BOOK REVIEW

“ABOUT MARKETING. ANTHOLOGY”. AUTHOR: IACOB CĂTOIU

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In each field there are works, monuments, and people with a reference role, which represent relevant elements in axiological analyses from that field. The marketing area benefits also from such landmarks, one of them being represented by Professor Iacob Cătoiu, DBA, author of numerous works, with a true vocation for teaching, doctoral supervisor, role model, whose activity has decisively marked this field. The book “About Marketing. Anthology” is a synthesis of the most important contributions of the author in the field of marketing. This paper is a very dense one, an aspect that derives from the depth of the analyses performed and from the author’s ability to harmonize concepts belonging to other sciences (psychology, sociology, mathematics) with those related to the science of marketing. The book is also characterized by diversity, enlarging upon topics that address subjects such as: marketing research, consumer behavior, tourism marketing, marketing strategies, marketing modeling, and methods used in teaching the disciplines of marketing. The paper also has diversity in terms of the periods it refers to or the geographical areas analyzed.

The book “About Marketing. Anthology” is a collection of writings, the result of a career designed on the foundations of Romanian and American higher education systems, a career

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crowned with a series of distinctions, but also with numerous destinies that Professor Iacob Cătoiu influenced. One of the challenges such a paper can bring to attention is to answer the question Was there marketing in Romania before the 1989 Revolution? Many people would give a negative answer, firmly convinced of its accuracy. The paper comes to invalidate such a perception, highlighting the interests Professor Cătoiu, as a member of the Romanian academic environment, had in the research and publishing activity in the marketing area before the 1990s, both in Romania and in the United States.

The American experience (1971-1975), as a master’s and doctoral student (with a diploma of merit that gave him the opportunity to be a member of the Honorary Society Beta Gamma Sigma) at one of the most prestigious universities, Indiana University, and the postdoctoral program entitled Central and Eastern European Teachers Program, organized by “J. L. Kellogg” Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University (1991 - 1993), made Dr. Iacob Cătoiu the only professor in Romania with three degrees in marketing obtained from American universities. This experience gave the author the opportunity to assimilate the principles on which the science of marketing is based, the ways of transmitting these principles in the teaching process, and the methods of researching phenomena in the economic area through a marketing perspective. All these seeds of knowledge planted during his studies in the United States of America bore fruit in Romanian soil, contributing to the development of the Romanian marketing school. In this way, the paper has a formative role revealing to younger readers realities regarding a field that has a fairly solid history in Romania, giving them the opportunity to read some articles published several decades ago, but which do not lose their value, because they are cornerstones of a building that we currently cherish: marketing higher education in Romania.

The paper is structured in six parts, dealing with issues related to the history of marketing, the conceptual approach to consumer behavior, the presentation of methods and instruments included into marketing research area, and the decision-making process in the field of marketing. The book ends with an incursion into a series of autobiographical landmarks of the author, presenting details from his personal life meant to paint the portrait of the human being behind these writings, with the involvement, dedication, and perseverance that accompanied his academic career.

The first part of the book, entitled Marketing emergence and evolution, deals with representative aspects of marketing history and of the way in which its development as a science and as an academic discipline can benefit from the use of certain teaching methods. In this sense, by presenting an article published in 1978, the essential moments of marketing emergence and evolution are brought to attention, by making an analysis of the most representative authors. It is noticeable that the presentation of historical coordinates on marketing was done over four decades ago, an aspect with a high degree of novelty for the academic environment of that period.

In this section of the book, an article published in the United States along with two prominent scholars, Richard Butler and Ananthanarayan Parasuraman, as fellow doctoral students at Indiana University is also presented. This article deals with the method of decision-making exercises in simulated economic operations, an innovative method of learning in the field of economics. The method was presented in an operational manner, which facilitates an easy understanding of how to apply it, highlighting its potential in training future marketers.
The area of marketing teaching methods in academia is completed by the presentation of an article published in Romania in 1977, signed together with the distinguished Professor Nicolae Al. Pop, Ph.D., as a colleague at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. The detailed description of the method is outstanding, providing teachers with a tool to operationalize the theoretical aspects presented to students, contributing to the formation of their skills for making marketing decisions. Such an article was also a challenge for the period in which it was published, as case studies in the field of marketing were more difficult to develop in the context of a specific centralized economy in Romania.

The experience in the American land allowed the author to get acquainted with the higher education system, making a detailed picture of it in the book, at the level of bachelor, master, doctorate, presented in terms of admission, curricula, credits, duration of studies, and assessment methods. In this way, the readers of the book can form a comprehensive picture of one of the most advanced higher education systems in the world. The analysis of marketing development in the academic area is completed by the presentation of its evolution in higher education in Romania, starting with the publication of the first books dedicated to market research until the establishment of the first marketing faculty in Romania, within the Bucharest University of Economic Studies.

The second part of the book, named Defining coordinates of marketing research, deals with a topic representing the cornerstone of the author’s career: marketing research. It presents both the conceptual coordinates for designing different marketing research methods and the operational ones for applying these methods to study economic phenomena. It is noted the approach of some aspects with a high degree of complexity such as: the evaluation of measurement accuracy in marketing research, the marketing experiments or the multivariate analysis of the marketing information. These aspects find their utility in the design and implementation of various marketing research activities, forming, at the same time, the starting point in the application of modern information analysis software. Dr. Iacob Cătoiu was one of the first specialists in the Romanian academic environment who presented the use of the marketing experiment to evaluate the relationships between certain types of variables, building the foundation of numerous studies conducted by students, doctoral students or marketing specialists from our country.

The third part of the paper, Consumer Behavior, deals with issues such as buying, decision-making process, typology of purchasing decisions, and endogenous and exogenous factors influencing consumer behavior. A significant contribution of the author in dealing with this topic is the approach of lifestyle, in terms of its dimensions, the variables through which it is studied, or the usefulness of lifestyle research in the decision-making process. Another aspect approached in this chapter, benefiting from a high degree of complexity, is the analysis of brand equity, made through the components underlying its formation (brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, other proprietary rights over brand assets) or through its implications for buyers and firms. It is noticeable the approach of brand loyalty, starting from the analysis of the loyalty pyramid, continuing with the presentation of indicators that can be used to measure this variable and the relationships it has with other components defining the brand equity.

The fourth part of the book, called General Marketing, includes topics related to marketing management process, such as: market strategy, marketing decision-making process, organization of marketing activity, ending with an analysis of marketing specialization in tourism services area. This part presents to the reader the way in which the
marketing decisions are in accordance with the general strategies of the organizations, the concept of market strategy being presented through the perspective of market strategy foundation and of the strategic typology. The decision-making process in marketing is presented in terms of the marketing decisions concept, the typology of marketing decisions, and the stages of the process employed for choosing such decisions. It is worth to mention the presentation of modeling possibilities in the marketing decision-making process, the book highlighting the decision-making models based on strategic game theory or on Bayesian analysis.

In the design and implementation of marketing decisions, the marketing department has a major role, the book presenting the place of marketing activity in the company organizational structure, the relations of the marketing department with other subdivisions, the responsibilities of this department, the training and the skills staff belonging to this structure should have. Such an analysis is useful especially for companies wishing to set up or reorganize their marketing department, in order to achieve the proposed objectives and streamline activities in this area.

The marketing of services is approached especially from the perspective of tourism services, the book referring to the role of marketing in tourism, the functions of tourism marketing, the particularities of marketing in this field, and the segmentation of the tourism market. The latter aspect has been developed both in terms of the stages of the segmentation process and in terms of the use of multivariate analysis methods for market segmentation. Thus, for the multiple linear discriminant, the algorithm that can be applied is presented in an explicit way, through an example which leads to the increase of the paper operational valences.

The fifth part of the book, entitled *Modeling marketing phenomena*, is characterized by a high degree of complexity, referring to the formalization of relationships between relevant variables for the analysis of marketing phenomena, using specific statistical-mathematical algorithms. Among the topics approached can be mentioned: the concept of model in marketing, the modeling process, the typology of marketing models, modeling consumer behavior. In this sense, models used for aims such as: analysis and forecast of demand for durable goods, selection of advertising media, long-term forecast of demand for new products, assessment of consumer attitudes and preferences are described. This part of the paper has a high utility for advanced marketing research aimed at analyzing the relationships between a number of variables and statistical-mathematical parameters that characterize these relationships in order to understand, with a high degree of accuracy, the economic realities from a marketing perspective.

The last part of the paper refers to the memoir “*Life as a moment - autobiographical landmarks*” which is meant to complete the author’s portrait by revealing aspects of his personal life that contributed to the formation of his professional personality. In this section, the context of initiating the project of writing an autobiographic book and that of its launch is highlighted, thus being transmitted to the reader the emotions that accompanied these events. Some of the reactions following the publication of this book were caught, both from the American academic environment, such as the article signed by Professor Dana-Nicoleta Lascu, Ph.D., at Robins School of Business, University of Richmond, in the “*Journal of Global Marketing*”, and from the Romanian academic environment, by highlighting published articles or messages sent to the author. They are accompanied by the
reactions of friends, countrymen, or other acquaintances, aimed to complete the appreciation expressed not only to the teacher, but also to the human being Iacob Cătoiu.

The book “About Marketing. Anthology” brings to the reader’s attention some of the most important contributions of Dr. Iacob Cătoiu to the science of marketing in Romania, which represented cornerstones on which future generations might support in order to continue the development of this science. The ability with which the author manages to bring together writings approaching multiple facets of marketing, developed on two continents, in different periods, gives the work harmony and unity. The latter attribute is found as a red thread throughout the book, from the beginning with the pious thought to the author's grandfather and father, participants in the Great Union of 1918, to the last part of the work, from which emanates the unity of readers of the autobiographical book on how they appreciated it. Thus, the paper “About marketing. Anthology” can bring together different categories of public: students, doctoral students, marketing specialists in academia or business environment, highlighting both professional and personal landmarks of a behavior that lies at the foundation of an exceptional career in marketing.

About the author

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Iacob Cătoiu, Professor Emeritus, Doctor Honoris Causa is a graduate of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, specialization the Economics of Internal Trade (1969), of the Master of Business Administration program Indiana University (1973), and of the doctoral program Doctor of Business Administration Indiana University (1975). Between 1991 and 1993, he attended the postdoctoral program “Central and Eastern European Teachers Program” organized by Northwestern University. In 2011, he was awarded as Professor Emeritus from the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies.

His areas of interest are: marketing, marketing research, consumer behavior, strategic marketing, tourism marketing, and international marketing. He has published 59 books/textbooks, 105 scientific articles, and has participated in numerous research contracts. As a doctoral supervisor, he coordinated 46 doctoral theses.

In administrative area, he served as vice dean of the Faculty of Commerce (1981-1989), dean of the Faculty of Commerce (1992-2003), and dean of the Faculty of Marketing (2003-2004), Bucharest University of Economic Studies. He is a member of some professional associations and has participated in the editorial team of various marketing journals. He received the distinction of Doctor Honoris Causa awarded by the “1Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia and by the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu.