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PARENTAL PERSPECTIVES IN BOOSTER SEAT USAGE

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Ismet Anitsal, Tennessee Tech University
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ABSTRACT

The use of booster seats compared to the use of adult seat belts alone lowers the risk of injury to children in crashes by 59 percent according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This study tests an attitudinal model of booster seat usage by using structural equation modeling based on a total usable sample of 1320 respondents representing fathers and mothers of K-4 students in Tennessee. Specifically, it compares mothers and fathers in terms of their approaches to booster seat usage. Since purchase and regular usage of booster seats involve the whole family, if mothers and fathers do not show a consistent and positive attitude towards it, expecting a permanent positive change in children's view of booster seat will be unrealistic despite educational efforts in classrooms.

THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ON SALES CAREER ADVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Personal selling is a part of everyday life, reflected in how we build and maintain relationships, convince others of our ideas, negotiate terms even in friendships (ex: where to go for dinner), portray ourselves to others (ex: in an interview, first date), and may be part of our daily jobs. However, personal selling, and salespeople in particular, has been criticized as being a tool used to convince people to buy what they do not need. Business students, about 60% of whom end up in an entry-level sales position directly out of their undergraduate program, are still fairly averse to a career in sales.

This study explores 1) how students' attitudes toward a career in sales change due to participation in Experiential Learning (ExL) activities and 2) the impact of confidence as a moderator of these effects. Students' attitudes toward sales will be assessed at the beginning and end of the course, and periodic assessments of confidence will be taken several times during the course. It is expected that attitudes toward sales will change positively as a result of participating in a personal selling course with ExL activities and that confidence will be built through the experiences in the course and will moderate the attitude change. The paper reports research in progress.

INTRODUCTION

Since the production era in the evolution of sales (Weitz, Castleberry, & Tanner, 2008), the sales profession and salespeople have often been viewed in a negative light. The mentality of "sell what you can produce" led to salespeople who were pushy and perceived as insincere and manipulative. Even media has often portrayed salespeople in a negative light, often suggesting unethical behavior, dishonesty, and manipulation (Hartman, 2006; Waldeck, Pullins, & Houlette, 2010). A negative perception of sales and salespeople may impact one's willingness to consider sales as a career. Can the image of a career in sales be changed through positive experiences and increased knowledge in a classroom? This paper reports on research in progress investigating the effect of experiential learning on perception towards sales careers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even with the growing popularity of sales centers, degrees and certificates in sales, and sales as a required course in marketing departments, the field of sales education has not been explored as much as other marketing education topics (Anderson, et al., 2005). It is approximated that 80% of marketing majors and 50% of finance majors will find themselves at some point in sales (Bobot, 2010). However, sales practitioners have objected that sales skills taught in academia are often inadequate (Johnson, 1990). Students were found to be inadequately prepared for sales careers, particularly with regard to oral and written communication, interpersonal, and creative thinking (or problem-solving) skills. Not only is there a growing need to better prepare marketing majors for a career in sales, but even nonbusiness majors are realizing the benefit of acquiring personal selling skills. Expectations that salespeople “adjust to consumer demands, organizational needs, and environmental pressures” (Artis & Harris, 2007) have been growing and call those in academia to research effective education methods to train in skills such as adaptability, problem-solving, and interpersonal relations.

Despite an increasing number of sales positions (9% - 25% increase by 2016) and a greater emphasis on sales education, negative perceptions of a career in sales persist among students (Waldeck, et al., 2010). Since learning sales skills is multifaceted, involving the learning of complex skills and techniques that cannot be learned through readings and lectures alone (Michaels & Marshall, 2002), the general aversion to a sales career may be related to students’ inability to link theory and practice. The practical nature of sales begs that educators move “from from a passive learning model to an active learning model, from a lecture approach to an experiential learning approach” (Anderson, et al., 2005).

Experiential learning literature states that experience is a component of the learning process, largely founded on the learning process theory of education and psychology notables John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget. Modern theories and practice in experiential learning often reference the work of these scholars, suggesting that ideas are not fixed elements of thought but are formed and reformed through experience (Kolb, 1984). John Dewey’s theory set the stage for experiential learning by suggesting that learning requires interaction with the environment (Dewey, 1938). Thus, learning involves observation of surrounding conditions, knowledge of similar situations in the past, and judgment, the putting together of what is observed and recalled. In bringing this theoretical framework into action, Kurt Lewin developed a laboratory training model that consisted of a four stage cycle: 1) concrete experience, 2) observations and reflections, 3) the formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, and 4) the testing implications of concepts in new situations (1948). In a series of lectures by Jean Piaget, he stated that learning results from the interaction of experiencing the world and assimilation of the experience into concepts (Piaget). Thus, in the words of David Kolb, “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984), requiring interaction rather than one-way communication for learning to occur.

Building on Kolb’s experiential learning model, Rogers and Freiberg propose that learning is facilitated when: 1) the student participates completely in the learning process and has

control over its direction, 2) is primarily based upon direct confrontation with practical, social, personal, or research problems, and 3) self-evaluation is the principal method of assessing progress or success (1994). Although many students enter higher education conditioned by their previous educational experiences to be passive recipients of what they are taught, allowing students to take control of and responsibility for their learning greatly enhances their ability to learn from experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The text-driven approach of business education contrasts with the experiential learning process of demonstration—practice—production—critique used in art classes, and may prove to be a major reason for decreased practical understanding, skill development, confidence, and attitude toward the career.

Sales situations often do not have textbook answers, but require the development of a complex skills set that necessitates experiential learning to develop students into professional salespeople that are able to effectively and professionally communicate, develop relationships with and problem-solve for clients, gather and synthesize information needed for sales calls, deal with complex sales and ethical issues, and make informed judgments in unanticipated situations (Michaels & Marshall, 2002). Since personal selling skills are developed through real exposure and practice, marketing educators have begun developing various hands-on approaches to bring realism into sales courses: role-plays, case analyses, simulations, sales presentations, etc (Bobot, 2010). Whatever the method, there is agreement that exposing students to the sales process (needs assessment, handling objectives, etc) integrates sales theory with practice. Sales educators have begun implementing experiential learning exercises like Professional Activity Reports that require students to attend local professional meetings, shadow or interview professionals, etc. (Hawes and Foley 2006). The use of role-plays is also essential to students' ability to apply personal selling skills, reflect upon their own performance with regard to each sales stage, and receive constructive feedback to further develop their skills (Carroll, 2006).

HYPOTHESES

The development of sales skills through experiential learning is predicted to increase knowledge of sales techniques, confidence in one's ability to sell, perceptions of salespeople, and attitude toward a career in sales. Perceptions of salespeople (Waldeck, et al., 2010) and confidence in one's sales skills are expected to influence attitude toward a career in sales. Since confidence has been shown to be a predictor of attitude as well as a moderator of the attitude-intention and thoughts-attitude links (Bergkvist 2009), it is predicted that confidence will moderate attitude change. Additionally, knowledge of sales techniques is expected to increase an individual's confidence in using those skills effectively. Thus, the first set of hypotheses predict change over time, the second set of hypotheses predict positive correlations between independent and dependent variables, and the final hypothesis predicts moderation of attitude change.

H1a: Attitudes toward a career in sales will increase after participation in a Personal Selling ExL course.

H1b: Knowledge of sales techniques will increase after participation in a Personal Selling ExL course.

H1c: Confidence in one's ability to sell will increase after participation in a Personal Selling ExL course.

H1d: Perceptions of salespeople will increase after participation in a Personal Selling ExL course.

H2a: Knowledge of sales techniques will positively impact Confidence in one's ability to sell.

H2b: Confidence will positively impact Attitude toward a career in sales.

H2c: Perceptions of salespeople will positively impact Attitude toward a career in sales.

H3: Confidence will moderate the change in Attitude toward a career in sales.

METHODOLOGY

Twenty-three students in a Personal Selling class at a public mid-western university were asked to participate in a preliminary assessment of perceptions to a career in sales. This study reports survey research in an educational setting where participants are adults pursuing various majors (some demographics are highlighted in the results section). The students were asked to respond to 7-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree) assessing their attitude toward sales, knowledge of sales techniques, confidence in their ability to sell, and intention to pursue a sales career. All scales were adapted from existing measures and were reliable using Cronbach's alpha: Attitude ($r = .95$), Knowledge ($r = .93$), Confidence ($r = .97$), Salesperson Perceptions ($r = .84$), and Intention to pursue a sales career ($r = .97$).

RESULTS OF PRECLASS SURVEY

Since this study discusses research in process, results of the pretest are discussed and expectations of the post-test are outlined. Respondents were 52% male and ranged in age from 20 to 35. Fifty-six percent had a 3.0 GPA or greater, 78% were Caucasian, and 78% were seniors. The majority (91%) had majors in the School of Management, with 40% majoring in Marketing. Preliminary results show that attitude toward sales is fairly positive (mean = 5.40), knowledge of sales techniques is average (mean = 4.69), confidence in one's ability to sell is fairly strong (mean = 5.43), confidence in using sales techniques is average (mean = 4.90), confidence of being successful in sales is fairly strong (mean = 5.65), salesperson perceptions are neither extremely negative nor extremely positive (mean = 4.76), and intention to pursue a sales career is fairly high (mean = 5.20).

Initial tests on Hypotheses H2a through H2c were conducted to explore the impact of knowledge on confidence, confidence on attitude, and perceptions on attitude. Regressions show that knowledge significantly predicts confidence ($b = .75$, $t(22) = 6.29$, $p < .001$) and explains a large amount of variance in confidence scores, $R^2 = .65$, $F(1, 22) = 39.57$, $p < .001$. Additionally, perceptions of salespeople significantly predict attitude ($b = 1.18$, $t(22) = 3.06$, $p <$

.01) and explain a fair amount of the variance in attitude scores, $R^2 = .31$, $F(1, 22) = 9.37$, $p < .01$. However, confidence does not predict attitude ($b = .28$, $t(22) = 1.25$, $p = .224$) and does not explain much of the variance in attitude scores, $R^2 = .07$, $F(1, 22) = 1.57$, $p < .224$. Thus, while H2a and H2c were supported through initial analysis, H2b was not.

Since H2b was not supported, two additional regression analyses explored 1) if, in fact, attitude is an essential variable in one's intention to pursue a career in sales and 2) if confidence has any impact on intention. Regressions show that attitude significantly predicts intention to pursue a career in sales ($b = 1.03$, $t(22) = 5.81$, $p < .001$) and explains a large amount of variance in intention scores, $R^2 = .62$, $F(1, 22) = 33.75$, $p < .001$. Additionally, confidence significantly predicts intention to pursue a career in sales ($b = .70$, $t(22) = 2.62$, $p < .05$) and explains a reasonable amount of variance in intention scores, $R^2 = .25$, $F(1, 22) = 6.86$, $p < .05$. Thus, the significance of attitude and confidence is established, but awaits further investigation upon the collection of post-test data.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Initial results establish both attitude toward sales and confidence of one's sales skills as predictors of whether one intends to pursue a career in sales. Additionally, knowledge is found to be a predictor of confidence and perceptions of salespeople predictive of attitude toward sales. Findings hint at a connection between confidence and attitude that is not necessarily causal. With the collection of post-test data, further analyses will explore change in attitude, knowledge, perceptions, and confidence over time (H1a through H1d) as well as the moderating effect of confidence (H3). The remainder of the study entails post-test data collection toward the end of the Personal Selling course (May 2011), with final results expected in late June.

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CHINESE CONSUMERS' STORE IMAGE FORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR PATRONAGE BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

The researchers explored Chinese consumers' store image perceptions from their free responses and compared the responses with those revealed from structured questions. The qualitative data identified six broad components, some of which contained idiosyncrasies that are unique to Chinese consumers. The quantitative analyses revealed that Chinese consumers' shopping tendencies correlate highly with merchandise and store congeniality. Their average expenditure during each shopping trip is affected by merchandise, service, advertisements, store congeniality and consumers' income. The study can help international retailers better understand the store image attributes that are unique to Chinese consumers and develop an effective retailing mix.

LESS IS MORE FOR ONLINE MARCOM IN EMERGING MARKETS: LINKING HOFSTEDÉ'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND HIGHER RELATIVE PREFERENCES FOR MICROBLOGGING IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study uses a series of simple linear regressions with the relative usage rate of microblogging to social networking as the dependent variable and each of Hofstede's five cultural dimensions as the independent variable for each of 17 participating countries on five continents. After running the regressions against the five dimensions using this approach, a strong correlation and moderate determination for the individualism dimension, or IDV, is established.

This study is significant because it provides critical information that is likely to be useful in teasing out a multiple regression model explaining the differences in the social networking adoption patterns between developing and developed nations. Firms marketing to developing countries must understand each country's unique cultural bias towards different types of marketing communication channels outside the traditional marketing channels. Microblogging, a potential form of electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) advertising, was shown to be more prevalent in emerging countries than in developed nations. This has potential implications for marketers who want to reach the masses in these powerful emerging markets. However, more research is needed about the motivations behind developing country usage of microblogs.

THE EFFECT OF BRAND EXPERIENCE ON BRAND RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

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ABSTRACT

It is very important for customers to have brand experiences in marketing practice. These brand experiences affect consumer-brand relationship quality positively. Brand experience is composed of four dimensions: sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual. These are evoked by brand-related stimuli like brand design, communications and environments.

In this research, we investigate which brand experiences affect brand relationship quality. Among four brand experience dimensions, we investigate affective and behavioral brand experiences, because affective and behavioral dimensions have a decisive effect on the brand attachment. According to this research, an affective brand experience affects brand trust and brand commitment positively. A behavioral brand experience does not affect brand trust meaningfully but positively affects brand commitment.

Also we examine brand trust-brand commitment relationship and brand relationship quality-brand loyalty. Brand trust affects brand commitment positively and brand relationship quality (trust, commitment) influences brand loyalty positively.

In this study, we suggest that not all brand experiences are effective to promote brand relationship quality. According to the goal of a company or a brand, marketing managers should implement brand experience strategies selectively. Also, it is important to choose a brand experience activity that is well matched with the pursuing brand relationships. Through this study, we suggest brand experiences are crucial for building a brand relationship and a brand loyalty.

NET GENERATION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents constitute a strong market segment these days. Consequently it is important for marketers to understand teenage consumer patterns. In recent times, consumer socialization theorists have explored the effect of socialization agents on adolescents, including television and music (Moschis and Moore, 1979; Gaddy, 1986; Butterbaugh, 1999). However, there is a gap in the socialization literature regarding adolescents and internet usage; given the increasing exposure to internet technology and the ubiquity of the internet in the lives the Net Generation this gap needs to be addressed. This paper explores the role of internet technology as an antecedent to consumer socialization agents of adolescents and, its effect on their social consciousness and purchase intentions. The objectives of this research are to: expand the consumers' socialization process model to include internet technology, assess the effects, of age and internet usage as antecedents to the consumer socialization agents of social ties and attitudes of others, assess the influence of these socialization agents on consumer purchase intention assess the influence of these socialization agents on consumers' social conscience.

DOES THE CUSTOMER-FIRM RELATIONSHIP AFFECT CONSUMER RECOVERY EXPECTATIONS?

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ABSTRACT

Consumers experience service encounters every day. Service encounters, which involve human element, unfortunately sometimes do result in service failures. Such failures will most definitely affect consumer satisfaction and thereafter their future purchase intentions. Service recovery provides an opportunity for service providers to fix the related problems, and therefore restore customer satisfaction. To determine an appropriate recovery strategy necessitates service providers to understand and gauge customer recovery expectations. Building on previous studies in this area, we examine the role of the preexisting customer relationship on consumer recovery expectations.

Researchers use different types of commitments to describe the relationship between customers and service providers. Two different types of service organization commitments were identified: affective and continuance. Affective commitment implies an emotional attachment to an organization that arises as a result of an existing consumer relationship. Continuance commitment, on the other hand, entails customer's commitment to an organization based on despair or helplessness.

Building on expectation-disconfirmation paradigm, we posit that both affective commitment and continuance commitment will have a positive impact on consumer recovery expectations. Based on the interdependence theory, from the field of psychology, we develop two competing hypotheses, referring to the counter balancing relationship between commitment to a service organization and consumer recovery expectations.

A total of 617 service encounter incidents were collected by undergraduate students. First, student described a recent service encounter that occurred with a service provider. This was followed by the subsequent measurements of the relationship between the student and the said service organization.

The results from this study suggest that consumer affective commitment and continuance commitment are positively related to their recovery expectations. In addition, the closeness to service employees is also positively related to consumer recovery expectations.

The managerial implications of this study are significant. If consumers are more likely to forgive the mistakes made by service providers, because of the close interpersonal relationship developed by their employees, it follows that encouraging their employees to build personal relationship with customers is likely to combat the negative effect of the service failures.

USING TAGUCHI METHODS IN A MARKETING STUDY TO DETERMINE FEATURES FOR A SMARTPHONE

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ABSTRACT

One of the most important issues involved in launching a new product offering involves identifying those features which will enable a product to garner the greatest market share. Numerous approaches have been used for this purpose, with Quality Function Deployment (QFD) being perhaps the best known and most widely used. In recent years, there has been considerable discussion of the use of Taguchi methods in marketing studies for identifying product features, and yet the literature remains quite sparse in the actual use of Taguchi methods for this purpose. This paper makes a contribution to the literature on Taguchi methods in a marketing study to illustrate their use to identify the most important features to be offered for a SmartPhone. The paper further contributes to the existing literature by illustrating a means of estimating how pairs of features may inter-relate to yield a more favorable product reception by the market.

MARKETING SKILLS: LESSONS FROM THE PRACTITIONER COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the results of a survey on skills which marketing majors need to exhibit in order to be hired in the Direct Marketing industry in the mid-Atlantic region. This research was conducted as part of the redesign of the marketing program at an urban land grant institution on the east coast. We reviewed literature on curriculum development and on necessary skills noted in previous research. We developed a survey which was administered to a group of practitioners. The respondents were asked a series of questions designed to gauge the relative importance of various skills for their new hires. The results support the central tenet that skills such as communication and analysis were more important than specific marketing knowledge in evaluating the potential of new hires. We research objectives to guide future research in this area.

INTRODUCTION

This paper stems from work the first author was involved in the restructuring of his universities general education curriculum and its marketing program. During this process he met with several members of the local business community to help determine their needs when hiring new marketing graduates. One issue that was repeatedly raised was that the applicants who applied for marketing and other business related positions were not prepared for the openings available. This trend was not confined to our graduates alone but was symptomatic of marketing majors from several universities. During these discussions we decided to determine what skill sets our graduates would need in order to be actively considered for marketing positions in the region. Some 45.4% of our respondents said that they planned to hire new marketing graduate the year of the survey (2010). It was thought that by understanding the issues of importance to the practitioner community we could better place our students in the marketplace.

Marketing majors have faced a relatively difficult time finding employment in their field since the beginning of the recession in 2006. In 2007 some 51% of college graduates had jobs when they graduated from college (National Association of Colleges and Employers 2009) while in 2008 that percentage had decreased to 26% and 19.7% by 2009 (Berman 2009). We believe that this trend is especially troubling for smaller, regional focused schools who have a teaching focus and lack a prestigious brand name. These schools are faced with the question of how to remain relevant to their students and provide an educational experience that positions them for a career in their chosen arena. According to Schlee and Harich (2010 pg. 341) "The primary

directive of marketing programs in teaching oriented business schools is the preparation of marketing students to be productive performers in business and organizations.” Working in conjunction with members of the Direct Marketing Association of Washington Educational Foundation we developed a survey that begins to answer this question.

METHODOLOGY

Based on several discussions with members of the local direct marketing practitioner community, marketing faculty from other institutions, and our marketing majors we developed a set of survey questions which were administered via Survey Monkey. The respondents were sent an email with a request to go to the Survey Monkey site to take the survey and to forward the request to someone in the firm who had hiring authority for marketing graduates if they did not. One follow up email was sent. Our subject population was the mailing list of the Direct Marketing Association of Washington D.C. This organization has a membership list of 1200 firms, predominantly made up of small to medium size businesses in the mid Atlantic area. We received 108 usable surveys. The questions were framed as likert scale items anchored by strongly agree and strongly disagree, with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree. The questions were in the format of “My firm requires that our new marketing hires possess ____”. A lower score indicates a stronger preference for the scale item.

The mean age of the respondents was 46.4 years, 43 were male, 65 females. 82.4% of the respondents held a baccalaureate or a graduate degree. 45.4% anticipated hiring new marketing personnel this year. 64.8% of the firms hire recent university graduates right out of school.

RESULTS

Our results suggest that there are certain skills which are deemed to be critically important to our respondent group. Table One summarizes the ratings for both general skills, also called meta-skills and Table Two presents the more marketing specific or conceptual marketing skills. (Schlee and Harick 2010) The general skills were assigned to four categories by two marketing faculty. These four areas are analytical skills, communication, information technology, and teamwork and problem solving. Our two questions regarding analytical skills were a general question on data analysis and a question on Microsoft Excel which according to our discussion groups was the most frequently cited analytical tool for these businesses. Both of these skills were regarded very highly by the respondents. Communication skills, written, oral, communication of ideas and powerpoint, perhaps the most frequently used presentation tool were all rated very highly.

Table One: General Skills				
General Skill	Variable Measured	Number of Responses	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Analytical Skills	Data Analysis	102	1.25	.45
	Excel	102	1.48	.58
Communication	Written Communication	102	1.23	.42
	Oral Communication	102	1.38	.53
	Communication of Ideas	102	1.36	.56
	Powerpoint	100	1.53	.64
Information Technology	Information Technology	102	1.55	.68
	MS Access	101	1.53	.64
Teamwork & Problem Solving	Works Well in Groups	103	1.39	.58
	Takes Initiative	102	1.43	.61
	Problem Solver	102	1.43	.61

Table Two: Marketing Specific Skills				
Marketing Specific Skills	Variable Measured	Number of Responses	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Specific Skills	Marketing Research	102	2.75	.73
	Sales Promotion	102	2.77	.85
	Personal Selling	102	2.89	.85
	Advertising	102	2.74	.82
General Measure	Theoretically Competent in Marketing	102	2.16	.74
Multi Disciplinary	More Than One Discipline	103	2.26	.84
	More Than One Functional Area	103	2.25	.92

DISCUSSION

Our respondents consistently rated the general skills of written communication, Our results parallel those of Schlee and Harick (2010) who performed a content analysis of marketing position advertisements and found that the four most important meta-skills for entry-level marketing positions were oral communications, written communications, presentation ability and team/relational/leadership skills. Additionally Kelly and Bridges (2007), in a comparison of practitioner and educators skill assessments found that the practitioner group rated communication skills and presentation skills as the two most important skills for marketing majors to possess when entering the work force.

Taken as a whole the meta-skills were seen as being more important than the more specific marketing specific skills. Although other research has indicated this it was somewhat puzzling to find this result so clearly defined. We conducted a follow up discussion to discuss this issue. Several points were brought up that may be germane and speak to the generalizability

of the results. First, this research was conducted with a group of direct marketing professionals. The perception of these people was that generally the direct marketing field was not often covered in the course work of the marketing majors they interviewed and that specific expertise in that course work would be important. Since direct marketing is not often covered the practitioners believe that they will need to develop that expertise in the working environment. This is supported by a survey we did of 33 comparable and aspirational marketing programs in the United States for our program review. We found only three programs with coursework in direct marketing. One of the questions we will need to answer in the next iteration of this project is whether or not the practitioner community would place additional emphasis on coursework specifically targeted to their employment needs.

Second, this group of practitioners is predominantly from what Martin and Chapman (2005) called small-to-medium enterprises (SME's). They noted that business graduates generally viewed larger firms as more attractive than SME's perhaps due to a lack of knowledge about SME's. Also SME's are likely more concerned with the immediate benefit to the bottom line of cash flow and immediate impact on the firm's profitability. It was thought that there may be a difference in the general skills between their applicants and those of the larger more prestigious firms.

Finally, our discussion groups have noted that if a marketing student comes in with average marketing skills but possesses excellent communication skills that person can learn the job-specific skill sets needed for the firm. If however the person has poor communication skills there appears to be small likelihood to improve those skills on the job. Poor communication skills, poor networking, leadership, and teamwork skills do not appear to lend themselves to being taught on the fly at these smaller work places.

This exploratory look at practitioner's evaluation of marketing skills suggests that our students need to develop the general or meta-skills before they begin to search for employment. A reasonable question however is when and how will students attain these skills. Bacon and Anderson (2004) believe that there is little evidence to suggest that students increase their written communication skills during the four years of college even though business faculty have assumed that this is the case. If this is true for all the skill sets we looked at then it requires us to look at how we as business faculty incorporate these skills and others into the marketing curriculum.

We believe that the skills needed to start a successful marketing career are a valuable subject for discussion. As noted earlier in this paper the ability for business students generally and we believe marketing students specifically to exhibit the general skills of communication, analysis and leadership are key components in the hiring process. Smaller, more regionally oriented business schools have a clear need to provide a useful education which enables our students to successfully launch their careers

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Research Objective One: Is there a significant difference in the meta-skills described in this research between the applicants for positions in large businesses and the SME's considered in this research?

Research Objective Two: How effective are existing models for teaching the meta-skills noted in this research?

Research Objective Three: What is the appropriate role of marketing faculty in the development of these meta-skills?

Research Objective Four: Would specific general marketing skills such as those taught in coursework in direct marketing, e-marketing or database marketing be perceived as important as the meta-skills by the direct marketing community?

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BRINGING CULTURE ALIVE IN THE MARKETING CLASSROOM: USING THE NOVEL *SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD* TO TEACH GLOBAL MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

*Cultural awareness and sensitivity is one of the most important topics in international marketing courses. But when students have little or no personal experience in dealing with different cultures, it can be difficult for them deeply to understand the manifold ways in which cultural differences and consequent misunderstandings affect global marketing effectiveness. This article proposes a pedagogical remedy for students' lack of experience with cultural differences, misperceptions, and personal growth in cultural understanding—having students read and discuss the novel *Speaker for the Dead*. In reading this intrinsically interesting novel, students vicariously experience both intellectually and emotionally what it means to misunderstand and then, by degrees, better understand another culture. The article highlights telling details in the novel that graphically illustrate important global marketing concepts such as the self-reference criterion.*

Bringing Culture Alive in the Marketing Classroom:
Using the Novel *Speaker for the Dead* to Teach Global Marketing

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