

MULTICULTURAL MARKETING EDUCATION 2.0:

THE DIFFUSION OF ETHNIC APTITUDE PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICES

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Abstract

This study examines the diffusion of multicultural marketing practices and pedagogy over the past fifty years. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory is used to examine ethnic marketing instruction techniques based on their determinants for course adoption. The chronological diffusion of multicultural marketing practices and pedagogy is plotted from a literature survey. Instructional prototypes are then identified based on ontological teaching properties. Finally, this portfolio of multicultural marketing instruction prototypes is profiled using Rogers' three adoption dimensions -- adopter categories, the adoption process, and adoption factors. The adoption dimension profiles make innovation prototypes operational for a variety of instructional conditions. As a research continuum, the diffusion of multicultural marketing instruction contributes a cumulative model to the marketing education literature. As a course preparation resource, the portfolio of multicultural marketing pedagogy configures choices for marketing educators. This new pedagogical platform, Multicultural Marketing Education 2.0, embraces collaborative learning design and customized learning delivery.

Realized Situation

Multicultural Marketing Education 2.0 (MME 2.0) advances a more open, inclusive, and collaborative instructional platform for ethnic marketing learning and instruction. Presently, multicultural marketing education is primarily confined to narrowly defined categories of people, pedagogy, and practices. The people -- instructors, scholars, students, and consumers -- are largely ethnic minorities in pluralistic societies like the United States. The pedagogical approaches and textbook material generally separates ethnic marketing content and concepts from other marketing course subject matter. And, the practices are typically bounded by ethnic market segmentation.

Heretofore, the logic of concentrating multicultural marketing education on underrepresented minorities was a rational way to affirm the importance of ethnic identity, as well as to acquaint mainstream White instructors and students with market diversity. However, the world has changed. The current generations of college instructors and students have greater exposure to ethnic minorities in society and the media, with more than 30% of Generation Y comprised of immigrants.

Moreover, the U.S. ethnic composition has broadened beyond the Black and White division depicted in early studies to encompass a universal spectrum of African, Asian, Hispanic, Arab/Middle Eastern, Australian, and European ancestries – including a growing population with combined ethnicities.

For marketing educators, the current and future reality reflects a trend towards multicultural blending versus boundaries. In turn, this market reality calls for greater ethnic aptitude sharing among all instead of specialization by a few. This new world of universal ethnic diversity is the focus of MME 2.0. The world where digital and social advancements have spawned a collaborative Internet in the form of Web 2.0, collaborative knowledge creation and sharing in the form of “wiki” content, and collaborative communities through social media (including academic and marketing/brand communities). With societal conditions supporting MME 2.0 collaboration, a comprehensive menu of ethnic marketing pedagogy and practices can catalyze adoption and sharing of instructional ideas.

Reviewed Sources

Multicultural marketing has been a mainstay of company practice and course pedagogy for more than fifty years. Regularly documented ethnic demographic trends (Yakelovich 2010; Humphreys 2010) and viable strategies for targeting diverse markets (Tharp 2001; Halter 2000; Cui 1997; Rossman 1994; Webster 1992) have established the credibility of multicultural marketing expertise (Rao 2006; Pires and Stanton 2005). The historical account by Cui (2001) traces ethnic marketing back to the 1930s. Most prominent are the chronology of marketing studies addressing individual ethnic segment traits. Unfortunately, a noticeable void exists in the marketing education literature with regard to multicultural marketing aptitude, with some exceptions (Carter 2010; Borna 2007; Cherrier, et al. 2006; Burton 2005; Jones 2003). Despite the rich history of multicultural marketing scholarship, academic frameworks with sufficient ethnic breadth and conceptual depth have only recently begun to inform pedagogical planning (Korzenny 2011; Carter 2010; Rao 2006; Pires and Stanton 2005; Burton 2005, 2002; Ogden, et al. 2004; Jamal 2003; Costa and Bamossy 1997). Effective course instruction draws upon both multicultural marketing practices and pedagogy, because techniques are transferable from companies to classrooms.

Resulting Study

In order to further the pursuit of inclusive ethnic pluralism and collaborative educational purpose, this study frames the diffusion of multicultural marketing techniques in the marketing literature. Relying on Rogers' (1983, 1962) diffusion of innovation theory, the progression of ethnic marketing practices and pedagogy are analyzed on three dimensions; (a) adopter categories, (b) adoption process, and (c) adoption factors. The resulting continuum clarifies the instructional options

available to marketing educators as well as the criteria for adopting them. This continuum of ethnic marketing instruction is defined as Multicultural Marketing Education 2.0, because of its collaborative design principles and customized delivery practices. Similar to Web 2.0, the development of MME 2.0 traces the transition from isolated connections to inclusive community. Traditionally, MME has segmented course design by ethnic segment. Textbooks tend to proceed from one ethnic market profile to the next, typically emphasizing ethnic minority consumers and associated brand strategy skills. Instead, the collaborative learning design of MME 2.0 permits a universal approach towards encoding ethnic competence within, across, and among diverse constituencies – instructors, students, consumers.

Recommended System

By mining ontologically similar methods from the chronological literature, the analysis produces a multicultural marketing instruction prototype portfolio. This prototype portfolio provides marketing educators with a menu for selecting ethnic marketing techniques for courses, as well as a collective continuum of methods for multicultural marketing competency. Adoption profiles, based on Rogers' (1983, 1962) theory of diffusion, sharpen the angles on what makes an innovation fit (adopter categories), root (adoption process), and grow (adoption factors). These more precise dimensions help to frame the diffusion pattern as sequential phases of methods for improving ethnic market aptitude. Just as markets evolve in phases marked by advancing techniques (e.g., agricultural, industrial, services, digital, mobile/social-media), it is useful to frame the diffusion of multicultural marketing instruction techniques as a rational progression and not a random walk.

Trends in digital/social media, as well as new generational cohort norms, are leading marketing courses towards adaptable ethnic marketing aptitudes, global learning networks, and shared multicultural intelligence. In the present, three conditional factors should inform marketing educators' adoption of pedagogical prototypes from the MME 2.0 portfolio.

1. Instructor Capabilities – ethnic cultural exposure and multicultural marketing expertise.
2. Course Competencies – course learning continuity improves multicultural marketing aptitude.
3. Student Composition – student learning is the most important goal of multicultural pedagogy, and the composition of students in a course is an indicator of instructional receptivity.

Therefore, this study achieves the stated objectives of first charting the diffusion of multicultural instruction innovations in the collective marketing instruction literature, and then identifying a portfolio of pedagogy prototypes for adoption by individual marketing educators.