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Marketing Literature in Ph.D. Modules in Brazil and the United States: Description and Reflections

Ronan Torres Quintão^{a,1}, André Urdan^b, Tânia Veludo-de-Oliveira^c

^aCEFET-MG and EAESP-FGV, Av. Amazonas, 5253, Belo Horizonte-MG, 30.421-169, Brazil

^bEAESP-FGV, Av. 9 de Julho, 2029, São Paulo-SP, 01.313-902, Brazil

^cCentro Universitário da FEI e EAESP-FGV, R. Tamandaré 688, São Paulo-SP, 01.525-000, Brazil

Abstract

This article analyzes the literature adopted in marketing modules of 12 doctoral programs in Brazil and compares it to the results found by Joswick, Bauerly, and Johnson (2004) on doctoral marketing seminars in the United States. While such literature in the U.S. consists predominantly of journal articles, in Brazil it is still common the use of textbooks. Regarding the age of the publications, they are less updated in Brazil. Overall, the analysis points out to the need to reduce the quality gap underlying Brazilian doctoral programs, although taking into account the educational context of each country.

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1. Introduction

Discussions on marketing teaching have been a focus for concern in recent years. Specific periodicals such as the *Journal of Marketing Education* and *Marketing Education Review* have increasingly attracted attention of lecturers and researchers. In Brazil, the interest follows the international trend. Several studies have addressed the issue under different approaches, for example, there are studies on the teacher-student relationship (e.g., Bacellar & Ikeda, 2008), the view of lecturers on marketing teaching (e.g., Bacellar & Ikeda, 2007), the student's training (e.g., Bressan & Toledo, 2004; Ikeda, Veludo-de-Oliveira, & Miyazaki, 2004) and, teaching techniques (e.g., Ikeda, Veludo-de-Oliveira, & Campomar, 2007).

Despite the growing interest on the topic, research on the marketing curriculum is still in its infancy (Chonko & Caballero, 1991; Mason, 1990). Roach, Johnston, and Hair (1994) analyzed the current state of education in marketing and placed great emphasis on the curriculum. As Marcis, Keller, Deck, and Carr (2005) affirm: “empirical studies of syllabus components are a generally unexplored area, particularly in business disciplines” (p. 186).

The American university system has a very strong influence over many countries around the world. This influence is quite evident in the marketing teaching in Brazil as the leading American schools have constantly served as benchmarking for the conception and reformulation of disciplines and courses for Brazilian schools of business. Based on these considerations, two research questions are posed: What is the reality of the marketing literature in the Brazilian doctoral programs? How do Brazil and the United States compare to each other in terms of readings assigned in doctoral seminars of marketing? So, this article will analyze the literature of marketing modules of Brazilian Ph.D. programs, and compare such literature to the results found by Joswick, Bauerly, and Johnson (2004),

¹ Ronan Torres Quintão. Tel.: +55-031-3319-6867
ronan@dcsa.cefetmg.br

who conducted a similar research approach in the United States. The unit of the analysis will be the syllabus of marketing modules in Brazilian doctoral programs.

2. Literature Review

The syllabus fulfills many purposes, and according to Matejka and Kurki (1994) the purposes are: to serve as an agreement (or contract) between the teacher and student; to be an instrument to communicate intentions, seriousness and expectations; and, to offer a cognitive map to be shared with students. For Slattery and Carlson (2005), the syllabus involves three main aspects: motivational, structural and evidential. *Motivational*, because it is the plan which sets the ‘rhythm’ for the course. *Structural*, because the syllabus creates an effective organization for both the students and the lecturer, thus allowing everyone to acknowledge where to go and how to accomplish the objectives. *Evidential*, because the syllabus refers to the communication of evidence that reflects the teaching philosophy nature and quality, making it possible the comparison with other schools. For Parker and Harris (2002), the syllabus can be seen as a permanent record, wherein information on required readings is accessed.

Kurtz, Velliquette, Garretson, Dhodapkar, and Olson (1997) analyzed the syllabi of 27 doctoral seminars on ‘Marketing Theory’ in the United States and Canada. Kurtz et al. (1997) identified two books adopted by most seminars: (i) ‘Modern Marketing Thought’ (1991, South-Western Publishing Co, Cincinnati, OH), by Shelby Hunt, and (ii) ‘Marketing Theory: Evolution and Evaluation’ (1988, John Wiley & Sons, Inc, New York, NY), by Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett. Articles from the *Journal of Marketing* were the most popular in the syllabi. Seminal articles such as ‘Marketing Scientific Progress, Scientific Method’, by Anderson (1983), and ‘Broadening the Concept of Marketing’ by Kotler and Levy (1969), are part of the syllabi of 11 and 10 out of 27 seminars, respectively.

Bauerly and Johnson (2005) have suggested that the quality of a journal can be assessed by the likelihood that the journal is included in the syllabi of Ph.D. programs. That is, the impact of a journal should be measured by the extent to which their articles appear in the bibliography of doctoral modules. Bauerly and Johnson (2005) evaluated journals used in doctoral marketing programs and found an overlapping of preference for specific publications. The most quoted and listed marketing journals in the syllabi use to be: *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research* and *Journal of Marketing Research*. The study of Yoo (2009) reinforces these findings; the software *Prinqual* was used to integrate 13 rankings of marketing journals. Although each ranking had adopted a different criterion, the analysis showed that the three most influential journals are the just above-mentioned ones.

Yadav (2010) has criticized the marketing teaching in current doctoral programs due to the diversity of modules about methodology offered nowadays, thereby going beyond the scope of marketing. Whereas methodological modules abound, conceptually fundamental marketing topics, such as ‘Marketing and Economic History’, have been neglected. The drop in the number of conceptual articles which have been published in the marketing area in face of the overvaluation of empirical studies is a cause for concern.

3. Methods and Procedures

To answer the research questions, this study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional approach. The doctoral programs in Business Administration which are recommended by the Brazilian Ministry of Education were selected to comprise the sample. Information on the programs is available on the CAPES website. CAPES is the Brazilian governmental office in charge of public evaluation and accreditation of graduate programs. The website was accessed in April, 2011. Of the 27 programs listed, 18 (67%) were found to have a major area of specialization in marketing.

The marketing modules offered and the lecturers responsible for them were identified in websites of the doctoral programs within institutions of higher education and universities. Only the modules on marketing, both compulsory and elective, were selected. Compulsory general modules – such as research methodology, qualitative research methods, and quantitative research – were excluded from the analysis for not being specific of marketing.

The lecturers were asked by e-mail and in some cases, in person to provide the syllabi of their marketing modules. Among 18 institutions with doctoral program in marketing, 12 of them (67%) have provided their syllabi for analyses.

This study followed the same method of Joswick, Bauerly, and Johnson (2004) and did not discriminate the bibliographies by their nature in the syllabus, that is, whether it was a required reading or an additional reading.

4. Results

Table 1 lists the 12 institutions of the Brazilian sample, the respective modules taught in doctoral programs, and the number of citations indicated for reading in the bibliography.

Table 1: Educational Institutions in Brazil which have a
Doctoral Program with a Major Area of Specialization in Marketing

| N. | Institution | Num. of Marketing Modules | Total of Citations | Citations by Modules |
|----|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | FGV | 4 | 288 | 72,0 |
| 2 | FUMEC | 4 | 138 | 34,5 |
| 3 | PUC (PR) | 5 | 209 | 41,8 |
| 4 | PUC (MG) | 1 | 7 | 7,0 |
| 5 | UFPE | 4 | 82 | 20,5 |
| 6 | UFPR | 3 | 74 | 24,7 |
| 7 | UFRGS | 8 | 77 | 9,6 |
| 8 | UNINOVE | 5 | 127 | 25,4 |
| 9 | UNISINOS | 1 | 23 | 23,0 |
| 10 | USCS | 1 | 46 | 46,0 |
| 11 | USP (RP) | 5 | 80 | 16,0 |
| 12 | USP (SP) | 6 | 120 | 20,0 |

In the Brazilian sample, the average is 3.91 marketing modules by doctoral program. PUC (MG) and UNISINOS are the institutions with the lower number of these modules (only one), whereas USP (SP) offers the greatest number of disciplines in marketing (six). The average is 27 references by syllabus in Brazil, compared to 67.1 in the United States.

Considering the 32 most quoted publications in the Brazilian syllabi, which represent 72% of the total citations: (i) books account for 39.9% (i.e., 339 citations); (ii) academic journals correspond to 58.8% (i.e., 492 citations); and, (iii) conference proceedings represent 2.1% (i.e., 18 citations). Of the 7,126 citations mapped by Joswick, Bauerly, and Johnson (2004), 88.3% were academic journals and 11%, books. Regarding the book publishers, among the quoted publications: (i) Atlas (Brazilian publisher) holds the 2nd place, (ii) Bookman (also a Brazilian publisher) holds the 5th place and, (iii) Prentice Hall (a world's major educational publisher), the 7th place.

The numbers in parentheses that follow indicate the ranking of the top journals in terms of the number of citations in Brazil and the U.S.: *Journal of Marketing* (1st, 1st), *Journal of Retailing* (2nd, 21st), *Journal of Marketing Research* (3rd, 3rd), *Journal of Consumer Research* (4th, 2nd), *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* (5th, 37th), *Journal of Macromarketing* (6th, 33th), *European Journal of Marketing* (7th, n/a), *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (7th, 5th), and *Harvard Business Review* (9th, 10th).

As it is in the United States, the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research* and *Journal of Consumer Research* are among the main used journals in Brazilian doctoral marketing modules, although there are differences in the position occupied by the last two journals in comparison to the American ranking. The *Journal of Retailing* stands out in Brazil (2nd position) in relation to the United States (21th position) due to influence of the module 'Retail and Consumer Behavior' (FGV), with 41 citations, and the module 'Retail and Sales' (UFPR), with 14 citations. These two modules represent 85.9% of the *Journal of Retailing's* citations (55 out of 64 citations). Only four out of the 10 most quoted journals in the syllabi of the Brazilian sample are among the 10 most quoted journals in the United States.

About the age of the references used in Brazil (i.e., years since publication), 1,224 citations were analyzed, although the syllabi did not indicate the release date for 40 of them. The citation ages of the journals listed in the Brazilian syllabi are lagged behind the United States: 2.8% of the citations in the Brazilian syllabi refer to publications within the last two years, a proportion that rises to 10.8% in the U.S. In the same manner: (i) 2 to 3 years

of age are 10.9% in Brazil and 12.9% in the U.S., (ii) 4 to 5 years, 10.0% in Brazil and 11.7% in the U.S. and, (iii) from 6 to 7 years, 12.2% in Brazil and 12.3% in the U.S., respectively.

5. Concluding Remarks

The amount of references found in the syllabi of marketing modules of doctoral programs in Brazil points out to a relatively minor load of reading and study for Brazilian students compared to American students, since the average is 27 references per syllabus in Brazil versus 67.1 in the U.S. The number of citations of textbooks in the syllabi shows a critical difference in the training of researchers in Brazil in comparison to the U.S. as well. The use of textbooks accounts for 11% of the total of readings assigned in doctoral marketing seminars in the United States, while it accounts for almost 40% of total citations in Brazil. The difference continues to grow when it comes to the analysis of the ages of citations. The publications produced in 2011 and 2010 represent only 2.8% of the total citations of the syllabi in Brazil, while such period comprises almost 11% of citations in the U.S. The reading materials in marketing modules in Brazil seem to present inferior quality for a doctoral education in terms of updating, diversity of sources, and types of publication. The scientific training of doctoral candidates in Brazil tends, therefore, to be less demanding when compared to the United States.

One of the limitations of this study is the lack of information on six Brazilian institutions which have marketing modules in their doctoral programs, which did not provide the syllabi for analysis as requested. Another limitation is the question that remains on the degree to which the material specified in a syllabus is in fact effectively studied by Ph.D. candidates. Many references are put in the syllabi only to complement compulsory readings and are not used as a requirement for the discipline – this research was not able to analyze this issue which is of great importance to evaluate the quality of teaching and should be further explored. In future research, it would be relevant to compare the most quoted authors, textbooks and articles in Brazilian and U.S. syllabi with those of other countries, such as European and Asian countries.

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