

TEACHING MARKETING IN EMERGING COUNTRIES: DEVELOPING COMPETENCIES AND COMPETITIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is present a report of a practical experience developed in a emerging country and propose a theoretical construct for Marketing's undergraduate courses in these countries, focused on competencies development of graduated students – the future professionals, identified as the sum of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well to promote the improvement of emerging countries' competitiveness compared to developed countries, based in their own set of comparative and competitive advantages, optimizing their environmental, financial and human resources.

INTRODUCTION

The task of teach Marketing in under-development countries as Brazil, Russia, India, China and Mexico, amongst others, offers a real challenge to Marketing Educator's because the "state of art" literature is mainly North-American and also have plenty examples of "the American way of buy".

Despite of their impressive share in global market, American consumers have some peculiarities, based on their cultural and social habitat, which reduces the pedagogical appeal of such examples.

Demand of consumer goods in under-development countries is not flat but peaks and valleys oriented and the pace of their behavior is very dependent on political and macroeconomics aspects which affects both sides: demand and offer. The marketing mix strategy is always in a ongoing status and the learning curve acquired from previous governments styles are not enough

to succeed on a constantly changing environment.

Marketing educators need to rethink their classes and examples daily, early adopters do not behave exactly as described on Marketing Handbook, from a pricing strategy point of view high inflation rates demands more creativity than flat ones, logistics and distribution are also an issue because infrastructure is weak and inexistent in some cases, integrated marketing communication requests quick messages than clever text because illiteracy is more frequent than literacy.

Individually, the average underdevelopment country's customers have less money in the wallet than their American counterpart, but we are counting them in millions and billions of people instead of few percentage of rich and high income buyers.

So the challenge is adapt and adjust the theoretical models to practical situation. How Marketing theory will answer these demands? How the best practices from one country could be successful used in other country with several differences, ranging from race to beliefs, including religion, language, politics, economics, legal and environmental issues?

MARKETING TEACHING

The current scenario in Marketing's undergraduate courses is very complex in Brazil and in most of emerging countries with a clear division between these countries and developed

countries. Despite of a more competitive approach in the emerging countries' undergraduate courses, there's still a strong influence of case studies and teaching styles, imported from developed countries.

Based on the authors' experience in Marketing's undergraduate courses the main trend identified is the total reproduction of international cases in classroom. This fact is more clear when the adopted literature is analyzed. These books, despite of their high editorial quality and didactical sequence of topics (covering the full term), brought to the classroom and to the student a totally different reality, and even with their academic consistence and relevance, are not enough to fulfill the learning needs of these students, leading them to a business scenario building which is useless for their current and future decision taking.

CASE STUDY

To prove this hypothesis, 20 (twenty) marketing educators from 3 (three) different universities in São Paulo were interviewed. This is not a representative sample of Brazilian reality but helps in order to mine initial data about best practices and opinions about the form and content of these courses. Every respondent have more than 10 years of experience in Marketing teaching.

All respondents were unanimous to confirm the strong influence of US literature in their courses and to avoid this unilateral conception, they adopt complementary Brazilian case studies by their own.

Most of Brazilian Marketing Educators shares their time between an executive career and a part-time job (at night) as teachers. This fact was identified by 45% of respondents as the main reason for their lack of time to research. As a consequence, they became dependents of another scholars, looking for information in congresses' proceedings, journals and magazines, which is not enough to satisfy their need. Another issue found is related to the adjustment of international literature to Brazilian (and other emerging countries) reality. A total of 25% of respondents pointed the immediate need of revision in the didactical resources (as transparencies, cases, instructor's manual, etc) available from publishers.

Since no comment were made on classroom's teaching methods in these interviews, we supposed the respondents just took in consideration the macroscopic view of the current scenario and most of their teaching practices are focused on emulation of current models than Brazilian case studies application.

CONCLUSIONS

The consequences of this scenario are frightening because the students concludes their terms with a misconception, based on a wrong premise that real business world in exactly as presented in the classes and Marketing is unique, always producing the same responses from customers or companies, in spite of social, cultural, political, environmental and legal factors, which culminates in a incorrect, false and erroneous preparation of the future professional.