

***The Art and Science of Modern Marketing
Education***

**2024 Annual Fall Educators' Conference
Proceedings**

Editors

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***29th Annual Marketing Management Association Fall Educators' Conference
September 18-20, 2024, Santa Fe, New Mexico***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Marketing Management Association is proud to present the 29th MMA Fall Educators' Conference! We are excited to bring together colleagues from around the world for a collegial and inspiring conference focused on marketing education. The papers, panel sessions, and special sessions submitted to this year's conference cover a wide range of cutting-edge topics that are critically important to future of marketing education.

The many potentially paradigm-shifting societal and technological changes impacting higher education influenced the theme of this year's conference, "The Art and Science of Modern Marketing Education." The Marketing Management Association has a long history of bringing educators and scholars together to discuss the ever-evolving landscape of marketing education and to share best practices. This makes our community uniquely qualified to address the current and future challenges and opportunities in marketing education.

We are very thankful to all the scholars who submitted position and refereed papers as well as volunteered for special sessions and panels. We are also sincerely grateful to everyone who reviewed the refereed papers and those who have volunteered to be session chairs. The conference cannot run without these volunteers, and each of them are all listed in these proceedings. Special thanks to **Becky Hochradel**, Publications Editor, for assembling all the material into these conference proceedings.

We are proud to have the Doctoral Student Consortium, sponsored by **The Original Videobook for Principles of Marketing**, back for a second year in a row at the conference. Thank you to our consortium co-chairs, **Brian Vander Schee** and **Brian Rutherford**, for all their efforts putting together an outstanding program. We are also grateful to the many excellent consortium faculty colleagues presenting during the consortium. To all the doctoral students attending this year's consortium, we welcome you to the Marketing Management Association! We are sure you will have an excellent experience and look forward to seeing you at future MMA conferences.

It was great to offer two pre-conference workshops, sponsored by **Hubro Simulations**. Thank you to **Scott Griffith** for leading the pre-conference workshop on *Using Simulations in Marketing Courses* and **Jeremy Kagan** for leading the pre-conference workshop on *Incorporating Artificial Intelligence in Marketing Education*.

Two teaching competitions are held this year with finalists selected before the conference. Thank you to **Interpretive Simulations** for sponsoring the Teaching Innovation competition, to **Eric Rhiney** for leading the competition, and to the dedicated panel of judges. We also thank **Marketplace Simulations** who sponsored this year's Master Teacher Award Competition. Thank you to **Mark Wolters**, the Master Teacher Award competition coordinator, for leading that competition's judges who selected a great slate of finalists. To all our sponsors, your continued support is invaluable to the Marketing Management Association, and we look forward to a long relationship to come. All judges and finalists are listed later in these Proceedings and in the Conference Program.

The Best Refereed Paper Award, sponsored by **Wessex Press**, went to **David Raska** and **Abdullah Al-Bahrani**, Northern Kentucky University, for their paper entitled "*Hey, This Could be Me in Just a Few Years: Re-inventing the Syllabus as Self-efficacy Booster.*" The winning paper was selected prior to the conference after two rounds of blind peer review.

Finally, special thanks go to our exhibitors **Stukent Simulations**, **StratX Simulations**, **Pearson Learning**, and **MBTN**. You offer us great ideas, tools, and training to improve our effectiveness in the classroom and we are proud to promote you in these proceedings, on the conference website, and in the Conference Program. Without you we could not put on this conference, and we welcome you to join us, again, next year!

The 2025 MMA Fall Educators' Conference will be held September 17-19, 2025, at the Embassy Suites Hotel by Hilton in Las Vegas, Nevada! The 2025 MMA Spring Conference will be held virtually March 20-21, 2025.

Many thanks to everyone involved with the conference! We hope you enjoyed lots of stimulating conversation, learned a few new ideas to take back to the classroom, and met some fellow scholars who share your passion for improving the lives of our students!!!

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STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES IN OVERCOMING FACULTY BURNOUT AND FATIGUE

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a strategy for marketing faculty faced with the all-encompassing challenges and demands of working in higher education while overcoming fatigue and burnout. The goal is to provide a strategic approach to meeting teaching, scholarship, and service responsibilities while facing fatigue and burnout conditions. The strategy considers the demands on faculty in online, blended, and face-to-face environments while creating a positive learning environment for the advancement of marketing students. The results are the basis for proposing a strategic approach for meeting faculty needs in the area of fatigue and burnout.

INTRODUCTION

A university faculty position is an uncommon opportunity for influential practitioners and those with terminal degrees to use their knowledge to lead others in pursuing their educational and personal goals. Along with teaching, the position's responsibilities include conducting meaningful research and meeting service obligations for the university, department, discipline, and the community. Higher education was in uncharted territory during the spring semester of 2020, with COVID-19 spreading globally (Taylor & Frechette, 2022).

Higher education has adjusted to the pandemic with changes in teaching practices, university funding, and management. The changes influence the academic activity of seeking and disseminating knowledge to stimulate critical thinking (Vos & Page, 2020). The increased job demands in teaching, scholarship, and service impacting the work environment are associated with increased stress levels affecting mental and physical health (Minnotte & Yucel, 2018) and reduced job satisfaction (Yeh, 2015). According to Taylor and Frechette (2022), marketing faculty may be particularly susceptible to burnout as they are attuned to satisfying student-as-consumer needs. Faculty burnout can be described as the exhaustion of the capacity to maintain an intense involvement that has a meaningful impact at work (Schaufeli et al., 2009). The impact on work from faculty burnout can be declining engagement and physical or mental energy, which can affect the organizational climate and student learning. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how faculty in higher education can successfully address the challenges contributing to fatigue and burnout.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Organizational Climate

According to Vos and Page (2020), the changing external and internal operating environments of universities affect faculty members' perceptions of their teaching role and ability to teach effectively. Organizational climate provides the means of considering both of these factors. The organization's climate represents shared faculty perceptions of the work environment factors affecting their roles, performance, satisfaction, and productivity (Schneider & Rentsch, 1988). See Figure 1 for the organizational climate factors.

Faculty Job Characteristics

In higher education, there are two broad job characteristics for faculty: job demands and job resources (Cao & Zang, 2022). Job demands linked with physiological and psychological costs include role conflict, job insecurity, and excessive workload (Demerouti et al., 2001). According to Demerouti (2001), job resources for faculty in higher education are elements that function in achieving work goals and reducing physiological and psychological costs. Examples of job resources are social support from colleagues, job independence, and performance feedback, including annual evaluations and student surveys. Faculty lacking the necessary job resources to meet their responsibilities may

feel overburdened while leading to stress, fatigue, and burnout. In the organizational climate, the lack of job resources may negatively influence faculty work motivation or engagement while resulting in exhaustion, burnout, and health issues (Cao & Zang, 2022).

Figure 1: Model of Organization Climate Factors (Grabanski, 2014; Vos & Page, 2020)



COVID-19 Impact on Faculty

During March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, thus changing how course delivery was conducted for higher-education students (Taylor & Frechette, 2022). According to Lee (2020), this forced many faculty members from classroom teaching face-to-face to using online pedagogy, technology, and assessment to meet student needs. During the summer of 2020, faculty converted courses to online or blended format for fall delivery. In the fall 2020 semester, many universities offered courses online or in a blended combination of face-to-face and online delivery (Aspegren & Zwickel, 2020). The change in how higher education offered courses during and after the pandemic caused more stress for faculty with working longer hours, increased workloads, and reduced support due to financial pressures (Taylor & Frechette, 2022).

Shifting to online and blended delivery has increased student anxiety and retention rates (Brown, Kush, & Volk, 2022). Economist Nathan Graw from Carleton College in Minnesota forecasted that U.S. colleges might lose 15% of their students by 2025 (Herjanto, Amin, Burke, & Burke, 2023). Due to decreasing enrollment, higher education faces future budget deficits. These projected deficits can lead to evaluating programs and faculty positions regarding viability. Osterland (2021) asserted that the pandemic has forced students to focus on entering a labor market that offers employment opportunities in marketing and other business administration fields.

Dimensions of Faculty Fatigue and Burnout

Students expect higher education institutions to ensure a quality education and learning opportunities while offering continuous improvement in their programs and degree offerings (Lehrer-Knafo, 2019). With the pressure to meet the demands of the students and stakeholders, the single most significant factor contributing to faculty fatigue and burnout was the overall workload (Taylor & Frechette, 2022). The number of students that faculty served was a factor that contributed to fatigue and burnout since the time spent with each student reduced time for scholarship and service (Pretorius, 1994).

Time and energy constraints for faculty in the work environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic have brought challenges in balancing the dual roles of work and family. According to Minnotte and Yucel (2018), work stressors can result in work-family conflict. Senecal, Vallerand, and Guay (2001) found that work-family conflict increased emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is defined as a feeling of fatigue and strain stemming from overtaxing work and may shape attitudes toward the job while reducing job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

In order to develop a strategy for future educators, this qualitative study examined faculty in higher education facing challenges in addressing fatigue and burnout while meeting their responsibilities. The qualitative study called Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) was used to analyze domains and starts with concrete themes. The domain is a consensual theme emerging from the responses to open-ended interview questions. The next step in CQR is the creation of more abstract themes after a process of cross-analysis, which is generally called axial coding in Grounded Theory (Hill, Knox, Thompson, Williams, Hess & Ladany, 2005). The ten participants are successful, experienced faculty working in higher education. The gender of the participants in the study are 30% female and 70% male. The professionals' years in their respective fields range from 6 to 41 years, with an average of 16 years.

The survey interview format consisted of demographic information and open-ended questions regarding faculty members' backgrounds, challenges, adaptations, and support for their academic roles and responsibilities. The resulting data was analyzed, leading to the identification of common themes. These themes surfaced implications for faculty addressing the conditions contributing to fatigue and burnout. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants to protect their identities and to convey information essential to the research results.

RESULTS

The participants in the study described experiences when addressing conditions that can create fatigue and burnout when working in a faculty position in academia. A comprehensive view of the participants' experience results from examining three themes emerging from analyzing the CQR research results. The three themes determined from the responses to the study are (a) organizational climate, (b) impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and (c) balancing faculty responsibilities.

Organizational Climate

Participants described the need to align their areas of responsibility, connect with colleagues, and interact with and assess students' performance effectively. In order to meet all three areas, organizational climate factors are considered instrumental to faculty success and overcoming the challenges of faculty fatigue and burnout. The participants in the study discussed the main factors that shape the organizational climate. See Figure 1 for the organizational climate factors.

The organizational climate at institutions in higher education was a motivating factor for participants when considering a faculty position before the COVID-19 period. At least 50% of the participants in the study realized at the beginning of their careers what the expectations were to teach effectively through andragogy, conduct meetings with students, and find time to meet the responsibilities of service and scholarship. Doug had family members in teaching and administration and felt like higher education was a natural field. Peter retired from the business world to enter teaching and give back to the community. Practitioners who did not have previous experience in teaching before entering a full-time faculty role found that the organizational climate was overwhelming and required an adjustment. According to Grabanski (2014), the ability to adapt to the workload expectations in higher education was affected by learning on the job in a new context, adjusting emotionally to the demands of a faculty position, and learning the art of teaching.

The participants in the study agreed that there was a steep learning curve for learning on the job without prior experience as a faculty member in higher education. In order to adjust to the new environment and establish emotional equilibrium, participants who were previous practitioners, maintained industry ties to feel valued and respected while gaining self-confidence in their abilities in the academic environment (Grabanski 2014). Support in the academic environment, such as mentoring, collegiality of faculty, and professional development programs, assisted new faculty in understanding the higher education environment and developing the skills needed for success (Grabanski 2014). Rick stated that after becoming a full-time faculty member, he did structural training through professional activities that included workshops. The other participants also participated in professional development activities offered at the university.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

The second theme determined from participants' responses was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching, scholarship, and service at institutions of higher education. During the pandemic, the institution postponed face-to-face classes and shifted to online and blended course delivery. Instructors reworked face-to-face courses into online and blended formats during the summer of 2020.

Participants described their experience developing and teaching online courses before, during, and after the

COVID-19 pandemic. Kirk stated that the 2016 online courses utilized case studies and team projects. Then, when COVID-19 changed learning in higher education, the university was ready to offer online courses to meet students' needs while faculty worked remotely.

The university established an online presence in distance education in the fall of 2020. Terry said that when the COVID-19 pandemic changed course modalities, the university and faculty were ready to transition online, and everything was easy to adapt. Samantha stated that COVID-19 helped her to fine-tune teaching and that it helped her to realize that she had been creating a community in the online classroom. In contrast, Bill commented that some faculty at the university had not taught in the online format before COVID-19 and tried to give the same lectures, which affected the quality of learning.

The Zoom platform for videoconferencing technology was initiated and utilized for communication and collaboration as the university searched for ways to meet the faculty and student needs during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research has shown that videoconferencing can be more psychologically demanding for faculty and students than face-to-face interaction (Oducado et al., 2021). Faculty participating in this study worked virtually and utilized videoconferencing during the pandemic. Bert stated, "Faculty and students were more productive than ever when working from home." He said, "The new learning environment contributed to the isolation of faculty and students." Dottie reiterated this by saying, "There were course evaluations where students reported feeling isolated and stressed with online courses." She also stated, "Students requested more due date extensions, which increased faculty pressure and fatigue." According to Doug, students were questioning faculty about the effectiveness of online learning and were more critical about course delivery and material.

Balancing Faculty Responsibilities

According to Gomes, Faria, and Gonçalves (2013), the conflict between work and home demands can contribute to faculty fatigue and burnout. The third theme determined from participants' interview responses was the challenges of balancing professional and personal faculty responsibilities. During the pandemic, faculty worked from home with the Zoom platform and the Learning Management System (LMS) provided by the university. When it was considered safe during the downside of the pandemic, faculty returned to campus for face-to-face courses. They continued to look for support to better balance work and home responsibilities.

In addressing the balance of work and home, Johnny stated, "Balancing is key when dealing with responsibilities that are not part of the routine." He stated, "I just need to work longer hours to align the responsibilities and make tradeoffs using Zoom instead of being in person." Bill mentioned that the key is to maintain balance with a strong work ethic. He said, in conclusion, that enjoying teaching, research, and service is crucial to balancing the two roles. Kirk described decreasing administration support as putting more pressure on faculty when positions remain unfilled. He said that "Constant leadership changes create confusion and frustration." In addition, Kirk believed that pressure from trying to meet goals without support can lead to frustration, which could lead to fatigue and burnout.

Compassion fatigue and Zoom fatigue from working at home during the pandemic and returning to work on campus were consistent as the two factors affecting participants in balancing their responsibilities. The interview results complemented research (Lindecker, 2021), indicating that less experienced faculty members have higher compassion fatigue and burnout levels than older, experienced faculty members. Johnny said that Zoom meetings and addressing student issues can be both time and energy consuming. Peter stated, "Feedback from students in their appraisal at the end of each semester is an effective tool to support faculty and students in addressing issues contributing to fatigue and burnout. Terry's strategy to maintain balance is managing administrative tasks while meeting teaching, scholarship, and service responsibilities.

DISCUSSION

The authors of the study cultivated a complex understanding of how faculty addressed challenges encountered in a fluctuating organizational climate, the COVID-19 pandemic, and personal and professional role responsibilities. The analysis of ten in-depth faculty interviews enhanced the validity and reliability while providing an overall faculty approach that successfully addresses the challenges of fatigue and burnout. The approach aligns with Grabanski (2014), in which the ability to adapt to workload expectations is affected by learning on the job, adjusting emotionally to the demands of a faculty position, and learning the art of teaching in a new environment. There was a new context in teaching experienced during COVID-19 when courses changed to online formats in the short time allotted during the summer of 2020. Taylor and Frechette (2022) emphasized that the primary job demand contributing to faculty burnout is the size of workload in the time allotted, available resources, and support for both the faculty and students.

While faculty worked to convert courses to online formats, there was pressure to complete the process quickly. The faculty in this study were able to meet deadlines experienced in developing and teaching online since the

university had been a pioneer in distance teaching before the COVID-19 pandemic. The organizational climate during the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged collaboration and problem-solving in course preparation through Zoom video conferencing with the administration. Even though all faculty in the study were required to teach online, there was no steep learning curve because they had experience utilizing the online platform. Meetings and timely communication were essential to reducing the stress of preparing and redeveloping course material during a challenging time for higher education.

The faculty conveyed in the interviews that there was an understanding of what factors contribute to fatigue and burnout, which, according to Thirunavukkarasu and Suryakumar (2021), can result in enthusiastic depletion, physical exhaustion, and psychological exhaustion. The faculty recognized the university's organized and practical approach to online and blended facilitation as essential to reducing fatigue and burnout. Timely communication between course developers and instructional designers resulted in courses that provided faculty time to address teaching, scholarship, and service issues. Having time to address work responsibilities created a balance that provided more time for personal responsibilities, thus reducing stress.

Participants in the study addressed factors that impact the balance between time dedicated to professional and personal responsibilities. One participant in the study stated that declining enrollment could add stress since programs might be cut or restructured, thus leading to faculty layoffs. Research shows that student retention is an increasing challenge for faculty, driven by institutional, faculty, and student factors (Muzumdar et al., 2020). According to Herjanto, Amin, M. M. Burke, and M. J. Burke (2023), student retention results from ongoing issues of student financial hardship, lack of support, and issues stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Student retention in online courses can be affected by "Zoom fatigue," which is the exhaustion and fatigue associated with video conferencing that can impact students and faculty (Oducado, Dequilla, & Villaruz, 2021). Facilitating courses on the online platform can be challenging and exhausting for faculty after they exceed their tolerance for the increasing level of exposure to this modality, according to McMurtrie (2020). In interviews, the participants discussed overcoming "Zoom fatigue" by emphasizing the importance of faculty possessing applied skills in the following areas: communication, conflict management, leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, and time management.

The increasing pressure on faculty to provide mental health support and emotional labor to students can impact faculty performance, leading to fatigue and burnout (Gould, 2018; Ernst, 2019; Heemstra, 2019). Compassion fatigue was a factor mentioned in the interviews by participants that results from the emotional strain of exposure to those suffering from the challenges resulting from traumatic events (Lindecker & Cramer, 2021). Research shows that the number of students that faculty advise and teach in the classroom can be a factor in compassion fatigue and burnout (Pretorius, 1994). The support faculty receive from administration and student success coaches can be instrumental in faculty assisting students who disclose personal information as a rationale for absences or requesting extensions relating to poor performance.

Stressful events outside the workplace, such as on the personal or societal level, can also influence faculty fatigue and burnout (Taylor & Frechetta, 2022). In order to have the time to address factors contributing to fatigue and burnout at both the workplace and home, faculty participating in the interviews emphasized the need to align responsibilities through time management while prioritizing activities. Faculty noted that high work expectations require them to adapt at the workplace and home more than when they first entered academia. Stress on faculty to address workplace and home responsibilities can be affected by the personality trait of perfectionism (Stoeber & Damian, 2016). The faculty member can be putting extra demands on their time to meet high standards when addressing events at work and home.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how faculty in higher education can successfully address the challenges contributing to fatigue and burnout. With this understanding, a strategic approach can be developed at higher education institutions to assist faculty in meeting their responsibilities at work and home without succumbing to fatigue and burnout. Faculty members have more control and flexibility over time and generally understand what the academic schedule requires from them. Therefore, the ability to adapt to meet the challenges of workload and home expectations was affected by completing assigned responsibilities while meeting deadlines and adjusting emotionally to the challenging demands of the faculty position. Administrators have an opportunity to mitigate faculty fatigue and burnout through program initiatives and supports within the organizational climate of the University.

Recommendations derived from the analysis of the data derived from the interviews and the literature review are as follows:

1. Faculty should have available professional development programs regarding fatigue and burnout and their effect on performance.

2. Faculty should have time management strategies offered before the start of the academic year.
3. Mentoring for new and junior faculty should include how to align teaching, scholarship, and service.
4. Support systems, including an innovative mentoring program, should be available for faculty throughout the academic year.
5. Strategies for Zoom conferencing and course facilitation should be available for faculty.
6. Course development training and instructional design support systems should be available to maintain the highest standards in course facilitation.
7. Programs to support faculty mental health should be available.

This study was a qualitative study, and the findings imply that there is a positive, proactive approach to overcoming the challenges of faculty fatigue and burnout. A positive approach, utilizing support systems for faculty and students, can be part of an effective strategy for meeting responsibilities for both. In addition, effective communication with timely feedback are necessary strategies used to address issues before they develop into factors that contribute to faculty fatigue and burnout.

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MARKETING EDUCATION AND BUILDING CHARACTER CORNERSTONES

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ABSTRACT

As the marketing education landscape continues to evolve, one thing remains constant: the timeless value of character. Integrity, authenticity, and empathy form the bedrock of effective marketing strategies, guiding marketers in their quest to build trust, foster connections, and drive meaningful engagement with their audience. By instilling these core values while considering western and non-western approaches, we empower the next generation of marketers to not only navigate the complexities of the digital age but also to create impactful campaigns that resonate with the hearts and minds of consumers worldwide. As educators, practitioners, and thought leaders, we can continue to nurture the character of future marketers, shaping a world where integrity, authenticity, and empathy reign supreme in the development of character and in the pursuit of meaningful connections and enduring success in this field.

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of marketing, where strategies evolve at the speed of technology, one element remains timeless and indispensable: character. While the tools and tactics of marketing education may change with each passing trend, the enduring value of integrity, authenticity, and empathy in marketing education cannot be overstated. In this article, we delve into the importance of character in these areas and how they can shape the next generation of marketing professionals.

Mele (2006) states, “As the rest of the world shows increasing interest in issues of corporate social responsibility, the role of business in society, and what constitutes true leadership, today's CEOs are being forced to reconsider their roles as well. It is no longer enough to run a company; stakeholders are demanding that a company be run well. It takes an ethical leader to carry out such a task, and business schools can provide the guidance that will produce the leaders that the modern business climate demands.” Marketing and management departments could consider embracing this.

Developing character is a self-regulating process in which ethics are inserted into discourses on institutional reforms to address perceived moral deficiencies. In this way, the ethical shaping of modern societies is driven from below, from the grass roots, and not derived from above, i.e. basic and universal moral principles. Ethical claims are thus carried upwards in a multistage social process to the level of action conditions within each context (i.e. discussions about certain action conditions take place in a certain context which has its own action conditions and which can itself be subjected to a meta-discourse on how to set or modify those conditions). In the downward direction, the political will of the people has to be implemented in suitable regulations and secured by appropriate sanctions (which are then the new conditions in the lower contexts). Homann suggests calling this approach “economics of interaction.” Minnameier, G. (2004).

The purpose of this paper is to propose that character ethics provide a solid foundation for marketing practitioners, researchers and educators. Certain virtues and character traits appear to be universal across cultures and are applicable in both global and domestic contexts. Murphy (1999). We concentrate on three major virtues or character traits while discussing some others that seem to fit well in these broader categories.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some argue that character and ethics should be included in the same discussion. Three major approaches to ethical theory — virtue, principle and politics — can be applied to marketing practices and education. Even politics theory, drawn from political philosophy focus on societal responsibilities and the social responsibility of marketing literature is grounded in this view. There are varying views on virtue ethics and duty-based ethic approaches. The operational criteria by which to judge each of these theories can be explained as follows: virtue ethics is aspirational and seeks to answer the question - What kind of person/organization should I/we be?

Duty-based ethics implies setting standards for human behavior and an expectation that individuals will live up to these standards; consequences-based ethics emphasizes the costs and benefits of any action (marketers often find this a desirable theory because it follows the common managerial action of weighing the pros and cons of various decisions); the politics model uses societal and legal guidelines to judge the appropriateness of marketing actions. All of these theories have limitations which domestic and international marketers seeking to apply them should understand. For example, in the politics approach the question of individual rights relative to societal goals is difficult to reconcile. Similarly, the greatest good for the greatest number usually means that some minority may be worse off. How can their rights be protected? The emphasis on universal rights and duties "are viewed by some as not being well-suited to our complex, multicultural, and global marketplace" Murphy (1999). In essence, virtue and character ethics is sometimes criticized for being too idealistic.

Three areas which seem to have universal appeal in marketing education literature include integrity as a foundation of trust, authenticity while connecting with the human experience, and empathy in understanding the customer journey appear as common themes in marketing education and for practitioners. A brief description of each value is listed below.

Integrity

This is the foundation of trust: In a world inundated with advertisements and promotional content, consumers crave authenticity and sincerity. Integrity lies at the heart of building trust between brands and consumers. Marketing education must instill in students the importance of honesty, transparency, and ethical conduct. From crafting compelling messaging to engaging with customers on social media, marketers must uphold the principles of integrity at every turn. By prioritizing honesty and integrity in their practices, marketers not only build trust with their audience but also foster long-lasting relationships that transcend transactions.

Authenticity

This connects with the human experience: In an age of digital communication and virtual interactions, authenticity emerges as a powerful differentiator for brands. Authenticity goes beyond polished presentations and scripted messages; it encompasses the genuine expression of a brand's values, culture, and purpose. Marketing education could encourage students to find their unique voice and express it authentically across all touchpoints.

Whether through storytelling, user-generated content, or brand narratives, authenticity allows marketers to connect with consumers on a deeper level, fostering meaningful relationships rooted in shared values and experiences. According to Sartre, a fixity of character only means that the person persists in a certain projection of him or herself. He argues that character is a vow. As an example, when someone says, "I am not easy to please," he/she is entering into a free engagement with their ill-temper, and by the same token words are a free interpretation of certain ambiguous details in their past. In this sense there is no character; there is only a project of oneself (p. 705). Jackson, (2005).

Empathy

This involves understanding the customer journey: At the heart of effective marketing lies a deep understanding of the customer journey. This ability to step into the shoes of another and understand their perspective—is indispensable in crafting marketing strategies that resonate with diverse audiences. Marketing education can cultivate empathy in students, encouraging them to listen attentively, observe thoughtfully, and empathize deeply with the needs and aspirations of their target audience. By empathizing with consumers, marketers can create campaigns that speak directly to their pain points, desires, and aspirations, fostering a sense of connection and belonging that transcends mere transactions. This virtue has a very simple meaning - being able to put yourself in the place of others.

Some philosophers see this virtue as a manifestation of the Golden Rule - treat others as you would like to be treated. Another, and more recent, interpretation of the empathy virtue is that it can be equated with the ethic of caring. This notion was proposed by Carol Gilligan in 1982) in her response to Kohlberg's work from 1969. Harms, Fritz & Rockwell (2004) developed and conducted an online survey to collect data describing 109 respondents, the extent of their character education professional program development activities, and their degrees of internalization and behavioral change. Pre and Post data comparisons revealed significant levels of change in behaviors, including considering other peoples' feelings and resolving conflict in a peaceful manner. All pre and post data demonstrated that respondents at least frequently lived their lives in accordance with their values.

Courage

In addition, the courage to take action is involved in character development. Ethical business leaders are defined by their characters, which are revealed by the positive moral habits they develop during their lifetimes. These virtues

have an obvious place in the corporate environment. A manager with courage, for instance, will make and implement hard choices.

Trust

Murphy (1999) emphasized the build-up of family/kinship trust in our cultures of marketing education. - One criticism of scholarly work in virtue ethics is its lack of recognition of virtues in other than Western cultures - e.g, Asian and African perspectives. A recent attempt to rectify this shortcoming is Fukuyama's discussion of Confucian ethical principles in Chinese society. These family and kinship ties/duties are the most important of social relationships and provide the basis for a degree of trust and obligation.

Fukuyama contends this emphasis on family virtues works to the detriment of other social relationships and is one reason why large companies have not historically been successful in that culture. This can develop a "just" marketer/manager who will treat all people fairly to the best of their ability. A manager with this practical wisdom will make thoughtful decisions. Melé (2006).

Being Involved

Stan (2013) discussed the involvement of the person. A character inspired leader would accept beyond any doubt that external effort of the individuals affected by failure, no matter how consistent, genuine and sustained they might be, cannot replace complete and convincing involvement of that person within her own existential (educational, if case be) itinerary towards achievement of the desired success.

Freedom

It can be argued that freedom as a value, in both capitalism and democracy, is a prized and honored value. To many, freedom is the central, driving force for efficiency and success in modern economic institutions. Jackson's (2005) article offered an explication of human freedom in an effort to show how such ideas might complement and improve the standard virtue and rule based ethical systems offered in most business ethics texts as well as enhance ethical life in the business world.

DISCUSSION

Culture

International marketing, differentiating western and non-western cultures is becoming ever-increasingly paramount in curriculum development and delivery. None of the foregoing would make sense were it true that nation states should all adopt one, single, monolithic blueprint of character and ethics.

It was revealed that while evidence accumulates that some fundamental ethical principles are transnational in character, it also suggests strongly that nations and cultures possess at least some "moral free space" in which to shape their own religious, cultural, and historic identities. Hence, within this range of moral free space lie the important questions about ethics and economic efficiency. Donaldson, T. (2001). This can apply to the development of character, as well.

Clark (1990) referenced Hall's 1966 comment: "No matter how hard man tries, it is impossible for him to divest himself of his own culture, for it has penetrated to the roots of his nervous system and determines how he perceives the world . . . people cannot act or interact in any meaningful way except through the medium of culture." (p. 177). Numerous examples reflecting differences between nations could be cited. That such differences actually exist seems obvious, but understanding them is not simple. One approach, which gained as much currency in the ancient world as it has in the modern, is to study national character.

National Character

This has a usefulness and applicability for research in international marketing. A working definition was offered: national character describes the pattern of enduring personality characteristics found among the populations of nations. Clark (1990). In relation to retail and sales groups related to marketing, substantial variation was found to be evident between the two different types of response groups (retail management groups versus retail sales groups) on the different ethical evaluative dimensions. Manager groups, in all cases, tended to be more critical of the unethical action on the moral equity dimension than their sales counterparts.

Henthorne, Robin, & Reidenbach (1992) emphasized that manager groups tended to perceive the action as less traditionally or culturally acceptable than did the salespeople. Finally, the manager groups indicated that the actions tended to violate their sense of contract and promise more than did the sales groups. It is noteworthy that the direction of these relationships held in every case.

The highly similar responses to these scenarios among the relatively diverse sales groups, as well as among the retail managers, combined with the disparity between the two segments, suggests ethical perceptions between the two occupational groups are different. One hypothesis that might explain this difference is that there are separate management and sales force cultures in the United States, which are both pervasive and exhibit different ethical values.

Henthorne, Robin, & Reidenbach (1992) stated, “These values are not organizationally specific but rather are occupationally specific. However, additional research is needed in order to verify this hypothesis. The additional research should include different groups of managers and salespeople, different scenarios, and different geographic areas of the United States.”

Other Virtues Worth Considering

There are also alternative approaches to character building which could fit into the categories mentioned above. Although a number of recent books and articles propose several virtues such as creativity, community, justice, practical realism, prudence, etc. that can be applied to contemporary business, a few advocate specific virtues relevant to marketing. Friendliness and shame as well as more traditional virtues like honesty and trust may be included as specific virtues to consider. Studies generally show five core virtues for global marketing, presenting related virtues and their application to marketing.

Integrity Revisited

A hallmark virtue of any profession or community is that its members act with integrity. This word generally has two meanings - adherence to a code and completeness/wholeness. A second essential virtue for international marketing continues to be fairness. The dictionary definition states that fairness includes being unbiased and equitable. Within philosophical discussions, the term justice is used to denote this idea. However, in a business context, fairness is a basic expectation without the potentially pejorative connotation that justice entails.

Trust Revisited

Although the word "trustworthiness" is technically proper when one discusses this virtue, in a business setting, the shorter version is almost always used. Dependence on others is a central notion within trust. Much of daily activity from driving one's automobile, to visiting the dentist and accepting a personal check involves trusting another party. Since trust is cooperative in nature and not enforceable, it is inherently an ethical notion. Successful international marketing requires that managers in the home country trust their employees located elsewhere.

Furthermore, consumers learn to trust brand names that they may have difficulty pronouncing and are uncertain as to where the products are manufactured. Some authors point out that societies can save substantially on transaction costs because economic agents trust one another and thus can be more efficient than low trust societies where contracts and enforcement mechanisms are necessary. The area of relationship marketing requires high levels of trust between partners and can lead to several positive outcomes - greater communication and feedback, better problem solving and effective delegation. Respect continues to be a vital virtue - This virtue does not appear in recent books focusing on virtues relevant to business. However, it seems especially pertinent to marketing and is frequently mentioned in corporate ethics documents (Murphy (1999). To respect someone is to hold them in high regard or to give them special attention. In Western societies, respect is often associated with not interfering with another.

Respect

This virtue that can be easily misconstrued. It does not mean acquiescence. Individuals who "respectfully disagree" with others are often held in higher regard. Respecting the values and traditions of another culture does not mean practicing relative ethics.

As a researcher, I continue to find connections that continually lead to these three areas serving as cornerstones for marketing education in 2024 and beyond.

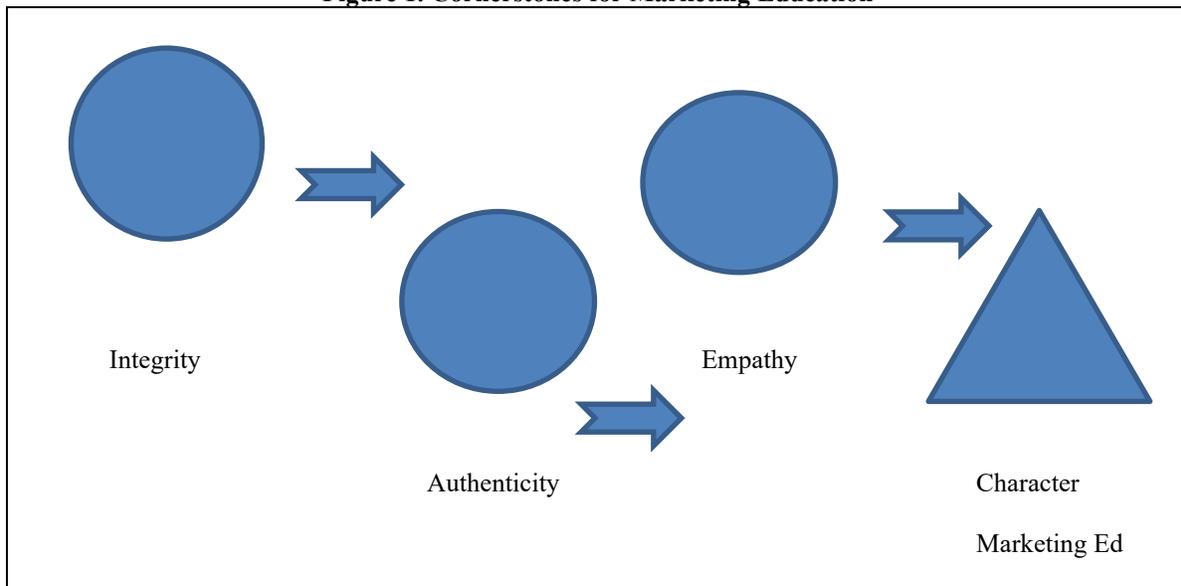
Literature provides enough examples, and investigation by this researcher indicates these three values are the bedrock of operating within competitive markets, being believable, and serving the client with integrity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Infusing character development and ethical behavior in your curriculum – can become a reality in the practice of marketing. Educators should be involved in curricular activities reinforcing these important ethical ideals. The goal of virtue based marketing education should be to assist students in becoming the kind of professional that "(a)

they would like to be; (b) the profession idealizes or aspires to educate; and (c) diverse communities find competent, beneficial and trustworthy.”

Figure 1. Cornerstones for Marketing Education



Several recommendations have been offered by various authors. One is to integrate ethics and character instruction throughout the curriculum by developing professionals who can recognize and deal with ethical situations. The virtue ethics focus means that educators should nurture and mentor students' intellects, social sensibilities and emotional understandings. A second recommendation is to involve students more in their education as they move through the years. As the learner gains competence, responsibility gradually shifts to the student. As a result, character education can also pose tough questions for students to contemplate.

Some scholars have been particularly critical of western society and its basis on what he termed the “marketing character”, where it is asserted that the self is experienced as a commodity whose value and meaning are externally determined. With this in mind, a new psychometric instrument (the Saunders Consumer Orientation Instrument – SCOI) was constructed with the aim of measuring and assessing the marketing character within an Australian sampling frame. This is not the subject of this study but suggests further exploration is needed.

Fromm (1947) believed that humans were distinct from other animals in that their facility to reason has torn them away from their prehistoric union with nature. The fact that reason enables humans to be self-aware of their isolation from nature leads to what Fromm calls the “human dilemma.” This dilemma has been named “the burden of freedom” which is a feeling of being alone in the world and arises from having the freedom to think and make choices for oneself while asking the fundamental existential questions such as

“Who am I?”, “Why am I here?”, and, “Is this all that there is?”. This burden is thought to produce basic anxiety Saunders & Munro (2000).

Social Media Influence

Social Media continues to have an influence in discussion of character development discussions. To foster marketing management character among the millennial generation, it can be pursued through reinventing the potential of this relevant and valuable generation. The desire for financial freedom also encourages the growth of entrepreneurial interest in the millennial generation. In addition, social media is an important factor that can strengthen the growth of innovative and entrepreneurial character.

Adnan, Yahya, & Saputra, (2021) state, “Given that reinventing potential activities, the desire for financial freedom, and social media are important factors in shaping marketing and management character, stakeholders such as government, business groups, and universities must be able to adjust programs, policies, and curriculum that can support the growth of these elements of character among the millennial generation.”

CONCLUSIONS

As the marketing education landscape continues to evolve, one thing remains constant: the timeless value of character. Integrity, authenticity, and empathy form the bedrock of effective marketing strategies, guiding marketers in their quest to build trust, foster connections, and drive meaningful engagement with their audience. This is not to say that other virtues and values should be excluded from the discussion.

Yet, by instilling these core values while considering western and non-western approaches, we empower the next generation of marketers to not only navigate the complexities of the digital age but also to create impactful campaigns that resonate with the hearts and minds of consumers worldwide. As educators, practitioners, and thought leaders, we can continue to nurture the character of future marketers, shaping a world where integrity, authenticity, and empathy reign supreme in the pursuit of meaningful connections and enduring progression in marketing education and management fields.

Whether you're a seasoned marketer or a student just embarking on your marketing journey, remember this: In a world driven by data and technology, it's the human touch—the character—that truly sets brands apart. As you hone your skills and craft your strategies, let integrity be your compass, authenticity your guide, and empathy your superpower. Together, we all can build a future where marketing management strategies are not just about selling products but about creating experiences, fostering connections, and making a positive impact on the world around us.

Minnameier (2004) would argue that, “Ethics and building character in marketing education are not opposed to each other, but congenial.” The same is true for marketing education and building character along the way.

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RECLAIMING THE VALUE OF U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Higher education has been under attack from voices outside and inside the academy (Crumbley, Flinn, & Reichelt, 2012; Fry, Braga, & Parker, 2024) and has faced several years of bad press. These increase the pressure of a problematic enrollment picture caused by declines in the number of high school graduates and the college-going rate of graduates in many states. To avoid a cataclysmic result, higher education institutions must do a better job creating and communicating value. We outline several causes of the declining perceptions of value provided by higher education attainment and recommend actions to reclaim the value of higher education in the U.S.

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Value: Costs

We approach the value question from a marketing perspective by focusing on perceptions of benefits and costs, starting with the cost picture.

A 2022 study by NORC at the University of Chicago found that 75% of Americans believe people do not attend college because they cannot afford it. Tuition and fees, along with room and board rates, have risen dramatically in recent decades. As Table 1 indicates, tuition in U.S. has more than doubled since 1980, even after adjusting for inflation. Part of the blame for that increase rests with state governments. As a result of sustained cuts and governmental spending pressures elsewhere, higher education has declined as a share of state budgets. The higher education share of states' general fund spending fell from 14.6 percent in 1990 to 9.4 percent in 2014. An Urban Institute Report found that by 2021, the percent of state funding had declined to 8.5%. As state funding for higher education has declined, institutions have resorted to tuition, room and board, and other fee increases to make up funding shortfalls.

Table 1. The Increasing Cost of College Tuition in the US

	1980	2000	2020
Tuition in 1980, 2000, and 2020 dollars	\$3,499	\$12,922	\$29,0333
Tuition in 1980, 2000, and 2020 dollars	\$3,499	\$5,874	\$8,798

NOTE: Tuition cost includes tuition, fees, and room and board from the Digest of Education Statistics, Table 330.10. Inflation is measured using the consumer price index.

Source: US Department of Education, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and authors' calculations.

While part of the blame for increased tuition falls on state governments, higher education institutions are not exactly faultless. Non-instructional spending, which includes spending on administration and student services, outpaced instructional spending from 2010 to 2018, according to the American Council of Trustees and Alumni Institute for Effective Governance. The Council found spending on student services rose 29% and administrative costs increased by 19%, while instructional spending only rose 17%. A 2021 study by Delucchi et al found between 1976 and 2018, the number of full-time faculty employed at colleges and universities in the U.S. increased by 92% while student enrollment increased by 78%. During this same period, full-time administrators and other professionals employed by those institutions increased by 164% and 452%, respectively.

The cost issue is further complicated by increasing opportunity costs of attending college. Young adults attending college forego the opportunity to enter a tight labor market with increasing wages for lower skilled positions. Students and their parents are questioning the value of higher education in light of rising costs and improved job prospects for

young adults without college degrees (Fry, Braga, & Parker, 2024). Additionally, a 2022 survey found that even one in three college graduates did not think their education was worth the costs (Strada Education Foundation, 2022). A March 2023 (Belkin) survey found that only 42% of Americans believe college is worth the cost because it leads to better job opportunities and higher income, while 56% believe that earning a college degree is not worth the cost. When we compare this result to 2013, we find that opinions have changed over 10 years. The 2013 study found that 53% believed college was a good decision, while 40% believed it wasn't.

Higher Education Value: Benefits

While the benefits of higher education may be far-reaching for society, focusing on two important stakeholder groups—students and employers—may be more informative for addressing the tangible outcomes of changes in the value calculation. For both students and employers, perhaps the most significant benefit is a credential that reflects a certain knowledge base and skillset. Students view this credential as the ticket to higher standards of living, while employers view the credential as a signal that a potential employee will be productive in their organization. As discussed earlier, though, students are increasingly less likely to see the credential as a ticket to higher incomes, even without consider the cost side. Tight labor markets—or perhaps changes in employers' perceptions of the value of a degree have led notable companies such as Delta, IBM and GM to drop degree requirements (Liu, 2024). Even state governments are dropping requirements that most jobs have a four-year degree (Sigelman et al., 2022).

Employers dropping degree requirements may suggest that a degree does not signal the value it once did. Put differently, college graduates may be less distinguishable from nongraduates, which suggests less learning is occurring than in past years. Again, state governments, while well meaning, may be contributing to a decline in learning that has led to a less valuable degree. In order to incentivize better retention and graduation rates, some states have gone to a performance-based funding model for a portion of a university's state funding. For example, the Kentucky Council on Post-secondary Education states: "Aligning state funding with college completion and other student success metrics incentivizes institutions to enroll, progress, and graduate more students. The model also rewards the efficient production of degrees and credentials, and provides premiums when institutions graduate low-income, underrepresented minority, and STEM+H students. An overall rise in the number of graduates maximizes taxpayers' return on investment in higher education and translates to a more highly skilled workforce."

While performance-based funding sounds good in theory, it may create perverse incentives to game those performance metrics tied to state funding. For example, retention- and on-time graduation-rate based funding formulas may lead to administrators pressuring faculty to pass students along who in earlier years would have failed. While universities overly focused on drop, fail, and withdrawal (DFW) rates could mean that they want to ensure students get the academic support they need, an undue focus on DFW rates also could be a signal that administration thinks an individual faculty member grades overly tough. If the focus on DFW rates is the latter it could lead faculty to sever the link between learning and grade performance, thus producing students with course credit but without the corresponding knowledge and skills that the course credit is supposed to represent, and, by extension, graduates without the knowledge and skills expected by employers who select in part on that degree credential.

It is not surprising in this content, then, that grade inflation is alive and well at many universities (Crumbley, Flinn, & Reichelt, 2012). While grades once signaled a student's level of competency in a subject, today it signals very little. In 1950, the average GPA at Harvard was 2.55, today it is 3.8 (Harvard Crimson). While most students will never attend Harvard, grade inflation is also prevalent at many public universities (Gradeinflation.com). One might argue that students today are "smarter" than students of years past because high school graduation rates have increased. Unfortunately, data from the ACT debunks this argument.

In October 2023, ACT released information that the average composite score on the ACT test fell to 19.5 for the class of 2023, a decline of 0.3 points from 2022 which was already the lowest composite score since 1991. This was the sixth consecutive year of ACT declines, a trend that began before the COVID-19 disruption. The ACT also reported that more than four in ten seniors meet none of the college readiness benchmark and 70% of seniors fall short of college readiness benchmark for mathematics.

Thus, we have the paradox of higher college GPAs even though a critical mass of students is not adequately prepared for college. To make matters worse, many colleges shifted to a test-optional admissions process for the fall 2020 admissions cycle due to COVID 19. For the fall 2023 cycle, more than 1,900 colleges and universities in the U.S. extended their test-optional policies with some making the move to test-optional even longer or permanent (Fair Test). Consequently, these colleges are relying on high school GPA as the indicator of college readiness. In a 2023 paper, Bowden et al. found that increased high school graduation rates and higher high school GPAs have not resulted in higher student achievement. Bowden also theorizes that relaxing academic standards to achieve higher graduation rates may be exacerbating gaps on ACT performance between lower and higher achieving students.

One might argue that even though students are less prepared for college, they are studying more once they get

there to make up for any academic deficiencies. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Studies show that students are studying less (Babcock and Marks, 2011) and working more hours (Scott-Clayton, 2012). Denning et al. (2022) found that a primary driver of university graduation rates is grade inflation, and that a number of recent college graduates would not have earned degrees if students had been held to the 1970s and 80s standards. Hence, we have a situation where degrees awarded today may reflect less learning than degrees granted in previous generations.

ACTIONS TO RECLAIM THE VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

While the headwinds facing higher education are strong, we are not without hope that the issues highlighted above can be solved with coherent actions. Here, we conclude with brief recommendations that should reclaim the value of higher education lost in recent decades.

1. Increase academic rigor. Rigor is necessary for degrees to remain or once again become more reliable signals of productivity. Deans and provosts should be just as concerned with faculty that have grade distributions with a disproportionate number of As assigned as they are with faculty who are on the DFW “watch list”. When degrees are reliable signals of knowledge and skills, perceptions of their value should increase.
2. Fix budgets. The next action is to reduce non-instructional spending and reallocate those funds to holding down tuition increases and for student tutoring support. As students come to college less prepared than in past years, additional spending on tutoring is one area where additional spending is needed. While doctoral granting institutions may be able to utilize graduate students to fill some of these roles, institutions that are primarily undergraduate institutions do not have that luxury. Universities without an adequate pool of graduate students will need to hire professional tutors or instructors that have a dual role as both a teacher and tutor.
3. Advertise net costs. We also suggest that colleges ensure students understand the net cost of attending a university is not always equal to the full Cost of Attendance (COA). A Brookings study in 2023 found that the net cost of attending a university has not increased by as much as the full COA. The federal government requires universities to state their COA. This “Sticker Price” includes tuition, fees, room and board, books, travel, and other expenses. However, the full COA does not reflect scholarships and other grants such as Pell Grants that reduce the overall cost for many students. While universities are required to provide net price calculators based on a student’s personal financial situation, the net price calculators have been found to be cumbersome and require detailed financial information from parents and the students to be useful. By utilizing the net costs of attendance instead of the full COA, universities can reduce the perception that the cost of college is not worth the benefit.
4. Consistently convey value. Universities need to also emphasize both the short and long-term value of college graduation. While any one individual without a college degree can out-earn a college graduate, the National Center for Education Statistics found in 2021, “For 25- to 34-year-olds who worked full time, year-round, higher educational attainment was associated with higher median earnings.” The Center reported the median earnings of those with a master’s or higher degree were \$74,600, some 21 percent higher than the earnings of those with a bachelor’s degree (\$61,600) and 55 percent higher than the earnings of those who completed high school (\$39,700). The Association of Public Land-Grant Universities reported in 2022 that over a lifetime, college graduates make \$1.2 million more than high school graduates.
5. Re-center on academics. Some politicians have railed against universities’ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, while others have criticized graduation and retention rates. Activists have pressured universities to divest endowment assets and take stands on controversial issues such as the conflict between Israel and Hamas. Political activities of students and faculty, and political statements by senior administrators, have drawn the lions’ share of media coverage of higher education for several years, distracting the community from the core academic mission of universities. Recently, Harvard announced that it would no longer make statements about political matters (Friedersdorf, 2024). The rest of academe should follow suit, thus enabling universities to remain better focused on communicating the value of its core work.

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THE MARKETING AND ANALYTICS OF A TRIP CHAINING SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses what is known as the trip chaining problem (TCP) that links/connects n number of locations for the purpose of acquiring or dispensing items of interest, need, or pressing expiration. An efficient sequencing of site visits that an individual would follow in securing the desired items or services is offered. Alternatively, a service that tours in the individual's place, secures and bundles the desired items, and makes the bundle conveniently available to the client is addressed. The learning value of the TCP to marketing and other business students and how it may be the subject matter of a capstone course are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

For teaching purposes, the essentials of marketing are often presented to students in succinct form as the 4Ps (pricing, promotion, product, and place) or in terms of consumer wants and needs, cost, buying convenience, and communication often referred to as the 4Cs. Through case studies, course projects, student consultancies, internships or ad hoc projects with select subject organizations, students during their undergraduate matriculation have some exposure to and experience with the marketing function of a variety of organizations. In the spirit of this pedagogy, the trip chaining problem (TCP) and its value creating possibilities are presented.

Trip chaining may be looked upon as connecting in the least costly way n number of sites/locations, facilities, depositories, or assets for the purpose of dispensing or acquiring at each a desired product, service, or commodity.

As an example, suppose a Global Positioning System (GPS) provider wants to investigate enhancing its basic service to include producing itineraries that link a set of user specified sites to be visited. Unlike the typical GPS client request for a mapping between two locations, trip chaining calls for a mapping among $n > 1$ site visits. The client may seek a routing that links home to locations such as a refueling station, food market, post office, bank, laundry, and a hardware store based on the best available information at the time. Alternatively, the client may seek a third party (3P) possibly the GPS provider to do some or all of the same trip chaining and to make the result (products, items of interest to the client, serviced products, etc.) bundled and conveniently available to the client. For either scenario, it is reasonable that the client would seek the site chaining with the smallest travel distance, see Asghari and Al-e-hashem (2021) and He, Liu and Shen (2022). The value of the trip chaining itinerary to the prospective client is the travel time savings due to the provider's efficient linking of the desired sites based on information known to it and the technology it brings to providing a chaining solution. For the 3P, a savings is realized in seeking the route offering the least costly utilization of its trip chaining resources, e.g. its drivers and vehicles. In both cases, the sequencing of sites visits must be effective in producing what the client wants. Seeking the least distance linking of the n number of sites is a simple proxy for pursuit of the least costly most efficient routing. Once the chaining with the smallest distance linking the n number of locations is found, estimates of the projected time of arrival at each location as well as fuel consumption (battery or gasoline) and fuel availability in route and other features of possible interest to the client along the way can be identified. For the latter, the client may be informed of pricing and product promotions at retail outlets adjacent and peripheral to the provided itinerary as well as other personalized marketing opportunities. The 3P may be interested in multiple itineraries linking site visits for multiple clients. Interest in multiple itineraries may arise when some sites have limited availability during the day and may need to be visited early in the touring; compatibility issues may arise in carrying in close proximity certain items; and weather and road conditions along the path may affect access to some sites and change the appeal of the itinerary selected in advance of the trip start. It seems more likely that conflicting situations would arise in accommodating the needs of multiple clients than a single client. When they arise, an alternate itinerary should be readily available. The above provides some insight to the nature of the trip chaining product.

From the authors' experience with classroom treatment of the TCP, students enjoy investigating the marketability

and feasibility of a TCP. Perhaps due to the ubiquity of delivery services such as USPS, UPS, Amazon, Uber Eats, Grab-and-Go, Grubhub, DoorDash and others, students see like-kind services in action. No doubt some are customers or employees thereof. As a result, students can relate to searching for effective (dispensing and/or acquiring what the customer wants) and efficient (least costly) trip chaining. See Primerano, Taylor, Pitaksringkarn and Tisato (2008) for discussion of the TCP.

The TCP may be modeled in a variety of ways. In its simplest form, it may be framed as a string of location references such as 0,2,5,3,1,4,0 indicating that the linking/touring begins at location 0 and is followed with visits to sites 2,5,3,1,4 in that order reading left to right and thereafter returns to the starting point 0. Given such a representation, it is easy to produce other trip chains by permuting location references 1,...,5 individually one at a time, in pairs, or in other orderly ways to be addressed. Each chain is then evaluated for its appeal. It will be shown how the data modeling lends itself to spreadsheet organization and in turn spreadsheet analysis. The string is the means for mining the trip chaining data set.

Investigation of a TCP is well suited to a capstone course and teamwork experience. It would bring together students with a variety of backgrounds and skill sets to investigating a TCP. The latter may arise from an instructor-framed TCP such as the 3P alternative service provider introduced above. Or the subject TCP may be a student-envisioned chaining innovation(s) based perhaps upon their buying behavior experiences with Amazon, Uber and other like entities whose core product involves trip chaining. Some students come to a capstone course with experiences in researching a good/service enhancement and planning how to take it to market. Some have course experiences in modeling and solving a business problem to optimality using spreadsheet methods. Some have course experiences in researching product liability issues that may be applicable to what the 3P can/not do in place of the client. And some have experiences with costing a new product and financing its introduction to the production environment. Judgment of the TCP's feasibility, efficiency and effectiveness would be a group decision based on analytics, i.e. the outcomes of producing and evaluating trip chains consistent with the envisioned TCP. Most students come to a capstone course with prior teamwork experiences. As such, the proposed experience is aligned with the learning advocated by marketing educators such as Gaidis and Andrews (1990) and may mimic an early career first assignment within a marketing group, see Spanjaard, Hall and Stegemann (2018). In this regard, the TCP is offered for the marketing instructor's consideration.

The special feature of the presentation is how an Excel spreadsheet may be used to investigate the impact of envisioned trip chaining enhancements. No reference to special purpose trip chaining software is made. The Excel environment is a testing platform that allows students to go beyond just envisioning trip chaining enhancements.

PROBLEM FRAMING

Trip chaining is modeled here within an Excel spreadsheet environment that is familiar to business students and ubiquitous among university learning environments. It is presumed what works well in the Excel modeling of student-conceived service enhancements will work well in a GPS-like computational environment. The contrary is also presumed. Accordingly, spreadsheet modeling of trip chaining provides students with investigative means for assessing the feasibility and computational burden of what they propose as chaining enhancements.

Trip chaining can be visually displayed on a two-dimensional (X,Y) grid where each location of interest is identified with Cartesian coordinates. The rectilinear distance between any two points on the grid is known as the Manhattan distance metric. It is the sum of the absolute difference between the two X coordinates and the absolute difference between the two Y coordinates of any two points of interest. A two-way table of distances in Manhattan blocks (MB) between all two-point locations of interest on the grid can be composed and addressed in an Excel spreadsheet.

The string form of a trip chain as presented in the preceding section is adopted here. For the TCP with $n=3$ site visits denoted by references 1,2,3, there are $3!=6$ possible trip chains. Without explicitly referencing the start and return site denoted by identifier 0, the order of site visits for the six possibilities read left to right are 1,2,3; 1,3,2; 2,1,3; 3,1,2; 2,3,1; and 3,2,1. Each chain can be evaluated for total travel distance and other considerations of interest. To evaluate a chain such as 1,2,3 for travel distance, it would be necessary to have the distances between the following two-point locations, i.e. 0,1; 1,2; 2,3; and 3,0. Lookups in the table of all two-point distances would provide the needed information for computing the trip chaining travel distance. Translating any trip chain of interest in string form to a series of vertically contiguous spreadsheet cells is achieved in the following way. The leftmost location reference in the string is assigned to the first cell in the designated area and each string location index thereafter is assigned to the cell immediately below the preceding cell assignment until all location references in the string are so assigned. The translation occurs automatically for any trip chain entered in string form in a reserved spreadsheet cell. Thereafter travel distance and other features of the trip chaining can be calculated.

Framing a trip chain for individual customers or a third-party provider 3P as a string of location indices, decomposing a chain into its successive two-point constituents, and composing and accessing the table of all two-point distances make up the basic evaluative framework offered in this narrative. The framing provides students with the means to explore firsthand their proposed service enhancements without learning coding that may be unique and proprietary to GPS-like processing. Spreadsheet framing of the TCP as presented is intended to disarm what may appear at first to be a daunting modeling problem.

EXAMPLE

The TCP to be investigated has $k=2$ customers and one alternative third-party provider (3P). Customers 1 and 2 have respectively three and four sites to visit. Consequently, the 3P who if elected by both customers would tour seven sites to acquire the sought after customer items.

Framing the Example TCP

In the following narrative, let 01, 02, and 03P refer respectively to the home/start positions for Customer 1, Customer 2 and the third-party provider 3P trips. Also, for any trip chain, it is assumed that the touring vehicle leaves from and returns to its respective home/start location. The points of visitation for Customers 1 and 2 and in turn the third-party provider 3P are presented in co-ordinate form in Table 1. Given the content of Table 1, the distance between all two-point locations in city/metropolitan blocks (MB) were computed and are displayed in Table 2. The reader can verify the entries there using the content of Table 1. It is assumed that distances $d_{i,j} = d_{j,i}$ between any two points i,j applies. It simplifies the treatment and accounts for the appearance of Table 2.

Table 1. Site References

Site Locations for Customer 1		Site Locations for Customer 2		Site Visits for the 3P	
Location Reference	Grid Co-ordinates X,Y	Location Reference	Grid Co-ordinates X,Y	Location Reference	Grid Co-ordinates X,Y
01	38,12	02	2,44	03P	50,50
1	83,90	4	31,23	1	83,90
2	35,52	5	45,94	2	35,52
3	80,2	6	39,11	3	80,2
		7	93,52	4	31,23
				5	45,94
				6	39,11
				7	93,52

In Figure 1 below, a trip chain is shown for the alternative third-party provider (3P) that begins at and returns to position 50,50 labelled 03P, the home/start position. Following the directed bolding of the arrows traces out the manner in which the 3P would visit the seven sites. The first visited site is at 35,52, location 2, a distance of 17 (=15+2) MB grid units away from the home site. The second site visit is at 31,23, location site 4, a travel distance of 33 (= 4+29) MB grid units away from the first site. The third site visit is at 39,11, location 6, a distance of 20 (= 8+12) MB grid units away from second site. The site visits would continue in the manner of the directed arrows and terminate at the home/start position 50,50. Figure 1 is a visual of one possible trip chain for the 3P.

Solving the Example TCP

The trip chain found by successively linking the site closest in distance to the most recently linked site beginning with the home location is known as the nearest neighbor rule (NNR). It is a heuristic with strong intuitive appeal for students. Although following the NNR in composing a first trip chaining solution is relatively fast, it does not guarantee the optimal chain. The trip chains for Customers 1 and 2 found by applying the NNR are presented in Table 3 below. The distance between any two adjacent locations there can be verified by means of a lookup in Table 2. For example, in the section titled 'Trip Chain for Customer 1' in Table 3, the distance value 43 in row 2 under the column heading 'Travel Distance (MB)' was obtained by means of the lookup in row 01 and column 2 of Table 2 in the section titled 'For Customer 1'. It is the distance from Customer 1's start/home location to location 2. The distance value 86 displayed below value 43 in Table 3 is the distance from location 2 to location 1 found in row 1 column 2 of

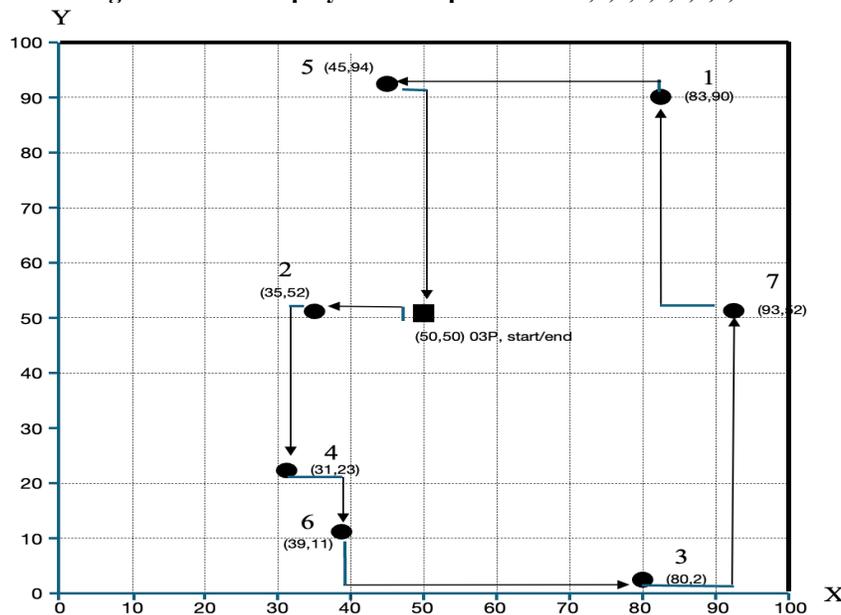
Table 2. Note in Table 3 each distance measure MB is converted to miles using the rule of 0.05 mile to one MB, see Rosenthal and Strange (2020).

Table 2. Two-point Distances for Customers 1,2 and the 3P of the Example

For Customer 1					For Customer 2					
From/ To	01	1	2	3	From/ To	02	4	5	6	7
01	-	123	43	52	02	-	50	93	70	99
1	-	-	86	91	4	-	-	85	20	91
2	-	-	-	95	5	-	-	-	89	90
3	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	95
					7	-	-	-	-	-

For the 3P								
From / To	03P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
03P	-	73	17	78	46	49	50	45
1	-	-	86	91	119	42	123	48
2	-	-	-	95	33	52	45	58
3	-	-	-	-	70	127	50	63
4	-	-	-	-	-	85	20	91
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	89	90
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	95
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 1. Grid Display of 3P Trip Chain 03P,2,4,6,3,7,1,5,03P



Observe how the two-point trip chain decompositions presented in Table 3 lend themselves to spreadsheet translation and in turn to calculation of features of interest such as travel distance.

An orderly repositioning of each location index one at a time in each position of an available trip chain is a way to generate alternative trip chains among which a better trip chain may be found. For illustration, repositioning location indices 1,2, and 3 (arbitrarily selected) in this manner within the 3P's trip chain displayed in Table 3 produced the trip

chains displayed in Table 4. The trip chain 2,4,6,3,5,1,7 for the 3P displayed in row 4 under the heading ‘Permuting Location Index 3’ has travel distance of 382. The latter is better than the 394 distance measure reported in Table 3. In Table 4, the start/return location identifier 03P is omitted in the cited trip chains. However, the two-point distance between the starting location and the first site visit and the two-point distance between the last site visit and return to the home site are included in each distance measure reported in Table 4. The point of Table 4 is demonstration of i) the repositioning technique for generating orderly perturbations to a trip chain produced by any means and ii) the spreadsheet-like layout for doing so. With regard to i), note the left-to-right downward staircase appearance of indices 1, 2, and 3 in the chains displayed under the column labels ‘Permuted Chains’. Note too that the search for a better trip chain can continue by applying the same repositioning methodology to trip chain 2,4,6,3,5,1,7, the best found chain up to this point with travel distance 382.

Table 3. Assessing Performance Features of Select Trip Chains

Trip Chain for Customer 1 01,2,1,3,01 ¹			Trip Chain for Customer 2 02,4,6,5,7,02 ¹			Trip Chain for the 3P 03P,2,4,3,6,5,1,7,03P ²		
Segment ³	Travel Distance (MB)	Travel Distance Miles	Segment ³	Travel Distance (MB)	Travel Distance Miles	Segment ³	Travel Distance (MB)	Travel Distance Miles
01	-	-	02	-	-	03P	-	-
2	43	2.15	4	50	2.50	2	17	0.85
1	86	4.30	6	20	1.00	4	33	1.65
3	91	4.55	5	89	4.45	3	70	3.50
01	52	2.60	7	90	4.50	6	50	2.50
			02	99	4.95	5	89	4.45
						1	42	2.10
						7	48	2.40
						03P	45	2.25
Total	272	13.60	Total	348	17.40	Total	394	19.70

¹ Obtained by applying the NNR. ² Arbitrarily selected for illustration. ³ The trip chain is decomposed beginning with placement of the leftmost site reference in the first spreadsheet cell location and each successive site reference one cell vertically below the preceding placement.

Not shown in Table 4 is the method of positional interchange of location index pairs. For example, in an available trip chain, the positional interchange of location index 1 with each of the other indices one pair at a time in each instance produces a new trip chain for evaluation. The investigation would continue with pair positional interchanges involving index 2 and each of the other location indices. Then index 3 until all location indices have been so paired, interchanged and evaluated. Pair interchanges for index 1 would be 1,2 and 1,3 ...through 1,7; for index 2, the positional interchange pairs would be 2,3 and 2,4 ... through 2,7 and continue with similar treatment to remaining indices 3 through 7. This methodology is referred to as pair positional interchange or just interchanging in this paper, see Wellington and Lewis (2021) for more detail.

Table 4. Searching for Improvements to the 3P’s Trip Chain

Row	Repositioning Selective Indices in Trip Chain 2,4,3,6,5,1,7 ¹					
	Permuting Location Index 1		Permuting Location Index 2		Permuting Location Index 3	
	Permuted Chains ¹	Travel Distance	Permuted Chains ¹	Travel Distance	Permuted Chains ¹	Travel Distance
1	1,2,4,3,6,5,7	536	2,4,3,6,5,1,7	394	3,2,4,6,5,1,7	450
2	2,1,4,3,6,5,7	566	4,2,3,6,5,1,7	448	2,3,4,6,5,1,7	426
3	2,4,1,3,6,5,7	534	4,3,2,6,5,1,7	480	2,4,3,6,5,1,7	394
4	2,4,3,1,6,5,7	558	4,3,6,2,5,1,7	398	2,4,6,3,5,1,7	382
5	2,4,3,6,1,5,7	470	4,3,6,5,2,1,7	486	2,4,6,5,3,1,7	470
6	2,4,3,6,5,1,7	394	4,3,6,5,1,2,7	486	2,4,6,5,1,3,7	400
7	2,4,3,6,5,7,1	470	4,3,6,5,1,7,2	420	2,4,6,5,1,7,3	390

¹ With travel distance 394. ² To facilitate comprehension of the repositioning technique, the notation 03P denoting the starting and ending location in each tour is omitted.

Table 5 is demonstration of the search technique that combines i) repositioning each location index (1,...,7) one

at a time in all seven positions of a selected routing string (row 0) for the 3P and ii) positionally interchanging all index pairs. Implementation may begin with either i) or ii) followed by the other. The analysis of table 5 began with investigation of the positional interchange of all pairs of locations indices native to 7,2,4,6,3,5,1 in an orderly fashion, i.e. 1,2; 1,3; ... 1,7; then 2,3; 2,4; ... 6,7. Among the trip chains so produced, the best-found by travel distance at this point is reported in row 1. It is interchanging positions of indices 5 and 7. Row 2 shows the outcome of continuing the search by repositioning each location index 1,...,7 one at a time in the trip chain reported in row 1. In doing so, the best-found result is reported in row 2 with travel distance 322. It is repositioning index 5 to the rightmost position of the trip chain. In this and other ways, trip chain variations may be produced and evaluated for implementation consideration. Students can elect the manner of proceeding with the two methods and perhaps combining them with student-authored method.

Table 5. Outcome of a Search Technique Combining Repositioning and Interchanging Location Indices

Row	Trip Chain	Perturbation	Travel Distance (MB)	Travel Distance Miles
0	7,2,4,6,3,5,1	-	448	22.40
1	5,2,4,6,3,7,1	<u>Interchanging</u> the positions of location references 5 and 7 in the chain of row 0	388	19.40
2	2,4,6,3,7,1,5	<u>Repositioning</u> location index 5 to the right of index 1 in the chain of row 1	322	16.10

The content of Table 5 prompts inquiry concerning the optimal trip chaining for the 3P. By exhaustive enumeration, it can be shown that the optimal distance-minimizing trip chain for the 3P is the itinerary of row 2 in above Table 5. Its distance evaluation is detailed in Table 6 below and a visual of the trip chain appears in Figure 1 above. Although the best-found trip chain obtained by exhaustive enumeration is identical to the chain reported in Table 5 (row 2) obtained by different means, a common best-found result is not to be expected. Best here refers to smallest travel distance. The methods of repositioning and positionally interchanging index pairs have no guarantee of optimality. Exhaustive enumeration produces the optimal itinerary as onerous as doing so may be. Of course, what can be done algorithmically for searching out the 3P's trip chain can also be done for any customer. Apart from complete enumeration in some form, no other method guarantees an optimal solution.

Table 6. Optimal Trip Chain for the 3P

Row	Trip Chain 2,4,6,3,7,1,5		
	Segment ¹	Travel Distance (MB)	Travel Distance (Miles)
1	03P	-	
2	2	17	0.85
3	4	33	1.65
4	6	20	1.00
5	3	50	2.50
6	7	63	3.15
7	1	48	2.40
8	5	42	2.10
9	03P	49	2.45
10	Total	322	16.10

¹ The trip chain is decomposed beginning with placement of the leftmost location index in the first cell and each successive location index in the cell thereafter, one per cell.

The point of introducing the two methods of perturbation presented in Tables 4 and 5 is demonstration of how a possibly better trip chain may be found. When no trip chain is available, the NNR provides a relatively fast first solution. Thereafter, Excel implementation of repositioning and interchanging assists the search for a better result. The Excel spreadsheet available at <http://www.mongrelworks.org/MMAEduc/> accommodates repositioning and interchanging location indices in the manner described here. It relieves the student of some of the tedium of searching for a better result. At this point, the student has the means for investigating a product enhancement that impacts trip

chaining.

Analysis

Searching beyond the first-found result (394, Table 3) for the 3P produced an attractive outcome (=322, Table 5) with a 18.2% reduction in travel distance, i.e. $(322-394)/394 \times 100$. The benefits of such an itinerary to the 3P are efficiencies in the form of less fuel consumption and less driving time and distance. The 3P service provider who can identify efficient trip chaining for multiple customers may have a competitive advantage. Similar efficiencies result for the individual who seeks an efficient chaining among specified locations. In addition, services such as information regarding traffic density, expected time of arrival at each location, price and product promotions along the routing chain, and other features may add value to the chaining the individual seeks. For the itinerary provider, the point to promote is that the proffered service can provide a better more informative chaining than a customer alone or a 3P alone could. What is needed is marketing's framing of that value to prospective customers, i.e. individuals and 3Ps.

Besides looking for a chaining better than the first found, the techniques of repositioning and interchanging location indices can assist in analyzing the impact of a new service feature. In the discussion that follows, assume the 3P provider seeks the analysis. Note that the 3P may also be an itinerary provider.

Given the best-found trip chain 2,4,6,3,7,1,5 for the 3P with travel distance 322, suppose the feature of priority visitation to certain sites is considered as a possible product enhancement. Because business hours for some sites to be visited may not be coincidental with estimated arrival times, it may be necessary to give first or early visitation priority to sites so affected. Suppose priority is to be given to visiting sites 4 and 7 to acquire some of customer 2 items that have time availability restrictions. Assume the priority calls for visiting site 4 first then site 7 immediately thereafter. What can marketing analytics bring to investigating this service possibility? Making sites 4 and 7 the first stops in the best-found route up to this point i.e. trip chain 4,7,2,6,3,1,5 is an easy first solution. The associated travel distance is 472. The analysis at this point albeit limited suggests that the cost in travel distance resulting from giving first-visit priority to sites 4 and 7 could be as large as 472, not an attractive outcome. The accommodation degrades the service to all customers. Let the investigation continue by repositioning location indices 2,3,5,6 one at a time in the third through seventh positions of the chain 4,7,2,6,3,1,5. Table 7 displays the outcomes of repositioning location index 2 in Section 1, index 3 in Section 2, index 5 in Section 3, and index 6 in Section 4. Indices 2, 3, 5, and 6 were arbitrarily selected for illustration. In each section, note the staircase appearance of the repositioned index. No trip chain with travel distance smaller than 472 was found among the results displayed in Table 7. Note too that constraining the chaining to include priority visitation cannot produce a result with travel distance smaller than 322 (the unconstrained result reported in Table 5). Based on the results of this limited investigation, we can conclude that the best accommodation of first-stop priority to sites 4 and 7 for Customer 2's items has distance value between 322 and 472, a wide spread. The question arises what better result may the analytics of trip chaining offer.

Table 7. Selective Trip Chains for the 3P Accommodating First-visit Priority to Sites 4 and 7

	Section 1		Section 2		Section 3		Section 4	
	Repositioning Index 2		Repositioning Index 3		Repositioning Index 5		Repositioning Index 6	
Row	Trip Chain	Travel Distance (MB)	Trip Chain	Travel Distance (MB)	Trip Chain	Travel Distance (MB)	Trip Chain	Travel Distance (MB)
1	4,7,2,6,3,1,5,	472	4,7,3,2,6,1,5,	554	4,7,5,2,6,3,1,	538	4,7,6,2,3,1,5,	554
2	4,7,6,2,3,1,5,	554	4,7,2,3,6,1,5,	554	4,7,2,5,6,3,1,	550	4,7,2,6,3,1,5,	472
3	4,7,6,3,2,1,5,	554	4,7,2,6,3,1,5,	472	4,7,2,5,6,3,1,	550	4,7,2,3,6,1,5,	554
4	4,7,6,3,1,2,5,	560	4,7,2,6,1,3,5,	630	4,7,2,6,5,3,1,	620	4,7,2,3,1,6,5,	642
5	4,7,6,3,1,5,2,	484	4,7,2,6,1,5,3,	484	4,7,2,6,3,1,5,	472	4,7,2,3,1,5,6,	562

Consider a different approach. Suppose priority visitation to sites 4 and 7 could be delayed to no later than the third site visit. Some possible trip chains are presented in Table 8. They devolved from the best-found trip chain up to this point in the investigation, see row 0 of Table 8. In the Table, each row 1,...,6 reports the best found trip chain resulting from i) the repositioning of each index 1,...,7 one at a time so that neither index 4 or index 7 appeared beyond the third position from the left in any trip chain. Then operation ii) followed where the positional interchange of each index pair beginning with index 1 paired with each of the other indices 2,...,6 excluding indices 4 and 7 one pair at a time, then index 2 paired with indices 3,...,6, and so forth. To repeat, the pairings were such that neither index 4 or index 7 appeared beyond the third position from the left in any trip chain so produced. Operations i) and ii) were applied to the chaining of the immediately preceding row that displays the best-found result at that point of the

investigation. The combined operations continued until no better trip chaining emerged. That happened with application of operations i) and ii) to the trip chain reported in row 6 with trip distance 388. No better trip chaining with priority visitation given to visiting sites 4 and 7 no later than the third stop was found.

Table 8. Some Additional Trip Chains Found in the Continuing Search

Row	Trip Chain	Travel Distance (MB)	Remark
0	4,7,2,6,3,1,5	472	Best-found route at this point
1	2,4,7,6,3,1,5	468	Reposition index 2 to leftmost position in chain of row 0
2	4,2,7,6,3,1,5	464	Interchange positions of indices 2 and 4 in chain of row 1
3	2,4,7,6,3,1,5	462	Reposition index 2 to leftmost position in chain of row 2
5	2,7,4,6,3,1,5	418	Interchange positions of indices 4 and 7 in chain of row 3
6	7,2,4,6,3,1,5	388	Interchange positions of indices 2 and 7 in chain of row 4

The outcomes of the examinations reported in Tables 7 and 8 provide insight to the cost of accommodating priority site visitation in the trip chaining situation of the example. The investigation shows what analytics can bring to assessing the impact of a marketing-identified service enhancement. Specifically, analytics is telling marketing if priority visitation for sites 4 and 7 could be scheduled as late as the third site visit, travel distance so constrained could be as great as 388. The analysis is pointing out that some customer’s needs for site visitation are costly.

From inspection of the best-found unrestricted trip chain 2,4,6,3,7,1,5 reported in row 2 of Table 5, note that first two-stop priority visitation could be given to locations 2 and 4 without degradation in travel distance 322. Or alternatively, observe that the chain read right to left i.e. 5,1,7,3,6,4,2 has the same travel distance 322 implying first two-stop priority could be given to sites 5 and 1 without degrading the best-found travel distance. Giving first or early stop priority to sites 4 and 7 is more costly in terms of trip travel distance. The analytics brought to the investigation provide insight to the breadth of cost associated with early site visitation. It is marketing’s challenge to frame (what sites to accommodate/not) the manner of offering early stop priority and its pricing and promotion. The accommodation or lack of it may have strategic implications.

Note that it is not necessary that all sites for customer 2 be visited by the same touring vehicle. It is necessary that all items sought by customer 2 be made collectively available at a certain site known to customer 2. Analytics could be charged with investigating the unbundling of orders for multiple customers using multiple touring vehicles. The unbundling is an interesting framework for students to consider.

The point of the example is demonstration of the interaction of marketing and analytics in consideration of implementing a variation of the current trip chaining product and taking it to market. In this case, the analysis is prompting if and how should the chaining product accommodate the need for early site visitation.

TEACHING RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

As noted above, students easily relate to a TCP and enjoy investigating its marketability and feasibility. Because an envisioned trip chaining enhancement has broad marketing, analytics, and other business discipline/major related aspects, a team approach at the capstone level of matriculation is recommended.

Tables 3 and 4 and Figure 1 are useful teaching/learning tools for the TCP and have strong visual appeal in communicating to students how a trip chain can be imaged, represented in an Excel spreadsheet environment, perturbed for the purpose of finding better trip chains, and useful in the investigation of variations of the basic TCP product. It is also suggested that the instructor facilitate student understanding of the value of searching for multiple solutions especially when there are competing criteria to consider in producing a trip chain, see the following section. Allow students to explore the proffered Excel spreadsheet and to customize it. You may be surprised what some students can produce in this regard. The spreadsheet is a familiar workspace for students.

Teaching materials for the TCP are available at <http://www.mongrelworks.org/MMAEduc/>.

TEACHING ENHANCEMENTS AND SUMMARY

Consider the following that students may incorporate in their treatment of a TCP. The performance metric of travel distance was primary in the above demonstrations and analyses. But other performance metrics could apply. For example, the carbon emission produced by executing individual customer trip chains or a 3P’s trip chain can be estimated. It may have value to green-conscious customers. The estimation is made possible using information made publicly available by the EPA (2024) such as: i) an internal combustion gasoline automobile emits 423 grams of carbon dioxide per mile and ii) a light truck diesel delivery vehicle emits 1,454 grams of carbon dioxide per mile. The

analysis could be further advanced by moving students to assess the emission reduction made possible with use of electric automobiles and light trucks for touring sites. The trip chain of appeal may be the one with the smallest carbon emission. Or the student may be drawn into investigating tradeoffs between travel distance and carbon emission among alternative chains such as those presented in Tables 7 and 8. In another way, analytics and marketing interact in framing the chaining product to take to market.

The $n!$ dimensionality of the number of possible trip chains is a challenging aspect of the TCP. If students seek the optimal itinerary for a TCP, they will encounter it. As referenced here, one way is through explicit enumeration of the $n!$ possible trip chains. Excel's 'alldifferent' feature can assist. However, even for a TCP with small n , the process can be slow.

In the literature, the dimensionality feature that haunts a routing problem such as the TCP is referred to as the "curse of dimensionality". For most problems so affected, explicit enumeration of all solution possibilities is not recommended. Alternatively, the problem solver is moved to deal with heuristic based solution methods such as the NNR. A heuristic produces a result of unknown optimality and in most cases of unknown proximity thereto. But they produce a first solution quickly relative to enumerative methods. Thereafter, the search for a better chain can proceed in the manner of the demonstrations of Tables 5, 7 and 8. Although doing so will conclude with an optimality uncertain result, it is the recommended procedure for the TCP. Most commercial routing applications make use of a heuristic. Excel's proprietary add-in Solver does.

The Excel computational environment is ubiquitous in academe and very familiar to business students. In fact, Excel framed problem solving is a common feature of popular marketing analytics textbooks. And Excel spreadsheets have portability among student personal computers. The appeal of Excel based solutions extends to the corporate world particularly with small organizations.

Concluding problem solving with the 'best-found' result of unknown optimality is different and in contrast with textbook treatments of other allocation problems that seek and produce 'optimal only' solutions. Treatment of the TCP here brings the student head-on to an experience in dealing with an optimality-uncertain result. The latter is a feature that extends to real world treatment of routing problems such as the TCP. As such, the experience outlined here has learning value for students.

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USING AI TO TRAIN MARKETING STUDENTS TO BE EMPATHETIC

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This paper explores the intersection of empathy training and artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing education. The overarching goal of this research is to help students be more effective marketers when they graduate. This research focuses on empathy, the ability to take the subjective perspective of another person (cognitive capacity) and share that person's emotional state (affective or emotional response). In addition to empathy, we believe students will be more effective marketers and better equipped for careers by becoming proficient in AI.

A literature review addresses empathy's role across various marketing contexts and AI's growing presence in education. We then describe two assignments using ChatGPT to enhance empathy in blog writing and sales role-plays. The assignments prompt students to evaluate and improve their empathetic communication skills with AI assistance and allow students to begin to develop proficiency in AI by practicing and honing the art of prompt engineering. Even though the appropriate prompts were provided to students, they had to refine and iterate as they went to produce better output from ChatGPT which, in turn, can enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For both the blog writing and sales role-play assignments, steps are outlined and examples of ChatGPT output are provided.

Reflections and observations of the instructors and students are presented. We conclude that AI can effectively guide students in developing empathy by providing structured feedback and suggestions. Integrating empathy training and AI tools can significantly enhance marketing education and prepare students for future career challenges.

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COMBATING FAKE NEWS: AN UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE DIGITAL LITERACY INTERVENTION TO INOCULATE AGAINST ONLINE MISINFORMATION

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Developing digital media literacy skills is important for marketing education. Though raised in a digital age, college students are unprepared to decipher between valid information and misinformation (Kendrick & Fullerton, 2019). College students are perceived as digital natives who are fluent in evaluating the information that flows online yet research has indicated students struggle to evaluate Internet sources (Choi, 2020). They use the location in the search engine results page to determine trustworthiness and rely on website heuristics such as web design and sponsors to establish credibility (Ziv & Bene, 2021).

Marketing educators are called to “inoculate” students from the ills of misinformation and disinformation. According to inoculation theory (McGuire, 1970), students can build cognitive resistance against future persuasion attempts if they are preemptively exposed to weakened doses of misinformation. Similar to how a vaccine strengthens the immune system, we posit exposing students to small doses of misinformation tactics can help strengthen their attitudinal resistance against deceptive information. Throughout the term, students learned about digital media literacy strategies such as click restraint, lateral reading, fact-checking, evaluating source authority and perspective, and assessing evidence to combat misinformation tactics. These strategies were presented in five video modules relating to marketing topics such as integrated marketing communications, marketing research, and digital marketing. After they watched the video, they were assessed on their learning via a quiz.

According to the SIFT method, first readers must “Stop.” Readers are asked to employ click restraint (Wineburg & McGrew, 2019) and not click on the first link on the search engine results page (SERP), as the results can be altered using search engine optimization techniques and paid search advertising. These digital marketing techniques could result in sites with lower credibility ranking higher than more credible sites. Readers should evaluate the title tags, URLs, snippets, and source of each webpage listing on the SERP. The SIFT method asks readers to stop and scan the first page of the SERP and examine the information neighborhood. They should ask themselves if the first page of the SERP contains advertisements, press articles, blogs, and company websites. Additionally, they are asked to assess the valence of each listing and diversity of results. Is the neighborhood diverse (i.e., listings from different sources) or are certain groups trying to influence the conversation? They should also go to the second page of the SERP to distinguish if there are differences compared to the first page of the SERP.

Secondly, the reader should “Investigate” the source by studying the publisher and author(s) to assess the expertise and agenda. They should ask themselves if the author(s) is a journalist (i.e., earned media), blogger (i.e., earned media), public relations employee (i.e., owned media) or advertiser (i.e., paid media). Thirdly, the reader should “Find” better coverage to establish whether there is expert consensus or disagreement among the experts. This allows the reader to understand the context and history of the claim. A study conducted by Wineburg and McGrew (2019) demonstrated when fact checkers assessed a site, they read laterally and are more likely to arrive at warranted conclusions in a quick manner. Lateral reading is a networked approach whereby the reader assesses the information neighborhood by opening another tab and doing a search on the source rather than staying on the website and reading vertically within the website. The reader can better assess the source and its claims by reading laterally across sites to assess the credibility of the website. Lastly, readers should “Trace” the original context so they can analyze whether the claims in the text are accurately presented.

An experiment was designed to measure if students’ information literacy increased after the lateral reading intervention. In the start of the term, undergraduate and graduate business students were asked to assess the disinformation website Friends of Science Society, a non-profit group that denies carbon dioxide is a major driver of

climate change. During the pre-test survey, students were asked to imagine they were researching the topic of climate change and came across this website. They were asked to review the website for no longer than 10 minutes and assess if it was a reliable source of information. Then, they were asked if they employed the lateral reading and click restraint techniques. Information literacy was operationalized through using the click restraint technique, assessing the source's authority, and evaluating the reliability and relevance of the evidence. Each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. After students learned about the digital media strategies presented in five video modules, they completed the post-test survey. The final sample only included students who took the pre-test and post-test: 49 undergraduate and 61 graduate business students.

Overall, undergraduate and graduate business students increased their digital media skills after the intervention. The number of graduate students who employed click restraint technique significantly increased from 57% in the pre-test to 80% in the post-test ($z = -2.887, p = .002$). However, in contrast, undergraduate students applied the click restraint technique 55% in the pre-test and 63% in the post-test ($z = -0.660, p = .255$). For undergraduate students, there was not a significant increase after the intervention. There was a statistical significance for both graduate and undergraduate students. 92% of graduate students applied lateral reading during the post-test compared to 75% in the pre-test ($z = -2.446, p = .007$) while 78% of undergraduate students used it during the post-test opposed to 59% in the pre-test ($z = -1.955, p = .025$). Graduate Students' perceptions of the source being trustworthy were low ($M = 2.72, SD = 1.04$) before the intervention and decreased more after the intervention ($M = 2.61, SD = 1.44$); yet the difference was not significant ($t(60) = 0.80, p = 0.21$). In contrast, undergraduate students' evaluation of source trustworthiness significantly decreased ($t(48) = 1.63, p = 0.05$) from the pre-test ($M = 3.35, SD = 1.02$) to the post-test ($M = 3.00, SD = 1.63$). The graduate students evaluated the relevancy of the evidence to determine if it supported the main argument. They applied this strategy after the intervention and found the main argument was significantly less relevant ($M = 3.11, SD = 1.20$) after the intervention compared to before ($M = 3.43, SD = .85$) the intervention ($t(60) = 2.45, p = 0.00$). While the undergraduate students' ratings decreased after the intervention ($M = 3.22, SD = 1.47$), the decrease was not significant ($t(48) = 0.87, p = 0.19$). Graduate students also assessed the reliability of the evidence significantly lower after ($M = 2.80, SD = 1.46$) compared to before ($M = 3.05, SD = 1.11$) the intervention ($t(60) = 1.74, p = 0.04$). Undergraduate students' ratings decreased from the pre-test ($M = 3.33, SD = 1.31$) to the post-test ($M = 3.06, SD = 1.48$); however, the decrease was not significant ($t(48) = 1.22, p = 0.11$). The overall reliability of the website was perceived by graduate students as significantly lower after ($M = 2.67, SD = 1.59$) compared to before ($M = 3.02, SD = 1.08$) the intervention ($t(60) = 2.84, p = 0.03$). Similarly, undergraduate students significantly perceived it to be less reliable after ($M = 3.08, SD = 1.66$) the intervention ($t(48) = 2.11, p = 0.02$).

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USING DATABASE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SENSE OF BELONGING

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Students are hesitant to engage in marketing analytics because they are concerned about their ability to master the material and the potential embarrassment of looking incompetent in front of their peers (Peltier et al., 2021). These *math anxiety* fears often manifest as students not even trying and simply avoiding any concepts related to math or quantitative analysis, even though the need for marketing graduates to be competent in these areas is readily apparent (Honea et al., 2017). This is particularly the case with database management, a foundation for marketing analytics. Advances in active learning and flipped classrooms have addressed these concerns to a certain degree by having students consume content on their own and then spend class time engaging with concepts that require more attention (Vander Schee, 2007; Zainuddin & Perera, 2019). The idea is for instructors to use class time for students to apply concepts.

An application of active learning is to approach student concerns with exercises that foster autonomy in problem solving and instill motivation to be successful. Over time students build self-confidence in their skills and overcome social fears as they also experience a sense of belonging (Judge et al., 2007). The classroom can provide a supportive environment where students work on in-class exercises independently and then consult with their colleagues and instructor for affirmation. Knowing that they may be called upon during class adds accountability and independent preparation. The objective of the Database Management Activities (DMAs) is to motivate students to master database management skills on their own while building their self-confidence with a sense of belonging. This paper provides a literature review of relevant theory, followed by the DMA description, method of analysis, results, discussion, and finally limitations and suggestions for future research.

In the new era of data and analytics driven approaches to doing business, marketing graduates are increasingly required to take more technical courses that were previously limited to computer science majors. Due to their varying experiences, graduate marketing students lack a common background, and the instructor cannot make any assumptions about their prior training or skills. Therefore, instructors need to use an approach to learning database management skills that work for all graduate marketing students.

There are no grades assigned in the course for DMAs. The intent is to allow students to make mistakes without having to worry about it affecting their grade. Nevertheless, the possibility of coming up in front of a class and working out the query motivates students to come to class prepared, pay attention in class, and build confidence for independent learning in the future.

The results of this study provide evidence for students perceiving the DMAs to be effective in enhancing their learning and recommending them in the future. The results of this study show that students found the DMAs to foster autonomy and motivation in their learning. This finding is consistent with Zainuddin and Perera (2019) where students are motivated to achieve their goals within a team setting. However, in this study students were also encouraged to work on their own and demonstrate their mastery of skills by sharing their solutions with the whole class. This additional step provided motivation for adequate preparation and review as well as accountability.

Developing a DMA for each individual block, for query building for example, can be time consuming, however they can be used again in future courses, cutting down on prep time with repeat course offerings. They are adaptable for online synchronous learning environments and can be applied to undergraduate courses in database management or marketing analytics. Although students are encouraged to work on the DMAs on their own, some students may choose to work with a partner or group initially, to build confidence in their skills development. However, all students should be encouraged over time to work independently to replicate the work setting in the future.

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CEO INTEGRITY'S INFLUENCE ON FIRM DIGITAL ORIENTATION: HOW CMOS AND AD INTENSITY DRIVE DIGITAL ORIENTATION

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Adaptation of digital technology in the firm increases firm value (Chen & Srinivasan, 2023; Kindermann *et al.*, 2021; Salvi, 2021) because digital transformation can help organizations maintain competitiveness and adaptability in an ever-evolving market environment (Westerman *et al.*, 2011). According to international data corporation, the global digital transformation investments may reach up to 3.4 trillion dollars in 2026. Digital transformation includes a broad range of technologies like cloud computing, data analytics and business intelligence, adoption of artificial intelligence and machine learning and digital marketing. Surprisingly, only about 50% of companies plan to incorporate AI technologies in their day-to-day transactions despite the growing importance of AI and data science (McKinsey and Company, 2022) demonstrating the agile characteristic of digital orientation. One important dynamic in the firm that sways this orientation is the CEO and their strategic orientation.

Our findings lead us to conclude that organizations with CEOs who have high integrity tend to have lower levels of digital orientation dimensions in the firm. This negative effect of CEO integrity on firms' strategic orientation in general and the dimension of digital orientation in particular is strengthened when the firm invests more in R&D intensity. At the same time, the negative effect of CEO integrity on digital orientation diminishes if the firm has high advertising intensity. The negative effect of CEO integrity on digital orientation also diminishes if the firm has presence of CMO in the firm.

We contribute to upper echelon theory literature by adding to the discussion of how business executives' psychological traits map onto firm behavior. Past research that has investigated the effect of CEO integrity (e.g., Arjoon, 2005; Irianto *et al.*, 2009) has considered only positive outcomes (such as greater employee loyalty and lower likelihood of employee fraud) of this 'bright' trait. Thus, we add to the limited work on managers' personality traits in general, and CEO integrity in specific, several important outcomes that have remained virtually unexplored by researchers in UET. Our findings suggest that future UET researchers need to pay attention to managers' integrity in order to understand and explain differences in firms' digital decisions. We also encourage future researchers to explore negative effects of other 'positive' traits in order to get a more nuanced understanding of the impact of such traits.

Our research also reveals that corporate boards may benefit by considering the impact of a prospective CEO's integrity in their hiring decisions. Specifically, executives' integrity, measured using textual analysis of executives' words, may assist board members in predicting the executives' future decisions before hiring them. While we do not suggest that corporate boards should be cautious about hiring CEOs with high integrity, we do suggest that they should try to inculcate a risk-taking mindset among CEOs with high integrity through training and the use of corporate governance mechanisms. Given that digital orientation does tend to have a positive impact on shareholder value (Covin and Slevin 1991; Wiklund and Shepherd 2003), investors may also consider CEOs' integrity, as manifested by CEOs' word choices in their investment decisions. When a firm recruits a new CEO, there is substantial uncertainty about the kind of strategic actions the CEO will be taking in the future. Investors can use the CEO's integrity as an effective signal to predict the CEOs' choices, specifically the CEOs' emphasis on creating a digital mindset in their firms.

Our investigation also provides a number of noteworthy practical implications for CEOs. We reveal that it is advantageous for CEOs to understand that integrity is a double-edged sword. This understanding promises to help CEOs leverage the strengths of their integrity, while simultaneously using tools such as training to diminish its negative aspects. More specifically, CEOs — particularly those who identify themselves as having high degrees of integrity — may benefit by surrounding themselves with CMO and creative TMT members in order to minimize the

digital orientation-related deficiencies that may come with their personal traits.

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ENGAGING POST-PANDEMIC STUDENTS USING AI

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POSITION PAPER

Marketing educators face challenges today in engaging students in both online and face-to-face settings (Groza et al., 2024). However, Bacon and Stewart (2022) caution that increased engagement must be targeted toward cognitive or behavioral learning outcomes. With the sudden arrival of generative artificial intelligence (AI), business leaders are now calling for marketing educators to give students experience with AI (Guha et al., 2024). In sum, marketing educators face the need to “hit a trifecta” in their courses—engaging students to more energetically pursue course learning objectives tied to AI.

Members of Generation Z (born in the late 1990s through the early 2010’s) – now comprising cohorts of college students - are characterized as an anxious generation (Haidt, 2024) uncertain about their prospects for the future. At this time, AI has emerged, but the impact on the lives of college students is predicted to be both positive and negative (Grewal et al., 2024). This would result in an attraction-avoidance situation for marketing students when confronted with the need to learn about AI and how it can affect their lives.

As an approach to offer students a way for learning about AI and how it can affect their lives, the following proposal for co-creation between student and teacher is made. Specifically, students can participate in an experiential learning assignment with AI focused on their own career called the “AI Turbo-Charged Career Consultation.” The following comes from an undergraduate marketing course syllabus:

I would like to meet with you individually in my office to discuss career issues. *Bring the following Generative AI results.* This should take about 10 to 15 minutes each to discuss with me in my office (or in a Zoom meeting for online classes.).

Generative AI exercise to bring your prof:

Activate the search engine Copilot. Enter “Copilot” in the search window. Click on Copilot. You are now using Microsoft’s version of AI. Ask Copilot to 1) develop a career path for you in [your area of interest] in [your most desired geographic location], then 2) ask for employers that fit your career launch in this locale.

My office hours will be the times for these: Tuesday 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm and Wednesday 4:30 – 5:30 pm. These will be conducted before Test 1. Grading is pass/fail, if we have a discussion - you pass (100 points). If you don’t show up and discuss – you fail (0 points). Your career consultation with Dr. P is worth 1 % of your course grade. (*Learning Objective Covered: gain knowledge about forces influencing consumers around the world.*)

Here is an example of Copilot’s response for a student who played on the football team:

What firms within 50-miles of Hudson, WI would be good for a former defensive lineman in football who has a marketing undergraduate degree?

There are many firms within 50 miles of Hudson, WI that would be good for a former defensive lineman in football who has a marketing undergraduate degree. Some of the possible firms are:

- Valpak of Rochester Direct & Digital Marketing: This is a firm that provides direct mail and digital marketing solutions to local businesses. They are looking for an advertising sales representative who can sell their products and services to potential clients. As a former defensive lineman, you can use your communication, persuasion, and competitive skills to sell effectively and build relationships with customers¹.
- Two others followed...

I hope this information helps you find a suitable career path for your interests and skills. ☺

Students may need to employ prompt engineering to refine the results AI produces. However, AI can generate the first draft of a letter to firms introducing the student to the firm.

The AI results become the focus for a career consultation with students that now has more focus and more power. “I did not know this was possible!,” or “I had heard about it (AI), but hadn’t used it myself” are typical responses of the student in the career consultation. Rich discussions have ensued which were then connected to learning in the course. Researchers can now go beyond the exploratory phase of this case study to actually evaluate the ability of the AI Turbo-Charged Career Consultation in achieving course learning objectives related to AI. All marketing courses can integrate this assignment to engage students about a transformative technology for marketing—AI—that is fun.

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THE USE OF IMPROV IN FOSTERING CREATIVITY AND REDUCING PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY IN MARKETING STUDENTS

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POSITION PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of improvisation as a pedagogical tool. Specifically, we propose that incorporating improvisational techniques can enhance student self-efficacy in both creativity and public speaking. In doing so, marketing educators can create an environment that encourages risk-taking, fosters creativity, and reduces anxiety associated with public speaking. We anticipate this approach will empower students to develop not only theoretical knowledge but also the practical skills needed for success in their future careers as marketing educators often grapple with the delicate balance between the two. While theoretical knowledge is undeniably crucial, attention to creativity and public speaking skills is equally important. Research consistently highlights the value of creativity in the eyes of employers (Finch, 2012, Schlee & Harich, 2014, Martz & Braun, 2017). Additionally, effective oral communication remains a critical expectation in professional settings (DiSalvo et al., 1976; Young & Murphy, 2003).

To offer a bit of background, the May 2024 “Crush!” Apple iPad Pro Commercial stirred controversy when it depicted an industrial crusher flattening historically creative objects, including cameras, sculptures, a record player, and musical instruments. The ad aimed to metaphorically showcase the multitude of tools and possibilities available with the new iPad Pro (Nudd, 2024). However, unintentionally, it conveyed the message that creativity now resides within machines rather than the human mind, leading to significant backlash for Apple. Yet, the commercial highlighted a broader trend: activities once considered uniquely human are increasingly being automated or relegated to machines. As technology advances, concerns arise about its impact on creativity, especially among today’s “always wired” students. Organic creativity, a crucial skill in fields like marketing, faces challenges as AI becomes more prevalent. Interestingly, research by Habib, Vogel, & Thorne (2024) suggests that while AI has the potential to support creativity, it can also negatively impact both creativity and students’ confidence in their own creative ability. Apple’s miscue with the “Crush!” ad serves as a reminder that balancing technological innovation with human ingenuity remains essential.

Developing oral communication skills, particularly public speaking, is paramount in preparing students for successful careers in business. Public Speaking, often likened to eating vegetables – unappealing yet beneficial – remains a challenge for many students. The mere mention of the word “presentation” induces anxiety and panic (Ireland, 2020). However, beneath the surface lies an intriguing connection among improvisation, creativity, and public speaking. Improvisation, as a form of spontaneous creativity, compels individuals to think on their feet, generating ideas and actions in real-time. This process cultivates comfort with uncertainty and a willingness to take risks.

Engaging in improvisation can also alleviate public speaking anxiety. By teaching individuals to respond spontaneously, it instills confidence in managing unforeseen circumstances and maintaining composure under pressure. Moreover, creativity plays a pivotal role in reducing anxiety. Encouraging alternative approaches to presentation boosts confidence in material delivery, ultimately alleviating anxiety. In the context of business roles, creativity and public speaking skills are not merely beneficial but essential. Marketers rely on these skills to communicate persuasively and adapt to dynamic situations.

In terms of recommendations, this research proposal advocates for the formal integration of improvisation into marketing courses. By leveraging techniques from improv professionals or actors, students can enhance their marketing communication skills and creativity in context-specific scenarios. Some universities will have existing resources in the Fine Arts Department, and external providers could also be considered.

Challenges are commonly encountered in conducting research studies. In this case, the subjects under study present the biggest one. Encouraging students to participate and recognize the informal improvisation skills they already possess presents some challenges. One challenge is convincing students to be open minded and to participate fully in the improvisation exercises. Students often do not recognize that they already have experience in improvisation in their daily lives, albeit informally.

Future research could explore avenues to further understand the impact of formal improvisation sessions on creativity enhancement and the reduction of public speaking anxiety among marketing students. The authors plan to test this proposal by administering pre- and post-test surveys to include the Public Speaking Anxiety Scale (Bartholomay and Houlihan, 2016) and the Self Rated Creativity Scale (Tan & Ong, 2019), to assess effectiveness of this pedagogical approach.

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GETTING MARKETING MAJORS TO VALUE THEIR MARKETING DEGREES

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POSITION PAPER

A 2024 report found that underemployment, four-year college graduates being employed in jobs that do not typically require a bachelor's degree, is a large and persistent problem. Over 52 percent of college graduates are underemployed a year after graduation, with 45 percent underemployed a decade after graduation. Sadly, graduates with marketing and other general business degrees that are not math-intensive experience even higher levels of underemployment (57 percent). Consequences of graduates who start as underemployed include a greater likelihood of continued underemployment and earnings of 50 percent less than those with college-level employment.

The context of this paper is the very turbulent environment in which higher education is operating. Unfortunately, the public is questioning its value, and university enrollments are decreasing. When it comes to the marketing degree, it is our experience that some students and employers alike may not recognize the value of a marketing degree due to their belief that "anyone can do marketing." For example, we have witnessed employers hiring applicants for marketing positions who have no college degree or a college degree in a discipline that is not even closely related to marketing.

How can marketing educators help their students avoid underemployment? We believe one way to do this is to get them to value the marketing degree. If students recognize and appreciate the importance, benefits, and worth of a marketing degree, we believe that they will be more likely to strive to start their careers in college-level employment. As marketing educators, we can proactively impact students in their pursuit of college-level employment. In doing so, we propose a framework of initiatives that includes the participation of faculty, students, and employers, led and implemented by marketing faculty to enhance perceptions of value in marketing majors and graduates.

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AUTHENTICITY, INTEGRITY & EMPATHY - ESSENTIAL CHARACTER TRAITS FOR MARKETING

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POSITION PAPER

In the dynamic landscape of marketing, where strategies evolve at the speed of technology, one element remains timeless and indispensable: character. While the tools and tactics of marketing education may change with each passing trend, the enduring value of integrity, authenticity, and empathy in marketing education cannot be overstated. In this position paper, the importance of character traits and how it shapes the next generation of marketing professionals is investigated.

Mele (2006) states, “As the rest of the world shows increasing interest in issues of corporate social responsibility, the role of business in society, and what constitutes true leadership, today's CEOs are being forced to reconsider their roles as well. It is no longer enough to run a company; stakeholders are demanding that a company be run well. It takes an ethical leader to carry out such a task, and business schools can provide the guidance that will produce the leaders that the modern business climate demands.”

Homann, 2001 & Minnameier, G. (2004) emphasize that developing character is a self-regulating process in which ethics are inserted into discourses on institutional reforms to address perceived moral deficiencies. In this way, the ethical shaping of modern societies is driven from below, from the grass roots, and not derived from above, i.e. basic and universal moral principles. Ethical claims are thus carried upwards in a multistage social process to the level of action conditions within each context (i.e. discussions about certain action conditions take place in a certain context which has its own action conditions and which can itself be subjected to a meta-discourse on how to set or modify those conditions).

“Certain virtues and character traits appear to be universal across cultures and are applicable in both global and domestic contexts” Murphy (1999). Some argue that character and ethics should be included in the same discussion. There are varying views on virtue ethics and duty-based ethic approaches. Virtue ethics is aspirational and seeks to answer the question - What kind of person/organization should I/we be? Three areas which seem to answer this question have universal appeal in marketing education literature - include integrity as a foundation of trust, authenticity while connecting with the human experience, and empathy in understanding the customer. Below are possible qualities to instill in our future marketing educators.

Integrity - the foundation of trust: In a world inundated with advertisements and promotional content, consumers crave authenticity and sincerity. Integrity lies at the heart of building trust between brands and consumers. Marketing education must instill in students the importance of honesty, transparency, and ethical conduct. From crafting compelling messaging to engaging with customers on social media, marketers must uphold the principles of integrity at every turn. By prioritizing honesty and integrity in their practices, marketers not only build trust with their audience but also foster long-lasting relationships that transcend transactions.

Authenticity - connecting with the human experience: In an age of digital communication and virtual interactions, authenticity emerges as a powerful differentiator for brands. Authenticity goes beyond polished presentations and scripted messages; it encompasses the genuine expression of a brand's values, culture, and purpose. Marketing education should encourage students to find their unique voice and express it authentically across all touchpoints. Whether through storytelling, user-generated content, or brand narratives, authenticity allows marketers to connect with consumers on a deeper level, fostering meaningful relationships rooted in shared values and experiences.

Empathy - understanding the customer journey: At the heart of effective marketing lies a deep understanding of the customer journey. This ability to step into the shoes of another and understand their perspective—is indispensable in crafting marketing strategies that resonate with diverse audiences. Marketing education can cultivate empathy in

students, encouraging them to listen attentively, observe thoughtfully, and empathize deeply with the needs and aspirations of their target audience. By empathizing with consumers, marketers can create campaigns that speak directly to their pain points, desires, and aspirations, fostering a sense of connection and belonging that transcends mere transactions. This virtue has a very simple meaning - being able to put yourself in the place of others. Some philosophers see this virtue as a manifestation of the Golden Rule - treat others as you would like to be treated. Another, and more recent, interpretation of the empathy virtue is that it can be equated with the ethic of caring. This notion was proposed by Gilligan (1982) in her response to Kohlberg (1969).

Furthermore, consumers learn to trust brand names that they may have difficulty pronouncing and are uncertain as to where the products are manufactured. As Fukuyama (1995) points out, some societies can save substantially on transaction costs because economic agents trust one another and thus can be more efficient than low trust societies where contracts and enforcement mechanisms are necessary. The area of relationship marketing requires high levels of trust between partners and can lead to several positive outcomes - greater communication and feedback, better problem solving and effective delegation (Gundlach and Murphy, 1993; Murphy et al., 1996).

Infusing character development and ethical behavior in your curriculum – can become a reality in the practice of marketing. Educators should be involved in curricular activities reinforcing these important ethical ideals. Several recommendations have been offered by various authors. One is to integrate ethics and character instruction throughout the curriculum by developing professionals who can recognize and deal with ethical situations.

As the marketing education landscape continues to evolve, one thing remains constant: the timeless value of character. Based on the literature and practitioners, integrity, authenticity, and empathy form the bedrock of effective marketing strategies - guiding marketers in their quest to build trust, foster connections, and drive meaningful engagement with their audience.

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NAVIGATING THE ENROLLMENT CLIFF AND AI INTEGRATION IN MARKETING EDUCATION

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POSITION PAPER

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed marketing education in different ways. These changes present challenges and opportunities for both educators and educational institutions. In this position paper, we explore these dynamics, specifically looking at AI integration into marketing education after the pandemic and how to address the upcoming enrollment cliff.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of online and hybrid learning models (Bashir et al., 2021). With this shift, educators have been utilizing new approaches, tools, and materials that work well in these learning models (Sato, Simone Nomie, et al., 2024; Bervell & Arkorful, 2020). Given the fast pace of advancements in AI marketing, marketing educators need to keep up to date with these changes to effectively engage and prepare students (Guha, Grewal, & Atlas, 2024). Educational programs in marketing should embed AI technologies into their courses to improve student engagement and learning. By utilizing AI tools, student learning can be analyzed to customize learning materials according to students' learning styles and needs, leading to improved results (Gligorea et al., 2023). AI-enabled tools can model client interactions and market situations, giving students hands-on experience in a simulated environment (Dai & Ke, 2022). The rapid pace of technological advancements requires continuous marketing curriculum updates, which could necessitate allocating considerable resources within a short time. AI also proves helpful in efficiently producing and updating educational content, ensuring its accuracy and relevance (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). Ethical considerations, such as data privacy, plagiarism, and algorithmic bias, must be also addressed to ensure the responsible use of AI (Tang & Su, 2024).

The enrollment cliff is approaching in 2025 and requires strategic planning and implementation by educational institutions. The term "enrollment cliff" refers to the expected drop in the number of college students beginning in 2025 due to declining birth rates during the Great Recession (Phillips, 2023; Synario, 2023; Schuette, 2023). Educational institutions must develop and implement strategic plans to mitigate the negative impact of the enrollment cliff. They must adapt their marketing strategies to attract a shrinking pool of prospective students (Phillips, 2023; Synario, 2023). Educational institutions must focus on flexibility and career alignment to remain relevant and responsive to the needs of the students (EducationDynamics, 2024). The strategic approach involving short- and long-term measures could include enhancing outreach programs and expanding online and hybrid course offerings to attract a larger pool of students (Fischer, Baker, Li, Orona, & Warschauer, 2022). It should also focus on improving student retention through enhanced student support and engagement and, investing in international student enrollment (CLA Connect, 2024). Additionally, institutions should consider utilizing data analytics and adaptive learning to improve students' learning experience. By embracing these changes and integrating AI, educational institutions and marketing educators can mitigate the negative impacts of the enrollment cliff. This approach can also more effectively enhance students' learning experience and prepare them for the evolving business environment.

Future research should focus on integrating AI tools into marketing curricula and developing frameworks for incorporating AI into marketing education that address ethical concerns and ensure data privacy. Additionally, studies should explore the impact of incorporating AI learning and student assessment tools on student engagement and outcomes. Research should also investigate strategies to mitigate the impact of the enrollment cliff on higher education institutions.

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“THE SWEET SPOT”- REFINING YOUR SALES EDUCATION PROGRAM

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POSITION PAPER

According to a report from the Work Institute (2022), 38 percent of entry level sales people leave within the first year, making the cost to recruiters high. Increasing demand for sales-ready graduates is not satisfied despite the increase in higher education sales programs over the past few decades, growing from 27 in 2007 to 196 in 2023 (Sales Education Foundation [SEF], 2023). Most university sales programs teach selling techniques and development of interpersonal and communication skills reasonably well (Spiller et al., 2020) and turnover rates for these graduates tend to be notably lower than the industry average, but less than half of sales programs reported teaching career choice and development as well as self-leadership or personal skills (31.7% and 41.3%, respectively) (Spiller et al., 2020).

Knight et al (2022) and Knight et al (2023) found that recent sales program graduates reported being better able to structure and conduct sales calls more effectively than their non-sales graduate peers as a result of training in asking good questions, mirroring the buyer, purposively handling objections and using best practice closing and other related techniques. Nonetheless sales graduates reported struggling more with staying confident in their abilities and maintaining focus on their goals in the face of day to day variability and high levels of rejection in entry level roles. Many also reported a lack of skills in choosing the right employer and role. Knight et al (2023) found via a sample of 203 graduates employed in sales for 6 to 36 months that sales related self-efficacy (or essentially confidence plus feeling capable) were related to both early stage sales performance and intention to stay amongst recent college graduates working in sales. Self-leadership skills or the ability to influence and direct your thoughts, feelings, and actions to achieve your goals were also found to be positively related to self-efficacy. Career planning and development skills were positively related to intention to stay with one’s current employer.

A recent expert panel session with six highly successful sales program graduates (graduated between 2011 and 2022) confirmed they used many of the sales techniques learned in their studies regularly citing them as perhaps the most important learnings in their college experience. They also agreed that better self-leadership and employer choice skills would have been valuable. The panel also suggested that students work to define their career goals and routinely review their work behaviors to ensure they align with goals. They encouraged students to strive to feel comfortable not only in their sales skills but to become authentic in being themselves and understanding what their strengths and weaknesses were in relation to their roles career goals.

The solutions employed at the author’s institution include:

- Development of a self-leadership plan based on the results of the Chally developmental assessment which ideally these students will use in the working world to ensure their work behaviors align with their goals
- Extensive use of sales program alumni in classes so students can understand the relevance of what they are learning and gain an independent view of how to choose an employer
- Robust curriculum on best practices in assessing and researching potential employers and mapping out their own career objectives and goals including a strategy for choosing a first employer
- Assess student experiential activities such as role plays, not only on the mastery of core sales skills similar to the rubrics used in national sales competitions, but also on the basis of the degree to which the student portrays themselves as being authentic and having an unforced and natural sales conversation.

One of the challenges faced by University sales centers is that they are sometimes highly reliant on funding and support from industry sponsors, so the challenge is to find the “sweet spot” between students being able to make objective judgments about their career plans, and to also give sponsors competing for sales talent among recent graduates a reasonable opportunity to present their career opportunities and for educators to benefit from the sponsors

insights and knowledge gained through the collaboration.

Although there has been some research on the impact of sales education on performance and intention to stay among sales graduates, additional studies are needed, which validate the relevant constructs in depth ideally longitudinal research which tracks students' performance, and perfection perceptions from pre-graduation to several years or more into their sales careers. Similarly some of the solutions recommended in this paper should be validated in the same manner as to their efficacy.

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MARKETING STUDENT REFLECTIONS: ASSESSING A CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAM

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POSITION PAPER

Co-curricular activities have long been an integral part of the business student experience, consisting of those opportunities for student experiences outside of the classroom that complement the curriculum (Abrás, et al., 2022; HLC, 2024b). Examples include internships, workshops, career and employment fairs, study abroad, and participation in student clubs or organizations, many of which are considered “high-impact practices” (Kuh, 2013). There is broad agreement in the literature that well designed co-curricular opportunities can significantly enhance students’ overall experience by providing opportunities to practice classroom and learned concepts outside of class (Abrás, et al., 2022; Kilgo, Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015; Suskie, 2015; Turrentine, 2012). However, there is less consistency in practice of the strategies and techniques for assessment of co-curricular experiences (Dean, 2015).

This paper describes an indirect assessment and analysis method that was used to assess students’ co-curricular experiences, leveraging a summative student reflection of a semi-structured co-curricular program called the Business Passport Program, with the reflection occurring in students’ final senior semester. Turrentine et al. (2012) noted that one of the challenges of using student perception of impact when collecting survey data immediately after an experience is that it is difficult to judge lasting value. This senior year reflective assessment allows for student perception of impact that is longer term, with intervening curricular and co-curricular experiences that inform their perceptions of that impact. An efficiency in this specific case is that this reflection activity is also used as an assessment of student writing, one of the curricular learning objectives.

The “Letter to the Dean” activity instructed students to write a formal letter to the Dean of the college, discussing three Business Passport activities/experiences and their relevance to their degree program and professional development. They were also asked to make an argument as to whether the events should be repeated in the future. Faculty in each department then used a rubric to score a sample of the writing assignments, with scores reported and informing our curricular improvement processes. While this assessment was created as an assessment of writing, the prompt’s focus on the Business Passport program provided a unique opportunity to use these letters not only as a writing assessment, but also as an assessment of our Business Passport co-curricular program and a selection of the activities and events that contributed to each student’s co-curricular experience.

Findings suggest that the students had more impactful comments related to Communications (27%) and Professional and Career Development (27%). As these seniors reflected upon their 2-4 years in the College of Business, they mostly pointed to the co-curricular activities that helped them gain confidence in writing and speaking and eventual employment. They were also impacted by the Ethics and Wellness activities. Interestingly, the “Wellness” continent is one that the College is considering adding and so few events were offered in 2022-2023. Yet, the topics were quite important to the Marketing students and made lasting impressions upon them.

Based on this initial review from Marketing students, we have gained insights into co-curricular programming. Knowing more about the co-curricular activities that are relevant to students, the College can better respond to those preferences. Reviewing only 10 Marketing submissions for the senior class for the semester represented about 25% of the graduates that semester. Future research will include reviewing all submissions to understand the topics that students find are the most impactful for them so we can focus attention on making sure those types of co-curricular experiences are provided to students. This would be important for both Marketing and other disciplines in the College.

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INTEGRATING AN ADVERTISING PITCH COMPETITION INTO A MARKETING CURRICULUM

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POSITION PAPER

It is widely established that there is value for both students and faculty in having students work with outside organizations to solve real world problems. This is often operationalized as a live case or client-based project, in which student teams work with one particular company to solve a problem during the course of the semester. This method has proved to be very effective in developing student skills in the areas of teamwork, conflict resolution, time management, communication, and critical thinking (Cummins & Johnson 2023). However, it should be noted that these projects can be difficult to implement and place increasing demands upon the faculty (Bove & Davies 2009; Johnson & Cummins 2022). When the live case takes the form of an advertising pitch competition, with a real world advertising agency and its client, it can be particularly challenging for faculty in a marketing program to integrate this activity into the curriculum.

Many marketing programs may have one or two Advertising courses and as a result, incorporating participation in an advertising pitch competition can be difficult. Potential issues include: the timing of the competition not aligning with the scheduling of a relevant course or the university academic calendar; faculty and students lacking the depth of advertising knowledge required to effectively compete; the quality of the client brief; difficulty scheduling meetings with all parties; motivating students and holding students accountable. In addition to being a client-based project, it is also a competition engaging students from a variety of universities. This raises the stakes for both students and faculty.

This position paper offers recommendations based on the author’s experience participating in the **HBCUs 4 Advertising Pitch Competition** sponsored by the MOSAIC Council of the American Advertising Federation (AAF) and Universal McCann Worldwide. In 2021 the MOSAIC Council of the American Advertising Federation (AAF) created the HBCUs 4 Advertising program. This program provides financial and programmatic support to AAF student chapters at approximately eight historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the country. The advertising pitch competition is co-sponsored by Universal McCann Worldwide. The agency selects a client and the client presents a brief related to an advertising problem the company would like to address. The universities create student teams and each team is provided a coach, an ad agency executive, to assist the team during the competition. Insights gained by the author are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Potential Issues and Recommendations

Potential Issue	Recommended Course of Action
The timing of the competition not aligning with the scheduling of a relevant course	Adapt the client brief to fit a particular course.
The timing of the competition not aligning with the university academic calendar	Select students who are highly motivated and willing and able to participate outside of the academic year.
Faculty and students lacking the depth of advertising knowledge required to effectively compete	Utilize the expertise provided by the coaches as well as online advertising resources.
The quality of the client brief	Translate the client brief into a meaningful assignment for students. This may be difficult if the brief is not well-defined.
Difficulty scheduling meetings with all parties	Determine the schedules of the most important parties, i.e., the client and coaches, and require students to commit to attending a specific number of meetings in order to remain on the team.
Motivating students	Create a class project that covers at least part of the brief. Additional credit may be given to students

	who want to participate in the competition.
Holding students accountable	Create requirements and consequences for participation, including being removed from the team.

Future research regarding how the competition element of the client-based project influences the nature of the use of live cases in marketing may prove to be beneficial.

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TRANSFORMING MARKETING EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE VIDEO CREATION ON TIKTOK AND PADLET

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POSITION PAPER

The challenge of ensuring that marketing students understand and apply concepts in real-world scenarios, rather than merely memorizing them, remains a persistent issue in marketing education. Despite more than 20 years of teaching Principles of Marketing, I have observed that students often engage in rote memorization, leading to a superficial grasp of concepts that they struggle to apply in practical contexts. To address this, I introduced an innovative project, MarketingTok, aimed at leveraging the popular social media platform TikTok to create engaging, concept-focused video content. This initiative seeks to meet students where they are, using a familiar medium to deepen their understanding and retention of marketing principles.

MarketingTok was initially designed with the tagline "Meet them at the court, play their game, MarketingTok," reflecting the strategy of engaging students in what I thought was their preferred digital environment, TikTok. As Dr. M, I began by creating videos on TikTok to illustrate key marketing concepts. Subsequently, I collaborated with students to produce additional videos and primarily encouraged students to work in groups to create their own videos. Each group, consisting of 4-5 students, was responsible for various tasks to ensure comprehensive participation.

Initially, the project faced several challenges: a minority of students were reluctant to participate due to discomfort with appearing on camera or a general disinterest in the activity. This was mitigated by assigning roles that did not require on-camera presence, such as scriptwriting, recording, editing, and adding subtitles. Additionally, students expressed hesitation about using their personal TikTok accounts for academic purposes, fearing potential privacy issues. To address privacy concerns, I transitioned from TikTok to Padlet, a platform that allowed students to not only post their videos but also organize them by chapters, which was more acceptable to the students and facilitated better organization of the videos. Integrating the video assignment into the formal grading structure and determining an effective method to grade the videos presented another hurdle, as students felt that the assignment should be an extra credit activity rather than a core graded assignment, reflecting a broader issue of how to value and assess innovative, non-traditional educational activities within a traditional academic framework.

To formalize and improve the MarketingTok initiative, several steps are recommended for future research and exploration. First, a detailed grading rubric should be developed to assess the videos on criteria such as creativity, accuracy of the marketing concepts, presentation skills, and technological quality. This will help standardize grading and align the project with academic expectations. Additionally, video creation should be made a mandatory part of the Principles of Marketing course, ensuring that it is recognized as a significant component of the coursework rather than an optional activity.

Conducting a longitudinal study to track the performance of students on exam questions related to the concepts covered in the videos will provide empirical data on the effectiveness of the project in enhancing conceptual understanding and retention. Also, collecting and analyzing student feedback will help identify areas for improvement and understand their perceptions of the project's impact on their learning. Lastly, offering workshops and resources for educators to adopt similar approaches will foster a community of practice around the use of social media and video content in marketing education.

Creating videos on TikTok and Padlet represents a promising approach to transition from rote memorization to a deeper understanding of marketing concepts. This initiative engages students in a familiar context, encouraging active learning and creativity. Addressing the challenges of participation, privacy, and assessment through thoughtful modifications and future research will enhance the project's impact. As marketing education evolves, innovative methods like MarketingTok can play a crucial role in preparing students to apply theoretical concepts in real-world

scenarios, ultimately improving their readiness for professional success.

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UNDERSTANDING THE OTHER SIDE: CAN PERSPECTIVE-TAKING HELP STUDENTS TO BRIDGE THE MARKETING/SALES GAP?

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POSITION PAPER

Perspective is a crucial but often unspoken aspect of marketing education. Many courses in the curriculum are taught from the perspective of either a marketing manager or a sales manager, or both. However, any differences in perspectives between these two business functions receive little attention in most undergraduate marketing textbooks and lesson plans.

A multidisciplinary group of business educators at a small midwestern U.S. university has been investigating perspective-taking across multiple courses. One research stream has focused on helping students to consider the perspective of the “other side” of the marketing and sales (M&S) interface. Students in an undergraduate Business to Business (B2B) Marketing course made two rounds of budgeting decisions, interspersed with lessons about perspective-taking and the roots of marketing/sales conflicts, to measure whether perspective-taking can influence decision making.

Any practitioner with experience in marketing or sales in a corporate environment can likely attest that these two functions often possess differing perspectives on each other’s roles and how best to work together. This M&S interface and occasional conflict has been the subject of so much research that Chernetsky et al. (2022) were able to review 89 published works on the topic, but it may not receive much attention in the classroom. Perspective-taking could serve as the means for introducing this topic; perspective-taking is an active process that occurs when an observer tries to understand the thoughts, motives, and/or feelings of a target. It has been studied extensively in social psychology, with more recent work conducted within the management literature (Ku et al., 2015).

The B2B Marketing undergraduate course was chosen for this perspective-taking pilot exercise because it is the only course in the curriculum that acknowledges the M&S interface. In past semesters, a fictional marketing manager and salesperson have been used as ongoing course characters in explaining how duties are traditionally the purview of one or the other. However, no time has been given to notions of differing perspectives or conflicts between the two.

The perspective-taking exercise took place during one class period early in the semester, and followed these steps. Scenario 1 was first communicated verbally and then in writing on the first survey. Students assumed the role of a marketing director who planned to submit an \$11 million annual budget request. The sales director contacted the marketing director, asking them to give up \$3 million of their budget request and to re-allocate that amount to the sales department budget. Students then completed the first survey, choosing one of three actions:

- **Option A** – Do not agree to the request. Submit budget proposal of \$11 million, with no changes,
- **Option B** - Agree to the request. Submit a reduced budget proposal of \$8 million and tell the sales department they can add that extra \$3 million to their budget, or
- **Option C** – Some other option.

The instructor then spoke for about five minutes on the role of perspective-taking in workplace decision making, and the importance of generating and maintaining long-term positive social capital with other departments. This was followed by a five-minute mini lecture on traditional sources of conflict between the marketing and sales functions, based on the work of Kotler et al. (2006) and Zoltners et al. (2013). Students then read the Kotler et al. article (2006).

Next, Scenario 2 was communicated verbally and in writing on the second survey, in which the situation remained unchanged but more perspective was offered on the sales department’s request. Names and photos of sales department members were shown, and details of a conversation with the sales director were shared. The sales director explained the current situation and how the money would be used, and expressed hope that the marketing department’s kindness

would be rewarded in the future, but no promises were made. Students then completed the second survey presenting the same three options, and finally answered an additional set of questions about their perceptions of the perspective-taking exercise.

Results in this pilot exercise were mixed. Student budget decisions changed but not significantly between the Scenario 1 pre-survey ($M = 2.11$, $SD = .766$) and the Scenario 2 post-survey ($M = 2.31$, $SD = .549$); $t(25) = -1.729$, $p = .096$. More students than anticipated agreed to the sales department's budget request on the pre-survey, prior to the lectures and readings. As a result, decisions were not significantly impacted by the perspective-taking intervention. When option 2 (accept budget request) and option 3 (another action) are collapsed into a single choice, there was a significant difference between the pre-survey ($M = 1.77$, $SD = .430$) and post-survey decisions ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .196$); $t(25) = -2.440$, $p = .022$.

This pilot project indicates that perspective-taking holds some promise in helping students to learn about working across the M&S interface, but that more pedagogical work is needed. Other methods for introducing students to perspective-taking might include guest speakers, role playing exercises, and simulation games. A revised exercise will be tested and implemented in future semesters of the B2B Marketing course, while the other three participating faculty members are revising their own exercises in accounting and economics courses. Our hope is to eventually publish a joint study about how perspective-taking can be used across the business curriculum. We are committed to exploring whether actively considering the "other side's" perspective can play a role in business education broadly, and in successfully bridging the traditional marketing/sales gap.

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EFFECTIVELY MANAGING LARGE CLASSES: STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT

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PANEL POSITION PAPER

Large classes present unique challenges for instructors, but with thoughtful course design, innovative teaching strategies, and emerging AI technologies, it is possible to create an active, focused learning environment that promotes student success. A fundamental strategy for managing large classes is setting clear expectations around behavior. Instructors should communicate their policies clearly in the syllabus, explaining the rationale behind the rules. This transparency helps students understand the purpose of classroom norms and encourages compliance.

To keep students engaged, instructors should move beyond traditional lecturing. Incorporating active learning techniques such as group discussions, in-class exercises, and real-world examples can significantly improve student focus and retention. Breaking up lectures with short activities and multimedia elements like videos can also enhance attention spans and make sessions more dynamic. While creating personal connections with each student in large classes is challenging, fostering a sense of community is crucial. Encouraging informal exchanges, providing personalized feedback through small group interactions, and utilizing virtual discussion boards can help students feel more engaged and part of a larger learning community. These strategies are particularly important in both in-person and online learning environments. Balancing digital accessibility with personal interaction is also important. While virtual office hours offer convenience, maintaining opportunities for face-to-face interaction is crucial. Implementing additional in-person office hours and, when possible, allocating time after class sessions for face-to-face questions can significantly impact student engagement and learning outcomes.

To enhance engagement during synchronous large classes held through video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, instructors can leverage features such as breakout rooms, polls, and chat functions to foster interaction. While requiring students to keep their videos on can help maintain a sense of presence, it is important to address privacy concerns by allowing students the option to keep their cameras off and using alternative methods to ensure engagement.

Emerging AI technologies play a vital role in managing large classes. AI-powered tools like clickers and group formation software can facilitate collaborative learning. AI tutoring tools can provide personalized feedback, allowing instructors to focus on higher-level facilitation. AI-based writing tools can also help instructors scale up their feedback and support.

Despite the challenges posed by large classes, instructors can create engaging learning environments through thoughtful design, active learning strategies, and strategic use of technology. By establishing clear expectations, fostering a sense of community, and leveraging both traditional and innovative teaching methods, educators can help students in large classes stay engaged, have a positive learning experience, and ultimately excel academically. The key is a balanced approach that combines the best of in-person and digital learning strategies to meet diverse student needs and learning preferences.

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15 TIPS FOR TEACHING MARKETING ANALYTICS

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PANEL POSITION PAPER

Marketing analytics plays a crucial role in modern business strategy by leveraging data to drive informed decision-making and optimize marketing efforts. Educators tasked with teaching marketing analytics face the challenge of equipping students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for success in the dynamic field of digital marketing. This paper outlines fifteen effective tips for educators to enhance the teaching of marketing analytics, emphasizing the importance of foundational concepts, practical applications, and continuous learning.

Tip 1: Emphasize the Importance of Marketing Analytics. It is essential to begin by elucidating the significance of marketing analytics in contemporary business contexts. Marketing analytics empowers organizations to understand consumer behavior, measure campaign effectiveness, and allocate resources efficiently based on data-driven insights (Smith & Jones, 2020). By emphasizing its role in strategic decision-making, educators can instill in students a clear understanding of why mastering analytics is essential for future marketing professionals.

Tip 2: Foster Inquiry and Questioning Skills. Effective teaching of marketing analytics involves cultivating students' ability to ask insightful questions. Brown and White (2019) argue that developing critical thinking skills through questioning helps students frame problems, identify relevant data, and derive meaningful insights. Encouraging curiosity and inquiry not only enhances analytical abilities but also prepares students to tackle real-world marketing challenges creatively.

Tip 3: Teach Fundamental Marketing Concepts. Before delving into analytics tools and techniques, it is crucial to establish a strong foundation in fundamental marketing concepts. Concepts such as segmentation, targeting, positioning, and the marketing mix provide the framework upon which marketing analytics strategies are built (Johnson, 2018). Understanding these concepts enables students to contextualize data analytics within broader marketing strategies and objectives.

Tip 4: Deep Dive into Customer Profiling. Customer profiling forms the backbone of effective marketing strategies. By teaching students how to segment and profile customers based on demographic, behavioral, and psychographic data, educators equip them with the skills to personalize marketing campaigns and enhance customer engagement (Green & Black, 2021). Practical exercises in customer segmentation allow students to apply analytical tools to real-world scenarios.

Tip 5: Utilize Case Studies for Practical Application. Case studies serve as valuable teaching tools to illustrate the application of marketing analytics in solving complex business problems. Taylor et al. (2022) highlight the importance of analyzing case studies to understand how analytics tools and methodologies can be employed to optimize marketing strategies, measure campaign success, and inform strategic decisions. Real-world examples provide students with practical insights into the challenges and opportunities in marketing analytics.

Tip 6: Provide Quick Reference Materials. Given the technical nature of marketing analytics, providing students with quick-reference guides and "cheat sheets" for statistical tests, analytics tools (e.g., Google Analytics, Tableau), and data visualization techniques is invaluable (Williams, 2017). These resources aid comprehension, facilitate hands-on learning, and serve as practical tools for students to apply in their coursework and future careers.

Tip 7: Demonstrate Analytics Tools and Platforms. Practical demonstrations of popular analytics tools and platforms, such as Google Data Studio, R Studio, and Power BI, are essential for enhancing students' technical proficiency (Clark & Adams, 2019). Hands-on experience allows students to manipulate data, create visualizations, and derive actionable insights, preparing them for the demands of the industry.

Tip 8: Highlight B2C vs B2B Analytics Differences. Educators should emphasize the distinctions between

analytics strategies for Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and Business-to-Business (B2B) markets. Roberts and Davis (2020) argue that understanding these differences is crucial, as metrics and methodologies vary based on target audience characteristics, purchasing behaviors, and decision-making processes. Tailoring analytics approaches to specific market segments enhances the relevance and applicability of students' skills.

Tip 9: Stress the Importance of Testing and Optimization. Testing and optimization are integral components of effective marketing analytics. Lee and Smith (2021) stress the significance of designing and executing A/B tests, analyzing results, and iteratively improving marketing strategies based on data-driven insights. Emphasizing the iterative nature of testing instills in students the mindset of continuous improvement and adaptation in response to market dynamics.

Tip 10: Select Relevant and Up-to-Date Course Materials. Choosing course materials that are current and relevant to industry trends is essential for keeping students engaged and informed (Harris & Wilson, 2018). Updated textbooks, case studies, and scholarly articles provide students with insights into emerging technologies, methodologies, and best practices in marketing analytics.

Tip 11: Leverage Certification Programs. Encouraging students to pursue certifications from recognized programs, such as Google Analytics Academy or HubSpot Academy, validates their skills and enhances their credibility in the job market (Mitchell & Turner, 2023). Certifications demonstrate proficiency in using specific analytics tools and methodologies, reinforcing students' competency and employability.

Tip 12: Facilitate Hands-On Learning with Real-World Tools. Integrating hands-on exercises with real-world analytics tools, such as Google Trends for market analysis and Tableau for data visualization, provides students with practical experience (Evans & Moore, 2020). Application-based learning enables students to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical skills, preparing them to tackle complex marketing challenges in their careers.

Tip 13: Foster Continuous Learning Through Industry Blogs. Encouraging students to follow industry blogs and publications keeps them informed about the latest trends, innovations, and thought leadership in marketing analytics (Bailey & Phillips, 2021). Blogs such as KD Nuggets and MarketingProfs offer valuable insights into industry developments and practical applications of analytics in marketing.

Tip 14: Connect Students with Career Opportunities. Facilitating networking opportunities, internship placements, and guest lectures by industry professionals exposes students to real-world applications of marketing analytics (Cook & Rogers, 2019). Building professional networks and gaining practical experience enhances students' career prospects and prepares them for the transition from academia to industry.

Tip 15: Encourage Participation in Expert Sessions and Competitions. Organizing expert sessions and analytics competitions fosters collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking among students (Reed & Bell, 2022). Expert sessions allow students to learn from industry professionals, while competitions provide opportunities to apply analytical skills to solve marketing challenges and showcase their expertise.

In conclusion, effective teaching of marketing analytics requires a balanced approach that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical application. By emphasizing foundational concepts, practical exercises, and continuous learning through industry engagement, educators can prepare students to excel in the dynamic field of marketing analytics. Implementing these fifteen tips equips students with the skills, competencies, and mindset necessary to leverage data-driven insights and drive marketing success in their careers.

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EFFECTIVELY MANAGING LARGE CLASSES: ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND INTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Felice A. Williams, Louisiana State University Shreveport

PANEL POSITION PAPER

The rising popularity of online instruction is undisputable, and managing large classes in this relatively recent educational context presents its own unique set of challenges. In addition to the usual considerations of course design and student engagement – among a host of other things – effectively managing large classes in the online context also necessitates forging beneficial partnerships within the organization.

Having instructed online classes for the past ten years, the breadth and depth of experience gained have been invaluable. Working with graduate students, in an accelerated seven-week format with approximately 150 – 200 students at a time (up to a maximum of 500 students at one point) requires access to organizational support and resources as well as coalition building among faculty.

Organizational resources such as academic coaches, access to software like similarity checkers, and proctoring services contribute to effectively managing large classes in an online context. The shared experience of faculty within the organization, who have over time gained a wealth of experience from managing large online classes, represents an exceptional source of knowledge for mutual benefit. To the extent that these can be harnessed effectively, they provide an additive effect to the overall successful management of large classes.

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EFFECTIVELY MANAGING LARGE CLASSES: INCREASING ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION AMONG STUDENTS

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PANEL POSITION PAPER

Teaching in a large auditorium with close to 300 students can be a daunting task for even the most seasoned faculty member! While many of us can effectively convey the Marketing concepts required for the class, we are often challenged to increase the engagement and participation by the students. Clickers and Kahoot trivia are often fun and entertaining for the students, but the licenses and technology can be expensive for the students or for the faculty/department once higher numbers of students are involved. Furthermore, being the “Sage on the Stage” can fail to deliver the satisfaction of reaching students and getting to know them better.

Facing a couple of these concerns, I worked on developing some low-tech, in-class activities to foster greater discussion among students while allowing me to “work the room” by going into the audience and working directly with the students. In this session, I will share some of the primary topics in a Principles of Marketing class that I was able to cover. I will also discuss how I went from over 250 submissions per graded session to 50-60 submissions making grading a lot easier to manage, even with the aid of graduate assistants. These in-class tasks can also work well in smaller classes where active engagement is hard for students who prefer not to speak up or air their viewpoints in class. Some challenges with the in-class tasks will be discussed along with ways to maneuver around them.

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FROM CLASSROOM TO CORNER OFFICE: TRANSITIONING TO ADMINISTRATION

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PANEL POSITION PAPER

As in all industries, higher education needs competent, strategic, and inspiring leaders. Yet, lack of leadership development and succession planning, particularly in academics, is one of higher education's biggest challenges (Lovett, 2017). In academia, the path to leadership typically runs through faculty ranks. However, challenges exist throughout the pipeline and beyond. More than half of academic leaders report that hiring academic administrators is a severe or moderate problem for their institution (Zahneis, 2023).

One factor may be an “us versus them” mentality about faculty and administration, causing reluctance in some faculty to make the switch. Once in their roles, the skills that lead faculty to be promoted up the academic ladder are not necessarily the same as those needed in administration. Faculty are often encouraged to prioritize research and teaching over service and leadership development, and hence, can be unprepared for managerial roles. The result of many of these challenges is turnover. A recent study found that most academic deans stay in their roles for less than five years (Henk, Wepner, & Ali, 2021).

The authors of this paper started their academic careers as faculty members with teaching, research, and service responsibilities. They have held and currently hold positions such as department chair, associate dean, dean, and assistant vice president of academic affairs. Despite varied motivations for moving into these administrative roles, their impact has been consistently significant: they have greater influence across their institution, enhance operational efficiency, and contribute more substantially to student success and community engagement.

While paths from faculty to administration can vary, Pesce and Prusko (2024) say that many faculty members feel an obligation to take on leadership positions. For those professors who aspire to administrative roles, their reasons might include personal desires for recognition, increased pay, better retirement benefits, a desire for control over situations and others, and an opportunity to have a greater impact (Whitaker, 2022).

Most academicians are trained to teach and conduct research. Faculty members who have demonstrated significant teaching and research accomplishments are often rewarded with leadership roles as department chairs and deans without consideration of their leadership skills and competencies (Ruben & Gigliotti, 2016). This often results in challenges as these new leaders must quickly adapt to their expanded responsibilities, which include administrative tasks, strategic planning, and managing diverse teams.

New administrators often perceive themselves as middle managers caught between two realms, balancing the objectives and anticipations of their subordinates with those of higher-ranking leadership (Frenkel, 2021). Some who still have teaching responsibilities experience tension between their research and teaching duties on one hand and their leadership responsibilities on the other (Morris, 2008). Additionally, faculty-turned-administrators can face identity challenges. Are you now “one of them?” How to handle confidential information or conflicts with your former faculty colleagues? How are your friendships with colleagues impacted now that you are the boss?

The literature indicates that mastering staff management is one of the most challenging aspects of these roles (Pesce & Prusko, 2024). Whitaker (2022) says that the collaborative nature of administrative work and time for research and community service commitments are challenging. There are fewer leadership development programs in higher education than in industry. Many institutions lack on-the-job training for department chairs, deans, and provost positions (Pesce & Prusko, 2024). Mentorship and leadership training can create value for any leader in academia. A

formalized program can support leadership growth, cultural mindset, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, it encourages informal relationships between current and future leaders.

Another critical factor is whether the institution values the development of potential leaders and “deepening the bench.” Ideally, resources would be put towards creating a leadership pipeline through roles such as committee chairs, course coordinators, and special project managers to support faculty career goals as they intersect with institutional needs. One opportunity could be in the annual faculty review process, which is standard at most institutions. Although the review is typically focused on teaching, service, and research, faculty could be encouraged to include professional development goals and a plan, which could help to identify and nurture future administrative leaders.

While the challenges and rewards of a move from faculty to administration are often discussed and various leadership styles examined, a limited amount of academic research on successfully navigating this transition exists. The authors propose a phenomenological study to seek and understand the multifaceted experiences of faculty members who have taken on administrative responsibilities, offering insights and strategies for navigating this critical career shift. There is a need to hear from those at various stages of this career life cycle to close this gap in the literature and help those grappling with these choices. Hearing from those who leave administration and go back to faculty should be included in this career life cycle study, too, as this transition receives scant attention in the literature as it is uncommon in other industries for leaders to return to the “rank and file” (Jaschik, 2023).

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THE WELL CARED FOR SALESMAN: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & SELF INSULATING CONSIDERATIONS FOR SALES CURRICULUM

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PANEL POSITION PAPER

Sales is a business discipline that can bring much rejection and absence of gain in an individual's efforts. Riseley (2023) reports salespeople can be nearly twice as likely to experience declining mental health compared to the standard workforce. As such, the salesperson must be psychologically equipped and strengthened to brave the storm of rejection and lack of gain. Current and foundational collegiate curriculum offer limited content in the area of positive psychology, mental health, and emotional intelligence building for the sales student.

A review of seven popular textbooks in undergraduate sales programs reveals foundational sales lessons across the chapters from understanding why people buy, ethical and legal issues in selling, networking and prospecting, CRM and sales technologies, value creation, prospecting and communicating, social selling, negotiating, presenting, closing the sale and following up with the customer. In each textbook, however, little information is provided for self-care, mental health and personal development of the salesperson. While each textbook offered a glimpse of motivation, self-management and/or handling rejections, to mention a few topics, ranging in detail in as few as two paragraphs to a few pages at most, much opportunity exists to address personal issues, personal insulating tactics and self-development in the realm of sales where burn-out, poor mental health and isolation are common.

Research has been conducted on the issue of self-care in sales. Dugan et al. (2023) found little attention has been given to salesperson well-being in the academic sales discipline and such has ramifications on customers, suppliers, colleagues and other members of the community. Rutherford et al. (2023) identified the relationship of burnout and emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction. Ewe and Ho (2022) offered salespersons' abilities to keep their mental abilities sharp is vital to overcoming challenges and moving forward from unforeseen challenges and circumstances. Weinberg (2012) offers a lack of mentorship exists in the industry (p.13). Weinberg (2012) also offers a lack of focus and discipline are common amongst salespersons (p. 15) that can limit one's success in the industry.

There are many aspects to be included in sales curriculum that can address the demanding aspects students can expect from the field of sales on the individual salesperson. Ewe and Ho (2022) offer exercises in passion and purpose, gratitude, long-term thinking, and self-reflection are beneficial. McFarland and Dixon (2021) offer, in discussing interpersonal mentalizing skills, that skills of being more self-aware and having a better understanding of one's own thoughts and emotions is beneficial to the salesperson. This author hypothesizes a course to be included in the sales curriculum should be dedicated to the well-being of the sales student and address specific self-building and insulating topics of self-care, self-esteem, dealing with rejection, positive thinking, faith in the process, establishing mentors and personal connections, motivation and determination, capitalizing on fear, and discipline to name a few. The better a sales student can be personally insulated for the upcoming nuisances of the industry and prepared for the personal challenges that will be experienced, the more effective they will be as a sales professional.

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FORMING CONSTRUCTIVE STUDENT TEAMS

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PANEL POSITION PAPER

Forming constructive student teams begins with motivated students who can work effectively as consultants with other team members in real business situations with business professionals. The selection of student teams is important for both the client and each student team member. Instructors can face a challenge when teaching a course involving student teams on how best to assign students to the teams. Students often prefer to work with others in class who are friends, or they recognize as others as being excellent students but also want to exclude some students from their team for many reasons including students who lacked the drive to perform and those who have proven to only perform effectively when working alone. Students sometimes also may be motivated to work with students that have similar interests and experiences as they have. However, it is necessary for the instructor to explain that the benefit of a team is to bring different experiences for stronger results when developing the marketing plan. This can translate into teamwork being an important goal in the success of their career growth.

Instructors must understand the challenges of three options when selecting student teams:

- 1). Students can select their team members
- 2). The instructor selects the team members (This is my preferred method to assure that a team has balance)
- 3). There is a random draw of the team members.

I have recognized that teams of two, four, or five work quite well, however, three students in a team can have negative consequences because many times two students tended to confront one student in the team. It involved situations where two students worked together effectively and avoided one, which is why I try to avoid teams of three.

Each option can influence the learning experience and the level of motivation for the students. This can also result in a higher level of satisfaction from the assigned business or nonprofit. A greater level of satisfaction for each client by the work each student team contributes can give each respective university a more favorable evaluation within the community. Conversely, a lower level of performance by a student team can give a less favorable evaluation by the client which can also translate into an unfavorable impression of the university students within the community.

Once students are assigned to teams it is important to find organizations willing to actively participate in the process. Organizations who are open and willing to share how they operate with the students can be a valuable link to learning. The instructor must assure that the students will get a quality learning experience working with the actual businesses or nonprofits which is why an introduction is made by the instructor with the student teams and their assigned client. Communication among team members as well as the clients assigned is important for a successful project. Students must be motivated to work with all team members to complete the project in a thorough manner. It is necessary to meet with the student teams regularly during the term to assure the process is moving at an adequate pace and to review the deliverables. I follow the stages in the marketing plan beginning about the fifth week of class. The first four weeks cover important marketing material that should be included in the final marketing plan to assist each client. Regular meetings with the students can serve as the building blocks for the marketing plan and help avoid unnecessary scrambling by the students to complete their projects on the due date. It is also necessary for each student team to meet with the instructor to do a practice presentation where I can observe and make comments about the delivery including the exhibits displayed to make every effort to have a satisfied client.

No compensation is ever expected for the time and effort students invest in the marketing plan projects but I do request each assigned business to attend the student presentations and also write a letter of satisfaction that includes completing a satisfaction survey. The letters of satisfaction and surveys provide evidence regarding the extent that the businesses benefitted from the projects. These projects provide positive publicity for the university and also benefit the business community in the form of an ongoing partnership. The project completion also offers the students a valuable addition in building their resume's.

It is important that each company understands the limitations students have when completing the marketing plan. Too often business expectations exceed what a student team can actually produce in a semester project. It is necessary for the instructor to clearly explain to each business what can actually be completed by the students in fifteen weeks.

Most businesses have been very satisfied to work with student teams to develop creative ideas and potential solutions for their business success. There remains a small number of businesses that expect a more comprehensive study than can be completed in a fifteen week course.

Students must evaluate all team members who were working on the team project. If a student gets a low evaluation by the team members, then that student's grade for the project would be adjusted. Unequal team member contributions are a major problem with team projects. Instructors must work to encourage all team members to contribute on an equal basis toward the final project.

There is a noticeable difference between the quality and depth of work performed by graduate students compared with undergraduates which explains why companies often request graduate students for their projects. Graduate students often have more classroom training and work experience than undergraduates.

Future research can continue to collect longitudinal data generated from the businesses who had graduate student projects and those who had undergraduate marketing students completing the marketing plans. It will be interesting to know if there is a higher degree of expectations from graduate students in completing the marketing plan project compared with the undergraduate students also working on the marketing plans. An important goal will then be to match the expectations of the select businesses with the appropriate student teams based upon their educational level. This ongoing study can help determine a company profile that can benefit greater with graduate students and those businesses who would welcome undergraduates for the marketing plan projects.

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ADVANCING SALES CURRICULUM WITH AI INNOVATIONS AND REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Greg Accardo, LSU Professional Sales Institute

PANEL POSITION PAPER

The landscape of sales is undergoing a radical transformation, driven by rapid advancements in technology and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI). As the Director of the LSU Professional Sales Institute, I am focused on the challenge of creating a sales curriculum that not only keeps pace with these innovations but also equips our students with the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly complex sales environment.

Traditional sales curricula have long provided foundational knowledge in areas such as customer relationship management (CRM), prospecting, and negotiation. However, the emergence of AI in sales presents new opportunities and challenges that require a rethinking of how we prepare the next generation of sales professionals.

A review of current sales textbooks and academic programs reveals a significant gap in addressing the impact of AI on sales processes. While topics like CRM and sales technologies are often covered, there is a notable absence of in-depth content on how AI can enhance sales strategies, improve customer interactions, and drive data-driven decision-making.

Research has shown that AI can significantly boost sales productivity by automating routine tasks, providing predictive analytics, and personalizing customer engagement. For instance, a study by McKinsey & Company found that companies using AI in sales increased their leads and appointments by 50% and reduced costs by 40-60% (McKinsey & Company, 2020). Despite these benefits, many sales professionals are unprepared to leverage these technologies effectively.

To address this gap, our curriculum at the LSU Professional Sales Institute is evolving to include comprehensive training on AI tools and their applications in sales. This includes hands-on experience with AI-powered prospecting tools, training in data analytics, and coursework on ethical considerations in AI usage. By integrating these elements, we aim to prepare our students not only to use AI tools but to understand their strategic implications and ethical responsibilities.

In addition to integrating AI advancements, it is crucial to expose students to the realities of the sales environment through live-selling projects. These projects involve students interacting with real people to execute the sales process, providing invaluable practical experience. Live-selling projects offer a platform for students to apply theoretical knowledge, develop essential interpersonal skills, and navigate the challenges and adversities inherent in a sales career.

Experiencing the pressures and unpredictability of real-world sales scenarios prepares students to handle rejection, build resilience, and develop problem-solving skills. This practical exposure is indispensable for understanding the dynamic nature of sales and the importance of adaptability and perseverance.

Live-selling projects also foster a deeper understanding of customer needs and behaviors, allowing students to practice empathy and effective communication. These experiences are critical for building the confidence and competence required to succeed in a competitive sales environment.

Advancing our sales curriculum to incorporate AI innovations and real-world experience is essential for preparing our students for the future of sales. By providing them with the knowledge and skills to harness the power of AI and exposing them to the realities of the sales profession, we can ensure that they are well-equipped to meet the demands of the modern sales landscape and drive success for their organizations.

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EFFECTIVELY LEADING AN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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PANEL POSITION PAPER

Leading a study abroad experience can be a rewarding experience for faculty. Knowledge of the destination country or countries is valuable, but it is not the sole factor in determining program success. Designing an effective international learning experience entails planning before, during, and after a trip. Our panel addresses three issues related to leading a study abroad experience: 1) designing impactful short-term programs, 2) preparing students for their study abroad experience, and 3) reinvigorating and reshaping study abroad programs.

Designing Short-Term Experiences: At Rowan University's Rohrer College of Business, we offer junior level theme-based and credit-bearing short-term study abroad programs. These programs typically run during spring break, with significant work completed before, during, and after the travel period. To minimize costs and maximize educational and cultural experiences, we collaborate exclusively with non-profit organizations. Our locations are strategically chosen based on the theme, usually focusing on Asia or Central America, and we assess students' cross-cultural competence before and after travel.

For a faculty-led study abroad program to succeed, several key factors are considered and implemented. First, the characteristics of the faculty member leading the program play a pivotal role in its success. Their cross-cultural competence, curiosity, excitement, and adaptability lay the groundwork for the entire experience and create strong faculty-student relationships, fostering enthusiasm, positive group dynamics, and meaningful learning opportunities. Second, pre-departure planning, including thorough orientation sessions, is essential to set the tone and manage expectations. At the Rohrer College of Business, we provide two pre-departure orientations: one to form bonds among students and another to offer cultural and logistical preparation. Furthermore, it is important for the faculty leader to maintain steady communication with the students through the most convenient messaging platforms. Third, the design of the program should emphasize experiential learning, integrating local visits, guest lectures, and hands-on activities to enhance understanding of global issues within disciplinary contexts. At our institution, students are required to complete a pre-departure assignment to understand the culture and business environment of the destination country, as well as the operations of the organizations they will visit. This assignment ensures that interactions with local managers are meaningful, transformative, and impactful. Fourth, the size of the group significantly affects the overall study abroad experience. A manageable group size allows for more personalized attention and fosters closer relationships between faculty and students, creating a strong personal and professional network. We limit the number of participants to a maximum of 15 students to ensure deeper engagement and stronger bonds among participants. Lastly, post-program debriefings and assessments are crucial for reflective practice and the refinement of future iterations. These sessions allow us to gather feedback, evaluate the success of the program, and make necessary adjustments for future study abroad experiences.

Preparing Students Ahead of the Experience: Middle Tennessee State University offers a summer study abroad program on influence marketing in Finland, Estonia, and Sweden. Students spend one week in the classroom at JAMK University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä, Finland. Additional professional and cultural opportunities are planned while visiting Helsinki, Tallinn, and Stockholm. For many students, it is their first trip outside the United States, and for some, it is their first experience with air travel. Communication is key to alleviating concerns and putting students at ease about the trip. While some students are fine with ceding control over planning an international trip to someone else, others are nervous about travel, accommodations, and attractions for which they have little or no input into organizing.

Given the apprehensions students may have about their study abroad experience ahead of the trip, two priorities

s are communication and preparing students for adversity. An effective communication channel before and during trips is GroupMe. It is used to share trip information, remind students of deadlines to submit documents and payments, and connect with each other in real-time while on the trip. Preparing students for adversity is another priority I have established as part of my pre-trip communication with students. Setbacks will occur over the course of a two-plus week trip; flights will be delayed, luggage will get lost, and trains will be behind schedule, to name a few issues. It is important that students understand it is part of traveling and have an appropriate response. Some students take such incidents in stride; others crumble under the adversity. I emphasize that adversity in some form is to be expected, but there is a response for just about every situation to address whatever problems might arise. Adaptability is a soft skill valued in the workplace that can be nurtured during a study abroad experience.

Reinvigorating and Reshaping Travel Abroad: The University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio, has long held international travel central to its focus on students' experiential learning opportunities. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, along with wholesale changes in the personnel of its international education department, centralized coordination and leadership for international travel opportunities have waned. Coupled with these challenges are unique demographics of the institution that do not lend themselves to previous personal international travel experiences. For first-time incoming freshmen in 2023, 74% were full-time Ohio residents, with 80% of this population emanating from micropolitan or rural areas (University of Findlay Institutional Research, 2023).

In order to combat the recent decrease in organization of and participation in international learning experiences, the College of Business (COB) decided to decentralize these opportunities for its students by reinvigorating a partnership with the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria (UASUA). One trip had been organized with COB students to travel to this university previously. However, this partnership had largely ceased due to the pandemic and lack of international travel personnel.

In 2024, the University led its first travel abroad experience with COB students to the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria. Led by the dean and one full-time faculty member, the COB chose four undergraduate students for this initial "pilot" group to travel and learn with graduate students at the UASUA. During this trip, students participated in a Makeathon Event with graduate students from the UASUA, serving on cross-cultural teams to work with German and Austrian companies to come up with strategies to better align with a circular economy. Additionally, students had the opportunity to present at the Cross-Cultural Business Conference, sharing their insights from the Makeathon as well as their personal reflections on their experiences.

There were multiple key takeaways from this experience by both students and leadership that will help to build a bridge for future travel opportunities. Future plans include integration of a for-credit course that spans both before and after the travel experience. Additionally, students who took the trip this year will serve as ambassadors to encourage more students to apply and participate in the experience for future years. Finally, an enhanced cross-cultural educational opportunity will be discussed with the partnering university.

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COACHING THE DIGITAL MARKETING PROJECT WITH THE HELP OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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SPECIAL SESSION

Digital marketing is omnipresent in modern marketing practice and is increasingly part of the standard marketing curriculum. One reason why digital marketing is tricky to teach is because the landscape is continuously evolving due to new technologies such as AI (artificial intelligence). Zahay *et al.* (2022) suggest that teaching digital marketing is a balancing act between teaching basic strategic marketing concepts, technical knowledge (often in the form of certifications) and practical applications of digital marketing concepts.

The applied learning aspect of in digital marketing education can take many forms, such as a simulation, a reflection assignment or in-class exercise. A common example of applied learning in digital marketing classes is a project with either a real-life client or one selected from a list of top companies. The project can encompass the process of strategic planning through implementation or just focus on one aspect of digital marketing, such as search or social media.

That said, marketing educators are seeking to integrate AI into their classrooms in many aspects, including the digital marketing project. One of the benefits of integrating AI into the classroom is that students are equipped with skills needed in the workforce. Another benefit of teaching AI is to offer those experiential learning opportunities in the classroom so critical to digital marketing education. The digital marketing curriculum at both the graduate and undergraduate level is particularly well-suited to the use of AI in the classroom as it offers a chance to learn new technologies as well as to apply them in a marketing context.

Since AI increasingly can play a critical role in the digital marketing project, this panel focuses on how to integrate AI into the digital marketing project in many ways. The panel discussion will begin with the process of selecting the project outline and a pros and cons of different approaches. Topics include whether to use a real-life client or pick a well-known company and how to identify the scope and parameters of the project.

Next, there will be a discussion of how students can integrate AI into the digital marketing project. A specific approach to integrating AI into the project will be to illustrate the use of HubSpot's new AI-powered Campaign Assistant (Beta) to allow students to complete various project aspects. While early efforts at teaching AI in the classroom focused on large-language models and prompt engineering, increasingly students will be asked to be familiar with how AI is being incorporated into marketing applications they will use on the job. For example, the HubSpot Campaign Assistant can create web page and email marketing content as well as create paid search ads and a Facebook page and associated advertising copy. Assignments that in the past might have been difficult for students in terms of creating content can be made easier as the content generator gets them started, generates ideas, and can save time.

Finally, the panel will overview some of additional tools that that can be used in integrating AI into a digital marketing project. For example, the first step in a social media plan is listening. Social listening tools powered by AI, such as Sprinkler, can analyze online reviews and social media mentions, among others. Generative AI applications such as ChatGPT can help create drafts of user personas to drive campaigns. The panel will conclude with audience questions and a general discussion. Participants will benefit by gaining knowledge and sharing ideas on coaching these types of projects with the help of AI applications.

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EXPLORING CLIENT PROJECTS AS CAREER LAUNCHPADS FOR WOMEN IN MARKETING

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SPECIAL SESSION

Despite outnumbering and frequently outperforming their male counterparts in higher education (Fry, 2022), women graduates encounter significant hurdles in the workplace. These challenges often stem from deep-rooted societal perceptions that associate leadership with traditionally masculine characteristics (Castaño et al., 2019). Research has consistently demonstrated that women tend to exhibit lower self-confidence levels than men during the early stages of their professional journeys (Zenger, 2019). Consequently, this perceived lack of confidence can place women at a disadvantage despite their proven competence and capabilities.

DeLong & Elbeck (2018) found that more is needed to demonstrate marketing knowledge (hard skills); students must also demonstrate soft skills (such as interpersonal and professional intelligence) to be perceived as high-potential candidates in entry-level job interviews. Hard and soft skills can be improved with structured training in the classroom (DeLong & Elbeck, 2018).

One strategy in higher education to increase career readiness and better prepare women for the workplace is course-embedded client-based projects (CBPs), a subset of experiential learning. The authors aim to explore the use of CBPs and their potential benefits for enhancing women's career readiness and early career success. For instance, a CBP could involve a marketing student working with a local business to develop a new advertising campaign or a market research project. CBPs provide students with hands-on, real-world experience by working directly with clients to solve actual problems or develop solutions. CBPs involve applying theoretical knowledge to practical situations and enhancing critical thinking, problem-solving, and professional skills. This immersive approach is considered one type of experiential learning.

Kolb's seminal Experiential Learning Theory posits that learning is a process where knowledge is created through experience transformation. According to Kolb (1984), the experiential learning cycle involves four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This cycle allows learners to fully engage with the material and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, fostering deeper understanding and skill development.

Educational theorists such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Kurt Lewin emphasized the importance of experience in the learning process (Kolb, 1984). Experiential learning encourages active participation, critical reflection, and practical application, making it particularly effective in preparing students for the complexities of the modern workplace (Bowering et al., 2020). By engaging in authentic experiences and reflecting on these experiences, students develop critical competencies essential for career readiness and lifelong learning.

Integrating CBPs into courses can raise students' awareness of the importance of career readiness and foster the development of these essential competencies. When faculty prioritize these competencies over traditional course content, it can lead to improved subject matter learning. In a recent study of over 200 students who completed CBPs in their upper-level marketing classes, students reported a significant increase in their engagement and career readiness skills (Beaupre et al., 2024). However, this study did not address the role and impact of CBPs on young women's self-efficacy and early career experiences.

During this special session, the presenters briefly highlighted the research problem and the challenges women face in the workplace, such as the confidence gap and leadership perceptions. Additionally, presenters and attendees

identified the potential hard and soft skills graduates could develop through the CBP experience and how faculty can enhance their students' career readiness. In addition, the presenters shared preliminary research results from a study hypothesizing that female students who participate in client-based projects (CBPs) have greater self-confidence in job interviewing, the onboarding process, and early career success.

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THE FDA'S FRONT-OF-PACKAGE LABEL MANDATE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL SYSTEMS

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SPECIAL SESSION PAPER

Negative consequences of the increasing presence of obese and overweight individuals in the US population are generating a growing public debate and a search for appropriate solutions by institutions and policymakers. Many other countries have introduced Front-of-Pack Nutritional Labels (FOPLs) as a relevant tool to counteract such trends, supported by extensive research indicating their relative effectiveness. Within this context, the US Food and Drug Administration has initiated a large-scale exploration to identify which mandatory FOPL should be introduced in the US market.

This research contributes then to this current stream of research showing how different FOPLs impact with a different magnitude of effects consumer attitudes and behaviors toward healthier and more informed food choices. Among tested alternatives, evidences on an analysis on 181 US consumers suggest that - in the context of the US market - Nutri-Tips and NutrInform Battery performs significantly better than Nutri-Score on comprehension, help-to-shop and complexity reduction. Moreover, those results are not affected by socio-demographic differences. In terms of FOPL liking, tested labels are equivalent.

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