

## GLOBAL MARKETING EDUCATION: THEMES FROM THE PAST TWO DECADES

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### ABSTRACT

This article reviews the literature regarding the effort to internationalize the business school curriculum during the past two decades. Special attention is given to global marketing. These themes are important for they clarify accomplishments and indicate future problems.

### INTRODUCTION

For the past two decades there has been considerable effort to internationalize the business school curriculum. These efforts began in earnest in the early 70s with a number of meetings, conferences and studies designed to build awareness and increase the level of enthusiasm for internationalizing all aspects of the business school (Daniel and Radebaugh, 1974; Goodnow, 1973; U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, 1973 and Brookings Institution Report, 1975). Significant progress was made, however, two recent studies severely criticize the typical business school as being deficient in the global business dimension (Graduate Management Admission Council, 1990 and Porter and McKibbin, 1988). In order to prepare for what is sure to be a renewed emphasis on international business and global marketing education, it seems appropriate to examine the past themes or issues related to internationalization efforts. The goal is to provide one historical background to begin a new round of discussions for globalization. The paper outlines ten themes that emerged from a review of the literature and concludes with implications for possible future efforts. We begin by examining the early initiatives designed to create a need and awareness for internationalization.

**Theme I. Building the Need for International Education:** In the early 1970s a number of educators believed that internationalization of the business curriculum was both needed and desirable. James Goodnow (1973) surveyed academics and found that most do not need to be convinced of [the value of] some minimal education in international business and its environment. One argued that the lack of international business education was the reason why business people developed protectionist's attitudes toward foreign competition in the U.S. (Luytjes, 1969).

In a survey of business leaders, over 90 percent indicated their firms are affected directly or indirectly by international economic and political developments (Nehrt 1977). Business school deans concluded that international business will play a more important role in business and in school curricula (Altman, Kujawa and Sutija, 1979). Surveys of large firms and business school graduates lead to a similar conclusion (Patrick 1978). In 1974 the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business officially acknowledged the growing importance of international business education. AACSB accreditation standards were altered to require that curricula of business schools reflect "worldwide", as well as, domestic aspects of business (AACSB 1974).

Any doubts that might have lingered about the need to internationalize were swept away with the publication of two reports, Business and International Education (1977) and The Internationalization of the Business School Curriculum (1979). These publications contained individual studies and summary essays reiterating all the significant ideas and recommendations found in previous reports. Because of the comprehensive nature and stature of the publishers, these reports had substantial effect on business schools. They created a new international orientation for business education, from undergraduate to executive development programs. In summary, the need for international business education was firmly established by the late 1970s. Reports and articles on the subject concluded that most firms, regardless of size and type of operations, are affected by global economic and political developments. With a strong consensus firmly established, educators turned to the more difficult tasks of deciding how to internationalize the business school curriculum.

**Theme II. Insufficient Implementation of the AACSB Standard:** With an international dimension required, business schools focused on implementing the standard. Because the requirement for internationalization was stated in very general terms, disparities developed between the curricula of different business schools. To reduce these

differences, AACSB Standards and Operations Committee clarified the standard and spelled out ways to meet the requirement. While there was no single way to meet the standard, three were outlined: 1) Inclusion of the international dimensions within the subject matter of the different disciplines, or 2) Offering selected internationally oriented subject courses, or, 3) Participation in international workshops, international faculty exchanges, faculty and student exchanges and the like (AACSB, 1978).

While there is little disagreement over the need to internationalize (Aggarwal, 1989), implementation has been less than desired. Porter and McKibbin (1988) in their report on business education conclude that insufficient attention has been given to the international dimension of business. They say it is an area where awareness of need is high, but need has not been translated into a great deal of action (they suggest that it has been given lip service).

Studies by Nehrt (1987) strongly supports this conclusion. In a survey of faculty who participated in the AACSB internationalization workshops (1071 participants out of 24,000 business school faculty), Nehrt suggested that these educational efforts are unlikely to result in a real change in curriculum because of the small number of faculty taking part. In the survey of schools, most indicated that they made the decision to include an international dimension in some or all of the core courses. However, implementation will be difficult because the majority of faculty are not familiar with the international dimensions of their own disciplines. In short, Nehrt concludes that business schools have failed to adequately implement the international education requirement.

**Theme III. Lack of Qualified Faculty to Teach International Related Courses:** A major criticism often expressed is the lack of faculty qualified to teach the international dimension in courses. Two reasons are cited for this situation. First, there are no international course requirements in doctoral programs, and second, there are few faculty exchange programs. In 1976 Nehrt (1987) surveyed the largest 25 doctoral programs and found that only 25 percent of the PHD students had at least one course in international business. In 1987, he surveyed 48 PHD schools and found that of the 1690 current students who had completed all course requirements, only 17 percent had one or more courses in international business. Nehrt concluded that the situation is deteriorating while the need is increasing.

A 1983 study dealing with foreign exchange programs found that 82 out of 414 schools had one or more (Nehrt, 1987). A year later in a follow-up study, only 64 exchanges programs remained in operation. In addition, the study discovered that only 125 business professors have gone abroad on exchanges and only 60 foreign professors came to teach in U.S. schools. What is most surprising is that some of the more well-known business schools do not offer opportunities for exchanges.

**Theme IV. AACSB Requirements-Help or Hindrance:** An interesting controversy is whether AACSB accreditation requirements benefit or assist in the effort to internationalize the curriculum. Thanopoulos and Vernon (1987) found that among AACSB schools, the accredited ones are not significantly different from the non-accredited schools. They suggest that accreditation requirements may actually retard rather than enhance the internationalization of business education. As an example, they say that non-accredited schools, with their greater curricula flexibility, are better able to require foreign languages than schools who conform to accreditation standards.

Aggarwal (1989) argues that because of inflexibility, business schools often contend that something must be removed in order to internationalize. Further, he suggests schools often argue that few students are likely to work abroad after graduation, and therefore, such education is not essential. Korbin (1984) found that in the development of international expertise, traditional education, whether graduate or undergraduate, is not perceived by business people to be a significant factor. Under such conditions, it seems time to seriously question the criteria on which schools structure their curriculum, particularly when the criteria interferes with the needs in the global marketplace.

**Theme V. Increased Interest in Global Marketing Research:** International marketing research efforts have increased over the past several decades. A content analysis of the Journal of Marketing for a 40-year period (1936-1975) showed that about 5 percent of its articles concerned international marketing between 1936-1955, peaked at about 14 percent in the 1960-63 period and declined to about 3 percent in 72-75 (Grether, 1976). In a similar study from 1970 through 1980 of the Journal of

Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, and Journal of Consumer Research, Ghymn and White (1981) found that international content as a percentage of total articles was 6.5 %, 1.2% and 1% respectively.

This low level of research output seems to have changed during the past decade. For the time period 1980-85, Bradley (1987) examined 32 journals containing a total of 7,914 articles and classified 1,014 or 12.8% as international marketing articles. This is a significant increase over earlier decades. The increase in research in international marketing is due to its greater dynamics, complexity, diversification and competitive requirements at all level of management than is found in purely domestic markets (Bradley, 1987). Today there are a number of publications devoted solely to international marketing issues, including the International Marketing Review, Journal of Global Marketing, and Journal of International Consumer Marketing. Also encouraging is the new publication concerned with education, the Journal of Teaching In International Business.

**Theme VI. Growing Interest in Global Marketing Courses:** International or global marketing is a leader among international courses in perceived relevance and importance in today's business and academic world. The course is regularly taught at 68 percent of the undergraduate and 61 percent of the masters programs in business (Thanopoulos and Vernon, 1987). This is a substantial increase from earlier years where surveys found that only 43 percent of schools offered courses in international marketing (Grosse and Perrett, 1980).

In a survey of firms, 88 percent of the respondents rated international marketing as either "very desirable" or "desirable" Kohers, 1984). The only course rated higher on these scales was principles of international business. In a similar study (Reynolds and Rice, 1988), international marketing and international finance were rate more important than all other subjects studied. In a recent study of Canadian business, respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of fifteen international courses as they related to career progress within the organization (Beamish and Calof, 1989). International marketing was rated the most important, followed by international finance and international trade/export management. While these studies are not comprehensive, it does appear that international marketing is one of the most popular and important courses in the international curriculum.

**Theme VII. Dissatisfaction with Knowledge**

**Development in International Marketing:** There appears to be a sense of dissatisfaction with the type and content of research done in knowledge development of international marketing. In one of the first review articles, Cavusgil and Nevin (1981) argued that international marketing is in the state of becoming a respected subdiscipline. They also criticized the quality of much of the research as lacking in conceptual frameworks, as well as hypothesis used to guide research.

Graham and Gronhaug (1989) conclude that PHD dissertations, the keystone of knowledge development in marketing, tend to be driven by standards of rigor and a distinct method bias that make them inappropriate for the study of important problems in the international field. Bradley (1987) expresses similar sentiments when he says that researchers are preoccupied with the description and conceptualism of international marketing problems with little effort devoted to research that is more scientifically advanced. One reason for the lag in knowledge development is the enormous problems associated with doing acceptable research in the field. One scholar put it best when he said, "When the area is rather difficult to research both conceptually and practically, it is understandable that most colleagues try easier routes. A good deal of this seems to be conditioned by the overall preference for narrow empiricism results and clinical research, which is less appropriate in international marketing" (Hampton and Gent, 1984). Furthermore, American scholars know little of knowledge production in foreign countries because most do not speak or read foreign languages.

**Theme VIII. Foreign Language as an Educational Requirement:** There are contradicting views regrading the importance and need of a foreign language as part of a business student's education. In a study of American companies with international operations, Tung (1981) found that in the selection of personal for overseas assignments, language ability was not an important criterion. Reynold's and Rice's (1988) survey of American companies found little requirement for foreign languages. Kobrin (1984) found among the executives interviewed that language is an important plus, but not the critical factor.

Others, however, highly recommend at least one foreign language. In Koher's (1984) study of

business firms, respondents rated proficiency in a foreign language as desirable. In addition, he discovered that a foreign language major with a minor in business was given a very desirable rating. Graham and Gronhaug (1989) argue that business schools should place higher value on language training and overseas living experiences. In a study, including both international marketing scholars and marketing managers, training in a foreign language was rated as the fifth most important area of study out of a total of thirty-nine (Hampton, 1986).

**Theme IX. Importance of Areas Outside the Normal Business Curriculum:** It is interesting to note that in the development of international marketing curriculum, studies express, directly or indirectly, the importance of courses outside the business school. Surprisingly, a study found the areas deemed most important lie outside the business discipline (Hampton, 1986). They are cultural studies, communications skills, and a foreign language. Sherry (1988) has argued for sometime of the relationship that exists between international marketing and cultural anthropology. Business executives mentioned language training, Latin American studies, international relations and similar training as contributions to international expertise (Kobrin 1984).

**Theme X. The Need for Practical Skills:** Another common theme expressed was the need for more practical skills, especially for small business. There was consistency across most curriculum studies regarding the importance of teaching skills related to importing and exporting. Melon and Graham (1983) argue that this area should be the emphasis of all introduction to international marketing courses. McNabb (1985) found that managers engaged in international business rated export topics as very important (topics included financing exports, legal aspects of trade, contracts and customs laws). Hampton (1986) also found a desire for more practical applications of marketing concepts in international markets, especially exporting.

#### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

During the past twenty years, we have achieved moderate success in our efforts to internationalize the business school. Today, we are keenly aware of the need to internationalize. We rejoice in the growing interest in international courses and are satisfied with the increased research interest in international marketing.

On the other hand, we are severely criticized for failing to sufficiently introduce the international dimension, and for failing to train enough qualified faculty to teach international courses. We also must share the blame for a lack of knowledge development, and for failing to emphasize certain practical skills, especially exporting. We seem unable to decide on whether to require a foreign language, and suffer under rigid accreditation requirements that make it almost impossible for students to take courses outside the school of business.

Of the ten themes identified in this review, only three are positive regarding efforts to internationalize. One can only conclude that the job has just begun. The implications are clear -- we must renew our efforts to globalize the marketing curriculum. We must recognize that internationalization of the marketing curriculum and faculty is too important to be left to AACSB requirements. It is time for every course in the marketing curriculum to be taught from the international perspective. It is time for us to work with our national organization, the American Marketing Association, to set specific goals and adopt internationalization as one of the top priorities. Finally, it is time to develop a major in international marketing that has as a minimum a foreign language requirement.

List of References are Available from the Author on Request