Fri, 4/17 11:28AM • 12:13

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

social science, measurement, marketing, measure, testing, test, call, journal, published, paper, observable, necessarily, work, suppose, john, methodology, validity, complicated, happiness

00:00

Originally, John Rossiter, who is a professor of marketing in Australia, published a paper probably close to about close to 20 years ago. Now, here we are in 2020. So around the early 2000s, in a journal called the International Journal of Research in marketing, and since then he published a few others, all based on this. What he claims is a new way of thinking about measurement. And being a marketing Professor as he is and mainly involved in advertising and the psychological attitudes towards advertising and things. Marketing is the is the field that he's publishing it but he worked doubtless, I guess, claim or expect or hope certainly, that the it was more generalizable. And just that and in fact, in the same way that the work I've done on Measurement when we're just marketing professors, so we publish in marketing journals, but they're not specific to marketing. Anyway, so he promised his original course paper in around the year 2000 2002, I think. And in the end that that won a long term contribution award from the journal is quite intellectually influential work, even if it wasn't cited as much as he'd hoped. In the intervening time, he published a few other papers, and I've known john roster for a long time. In fact, he was a evaluator on my first ever PhD presentation at a conference and so I've known him for a long time. And we've always had these discussions about this method or way of thinking course that he, he came up with and my sort of thesis has always been that it probably goes a little bit too far in many ways and not firing up in any other way. And, and some of the core contributions are already extant in measurement theory because measurement is one of my main areas of interest.

02:09

So, when when he published his latest paper in 2016, and in the European Journal of marketing, I took the opportunity to write a rejoinder with my colleague which kind of be intentional to really set out the the ways that, that we feel that course doesn't really go far enough. And perhaps the reason why it hasn't been as influential insight as John Rossiter would have might have hoped. And that was the genesis of the paper. And indeed, they came out relatively well, I think, I mean, I suppose I'd like to think the reason it wasn't quite as, as well cited, or in quote marks successful over the pace of how you define success. I wouldn't mind winning the award Couple of awards that john has won for that for those papers myself, so I would consider that quite successful. And I think he might maybe have bigger, bigger dreams for that methodology. And I think there's, I'd like to think it wasn't that successful because of the points I made in the paper, which is that most of the good things that have to say are relatively well covered elsewhere, if you if you really get down into the nitty gritty of of measurement theory, but I suspect the reason it wasn't quite as well. Successful as those a well cited as he might have hoped is because it's complicated. And it's also people weren't getting heavily criticised for doing what they were doing already.

03:45

And I think I think you find there's a lot of politics isn't quite the right word, but there's a lot of social effects in in how sciences development and I think is perhaps certain people in certain gatekeeping physicians have bought into that methodology, you would have found a lot more other people buying into that methodology because they would have been getting criticisms and rejections of their journal papers and you also find that, that that how things move, I don't necessarily want to say move forward but that move from one way of doing things to another particularly, we're very trained based in a lot of the social sciences especially is this research, very trend based and people sort of jump in we will jump into a new methodology when it when it becomes kind of fashionable, and we get these trend following bubbles and then someone else comes with something else that some everyone else jumps into it. And the pendulum swings the other way. And I think courses never really caught on as a as one of these bubbles for various reasons and if it had like, from other methodological in quote marks innovations, you would have seen a significantly greater uptake it.

05:08

I think, actually the situation we are in right now with we're doing this, this interview in the middle of a lockdown because of the Coronavirus. Actually, I was thinking about this this morning. It's quite a good metaphor or a quite a good example of the importance of measurement because we're right in the middle in this country in the UK and around the world, in the middle of a debate about measurement essentially, or you might call it testing. So when we read stories about testing for Coronavirus, or antibodies, or antigens, or whatever, and I'm not a biologist, so my terminology is not exactly necessarily correct here, but the principles remain accurate. We're essentially looking for a test and there's a lot of debate on how much testing we should be doing.

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If you replace that word. testing for measurement, we have a clear overlap. And on the one hand is an idea that we need to keep control of those tests. We need to make sure that those tests give us in quote marks a correct result. I don't necessarily want to say the right results, but if we test and we test for example, for whether or not somebody has had Coronavirus or not, we would want the result of that test to be accurate. In other words, we would we would want it to correctly tell whether or not you would had Coronavirus. This is in a nutshell what we call validity. That's the test measure what it's supposed to measure. Now, on the one hand, you can prioritise accuracy of that test, which would mean you would need control over the testing process which would have the I suppose implications of making it will be Rolla, it would be, you'll be able to do less tests in a given time period, because you'll fail revising accuracy. On the other hand, you could perhaps not prioritise accuracy as much. And you could do more tests in the same amount of time. On the one hand, we're balancing out this need for validity and the test and need to be sure of validity was the benefits we might get for testing or widely with a lower not necessarily a lower validity, but with a lower confidence in validity, because maybe we haven't spent as long validating those tests.

07:36

And I think if you look at something like again, testing for whether or not you've been exposed to a virus you're in. It's difficult, of course, but at least dealing with something that is physically in principle observable, you have or you haven't been exposed to this virus and there should be a physical indicator of it. Now, imagine If you're a social scientist, and what you're trying to do is measure something like happiness, or Love is an example I use all the time, or I mean power, ground, other great social construct. And really, where do we locate the reality of these things?

08:19

And that is where I think you get ourselves into trouble is in all social sciences, when we kind of assume reality, and we assume we can have access to this reality with our measuring devices. I think that's one of the big challenges of social science is in trying to work out whether or not we have validly measured the presence or absence of or even in more detail, the amount of some saying and I use the word thing in a very broad sense that we're interested in. And a lot of times in social science, we're dealing with These complicated on observable concepts. Think about how we have this recent trend towards making policy decisions not necessarily on GDP or economic benefit for a country but on the benefits to well being and happiness. Well, how do we measure well being? How do we measure happiness? How do we measure quality of life? these debates are at the centre of all the knowledge that we can generate about social science, where can we improve our measurements? pretty much everywhere. I think it's natural to say that everything is bad. It's just that in every area of measurement, from defining the things that we're interested in, so what does for example, attitude mean? What does happiness mean? What does thinking about marketing analysis not necessarily as a psychological idea, but as a strategic idea, very famous concept in marketing called market orientation.

09:58

What does that mean? Does it mean the set of activities that a firm does? Or does it mean some kind of corporate culture? in corporate culture is a great example? What exactly is corporate culture? Is it a set of practices? Or I suppose observable features of a firm? Or is it some kind of collective mindset that all the employees somehow share? And if so, what does that mean? And how do you measure it? So I want to, on a very foundational level, we can improve our, what we would call our conceptualization or but in a very simple sense, you'd call it definition, we can prove our definition and our our understanding of what we're trying to do, which is really I suppose my main interest, yeah, what, what logic and what justification Do we have to train these things, the real For example, when we start talking about what they are, and then once you've done that, I think you can be in a position to start thinking about the technical details of measurements, and they become things, which look complicated, and of course, you know, are complicated, but in my view are actually a lot less complicated than the definitional question. So things like how do we collect data? How do we access data on the things that we're trying to measure? And then how do we analyse that data to come up with quantitative scores or numbers that indicate how much of something that you have? And I think those are challenges, but without the foundational definition, we can't even approach those things. Now the problem is, I think we spent far more time in marketing is a good example. But in most social sciences, quantitative social science approaches in the latter problems, in other words, trying to deal with analytic issues, data collection issues when I don't think we spend enough time on the foundational issues of what it is that we're trying to gain information on or gain measurement of.