

A Comparative Analysis of Three Introductory Marketing Texts:

Wentz's (1979) Marketing,

Enis' (1980) Marketing Principles

and

McCarthy's (1979) Essential of Marketing

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The task of choosing a text for an introductory course in marketing is becoming increasingly difficult. With the tremendous choice of texts, an instructor may find it tempting to adopt one with little more than a cursory look at the available titles. The purpose of this paper is to aid the selection process by providing a comparative evaluation of three recently published texts: Wentz's Marketing, Enis' Marketing Principles, and McCarthy's Essentials of Marketing. Although many criteria could be used to compare these three texts, the present review focuses on general orientation, special features, breadth of coverage, and recency of coverage.

General Orientation

Target audience. All three texts are primarily aimed at undergraduates, taking their first course in marketing. None of them would be suitable for use in a graduate program and some critics may seriously question whether McCarthy's text, a shortened version of his successful Basic Marketing, is suitable in a four-year college program.

Writing style. None of the texts can be accused of being overly scholarly in writing style. Rather, all three are written such that undergraduates should experience little difficulty in understanding the material. Wentz tends to use short, crisp, informative sentences which are sometimes a little too choppy. Enis and McCarthy tend to use longer sentences which may flow well in general, but may also be more likely to induce boredom than Wentz's short-stroke style.

For those who appreciate such things, Wentz provides a clean-cutting dry wit in his writings. Enis and McCarthy rely on pictorial cartoons. Enis' cartoons are funny. McCarthy's are not.

Of the three, Enis' writing style tends to be the most technical and sophisticated, though not overly so. Wentz and McCarthy eschew quantitative methods and technical presentations because "they are certainly not needed to understand the main body of marketing theory" (Wentz, xvii).

Admittedly, the presentation of technical material can be, at times, frightening to a beginning student, but some topics seem naked without some kind of quantitative formulation. For example, Wentz's effort to describe Fishbein's compensatory model of attitude (p. 74) without explicitly stating the formula causes more, not less, anxiety.

McCarthy's approach is to restrict "technical" topics to Appendix A (Economics Fundamentals, e.g., $TR = P \times Q$) and to Appendix B (Marketing Arithmetic).

Visual layout. McCarthy's text has the sharpest looking cover of the three. Enis' cover must have been designed by a committee. For reading, Wentz's text is the easiest on the eyes. His pages have larger print and about five fewer lines per page than Enis and McCarthy. McCarthy's is also neatly and professionally organized--and colorful if one excludes the black and white photos. Enis has many exhibits within the textual material, which are highly informative and worthwhile, but they are an eyesore and create visual clutter.

Chapter layout. Table 1 presents the chapter layouts of the texts. It is noteworthy that Wentz wastes no time getting to the four Ps, while Enis holds out for ten chapters and McCarthy for seven chapters before discussing the marketing mix variables. This may be because Wentz waits until the last portion of the text to get involved with macroenvironmental issues.

Also noteworthy is that Wentz and McCarthy set aside chapters for international marketing, Enis does not. Wentz and Enis have chapters on

public policy, McCarthy does not. Wentz alone has chapters on social issues and consumerism, and McCarthy alone has a chapter (Appendix C) on career opportunities in marketing. Wentz is more likely than the others to offer more than one chapter (though not necessarily more pages) on any given topic.

All three have cases. Wentz's cases are called "minicases," and appropriately so.

Breadth and Recency of Coverage

The following section contains crude but informative measures of the breadth and recency of coverage by the texts. This discussion is limited to those seven topics which can readily be compared across authors.

As Table 2 shows, those topics are: the marketing mix variables, research, consumer behavior, and segmentation. Wentz devotes 63% of his text to these topics, Enis 42%, and McCarthy 58%.

Number of Subtopics. One possible indication of the breadth of coverage might be the number of subtopics (subheadings) discussed in each of the topical areas held in common. Looking at the top half of Figure 1 it can be seen that Wentz excels on this measure in his promotion chapters (145 subtopics), in his price chapters (58 subtopics), and in his channels chapters (56 subtopics). Otherwise, Enis excels on this measure in his product chapters (93 subtopics), in his consumer behavior chapter (65 subtopics), in his marketing research chapter (62 subtopics), and in his segmentation chapter (31 subtopics).

Number of subtopics per page. The bottom half of Figure 1 shows the number of subtopics per page. The number of subtopics per page is an interesting measure in that it gives an indication of how much space

an author devotes to a subtopic on the average. Very high scores on this variable may indicate a high degree of fragmentation. Very low scores may indicate a tendency to be pedantic or wordy. Figure 1 (bottom) suggests that Enis may be bordering on fragmentation (trying to squeeze too many subtopics into a fixed amount of space). In all fairness, high scores on this measure may simply indicate a more detailed, meticulous organization of the material. This, however, does not seem to be the case here.

Number of references cited and mean year of citation. In general, Enis tends to cite fewer references but more recent ones than Wentz and McCarthy (Figure 2). Wentz owns the distinction of having both the most number of references for a topic (91 in his promotion chapters) and the least number of references for a topic (11 in his segmentation chapter). Wentz's consumer behavior chapter (\bar{M} = 1966) has the lowest mean year of references cited in a topic area by the three texts. This may be because Wentz's coverage of consumer behavior is heavily traditional and deals with such classical topics as Gestalt psychology, learning theory, motivation research, cognitive dissonance, the Howard-Sheth model (in an appendix), and collective behavior--with a sprinkling of more current offerings, such as psychographics.

The manner in which the references are cited by the authors is interesting in itself. McCarthy's references are stacked by chapter in a special section at the end of the text and Enis' citations are mostly in the form of a selected bibliography at the end of each chapter. Wentz liberally references with footnotes within chapters. Wentz's citation method drastically reduces the number of page flipping required to track down sources of reference, and increases the probability that the student will be exposed to valuable secondary sources of information.

General Evaluation and Conclusions

Some sweeping, albeit risky, generalizations can be made based on the strengths and weaknesses of each text. For the serious marketing student (marketing majors?), Enis' text is the most appropriate of the three. It is the longest (647 pp), it is usually more technical, it offers a number of special exhibits which are often abridged versions of recent, quasi-classical research topics (e.g., Exhibits 10-11, 12-7, and 12-15 on conjoint analysis, BCG, and PIMS, respectively), it spends considerable time on topics other than the four Ps (e.g., marketing management roles, tasks, philosophies, environments, planning, and control), and it is a significant improvement over the previous two editions of the same text.

The adopter of Enis' text should be forewarned, however, that supplementary back-up material will be needed to build on Enis' weakest chapters--channels and promotion.

Wentz's text might be most appropriate for those who are interested in picking up the core marketing principles, but who are not planning on making a career out of marketing. His writing style is clear, succinct, and unpretentious--pedantics have no place in Wentz's text. His coverage is at least adequate in most areas (e.g., pricing and public policy), and better than Enis' coverage of promotion and channels. His weakest chapter is on segmentation.

McCarthy's text belongs in a lower league than Enis and Wentz. It is easy to read but the coverage is shallow and borders on insulting to one's intelligence. McCarthy's best chapters are on channels, though Wentz's discussion of channels is meatier. McCarthy's text would be most suited for the "C" student skating through school.

In all fairness, it should be pointed out that no text is perfect and no text can satisfy everyone. But, hopefully, the present review provided some useful bits of information about the strengths and weaknesses of each text--information which can facilitate that search for the perfect text.

References

- Enis, Ben M. (1980), Marketing Principles, Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishing.
- McCarthy, E. Jerome (1979), Essentials of Marketing, Homewood: Irwin, Inc.
- Wentz, Walter B. (1979), Marketing, St. Paul: West Publishing, Inc.

TABLE 1
LAYOUTS OF TEXTS

<u>Topic</u>	Chapter Numbers in		
	<u>Wentz</u> ¹	<u>Enis</u> ²	<u>McCarthy</u> ³
Marketing Management: Nature, Roles,, Overview	1,2	1,2,3, 5,6,7	1,2,3
Consumer Behavior	3,4	9	5,6
Segmentation	5	10	7
Product	6,7	11,13	8,9
Promotion	11,12,13, 14,15	14	13,14,15
Price	16,17	12	16,17
Channels	8,9,10	15	10,11,12
Marketing Research	18,19	4	4
Public Policy	20,21	8	none
International Marketing	24	none	18
Consumerism	22	none	none
Social Issues	23	none	none
Career Opportunities	none	none	Appendix C
Program Implementation and Control	Epilogue	16,17,18	19

¹ Wentz has 24 "minicases," one after each chapter; and, a glossary at the end.

² Enis has 40 cases, about 2 per chapter.

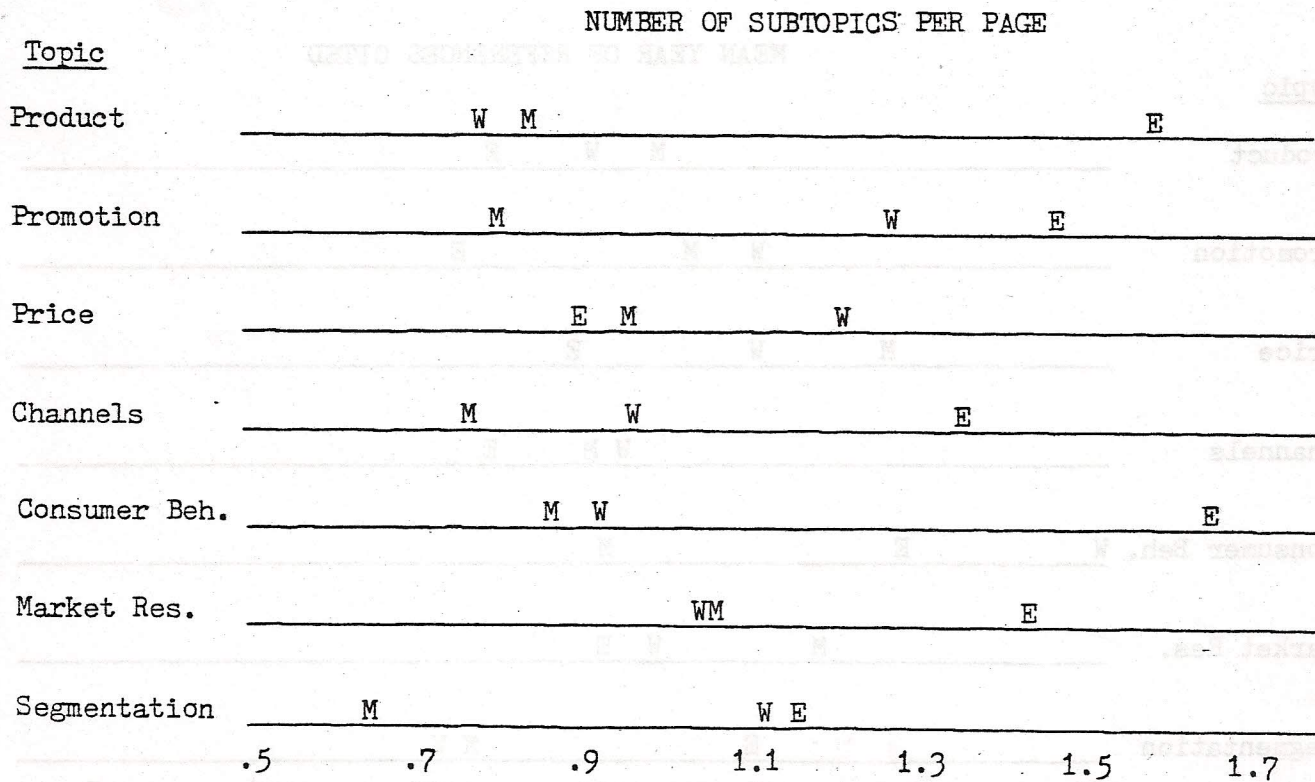
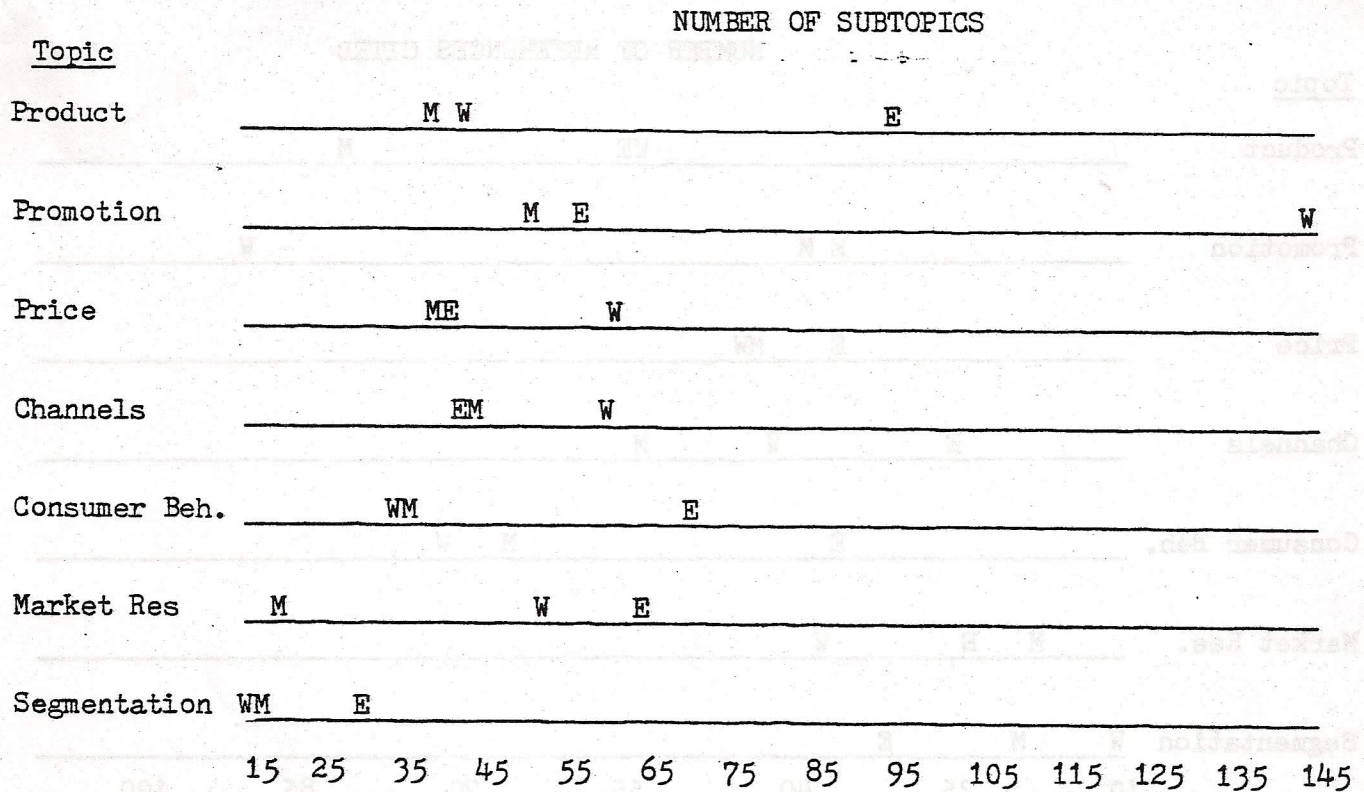
³ McCarthy has 30 cases and a glossary.

TABLE 2

Pages Devoted to Topics Held in Common

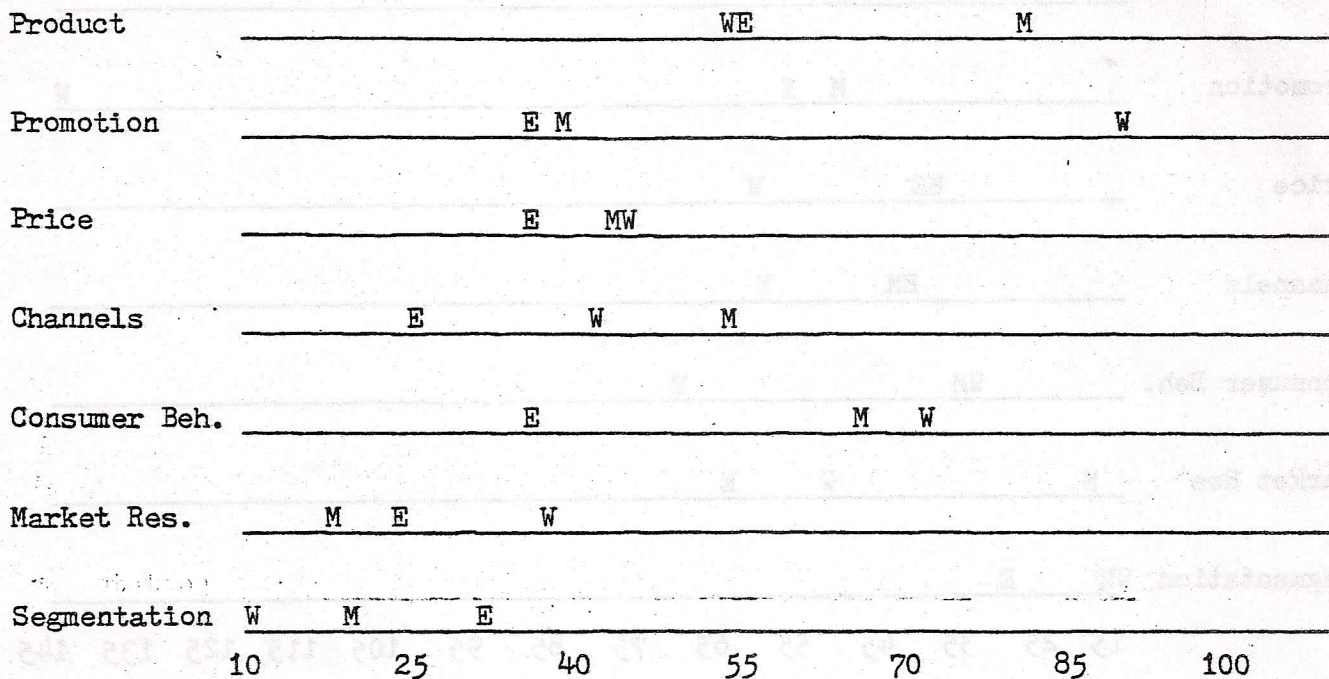
<u>Topic</u>	<u>Wentz (575pp¹)</u>		<u>Enis (647pp)</u>		<u>McCarthy (483pp)</u>	
	<u>Share of Text</u>	<u>Column Rank</u>	<u>Share of Text</u>	<u>Column Rank</u>	<u>Share of Text</u>	<u>Column Rank</u>
Promotion	20%	1	6%	4	13%	1
Channels	10%	2	4%	6.5	11%	2
Product	9%	3	9%	1	9%	3.5
Price	8%	4.5	6%	4	8%	5
Mrkt Research	8%	4.5	7%	2	3%	7
Consumer Behav.	6%	6	6%	4	9%	3.5
Segmentation	2%	7	4%	6.5	5%	6
Total	63%		42%		58%	

¹575pp is an adjusted estimate to allow for the larger print and fewer lines per page in Wentz (approximately 45 lines per page in Wentz compared to approximately 50 lines per page in Enis and McCarthy). Otherwise, the numbers in parentheses represent the total number of pages in the texts, from cover to cover.

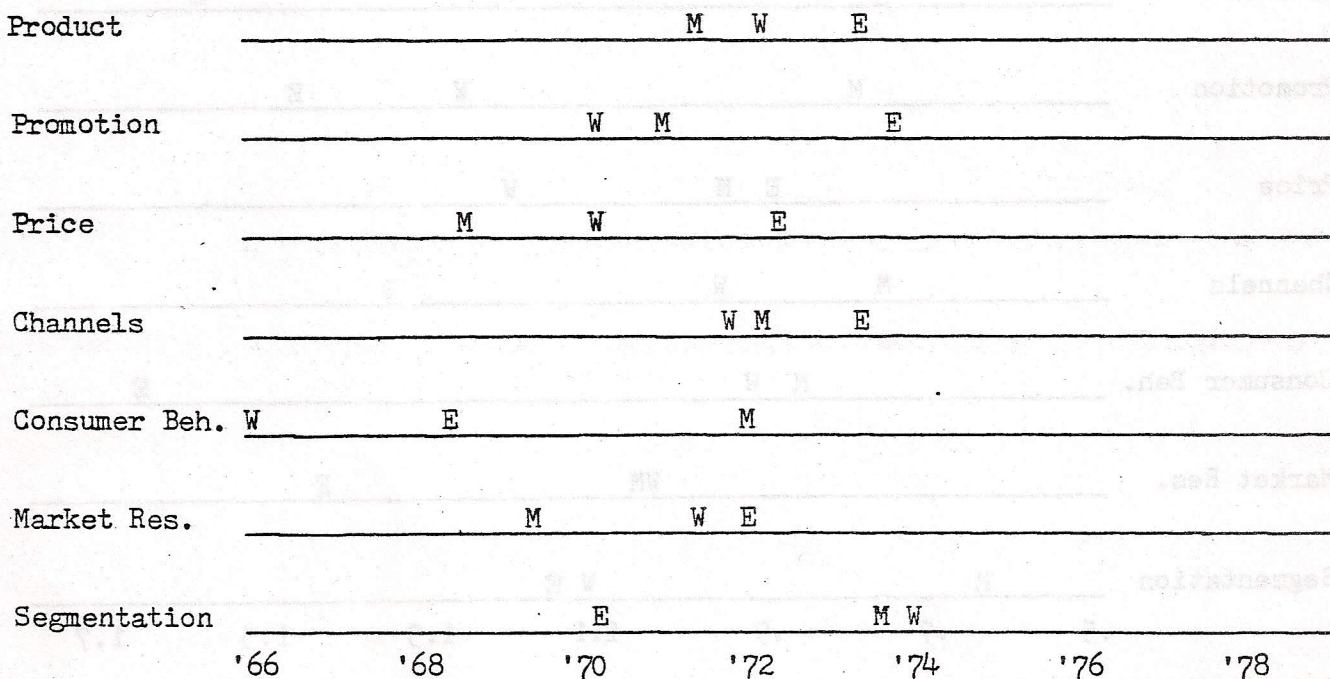


W = Wentz, E = Enis, M = McCarthy

NUMBER OF REFERENCES CITED

Topic

MEAN YEAR OF REFERENCES CITED

Topic

W = Wentz, E = Enis, M = McCarthy