

PERCEPTIONS OF MARKETING MAJORS: VIEWS FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

This study explores perceptions of marketing majors among 205 business students in two California State University campuses and a private university in Washington. The study explores several traditional dimensions of academic performance as well as personal characteristics of business students. There were significant differences between how marketing majors thought of themselves, how they viewed other marketing majors, and how other business majors viewed marketing students.

The research findings support the findings of earlier studies when it comes to the image of marketing majors. For the most part, marketing students are viewed as popular slackers, people who have good communication skills, but who do not work very hard. As disturbing as this view may be, it is even more troublesome that marketing majors are viewed as being less honest than most other business majors. Surprisingly, when we compared the opinions of marketing majors with those of non-marketing majors, there was relative agreement on most of these characteristics. Marketing majors also believed that most marketing majors do not work very hard and are not very honest. Nevertheless, their assessment of their own characteristics was more positive than their assessment of fellow marketing classmates. Marketing majors saw themselves individually as

ambitious, independent, team players, flexible, good communications, leaders, well organized, and creative. Though many marketing majors admitted they were not very studious and not very good in math, they believed that their personal shortcomings were smaller than those their classmates in marketing courses. In general, marketing majors also felt that their career prospects were better than other business majors thought, though, most did not believe that marketing is a benefit to society.

The discussion of these findings focuses on two specific areas that warrant additional deliberation by marketing educators: marketing students' lack of willingness to work hard and their perceived lax ethical standards. Several suggestions are included for improving the quality of marketing majors, as well as the perceptions of marketing majors held by those in other business disciplines.