGURE 1a ACTIONS IN SPACES AND TIME

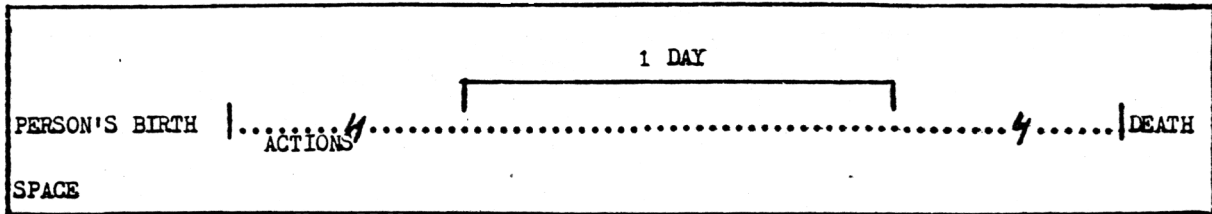
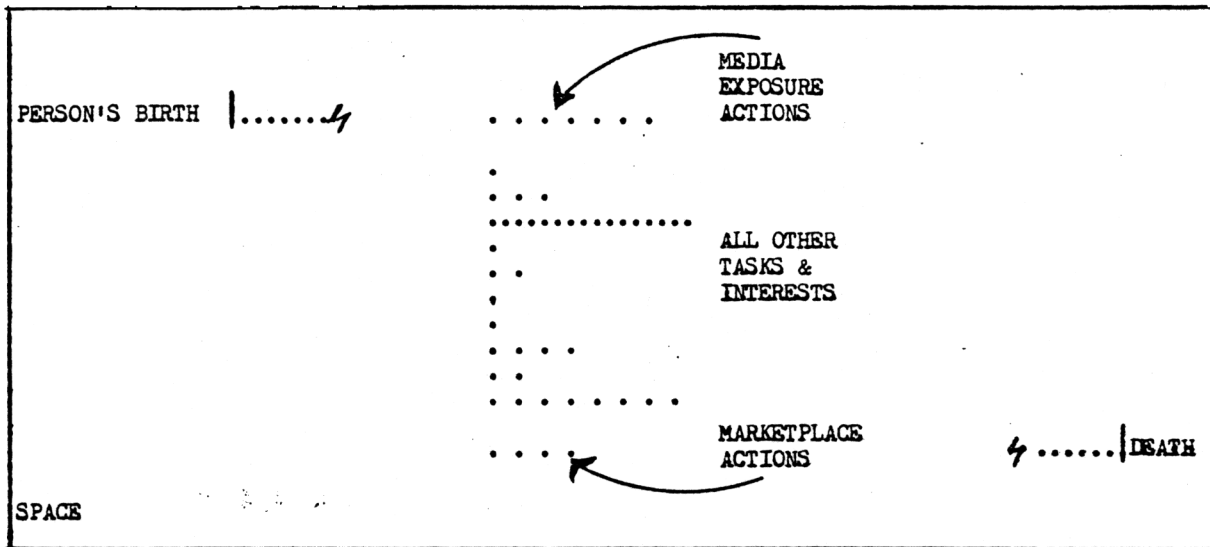


FIGURE 1b MARKETER'S CATEGORIZATION OF 1 DAY'S ACTIONS



marketer's interest in (1) communicating with the person (media exposure actions), (2) effecting exchanges with the person (marketplace actions), and (3) serving the person's wants (all other tasks and interests). The rows in Figure 1b represent activities and the columns represent separate occasions on which the activity is performed. Accordingly, in the region designated as "all other tasks and interests," each row represents an activity such as showering, brushing teeth, combing hair, shaving, drinking hot beverages, traveling from one place to another, etc. Entries in a row represent the frequency with which the activity is performed in one day. Within "all other tasks and interests," for any one product category the marketer may be concerned with a region represented by only one row or, possibly, a few rows representing closely related activities. Elsewhere, I have referred to this region as the "focal behavioral domain" (Fennell 1982). Marketers find that addressing themselves to just the narrow range of a person's actions that their good or service serves offers complexity and problems aplenty. Why complicate the task even more by using classificatory schemes that implicate irrelevant aspects of the person?

For the marketer's task of want-satisfaction, classificatory approaches that purport to characterize persons are unsuitable because they cover too much ground by requiring respondents to aggregate across different activities e.g., the rows in Figure 1b, and because they lose valuable

information by requiring respondents to aggregate over the occasions on which an activity is performed e.g., the columns of Figure 1b. In regard to one potential customer, the appropriate universe for the marketer is not the totality of the person's actions nor, for the vast majority of goods and services, is it a single instance of the activity of interest. The marketer wants to be able to exclude irrelevant activities and to obtain good information about all occurrences of the activity of interest during an appropriate period of time. Classificatory systems that recognize one source of influence only, e.g., the person, are deficient by implying homogeneity within the actions of a person across activity and over time. As marketers we are, of course, well aware that our markets comprise heterogeneous demand. We have, I believe, tended to attribute heterogeneity exclusively to differences among people, overlooking the sources of heterogeneity within one person.

Within-Person Sources of Heterogeneity

Heterogeneity within the person arises because (1) even if the focal behavioral domain comprises only one activity e.g., showering, it consists of actions that are repeated over time, allowing for the possibility of variation in the operative person and environment elements, and (2) the marketer may have defined the focal behavioral domain to include more than one premarketplace activity, e.g., bathing and showering, or may have defined it in terms of product use e.g., use of bath soap implicating, possibly, a few activities.

Rampant Abstraction

We have not, perhaps, paid as much attention as we might to the abstraction inherent in phrases such as "showering," "doing the laundry," "snacking." In fact, such terms and phrases are convenient shorthand references to multiple instances of a generic activity each of which represents a unique intersection of person and environment elements for the person in question. There is no such thing as showering in the abstract and when we ask our survey respondents to answer questions about "showering;" we should be aware that we are requiring them to summarize across multiple showers each of which occurred in its own particular intra and extra-psychic environment. Further aggregation occurs should we ask our respondents to address themselves simultaneously to more than one activity such as "bathing and showering." We relinquish even more control to the respondent when, switching to a market basis for aggregation, we ask respondents about their "use of bath soap." Each of these three approaches to stating the focal behavioral domain has its own particular advantages and disadvantages and I do not intend to promote one as universally superior to the rest. My purpose here is to emphasize that the various approaches are not direct substitutes for each other and to underscore the extent to which our linguistic conventions encourage us to categorize and summarize and, in the process, to demand that our

¹For example, marketers are more likely to use premarketplace activity when their objective is to increase product use and to employ a product-use definition when their objective is to increase brand share.

respondents aggregate their experiences in answering our questions.

Although information and precision are lost, it can be argued that asking respondents to address themselves to generic activities is appropriate when the marketplace also addresses multiple activities (e.g., brands of bath soap to be used for showering, bathing, and possibly other activities). The respondent's task may be thought to simulate marketplace choice in that in order to select among such brands consumers must attempt to assess their wants across use occasions and activities. At the same time, openings for new positionings, new brands, and new products are likely to result from overthrowing the conventional groupings and differentiations reflected in the current array of goods and services. The information that falls between the cracks when we think about and investigate consumer wants at the level of generic activity may be collected by a competitor who uses it to advantage in servicing hitherto ignored segments of demand.

Universe of Person-Activity Occasions

To return to the simplest case where the focal behavioral domain comprises just one generic activity e.g., "showering," the universe of interest to the marketer comprises all showers taken by persons during a specific time period (e.g., one year). For purposes of responding to consumer wants, the showering universe is not "persons who shower during 1982" but "showers taken during 1982" consisting of persons times occasions. Should the focal behavioral domain be defined as "bathing and showering," the appropriate universe is "baths and showers taken during 1982" and, should it be defined in product terms as "using bath soap," the appropriate universe is "bath soap uses during 1982." Components of the universe corresponding to each of these definitions of the focal behavioral domain are shown schematically in Figure 2. I am retaining "person" in the term "person-activity" by way of recognizing that it is persons who are responsible for the activity as defined in the marketer's focal behavioral domain, who can provide information that marketers need concerning the activity and with whom marketers need to communicate and effect exchanges and, perhaps most importantly, that marketers exercise choice whether to include in their market all or less than 100% of the persons who perform the focal behavior. I shall return to this last-mentioned point later in connection with market definition. To say that, as regards marketing's central assignment of want-satisfaction, person-activity occasions and not persons are the appropriate unit to be studied and classified is not to discount the strategic importance of persons. It is, rather, to acknowledge that the person is a complex entity whose actions are finely tuned to its complex environment and that marketers, at any one time, address just a fraction of the entire set of person-environment intersections, specifically a universe of person-activity occasions.

APPROPRIATE CLASSES

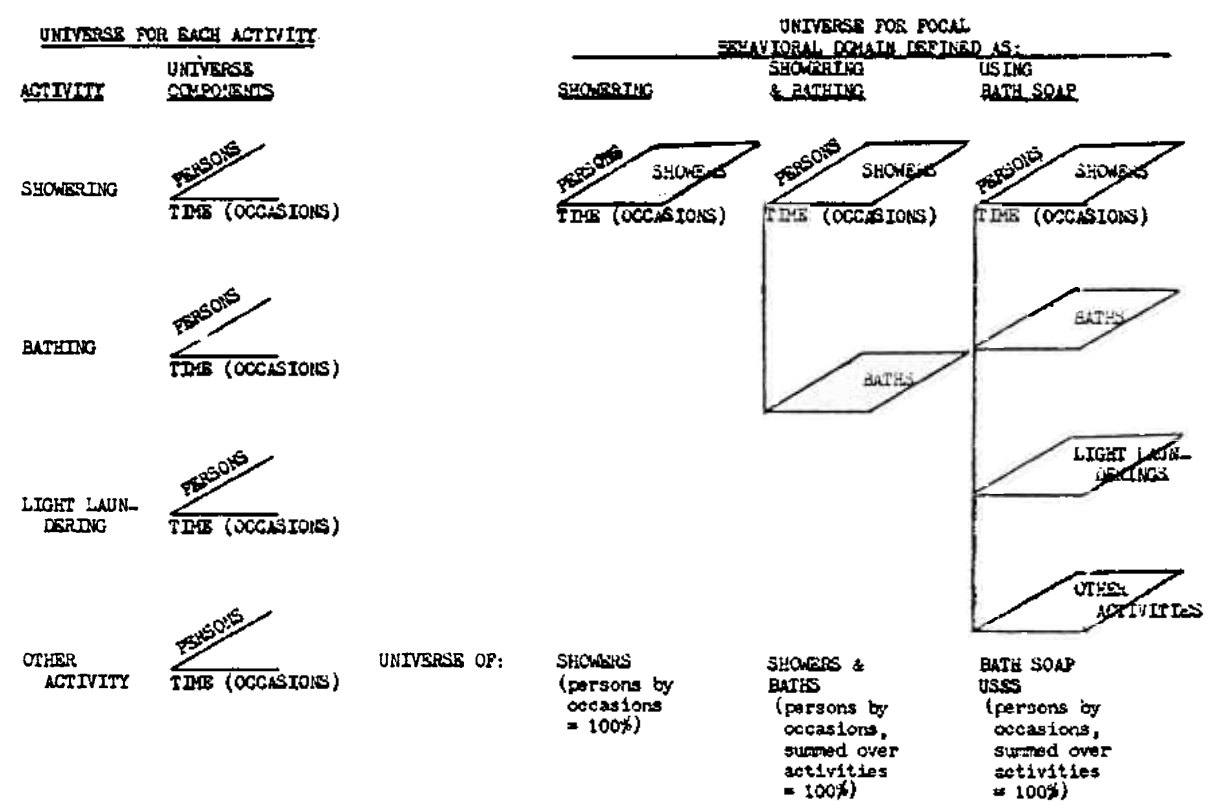
How do we go about classifying person-activity occasions? What do we want to know about a universe of occasions on which persons perform a certain activity such as showering? Later, I shall illustrate how

the marketing enterprise as a whole may be coordinated to components of a person-activity occasion. First, let me address the question of understanding what the person is doing by means of one instance of an activity such as showering. Much of the interest among marketing practitioners in finding better systems for classifying consumers springs from our need to describe heterogeneous consumer wants in order to respond to the segments of demand in our markets. The shift in focus from person to person-activity occasions changes the basic question from: What motivates the person? or, How can we best describe the needs of this person? to: What motivates this action? How can we best describe what the person is doing by this action?

Action is Motivationally Ambiguous

To an observer, an action is inherently ambiguous. This is true not only of maneuvers at the level of international diplomacy, organizational politics, or courtship, but with regard to the "simpler" activities of daily living. What in fact is a person doing when showering? An objective description of the activity and of its spatial and temporal aspects does not tell us that the person is cleansing a body perceived to be dirty (grimey, germ laden, smelly, etc.), or refreshing a body and a spirit experienced as tired (sluggish, exhausted, worn down, weary, despondent), or relaxing a body and a mind perceived as uncomfortably tense, or warming up (cooling down) a body perceived as uncomfortably cold (hot), or performing a symbolic action appropriate to one's self-

FIGURE 2 UNIVERSE FOR VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF THE FOCAL BEHAVIORAL DOMAIN



concept as a civilized being (a fastidious person, a model parent, an ascetic, a narcissist), or mindlessly engaging in a habitual routine, or exploring the relation between water temperature, air temperature, movement when showering and bodily sensation, or enjoying the sensory experiences resulting from physical activity and pressure on the skin, or reluctantly and painfully performing a necessary but unpleasant chore, or any of the above while worrying about wasting water (energy, time) or yet others. Making "what the consumer wants to buy" involves understanding what the consumer is doing by means of an activity conventionally labeled, in this instance, "showering." Marketers attempt to learn about these alternative orientations through qualitative research (individual depth and focused group interviews) and they have done so largely without benefit of a conceptualization of the possible kinds of orientations that might be found.

Activating Conditions as Perceived

Wants -- experienced discrepancy between existing and imagined conditions -- activate behavior to bring about a change in the relationship between the person and the environment. For the representation of wants, rather than separate treatment of the person and the environment we need to model the joint effect of person and environment systems in shaping the conditions that may activate behavior. Is behavior always activated in the same way or are there various configurations of the person-environment intersections that activate behavior? If action is motivationally ambiguous it follows that a given action may originate from one or more of a variety of motivating circumstances. A basic classification system for marketers would be one they could use to categorize activity occasions in terms of their activating conditions. Elsewhere I have described a set of seven different kinds of activating conditions (Fennell 1978, 1980b). The five simple cases are: Current Problem, Potential Problem, Normal Depletion, Interest Opportunity, and Sensory Pleasure Opportunity. Considering just the basic five, the first three may be regarded as stick-type motivations where conditions are goading or prodding us into action; the other two are carrot-type motivations, where the presentation of something interesting or attractive makes us uncomfortable until we possess it. In addition, there are two complex cases that implicate more than one source of behavioral activation i.e., at least one of the basic five and one other and that involve, respectively, approach-avoidance conflict and frustration.

Considering just the five simple cases shown in Figure 3, we have a set of concepts to represent differing conditions in which behavior may be activated. Note, the seven classes represent activating conditions as perceived by the person engaging in the action. Accordingly, for any action of interest we may now ask: In performing this act, is the person escaping from a current problem, preventing a potential problem, maintaining a stable state, exploring a cognitive interest, facilitating the experience of sensory pleasure or, of course, is some combination of these orientations (including the two complex cases) present?

FIGURE 3 ACTIVATING CONDITIONS AND CORRESPONDING BEHAVIORAL DIRECTION

<u>PERCEIVED ACTIVATING CONDITION</u>	<u>DIRECTION FOR BEHAVIOR</u>
<u>SIMPLE</u>	
1. CURRENT PROBLEM	SOLVE PROBLEM
2. POTENTIAL PROBLEM	PREVENT PROBLEM
3. NORMAL DEPLETION	MAINTAIN STABLE STATE
4. INTEREST OPPORTUNITY	EXPLORE
5. SENSORY PLEASURE OPPORTUNITY	FACILITATE
<u>COMPLEX</u>	
6. PRODUCT-RELATED PROBLEM	RESOLVE CONFLICT
7. SATISFACTION-FRUSTRATION	RESTRUCTURE SITUATION

Source: Adapted from Fennell (1978)

Satisfying Another's wants: Three Difficulties for Marketing

To present a set of categories appropriate to classifying activity occasions is not to say that we may expect plain sailing from here on in. There has been some discussion in the literature of consumer behavior, to which I shall return later, about the relative merits of objective i.e., an observer's standpoint, and subjective i.e., the actor's standpoint, approaches for the marketer's purposes. While objective approaches have their place, there seems little question that it is activating conditions, as experienced by the person engaging in the action, that marketers are trying to address through their market offerings. As a consequence, the task of want-satisfaction entails at least three significant difficulties for marketing. (1) Marketers are responding to conditions that occur, privately, within peoples' experience of themselves and their world and that, normally, are not publicly observable. Marketing practitioners have been well aware of this difficulty, of course, and a large industry of qualitative research has developed to elicit consumers' beliefs and attributions regarding these activating conditions. Up to now, an inherently difficult task has been made more troublesome than need be by the absence of a conceptualization of the conditions that create wants, leaving marketers without a map of the terrain they are attempting to explore and forcing them to rely on the skill of interviewers, the representativeness of respondents in qualitative research and the respondents' ability to articulate their experience of everyday conditions and events. (2) The entire spectrum of human activity, ranging from the most commonplace to the most lofty involves the use of marketplace goods and services in greater or lesser degree. A great deal of marketplace activity has to do with providing aids for keeping life going in a reasonably orderly and hygienic manner. On a daily basis each of us expends energy and resources to keep our biological system functioning and to ward off, from ourselves and our manufactured aids to living, ravages, encroachments, and assaults from the natural environment. Much of this

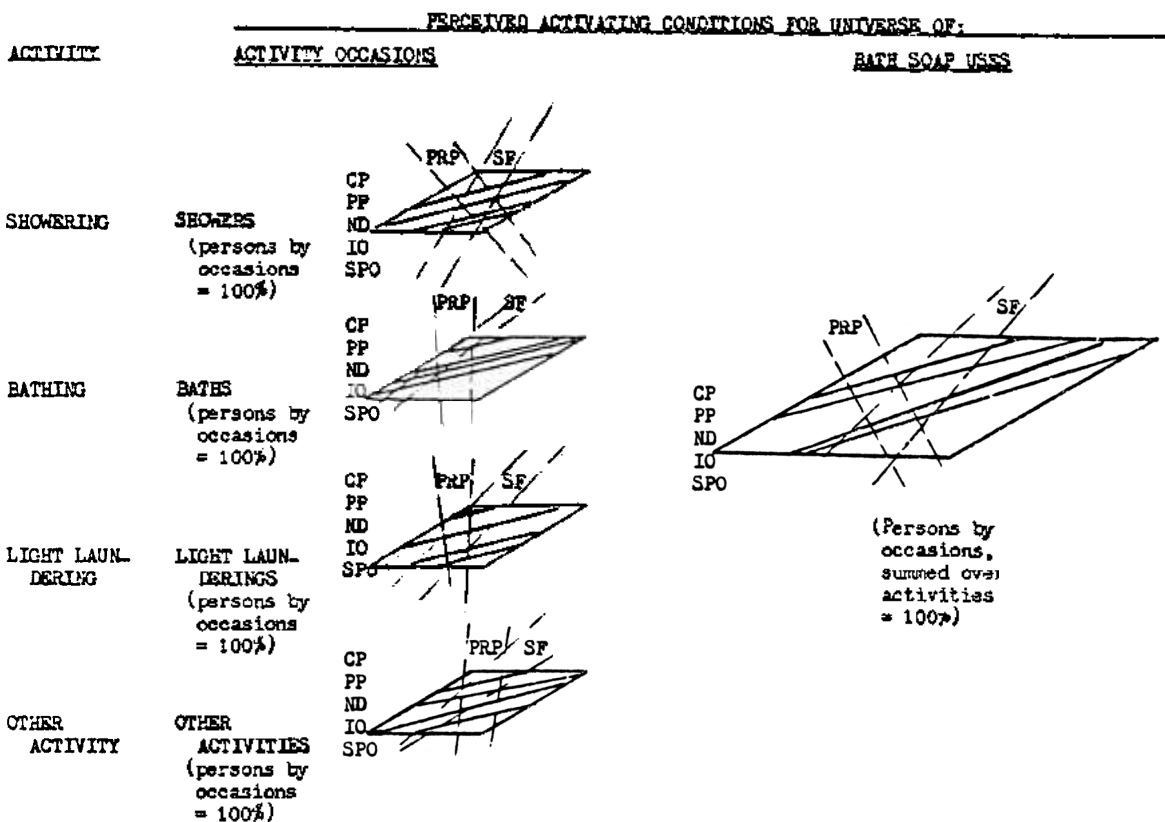
activity is not interesting or pleasurable in itself. These are no-win endeavors where we must run to stay in the same place. Our satisfaction, if any, comes from contemplating the disorder and destruction that would result if we neglected to perform our tasks. Technically, when our actions terminate an aversive state of affairs, we are negatively reinforced. In the nature of things much of the productive enterprise must be devoted to giving negative reinforcement, which implies satisfaction by the removal of something unpleasant. The removal of dirt, soil, deterioration, decay, mold and mildew, hunger, thirst, cold, heat, headaches and tummyaches, is not, we like to think, what life is about, but it has to be done, and recurringly. It should not be surprising if we, as consumers, perform these activities as mindlessly as possible. But if this is the case, how articulate will we be in communicating to marketers what the producer needs to know to help us perform the chores that keep things running? (3) As I have noted elsewhere (Fennell 1980a, b), individuals may deal with activating conditions by cognitive activity alone -- by changing the way one thinks about the circumstances. Particularly in cases where no appropriate action is available, it is often beneficial for a person to be able to deal with unpleasant thoughts and events by means of rearranging the way he or she views, and feels about, the unsettling elements or, indeed, by not acknowledging the unpleasantness as such. Many of the appurtenances of today's "civilized" living represent the amelioration of chores and irritations, great and small, which former generations accepted as ineluctably part of the human lot. Impediments to technological progress probably lie as much in failure to recognize that things could be otherwise as in the difficulty of finding cost-efficient solutions. Our ability to deal with life's unpleasantnesses by symbolic activity and by strategies such as rationalization and repression, while possibly adaptive for individuals in the short run, adds to the difficulty of the marketer's task of want-identification. Before the advent of lightweight pressing irons, for example, consumers were not begging manufacturers to make irons lighter. In those days, the consumer's perception was that irons are weighty in order to get wrinkles out of clothes and one just marshalls one's resources and plans one's work schedule accordingly. Even when respondents were invited in marketing research surveys to indicate their dislikes and complaints about the task of pressing clothes, weight of the iron did not head the list by any means. Nevertheless, once lighter irons are available, doing the family ironing with "old fashioned" weighty pressing irons is as unthinkable as having a tooth extracted without anesthetic. Because everyday health and wellbeing require that we not dwell on difficulties that we are powerless to change we may not be ready, in all cases, to describe not only the goods and services we want but even the conditions that stress us and for which we would truly wish to have remedies. The answer to the anomaly of our difficulty in articulating our wants is not to give free reign to technological inventiveness without benefit of consumer input. A multifaceted approach is needed that capitalizes on the strengths of behavioral science and technological sophistication working collaboratively. In practice, marketing research and R&D personnel do collaborate, of course, in specific endeavors but less effectively than they might were they able to communicate in terms

of a shared understanding of the nature of demand in its public and private aspects.

Classification of a Universe of Activity Occasions

"Consumer classification" has largely been taken to imply a universe of persons and categorization approaches that purport to describe persons. I have suggested that marketing's central assignment of responding to consumer wants requires that we think in terms of a universe of person-activity occasions and categorization approaches that are appropriate to the classification of actions. I have briefly described a set of classes that is designed to represent the kinds of conditions that activate actions. Various universes that are relevant to marketing planning for bath soap, classified in terms of the set of activating conditions are shown, schematically, in Figure 4. First, the activities of showering, bathing, etc. are indicated to the left and, moving across the figure, are followed by their respective activity occasions universes, showing the proportion of showers, baths, etc. activated by the perception of a current problem (CP), potential problem (PP), normal depletion (ND), etc. If the marketer has defined the focal behavioral domain in product terms e.g., using bath soap, thus implicating various activities, combining across the four yields an activity occasions universe of bath soap uses classified by perceived activating conditions, as shown impressionistically to the right. With regard to each of the

FIGURE 4 COMPONENTS OF HETEROGENEOUS DEMAND



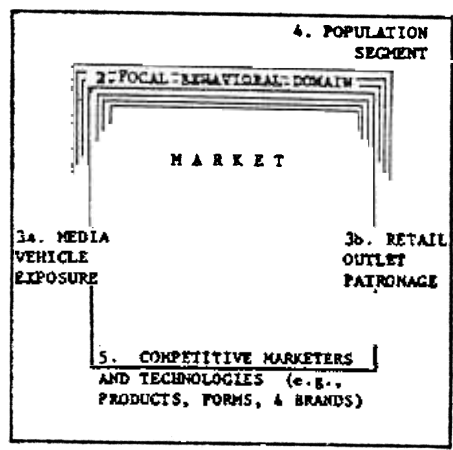
components of the universe of person-activity occasions many options are available to marketers as they develop their marketing strategy. Some of the main considerations that affect these choices are indicated in Figure 5 (Fennell 1982).

FIGURE 5 MARKET DEFINITION AND SEGMENTATION: MAJOR TASK COMPONENTS

MARKET DEFINITION (see Figure 5a)

1. IDENTIFY DOMAIN OF OWN (i.e., Marketer's) EXPERTISE.
2. SELECT A (CORRESPONDING) DOMAIN OF CONSUMER EXPERIENCE/ACTIVITY (i.e., the FOCAL BEHAVIORAL DOMAIN).
3. EVALUATE LOCATABILITY OF PERSONS WHO PERFORM FOCAL BEHAVIOR (e.g., study their media exposure and retail outlet patronage in light of own resources) FOR PURPOSES OF:
 - COMMUNICATION FROM THEM -- of information needed to develop marketing strategy (via marketing research)
 - COMMUNICATION TO THEM -- of brand availability and attributes (via marketing communications)
 - EXCHANGE WITH THEM -- good/service for money.
4. DEFINE OUTER LIMITS OF CURRENT PROSPECT GROUP (e.g., select a population segment as analytic frame -- US adults, US adult male blacks, US females age 15-45, US teens residing in west, etc.).
5. SPECIFY COMPETITIVE MARKETERS/TECHNOLOGIES (ACTUAL AND PERCEIVED) IMPLICATED BY OPTIONS AVAILABLE IN TASKS 1-4.

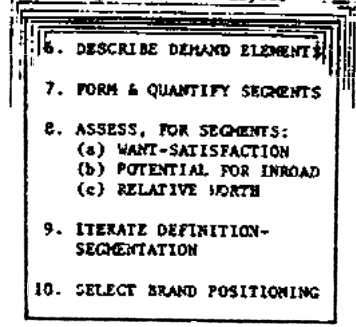
Figure 5a Dimensions of Market Definition



MARKET SEGMENTATION (see Figure 5b)

- Within Market as Defined (i.e., set of options in tasks 1-4),
6. DESCRIBE ELEMENTS OF HETEROGENEOUS DEMAND (e.g., custom information about activating conditions, desired states, desired product attributes for focal behavioral occasions).
 7. FORM AND QUANTIFY DEMAND SEGMENTS.
 8. ASSESS:
 - (a) STATE OF WANT-SATISFACTION IN DEMAND SEGMENTS
 - (b) POTENTIAL FOR BRAND INROADS IN DEMAND SEGMENTS (e.g., custom data on: Form preference; Brand consideration status, general and specific; Brand awareness, experience, beliefs, knowledge, perceived positionings overall)
 - (c) RELATIVE WORTH OF DEMAND SEGMENTS.
 9. REPEAT TASKS 6-8 FOR ALTERNATIVE MARKET DEFINITIONS/SEGMENTATIONS.
 10. SELECT BRAND POSITIONING i.e., target segment(s) of demand (one, some, or all conditions activating prospects to perform focal behavior as defined) and corresponding brand attributes, tangible and intangible.

Figure 5b Components of Market Segmentation Analysis



TWO CONTROVERSIES

Considerations of space allow me to say only a few words about each of two controversies on which my analysis takes a position namely, behavioral determinants and objective versus subjective approaches.

1. What Are the Determinants of Behavior?

The weight of tradition, everyday views, and some influential psychological conceptualizations favor viewing behavior as explained by characteristics of the person. The implicit assumption is one of consistency within and across a person's activities. When authors start with the assumption of intraindividual consistency, they place the burden of proof on those who would assert variability within a person. The issue has been joined in the marketing and consumer behavioral literatures under the rubric of "situational" effects and "use occasions" (e.g., Belk 1974, 1975, Fennell 1975a,b, 1978, 1980b, Goldman & McDonald 1979, Nakkar & Lutz 1975, Leigh & Martin 1981 Radder 1982). Commenting on some of the situational effects literature in consumer behavior, Bourgeois, Haines, & Sommers recently concluded:

"It could be said, in summary, that it is known situation is important, but it is not known, in general (rather than specific) what situation is" (1981, p. 44). One source of confusion seems to trace to the fact that "situation" has been used to refer to both forms of intraindividual aggregation which I have discussed above i.e., within an activity and across activities (Fennell 1980b, Leigh & Martin 1981). A moment's thought and we realize that there is no behavior that is not "situational" i.e., unique to a particular person, time, and place. We should not have to make a special case for the importance of "situational" influences. It is for this reason that I have taken the position that discussions of "situational" influences are more properly discussions of the general question of behavioral determinants (Fennell 1978, 1980b). The onus of proof is on those who claim to be able, usefully, to characterize the person across his or her experience and activity, and over time.

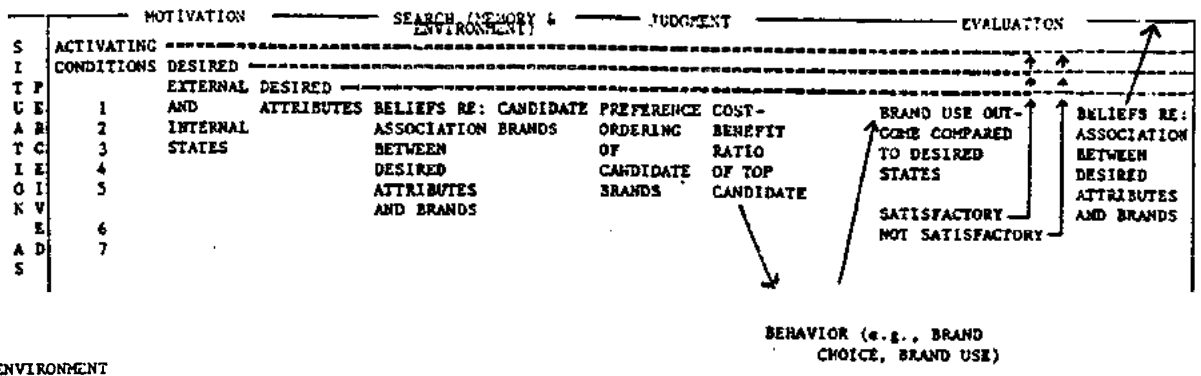
Elements in Behavioral Explanation

If "characteristics of the person" is too simplistic an explanation, what elements belong in a model of the determinants of behavior? How might we conceptualize the constituents of a person-activity occasion e.g., a single instance of taking a shower? As shown in Figure 6, minimally, we need to consider motivational, search, and judgment processes for a person in an environment of space and time. Considering the model of consumer brand choice, a situation begins when person and environment systems intersect creating activating conditions. I have already described a variety of activating conditions for showering as the consumer might experience them. For the experiencing person, activating conditions specify the essential qualities of desired states -- the way a person wishes things to be externally (e.g., gardening grime washed away) and the way a person wishes to feel internally (e.g., nongrimey and comfortable). If consumers cannot dispose of the activating condition by thought alone (e.g., "It's clean' dirt"), they search their memory and the immediate environment for ways to secure their desired states and they generate one or more candidate actions (e.g., taking a bath or shower; using various items while doing so). If more than one, consumers order the candidate actions in terms of likelihood of securing their desired states. They make a cost-benefit analysis of the top ranked (or sole) candidate action relative to the activating conditions. If it survives the analysis, the action will be performed unless other circumstances intervene. It is the marketer's task to understand the situation as perceived by the consumer, specifically the consumer's activating conditions and desired states, so well that technology is brought to bear appropriately in securing the consumer's desired states. In practice, this means the marketer identifies the attributes of goods and services that will terminate the activating conditions the consumer experiences.

As indicated also in Figure 6, the marketer's major domains of strategic choice as well as the main categories of information obtained through marketing research are readily coordinated to components of the brand choice model (Fennell 1982). Constituents of the person-activity occasion, as represented in my model of consumer brand choice, point to the systematic significance of the marketing enterprise as an example of applied behavioral science.

A. MODEL OF CONSUMER CHOICE

PERSON



B. MARKETERS' DOMAINS OF STRATEGIC CHOICE

PROSPECTS (THE POSITIONING DECISION) PRODUCT PROMOTION PRICE PLACE

C. DIAGNOSTIC AND EVALUATIVE INFORMATION

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH, PSYCHOGRAPHIC SEGMENTATION	REACTIONS TO PRODUCT BENEFITS & ATTRIBUTES (direct and derived), BENEFIT SEGMENTATION	BRAND AWARENESS, BRAND BELIEFS, PERCEPTUAL MAPPING	BRAND CONSIDERATION SET	PREFERENCE RANKING, PURCHASE INTENT RATING, CONSTANT SUM SCALE	VALUE RATING	OUT-OF-STOCK REPORTS, SALES DATA	BRAND-IN-USE RATINGS	BRAND KNOWLEDGE e.g., Brand Beliefs among Triers/Users
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D. HIERARCHY OF EFFECTS

AWARENESS KNOWLEDGE (LIKING) PREFERENCE CONVICTION PURCHASE

2. Objective versus Subjective Approaches

I shall say just a few words about the second controversial issue namely, whether we should use objective (i.e., from the perspective of an observer) or subjective (i.e., from the perspective of the experiencing person) description of the consumer's world. Behavioral scientists are divided and, as is often the case when the experts are divided, both approaches are valuable. Considering Figure 5, marketers find it convenient to use objective description for their task of market definition. A marketer of bath soap may plan to address the (subjective) discomfort a person may feel when grimy after working in the garden, or the (subjective) tenseness and edginess that may come from a day of surviving the rat race. Yet, as a first approximation to locating potential buyers it is convenient to say that the marketer is interested in persons who "bathe and shower." The marketer may plan to operate within a narrower definition of potential buyers e.g., persons who "shower daily," or "shower during the summer," or "shower in cold water," or "shower while on vacation." In defining the outer limits of the market, an objective description of the focal behavioral domain is usual and entirely appropriate, as in the screening questions used to locate respondents for marketing research. It is also customary to use objective description in research aimed at discovering how consumers align available market offerings with different activities and environments (e.g., "products by uses" analysis, Belk 1979, Day, Shocker & Srivastava 1979, Bourgeois & Haines 1981, Stefflre 1979). However, objective description of the

consumer activity and its environment does not reveal the consumer's perspective, specifically, the conditions that motivate the action and thus specify the essential features of the consumer's desired states. Here we must inquire into the private world inside the consumer's head if we are to design the goods and services that will help secure the consumer's desired states. In answering the question: In performing this action is the consumer escaping from a current problem, preventing a potential problem, maintaining a stable state, exploring an interesting situation, facilitating sensory enjoyment? the answers must come from research aimed at uncovering a subjective perspective.

As managers, the notion that it is important that we know the customer subjective perspective goes without saying. We have taken on the assignment of designing goods and services to serve people's experience of their world and of themselves that activates behavior to bring about an adjustment in person-environment relations.

PROSPECT

Within marketing, cost economy is one force towards obtaining comprehensive characterizations of individual persons. If general characterizations of individuals were useful in making marketing decisions, the time and cost involved in having marketing research respondents complete lengthy questionnaires could be prorated over a number of projects and/or clients. It becomes a question, then, of investigating whether there may be some marketing tasks where general characterizations of persons are helpful. Based on what we know at present it seems likely that relationships may be found between generalized person descriptors such as traits, needs, lifestyles, values, and, of course, demographic and geographic variables on the one hand, and, on the other, broad classes of activity such as using and frequency of using products (as opposed to brands) and patronizing certain types of media vehicle or retail outlet. Such relationships may help in making decisions regarding market definition (Fennell 1982) such as locating prospects under certain circumstances (see Figure 5, task #3). They are likely to be less helpful for the fine-tuning of market offerings to the wants of segments of demand within a market. For guidance in the critical strategic domain of selecting their brand's positioning, marketers cannot be satisfied with broad characterizations of persons. The understanding that leads to competitively superior answers to consumer wants is likely to come not from generalities about persons but from in-depth information about the conditions that give rise to the use of individual goods and services in specific circumstances.

There seems to be no good reason for assuming homogeneity within the person across activities and over occasions. I would urge that a task for the future is to investigate the extent to which homogeneity within the person exists. Marketing practitioners and students of marketing and consumer behavior are well situated to take on this task. Countless research projects, qualitative and quantitative, have already been, and will continue to be, conducted. All this work is telling us far less than it might were it conducted, systematically, using a common analytic frame from study to study. Without a doubt, there are

common patterns to be found in the motivational profiles of different activities i.e., the proportion of activity occasions classified as belonging in each motivation class (activating condition). Which are the activities that group together in this way and which do not? How much of our lives do we spend putting an end to, or warding off, unpleasant states, or just keeping things from deteriorating? For how much of our time are we responding to stick-type motivations, and how much reaching for carrots? When we "classify consumers" in ways that are truly helpful to marketers we shall find we have gained new understanding of ourselves.

Note that I am not suggesting that we ask exactly the same questions from study to study but we can, at least, take into account the same general set of considerations. It is highly unlikely that the kinds of determinants that affect behavior differ radically as we move from one activity of the person to another, or from one product category to another, or from one country to another. Working within a comprehensive conceptual framework, we see the individual projects that come our way in a new light. Our projects, in turn, give us information that enables us to assess the usefulness of our conceptualizations and to continue to improve them. Conducted within a common conceptual framework, homegrown for marketing use, our projects can be made to yield truly new kinds of information about ourselves from which we may benefit as human beings and marketers.

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