

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Reviews Editor: M.F. Bradley.

Buyer Behaviour: A Decision-Making Approach by Raymond L. Horton, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio, 1984, pp. 517.

Horton prefaces the book by stating that it "attempts to present a review of buyer behaviour theory and research that is current, theoretically and methodologically precise, and complete while remaining a textbook rather than a research monograph." Early in the book one is apt to decide that "attempt" was the opportune word such is the plethora of references. Horton, however, settles well to his task and the latter parts of the book as a result are much more reasonable.

The book is organised into seven sections. Part I is designed to present a "broad overview" of buyer behaviour. Here Horton having outlined how our knowledge in this area is constantly evolving, reviews the associated theory and concludes that "there is no new comprehensive theory on the horizon that appears capable of providing the necessary integration of old and new research findings".

The three stage concept which suggests that buying behaviour may be a case of Routinised Response Behaviour (RRB), Limited Problem Solving (LPS), or Extensive Problem Solving (EPS) is used to organise the material in the next three sections of the book. Horton, however, is at pains to point out that the adoption of this concept implies commitment neither to the Howard-Sheth theory generally nor to the specific EPS-LPS-RRB progression.

Part V reflects on the many ways in which individual buyers differ and the implications these differences have for marketing strategy, while in Part VI attention is focussed on buyer behaviour that is conducted and experienced on a collective basis. This section of the book is thus in the "Engel, Kollat, Blackwell mould" and from a pedagogical viewpoint was found to be the most informative section of the book.

Horton concludes by outlining how buyer behaviour research can facilitate the formulation and implementation of public policies governing marketing practices. In particular the areas of unit pricing, deceptive advertising, and television advertising targeted at children are discussed. Irish policy makers may be well advised to take note of the author's comment in the last chapter that "public policy makers could have definitely benefited consumers, and possibly retailers, by incorporating research on consumer information processing into the design of unit pricing laws".

Overall the book is informative and well written and should be of interest to the academic and serious student alike. Perhaps it may even reach the desk of some policy makers?

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Aggregate Supply, Aggregate Demand and Income Distribution in Ireland: A Macro-sectoral Analysis by John Bradley and Connell Fanning, Dublin. The Economic and Social Research Institute. Paper Number 115. 1984.

A common charge directed against macroeconometric models is their eschewal of an internally consistent economic theory in favour of the less constraining *ad hoc* approach. From the point of view of the policy-maker this shortcoming (sic) is

consequential when compared to the apparent failure of macroeconomic models to cope with or even explain the economic experiences of the 1970s. It's no secret that confidence in these models as a means of explaining how the macroeconomy works is currently at a very low ebb. There exists no grounds for optimism that this ESRI research effort, when completed, will be any more successful in addressing itself to the current economic controversies than were the macro models that preceded it.

The study itself represents the first part of what the authors ambitiously describe as a "... comprehensive examination of the construction of ... macroeconomic models and their use in analysing some of the major macroeconomic problems currently challenging policy research and implementation in Ireland" (p. 14). It purports to present a theoretical framework leaving to a further study the implementation of an "operational model" of the Irish economy. One of the stated objectives of the study is the provision of a "medium term macroeconomic perspective" (p. 20), with the "medium term" defined as a five year period. Capacity and how it is treated clearly plays a role over such a period and this is reflected in the emphasis placed on the supply side of the "model". The inclusion of the supply side is achieved through standard Neo Classical production theory and with output demand determined, the combination of the two elements constitutes in the authors' terms the "Neo Classical Keynesian Specification (NKS)". Though we are assured by the authors that this approach "is just one of a possible number of frameworks" which could have been used, there is no elaboration on the questions and the problems raised by the use of the NKS approach. Chapter one presented the ideal opportunity for the authors to address themselves to these considerations; instead it was characterised by a stilted and pedantic foray into irrelevant and peripheral philosophical issues which seemed to serve no useful purpose.

The document contains something in the region of sixty-one behavioural equations but couldn't really be defined as a model since the authors present alternative specifications for many of these equations. In most cases the authors don't reveal a preference for one specification over the other which is clearly another shortcoming of this study. It remains to be seen whether the eventual choice of specifications is based on consistent theory or statistical considerations. Though parameter estimates are recorded for all the specifications their usefulness is suspect. In some cases the data set has as few as seventeen observations the latest year of which is 1979. Clearly, the parameter estimates with such a small data set will prove highly sensitive to the addition of observations and it remains to be seen how the availability of more recent data will affect the "model".

Scant emphasis is placed by the authors on the econometric aspects of the "model". The estimator used (except in the case of estimating the factor demand systems which uses a full information maximum likelihood estimator) is ordinary least squares (OLS). We are informed that "the validation procedure is that appropriate to single equation testing" (p. 32), but it never emerges from the study that this constitutes anything more than an examination of the R^2 's or the t -statistics. Equations that yield low Durbin-Watson (D-W) statistics are, in general, corrected for first order autocorrelation. This may be a valid exercise in some cases, however, the authors never seem to consider that low D-W's may imply, for example, a mis-specified equation. Most macro models tend to exhibit a flippant attitude to econometric issues and in this regard this study doesn't seem very much different.

Since the "compilation, operationalisation, and evaluation of an economy model is the subject of a subsequent report", it remains to be seen how significant a contribution the study can make to understanding the "major national economic

problems facing the Irish economy". There is a fair bit of *deja vu* about this document and one cannot help wondering that something similar will be said about the results when the study is finally completed.

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Redmond's Guide to Irish Labour Law by Mary Redmond. Dublin. The Bridgefoot Press. 1984. 188 pp. (soft) IR£10.

Redmond's Guide to Labour Law aims to provide as comprehensive an overview of the subject as possible. The author's ambitions for the Guide are made clear in the introductory paragraph: to enable those using it to examine the different aspects of Irish labour law on a comparative basis and to locate the subject in its historical and social framework by the inclusion of detailed references to the political, social and economic nature of the State.

It must be mentioned at the outset that the fulfilment of the author's intentions is constrained to some degree by the format which she had adopted. With the exception of the first few paragraphs, the Guide is a reprint of Dr. Redmond's contribution to the International Encyclopaedia for Labour Law and Industrial Relations (Kluwer 1984). The purpose of the encyclopaedia is to provide comparative data on labour law and industrial relations systems in a variety of countries. Because of the obligation to follow the format laid down for the encyclopaedia, the Guide has a certain rigidity of structure which is particularly marked in its effect in the introductory section. This part of the Guide deals with the political, legal and economic systems which form a backdrop to the development of labour law in Ireland. Against this backdrop, the definitions and notions which comprise our understanding of labour law are set out and the historical background and development of labour legislation is considered.

Information is copious, but, as stated above, the effect is sometimes disjointed because of the way in which that information is structured. Very detailed material is supplied on some aspects of our political and economic system while other issues appear to be treated summarily. There are a couple of minor errors of detail or omission – a reference to the Resettlement Assistance Scheme without noting the decision to terminate the scheme in 1982 and reference to the Employment Incentive Scheme by the wrong name. Such errors are, however, inconsequential and perhaps, inevitable, given the complexity and scope of the information which is compressed into this section of the Guide. Undoubtedly they will be corrected as the Guide progresses towards further editions.

Following this introductory section, the Guide divides into two parts, the first dealing with the individual employment relationship, the second with collective labour relations. There are ample cross-references to illuminate points briefly raised in the text which go a long way towards alleviating the structural difficulties imposed by format. The clarity of style, and that marked ability to effectively communicate complex information which have characterised Dr. Redmond's previous publications, are used to good effect here. Redmond's Guide is not intended to be exclusive to lawyers and academics. Its material contents are particularly relevant to practitioners, both management and trade unionists, administrators and the ordinary lay-person with an interest in the subject. It is a good reference book. As the author puts it, it caters for all "who want an immediate answer to an urgent question" (para 3).

The development of labour legislation in Ireland could be described as a hap-

hazard affair. Collective labour law, Dr. Redmond points out, is largely comprised of legislation and case law from pre-Independence days. Since 1937, the Constitution has exerted a considerable influence on developments in this area, both in its own right as a jurisdiction and as a statement of rights with which all common and statute law must conform. It is not within the ambit of Redmond's Guide to discuss the reasons why the law governing collective labour relations has undergone so little development since the foundation of the State. Significantly, however, Dr. Redmond notes that such development as has taken place in the form of statute law has diverged from earlier pre-Independence legislation. "The latter for the most part, were concerned with trade union freedom. In contrast, statutes of the Oireachtais, notably the Trade Union Act, 1941, attempt in a corporatist fashion to introduce a system of state-run regulation, principally in the form of the licensing of trade unions."

The most significant developments in Irish labour law have taken place in the area of individual employment relationships, especially, as Dr. Redmond shows, in relation to increased job security for employees. The provisions of the various statutes governing the employment relationship and the concepts which they embody are set out in some detail in the Guide. Where relevant, case references and referrals to more detailed studies and reports are included. The range of subjects covered, which, incidentally, includes chapters on agreements in restraint of trade and inventions by employees, is very impressive.

Among other things, the multiplicity of sources from which our labour legislation has derived gives rise to the impression in the mind of the reader that no coherent policy in regard to the development of labour law has as yet evolved at central level. Developments seem to have occurred, by and large, in response to immediate needs, or in response to the demands of interest groups, whether employer or trade union, or have been influenced by our relationship with international bodies and the requirements imposed by such relationships. This lack of policy direction may, however, be compensated for by the lack of political bias in our legislation. Dr. Redmond draws our attention to this more positive aspect of Irish labour law: "While the three main parties may have separate approaches to the question of industrial relations, the practice of prior consultations with FUE and ICTU with a view to achieving the greatest measure of consensus possible, when labour legislation is being prepared, has meant that legislation when enacted is generally lacking in bias arising from party political ideology". (para. 61).

Redmond's Guide is not simply a description of the rights, duties and regulatory mechanisms which comprise Irish labour law. It is a practical work which contains many useful and pertinent observations on the origins and development of labour law and must appeal to personnel managers, trade unionists, students and lawyers. Its cartoon cover, which so neatly captures the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust between employer and worker — so much a feature of Irish industrial relations — is particularly attractive.

Case Studies in International Marketing by Peter Doyle and Norman A. Chart (editors) Heinemann, London, 1982.

Outside North America the writing of management case studies has traditionally attracted little investment of academics' and business schools' time and even less of their talent. Misplaced loyalty to older pedagogical methods and a remoteness from the realities of managerial problems and challenges endemic in many European university schools of management served to divert academic research into other areas and their teaching into theory at the expense of application. Times are changing, however. This collection of case studies in international marketing, edited by Doyle and Hart, represents one of the few good case collections that have been published in Europe using European materials. It is, unfortunately for the Irish student or management trainer, almost totally based on British companies and their concerns. The notable exception is three cases of Irish origin dealing with the Mosse Company and Hygeia Ltd., which were researched and written by M.F. Bradley and J.J. Ward of UCD and UCG respectively. In general, the cases are all well researched and written. Several suffer from the persistent weakness of much British case material — they are case histories rather than case studies. The essence of a case study is to present the student with a problem or issue requiring managerial action. Through confrontation with the issue, the student learns to apply theory, through diagnosing the nature of the "problem" faced, analysing it thoroughly, developing alternatives for action, specifying decision criteria, choosing a course of action, and considering the implementation consequences. Without this quality and range of content the case study degenerates into an anecdote and is of little interest for pedagogical purposes.

Management teachers will find the collection a useful addition to the existing range of European case material. The student will find the book a little "bare", as very minimal text is provided to give structure to the cases and to the development of the material in the collection from cases dealing with general environmental issues through opportunity identification and marketing programme development, to cases on the organisation and control of marketing. This is unfortunate as the editors had an opportunity to develop a more complete and innovative set of concepts within which to set the case material, but appear to have chosen an uninspired and uninspiring response to their own marketing opportunity. As a result, courses using these cases will need substantial conceptual input from the instructor and/or the use of an international marketing textbook.

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