

## **The Roles of Marketing Faculty and Students: Expectations of Marketing Students**

by

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### Topics

Innovative teaching methods and curriculum development  
 Learning styles, student development, performance and assessment  
 Using the web as a teaching tool

### Abstract

Role theory holds that individuals who interact have different role expectations on how each party is expected to act. For a relationship to be effective, participants must be in sync with each other's roles and expected behaviors. With advancing technology changing marketing content, pedagogical tools and the needs and behaviors of Generation Z students, the roles of faculty and students have changed. Through qualitative and quantitative research, this study will examine what students see as their responsibilities versus faculty members' responsibilities, across different educational objectives. Understanding and responding to what students expect can lead to greater student satisfaction.

### The Roles of Marketing Faculty and Students: Expectations of Marketing Students

Social roles are shared expectations that apply to individuals who occupy certain social positions (Eagley & Karrau, 2002; Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). A role theory perspective holds that individuals who interact have different behavior patterns and hold role expectations on how each party is expected to act (Biddle, 1986). For a relationship to be effective, participants must be in sync with each other's roles and expected behaviors.

Role theory has been adopted in several contexts where there is social exchange: Service encounters (Broderick, 1998; Solomon et al., 1985), stereotypes across groups (Koenig & Eagley, 2014), sales (Lysonski & Johnson, 2013), leadership roles (Shivers-Blackwell, 2004),

and team behavior (Fisher, Hunter & Macrosson, 2002). It has never been fully adopted in the context of a marketing student's role expectations of marketing faculty and themselves.

This is particularly relevant as the role of marketing professors is in a fluid state, facing several changes across the discipline, teaching and students. First, among the discipline, the digital age has altered how practitioners approach and execute marketing; from big data to social media, faculty have struggled to keep up and incorporate this new content into their courses (Faulds & Mangold, 2014; Granitz & Koernig 2011; Harrigan & Hulbert, 2011; Spiller & Tuten, 2015; Wymbbs, 2011). Second, digital tools have transformed how and what faculty use to teach marketing (Buzzard et al., 2011; Celsi & Wolfenbarger, 2002; McCorkle, Alexander & Reardon, 2001). Presentation software, e-mail, video, social media, open source and digital textbooks, chat rooms, conferencing software, simulations, online learning platforms (e.g. Blackboard, Desire2Learn, etc.) and other software are all used for two-way communication of core material and information between faculty and students. Third, growing up in a digital world has changed our students. As millennials pass through college and Generation Z begins university, marketing faculty face the first true digital natives (Williams, 2015). To them, digital is not technology but a way to communicate. To learn, they want practical experience and they have a "get it when you want it" attitude (Anonymous, 2014; Williams, 2015). Added to this, earlier calls for educators to focus on skills such as leadership and teamwork and to move from lecture to experiential learning to high impact practices, are now especially relevant (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Wright, Bitner, & Zeithaml, 1994).

Thus marketing educators' roles have transformed considerably from a simple lecturer of stable content to a designer of curriculum that is up-to-date, teaches practical skills, incorporates the latest pedagogical technology and methods, engages the newest generation of students and addresses their new unique set of needs.

Against this backdrop, several past studies have viewed students as customers and focused on understanding and meeting their expectations, as you would any customer (Gwinner & Beltramini, 1995; Newell, Titus & West, 1996). The research has echoed the changes discussed above with regards to the content, skills and pedagogical approach and tools. Students want to be prepared for the future marketplace (Ackerman, Gross & Perner, 2003). They desire challenge, interaction, hands-on experience, and ties to the real world (Bridges, 1999; Karns 2005). Students expect faculty to master instructional technology and not doing so can lower the credibility of the instructor (Schrodt & Witt, 2006). In terms of roles, Taylor et al. (2011) studied engagement and found that students believed it was the faculty's responsibility to engage students, while the authors stated that students must realize their roles, as co-creators with faculty of educational value.

Thus while past research has studied what students want, it has rarely demonstrated what students see as their role versus what they see as the role of the professor. This research seeks to fill this gap and has two main objectives:

- 1) Across content, skills and pedagogy, to understand what students see as their roles versus the roles of the professor;
- 2) To understand how they define the different roles; and
- 3) To understand how fulfillment of these roles affects student satisfaction

Understanding the different perceived roles and expectations is critical for several reasons. First, we are in two quickly changing disciplines, marketing and education. Knowing where students are, in terms of role expectations, can determine if there is role congruity between faculty and students. Role congruity can lead to greater student satisfaction with the educational experience (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). Second, if there is role incongruity, faculty can alter their approach or better prepare students for their role. Mostafa (2015) found that students who understand their roles and are ready to co-create value receive greater functional, social and emotional value from their education. Third, this study will definitively meld the literature on role theory and marketing education.

### Methodology

To achieve the main objectives of this research study, we will conduct two phases of data collection. The first phase will be a qualitative study to glean a better basic understanding of what university marketing students want from their education, in terms of skills, knowledge and pedagogical delivery. For each area, they will be asked what they perceive their role to be compared to the role of faculty in mastering these items. In this qualitative data collection phase, we will be conducting focus groups and one-on-one interviews. The second phase of this research will be quantitative in nature. In this part of our data collection, an online survey will be sent to marketing students asking them to delineate their role versus the faculty role in terms of skills, knowledge and pedagogical delivery. We will also measure the effect of these different roles on student satisfaction.

For more details on Methodology, please see Appendix A.

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## APPENDIX A

### Qualitative Phase

We will start by conducting one-on-one interviews with undergraduate students from two different universities. In these interviews, we will ask students what they want from their education, in terms of skills, knowledge and pedagogical delivery. We will then ask about their perceptions of the roles and expectations for faculty and students across these three main areas: 1) course content, 2) skills, and 3) course pedagogy. Based on the results of these one-on-one interviews, the next step in the qualitative phase of data collection will include 6 focus groups. Each focus group will consist of 8-12 undergraduate marketing students and will be moderated by a trained professional who is not a part of this research study. The one-on-one interviewers and focus group moderators will ask open-ended questions regarding the course content, skills, and course pedagogy, discussed below.

### Content

The discussion of essential course content will be based on work done by Schlee & Harich (2010), who documented the knowledge required for marketing jobs in the 21st century at multiple levels of job complexity. It will also be based on the work of Finch, Nadeau, & O'Reilly (2012), who examined key challenges in marketing education. Examples of questions about course content might include those related to: learning marketing concepts (What is marketing and how to market), enacting these concepts (Learn by doing), up-to-date content, etc. We will also query students on data collected in the one-on-one interviews.

### Skills

In addition to student input, the discussion of necessary skills needed to be developed will be based on Floyd and Gordon's (1998) work on the relative importance of communication skills (both written and verbal), problem-solving skills (analytic/quantitative), interpersonal skills, and work experience. Results from Schlee & Harich's (2010) work documenting the skills required for marketing jobs will also help drive the conversation on this topic, as well as Finch, Nadeau, & O'Reilly's (2012) research on the meta-skills needed by undergraduate marketing majors to succeed in the marketplace. Examples of areas of exploration include questions about soft skills (teamwork, leadership, networking, cross-functional, etc.), ethics, and practical experiences (internships, career jobs, consulting projects, etc.). We will also query students on data collected in the one-on-one interviews.

### Pedagogy

The discussion of perceived appropriateness of pedagogical techniques will be based on several recent articles focusing on the use of technology in the classroom and new approaches to teaching. For example, Rinaldo, Tapp, & Laverie (2011) examined the effectiveness of using Twitter as a pedagogical tool and Neier & Zayer (2015) examined students' perceptions and experiences of the use of social media as a pedagogical tool in college courses. Green (2015) advocates for the use of flipped classrooms. Examples of questions that could be asked for this topic might include questions about students' technology usage (and perceptions of what faculty use), details on how students communicate and interact with faculty (e.g. how much and through which platforms), and what they experience in the classroom (lecture, flipped classroom, etc.). We will also query students on data collected in the one-on-one interviews.

### Roles & Expectations

For all three of the above areas, we will delve into questions that more fully flesh out students' perceived roles and expectations of their roles for these topics versus faculty (or other external entities) roles. The role of student satisfaction based on students' perceptions of whether they are "in sync" with faculty members' roles and expected behavior will also be explored. From student input, we also expect topics to arise from these interviews that we did not anticipate a priori. Other possible areas of exploration might include issues such as students' expenditure of time (e.g. What do they expect to be doing during class time? Outside of formal class time?) After compiling and analyzing the results from the qualitative phase of our research (one-on-ones and the focus groups), we will start the second phase of this research study.

### Quantitative Phase

In the second (quantitative) phase of this research, we will take the qualitative findings and create a list of the desired knowledge, skills, and types of instruction. An online survey will be created and distributed to 250 marketing students at a West Coast and a Midwestern university. Subjects will rate their expectations/understanding on the degree to which the responsibility for knowledge, skills, and pedagogical items resides with faculty members, students and/or another external party (AMA, PSE, etc.). A 7-point scale with one being "definitely not my responsibility" and seven being "definitely my responsibility" will be used for the student's own expectations, and the subjects will rate the degree to which it is the faculty member's responsibility and/or an external party's responsibility on a similar scale (1 = definitely not their responsibility; 7 = definitely their responsibility).

The survey will have the students think of their answers in the context of a course they have recently completed. In addition to the questions about appropriate content, skills, and pedagogy, the subjects will also be asked to rate their satisfaction with the instructor and the course on a 7-point scale, as well as the grade that they earned in the. Demographic characteristics of the subjects will also be asked on the survey, including age, gender, race, year in school, GPA, and major.

### Data Analysis

For the qualitative phase of this research, subjects' responses will be transcribed and then a content analysis of their responses will be conducted. The results of the content analyses will drive the creation of the online survey (quantitative phase). Once the data are collected from the quantitative phase of this research, we will analyze it using regression with each of the key

responsibilities to determine what is driving student satisfaction. We will also conduct ANOVAs to determine if there are any differences in the perception of roles and expectations across the demographic characteristics that we collected.

Currently, we are in the data collection process and if this paper is accepted we plan on presenting preliminary results at the MEA Conference, 2018.

#### References for Appendix A

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