Business-to-Business Marketing Textbooks: A Comparative Review

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ABSTRACT. Even in this high-tech age, textbooks remain a very significant teaching instrument. Half of all lecturers at US business schools use textbooks as the basis for their business-to-business marketing courses. Against this background, a comparative analysis of a selection of English-speaking textbooks on b-to-b marketing was conducted. The objective was to identify the various strengths and weaknesses and hence suitability for different purposes through a systematic, methodologically valid comparison, of state-of-the-art textbooks on the subject. Criteria and methods for comparison are derived from the stated objectives of b-to-b textbooks. Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives serves as the framework for the systemization of objectives. In a con-

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cluding evaluation, the results are discussed and potential areas that could be addressed by future textbooks are considered.

KEYWORDS. Comparison of textbooks, textbooks on business-to-business marketing, taxonomy of educational objectives

INTRODUCTION

More than half the graduates of American business schools will work in firms which are active in business-to-business markets. Yet, some years ago, it was estimated that less than six per cent of these graduates would take a course in business-to-business marketing[1] (Hlavacek 1980). With the recognition of industrial marketing as an important area of research and instruction in its own right, this situation has improved considerably since the early 1980s (see the impressive account of research activity on business marketing from 1978 to 1997 in the Reid & Plank Review 2000a). Yet, a considerable proportion of graduates will still start working without having taken a course in business-to-business or industrial marketing. In acquiring the necessary knowledge finally on the job, they are then likely to fall back upon business-to-business textbooks at that point. For those who have taken part in a business-to-business marketing course, it is likely that a textbook will have shaped their understanding of business-to-business marketing: Even in this high-tech age, many teachers still heavily rely on a textbook to structure their course (Rich, Powers & Powell 1988; Rugimbana & Patel 1996). One in two instructors uses a textbook as the basis for their business-to-business marketing courses (Narus & Anderson 1998), so textbooks remain a prime component of instruction (Becker & Watts 1996; Tootelian, Bush & Stern 1992)–and one that may influence student satisfaction with the course considerably and thus also course evaluations (Rich, Powers & Powell 1988). Against this background, selecting the appropriate textbook on business-to-business marketing is a crucial issue for both practitioners and academics involved in teaching business-to-business marketing. In this paper, we will focus on the academic side of the problem, although some practitioners may also find the assessment helpful. What follows relates to a comparative analysis of the leading business-to-business marketing texts in an attempt to answer the above question. This issue has not yet been addressed sufficiently in the literature, let alone to a comprehensive extent. For example, while representing a remarkable exception in this field, Rugimbana & Patel's work (1996), covers only three books (all on general marketing) and focuses on a single criterion (understandability).

THE SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS FOR COMPARISON

A selection of seven textbooks forms the basis for the comparative analysis (see Table 1). The selection is orientated around the textbooks recommended in the business-to-business marketing section of the Marketing Education Review (1999), the Industrial Marketing Practitioner (1999) and a study of Narus and Anderson (1998).

An allocation of textbooks to undergraduate or graduate levels is not a-priori considered in this investigation, because, firstly, no criteria for unambiguously placing the books in one or the other group could be established.[2] For instance, in the listing from the Marketing Education Review, the textbook of Hutt and Speh[3] is regarded as an undergraduate text, whereas in the study by Narus and Anderson (1998) it is considered the most-used book at the Masters level, that is in the graduate arena. Secondly, rejecting such an a-priori distinction allows for arriving deductively at a clear differentiation of the books' different structures. However, we have made an a-priori allocation to the literature for two other aspects: firstly, textbooks exclusively targeted for Masters-level

TABLE 1. Selection of business-to-business marketing textbooks for comparison.

Textbooks
Anderson, James C./ Narus, James A. (1999), Business Market Management: Understanding, Creating, and Delivering Value, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Bingham, Frank G. (1998), Business Marketing Management, 2nd ed., Homewood, IL: NTC Business Books.
Brierty, Edward G./ Eckles, Robert W./ Reeder, Robert R. (1998), Business Marketing, 3rd ed., Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Eckles, Robert W. (1990), Business Marketing Management, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Haas, Robert W. (1995), Business Marketing: A Managerial Approach, 6th ed., Cincinnati, Ohio: South-Western College Pub.
Hutt, Michael D./Speh, Thomas W. (1998b), Business Marketing Management, 6th ed., Fort Worth: Dryden Press.
Webster, Frederick E. (1995), Industrial Marketing Strategy, 3rd ed., New York: Wiley.

executive programs and secondly, for doctoral programs are explicitly excluded, because of the significant differences between the various stated programs (Danneels & Lilien 1998; Narayandas, Rangan & Zaltman 1998).

CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of textbooks on business-to-business (b-to-b) marketing, as formulated in the literature, form the basis for this study.

Firstly, the fundamental objective of any textbook is to convey knowledge (Berry 1993; Wills 1982). Thus, the challenge is to cover a large range of the discipline at a state-of-the-art level (Jaffe 1997), and this applies to business-to-business marketing books as well. Lichtenthal and Butaney (1991) comment further on the importance of integrating the latest research findings and their application in b-to-b books. Secondly, above and beyond the pure transfer of knowledge, a b-to-b marketing textbook should promote the development of cognitive capabilities. These capabilities refer to the understanding and application of b-to-b marketing concepts and to creative and effective problem solving (Lichtenthal & Butaney 1991). Thirdly, if used in a course, a textbook is arguably the core teaching instrument, sometimes complemented by additional materials as, e.g., case studies. Thus, it is necessary that a b-to-b marketing book provides the basic structure of a course as well as the basis for achieving the learning objectives (Lichtenthal & Butaney 1991; Narus & Anderson 1998). It should be designed in such a way as to allow students to learn as much as possible about the subject matter from the course (Rich, Powers & Powell 1988). In the context of a course on business-to-business marketing, a textbook should thus contribute towards the development of a variety of capabilities: analysis, research, evaluation and critique, communication, synthesis and organization (Hutt & Speh 1998a; Lichtenthal & Butaney 1991; Rodriguez 1998).

However, this specific derivation of business-to-business marketing objectives requires augmentation through the use of more generally-accepted principles for evaluating textbooks which could also be useful for business-to-business books. We therefore used a general evaluation approach: Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives for the cognitive domain.[4] This taxonomy provides a classification scheme which is characterized by a hierarchical construction and theoretical grounding. The taxonomy of educational objectives for the cognitive domain was developed by 30 academics in order to eradicate vagueness in discussions relating to learning objectives and to create a theoretical framework for communication between experts. Its practical relevance has been documented in empirical evaluation and in the application of this taxonomy concept in management theory (e.g., Hampton, Krentler & Martin 1993). The concept has been critized in various aspects (for examples, see Furst 1981; Moore 1982; Paul 1985), but, with about 2,000 citations in the ERIC database (Educational Resources Information Center) alone, a vast amount of literature referring to or based on the taxonomy and recent studies still using it, the concept remains the prime framework for defining educational objectives (see as examples Anderson 1999; Clabaugh Jr., Forbes & Clabaugh 1995; Guthrie 2000; Marzano 2001; Stearns & Crespy 1995; Sultana & Klecker 1999; Wentland 2000; Zabudsky 2000). The taxonomy has been used as basis for empirical research undertaken, for instance, in the US, Australia or Turkey and has been applied in different educational settings, ranging from microbiology to professional selling, physics or fine arts. With respect to its impact on theoretical research, there have been numerous modifications, refinements and general discussions (see Imrie 1995; King, Wood & Mines 1990; Solman & Rosen 1986; Stuart & Burns 1984).

In terms of its meaning, it is important to stress that the taxonomy for the cognitive domain actually defines teaching intentions associated with the development of knowledge and intellect. The actual attainment of these capabilities and hence the degree to which they are realized, may differ and lies largely in the responsibility of the student. This has implications for the operationalization of the taxonomy. For instance, in his work on stating behavioral objectives, Gronlund focuses on the actual outcome of the teaching/ learning process, that is in terms of actual student behavior (Gronlund 1970). By doing so, he provides statements for defining objectives in behavioral terms (e.g., "Describes the characteristics of a given historical period."; Gronlund 1970). Each statement for a specific learning outcome starts with a verb, by this indicating observable behavior. Our approach differs from Gronlund, as we do not focus on actual student behavior. Instead, we attempt to assess the degree to which the books in the analysis are appropriate material in relation to a given objective (from the taxonomy) which a teacher might have in mind. So what objectives might a teacher following Bloom's taxonomy have in mind?

Bloom's taxonomy identifies the following six fundamental cognitive abilities, which combine in hierarchical order all conceivable capabilities:

Basic Capabilities

1. knowledge (level 1): rote memory of previously learned material
2. understanding (level 2): involves translation of one level of abstraction to another; requires understanding of facts and principles to restate problems in own words or give examples

Skills

3. application (level 3): use of learned material/principles on new problems
4. analysis (level 4): recognition of unstated assumptions and logical fallacies in reasoning; distinction between facts and opinions
5. synthesis (level 5): ability to form a hypothesis or theory of his or her own (new problem-solution) from different aspects (often requires creativity and/or material from other disciplines)
6. evaluation (level 6): ability to assess value of material at disposal for a given purpose; use of internal (consistency) and external (relevant standards) criteria to discuss the quality of the material

These capabilities include all those that were derived without a theoretical grounding, in the context of the learning objectives of business-to-business marketing textbooks. The previously formulated textbook goals need to be further operationalized so as to enable their implementation in practice. By so doing, not only all dimensions that define a textbook can be analyzed and compared, but also the appropriate learning objectives for a text. Rugimbana and Patel (1996) point out that very few publications compare textbooks. Furthermore, in these publications, textbooks are compared only in terms of one criterion and without a methodologically sound derivation, but in a purely applied manner (as examples, see Cline 1972; Doane 1994; Spinks & Wells 1993). A comprehensive comparison of several textbooks on the basis of various criteria is not available in the literature. Therefore, criteria and methodology for this analysis need to be derived from the cognitive skills of Bloom's taxonomy. Despite the considerable impact this concept has exerted on the theory and practice of education during the past three decades, no conclusive and general operationalization of Bloom's six fundamental cognitive abilities as educational objectives has yet been undertaken (Clabaugh Jr., Forbes & Clabaugh 1995; for examples see Karns, Burton & Martin 1983; Gronlund's work (1970) constitutes an exception, but is not appropriate in our context as explained above). An operationalization of the elements of Bloom's taxonomy is thus achieved in this paper by referring to various sources in the literature on marketing, marketing education and education (e.g., from a study by Rich, Powers & Powell (1988) resulting in guidelines for textbook satisfaction from a student perspective). In subsequently assessing the textbooks according to these criteria, it is important to note that a strong subjective element will inevitably remain–of this all readers should be aware as the authors are themselves.

Knowledge

The knowledge conveyed in a textbook can be compared on several dimensions. To start with, the formal structure of any text constitutes a purely quantitative, first-sight indicator in terms of amount of material covered and of the systematic order of discussed topics. In our case, it hence provides information on the extent to which the actual design of the books varies. Therefore, the net page area (i.e., total page area without case studies and references) with characters-per-page as a standard indicator (measure) for varying page formats (average number of characters of the first five normally formatted lines of each textbook, multiplied by the number of lines in the first full-text page of the book), the depth of subdivisions and the use of various structuring modules are comparative bases.

The more content-oriented criterion of approach focuses on the selection and sequencing of the various themes. In the literature, mainly two approaches relevant to business-to-business marketing can be distinguished: Firstly, the instrumentally-oriented approach and secondly, the marketing-management approach (Backhaus 1997; Blotnicky 1991; Engelhardt & Witte 1990; Lamont & Friedman 1997; Smith & Robbins 1991). The conventional instrumental approach is characterized by the perspective that business-to-business marketing problems can be resolved through the instruments of product, price, distribution/placement and communication/promotion ("four p's"). This approach has been extended to the marketing-management approach that considers, in addition to the four instruments, the managerial functions of analysis, planning (strategic and operative), implementation and control (Haas 1995; for a documentation of the relatedness between the two approaches see, e.g., Smith & Robbins 1991). In order to facilitate identification of the marketing-management approach in the comparison, the phases of the approach must be covered appropriately thematically. An allocation of the content of individual themes to the phases of the approach could not be found with respect to business-to-business marketing books. Consequently, specifying the nature of the content is based on Kotler's Marketing Management textbook (1997). The comparison of textbooks proceeds through an understanding of the structure of contents, based on the characteristics of the stated approaches.

A text book, especially an introductory or general one, should cover a large percentage of all themes which are generally regarded as relevant for a particular teaching discipline (Kuhn 1970). Ray, Stallard and Hunt (1994) suggest that particularly in the case of undergraduates, a broad knowledge is appreciated by employers. Therefore, the breadth of coverage in the various books is compared. In order to make judgements, the themes that are considered in the literature as relevant for business-to-business marketing are compared with the lists generated from the textbooks. The studies of Narus and Anderson (1998), Plank (1982) and recently a very thorough study by Reid and Plank (2000a), provide the academic perspective (Narus & Anderson; Reid & Plank) and practical perspective (Plank), and thus the foundation for this comparison. In detail, the topics depicted in the following Table 2 are considered.

In this manner, statements can be made, as to which themes are handled in the textbooks, the spread in terms of thematic breadth and the extent to which the themes are relevant to business-to-business marketing.

In addition to the themes that can generally be assumed to be regarded as relevant, Hutt and Speh (1998a) emphasize the need to consider current themes in a business-to-business marketing course, while Rich, Powers and Powell (1988) state this in general terms for any marketing course. As the basis of a course, a textbook reflects the themes that can be covered in the course using the books' conceptual framework. The integration of current topics and up-to-date material therefore seems an important characteristic for the relevance of a textbook (Rich, Powers & Powell 1988). This is important in terms of providing a conclusive, coherent and at the same time up-to-date framework of the subject. Also, it allows students to relate more easily to their own daily business background (business news on the media, etc.) which also fosters the ability to learn from the course (see Henke et al. 1988 on increasing students' motivation to learn by bringing real life marketing to

TABLE 2. General themes in business-to-business marketing.

General Themes	Source
Differences B-t-B and Consumer Marketing	Narus and Anderson (1998)
Organizational Buying and Purchase: Purchasing and Materials Management Buying Center and Related Models Value Assessment Relationship Marketing Strategic Alliances	Reid and Plank (2000a) (overall) Narus and Anderson (1998); Plank (1982) Reid and Plank (2000a) Narus and Anderson (1998) Narus and Anderson (1998) Narus andAnderson (1998)
Business Marketing Intelligence System	Narus and Anderson (1998); Reid & Plank (2000a)
Analysis of Demand	Narus and Anderson (1998); Plank (1982)
Market Segmentation	Narus and Anderson (1998); Plank (1982)
Marketing Instruments (Product, Price, Placement, Promotion)	Narus and Anderson (1998); Plank (1982); Reid & Plank (2000a)
Implemetation and Control	Narus and Anderson (1998)
Trends:International Business-to-Business Marketing Business Service Marketing Marketing Ethics	Narus and Anderson (1998); Reid & Plank (2000a) Narus and Anderson (1998); Plank (1982) Reid and Plank (2000a)

the classroom). In order to assess the books, a (non-exclusive) list of topics considered as current in the literature was collected (see Table 3) and compared with those topics handled in the textbooks.[5] The list itself is derived partly from general literature (books or articles), which considers this issue, and partly from several commentaries on the Reid and Plank (2000a) study. The study itself being of a more retrospective character, the commentaries are clearly also concerned with current and future challenges of business marketing.

Although not stated explicitly in the literature, there is an additional criterion which is pertinent to the comparison of textbooks. The fact that a topic is handled in a textbook, gives no indication as to the extent and weighting accorded to this theme. Consequently, the criterion of depth of treatment (of themes) supplements our criteria catalogue. The depth of the themes handled, is compared by means of the marketing-mix instrument of price as an example, because this instrument is accorded the highest significance in both the Narus and Anderson and the Plank studies. In this respect, particular attention is paid to the models and concepts that are introduced, in order to draw conclusions as to the level of detail that is conveyed in the books.

Understanding

If a textbook is to be understood by students, it needs to fulfill the conditions for a successful transfer of knowledge. In the literature, readability is given as a basic and necessary, although not sufficient, criterion (Adelberg & Razek 1984; Cline 1972; Rugimbana & Patel 1996). Readability is regarded as a significant selection criterion and thus represents an appropriate basis for a first-sight comparison on understanding (Spinks & Wells 1993). A procedure for measurement discussed in the literature is a "readability index" based on average word and sentence length. The LIX, developed by Björnsson (1968) as "Läsbarhetsindex", is one such index, and is regarded as superior to the others (Adelberg & Razek 1992). Applications can be found to English as well as French, German or Greek texts (Anderson 1983). The formula is:

$$LIX = S + W$$

where: S = average number of words
W = percentage of words with seven or more letters

Both the LIX and other indices of this kind are heuristic procedures which are constructed through the addition of absolute numbers and percentages. Nonetheless, empirical investigations have shown that the LIX represents comprehensibility quite adequately (Adelberg & Razek 1992). Indices like the LIX for measuring readability have been somewhat criticized for basing the assessment on formal characteristics of the text itself alone. Other aspects such as the reader's knowledge or the difficulty of the subject cannot be captured. Against this background, other proce-

TABLE 3. Current themes in business-to-business marketing.

Current Themes	Source
Business Networks	Achrol (1997); Best (1990); Moore (1996), Spekman (2000).
Cross-Functional Relationships	O'Reilly (1994); Reid and Plank (2000a); Wright, Bitner and Zeithaml (1994).
International Dimensions of Business-to-Business Marketing	Bea (1997); Gaugler (1994); Johnston and Borders (1998); Koch (1997); Narus and Anderson (1998).
High Tech Marketing	Lamont and Friedman (1997); O'Reilly (1994).
Relationship Marketing	Lamont and Friedman (1997); Palmer (1994); Reid and Plank (2000b).
Value Assessment	Reid and Plank (2000b), Spekman (2000).

dures have been suggested in the literature to integrate a content dimension, such as the cloze procedure (see Rugimbana & Patel 1996; Taylor 1953). Certain words are eliminated from a text, thereby creating a completion text that has to be filled in by the respondents. The better they manage, the higher the text's score in terms of understandability (as opposed to readability) for this particular group. However, there is a major drawback to this index, leading to our preference of the LIX for this study: The method originates from the learning theory of communication that, among others, deals with redundancy in language. Low redundancy is interpreted essentially as low understandability by the cloze procedure (see Taylor 1954). Efficient and precise use of language, that, in the original text, may even enhance comprehensibility, is likely to produce a low score for readability in the cloze procedure. Moreover, a measurement of real understanding as suggested by the method is not possible since consistency of arguments as a crucial element in determining understanding cannot be included. Hence, explicitly restricting ourselves to measuring only readability seemed a more objective approach, although it certainly captures only a very basic prerequisite of deep understanding of a text.

The design of our study is oriented around that of Spinks and Wells (1993). Using 10 sample passages from each book, we obtained a higher number per book than in the Spinks and Wells study. Furthermore, the LIX measures the number of letters, rather than the word length, based on the number of syllables as for the index used by Spinks and Wells.

In their review of the first edition of Industrial Marketing Management by Hutt and Speh (1982), LaPlaca indicates that the comprehensibility of the textbook is well supported by clear graphics. The literature also concurs that visualization contributes to an understanding of the material (Moore 1993; Peeck 1993; Evans, Watson & Willows 1987) and as a result to higher student satisfaction with the book and the course (Rich, Powers & Powell 1988). Interrelated networks of knowledge can be portrayed more effectively through appropriate visualization than through verbal explanation (Eysenck & Keane 1990; Hunter, Crismore & Person 1987; Winn 1987). The reason is that complex informational linkages can be absorbed simultaneously, whereas verbal explanations can only be portrayed and absorbed linearly. A very basic proposition associated with visualization in general is, however, that the degree of abstraction should match the complexity of the underlying ideas. The more difficult the latter, the simpler the visual object should be in terms of structure as well as coloring (unless colors are integral and necessary part of the object) to allow for a stronger focus. Evidence suggests that colors may enhance realism of pictures, may direct attraction to some particular information, or may allow for clearer distinction of elements (Chute 1979). However, it is suggested in the literature that there is a limit to which the use of colors is helpful: some authors even suggest a maximum number of colors for symbolic objects (Stary 1997). In any case, studies suggest that in order to realize the full potential of spatial aids, students should receive training on how to use these aids most effectively (Moore 1993; Scevak & Moore 1990).

In order to evaluate the figures or graphics in textbooks, the investigative design of Evans, Watson and Willows (1987) was used. Accordingly, on the quantitative level, the frequency of illustrations is determined and qualitatively, the type and complexity of figures are considered. As types of figures, the following categories were used: tables, maps, inserted text (boxes), diagrams/graphs and pictures (Evans, Watson & Willows 1987). Tables are defined as general presentations of verbal or numerical data in lines and columns (Hunter, Crismore & Pearson 1987). Inserted texts are passages containing verbal presentations (text), distinctively set apart from the floating text. Diagrams are visual depictions of pairs of values, symmetrically related, usually presented in a coordinate system (Kosslyn 1987). Maps are schematic geographic presentations using symbols (Kosslyn 1987). Given the fact that complex interrelationships in particular, are most effectively and understandably explained by means of illustrations, figures that visualize structures are differentiated according to whether they depict linear or complex interrelationships. It is assumed that the latter in particular, support understanding, since complex interrelationships are more difficult to depict by verbal presentation than linear ones.

Applications

In terms of their subsequent careers in industry, it is decisively important that students be able to apply appropriately, the theories they have learned (Lichtenthal & Butaney 1991). This means in the first place that they acquire a solid theoretical foundation which will allow them to move to higher levels in the cognitive hierarchy (Clabaugh Jr., Forbes & Clabaugh 1995; Lamont & Friedman 1997). In an second step however, the crucial objective is to convey theory in such a manner that students have at their disposal instruments capable of solving practical problems (Ames & Hlavacek 1984). Theory must be formulated accordingly, and consequently, the theory-practice connection emerges as additional criteria in the investigation (Blotnicky 1991).

No explicit procedures for evaluating this criterion in text books are evident in the literature, although it is generally suggested that case studies can "bridge the gap between classroom training and real-world experiences" (Clabaugh Jr., Forbes & Clabaugh 1995) (see also Lamb Jr. & Baker 1993). In this study, we regarded a textbook as theoretically oriented to the extent that various models and concepts are presented. The practical emphasis can be introduced through examples, demonstrations of applications or more actively in case studies (Rich, Powers & Powell 1988). The subject of "market segmentation" is particularly well suited to comparisons in this context. Its significance within the marketing curriculum is emphasized by Stearns and Crespy (1995). A study by Wind and Cardozo (1973) shows that market segmentation proceeds intuitively in practice, rather than on the basis of prevailing theoretical approaches. Furthermore, it has been established that the literature contains few practical demonstrations of segmentation processes (Webster 1995; Haas 1995), so that inclusion in a textbook would seem very helpful.

Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation

The development of more complex capabilities (especially analysis, synthesis and evaluation) can be supported in a textbook by appropriately formulated case studies and test questions (Clabaugh Jr., Forbes & Clabaugh 1995; Kelley & Gaedeke 1990; Krishnan & Porter 1998). The studies of Hampton, Krentler and Martin (1993) and Karns, Burton and Martin (1983) indicate that test questions in textbooks can contribute to the development of complex cognitive capabilities, but that the degree to which this applies, is less than optimal in terms of generally accepted normative rules and the subjective perceptions of the instructor. Consequently, based on the named studies, test questions were investigated with the aid of the taxonomy (of educational objectives), in terms of their contribution towards the development of complex capabilities. The same procedure was applied to the case studies.

Table 4 provides an overview of the formulated goals and the criteria used in the investigation.

RESULTS

The comparison of textbooks culminated in the identification of three groups, with the first group containing five of seven books. The books

TABLE 4. Comparative criteria derived from the objectives of books on business-to-business marketing.

Objectives of a textbook	Formulation of the goals based on the taxonomy of educational objectives	Derived criteria
Conveying knowledge	Knowledge	1. Formal structure 2. Approach 3. Themes: breadth, current topics, depth of treatment
Development of cognitive skills	Understanding	4. Comprehensibility of the text 5. Visual comprehensibility
	Application	6. Theory-practice link
	Analysis, synthesis, evaluation	7. Development of complex skills

of Anderson and Narus and Webster differ significantly from the others with respect to the investigated criteria and thus each form their own "group." Consequently, the results will be presented in terms of the identified groups.

FORMAL STRUCTURE

Group 1

The first set comprises the books of Bingham; Brierty, Eckles and Reeder; Eckles; Haas and finally Hutt and Speh. With respect to page coverage, it is confirmed that this varies between the textbook of Eckles with 401 net pages and 3,741 characters per page on the one hand, and that of Haas with 644 net pages and 3,698 characters per page. Three to four subdivision levels and 18-22 chapters seem typical, although the text of Bingham has only 15 chapters. The extensive use of supplementary material, above and beyond the main text, is conspicuous in all textbooks in this group. All contain chapter summaries, text questions, literature citations (endnotes and bibliography) as well as case studies. Furthermore, some have chapter outlines (Bingham; Brierty, Eckles & Reeder), learning objectives (Bingham; Hutt & Speh), key terms (Bingham; Haas), practice exercises (Eckles; Hutt & Speh) and embedded texts (Bingham; Hutt & Speh).

Groups 2 and 3

The textbooks of Anderson and Narus as well as Webster have a smaller page area and a lower number of capital and structure modules than the books in Group 1. With 349 net pages and 2,710 characters, Webster's book has the smallest page area of all the books under consideration. The Anderson and Narus text has 414 net pages and 3,834 characters per page, and is thus also at the lower end of the area continuum. Both books have three subdivision levels and 10 (respectively 11) chapters. Both books have chapter summaries and literature references, but none of the other supplementary material mentioned in the above paragraph, by that possibly encouraging teachers to select their own supplementary materials (case studies, etc.). The Anderson and Narus book also includes chapter outlines, a characteristic much appreciated by students, according to a study by Rich, Powers and Powell (1988).

It can thus be confirmed that the textbooks in the second group have a quantitatively smaller area and lower number of chapters, which suggests a more limited and/or focused content. Furthermore, they have considerably fewer structuring modules, although examination of the first group shows that structuring models can be regarded as general characteristic of business-to-business marketing textbooks.

APPROACH

Group 1

The investigation of the first group reveals that in the structuring of content, these textbooks use the theory building phases of the marketing-management approach. For all the books in this group, the basis for the following text is an introductory background chapter on business-to-business marketing. Accordingly, in the first part, the differences between business-to-business and consumer marketing are discussed in general terms and do not correspond to any particular phase of the marketing management approach.

After the introductory part, the five books under consideration deal with procurement (purchasing), information collection in business-to-business markets (business marketing intelligence system), market segmentation and demand analysis. This coincides with the first phase of the marketing management process, that of analysis (Kotler 1997).

For three textbooks, after the analysis component, there is a chapter devoted to the second phase–strategic marketing planning (Brierty, Eckles & Reeder; Eckels; Hutt & Speh). In Bingham's book, this topic is not treated explicitly.

Subsequently, the books consider the individual marketing-mix instruments. This is the operative part of the second phase–operative marketing planning (Kotler 1997).

The third and fourth phases in the marketing management approach deal with implementation and control (Kotler 1997). These thematic areas are handled in all the books apart from that of Bingham. However, implementation is considered explicitly in a separate chapter only in Hutt and Speh's book.

It is therefore evident, that, apart from Bingham's text, the business-to-business marketing books under consideration, are structured according to the marketing management approach. They present their content with small deviations in the sequencing of phases within this approach. In Bingham's book, the phases of strategic planning and of implementation and control cannot be identified and the text only follows the marketing management approach to a limited extent.

Group 2

As in the case of the books discussed above, the first chapter deals with the differences between business-to-business and consumer marketing. The second and third chapters are devoted to organizational purchasing. Webster devotes the fourth chapter to various market segmentation strategies. The thematic areas of the second to fourth chapters correspond with the first phase of the marketing-management approach. Nonetheless, there is no focus on the areas of information collection (business marketing intelligence systems) including market research and demand analysis. The following six chapters handle the marketing instruments, and can thus be allocated to the broader topic of operative planning. Strategic marketing planning is considered only in the last chapter. This isolated treatment of strategic marketing planning strongly suggests that the marketing-management approach is not an integral component of the overall presentation of business-to-business marketing. The approach is far more that of an instrumentally-oriented approach, with a concluding chapter integrating the marketing-management perspective. In order to understand the entire process of strategy development and implementation, the discussions of strategy development should have preceded the section on operative planning. Furthermore, the sections on information collection and demand analysis (parts of the first phase) and implementation (third phase) and control (fourth phase) are not considered. If one includes the detailed handling of the instruments, the approach in Webster's book can be considered essentially as instrumentally-oriented.

Group 3

Although the textbook of Anderson and Narus is entitled Business Market Management, their definition of business market management does not correspond to the marketing-management approach in sense of analysis, planning (strategic and operative), implementation and control. Anderson and Narus define business market management as the "process of understanding, creating and delivering value to targeted business markets and customers" (p. 4). The Anderson and Narus book thus seems to follow a quite recent approach, because until now, the value-process has not been discussed in the literature as a specific textbook approach, although it has been established that "value assessment" exerts an influence on the development of marketing strategies (Anderson, Jain & Chintagunta 1993). Sheth, Gardner and Garrett (1988) actually claim that "the main purpose of marketing is to create and distribute values."

It is worth considering the extent to which the phases of the value approach, correspond with those of the marketing-management approach. Through the discussion of market segmentation, competitive analysis and customer satisfaction, the first phase of the value approach conforms partly to the first phase of the marketing management approach. However, in this section, the second phase of the marketing management approach, strategic marketing planning, is also considered in detail. Anderson and Narus argue that their depiction of marketing-mix instruments does not follow the instrumentally-oriented approach and that they integrate from a value perspective into the overall depiction, components of the marketing mix that they consider relevant (p. XI). Accordingly, the third phase of the marketing-management approach can only be identified to some extent. However, once again, it is clear that the actual structuring of content does not correspond to the traditional marketing management approach. The last phase of the value approach deals with relationship-marketing themes, which does not correspond with any phase of the marketing-management approach. It is, therefore, clear that the phases of the value approach do not correspond with those of the marketing-management approach. Thus, the Anderson and Narus book can be regarded as characterized by an own distinct approach: the value approach. It thus differs considerably from "traditional" business-to-business textbooks.

Additionally, we analyzed the extent to which other approaches were used in all the textbooks considered. With the exception of Webster and Anderson and Narus, the authors indicate in the introduction, not only the need to develop different kinds of marketing strategies for different kinds of products, but demonstrate with the aid of examples, what these strategies might look like. However, in the course of the books, the authors do not follow through these thoughts, and do not in fact develop specific marketing strategies. This confirms the statement made by Backhaus (1998), that no English-language textbook really uses a transaction-types-approach for structuring (for a detailed example of this approach see Backhaus 1999).

BREADTH OF THEMATIC PORTRAYAL AND INCLUSION OF CURRENT THEMES

Group 1

The textbooks in the first group cover 73-85% of all topics covered in the given business-to-business marketing textbooks (for detailed results of all criteria, see http://www.uni-muenster/wiwi/ias). The depiction and weighting of topics can thus be regarded as essentially comparable. Furthermore, for the most part, they cover the themes hinted at as relevant in the Narus and Anderson (1998) and in the Plank (1982) studies as well as in the Reid and Plank review (2000a). Bingham's book is an exception, because, as discussed earlier when considering his approach, some fully relevant thematic areas are neglected. The treatment of current themes reveals differences in depiction for the books of the first group.

Table 5 shows the variance between the books with respect to the handling of current topics. Hutt and Speh's book emerges as positive with regard to giving an overviewing of the subject, because, apart from the subject of "business networks," all the topics considered as current (see Table 2) are handled. Some topics even emerge as integral components of the overall treatment, because they recur at various points in the text, rather than being dealt with in one section only.

Group 2

With a value of 50%, Webster's textbook has a far more limited thematic coverage than the books in the first group. Investigation of the cri-

TABLE 5. Treatment of current themes in the books of the first group.

Current Topic	Textbook	Location and Nature of Handling
International dimensions of business-to-business marketing	Bingham (1998)	Isolated treatment: 516+[1] onwards Integrated in overall treatment: 19+, 301+, 336+, 465+, 503+
	Brierty, Eckles and Reeder (1998)	Isolated treatment: 552+
	Eckles (1990)	Isolated treatment: 379+
	Haas (1995)	Isolated treatment: 64+
	Hutt and Speh (1998b)	Integrated in overall treatment: 60+, 284+, 338, 404+
High-Tech Marketing	Hutt and Speh (1998b)	Integrated in overall treatment: 243+, 264, 307+, 455
Relationship Marketing	Bingham (1998)	Isolated treatment: 45
	Hutt and Speh (1998b)	Isolated treatment: 505
Cross-Functional Relations	Hutt and Speh (1998b)	Isolated treatment: 249+
Business Networks	Haas (1998)	Isolated treatment: 199
Value-Assesment	Bingham (1998)	Isolated treatment: 84+
	Eckles (1990)	Isolated treatment: 65+
	Hutt and Speh (1998b)	Isolated treatment: 6

[1]The numbers refer to pages and the + sign indicates that the subject is treated in a varying number of ensuing pages.

terion “approach” already suggests that entire thematic areas considered relevant for a textbook on business-to-business marketing, are missing.

In Webster’s book, current themes play a relatively minor role. Value assessment and relationship marketing are emphasized. Although Webster regards the international dimension as a trend in business-to-business marketing, he devotes only three pages to this perspective (p. 79, 130, 195).

Group 3

With a thematic coverage of 43%, Anderson and Narus’s book has the most limited range of all the books under consideration. The reason lies in the approach selected, because only those themes are considered, which relate directly to the value concept. The book’s target clearly is the introduction of a new perspective.

The introductory section considers general issues on the subject of “value” with respect to business-to-business marketing. Furthermore, Anderson and Narus discuss the International Dimension, Working Relations and Business Networks. However, they do not deal with the differences between business-to-business and consumer marketing. Yet, this topic is of decisive importance, precisely because it is these differences that constitute the need for a specialized textbook on this sub-discipline of marketing.

Furthermore, only those components of the marketing mix are discussed, which are regarded as relevant to value creation. Consequently, the instrument "price" is considered, with the focus on value-based pricing, and channel management as a component of the instrument "distribution." All other aspects of the marketing mix are consequently ignored. A similar situation prevails with respect to the depiction of organizational purchasing behavior. The section on "Adding Value to the Purchasing Process Through Buying Teams" (p. 107) emphasizes the focus on value creation.

The lack of analysis of the procurement of information (including market research), demand analysis, marketing-mix instruments as well as implementation and control, may constitute some problems if the book is used as a basic textbook on business marketing. The missing themes are of interest both theoretically and in practice for business-to-business marketing (see, e.g., Plank 1982; Reid & Plank 2000a), because information provides a necessary basis for developing a marketing concept.

However, one should keep in mind that the Anderson and Narus book integrates a new perspective in the depiction of business-to-business marketing–and that this is the key target. Furthermore, current developments in business-to-business marketing play a decisive role. The consideration of "value" in relationship marketing, cross-functional relations, the international dimension and business networks, are not treated in isolation (as in the other books, if included at all), but are an integral component of the overall treatment. Hence, the book seems more appropriate for readers who already possess a basic knowledge in the field and want to focus on a special perspective (value) more in-depth.

DEPTH OF THEMATIC TREATMENT

Groups 1 and 2

With respect to depth of treatment (for detailed results see http://www.wiwi.uni-muenster.de/ias) it is apparent that most authors cover all major themes relating to "price." However, there is variation in the level of detail. No author considers all determinants of pricing decisions and Webster ignores this area completely. The treatment of pricing strategies also varies considerably between the books. All authors present their own particular selection of strategies and none provides a complete discussion.

It is conspicuous that for "common pricing practices," Hutt and Speh consider only one area, whereas all other authors deal with the topic exhaustively. Bingham's book is the only one which deals with international pricing policy.

Group 3

The Anderson and Narus text is quite distinct from the others in its handling of price. Apart from the consideration of individual pricing strategies, all other areas (significance of pricing policy, objectives, determinants, common pricing strategies) are excluded. The emphasis is on value-based pricing in particular, and is supplemented only through the consideration of two further "traditional" pricing strategies. Penetration and skimming strategies are treated as an integral component of "value based pricing." This confirms the hypothesis that Anderson and Narus's book concentrates on the value perspective at the expense of neglecting some traditional thematic areas.

COMPREHENSIBILITY OF THE TEXTS

Table 6 presents the results of the LIX for all the books. Column 2 shows in increasing rank order, the empirical LIX values for the various books. In order to make statements about readability, the textbooks are grouped into the LIX value-groups suggested in the literature (Fry 1977; Anderson 1983). These groups correspond with the readability levels in Column 4. It should be noted that a higher value for the magnitude "associated level of readability" in Column 4, means a lower level of comprehensibility in LIX terms.

The LIX values range over three levels of readability. For college textbooks, the appropriate level runs from 13 to 17 (Anderson 1983; Fry 1977). The style of writing used by Bingham; Brierty, Eckles and Reeder. Eckles reveals greater comprehensibility in terms of LIX than that of Anderson and Narus, which has a value two levels higher. However, given that it falls in the middle of the college-level range, it can be regarded as quite sufficiently comprehensible.

TABLE 6. Comparison of the criterion “text readability.”

Textbook	LIX for the books	Continuum of LIX values	Associated level of readability
Eckles	56,7	56-59	13
Brierty, Eckles and Reeder	58,4		
Bingham	58,9		
Webster	61,2	60-63	14
Haas	62,5		
Hutt and Speh	62,9		
Anderson and Narus	64,8	64-67	15

VISUAL COMPREHENSIBILITY

Table 7 presents the quantitative analysis of the graphics and figures used in the books.

An examination of the frequency of figures, shows that three of the books (Brierty, Eckles & Reeder; Eckles; Haas) have one figure on average for every double page. In the books of Anderson and Narus; Bingham; Hutt and Speh, there is a figure on almost every third page. On the other hand, Webster’s book is an exception, with a figure only on every ninth page.

It is not easy to evaluate the above results, because there are no indications in the literature as to what frequency of figures aids comprehensibility and above what frequency, breaking the flow of text actually reduces comprehensibility. Thus, only through questioning instructors, was it possible to confirm that figures do not necessarily promote understanding, but may also be disruptive and distracting (Evans, Watson & Willows 1987). With respect to Webster, one may pose the question as to whether, given the low frequency of the figures, the potential of figures to aid understanding of the material presented, is fully exploited by Webster.

For the remaining texts, it could be established that figures are manifest with a significantly higher frequency, which, as indicated above, could also reduce understanding through constantly interrupting the flow of the text. There is, therefore, something of a trade-off in terms of figure usage.

Nonetheless, various types of figures aid understanding to varying degrees, so that different forms will be considered. Figures can present the simultaneous dimension of complex interactions (relationships)

TABLE 7. Results of the quantitative analysis of the criterion "visual comprehensibility."

	Number of figures	Net number of pages	Frequency of figures	Frequency of pages per figure
Brierty, Eckles and Reeder	251	578	0,43	2,30
Bingham	146	533	0,27	3,65
Eckles	185	401	0,46	2,17
Haas	330	644	0,51	1,95
Hutt and Speh	191	555	0,34	2,91
Anderson and Narus	145	414	0,35	2,86
Webster	39	349	0,11	8,95

better than verbal explanations. Consequently, the visualization of complex interactions is regarded as contributing to a higher level of comprehensibility. Inserted text, on the other hand, illustrates the surrounding themes in another, different context and thus contributes only indirectly to an understanding of the material. The remaining types of figure are those which contribute to understanding, but not in the same way as the visualization of complex interactions (see Table 8).

The visualization of complex interactions plays a significant role in all the books and accounts for between 20% and 28% of all figures. The books of Webster and Haas are exceptions with 48.8% and 11.8% respectively. While the visualization of complex interactions plays a decisive role for Webster, the converse applies to Haas.

The most frequently used form of figure is the table. Particularly in the books of Brierty, Eckles and Reeder (57.8%), Bingham (42.5%) and Haas (45.5%), their extensive use is conspicuous. The Anderson and Narus text is characterized by a comparatively large number of inserted text passages (boxes). The results of an extensive "field research" comprise almost half of all figures.

Additional statements on the contribution of figures to text book comprehensibility, can only be generated if the application and quality of the individual figures can be evaluated meaningfully and validly. Compared to the research devoted to understandibilty of texts, research into the quality of visualization in terms of its improvement on understanding has been rather poor (Weidenmann 1993). Some procedures have meanwhile been suggested in the literature for assessing the quality of individual spatial aids, but they relate to a comparison of a smaller

TABLE 8. The results of qualitative investigation of the criterion "visual understanding." All figures in percentages.

	Visualization of linear relationships	Visualization of complex relationships	Tables	Maps	Inserted text (boxes)	Diagrams	Pictures
Brierty, Eckles and Reeder	2.0	19.9	57.8	0.4	7.2	2.0	10.8
Bingham	5.5	25.3	42.5	0.0	17.8	0.0	8.9
Eckles	4.9	28.6	26.5	0.5	16.2	10.8	12.4
Haas	2.1	11.8	45.5	0.6	16.1	8.5	15.5
Hutt and Speh	6.3	25.1	26.7	0.5	26.7	11.0	3.7
Anderson and Narus	4.8	25.5	13.1	0.0	48.3	4.8	3.4
Webster	2.6	48.7	23.1	0.0	5.1	7.7	12.8

number of figures and thus a high level of detail (Kosslyn 1989). Such an analysis cannot be undertaken in the context of this investigation (that is, 7 textbooks and 1,287 figures).

LINK BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Table 9 shows the complete results of the analysis of the criterion "Link between theory and practice."

With the exception of Anderson and Narus, it is evident that all books present both macro and micro segmentation approaches. The Anderson and Narus book presents market segmentation criteria, but no particular approach. Hutt and Speh present only Wind and Cardozo's "two-stage approach," while Eckles introduces only the modified "nested approach." Webster; Haas; Brierty, Eckles and Reeder; Bingham present both approaches.

The depiction of other approaches to market segmentation varies considerably between the various text books. Apart from the approaches of Doyle and Saunders as well as that of Thomas, the others presented in Table 8 are introduced in only one of the books. Furthermore, the approaches are not so detailed as the macro or micro segmentations, being little more than cited and explained briefly. As was already established with respect to the observation of the criterion "depth of themes treated" for the marketing-mix instrument "price", the authors make no claims of an exhaustive depiction of all market-segmentation approaches, but

TABLE 9. Results of the analysis of the criterion "link between theory and practice."

	Hutt and Speh	Webster	Haas	Eckles	Brierty, Eckles and Reeder	Bingham	Anderson and Narus
Two-Stage Approach (Wind & Cardozo)							
Nested Approach (Bonoma & Shapiro)							
Market Segmentation and Positioning Approach (Doyle & Saunders)							
Corporate Culture Approach (Eisenhart)							
CUBE							
Thomas							
McKinsey Strategic Gameboard							
Market Segmentation and Positioning Approach (Kotler)							
Rangan, Moriarty and Swartz							
Haas and Wotruba							
Demonstration: applications approaches	175+*; 181+	121	280+	130+		161	
Practical Examples	167; 168; 180	100; 101; 120	265	122+; 127; 129	203; 205; 206	159; 160	44; 45; 46
Case Studies	No. 2, 5, 14, 15, 16		No. 6, 8, 10, 22	No. 3	No. 8, 14, 19	No. 5, Case for Part 3	
Practice Exercises				132+			

*The numbers refer to pages and the + sign indicates that the subject is treated in a varying number of ensuing pages. The abbreviation No. refers to the case number specified in a book.

illustrate by way of example, that other approaches to market segmentation can be developed in research processes.

When discussing the criterion of the theory-practice link (see "Methodology and Criteria"), it was suggested in the literature that only a few examples demonstrating the application to segmentation can be found in the literature. However, the application is in fact presented in five books (Bingham; Eckles; Haas; Hutt & Speh; Webster).

All authors supplement the depiction of market segmentation with practical examples. They do so by means of examples which show how a particular aspect is applied to practical problems, and often support this with the results of studies relating to this aspect.

Case studies offer the possibility of an active application of theories in practical situations. However, because the textbooks of Anderson and Narus and Webster have no cases, such an application is clearly not possible if no complementary material is used. All other books have at least one case study on market segmentation. In addition, Eckles' book provides two application exercises for market segmentation. The relationship of theory to practice thus plays an important role in all the books, although, as indicated, two do not offer cases.

DEVELOPING MORE COMPLEX CAPABILITIES

According to the taxonomy of educational objectives for the cognitive domain, the required skills for solving the test questions and case studies were examined. For the analysis of the test questions, the chapters on organizational purchasing behavior, demand analysis, strategic marketing planning, channel management, personal selling and marketing controlling were chosen. This ensured that all components[6] of a textbook (analysis, strategic planning, operative planning, implementation and control) were integrated.

The classification of test questions and case studies reveals a subjective character. However, comparable studies also indicate that the subjective character of such results cannot be excluded (as examples, see Hampton, Krentler & Martin 1993; Karns, Burton & Martin 1983).

The textbooks of Webster and Anderson and Narus contain no test questions or case studies.

In addition to test questions at the end, Bingham's book also offers "concept questions" within the chapters. However, because, according to the author himself (p. XXII), these questions test pure learning, they were excluded from consideration.

The classification of test questions reveals that the books of Hutt and Speh, Eckles and Bingham aim predominantly at reproducing what has been learned. Thus, the questions merely ask what was presented in a particular chapter. Nonetheless, the books do contain some test questions that test evaluative skills and thus all other capabilities specified in the taxonomy. Yet, the emphasis falls clearly on mechanical learning. Conversely, the questions in the books of Brierty, Eckles and Reeder and that of Haas, focus on evaluative skills. Therefore, these books promote the development of complex capabilities to a far greater extent.

An analysis of capabilities that can be developed through case studies, reveals a uniform picture. All case studies of all textbooks under consideration require the application of evaluative skills. Through the hierarchical structure of the taxonomy of educational objectives, they also target the development of all skills specified in the taxonomy. The observation of case studies makes it quite clear that they are the most effective tool that text books have at their disposal for developing complex cognitive skills.

As indicated above, the books of Anderson and Narus and Webster do not offer either case studies or test questions. Therefore, it is doubtful that, on their own they contribute much towards developing complex skills. For this reason, Webster stresses the importance of supplementing the use of textbooks with case studies, so as to ensure a focus on applying the themes presented (p. V). Supplementary material to support the development of complex capabilities is a crucial requirement in case either one of these two books is used as basis for a course. In this respect they provide less support for the instructor who focuses on complex skills.

CONCLUSIONS

Our main findings are depicted in Table 10 at a fairly aggregated level. The results are described in more detail verbally in the following section on the two basic objectives of Bloom's taxonomy.

Table 11 contains some additional aspects that became conspicuous in our study. Although not directly related to the taxonomy scheme, and being of rather subjective nature, they may still value to the overall analysis.

Objective 1: Knowledge

The textbooks of the first group reveal the most extensive content and hence seem most suitable for undergraduate courses, although there are considerable differences within the group as well. The Anderson and Narus and the Webster books, on the other hand, both neglect some central themes in terms of a general overview of the subject. Both books rather seem targeted mainly at the undergraduate level. Particularly the Anderson and Narus book provides a focused view from a special perspective. The particular approach used in a book can be regarded as decisive in this respect, because it influences not only the structuring of

TABLE 10. Synopsis of main results.

Contribution to level acc. to Bloom/ Textbook	Knowledge	Understanding	Application (ex.: market segmentation)	Complex capabilities
Anderson and Narus	focused (value)	text: appropriate vis.: appropriate	significant role	sup. material for case studies required
Bingham	limited	text: appropriate vis.: appropriate	significant role	test questions: reproductive cases: evaluative
Brierty, Eckles and Reeder	broad	text: appropriate vis.: appropriate	significant role	test questions: evaluative cases: evaluative
Eckles	broad	text: appropriate vis.: appropriate	significant role	test questions: reproductivecases: evaluative
Haas	broad	text: appropriate vis.: appropriate	significant role	test questions: evaluative cases: evaluative
Hutt and Speh	broad	text: appropriate vis.: appropriate	significant role	test questions: reproductive cases: evaluative
Webster	limited (instrumental)	text: appropriate vis.: potentially low	significant role	sup. material for case studies required

TABLE 11. Additional aspects of comparison.

Additional features/ Textbook	Content	Volume	Other
Anderson and Narus	new approach (value)		
Bingham	rather limited, but without particular focus		
Brierty, Eckles and Reeder	strongly related to Eckles and Brierty/Reeder/Reeder (not in sample)		
Eckles			less vivid language
Haas		very detailed, but considerable redundancies	
Hutt and Speh	broad range of themes (general overview, current topics); comprehensible case studies	very detailed	
Webster	limited		

content, but also the selection of themes. The value-approach presented by Anderson and Narus leads to a focused selection related directly to the "value" concept and also to a rather biased presentation of the themes in terms of their contribution to "value creation" which makes the book less suitable for obtaining an overview of business marketing. The advantage of the value approach is that business-to-business marketing is portrayed from a new perspective and at the same time, discussions on the development of marketing strategies are grouped around a significant theme, making the book more appropriate for an advanced or specialized course or reader. The structuring through the marketing-management approach as found in most of the books, is more appropriate for a broader treatment of the overall spectrum of topics. Nevertheless, this concept also shows some inconsistency: although the authors frequently acknowledge that the various transactions in business-to-business markets are particularly heterogeneous, and that this requires differentiated marketing strategies, the actual approach followed in the books is undifferentiated. A possible solution to this could, in line with Reid and Plank (2000) who stress the significance of identification and definition of relationship types, be found in structuring a textbook according to an explicit typology of transaction (or business relationships). Originating from the commodity school (for a focused overview of this concept see Sheth, Gardner and Garrett 1988), transactions-types-approaches attempt to account for the extreme heterogeneity of marketing processes in business-to-business markets. While the commodity school concentrated on the objects of the transaction for classification, recent transactions-types-approaches focus on the transaction itself: according to certain criteria (e.g., physical characteristics of the goods or specificity of necessary investment) which are assumed to shape the way a transaction takes place, different types are identified (e.g., Cannon & Perreault 1999; Miracle 1965) and type-specific marketing requirements are derived (for examples see, e.g., Plinke 1992 and 1997; Kleinaltenkamp 1994). A textbook could then start with a general derivation of transactions types. After that, the structuring of the book on the uppermost level could be done according to these types, while the structure within each type could follow a marketing management approach or whatever the author might regard as useful. An advantage of this system would be that the transaction lying at the heart of marketing (Kotler 1972; Sheth, Gardner & Garrett 1988) is placed at the center of the structuring. At the same time it would be able to capture explicitly the significance and characteristics of relationship marketing, the importance of which has increasingly been emphasized in the recent literature (Hutt & Speh 1998a; Reid & Plank 2000b; Sheth & Sharma 1997; on its significance for the marketing curriculum see Koch 1997). Moreover, transaction-types-approaches may provide a link to new microeconomic theory (Cannon & Perreault 1994; for the economic perspective see in general, e.g., Williamson 1985; a recent typology is provided by Wathne & Heide 2000) and by that allow for a stronger a cross-subject perspective. The advantage of these approaches lies therefore not only in the differentiated development of general type-specific marketing strategies, but also in its ability to integrate a broad spectrum of topics. While the textbooks of the first group come closest to depicting the entire range of business-to-business marketing knowledge, all books reveal some weaknesses in their structuring of content, which could possibly be at least partly overcome through using a transaction-types-approach.

Objective 2: Contribution to the Development of Cognitive Capabilities

All groups reveal an appropriate level of linguistic comprehensibility. Furthermore, this is supplemented through visualization, although to a greater (e.g., Hutt & Speh) or lesser degree (e.g., Webster).

The practical and related application orientation is achieved through practical examples and especially case studies, in the books of the first group. These factors contribute substantially towards the development of complex cognitive capabilities. However, the presentation of appropriate and sufficient theoretical instruments for problem solving, remains a basic condition for practical application. All observed books have deficiencies in this respect in certain areas, because the depiction of theory proceeds very selectively, offering only a cross-section of the instruments actually available for practical problem solving. Furthermore, the undifferentiated presentation of content based on the marketing-management approach in most sample-books, requires substantial adaptation for practical application in a specific situational context. A transaction-types-approach might possibly facilitate practical application and situation-specific adaptation more effectively, through its differentiated marketing strategies. Thus, despite the creation of a practical linkage through examples and cases, the way in which theory is presented in the books under examination, renders a true applications orientation more difficult.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

All in all, in this study we have attempted to demonstrate a way of generating useful results from Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives for the cognitive domain when comparing different textbooks on business marketing. The concrete investigation itself has shown that, despite the variety of available textbooks on business-to-business marketing, none fulfills all of the identified educational criteria exhaustively. It seems likely that this may not, in completion, be possible at all, even if this is due only to the related volume. However, the study suggests that there is a certain "gap" in the English-language textbook market for business-to-business marketing for work beyond the marketing management approach (see also Smith & Robins 1991). A textbook structured according to transaction types may provide a further fruitful perspective, allowing for a broad inclusion of themes and at the same time for a focused, business-marketing specific perspective. For the time being, our results may however help teachers or interested practitioners in selecting a textbook on business marketing that might best conform to their particular purpose. The study does not, though, provide a general ranking of the books' overall quality.

Despite these findings there certainly are considerable limitations to our study which might at least partly be overcome by further research. Firstly, despite the use of a well recognized theoretical underpinning, there is a strong subjective element to our study in the actual assessment of the books. In some of our operationalizations greater objectivity in measurement is achieved, but at the expense of requiring more subjective interpretation in the subsequent evaluation. Therefore, further research into operationalization of Bloom's taxonomy would be very helpful. Secondly, in our study we only considered English-language textbooks. Similar studies on textbooks in other languages might not only provide helpful evaluations of these books themselves, but could also reveal interesting aspects in terms of a cross-language comparison. For instance it could be interesting, whether there is a general difference in focus on a certain level of the taxonomy for books in a specific language. Targeted at general business-to-business marketing textbooks, a similar comparison of books explicitly addressing MBA or PhD courses might reveal helpful aspects for teachers in these areas. Last but not least, books may more or less significantly be changed with every new edition. This would impact not only on individual criteria (e.g., current themes), but could influence the entire focus of the book. New textbooks may be published, some may not see new editions, so that a quite new sample may have to be analysed at some point in time.

NOTES

1. The terms "business-to-business marketing," "industrial marketing" and "business marketing" will, despite the debate about the distinction between the fields, be used synonymously in this paper, because the textbooks in comparison do not share a uniform understanding of these terms.
2. The authors are aware of the shortcomings of this lack of an a-priori distinction. In an undergraduate course, greater emphasis has to be laid on laying a theoretical foundation, while in a graduate course, specific topics can be accorded a more in-depth treatment. However, for the sake of providing a more comprehensive deductive analysis, we decided to avoid the above a-priori classification.
3. In 2001 the 7th edition of the book has been published. However, as all of the other books dated from the 1990s, we have chosen not to integrate the latest edition of Hutt and Speh. This contemporary analysis was completed early Spring 2001. Coupled to the double-blind review process, textbooks dated 2001 or later could not appear.
4. Bloom advances two further areas associated with the learning progress, the affective domain and the domain of motor capabilities. These are, however, excluded from our analysis as they are not that relevant for an analysis of textbooks on business marketing, neither have they been as well explored as the cognitive domain.
5. The role of the Internet is a topic which has emerged as a major factor in marketing literature in general and also in business marketing literature (Reid & Plank 2000a; Spekman 2000; Wilson 2000). It has not been included, due to the different publishing dates of the textbooks. The comparison might have been considerably distorted by its inclusion.
6. Components as according to the most frequently used approach in our sample, namely the marketing management approach.

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