

Motivation, Major and Marketing: How do simulations impact student learning?

Melanie Bruce

University of Tennessee at Martin

We have all been in the classroom with students who have low motivation towards the subject. We have also experienced the even lower motivation from students who are not marketing majors and are required to take the course. Simulations are intended to help students apply business concepts and theories to evolving situations, thus making the learning process an interesting, interactive, and long-lasting experience (Alsaaty, 2014) . Could this interactive and interesting experience change student's motivation towards marketing?

Background

Student motivation is the extent to which a student dedicates cognitive resources to a specific assignment or task (Ackerman & Hu, 2011) . Many education researchers, such as Olson (1997) , advocate that motivation is probably the most important factor that educators can target to improve student's learning. Competitive, computerized marketing simulations have become widely used as a teaching tool (Mottner, 2009) . The goal of implementing marketing simulations is to maximise student learning. Simulations have been shown to increase student involvement, enjoyment, and competence (Cadotte, 2016; Keys & Wolfe, 1990; Thompson, Purdy, & Fandt, 1997; Tompson & Dass, 2000; Vos & Brennan, 2010) . Despite the long history of use, research into the effectiveness of simulations is in its infancy.

Motivation

As students attempt to balance their academic, work, and personal requirements they approach and avoid individual academic tasks with varying levels of commitment, effort, and time. Motivational theories are concerned with the energization and direction of behavior. Motivation asks the questions; what gets individuals moving (energized), and what activities and tasks will receive focus (direction) (P. R. Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) .

There are three main levels of motivation, Amotivation; absence of motivation, Extrinsic; means to an end (i.e. grades), and Intrinsic; interest or enjoyment (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Koh et al., 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation has been hypothesised as the most beneficial type of motivation for student learning because it reflects learning for learning's sake, which may be enduring (Lilly & Tippins, 2002) . Intrinsically motivated people work on tasks more productively because they find them enjoyable (P. Pintrich & Schunk, 1996) . Interest motivates students (Renninger, Hidi, & Krapp, 1992).

Situational Interest

Situational interest is a psychological state of being interested in a task or activity that is generated by the interestingness of a task or context (see Pintrich and Schunk (2002)). Van Voorhis (June 2-4, 1995) suggested that giving students some control over the learning experience tends to increase intrinsic motivation and helps to engage students in the learning process. Simulations have been shown to increase student involvement and enjoyment (Cadotte, 2016) . Therefore, it is suggested that the implementation of a simulation will increase student's motivation in the subject.

H1 – The implementation of a simulation will result in an increase in level of intrinsic motivation of students towards marketing.

Personal Interest

Another major influence of student motivation is personal interest. Personal interest represents an individual's relatively enduring disposition to be attracted to, to enjoy, or to like to be engaged in a particular activity or topic (P. R. Pintrich, 2003) . Caruana, La Rocca and Snehota (2016) suggest that the effectiveness of computer based simulations as a learning device will depend of the extent to which it is accepted among students. This suggests that the level of personal interest students have towards the simulation will affect how effective the learning is.

H2 – Students' major will moderate the increase in intrinsic motivation of students towards marketing after the implementation of a simulation.

Method

Data collection will be in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire will assess the students levels of motivation before and after the semester long use of a simulation in Principles of Marketing. The Principles of Marketing course is taken by a large variety of majors. Principles of Marketing uses the MarketShare simulation by Interpretive. Potential moderating effects will also be tested including age, work experience, and computer confidence.

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