

# MARKETING EDUCATOR ADOPTION AND USE OF STUDENT RESPONSE SYSTEMS: AN EMPIRICAL LOOK

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## ABSTRACT

There is growing interest in adopting student response systems (aka “clickers”) for use in the collegiate classroom. While existent literature documents the potential and realized instructor and student learning benefits that can accrue from teaching with clickers, there is a lack of literature addressing why some instructors adopt and embrace this technology while others do not. If this interactive technology holds so much promise, why are some marketing educators teaching with clickers but others not? Understanding how and why adopters of clicker technology are different from or similar to non-adopters provides valuable information for those institutions, colleges, departments, and instructors desiring more diffusion of this teaching innovation.

## STUDY METHODOLOGIES

A multi-stage approach was used to identify and solicit responses from marketing educators with or without experience in teaching with clickers. Individuals with apparent responsibility for managing the marketing instruction at four-year collegiate institutions in the U.S. were identified. A total of 694 contacts (names) and contact information (e-mail addresses) were identified and used as part of the sample frame. Another sample source was the 2007 membership of the Marketing Educators’ Association and another source was review board members of the *Journal of Marketing Education* and *Marketing Education Review*. The three sources resulted in a total survey sample frame of 844 individuals.

A web-based survey was developed, pretested, and executed in late fall 2007 in order to capture data from clicker users and non-users within the sample frame. Key contacts were asked to complete the survey (whether or not they were a clicker user) and forward the survey request for participation to marketing faculty at their institution who they knew to have taught with clickers and/or forward the request to marketing faculty at other institutions who they knew taught with clickers. Those who taught with clickers were also asked to do the same (i.e., snowball sampling). A second survey participation invitation was e-mailed to all sample frame members (excluding first round undeliverables) two weeks after the initial request. A total of 301 non-users of

student response systems and 55 users of the technology participated in the survey.

## KEY FINDINGS

Even though those teaching with clickers feel using clickers increases their classroom preparation time and that clickers are not easy to learn to operate or use once learned and report less on-campus support for clickers, they still seem to value clicker use. Apparently, these negative factors are outweighed by their belief that using clickers increases their teaching quality. And, while they report low levels of on-campus support, they still feel they have the resources they need to teach with clickers. The lack of time to learn how to use clickers or the “hassle” of learning to use clickers was found as a barrier to more adoption. Users and those very familiar with clickers were uniform in stating that class preparation time increases when clickers are used. While clickers can save faculty members time in collecting exam and quiz responses and in taking attendance, developing and transferring questions to a clicker environment does take time. Many respondents mentioned that they did not know enough about teaching with clickers to warrant using them. A majority of clicker users feel that students do mind the economic costs associated with buying and using clickers. Most marketing educators teaching with clickers are addressing four of the seven possible classroom uses for clickers described by the literature. Much less use occurs for peer assessment, community building (e.g., general questions on current topics) and encouraging classroom debate.

Overall, it appears that marketing educators teaching with clickers are exploiting the technology’s most basic functions – asking and getting student responses to questions related to course content. But, it appears that the opportunity for designing and offering more creative and interactive clicker question sessions exists. It also appears to be true that many who have not taught with nor plan to teach with clickers might want to rethink their stance. Many of these individuals hold beliefs not held by those who have taught with clickers.