

ABSTRACT

THOUGHTS ON EXAMINATIONS IN MARKETING EDUCATION: THE SKILLED TEACHER PERSPECTIVE

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Marketing educators are confronted with a number of challenges before they walk into the classroom. Many decisions must be made including those of syllabus development and lecture style. One of the most difficult decisions is how to evaluate the performance of students. The examination is the usual way that performance is measured in most marketing classes. However, many marketing educators do not receive instruction on how to construct examinations as part of their doctoral education.

An important source of ideas concerning examination issues is marketing educators who are consistently rated by students as excellent teachers. These educators may provide insights into developing effective examinations which could benefit other marketing educators. Yet their perspective has only begun to be measured in research of national scope. The purpose of this paper, is to report what skilled marketing educators do when it comes to giving examinations.

EXAMINATION ISSUES

Attempting to produce an effective examination is nothing new in education. The education literature is full of research on the topic. Marketing educators have several options when it comes to developing examinations: objective (multiple choice, matching, and true-false), essay, and cases.

Overall, previous research on examination issues in marketing education has been limited in scope. Therefore, the present study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) what do highly skilled marketing educators have to say about the examination that they construct?; (2) on what do these educators base their questions?; and (3) what follow-up procedures do skilled marketing educators use after the examination is completed?

THE STUDY

A mail survey of marketing educators was undertaken during the spring of 1987. A mailing list of 279 colleges and universities was assembled from the 1986 American Marketing Association Membership Directory. Only schools with three or more marketing faculty were included in the sample. Two questionnaires were sent to the chairperson of the department of marketing at each school. The cover letter asked that the questionnaires be distributed to the two most effective teachers in the department. It was empha-

sized that not only student evaluations, but personal observation and feedback from students, alumni and parents should be considered when selecting faculty to receive the questionnaires.

The questionnaire was composed of two parts. Part one consisted of seven open-ended questions related to effective teaching. One of these questions asked the respondent to indicate what she/he does to enhance student learning and overall course effectiveness when it comes to designing examinations. The second part of the survey focused on the demographics of the respondent and characteristics of her/his school.

RESULTS

One hundred forty-four completed questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 25.8 percent. At least one questionnaire was received from 37.3 percent of the schools contacted (104 out of 279). A nonresponse bias check based on size of faculty ($\chi^2 = 3.46$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.23$) and geographic region ($\chi^2 = 3.15$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.52$) was not significant.

All responses to the open-ended question on examinations were evaluated and categorized by two judges. In terms of research question one on the construction of examinations, most respondents indicated that they used essay rather than objective examinations. The same number of respondents used strictly objective examinations and a combination of essay and objective questions, respectively. Graduate teachers used essay examinations more often when compared to the other methods of testing probably because of the analytical work required. Interestingly, a large number of undergraduate teachers also indicated a preference for essay examinations.

In terms of research question two, 26 percent of the respondents indicated that questions should be drawn from lecture material. Twenty-two percent of the respondents used application questions and twenty percent used cases in preparing their examinations. Sixteen percent stressed creativity was important in testing. Only four percent used a test bank.

Finally, the results of research question three indicated most respondents relied on quick feedback as an important component of the follow-up process. Very few respondents indicated that they go over the examinations. Instead, the respondents seemed to prefer a one-on-one discussion with students.