



# **2022 Annual Spring Conference Proceedings**

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ISSN 2325-3509 (Print), ISSN 2325-3533 (Online)

*Marketing Management Association Spring Conference  
March 10-11, 2022, St. Louis, MO*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Marketing Management Association is proud to present the annual Spring Conference! As in previous years, we find that the submissions to the conference were quite inspiring! The range and depth of the analysis that were conducted in submitting competitive, position, and panel papers were beyond our expectations.

We are very thankful to all the scholars who submitted position and competitive papers as well as volunteered for special sessions and panels. We are ever so grateful to all the reviewers. The reviewers are listed later in the proceedings. In addition, we could not have the conference without the session chairs, listed separately in this publication, who help with the smooth coordination of panels and presentations. Special thanks to **Becky Hochradel**, Proceedings Editor, for assembling all the material into these conference proceedings, and to **Holly Syrdal** and **Debbie DeLong**, MMA Webmasters, for keeping the website up-to-date.

Please take the opportunity to visit with the exhibitors who support the conference. They help to keep the price of MMA conferences a tremendous value for everyone, as well as offering attendees many resources that assist with marketing education.

**Interpretive Simulations** sponsored the Best Conference Paper Award. Thank you Interpretive Simulations for your support. The winning paper was selected prior to the conference and the authors are listed in these Proceedings. We also thank all the other exhibitors noted below who offer us great ideas, tools, and training to improve our effectiveness in the classroom. Without you we could not put on this conference and so we thank you for your participation and welcome you again next year!

Many thanks to everyone involved with the conference! We hope you enjoyed lots of stimulating conversation, learned a few new ideas, and met some fellow scholars who share your passion for the marketing discipline! **Mark your calendars** for the 2022 MMA Fall Educators' Conference. **It will be held in-person**, September 23-25, 2022 at the Drury Plaza Hotel in San Antonio, TX!

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Jayati Sinha, Florida International University

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# TAKING US OUT OF THE BALLGAME: GENDER DIVERSITY AND THE BUSINESS OF BASEBALL

*John Drea, Illinois College*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present research examines the gender diversity of Major League Baseball Teams business employees. A database of 2,280 MLB team business employees was developed from all thirty MLB teams. Names and titles were collected from team websites, with employment information added from LinkedIn, media guides, and other team sources.

The results indicate widely differing levels of gender diversity between functional areas. HRM, Communication, Foundations, and Retail all provided excellent gender diversity; however, Analytics & Strategy, Operations, Partnerships, Technology/IT, Ticket Operations, and Ticket Sales showed strong evidence of a “glass ceiling.” Recommendations include a league wide focus on the issue.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2001, Jones and Tucker (2001) cited the progress women had made in the corporate world in the previous decades and posited that the sports world would likely follow. Unfortunately, their optimism has only been partially realized. There has been considerable attention paid to the issues of diversity and gender bias in sports; however, most of the attention has focused on diversity issues involving players, coaches, media, and the performance aspects of the industry (Rosner and Shropshire; Kahn, 2000; Senne 2016).

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at the University of Central Florida produces an annual “Racial and Gender Score Card” for several major pro sports, including Major League Baseball (MLB) (TIDES 2021). The well-respected TIDES Reports evaluates racial and gender diversity, including evaluating the MLB Central Office. At the team level, TIDES evaluates diversity at the level of the player, coach, ownership, executive/president, general manager/head of baseball operations, VP of senior administration, and a broad category called “professional administration.” Professional administration, however, is treated as a single pool and issued a single “grade” for all of Major League Baseball. For all MLB teams, the professional administration category would constitute thousands of employees spread across a dozen or more different functional areas, ranging from IT to stadium operations to partnership development to retailing. Since these functions and work environments are likely to be different, it makes sense to look at individual functional areas to see if gender diversity is uniform or if there are differences between functional areas and what those differences would be. In addition, it is worth noting that the employees from these functional areas are the future pipeline of executives and other C-level employees. Maintaining gender diversity at lower levels is necessary to generate a gender diverse pool of applicants for executive positions later (depending on the functional area.)

### **Importance of the Topic**

MLB has a long-standing gender issue in the fan base, dating back to the beginning of the sport. Currently, 31% of men consider themselves to be avid fans of a MLB team, compared to only 12% of women, while nearly twice as many women as men are not fans at all (58% to 32%) (Statista 2022). At the same time, MLB TV ratings in 2021 remained 12% below pre-pandemic (2019) levels, with 18 of 30 markets seeing declines in viewership (Johnson 2021). For MLB to grow the fan base and TV audience, it will need to a better job to attract women as fans and patrons. Past and current MLB team business performance suggests it is unlikely that the strategies necessary to increase the number of women as fans and ticket buyers can be best created and executed predominately by men in a business management team. Rather than focusing initially on external strategies to address the gender issues in the MLB fan base, it would make sense to address internal team composition first.

For the present research, gender diversity is narrowly defined as the proportion of women working in managerial

roles for MLB teams in a non-player-related capacity. This is consistent with the approach used by Perryman, Fernando, and Tripathy 2016), who defined gender diversity as “the proportion of females in the top management team.”

### MLB Team Business Departments

In general, there are three broad level of business management positions for MLB teams (positions excluding player development/team performance positions): Manager level, Director level, and Vice President level (see Table 1). While there is considerable variation in titles from team to team, departments have greater similarity.

**Table 1. Management Levels and Sub Strata**

Level	Sub strata
Manager	Manager Sr. Manager
Director	Asst. Director Director Sr. or Executive Director
Vice President	Asst. Vice President Vice President Sr. or Exec. Vice President

Determining which employee is a “manager” begins with the title, but the term manager was defined as someone who manages people or processes. As an example, a Payroll Manager was included but an Account Manager was not (the latter is often synonymous with Account Executive).

Some organizations combined Ticket Operations and Ticket Sales into a single area called “Ticket Operations and Sales.” For the sake of consistency, these individuals were all coded as Ticket Sales. There were a small number of individuals with titles such as VP of Administration or Director of Business Services and attached to a department called Executives. They were excluded from analysis.

Table 2 provides a baseline for the number of employees by department for all 30 MLB teams combined, with Operations (14.8%) and Ticket Sales (13.2%) as the two largest areas. Departments that communicate with various stakeholder groups – Marketing (8.7%), Communication (10.4%), and Partnerships (10.1%) – combine for 29.2% of all managerial employment.

**Table 2. Departments and Numbers of MLB Employees by Level**

Department	Manager (includes Sr. Manager but not Account Mgr.)	Director (includes Asst., Sr., Exec. Director)	Vice President (includes Asst., Sr., Exec. VP)	Total	% of Total
Accounting and Finance	61	52	48	161	7.1
Analytics and Strategy	31	28	16	75	3.3
Broadcasting and Scoreboard	20	29	4	53	2.3
Communication	89	100	47	236	10.4
Team Foundations	22	23	9	54	2.4
Human Resource Management	24	26	28	78	3.4
Technology/IT	46	40	21	107	4.7
Legal & Govt. Affairs	4	14	37	55	2.4
Marketing	91	75	32	198	8.7
Operations (stadium, grounds, security, engineering)	158	133	46	337	14.8
Partnerships	122	74	33	229	10.1
Purchasing	3	3	0	6	0.2
Real Estate/ Development	2	9	2	13	0.5

Retail (retail stores, facility tours, and events)	120	63	28	211	9.2
Ticket Operations	62	34	9	105	4.6
Ticket Sales	158	108	34	300	13.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>2276</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Problem

In a study of ticket sales VPs in five major North American sports leagues, Drea (2022) noted that over 90% of all ticket sales vice presidents are male. In personal exchanges with a MLB and MLS team VPs on this issue, both VPs stated their belief that the lack of female VPs in ticket sales is likely due to is a lack of qualified female candidates at the director level, with many women in ticket sales leaving the profession prior to achieving the typical 4-6 years of experience at the director level needed before becoming an acceptable candidate to become a VP.

Why are their fewer women than men in leadership roles in professional sports? There are several ideas that can be viewed as complimentary:

- Individuals currently in leadership roles have normative expectations regarding what leadership behavior looks like, and men currently in leadership roles may be more likely to fit the norms in scenarios that are primarily designed by men, and vice versa (Place and Vardeman-Winter, 2018). In functional areas of sports business that have had decades of one male leader after another, this suggests a greater challenge in changing the normative expectations of what behaviors constitute leadership.
- A related idea is that women are often hired for entry level positions where certain “feminine qualities” (friendliness, being outgoing, bubblyness) create a “friendliness trap” (Hardin and Whiteside, 2012). The same qualities attractive for entry level positions become a disadvantage when women apply for leadership roles – especially using male norms for leadership.
- Most women and many men view a job in sports business as a career with other career options also available to them, while a core of men enter the field of sports business employment with something closer to an obsession to be connected to male sports. This sustains some male employees to remain in the field when others might leave for opportunities elsewhere.
- The “elephant in the room” in any discussion of gender diversity in sports are perceptions of harassing and inappropriate work environments for women. Activities which may constitute sexual harassment are still all too common in sports (Taylor, Smith, Welch and Hardin, 2018), forcing women into difficult choices, including accepting the behavior, reporting the behavior but dealing with career consequences, or leaving the organization and/or profession (Perez-Rivases, Torregrossa and Viladrich, 2017.)

## Research Questions

- RQ1: How does the gender diversity for MLB team business VPs compare to the gender diversity at lower levels of MLB team employment (manager and director)?
- RQ2: What is the level of gender diversity within each functional area common to MLB teams (marketing, communication, accounting and finance, etc.)? Do these functional areas all have relatively similar gaps between each level (manager to director, director to VP), or is their more gender diversity in some areas?
- RQ3: Are there other additional explanatory factors for the gender diversity gap in conjunction with existing explanations (leadership stereotypes, hostile environments)

## *METHODOLOGY*

A database was constructed of the names of all 2,280 MLB team employees working in a managerial role for a business (non-team performance) unit between by obtaining names from each team website. A team performance capacity would mean the team manager, general manager, coaches, trainers, scouts, medical staff, etc. – anyone who is connected to players and their performance. It also excludes spring training staff. Next, the LinkedIn profile for the individual was examined (if available) to obtain:

- Photo, used for assigning the employee to a gender category
- Previous employment history with current MLB team, including titles and length of employment,
- Education: degree(s), college or university, majors(s), year of graduation if noted

- Prior employment by previous MLB and MiLB teams or by teams in other pro sports leagues

When information was incomplete, additional sources such as team press releases, media guides, other photo sources were consulted and included. Photos were located on 90.9% of all subjects.

Gender was classified by having each subject photo independently reviewed by two student judges without a name attached. Judges were asked to classify whether the person presented primarily as male or primarily female. There was agreement between the judges on 94.1% of all photos. When there was disagreement, it was referred to a third judge for resolution. Subjects for whom no data was available were assigned to a gender category based on the gender commonly associated with their first name. Names of subjects that had no photo and that also possessed a name often used by both genders, such as Sam, Chris, Alex, Pat, etc. were removed from analysis.

## RESULTS

**RQ1: How does the gender diversity for MLB team VPs compare to the gender diversity at lower levels of MLB team employment (manager and director)?**

**Table 3. Gender Diversity for Business Management Positions on MLB Teams, Overall**

	Manager		Director		VP	
	n	%	n	%	#	%
Females	416	41.1%	270	33.2%	113	26.5%
Males	596	58.9%	544	66.8%	314	73.5%
Total	1,012		814		427	

The participation of women in MLB business management roles showed a significant overall decline with each level of management from 41.1% at the manager level to 26.5% at the VP level, as shown in Table 3. (Chi-square 36.500, sig = .000). The data indicates that gender diversity generally decreases at higher levels of an MLB organization.

**RQ2: What is the level of gender diversity within each functional area common to MLB teams (marketing, communication, accounting & finance, etc.)? Do these functional areas all have relatively similar gaps between each level (manager to director, director to VP), or is their more gender diversity in some areas?**

**Chart 1**

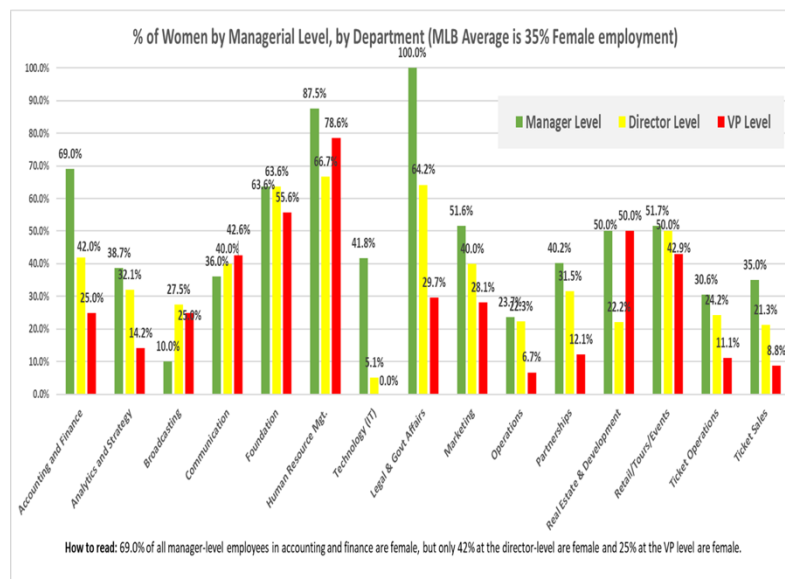


Chart 1 shows strong levels of gender diversity in the areas of Communication, Team Foundations, Retail

Operations, and HRM. In each of these functional areas, women are employed above the industry average of 35% at the manager, director, and VP levels. These four areas combined constitute 25.4% of MLB team business positions. The remaining three-fourths of business positions were found in departments with weaker levels of gender diversity. The “glass ceiling” was most apparent in six functional areas: Analytics and Strategy, Technology/IT, Partnerships, Operations, Ticket Operations, and Ticket Sales (Table 3). These six areas constitute 50.7% of all business positions for MLB teams.

**Table 3. Summary of Gender Diversity by Functional Area**

<b>Positive Gender Diversity (&gt;35% at manager, director, VP levels)</b>	<b>Percentages of Women as Mgr./Dir/VP</b>	<b>Glass Ceiling (less than 20% women at the VP level)</b>	<b>Percentage of Women as VPs</b>
<b>Communication</b>	36%/40%/42.6%	<b>Analytics &amp; Strategy</b>	14.2%
<b>Foundations</b>	63.6%/63.6%/55.6%	<b>Technology/IT</b>	0%
<b>HRM</b>	87.5%/66.7%/78.6%	<b>Partnerships</b>	12.1%
<b>Retail/Concessions/Tours/Events</b>	51.7%/50%/42.9%	<b>Operations</b>	6.7%
		<b>Ticket Operations</b>	11.1%
		<b>Ticket Sales</b>	8.8%

Two other functional areas, Marketing and Accounting & Finance, have gender diversity levels above the overall average of 35% for the manager (51.6% and 69%, respectively) and director levels (40% and 42%, respectively). Gender diversity at the VP level fell to 28.1% for Marketing and 15% for Accounting & Finance. These two areas combined represent 15.8% of all MLB team business positions.

**RQ3: Are there other additional explanatory factors for the gender diversity gap in conjunction with existing explanations (besides leadership stereotypes, hostile environments)**

**Table 4. Length of Time at Current Managerial Level, by Gender**

<b>Gender (n)</b>	<b>Overall Mean # of Months in Current Role</b>	<b>Current Months in Manager Role</b>	<b>Current Months in Director Role</b>	<b>Current Months in VP Role</b>
<b>Females (681)</b>	59.8 months	52.04 months	61.48 months	80.23 months
<b>Males (1210)</b>	75.5 months	61.44 months	77.81 months	95.97 months
<b>N=1907</b>	69.9 months	58.13 months	72.16 months	91.72 months

One additional explanation for why men are promoted more often than women is that men have more experience at all levels, though this is more relevant at the manager and director levels. When applying for a director-level position, the average female manager has just under five years of experience as a manager, while the average male candidate has 6.25 years. For positions at the VP level, the average female candidate has sixteen months less experience than her male counterpart.

### **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings support and extend the findings of TIDES diversity score card by going into more specific detail regarding where specific problems exist within MLB team business departments. It has been previously suggested (Barrett 2019) that an appropriate way to address the problems of gender diversity is through a top-down management commitment. This would be appropriate if the problem of gender diversity was unique to a team or a small number of teams where a commitment by senior leadership to change the structure and culture of those teams could affect meaningful change; however, chi-square results show no difference between teams regarding overall gender diversity. The findings indicate that this is not an isolated problem among a few teams but a systemic issue to Major League Baseball.

The results are illuminating and troubling, especially for the MLB team functional areas of partnerships, ticket operations and ticket sales. In each of these functional areas, 30-40% of managers are women, but the percentages of women have decreased by two-thirds or more at the VP level, to 8.8% to 12.1%. These three areas combine for 27.9% of all business management employment within MLB teams. It would be difficult to make overall progress without

addressing the factors which have led to the lack of women being named to director and VP level positions in these areas. These areas are critical to building the ticket base for MLB teams, a base that clearly needs more women, yet the efforts to build this base are being led by relatively few women.

Part of the challenge to generating change in this area is that it is first necessary to generate a desire to change, and there is less pressure on MLB to increase the gender diversity in business positions than elsewhere in the MLB. The TIDES report helps to focus media attention primarily on racial and gender diversity on other aspects of team operations: players, coaches, senior leadership, ownership, not on the accountants, ticket managers, stadium operators, etc.

One of the findings was that women have less experience compared to men across all managerial levels. This is an area that needs further exploration. Since the data shows that (except for four departments) women are not being promoted faster than their male counterparts, one possible conclusion is that women with marketable experience are leaving their organizations, thereby reducing the available pool of applicants for promotion to the next level. Support for this conclusion is based on a statistically significant age difference ( $p = .000$ ) between men and women of nearly three years (40 years, 10 months for men, 38 years for women). Whether women are leaving certain MLB functional areas for better opportunities, better work environments, a clearer path for the future, personal factors, or some combination of these or other factors remains to be seen.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations with the current data collection. Collecting and entering the data was a highly labor-intensive activity, which always increases the possibility of a data entry error. Errors were mitigated by having data entered in pairs of data entry technicians (one entering while the other checked) and all work was checked again later. Nevertheless, the sheer size of this undertaking opens the possibility of some data entry issues. There are also limitations with how the data was collected. LinkedIn data is entered by individuals, so if someone misstates something about his/her background, LinkedIn does not correct it. Spot checks of LinkedIn data against media guide data indicated that most individuals were highly accurate regarding their dates of employment and their employer, but less accurate regarding their correct occupation title or their correct major in college.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Progress has been made in diversifying some aspects of sports, but there is a long way to go. Confronting the lack of gender diversity in MLB managerial positions is not only an issue of fairness and good business practice, but it also an issue of good strategy. For MLB to thrive in the decades to come, it will need to reach out to women among other groups as part of the ticket, merchandise, and media audience. An effective way to do that is to start with a gender diverse organization that more readily understands this critical target market.

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**Special thanks** to students Anna Beth Batson, Skyler Dees, Emma Newton, Beau Parkevich, Jacob Thaller, and Jacob Trim for their assistance with data entry and judging, and to former Director of Diversity and Inclusion Valeria Cueto for helpful ideas and encouragement on this project.

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# AN EXAMINATION OF THE CAREER PATHS OF PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TICKET SALES EXECUTIVES

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## ABSTRACT

The career paths of all 149 senior ticket sales executives from MLB, MLS, NBA, NFL, and NHL were examined. The results indicate:

- Most organizations have four broad levels of employment within ticket sales: Entry Level, Manager, Director, and VP. The average length of time to progress through all levels and become a VP is 13.6 years of ticket sales department experience.
  - Only 8.7% of Ticket Sales VPs are female. Women are also underrepresented at the director level (25.3%).
  - Less than 25% of senior ticket sales executives have spent their entire career with their current employer – most have worked for other teams.
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## INTRODUCTION

One of the primary sources of revenue for the five major sports leagues in North America (Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association, National Football League, National Hockey League, and Major League Soccer) is ticket revenue. Ticket sale revenues make up 15-37% of total league revenues.

- NFL: 15% of total revenue is ticket revenue (Gough, 2020a)
- NBA: 22% of total revenue is ticket revenue (Gough, 2020b)
- MLB 30% of 2017 total revenue was ticket revenue (Gough, 2020c)
- MLS: 31% of 2017 total revenue is ticket revenue<sup>1</sup> (Krasny, 2017)
- NHL: 37% of 2018-19 total revenues were from ticket revenues (Gough, 2019)

While these percentages have generally been in slight decline as partnerships and media contracts constitute a greater share of total revenue, the Covid-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of ticket revenue to team and league operations. In the MLB, Commissioner Rob Manfred reported that combined team operating losses would be between \$2.8-\$3.3 billion for 2020, though this was also attributable to playing only a half-season (Canova, 2020). While the NFL was able to play an entire season, it still faced a combined \$2.7 billion loss for the 2020 season, while the NBA lost \$694 million in fan revenue for the cancelled portion of the 2020 season (Dixon, 2020).

The events of 2020 focused attention back on the ticket sales area within professional team sports. As fans return, and tickets, ticket packages, boxes, and suites are sold, renewed focus will be on the individuals responsible for ticket sales.

Leading the ticket sales function is a performance-based assignment. Each season, predictive models are used to estimate ticket sales and ticket revenue, and ticket sales leadership is evaluated against the ability to meet or surpass those projections. Most sales managers are primarily evaluated on sales generated, though persuasive arguments have been made to include residual income streams (Cron and Levy 2013) such as estimated future revenues through renewals and broadening the fan base. Consequently, leading a pro ticket sales area is largely about assembling, organizing, motivating, and controlling a sales team.

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<sup>1</sup> MLS revenues in 2017 were estimated at \$400 million, with merchandise, media, and sponsorships constituting \$276 million (Krasny 2017). If the remaining \$124m revenue comes from ticket sales, then  $\$124m/\$400m = 31\%$

With the increasing importance of the VP of Ticket Sales role in sports organizations, it is appropriate to examine this role within pro sports teams. Who are these ticket sales leaders? What are their ages, genders, backgrounds, and academic and work preparations? Are women participating in this profession comparable to men? Are barriers present?

The purpose of the present research is two-fold: identify the common career paths for senior ticket executives in the MLB, MLS, NBA, NFL, and NHL., and to examine what role, if any, that gender plays in the ticket sales profession. By doing so, the research should help those considering a career in professional sports ticket sales or already working in the field.

### ***METHODOLOGY***

Data was collected in a two-step process. Step one was to identify the senior ticket sales executive within each of the 149 teams across the five professional leagues. The second step was collecting data on each senior ticket sales executive’s employment and education history. This was accomplished by accessing the LinkedIn profiles for each of the senior ticket sales executives, then supplementing this information as needed with publicly available information from media guides, press releases, and other sources. Data collected included:

- Estimated age
- Gender
- Number of years in the current senior ticket sales executive position
- Previous job titles with the current team and years in each position
- Previous job titles and years of employment with other teams in the same league as the current employer
- Previous years of experience in other pro major and minor leagues
- Prior sales experience

### ***RESULTS***

#### **Levels of employment in ticket sales**

There are four levels of employment within professional sports ticket sales (beyond the intern level), with each level having two sub-strata.

- *Entry-Level* (primarily sales and customer service roles)
- *Manager-Level* (combination of functional and managerial duties)
- *Director-Level* (participating in goal setting and directing activities to achieve goals)
- *VP-Level* (actively participating in strategy development, monitoring and controlling operations, and evaluating performance).

**Table 1. Four Levels of Ticket Sales Employment**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Sub-strata/Titles</b>	<b>Avg. Yrs. spent by a VP at this level</b>
#1 Entry	True Entry (Acct. Exec.)	2.96 yrs.
	Adv. Entry (Acct. Manager)	
#2 Manager	Manager	4.92 yrs.
	Senior Manager	
#3 Director	Director/Asst. Director	5.73 yrs.
	Senior Director	
#4 VP	Vice President/Asst. VP	4.19 yrs.+
	Senior Vice President	

There were differences noted between leagues in how quickly future ticket sales executives rose from one level to the next. Ticket sales executives in the MLS (9.22 years) and NBA (11.43 years) moved from the entry level to VP levels faster than their counterparts in other leagues. The average NFL ticket sales executive spent nearly seventeen years before reaching VP status, with MLB (15.48) and NHL (14.99) executives not far behind.

#### **Gender**

While considerable public interest has been devoted to the efforts of teams and leagues to increase diversity among coaches and ownership groups, increasing diversity in the business operation for professional teams is also important; however, senior ticket sales executives show a lack of gender diversity. As shown in Table 2, 91.3% of senior ticket sales executives are male, with the total having only modest differences across individual leagues.

**Table 2. Percentage of Females in Senior Ticket Sales Executive Positions, by League**  
(actual number of female ticket execs is in parentheses)

<b>MLB</b>	6.7% (2 female ticket execs.)
<b>MLS</b>	0% (0)
<b>NBA</b>	13.3% (4)
<b>NFL</b>	9.4% (3)
<b>NHL</b>	12.9% (4)
<b>Total</b>	8.7% (13)

A closer examination indicates that little change has occurred regarding the numbers of women in senior ticket executive positions. Of the thirteen women who hold these top positions, only five were promoted into that position in the past three years. *During the same period, sixty-five men (92.3%) were promoted to a senior ticket executive position.* This suggests a need for more qualified female candidates within the pipeline, especially at the Director and Senior Director levels across all pro sports leagues.

### Age

Age is not reported in LinkedIn profiles. To estimate age, twenty-two years were subtracted from the year the ticket executive listed as graduating from an undergraduate college/university.<sup>2</sup> This is why age in this research is described as “estimated age.”

**Table 3: Mean Age (estimated) of Senior Ticket Executives, by League**  
(actual number of female execs is in parentheses)

<b>MLB</b>	44.40 years
<b>MLS</b>	37.68 years
<b>NBA</b>	42.09 years
<b>NFL</b>	44.05 years
<b>NHL</b>	41.04 years

The majority of all senior ticket sales executives are under 45 years of age, with 58.4% of executives between the estimated ages 30-45. Table 2 indicates that the average age of an executive is relatively consistent across the NFL, NBA, MLB, and NHL (less than 3.5 years differences); however, senior ticket sales execs in the MLS are significantly younger at 37.68 years.

### Education

The undergraduate majors of senior ticket sales executives were concentrated into one of three general areas:

- **Business-related majors** (management, accounting, marketing, finance, eco.) = 41.6%
- **Sports-related majors** (sports management, sports or exercise science, PE) = 24.3%
- **Communication** = 9.5%

While an undergraduate degree was a near prerequisite for the senior ticket sales executive role (99%), a graduate degree is not. Less than one-fourth (24.7%) of senior ticket sales executives have completed a graduate degree, with the heaviest concentrations of ticket sales executives with graduate degree in the NFL and NHL. Those who do have graduate degrees were primarily in sports or business-related fields (40%).

<sup>2</sup> This is admittedly an imprecise measure for age, since some individuals work before attending college, some attend college while working, etc. The listing of 149 ticket sales executives was manually scanned for these instances, and those cases were removed from analysis. This likely has the effect of lowering the mean age reported.

## Remaining with one team vs. moving

Twenty three of the 149 senior ticket sales executives (15.4%) spent their entire careers with a single franchise. Nearly all of these individuals have worked exclusively in ticket sales or ticket operations, as opposed to transferring from other functional areas (marketing, finance, operations, etc.) Managing the ticket sales function is a specialized task that requires specialized experience.

Staying with a single team for an entire career, as opposed to moving from team to team (or league to league), has little impact on how rapidly someone rises to become a senior ticket executive. The average estimated age of a senior ticket executive was 42.03 years, compared to an average age of 42.29 years for individuals who have spent their entire career with a single organization.<sup>3</sup> There were several instances of individuals entering ticket sales at the manager or director level with a background in consumer products management, embracing a more customer-focused approach (as opposed to a sales-oriented approach.)

## Years of experience

The data confirms that most ticket sales VPs do not start working with their current teams immediately after college and rise through the various position before becoming a senior ticket sales executive. In fact, such individuals are relatively rare in professional sports teams, as indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4. Senior Ticket Sales Executive Experience, by League**

Ticket Execs from	VPs who have spent their entire career with one team	Average years of work experience in pro team sports	Avg. yrs. of work experience from other pro sports leagues
<b>MLB</b>	23%	21.15 years	3.22 years
<b>MLS</b>	0%	11.96 years	7.49 years
<b>NBA</b>	7.7%	15.95 years	3.21 years
<b>NFL</b>	3.3%	21.55 years	6.60 years
<b>NHL</b>	20%	18.38 years	3.81 years

Senior ticket sales executives from the NFL and MLB were found to have more years of experience in professional sports than similar senior executives in the NBA, NHL, or MLS (Chart 9). The average senior ticket sales executive in the NFL has 21.55 years of experience working for teams in all pro leagues combined, the MLB ticket executives at 21.15 years. MLS senior ticket sales executives were the least experienced, with 11.96 years of experience – roughly half of the experience of their counterparts in the NFL and MLB.

While senior ticket sales executives within the MLS were the youngest of any of the five professional leagues and had fewer years of pro sports experience, they also bring more of their experience from other professional leagues to the MLS (7.49 years on average – see Chart 10). NFL senior ticket executives also bring significant experience from other professional leagues, averaging 6.6 years. By contrast, senior ticket sales executives in the NHL, NBA, and MLB average less than four years of experience from teams in other professional leagues.

## Types of work experiences

The data was also disaggregated to identify where senior ticket sales executives have previously worked (Table 5). The data indicates that NBA team experience is the most common type of experience held by senior ticket sales executives. Conversely, very few senior ticket executives outside of the MLS have MLS experience. While this is partially a function of the relatively recent growth in the MLS and smaller staffing levels, the effect has been to create a pipeline of other leagues preparing individuals for mid-level entry into MLS ticket sales.

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<sup>3</sup> The caveat is there are three senior ticket executives who have spent their entire careers with a single organization and are 55+ but have little information about specific details of their progression. There are also two executives (ages 47 and 61) that have spent almost but not quite all of their careers with a single organization. If that information had been included, the means for both groups would increase to approximately 45 years.

**Table 5. Previous Work Experience with Other Teams by Current Senior Ticket Sales Executives**

	Current League, Senior Ticket Sales Executive				
	MLB Sr. Ticket Executives	MLS Sr. Ticket Executives	NBA Sr. Ticket Executives	NFL Sr. Ticket Executives	NHL Sr. Ticket Executives
% with Previous MLB Team Experience	33.3%	23.1%	16.7%	26.7%	20.0%
% with Previous MLS Team Experience	0.0%	23.1%	3.3%	9.4%	0.0%
% with Previous NBA Team Experience	23.3%	46.2%	26.7%	34.4%	22.6%
% with Previous NFL Team Experience	10.0%	38.5%	10.0%	21.9%	9.7%
% with Previous NHL Team Experience	16.7%	26.9%	16.7%	34.4%	19.4%
% with Previous Minor League Baseball Experience	10.0%	23.1%	20.0%	3.1%	3.2%
% with Previous Minor League Hockey Experience	3.3%	23.1%	10.0%	0.0%	12.9%
% with Previous Auto Racing Experience	0.0%	3.8%	3.3%	6.3%	0.0%
% with Other Pro League Experience	10.0%	26.9%	6.7%	15.6%	3.2%

To interpret the table by league, read *down* the column. For example, for MLB:

- 33.3% of MLB senior ticket sales execs in have previous work experience for a different MLB team.
- 0% of senior ticket sales execs in MLB have previously worked for an MLS team.
- 23.3% of MLB senior ticket sales execs have previously worked for an NBA team, etc.

Table 5 indicates the importance of experience in other leagues to MLS ticket sales executives. Twenty-two of twenty-six (84.6%) MLS senior ticket sales executives who had previous experience with another team when they started with the current MLS employer started at the director-level or higher. The data suggests a pattern in the MLS of identifying talented younger sales executives from teams in other professional leagues, then hiring them into MLS teams and into positions of greater responsibility. Combining this with the finding that no MLS ticket sales executives had spent their entire careers with a single MLS team, it appears that leagues outside the MLS have become the de facto source of preparation for senior ticket sales executives within the MLS.

### **The role of previous sales experience**

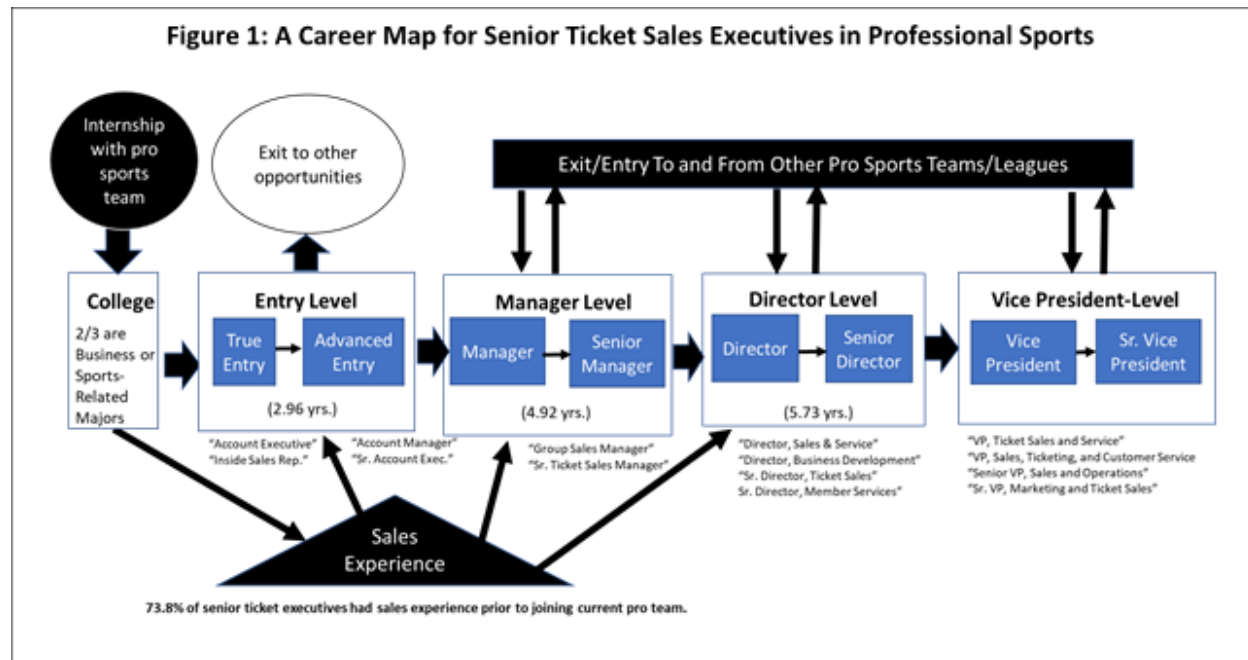
Most senior ticket sales executives (73.6%) have some previous sales experience when they joined their current employer. Sales managers with little to no sales experience are often perceived as being less effective than those with experience and internal to an organization (Gordon et. al, 2012). The type of previous sales experience brought to the job varied – in some cases, it was non-sports related sales experience that occurred immediately after college, while in many cases, the sales experience occurred when the future ticket sales exec was hired by another team for their first job as an account executive.

Having sales experience prior to joining a current employer is strongly related to where someone starts within the organization. 83.1% of individuals with sales experience started with their current employer above an entry level, while only 16.9% of individuals who had previous sales experience and started at an entry level.

### **Career map**

Figure 1 diagrams the variety of career paths of successful ticket executives. The major challenge in diagramming the sequence of positions titles and levels followed by senior ticket sales executives is that no two organizations are the same; therefore, no two paths are the same. At the same time, some generalities do exist across different leagues

and organizations. These are shown in Figure 1.



### DISCUSSION

Two issues identified in the research are the insular nature of the ticket sales field and the lack of gender diversity within current senior ticket sales executives. These issues appear to be related. The data indicates that experience in ticket sales is a strong preference in hiring managerial positions, since only three of 149 (2%) current VPs entered the ticket sales profession at the VP-level. The significance of this observation is that it makes the gender imbalance for ticket sales VPs difficult to overcome. If the generally accepted belief is that someone must have experience in ticket sales to manage personnel in ticket sales, the potential supply of qualified female candidates becomes limited to those already working at the director level.

**Table 6. Male and Female % in Ticketing Roles by Managerial Level, MLB Only**

Managerial Level	Female	Male
Manager (n=166)	35.5%	64.5%
Sr. Manager (n=26)	26.9%	73.1%
Director (n=99)	25.3%	74.7%
Sr. Director (n=25)	8.0%	92.0%
Vice President (n=25)	8.0%	92.0%
Sr. Vice President (n=10)	10.0%	90.0%

As an example, Table 6 shows how the declining percentages of women specifically within MLB ticketing as the level or responsibility rises. The data shows that women generally do not advance in significant numbers beyond the director level. There are twenty-seven females at the directors/senior director level, compared to 97 men. The likelihood of a female at the director/senior director level being promoted to a VP level is very low, where only 8.6% of VPs are female. The lack of gender diversity in ticket sales is a league-level issue, as opposed to a team-level issue. This is due to the high degree of mobility of ticket sales employees from team-to-team and league -to-league – a team focused approach would likely result in a handful of teams investing in the identification and preparation of qualified future female ticket sales executives for other teams.

While there have been increases in participation by women in team sports business positions, much of the improvement has occurred at lower levels (Lapchick, 2016; Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012.) A factor that contributes to lower levels of participation in sports business by females (relative to men) is a cloud of perceived sexism (Fink 2016). One of the effects of perceived sexism has been that it can be difficult to retain qualified women

within professional sports organizations where sexism is perceived (Hindman and Walker, 2018).

While the data indicates that the overall field of ticket sales tends toward being insular and to promote from within, this is particularly true within the MLB, where over half of senior ticket sales executives do not have experience outside of MLB. (nearly three-fourth of executives in other leagues have experience from multiple leagues.) The significance of this finding is unknown. Combining a lack of work experience in other leagues with a limited amount of graduate education, could indicate a lack of exposure to different processes and problem-solving approaches within MLB; however, teams do not exist in vacuums, and there is idea sharing that goes on between ticket executives in similar markets.

## ***LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS***

### **Limitations**

The present research only examined the career paths of individuals who became senior ticket sales executives. It did not examine ticket sales employees who either plateau at a lower level or those who leave the organization. It would be helpful to be able to inform new ticket sales representatives the *typical* amount of time spent in an entry level position before a sales rep either advances to the next level in the organization or leaves the organization. (By focusing on senior ticket sales executives, the present research is a “best case scenario” for new ticket sales reps.) To do this research, it would be necessary to identify all ticket sales representatives from all teams from 2-4 years ago then check their employment status over that period. The results would be complicated by the number of layoffs that have occurred in the industry during the COVID pandemic.

### **Future Directions**

In addition to potentially examining the career progression of all ticket sales representatives (as previously outlined), there are several other potential avenues for research.

- **Identifying early predictors of career success.** Like most sales-driven units, pro sports ticket sales is a performance-driven business where leadership is highly coveted. Individual employees strive to distinguish themselves through their performance and other positive behaviors to position themselves for promotion. Can individuals who are poised for success be identified at lower levels and groomed for advancement?
- **Gender barriers in the ticket sales profession.** For the first time, the present research identifies the low participation rate of women as senior ticket sales executives (8.3%). Table 6 showed how women leave the profession in greater numbers at each higher level. Additional research is needed to identify why this is happening.
- **Gender issues in hiring.** During the pandemic, many teams in the MLB, NHL, and NBA reduced their ticket sales staff. With all of the discussion on more gender and ethnic diversity needed, additional research is needed to see how teams and leagues responded when given the opportunity to rebuild sales staff – did they embrace these areas, or simply rebuild what they previously had? Research is needed to benchmark the number of women and African Americans at the managerial, director and VP level in the five major team sports (Drea 2022).
- **Career path analysis for other VP-level positions.** The present analysis focused on senior ticket sales executives, but could be repeated with other common VP-level positions (stadium operations, IT, HR, Finance, Marketing, etc.)

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# SALESPERSON DISSONANCE: A WORKING DEFINITION

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## **ABSTRACT**

Customers tend to place a great amount of trust in salespeople and the information that they share with them (about a product or service). And while not all salespeople may have outright lied about the product they sell, many will agree that they have exaggerated and even avoided the whole truth at times. Given that it is natural to wonder whether these salespeople experience dissonance caused by a mismatch between their belief (about the product they are tasked to sell) and their actions (having to sell it nonetheless). Surprisingly, there is no working definition nor scale to measure this phenomenon. This paper presents a look at the process of creating an acceptable definition for the construct of Salesperson Dissonance. Ultimately, the goal is to eventually be able to create a scale to measure this construct and to be able to study its relationship to other job-related outcomes (like sales performance, turnover intentions etc.).

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Ask any salesperson and they will gladly share stories of how they had to sell products/services in which they did not believe. They will say they continued selling despite knowing the product was of little or no value to the customer. Did those salespeople experience any negative thoughts/feelings towards their job or their organizations? Were they dissatisfied with what the job they were tasked to do? Did it affect their Job Performance?

Maybe salespeople are not expected to believe in what they sell, they are simply required to sell it to earn their keep. It could even be that salespeople are in fact happy to live in these less than perfect situations – “Happy Losers” content to keep selling things, even in situations in which they do not absolutely believe or from which they do not expect much success (Rapaille, 2006). Whatever the reasons may be, it is safe to say, this disposition causes dissonance in many salespeople. Although there is a great deal of research regarding dissonance, there is a paucity of research about salespeople’s experience, how it differs from other types of dissonance and how it impacts salespeople.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Atuahene-Gima (1997) points out that most often management seems bent on the idea that whatever [a company] decides to make will...be sold by its sales team. Yet, salesperson attitude towards the product(s) they sell is inversely related to salesperson performance (Fu, Richard, Hughes, and Jones, 2010). While it is the responsibility of the sales team to successfully sell the products of the company, not taking into consideration the level of product buy-in from salespeople can have detrimental effect on their success. This working paper suggests this can lead to a state of dissonance in which salespeople’s hold beliefs regarding the ability of their offerings to satisfy their customers’ needs which conflict with the efforts (e.g., promises, overcoming objections, etc.) necessary in order to successfully complete the sale of offerings.

Another study conducted on the pharmaceutical industry showed a relationship between salesperson’s belief in the product and its effects on the customer’s perception about the product and sales (Ahearne, Rapp, Hughes, & Jindal, 2010). The study aimed to see if the salesperson’s own belief in the product would cause in the customer’s mind a better and/or positive perception about the product itself. To put it simply, are customers likely to think positive of a product when and if the salesperson himself/herself does not really believe in it? Although the study does not use the term ‘Cognitive Dissonance’, its emphasis is on the salesperson’s own faith in the product’s value (i.e., how beneficial it will be to the customer).

The central aim of this paper is to establish a working definition that would help define the phenomenon of

Salesperson Dissonance. The goal is to eventually develop a reliable and valid scale to measure this construct. But first the authors are proposing a new construct – Salesperson Dissonance – which may help to identify and define the phenomenon described above. The authors believe this phenomenon may be one of the reasons that leads to several job-related outcomes such as poor engagement, salesperson dissatisfaction and poor sales. Therefore, the research question addressed by this paper is, how to best define the phenomenon of salespersons dissonance. To proceed further, this paper first discusses related literature which was used to craft the definition followed by discussing the exploratory research conducted and used to revise the definition.

Festinger (1957) was the first author to introduce the idea of Cognitive Dissonance. He postulated that if there was a mismatch between two cognitions, the person would feel a sense of psychological and perhaps even physiological discomfort. This discomfort (termed Cognitive Dissonance) would be so uncomfortable that the author believed it would force the person to take actions to reduce it. Such actions could involve changing the beliefs a person holds or changing their behavior so that either the new belief or behavior is now in line with the old beliefs and/or behavior. Festinger (1957) defined *Cognitive Dissonance* as an uncomfortable state that happens when two elements in a person's cognition are inconsistent. He conceptualized dissonance in two ways:

- A sense of psychological discomfort caused because of the non-fitting relationship between cognitions.
- Also, as a bodily (physiological) condition, similar to hunger that acts as a motivation force requiring the person to take some action.

He argued that in a person experiencing such discomfort, Cognitive Dissonance would act as an antecedent motivating (i.e., acting as a motivating force) them towards reducing said discomfort. Festinger believed that dissonance was a part of day-to-day life. Whenever a person is required to form an opinion, decide, or take action, dissonance is likely to arise between the actions taken and the knowledge or opinions that there is a possible different and better action. If we go by what Festinger has proved and accept that dissonance is a day-to-day occurrence, then in fact it can be assumed that salespeople do experience dissonance. The question then is not whether salespeople experience such dissonance but to what degree dissonance exists.

In his study Atuahene-Gima (1997), the concept of sales team's 'adoption' of the new product was said to include two dimensions: commitment (the interaction between the degree to which they accept the product and internalize its goals) and effort (extend to which they work smart and hard to accept these goals). This led us to our working definition of Salesperson Dissonance:

'Salesperson Dissonance was defined as the psychological discomfort a salesperson experiences due to the cognitive discrepancy between what they believe is true of the product/service they sell (its value to the customers) and the effort required to sell the same.'

## **RESEARCH**

To establish this definition, it was important to get feedback from experts. Experts were identified from among individuals who have conducted research in the areas of sales, dissonance, psychology, and organization behavior and been published in well reputed academic journals. Using a judgment sampling design, the goal was to find out if the proposed definition was clear (did it make sense) and whether it was adequate (reflective of the phenomenon of Salesperson Dissonance). This was not meant to be statistically descriptive but merely exploratory in nature. This was done through a Qualtrics survey which asked the respondents to rate the definition. Three 5-point bipolar items were asked with the following anchors: Clear-Unclear, Adequate-Inadequate and Excellent-Poor.

Of the experts contacted, six responded to the first definition. Four out of the seven respondents rated the definition was clear and five out of seven rated it was adequate. As part of the follow-up respondents were asked to comment on how they would improve this definition. The primary concern was the use of the phrase "effort required to sell the same" was confusing and it was not clear what effort was being exerted towards.

Taking this feedback into account, the definition of Salesperson Dissonance was revised to be:

'The psychological discomfort a salesperson experiences due to the cognitive discrepancy between what they believe is true of the product/service they sell (its value to the customers) and the effort required for them to sell that same product/service'. This new definition showed that the effort being referred to be the effort to sell the product/service towards which the salesperson had dissonance.'

Of the experts contacted, six responded to the second definition. Three out of the six respondents rated the definition clear, three out of six rated it adequate, and three out of six rated it excellent. However, this also means, three out of six indicated the definition was not clear, adequate nor excellent. As a follow-up, respondents were asked to comment on how they would improve this definition. There were still concerns from the respondents on the use of the word 'effort' in the definition. And so, in the third iteration of this working definition, the word 'effort' was replaced with the phrase 'the act of selling'. The third definition as proposed was:

'Salesperson Dissonance is defined as the psychological discomfort a salesperson experiences due to the cognitive discrepancy between what they believe is true of the product/service they sell (its value to the customers) and the act of selling that same product/service.'

Of the experts contacted, five responded to the third definition. Two out of the five respondents indicated the definition was clear (of the other respondents, one rated it 'unclear and two others rated it 'neither here nor there'), two out of five indicated it was adequate (of the other respondents, two rated it as inadequate and 1 was neither here nor there), while three out of six rated it was excellent. Even though this is not a survey design, it was disappointing to see our revisions to the definition did not have any positive impact on ratings. Again, as a follow-up question, we asked respondents to comment on how they would improve this definition and similar concerns raised were about 'the act of selling'.

There is consistency from respondents questioning all three versions of the definition extending selling to include its effort. However, the concern we have with completely removing these words is that dissonance is only the psychological-emotional aspect but also includes the additional labor involved in the process of completing a sale.

### ***NEXT STEPS***

The next steps planned for this study include further refining the definition and confirming the same. Once done, the scale items for the measurement of Salesperson Dissonance will be created and sent to experts for their review. The intention is to ultimately create a valid and reliable scale for the measurement of Salesperson Dissonance. While the process of creating and refining a working definition for Salesperson Dissonance has been interesting, it has also been quite challenging. One main challenge is that while those contacted are experts in the areas of personal selling, psychology, organizational behavior and other related fields, their engagement with the theories related to the concept being studied here may be limited.

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# UNDERLYING SEGMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING IN COLLEGIATE BUSINESS CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores underlying heterogeneity among college students who were active in business professional student organizations during the pandemic. The survey results were examined using cluster analysis, Anova and Tamhane T square post hoc tests. The resulting three segment solution was profiled and managerial implications were provided. The internal consistency and discriminant validity of the measures were also assessed using the Fornell Larker criteria. Differences were found across the three segments on all six of the functional motives and satisfaction. There were no differences among groups based on attitudes.

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper examines student motives for joining collegiate professional clubs and organizations as well as attitudes toward the clubs and satisfaction with their experience. Collegiate professional clubs and organizations provide an important cocurricular role in developing culture (Zabel, 2008), professionalism, and networking and provide an opportunity for skill application (Kaltenbaugh, Parsons, 2021; Munoz, Miller, & Poole, 2016). The purpose of this research was to determine if there is underlying heterogeneity to the members of the clubs and organizations or if a more homogeneous group exists. To explore the underlying heterogeneity, K means cluster analysis was utilized. Cluster analysis has been utilized to determine underlying segments in student populations and interest areas for business school recruiting. Examples of this include Heslop & Nadeau (2010) and Dailey (2011) in which underlying segments for MBA student recruiting was explored. Coccari, & Javalgi (1995) and Veloutsou, Lewis, & Paton (2004) utilized cluster analysis for university student targeting and recruiting. Similarly, this paper utilizes this approach to determine if there are underlying segments for student membership in collegiate professional clubs and organizations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Participation Function Index

The paper presents the use of an adaptation of the Volunteer Function Index (VFI) (Clary et al., 1998) to look at the functional motives of college students joining collegiate professional organizations such as a collegiate chapter of the American Marketing Association. The theoretical basis for the VFI comes from attitude function theory (Katz, 1960), which holds that the same cognitive understanding may serve different functions (reasons) for different people. The rewording of the VFI to reflect participating in a professional organization was minimal. The revised instrument is called the PFI – Participation Function Index (Nicholls & Orvis, 2017; Nicholls, 2019). The survey was designed to maintain the original six constructs of VFI with each construct representing different motives. These motives are: *values* expressing values (expectations/goals) related to wanting to help (altruism) and concern for others (humanitarian). The *understanding* dimension represents the clubs and organizations providing learning experiences and the opportunity to exercise knowledge, skills, and abilities and learn about specific causes. The definition of the *enhancement* dimension involves self-esteem and personal strength that helps personal (the ego's) growth and development, while the *social* dimension is defined as an opportunity to make or be with friends or to engage in an activity viewed favorably by important others. The *career* dimension assessed the use of the clubs and organizations as a means to maintain career-relevant skills and to help with or prepare for a new career. Finally, the *protective* dimension is defined as protecting the ego to feel less lonely and may serve to reduce guilt over being more fortunate

than others or to address or escape from personal problems (Clary et al., 1998). This paper extends the authors examination of these functional motives across collegiate educational settings to examine the motives for participating in service learning (Nicholls & Schimmel 2012; Nicholls & Mezera, 2018; Nicholls & Schimmel 2017; Nicholls, 2016; Nicholls, 2015) and participating in student organizations (Nicholls & Orvis, 2017; Nicholls, 2019).

### **Attitude**

It is well established that attitudes are antecedents of behavioral intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Batra, Homer, & Kahle, 2001; Homer & Kahle, 1988; 2005a). Westaby (2005). Briggs et al. (2010) reported, attitudes are shaped and predicted by reasons. This study adapts a general attitude toward charitable organizations scale which was shown to predict future volunteering intentions (Webb et al. 2000). Wang & Ki (2018) showed that attitudes toward professional organizations are a predictor of engagement with those professional organizations. This attitude adaptation has been used in several studies (Nicholls & Schimmel, 2012) and was found to predict participation in student professional organizations.

### **Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is defined as a function of expectation and expectancy disconfirmation (Oliver, 1980; Szymanski & Henard, 2001). Expectations are activated through disconfirmation (i.e., do not happen until after exposure, behavior, or action) (Oliver, 1980), can be active or passive (van Raaij, 1991), and are an outcome of a cognitive (decision making) process (Oliver, 1980). Satisfaction influences not just behaviors but also attitudes directly (Oliver, 1980). Regarding satisfaction, people have context-specific expectations and make decisions “about alternatives with uncertain outcomes, and they have to judge the consequences of their present choices” (van Raaij, 1991, p. 415), which create reasons for or reasons against participation in the behavior. Satisfaction with professional organizations is related to both the interaction with peer members and the organization itself (Fang, Fombelle, & Bolton, 2021). Student satisfaction with experiences has been found to increase the likelihood of future volunteering post-graduation (Nicholls and Schimmel 2012). Dickson, Markova, & Bohn (2010) noted the importance of customer service in professional organizations to maintain satisfaction and increase retention.

### **Professional Organizations**

There is a body of research that explores participation in professional organizations. A common theme among these studies is underlying motivation appears to be functional in nature. For instance, Bennett (1999), examined why people join and stay in business associations and found that the services offered were a key reason to both join and stay a member. Gruen, Summers, & Acito (2000) examined the relationship marketing activities that enhanced commitment to the professional associations. Markova, Ford, Dickson, & Bohn, T. (2013) explicitly looked at the benefits members receive from participation in a large accounting association and found that the quality of the benefits directly assisting members was related to members’ perceived value and continued membership. This finding is supported by Ki & Wang (2016) in a survey of over 13,000 members in 18 professional associations. These researchers found that personal and professional benefits were the reason to renew or recommend membership. The idea that personal and professional gain or enhancement is a consistent finding in the literature (Dekker, & Van den Broek, 2013; Gazley, 2013; Gazley, & Brudney, 2014; Hager, 2014, Wang & Ki, 2018).

Membership in student chapters of professional organizations has also been examined and found to be a benefit in student retention and engagement in majors (Irlbeck, Adams, Akers, Burris, & Jones, 2014). The majority of the research in student professional organizations has revolved around business and health care fields. In the health care area, the presence of student professional organizations has been found to be related to both the recruitment and retention of minority medical and dental students (Rumala, & Cason Jr., 2007 and Brunson, Jackson, Sinkford, & Valachovic, 2010 respectively). Student professional organizations provide opportunities for professional relationship building and idea communication (Roccograndi, Kang, Medlin, Ginsburg, & Martin, 2020). They also provide a bridge from participation at the collegiate level to the professional level of the organizations (McCroskey, & O’Neil, 2010).

Similar themes exist in the role collegiate organizations play in business schools. Professional clubs and organizations provide an important cocurricular role in developing the culture (Zabel, 2008); providing a foundation for developing socially responsible leadership (Legaspi, 2017); professionalism, networking and provide an opportunity for skill application (Blau, Blessley, Kunkle, Schirmer, & Regan, 2017, Kaltenbaugh, Parsons, 2021;

Munoz, Miller, & Poole, 2016). In addition, participation can lead to increased job opportunities and interest in continued participation in the professional organization after graduation (Schafer, Cleaveland, & Schafer, 2020).

### ***METHODOLOGY***

The questionnaire was designed using commercially available survey software (Qualtrics). The survey includes features to improve visual clarity and attractiveness, simplify the layout, and ease of navigation. In addition, a progress bar indicated progress toward completion. All these features reduced the potential for measurement error and increased likelihood of completion (Hair et al., 2010). The survey was technically pretested to ensure it worked as expected on a variety of platforms and there were not any other technical deficiencies. The survey itself was estimated to take 15 to 20 minutes (an upper limit for completing the survey), and on average, took 15 minutes. The survey was broken into sections (screens) and an indicator showed visually how much of the survey was completed. The data were collected in the Qualtrics software and then exported into SPSS

The population under investigation is college students in the College of Business (all majors and/or minors in marketing, management, information systems, healthcare administration, accounting, economics, finance, safety, sport, hospitality, and communication) at a northeastern university already participating in or planning to participate in student chapters of professional clubs/organizations. Although this population is not difficult to reach, at the beginning of a semester there was no way to predetermine who was participating in professional clubs. Therefore, a link to the pre-experience survey was e-mailed to the college's entire student body (910 students). The survey included a question to ensure students were qualified (Hair et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2010), and that the student intended to participate in a professional club during the semester. Only those that were participating in clubs during the spring of 2021 were used for this study. This left 89 responses that were received that were active in clubs during the pandemic. The data was saved as an Excel file and IBM SPSS was used for the analysis. The results of the analysis follow.

### ***RESULTS***

Internal consistency reliability assessed by Cronbach's alpha is used to determine whether measures consistently represent the same construct and should have loadings greater than 0.70 to be retained. However, loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 may be retained on the basis of face, content, or expert validity (Hair et al., 2011). The results, located in Table 1, for this study show all alphas for the constructs to be between .74 and .97 and showed internal consistency reliability.

Also located in Table 1 is the assessment of discriminant validity which evaluates the degree to which the construct is not correlated with measures different from it (Hair et al., 2010) and is distinct from those constructs. To assess discriminant validity, cross-loadings were examined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 1 shows the squared correlation matrix, including average variance extracted (AVE – shown on the diagonal) for each reflective measure. The AVE for each latent construct is greater than each of the latent constructs' highest squared correlation with any other latent variable.

Convergent Validity - Convergent validity assesses the extent to which a construct is positively correlated with the other indicators of the same construct. Convergent validity is evaluated using the AVE. An adequate degree of convergent validity is demonstrated with AVEs of 0.50 or higher (Hair et al., 2011). As Table 1 shows, all the reflective measurements have AVEs greater than 0.80. This is also located in Table 1.

In this study, respondents were grouped utilizing k-means clustering, based on respondents' mean scores on the six participation function index constructs. The three cluster solution converged in 7 iterations and yielded managerially useful segments. Most effective clustering occurred when respondents were separated into three clusters, comprised of 32, 37, and 19 respondents.

The generated clusters were then compared, utilizing Anova and post hoc comparisons to assess mean differences in group responses. Because equal variance across groups cannot be assumed, Tamhane's T Squared analysis was applied and assessed differences in generated groups' mean responses in the satisfaction, attitudes, values, understanding, enhancement, social, protective, and career constructs. Anova results at .01 level, revealed statistically significant difference among groups in the satisfaction, values, understanding, enhancement, social, protective, and career constructs, but not the attitude construct. Across all constructs, segment one has the highest mean responses, followed by segments two and three. These results are located in table two.

**Table 1: Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

	Alpha	attitude	career	enhance	protect	sat	social	unders	values
attitude	<b>0.9486</b>	0.9490							
career	<b>0.8216</b>	0.2755	0.8564						
enhance	<b>0.9053</b>	0.2555	0.6550	0.9174					
protect	<b>0.7671</b>	0.0532	0.5089	0.6094	0.8278				
sat	<b>0.9752</b>	0.3311	0.7006	0.7835	0.6372	0.9332			
social	<b>0.7933</b>	0.2044	0.5328	0.7445	0.6809	0.5924	0.8416		
underst	<b>0.7494</b>	0.3279	0.7787	0.6746	0.6539	0.7560	0.6237	0.8174	
values	<b>0.8598</b>	0.2462	0.7414	0.6035	0.4208	0.5984	0.4202	0.6770	0.8839

Examination of segments’ pairwise mean scores across the constructs revealed the mean scores for the values (17.3750) and understanding (17.3409) constructs. The first and second highest mean score constructs, fell between the “somewhat accurate” and “extremely accurate” range of responses. The values and understanding constructs’ mean scores fell closer to the “extremely accurate” response. The enhancement (16.0795), protection (13.1705), and social (12.9205) constructs, the third, fourth, and, fifth highest mean score constructs, also fell between the “somewhat accurate” and “extremely accurate” range of responses but fall closer to the “somewhat accurate” response. The career construct mean score (11.1818) is the only construct mean score to fall below the “somewhat accurate” response but closer to “somewhat accurate” response than “not at all accurate.”

**Table 2: One-Way ANOVA - Post Hoc – Tamhanes**

Construct	Mean			Post Hoc
	Group One	Group Two	Group Three	
Satisfaction	46.448	38.394	23.235	A, B, C
Attitude	24.207	23.114	22.158	
Values	20.156	17.027	13.368	A, B, C
Understanding	20.375	17.351	12.211	A, B, C
Enhancement	20.5	15.216	10.316	A, B, C
Social	16.25	12.486	8.158	A, B, C
Protection	16.813	13.054	7.263	A, B, C
Career	13.531	10.919	7.737	A, B, C
** Significant at .05 level A = Sig Diff between group one and two B = Sig Diff between group one and three C = Sig Diff between group three and two				

An examination of the means reveals what constructs had the highest scores (were the most important to the respondents) and those with the lowest scores. Satisfaction with the club experience was also important. Attitudes were consistently important across all segments. Of the functional motives, *enhancement* and *understanding* had the highest mean scores, with *values* a close third. Protection then social were the next fourth and fifth of the six functional motives. Career scored the lowest of the functional motives.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The identification of three clusters indicates heterogeneity exists among student members of business school clubs and organizations. Thus, understanding the students motives for participating in these clubs and organizations is important to recruit and retain the members. These organizations supplement the traditional educational experiences



through providing opportunities for application and socialization. Looking the specific motivations, this study found that, based on mean scores, the *enhancement* dimension was the most important it involves self-esteem and personal strength that helps personal (the ego's) growth and development. Programing to address this construct would include generating a uplifting professional environment for the student participants.

The construct of *understanding* was the next most important. The importance of this construct indicates the importance of providing learning experiences and the opportunity to exercise knowledge, skills, and abilities and learn about specific causes. The *values* construct was the third most important based on mean scores. From an advisor perspective developing an environment that expresses values related to career development, professional culture and sharing similar goals would address this construct.

*Protection* was the fourth construct and represents motives that deal with emotional protection (less lonely) and learning about professors and also provides an escape from straight academic endeavors. *Social* and *career* were the fifth and sixth respectively. For *social*, providing opportunities to make connections and develop friendships is important for these student chapters of professional organizations. With *career*, the value placed on a way to maintain career contacts and skill development are important elements.

### CONCLUSIONS

This paper demonstrated that members of student professional clubs and organizations are not homogenous when it comes to their functional motives for participating. The data from this sample revealed that the functional motives of *enhancement* and *understanding* were the two most important functional motives. It is interesting to note that *career* was the least important of the functional motives.

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# MODELING THE SIMULATION: A COMBINED APPROACH TO TEACHING MARKETING ANALYTICS

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## ABSTRACT

Using a marketing simulation to teach data analytics is an established way of engaging college students in data-driven decision making. This study examines the effect of combining a simulation and a supplemental regression project on student learning outcomes. A comparison was made for two groups of students enrolled in an undergraduate Marketing Analytics course (N=68). The control group used the marketing simulation only for the class project (n=32), and the experiment group used the same simulation, along with a supplemental analysis of simulation data using multiple linear regression (n=36). A significant effect was found for two student project learning outcomes, Market Share,  $F(1, 66) = 8.16, p < .001$ , and Share Price Index,  $F(1, 66) = 6.40, p < .05$ . However, no significant effect was found on overall student grades for the course,  $F(1, 66) = 1.53, p = .221$ . Recommendations for using supplemental data analysis projects across other marketing disciplines such as sales, advertising and digital media analytics are discussed.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the 1950's, higher education has sought new methods to bring meaningful experiences into the classroom (vanEsch, vonder heidt, Bentham & Northey, 2020). Today, educators are still challenged with getting students more engaged in course material and more willing to participate in teams to develop the collaboration skills valued by employers. Increasingly, employers are also looking for skills in data analytics and data-driven decision making. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, management analysts are increasing in demand. In 2020, there were 907,600 jobs with a 14% annual growth which is considered faster than average. Due to this growing need for management analysts, the median salary for these positions has risen to \$87,600 per year (Management Analysts, 2020).

Embedding marketing simulations in a course is an established way of engaging college students in data-driven decision making. Simulations not only encourage collaboration, teamwork and the ability to problem solve (vanEsch, et al, 2020), they also serve as a way for students to build their comfort levels in dealing with data visualizations and storytelling. As described by American statistician John Tukey, "The greatest value of a picture is when it forces us to notice what we never expected to see" (Tukey, 1977). However, communicating with data in a compelling, visual way is a skill that takes a lot of practice. The dashboard tools in most marketing simulations allow students to work with data and build appropriate charts and graphs to support their decisions and recommendations as they would "in the real world."

In fact, these simulations typically use data visualizations designed to mimic the experience of using marketing dashboards such as Tableau or Microsoft Power BI in a business environment. Mimic Pro by Stukent, for instance, claims to be the "number one selling digital marketing simulation" by mimicking the Google Analytics dashboard experience for advertising students (Mimic Pro, 2021).

Other simulations have a broader business focus. GoVenture CEO, is a fully online simulation in which students get to work individually or in teams to run a cell phone business. Students are given the opportunity to devise a business strategy in the U.S. and determine if they should sell their products in Canada and Mexico (Goventure CEO Simulation, 2021). This simulation given students insight in how to manage choices in the marketing mix, manage revenue and work with a budget, how to adjust strategies to remain competitive and learn how dynamic the business environment can be.

BrandPRO by StratX, is similar to GoVenture but creates a more advanced marketing analytics experience for students. The simulation provides market data and projects for "Sonite" electronics products in three consumer segments, Savvy, Professional and Trendy, and tasks students to make decisions to grow two products, Moon and

Mojo, in a crowded market environment (StratX Simulations, 2021). Students are faced with strong competition and must decide to improve or value-engineer products, create positioning strategies and determine promotional spending to increase market share and share price index (StratX Simulations, 2021).

### **Teaching the Data Mindset**

Most of these simulations focus on “ease of use” to help students quickly get oriented with the game and start making decisions. Unfortunately, in their zeal to be intuitive and user-friendly they provide data a little too easily for students. For instance, BrandPRO provides demand forecasts with no real explanation of their underlying economic forces and they do not require any predictive modeling to be performed by the student. These simulations are focused on finding the information needed to make decision quickly and with minimal effort, but not focused on helping students apply the fundamentals of statistics. According to a recent review by Phelps and Szabat (2017), less than 20% of business analytics courses include regression modeling and forecasting (p. 159). Clearly, more intention needs to be placed on helping students improve their ability to think with data and develop data-driven habits that lead to a data mindset that will help them throughout their professional careers (Horton & Hardin, 2015).

### **Assessing Student Learning with BrandPRO**

Today’s college students are increasing savvy in their understanding of how simulations are used in the classroom. They quickly focus their attention on learning how the game works, or in other words, “beating the game,” and as a result lose focus on how the simulation can facilitate their learning of data-driven marketing. To overcome this, it is recommended that student grades are not assessed using the metrics of the simulation, such as marketing share or earnings, but by the students’ ability to explain and justify their decisions based on the metrics from the simulation in short progress report papers. By removing the connection between winning the game and the grade, the student focus shifted to using data to drive decisions and to diagnose outcomes. In addition, teams can describe their five-year journey and evaluated their marketing objectives, tactics and results in a 15-minute debrief presentation at the end of the course, including custom data visualizations not provided by the simulation software.

### **BrandPRO Marketing Simulation Outcomes**

*Market share* is one of the key performance indicators used in the BrandPRO simulation to evaluate team decisions for their two brands in three market segments, Savvy, Professional and Trendy. After each one-year decision run of the simulation, teams are given their results. For the experiment group, students conduct additional analysis in Excel to better understand how independent variables in the game such as price, advertising spend, changes to product attributes effected market share using prior year’s data. Each team determines their own variables to be included in their regression models and used the results to help them make their team marketing decisions for the next year.

*Share price index (SPI)* is a performance metric that is based on the overall company’s profitability. Lowering operating costs and value-engineering products are among the decisions made by the teams during the simulation. Each team begins with a 100 SPI, and each year’s decisions either increase or decrease this metric. The experiment group of students also conduct regression to better understand SPI as a dependent variable.

Accordingly, a review of the outcomes used in the BrandPRO marketing simulation leads to the following research questions.

RQ1: Will additional data analysis improve student learning outcomes?

RQ2: Will additional data analysis improve student grades in the course?

### **Modeling the Simulation**

The following comparative study examines whether the addition of a predictive model conducted outside of the marketing simulation, using simulation data will improve the student experience vs. a simulation alone.

Students working in small teams (2-3 students) engaged in a brand simulation in which they managed two brands by using data from a marketing dashboard to make data-driven decisions aimed at achieving pre-determined marketing goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) of the simulation.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

Participants in the sample (N=68) consisted of junior and senior level undergraduate business students, enrolled in a course in Marketing Analytics. Data was gathered from two classes at a Northeast university. The two classes were given identical instructions for an experiential learning class project with one exception. The control group class (n=32) used the marketing simulation only, but the experiment group (n=35) used the simulation and was instructed to complete a supplemental analysis, in which each team extracted data from the simulation to identify relationships between simulation decision variables (product attributes, positioning, price, advertising spending) and outcome variables (market share and share price index) in a multiple linear regression model. This regression model data was used in addition to the simulation data given to improve their team results between decision years four and five.

### Data Preparation

At the conclusion of the simulation, final team performance data for two dependent variables market share and share price index at the end of the five-year decision period were downloaded and a condition variable was created. First, participants from the class that used the BrandPRO simulation were coded as the control group, and participants from the class using the simulation and regression modeling were coded as the experiment group. In addition, participant data was coded with all student names/identifiers removed. Student final grades for the course were added to the database to be examined as a third dependent variable with identifiers removed.

Lastly, the database was cleaned of any participants who did not complete the simulation project or who did not complete the entire course.

## RESULTS

A series of one-way ANOVA tests were conducted using IBM SPSS 28 statistical processing software to compare the effectiveness of the learning experiment on *market share*, *share price index* and student *course grades*. The first ANOVA test examined the effect of the experiment on market share. A significant difference was found,  $F(1, 66)=8.16, p<.001$ , in mean market share for the experiment group ( $M=28.2, n=36$ ) as compared to the control groups ( $M=19.2, n=32$ ).

The next ANOVA test examined the effect of the experiment on share price index. Again, a significant difference was found,  $F(1, 66)=6.40, p<.05$ , in mean share price index ( $M=121.6, n=36$ ) for the experiment group as compared to the control class groups ( $M=92.4, n=32$ ). Therefore, we can conclude that adding the regression analysis to the marketing simulation project did help students learn more about marketing relationships using data, resulting in higher outcomes for both market share and share price index.

Hence, we can answer research question (RQ1), yes, additional analysis did improve student learning outcomes for market share and share price index.

Finally, an ANOVA test was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the learning experiment condition on student course grades. No significant difference was found,  $F(1, 66)=1.53, p=.22$ , on mean grades for the experiment group ( $M=82.8, n=36$ ) as compared to the control group ( $M=80.1, n=32$ ).

Therefore, in response to our second research question (RQ2), the addition of a regression analysis step in the project did not significantly improve student grades.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study were mixed: the addition of a regression model to the marketing simulation project improved student learning but did not significantly improve student grades. This lack of improvement in grades may be explained by the scoring of the presentations and papers or perhaps by the final exam. However, the most important outcome is that student understanding of data analytics and data-driven decision making improved, and perhaps their confidence and data mindset as well.

The findings from this study can be applied to other aspects of teaching the data analytics through experiential learning. Performing their own analysis, as opposed to only relying what is given to you by a simulation or data dashboard, empowers students to take charge of their own research when needed, and to have more confidence using data to make important decisions and recommendations to higher levels of decision-makers.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations occurred during the course of this study. The study used a convenient sample which contained a narrow range of demographics and limited amount of participants. In addition, the participants were enrolled in an elective course that included many different majors and student backgrounds. Some students may have had more experience in using Microsoft Excel than others or have even taken a prior course in data analytics.

Further, only a very basic *Principles of Marketing* course, *Spreadsheet Design* course and *Introduction to Statistics* course were prerequisites for registration, so the project could not use a more complex predictive model than regression. Another more advanced software such as R or SPSS used in most research and predictive modeling courses, could have improved the students' analysis of the data but would have required more training.

### **Implications for Teaching across Disciplines**

The approach used in this study could be applied to teaching many other business subjects and applications of teaching data-driven decision making, such as in sales management or digital media. For instance, digital media classes may use a simulation such as Mimic Pro to engage in search engine marketing and real-time bidding for programmatic advertising, but they could also conduct an A/B test outside of the simulation to gain a further understanding of how campaign tests use statistics to compare the outcomes of ad messages or different creative techniques or placement on different media platforms.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Another area of experiential learning that could benefit from future research is the use of industry competitions embedded into their courses. For instance, RNMKRS is a virtual sales competition in which students practice the main facets of sales; discovery, presentation, handling objections and gaining commitment speaking to a bot. Students are judged by how they interact with the bot. RNMKRS is sponsored by a number of companies which look to hire students into sales careers. Their mission is “to empower people to communicate and influence decisions using interactive technology” (RNMKRS, 2021). This year over 2,300 students from around the U.S. participated (RNMKRS, 2021). Sales tactics and their associated results could be examined from past competitions using data analytics. Different approaches to training students for the competition could be compared using a simple comparative design.

In summary, A/B testing is used throughout marketing analytics as a way to improve outcomes through comparison, but we are often too busy to “practice what we teach.” With a little advanced planning, different types of supplemental research methods could be added to our classes to improve student outcomes as well as our teaching methods.

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# CAN GAMIFICATION MAKE YOU FALL IN LOVE? ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF GAMIFIED INTERACTIONS WITH HEALTH AND FITNESS APPS ON BRAND LOVE

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## **ABSTRACT**

Any brand's ultimate goal is to imprint a sustained positive image in the mind of consumers. This study examines the impact of gamified mechanics incorporated in health and fitness application on brand love and engagement. The study also assesses the sequential mediation of induced positive emotions and brand engagement on gamified interaction and brand love relationship. Data were collected from users of health and fitness apps through a self-administered questionnaire and analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling technique. Findings suggest a significant positive impact of gamification on brand love, both with and without sequential mediation.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

As a concept that got popularized by the end of the last decade with its first documentation in literature, gamification came in the form of "Funware" (Deterding et al., 2011). In little over a decade since its formalized inception, the literature on usage of gamification in various online and offline contexts has exploded with effective implementation in domains such as business (e.g., Herzig et al., 2015), education (e.g., Borges et al., 2014), environmental sustainability (e.g., Froehlich, 2015). Practitioners' adoption of gamification mechanics is even higher, focusing on desired behavior initiation and retention (Fankhauser, 2013). Contrary to challenging games focusing on providing a pure gaming experience with rules and game engines, gamification tries to create experiences comparable to a game by combining game experience design and game mechanics. In the practitioner world, gamification is extensively used in marketing communication by industry leaders like google, amazon, and Nike to make engagement with customers more interactive (Reed, n.d.). Gamification has become a vital component of health-related interventions over the past decade. It is evident that in the case of health initiatives at workplaces, more than 60% included gamified mechanics (Ferguson, 2012; Ferrara, 2013). Companies have also readily accepted gamification as a means for induction and retention of desired behaviors (Fankhauser, 2013).

This paper aims to determine the impact of usage of health and fitness apps on brand love while checking the impact of emotions induced due to usage of the app and brand engagement on this relationship. To address this objective, we are trying to answer the following questions through this study:

RQ1 – Does the inclusion of gamified mechanics in health and fitness apps impact customers' brand love?

RQ2 – What is the impact of positive emotions induced due to usage of health and fitness apps on consumer brand engagement?

RQ3 – Does positive emotions generated due to gamified interactions leading to more engagement impact consumer brand love?

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

### ***Gamification***

Gamification can be defined as "the use of game design elements in non-game contexts," i.e., using game mechanics in aspects that are not just for entertainment (Deterding et al., 2011). Subsequently, Huotari and Hamari (2012) defined gamification in the context of value created by the process as "a process of enhancing a service with affordances for gameful experiences in order to support user's overall value creation" (Huotari & Hamari, 2012). The concept of gamification has been successfully implemented and tested by academia and the practitioner world. Academia prominently implemented this in education (Khan Academy, 2006), marketing (Zichermann & Linder,

2010). and consumer products (Deterding, 2012). Usage of gamified mobile apps by both the practitioner world and academia for influencing consumers' behaviors has become a highly favored strategy (Deterding, Sicart, et al., 2011; King et al., 2013). Additionally, gamified systems can also persuade consumers to be a part of value co-creation (Kuo & Chuang, 2016).

### ***Gamification in health and wellness***

A worldwide increase in health and wellness challenges like tobacco, diabetes, physical stagnation, and obesity has led to an increased focus on wellbeing, and the inclusion of gamified mechanics in communication can help deal with these challenges. Since its emergence, researchers worldwide have pointed out the implementation of gamified mechanics in health as a promising new approach (e.g., King et al., 2013; Pereira et al., 2014). Large multi-national companies like Nike, Google, and Xiaomi and small health and fitness app developers for increasing engagement with consumers widely use gamified mechanics. Conceptually, gamification in health is an amalgamation of serious games, personal informatics, and persuasive technology (Cugelman, 2013; Munson et al., 2015). Gamification has also been used extensively in physical fitness interventions and for encouragement towards healthy behaviors (Johnson et al., 2016). Similarly, recent research in the health sector has expanded on video game properties like fantasy, narrative, and interactivity and found that these properties can lead to higher compatibility with internally induced motivation (Lister et al., 2014).

## ***HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT***

### ***Gamification-brand love***

Brand love is a relatively new construct that garnered significant scholarly attention recent past. It helps in determining and influencing the post-consumption behaviors of consumers (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) defined this love for a brand as "the degree of passionate, emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name". Hsu and Chen (2018a) found a positive relationship between gamification marketing activities and brand love in the customers. Therefore, we conceptualize that gamified interactions between customers and branded health and fitness apps will induce brand love in customers.

**H1: Gamification leads to brand love.**

### ***Gamification-positive emotions***

"Emotions are a subset of the broader class of affective phenomena" (Fredrickson, 2001), and 'affect' includes moods and feelings as well in addition to emotions. There are two basic categories of emotions- positive and negative emotions, and these are further categorized into primary and secondary emotions (Oliver, 1994). Bagozzi et al. (1999) state that emotions are a critical antecedent in determining the customers' behavior. In their paper, Carlson and Wang (2007) reinforced this argument and stated human emotions as the most reliable predictors of human behavior. When it comes to valance of these emotions, broaden and build the theory of positive emotions states that positive emotions help in broadening the mind at the time of interaction which enables better recall (Fredrickson, 2001) which is not the case with negative emotions that have little or no effect (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Research has also established a positive relationship between gamification and generation of positive emotion in online shopping consumers (Chrisnathaniel et al., 2021). Therefore, we postulate that gamified interactions will help in generating positive emotions in the individuals.

**H2: Gamification leads to the induction of positive emotions.**

### ***Positive emotions-engagement***

Consumers' engagement with the brand results from their behavioral, cognitive, and emotional investment (Hollebeck, 2011). He also identified emotions as one of the three dimensions of consumer engagement along with passion and involvement. Staudinger (2008) postulated that positive emotions alter people's motivation, problem-solving skills, and attitude. Due to the induction of positive emotions, customers tend to make favorable judgments, and their feedback will also be positive (SHAHMANDI, 2008). Furthermore, positive emotions are found to be a strong predictor of favorable engagement in various contexts such as in school (Reschly et al., 2008) and workplace (Schaufeli & Van Rhenen, 2006). In terms of gamified services, game mechanics usage can lead to various psychological outcomes such as enjoyment, motivation, and engagement (Cheong et al., 2013; Hamari et al., 2014).

Thus, we can propose that positive emotions developed due to gamified apps' usage will lead to better engagement of customers.

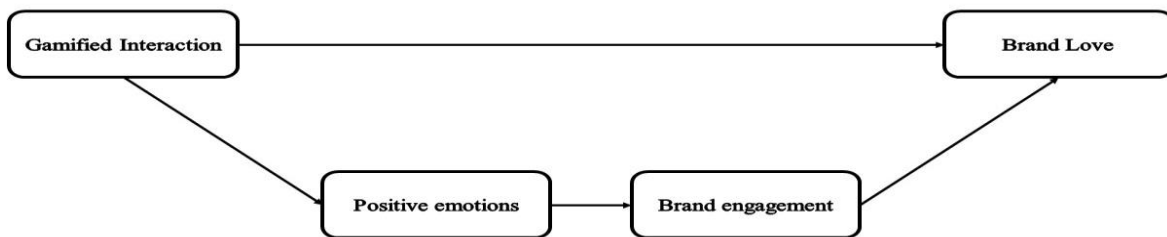
**H3: Positive emotions lead to brand engagement.**

***Brand love and brand engagement***

Brand love is "cognitions, emotions, and behaviors, which consumers organize in a mental prototype" (Batra et al., 2012). They also state that a feeling of love towards a brand includes a "passion component," i.e., a passionate attraction for a brand. Thus, brand love is "the degree of passionate, emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name" (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). The paper also established brand engagement's significance in development of love towards the brand. The existence of love for a brand requires a strong connection in emotional bonds and intrinsic rewards (Huber et al., 2015; Kaufmann et al., 2016). Also, if the brand's interaction is high, it will lead to brand love (Batra et al., 2012). Similarly, sports advertising elevates consumers' tendency to engage with the brand (Ioakimidis, 2010) which leads to increase in love towards that brand (Baena, 2014). Furthermore, research has also found that engagement is a significant predictor of brand love in drug industry as well (Pinto et al., 2016). Thus, a direct and positive relationship between brand engagement and a feeling of love for the brand should exist.

**H4: Brand engagement is positively related to brand love.**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



**METHODOLOGY**

***Data Collection and sample size***

We adopted a survey method for this study's research needs, and based on a convenience sampling technique, we delivered the questionnaires developed to students at a top-tier b-school and gym members in a metropolitan area. The research instrument was sent out to 667 individuals, and we got 392 responses from both offline and online channels. Out of these responses, we removed 161 responses as they were not fitness app users. Out of the remaining respondents, we removed the responders who were not attentive while answering the questionnaire. We identified these responders using two negatively coded questions in the questionnaire, and finally, 213 responses were selected for the statistical analysis. Structured equation modeling is used to test the research hypotheses using Smart PLS software. Respondents were informed about the study's purpose and academic nature, and we assured them of confidentiality regarding their identity.

***Measurements***

We have adopted validated scales of the extant literature in the context of health and fitness apps to measure all the constructs. We measured positive emotions with four items adapted from I-PANAS-SF's positive effect dimension (Thompson, 2007). Carroll and Ahuvia's (2006) brand love scale was used to measure the construct in the fitness app's context. It is one of the seminal works done on the construct of brand love. The brand engagement was measured

using three items developed from a widely accepted scale (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Finally, gamification was measured by adapting Wakefield et al.'s (2011) scale and Rodrigues et al.'s (2016) adaptation of this scale in gamification.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Hypotheses testing using PLS path modeling and inner model evaluation***

We employed path coefficients and associated p-values to analyze the statistical significance of relationships between items. After that, bootstrapping was done with ten thousand cycles to get t-statistics for the paths. Table 1 shows the path coefficients of latent variables, t-statistics, and respective p-values. The results indicate that gamification ( $\beta = 0.295$ ;  $t = 4.676$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) has significant and positive effect on brand love of customer. Therefore, H1 is supported. It was also found that gamification ( $\beta = 0.482$ ;  $t = 7.751$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) significantly and positively impact positive emotions thus supporting H3. Impact of positive emotions ( $\beta = 0.446$ ;  $t = 7.172$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) on engagement is also found to be positive and significant thus H4 is supported. Subsequently, impact of engagement on brand love is found to be statistically significant and positive ( $\beta = 0.559$ ;  $t = 10.645$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). Sequential mediation analysis helped us to identify any indirect effect of gamification on brand love. The analysis shows that emotions and engagement together are statistically significant mediators of gamification and brand love relationship ( $\beta = 0.120$ ).

**Table 1. Results of hypothesis testing.**

Effect	Path coefficient (Beta)	STDEV	t-values	p-values
Gamification $\square$ Positive emotions	0.482	0.062	7.751	0.000
Gamification $\square$ Brand Love	0.295	0.063	4.676	0.000
Positive emotions $\square$ Brand Engagement	0.446	0.062	7.172	0.000
Brand Engagement $\square$ Brand Love	0.559	0.052	10.645	0.000

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Health and fitness apps play a vital role in today's market, both from individuals' and associated brands' viewpoints. An individual can take advantage of these apps in goal setting and for fitness evaluation regularly. Meanwhile, a brand can use such apps to increase consumer's focus towards the brand. We develop a research framework to examine the impact of gamified applications in the health and fitness domain on both emotional states achieved and behavioral outcomes in terms of the emotion of love and purchase intention; by taking a sample of health and fitness app users. The research results show that gamified interactions can lead to the generation of positive emotions in an individual. It is consistent with the MDE (Mechanics, Dynamics, and emotions) framework that considers positive emotion as a core component of the gamified experience. This model also postulated that emotions developed are of relatively greater importance in a gamified setting than the mechanics and dynamics of the game (Robson et al., 2015). The positive emotions due to gamified interactions fulfill individuals' engagement goal(s). Teixeira et al. (2012) found a positive relationship between the generation of specific positive emotions and individuals' engagement. It is consistent with the study's findings that positive emotions have a significant and positive impact on gamified app users' engagement behavior. The app highlights the fitness improvements in an individual over a period and compares them with other individuals. Other gamified systems, such as badges, scorecards, and rewards, make people spend more time with the system (Hamari, 2017). Consistent with prior research (e.g., Palazon et al., 2019; Verma, 2021), the study found a positive and significant relationship between engagement with the gamified brand and feeling of love likeness towards that brand. Loureiro et al. (2017) also identified brand love as one of the outcomes of online brand engagement. Thus, it is evident that consumers' frequent desire to engage with a

brand's gamified system can lead to likeness or love towards the brand. Gamification's impact on the feeling of love towards the brand is also positive and significant. The finding is consistent with existing literature; for example, Hsu and Chen (2018b) identified a positive impact of the gamified system on brand love in consumers due to the creation of value for those customers by the system. Similarly, sequential mediation analysis where positive emotions and brand engagement acted as mediators between gamification and brand love found that indirect effects through these mediators were significant in this relationship. These findings are novel, and we cannot find support in existing literature for this sequential relationship between gamification and brand love with emotions and brand engagement acting as serial mediators.

This study aimed to identify the impact of gamification on psychological and behavioral outcomes of experiencing gamified mechanics in health and fitness apps. Results show the significant positive impact of gamified systems' usage on engagement and brand love. The study also highlighted the importance of positive emotions and resulting brand engagement in defining the relationship between gamification and psychological outcomes. This study outlined the need to include gamified mechanics for sustainable brand building and strongly emphasize the concept of using branded health and fitness apps as a tool for the same.

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# THE ROLE OF THE BYSTANDER IN E-COMPLAINT BEHAVIOR

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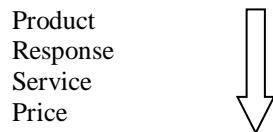
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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A customer's e-complaint provides digital evidence of dissatisfaction with the services or products offered by a business. Recently, online social networks have taken e-complaints to another level. This is because a social media complaint is often followed by affirmation or validation from other people who feel similar dissatisfaction (Ward & Ostrom, 2006). Scholars argue that social media complaints are increasing and becoming customers' preferred vehicle to express their dissatisfaction. Some explanations of this phenomenon are that social media complaints offer customers a more efficient means of expressing dissatisfaction, dealing with businesses' products or services, and checking businesses' responses any time and in any place (Gregoire et al., 2015). In addition, the instant access to businesses provided by social media enables customers to express their complaints without the fear of having direct confrontation with sellers and forces businesses to respond to customer complaints quickly, positively and anonymously (Bamford & Freeman, 2004). Further, social media complaints allow online social network members to give their support to complainers by commenting on original comments.

Although customers complain about any aspect of their online purchasing experiences, a customer complaint usually relates to online product, response, service, and price. Online product failures refer to core product related failures (Tang, 2014). This includes slow connection, problems with sending and receiving messages, unsatisfactory website content and technology, and lack of connection coverage (Nasir, 2014). Online response failures refer to businesses' inability to deal with customers' issues or to provide an appropriate response in a timely manner (Nasir, 2004). Online service-related failures refer to interaction failures or communication breakdowns between customers and businesses – for example, business employees' insufficient product knowledge (Alvaro, 2012) and their ineffectiveness and attitude toward customer inquiries in terms of politeness, responsiveness, flexibility, and empathy (Dabin et al., 2007), return/exchange policy, promotion, and advertising, and finally, company and privacy issues (Nasir, 2004). Online price is the amount of money that customers agree to pay for their internet connection service (Martin & Swan, 2004). In Nasir's (2014) study, the author explains that product related issues, timing or response related issues, service-related issues, and price related issues contribute to 38%, 27%, 22% and 4% complaints respectively. Based on the above arguments, we hypothesize that:

H1: The degree of customer complaints varies from highest to lowest according to the following type of complaints:



In this study, a bystander refers to an online member who is present or follows other people's complaints on an online social network. Participation role theory suggests that the cost of complaining may be affected by the presence of online bystanders (Kirk et al., 2018). The presence of bystanders may reduce the cost of complaining through providing psychological and physical support and comfort to the complainant (Fischer et al., 2011). McGuinness et al. (2019) suggest that the involvement of the bystander may also generate more complex issues that are difficult to solve. The authors explain that bystanders' involvement may destabilize and exaggerate the issues which in turn accelerates the intensity or severity of the complaint behavior. Based on the arguments, we hypothesize:

H2: The more involvement of the bystander, the more complex the complaint to be resolved.

From 347 usable comments, the online product-related e-complaints constituted over 60% in the sample. Within



this category, connection problems were found to be the most problematic (67.59%). Customers buy their internet service with expectations of good connectivity. Failure to receive a good internet connection reflects poor performance and generates psychological and emotional distress (Donoghue et al., 2008), which in turn leads to customer dissatisfaction and complaints (Reddy & Gopal, 2018). Online response related failures were the second main issue (18%) in our study. Response related failures are associated with waiting time. For customers, having to wait can be upsetting and highly irritating. Waiting time increases customers' cost and reduces their reward. The imbalance in cost and reward creates disappointment and dissatisfaction, and therefore generates the tendency to complain. Online service-related failures were found to be as important as response-related failure as both factors received nearly 15% of e-complaints. This included staff attitude, lack of knowledge and lack of communication. Online price-related failures were found to be the least problematic across all complaint categories, other than complaints related to billing. Incorrect charges were found to be the most common problem. Failure to provide accurate billing statements results in a customer perception that businesses have dishonored the agreed price and been fraudulent and misleading, resulting in customer e-complaints (Estelami, 2003).

Our study found that bystanders intervened in 77.74% of existing complaints. These results clearly demonstrate that bystanders' intervention complicates the original complaint and can make a complaint more difficult to solve. According to the theory of the bystander, one of the functions of bystander intervention is to help others (Nelson & Dunn, 2011). It can be assumed that by intervening in other members' e-complaints within an online social network, bystanders are attempting to highlight the importance of the problems as well as to ensure that complainers get the best solution possible.

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# ESPORT: STUDENT MARKETING AND STREAMING EXPERIENCES

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Esports have developed into a multi-billion-dollar industry with professional leagues, franchises, teams and players (Hedlund et al., 2021), as well as growth at the collegiate level. Esports are “video gaming competitions between individuals or teams which take place in person and/or in an interactive online environment” (Darvin, et al., 2020). A central practice related to the esports industry is streaming (Ruotsalainen & Friman, 2018). There are various live-streaming platforms with Twitch being the most popular, where streamers broadcast themselves playing video games and other activities, in real time, to an audience (Bruce, et al., 2018). Streaming provides real-time interaction between the streamer and their viewers, where they can watch, listen, interact, and respond to the streamer (Bruce et al., 2018). With the popularity and growth of esports among college aged students, universities offer scholarships for players (Banyai, et al., 2020) and have begun offering esports curriculum. The purpose of this study was to explore the lessons learned from students’ experiences marketing and streaming their esports content.

Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory (ELT) was utilized in the current study. Kolb’s theory is based on a holistic model of learning that is achieved from a student’s experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). Kolb’s model for ELT contains a four-step activity model. The ELT model has two connected forms of grasping experience – Concrete Experience and Abstract Conceptualization, and two connected forms of transforming experience – Reflective Observation and Active Experimentation (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). First, students attain information from their personal lived experiences (i.e. Concrete Experience). Second, students need to reflect on those experiences through a form of reflective exercise (i.e. Reflective Observation). Third, students can modify their model of thinking resulting from their new observations through their personal experiences, that is, students can learn from their experience (i.e. Abstract Conceptualization). Fourth, students can then change their conduct by applying their recently formed philosophies by experimenting (i.e. Active Experimentation). The method of measuring these four aspects of the ELT model was through reflection journals.

Students were required to stream 30 minutes of gaming/esport content and then reflect on their experience. A total of 18 students participated in the study, submitting four reflection journals during a 16-week semester. A total of 72 journals were analyzed. The journals were analyzed using an inductive analysis approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), given the qualitative nature of the data to allow for detailed reading of the raw data to develop concepts and themes through interpretations made by the researchers.

Dominant concepts and themes that emerged from the analysis were: social media marketing; critical thinking and problem solving/troubleshooting; self-awareness; gaining esport industry experience; and fun/enjoyment/entertainment. Selected quotes will be provided at the presentation.

The results suggest that by providing meaningful assignments that are experiential based, students will be more engaged supporting previous research that the experiential component of esport “may particularly appeal to the current and next generation of college students” (Funk et al, 2018, p. 11). Results corroborate Kolb’s ELT model (Kolb & Kolb, 2009) as students were able to connect course concepts, apply them before, during their streams, and within their reflection. Specifically, students attained information from their lived experience (i.e., live streaming); reflected on their experiences through their journals; students modified their model of thinking with regards to streaming (i.e., set up, troubleshooting, gaining viewers); and, continued to try new strategies, marketing, and tactics from their first journal entry to their last. Thus, all four steps of the ELT model were achieved through the reflective journals. Specific quotes, recommendations, and implications will be presented.

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# MEASURES OF CONTENT DISCONTINUITY IN ORDERING MULTIPLE-CHOICE EXAM QUESTIONS

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## *EXTENDED ABSTRACT*

Instructors may wish to administer multiple-choice examinations where the questions do not appear in the same order for all students. One objective in doing so is to discourage students copying answers from students seated nearby. To this end, software accompanying many published banks of multiple-choice questions provides for the random ordering of questions. Against this, orderings of questions inconsistent with their order in the published question bank (which generally follows the text content) may be disrupting to students. Accordingly, the different orderings may serve to (dis)advantage students taking an exam with one ordering of the questions over students taking an exam having a different ordering of the same questions. The present study introduces two measures of order discontinuity vis-a-vis the textbook order.

Virtually all introductory-level marketing (and business generally) textbooks are accompanied by multiple-choice test question banks. An important consideration in composing multiple-choice exams is the order in which questions appear on the exam. The ordering of questions has been the focus of considerable research. Most prominently studied has been the effect of ordering on exam performance (e.g., Kagundu & Ross 2015; Kleinke 1980; Marso 1970, Monk & Stallings 1970; Pettijohn & Sacco 2007; Sue 2009, Vander Schee 2009). Protocols for ordering questions include progressing from easy to difficult (Kleinke 1980, Tinkelman 1971, p. 77) and randomization (McLeod, Zhang, & Yu 2003). Another protocol—relevant to the present study—is based on question content. Specifically grouping together questions addressing a common topic, i.e., content continuity. (Dickinson 2018b; Balch 1989)

The present research describes two straightforward measures of content discontinuity. Instructors might employ the measures when planning question orderings. Where different orderings are to be used for a given exam administration, there should be interest in making the different orderings of comparable continuity so that examinees are not differentially (dis)advantaged due to any content discontinuity effect. Similarly, instructors might wish to maintain comparable content continuity across exams within a given semester or exams across semesters.

The type of order-related effect addressed in the present research focuses on the continuity of the subject matter or topic across the sequence of questions. The basic ordering is where the item content follows the same sequence in which that content was covered in the course. This condition is variously referred to as “content order” (Sue 2009), “forward order” Vander Schee (2009) or “forwardly ordered” (Geiger & Simons 1994), “sequential” (Balch 1989; Pettijohn and Sacco 2007), “chronological (Tinkelman 1971, p. 77), “regular order” (Canlar and Jackson 1991), and “topical sequencing” (Baldwin, Pattison, & Toolson 1989, p. 85).

Toward the purpose of the present study, none of the research cited above reports an empirical measure of content (dis)continuity. Following are described two straightforward measures of content discontinuity. The measures are particularly applicable—but are not limited to—where questions are drawn from published banks of multiple-choice questions.

Textbooks, of course, are invariably divided into chapters, the respective chapters addressing somewhat different topics. The sequencing of chapters may have some conceptual logic, with the content of one chapter on some basis segueing into the next. Similarly, the sequence of the content within a given chapter may have a coherent basis. On both bases—chapter to chapter and within chapter—the presentation of questions in the accompanying multiple-choice question bank usually follows suit. Here, that published order is taken to be the continuity basis, i.e., the “sequential” ordering, against which a different ordering, i.e., a discontinuity ordering, is compared

Consider multiple-choice questions appearing in published ordinal positions 1,2,3,4,5,6 for a given chapter, i.e., the sequential order column in Table 1. There are 720 (=7!) possible orderings of the six questions. One of those is presented as “ordering one” in Table 1. The question in the fifth position in the question bank appears as the first

question on the exam.

One measure of the discontinuity of ordering one is that 5 appears before 1 and 2 and 3 and 4; a total of 4 reversals from the original sequence. Question 4 in the sequential order appears before 2 and 3 and 1 and after 5; also a total of 4 reversals. Across the six questions there is a total of 18 reversals which is the **reversals** measure of discontinuity. That question 5 in the sequential order appears first in ordering one is a move of 4 positions. Question 4 in the sequential order is moved 2 positions to its position as the second question in order one. In ordering one the six questions are moved a total of 12 positions which is the **displacements** measure of discontinuity. (The fourth column in Table 1.) To capture both properties of ordering one, the two measures may be added to yield a **summed** measure of discontinuity equal to 30. The three measures are highly, but not perfectly, correlated: reversals~displacements (0.925), reversals~summed (0.988), and displacements~summed (0.973)

<b>Table 1: Example of Reversals and Displacements Measures of Discontinuity</b>			
<b>Sequential Order</b>	<b>Ordering One</b>	<b>Reversals</b>	<b>Displacements</b>
1	5	4	4
2	4	4	2
3	2	3	1
4	3	2	1
5	1	4	4
6	6	0	0
	Total	18	12

As points of reference, across all 720 possible orderings of six questions, the mean reversals, displacements and summed are 15.0, 11.67, and 26.67, respectively. Standard deviations are 5.32, 3.51, and 8.67, respectively. Maxima are 30, 18, and 48 which occur when the sequential order is completely reversed.

Content discontinuity is an artifact that may arbitrarily affect students' exam scores. The measures of content discontinuity presented here might be employed, by instructors and researchers, to mitigate that arbitrary effect. Too, programmers of software that generate random orderings of questions might report the measures as an informative complement to the orderings produced.

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# THE EFFECT OF EXTREME EXAMINEE GROUP BOUNDARIES ON THE POINT-BISERIAL MEASURE OF ITEM DISCRIMINATION

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## *EXTENDED ABSTRACT*

Item analysis is the practice of evaluating questions, i.e., items, toward selecting the best questions for inclusion on exams or refining questions toward that end. Given the ubiquity of published banks of multiple-choice questions that accompany virtually all introductory level marketing (and business generally) textbooks, often over several editions, few item analyses of such banks have been published.

Item discrimination is one of two cornerstone criteria for evaluation, the other being item difficulty. A common measure of item discrimination is the point-biserial correlation. Commonly, calculation of the point-biserial correlation is not based on all examinees. Rather, subgroups of high-performing and low-performing examinees are the basis. However, there exists no consensus as to the size of those extreme groups. The present research compares three boundaries that have been suggested in the literature, specifically the effect of the boundaries on the point-biserial correlation.

Published operational definitions of “extreme” include the upper and lower 27 percent of examinees (Kelley 1939; Johnson 1951), based on total exam score excluding the focal question, the upper and lower 25 percent (Gregory 2011, p. 144; Nunnally 1978, p. 280), and the top and bottom halves (Reynolds & Livingston 2022, p. 226. Contrary to Allen & Yen’s (1979, p. 122) assurance that, “for most applications, any percentage between 25 and 33 will yield similar estimates.” (Cohen & Swerdlik 2010, p. 258) the present research finds materially different estimates.

There is, then, no consensus regarding the most effective extreme student group boundaries. The present study estimates the degree of difference in point-biserial correlation values depending on the boundaries defining the upper and lower groups of examinees. Specifically quantified are the effects of using the upper and lower 27 percent, of students, the upper and lower 33.33 percent of students, and all students.

Samples of questions were drawn from published banks accompanying eight texts. The texts, the total number of multiple-choice questions in the respective banks, and the number of questions sampled from each question bank are reported in Table 1. For each examination, specific multiple-choice questions were selected on a systematic sampling basis. All questions analyzed had five options: the correct answer plus four distractors.

Providing data for the present analyses were undergraduate courses typically taken in the third year of a student’s university program, the courses having as prerequisites two semester-long principles of marketing courses. For each class the first midterm exam covered about the first third of the chapters, the second midterm exam covered about the middle third of the chapters, and the noncumulative final exam covered about the last third of the chapters. Each of the exams counted for 20 percent of the students’ final course grade. Exams were scored as the percent of questions answered correctly; no penalty was deducted for incorrect answers. Questions not answered were deemed incorrect for calculating exam scores and for the present research.

Mean point-biserial correlations for each of the three extreme group boundary conditions are presented in Table 2. To the point of the present study, for all eight question banks, the point-biserial correlations based on the upper and lower 27 percent of students are greater than those based on the upper and lower 33.3 percent of students and based on all students. Kelley’s (1939) prescription is roundly supported.



**TABLE 1  
BANK AND SAMPLE QUESTION COUNTS**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Total Questions</b>	<b>Sample Questions (percent of total)</b>
Levy, Weitz, & Grewal (2019, LWG), <i>Retailing management</i> , Tenth Edition	1157	479 (41.4)
Cateora, Gilly, Graham, & Money (2016, Cateora), <i>International marketing</i> , Seventeenth Edition	1170	425 (36.1)
Levy, Weitz, & Grewal (2014, LWG), <i>Retailing management</i> , Ninth Edition	1210	458 (37.9)
Levy & Weitz (2012, LW), <i>Retailing management</i> , Eighth Edition	1190	624 (52.4)
Solomon, Zaichkowsky, & Polegato (2011, SZP), <i>Consumer behaviour</i> , Fifth Canadian Edition	1148	671 (58.4)
Levy & Weitz (2009, LW), <i>Retailing management</i> , Seventh Edition	1332	736 (55.3)
Solomon, Zaichkowsky, & Polegato (2008, SZP), <i>Consumer behaviour</i> , Fourth Canadian Edition	1019	674 (66.1)
Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, & Best (2007, HMB), <i>Consumer behavior</i> , Tenth Edition	1624	958 (59.0)

**TABLE 2  
MEAN POINT-BISERIAL CORRELATIONS  
EXTREME STUDENT GROUP BOUNDARY**

<b>TEXT</b>	<b>Upper and Lower 27%</b>	<b>Upper and Lower 33.3%</b>	<b>All Students</b>
LWG (2019) 10 <sup>TH</sup>	0.3936	0.3764	0.3169
Caterora (2016)	0.4352	0.4122	0.3462
LWG (2014), 9 <sup>th</sup>	0.3507	0.3338	0.2903
LW (2012), 8 <sup>th</sup>	0.2296	0.2126	0.1727
SZP (2011), 5 <sup>th</sup>	0.2754	0.2464	0.1995
LW (2009), 7 <sup>th</sup>	0.2487	0.2257	0.1900
SZP (2008), 4 <sup>th</sup>	0.2464	0.2242	0.1879
HMB (2007), 10 <sup>th</sup>	0.2739	0.2493	0.2087

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# **USING TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED TEAM GUIDANCE WITH SENIOR MARKETING AND INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS STUDENTS**

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## ***EXTENDED ABSTRACT***

The global pandemic forced faculty to quickly transition to online learning. The Virtual Team Support System was designed to address the social isolation caused by the resultant geographic distance among students. The initiative, based on social integration theory and first-year experience programming, connects teams of marketing majors in an online senior capstone course with teams of students in an online first-year introduction to business administration course. The seniors serve as peer mentors who provide guidance in the context of an academic assignment, and engage in discussions such as time management, study skills, and group dynamics as a support to virtual learning. The VTSS survey results indicate both intro and senior students found the VTSS to be effective and recommend it for future use. Senior students also improved career competencies and expressed personal growth and satisfaction. The VTSS is readily adaptable to other virtual courses with first year and senior courses.

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# BOUTIQUE CUSTOMER LOYALTY: AN ASSESSMENT OF STORE AND SERVICE SATISFACTION

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Customer loyalty is important to all businesses, but especially important to boutique retailers. The proposed study will assess store and service customer satisfaction and its impact attitudinal and behavioral customer loyalty in the boutique retailer business segment. This study is an extension of Powers, Jack, and Choi's (2019) research conducted on discount retailer shoppers from Target and Wal-Mart. The information gathered will help local boutique retailers better understand the effect of satisfaction on loyalty as it is an essential concern for managers and has a direct impact on profitability.

Small businesses are important to the U.S. economy. The United States Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy reports that small businesses create two-thirds of net new jobs and account for 44 percent of U.S. economic activity. Customer loyalty is important to all businesses, but especially important to boutique retailers. A boutique is actually a specialized type of retail store. Boutiques sell limited types of products and operate in small spaces, so they must be more selective when ordering inventory. The effort of gaining new customers is expensive and time-consuming whereas focusing on loyal customers may be a difficult objective, it can decrease costs and increase profitability (Homburg, Muller, & Klarmann, 2011). Customer loyalty is essential to a firm's long-term profitability (Xhema, Metin, & Groumpos, 2018). This research will assess two dimensions of customer satisfaction including store and service satisfaction and its impact on two dimensions of customer loyalty including attitudinal and behavioral loyalty in the boutique business segment.

Satisfaction represents a judgment level of product or service consumption related fulfillment (Oliver, 1997). Store satisfaction is related to the quality of retail merchandise or the store itself (Menon & Chowdhury, 1995; Walsh, Evanschitzky, & Wunderlich, 2008). Service satisfaction represents the customer's experience with the store personnel and the customer service experience (Dabholkar, Thorpe, & Rentz, 1996). Loyalty represents the customer's intent to recommend the business or support the business through patronage (Fornell, 1992; Lam, Shankar, Erramilli & Murthy, 1992; Yuen & Chan, 2010). Attitudinal loyalty reflects the positive opinion that the consumer maintains of the organization providing the product (Yuen & Chan, 2010). Behavioral loyalty represents the repurchase intention of the customer (Bei & Chiao, 2001; Bolton, 1998; Bolton & Lemon, 1999; Cheng, 2011; Yuen & Chan 2010).

A survey will be created using measures adapted from Powers, Jack, and Choi's (2019) research. With the consent of local boutique managers, customers of two or three local boutiques will be invited to participate in an online survey. Data will be analyzed through correlation and regression. The results of the study will be shared with the boutiques in order to help the owners and managers of these local boutiques better spend their marketing dollars used to influence customer loyalty. This paper will contribute to the literature on store and service satisfaction as well as behavioral and attitudinal loyalty specifically in the boutique industry.

The challenges in conducting this research include recruiting boutique participation and encouraging responses from their customer base. While two owners of local boutiques have expressed interest in participating in this research project, no formal agreement is in place at this time. In order to encourage responses, participants can opt into a drawing for a boutique gift card.

Future research could investigate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty in different settings. Building upon Powers, Jack, and Choi's (2019) research conducted on discount retailer shoppers, this research proposes to add boutique retailer shoppers to the stream of research. This research could be extended to locally owned businesses versus franchise businesses, minority owned businesses, luxury goods businesses, or service-based businesses. This research could also be extended to other geographical locations to determine if location (urban versus rural, east coast versus west coast) affects the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

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# THE RESPONDING DIFFERENCES IN BUSINESS MISDEEDS: A MODERATION EFFECT ON THE CORPORATE REMEDY STRATEGIES BETWEEN CURRENT AND POTENTIAL CONSUMERS

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## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Research on misdeeds in marketing is at a relatively early stage of development, especially considering the thirst of customizing effective remedies to diverse crises for segmented consumers. In terms of the characteristics of business misdeeds, some of them are related to product-performance or product-harm crises (PPR) while others are symbolic, ethical, or business value-related (BER) (Huang 2015; Hafenbradl and Waeger 2021). Much of the research on these corporate response strategies has unilaterally focused on the question of what the misdeed firm should do after a scandal, such as denial, or apology, or compensation (Dutta and Pillutla 2011). There are few studies that investigate how the misdeed firm should deliver a specific remedy strategy for different types of misdeed between current and potential consumers. With an effort on closing the research gap, the current study aims to investigate the impacts of remedy strategies on PPR and BER misdeeds.

The findings suggest that different types of misdeeds moderate the effectiveness of response and correction plans between current and potential consumers. Firms need to take different remedy strategies for potential and existing consumers. Among potential consumers, reduction of offensiveness (i.e., the response plan) is the best remedy strategy for BER misdeeds (Wei et al., 2020); but for PPR misdeeds, the costly correction plan seems to have the same effect as the response plan. These results may be explained by the inference that potential consumers value symbolic benefits more than functional benefits when they consider buying a product from the firm that has revealed misdeeds (Wei et al. 2020; Dutta and Pullig 2011; Harrison and Huang 2020). This study highlights the fact that research on business misdeeds in marketing is at a relatively early stage of development, especially for potential consumers. Among current consumers, BER misdeeds are more harmful than PPR misdeeds in term of decreasing consumers' (re)purchase intentions. Most existing research has overlooked the role of brand positioning in business misdeeds context. The finding of the current study is addressing this neglect. Some brands highly focus on their symbolic values while some others mainly focus on their functional benefits. It can speculate that after the occurrence of a business misdeed, brands with different positioning may require different types of remedy strategies regarding monetary (Liu, Shankar, and Yun 2017) and/or emotional compensations (Claeys and Cauberghe 2014; Raithel et al. 2021).

To the best of the author's knowledge, this work is one of those pioneer original empirical studies that address the characteristics of business misdeeds and consumers simultaneously, which have been relatively less researched in crisis management. One major contribution is the study of the moderation effect of misdeed type on the purchase intention between potential and current consumers. Another contribution is that the current research has extended the literature of holistic versus analytic thinking style (Nisbett et al. 2001) to the context of business misdeeds in the domain of existing and potential consumers. Consumer's mindset may influence trust recovery after business misdeeds (Murphy and Dweck 2016). The reaction patterns of potential consumers in the current study suggest that they are likely to have holistic thinking style that leads them to be less susceptible to misdeeds than current consumers who may be dominated by analytic thinking. After a business misdeed, potential consumers' purchase intention exhibits an increasing trend compared with the negative slope of current consumers. This is probably because potential consumers as holistic thinkers are more likely to consider external context-based explanations, which are the response and correction plans in this context, for business misdeeds (Monga and John 2008). As analytic mindset individuals believe in people's ability to change, they are eager to perceive corporates' remedy strategies, such as a prompt apology or a sincere promise of change (Wei et al. 2020). Current consumers are thus more likely to forgive the misdeed firm than potential consumers with holistic mindset who believe human traits are relatively fixed and hard to change.

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# THE INTERACTION EFFECT OF BRAND NAME AND RANKING ON BEHAVIOR INTENTION IN SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

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## *EXTENDED ABSTRACT*

This paper examines the impacts of university brand name and value on behavior intention in social media (e.g. Facebook). Using processing fluency as a theoretical underpinning, this study can answer the following questions: (1) does brand name and ranking of university matter in behavior intention? (2) does the effect of university brand name on behavior intention change depending upon the university brand ranking? (3) what is the underlying mechanism of the impact of university brand name on behavior intention? and (4) does individual difference of social media behavior affect the behavior intention?

Pre-test and between subject experiment were conducted in which brand name and brand ranking were manipulated and processing fluency was measured. Both the university brand name and brand ranking were manipulated in this study. Brand name was manipulated by two different names of the brand: very similar to the previous brand name (standardization); moderately different from the previous brand name (adaptation). Brand ranking was manipulated by two different brand ranking scenarios (highly ranked among national universities vs. not ranked among national universities).

The results show that brand name matters more for the higher-ranking university in social media context. Thus, highly ranked university had better create new brand name for the better attitude toward the brand. But brand name effect is not pronounced for the lower ranking university. As an underlying mechanism of brand name effect on behavior intention, the mediation test demonstrates that processing fluency of brand name meaning plays some major role in determining the behavior intention. Attitude toward the social media shows positive relationship with behavior intention such that the more positive attitude toward the social media results in higher behavior intention.

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# “IN BRAND WE TRUST”: HOW BRAND EQUITY CAN INFLUENCE A FIRM’S DEFAULT RISK

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## *EXTENDED ABSTRACT*

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to devastate the global economy, public debt in many markets has surged to levels not seen in 50 years. In such an environment, firms are also expected to have significantly higher default risk. Default risk refers to the likelihood that a firm with debt will lack the ability to repay the principal and interest for its debt obligations as stipulated. In the finance, management, and marketing literature, default risk is an important indicator of firm health. Prior research has mainly studied the influencing factors of default risk from firm own conditions, capital market, and macroeconomic characteristics. An important firm intangible asset, brand equity, has been largely neglected. Using China’s nonfinancial listed enterprises as a sample, we examine the impact of brand equity on default risk. We collected data for all A-listed, non-financial Chinese firms for the period 2011-2020. With the final sample of 17979 firm-year observations, we find that brand equity significantly reduces the default risk of firms, and works by reducing the operating risk and cost of debt financing. We also find that product market competition moderates the effect of brand equity on default risk. The results suggest that brand equity is more important for companies with high product market competition in order to reduce default risk. Our findings suggest that companies should incorporate brand management into their firm’s risk management plan, especially during moments of economic instability.

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# MARKETING CERTIFICATES...BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE

*Kristen Regine, Johnson & Wales University*

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## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Marketing certificates give students a value-add to their education as well as making them more marketable upon graduation. According to the occupational handbook from the US Bureau of Labor, marketing jobs will grow 10% until 2030 and the major contributing factor is the move from print to digital. This creates an opportunity for students to learn by doing in the classroom whether online, hybrid or face to face; specifically in gaining valuable knowledge utilizing industry certifications. The variety of certificates available to marketing students will add value to a college graduate's resume and to stand out among others who do not possess these certificates. There are many to consider in the undergraduate or graduate curriculum some are free while others have a minimal costs. Once achieved, a student can showcase these credentials on LinkedIn, where one can gain recognition in a highly competitive field. Most importantly, they do not expire. A 2021 article by indeed, notes some of the more popular certifications include Hootsuite, Google AdWords, Twitter flight school, YouTube certification and many more. All of these certifications can be offered in a marketing course in lieu of a semester based project, homework assignments and even to show evidence of student course outcomes.

A major factor to consider when adding in a certificate to a marketing or business course is to consider the experiential opportunities for students and how to align with the expectations of employers and what they are seeking in a new hire. Will this certificate give a student an advantage over another applying for a job? An industry certification used in my social media course taught in the undergraduate marketing program is Hootsuite. In this course, students gain two certificates from Hootsuite; the platform and a social media certificate. These are valued at \$300 and are offered free of charge to students. Hootsuite offers a Hootsuite student program. By offering the two certificates, the social media class has immediate value to students and potential employers in a growing area of content management. If you're looking beyond the social media arena and want to incorporate marketing certificates in say a brand, principles level or marketing strategy class, there's LinkedIn learning.

The LinkedIn learning certificates are offered in just about every area of the marketing curriculum. These are valuable tools where students can showcase their expertise in such areas as public relations, communications, social media, digital as well as strategy and content development. These are self-guided and can be offered as homework, part of course objectives or as a smaller project during the course. LinkedIn learning certificates provide content for soon to be marketers out of the classroom as "badges" on their LinkedIn profiles. One important factor is building a curriculum where the subject matter is found to be a challenge from a student perspective. One area that students sometime struggle with is building content especially in the world of social media and which content will create engagement with followers. LinkedIn can offer multiple learning paths to help students achieve their goals especially in the early stages of a student really understanding what a marketing professional may do for a living at the early stages of their career exploration.

For the faculty member, certifications do not come without challenges. However, the benefits outweigh any bumps along the road. The primary consideration is the addition time spent out of the classroom by taking a hands on role as a faculty member. In order to be successful, faculty should also do their due diligence and complete the certificate. Some of the certifications I've personally used include; create a brand strategy, personal branding, advanced consumer behavior concepts and public relations foundations. A bonus is the added time spent on choosing these certificates is they could also count as professional development for the faculty member. Plus, the certificates on LinkedIn update frequently meaning new content will be release and certificates will update. The faculty member will need to ensure they are using the latest iteration of the certificate. This will help the faculty member when presenting the material in class and giving advice on what the student can expect from their experience. The most problematic area is technology. Since it is not managed by the University, you become the "middleman" in managing expectations. It's recommended that the faculty leave ample time for a plan B should an issue arise in the semester.

In conclusion, adding in a certificate is a win-win for the institution and the student. The institution can use these as part of the outcomes and assessment process as all of these certification have hours and objectives listed. As the marketing industry continues to evolve, keeping up with the latest marketing certificates will enable students to be more attractive to employers both large and small. It allows student to gain valuable technological skills at their own pace. Moreover, students are able to build an electronic portfolio with evidence of their skill set using these types of certifications. And finally, it provides a method for faculty to stay current in their industry and engage in their own professional development.

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# ASSESSING SOCIAL SELLING: A CONCEPT ANALYSIS OF SALESPERSON SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

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## *EXTENDED ABSTRACT*

As social media continues to grow and influence the world, companies have to consider how they are impacted beyond the marketing department and high-level customer interactions. In recent years, professional sales departments have taken a keen interest in leveraging social media for meeting their sales objectives. Industry practitioners have begun a practice often referred to as “social selling” as a way to highlight salesperson usage and sales management’s initiative to leverage salesperson content within social media during the sales process. As a result, the emerging phenomenon, social selling, or the leveraging of social media and other technologies within the sales cycle, has increased among salespeople in recent years. However, social selling research is growing as a topic of interest regarding the nuances of salesperson social selling, the impact of social selling on the sales process, and how social selling is defined. As academics, it is our responsibility to address these research areas. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to conduct an analysis of existing definitions and evaluate how research conceptualizes the practice of social selling. It is not only important that we understand and broaden our scope of this concept, it is also vital to establish a definition encompassing non-consumer stakeholders towards a common conceptualization for social selling and its integration into the professional sales world. This manuscript explores the act of social selling within the sales force and proposes a definition for social media content created and disseminated by salespeople for professional use throughout the sales cycle.

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# UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS OF SALESPERSON GENERATED SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

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## *EXTENDED ABSTRACT*

Technology, in particular, social media, has impacted how consumers communicate and disrupted how businesses correspond with potential, current, or past customers. In fact, organizations have seen an increase in company representatives' presence on social media to engage external stakeholders in an effort to support long-term relationships and increased profitability in recent years. Although social media usage was present and growing prior to the pandemic, the impact on communication and connection has not only increased as a result of COVID-19, but has also accelerated technology adoption across job functions, industries, as well as multiple generations of workers, based on the effects of quarantine.

As an internal stakeholder often tasked with building their own book of business, salesperson adoption of technology has also increased in response to COVID-19, as salespeople were forced to develop new ways to build connections and conduct the sales process. Industry practitioners and academic audiences now leverage the phrase "social selling" as a way to capture salesperson selling activities via social media platforms throughout the sales process. Over time, the types of social media content, as well as the authors of social media content (i.e. salespeople), has evolved significantly. It is important we understand both sides of the coin and as research continues to study salesperson technology and social media adoption, it is also vital we also understand how salesperson social media content is being perceived and received by consumers.

The importance of understanding salespeople leveraging social media to generate content and communicate with potential or existing customers is illustrated by industry adoption of the concept social selling in itself. Social selling, a salesperson's usage of social media throughout the sales process, is an emerging research area and something seen in industry practice. Social media has become an impactful force within our world and transformed the way consumers, salespeople, marketers, and companies communicate with each other. It is not only important that we understand and broaden our scope of this ever-evolving reality, but also investigate consumer attitudes towards posts made by company representatives such as salespeople. Therefore, the objective of this exploratory research is to understand how consumers react to social media content based on the author of the post. In particular, this paper explores how social media users perceive content leveraged for non-personal usage, i.e. salespeople.

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# IMPACT OF FACEBOOK ADVERTISING CONTENT ON ATTITUDE TOWARD A FOREIGN-OWNED FIRM MANUFACTURING IN THE USA: AN ANALYSIS OF GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATION

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*Shelley Davis, Troy University*  
*Christine Newman, Troy University*

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## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

This study explores how a foreign-owned automobile manufacturer in the southeastern United States can effectively use social media to manage its company image nationwide. Using hierarchy of effects theory as the framework, a between-subjects design randomly exposed each participant to one of four test ads based on Hyundai Motor Manufacturing of Alabama Facebook advertisements. Two dimensions produced testable content that sponsoring companies can control: (1) featuring images of the Hyundai Sonata product versus images of Hyundai employees, and (2) changing the headline from “Proudly made in the U.S.A” to “Proudly made in Montgomery, Alabama.” This ad content comprises one main effect (TRMT). According to Rosengren and Bondesson (2014), employees positively featured in a firm’s advertising can help improve that employer’s reputation and make it more desirable as a place to work, which can enhance the image of foreign-owned manufacturers in the United States.

Data were gathered from two separate studies of two different online Qualtrics panels of U.S. residents. The first study represents the U.S. population as a whole (USA), and the second study split the sample between Alabama (AL) and Michigan (MI) state residents. These three geographical regions comprise the second independent main effect tested in this study (PLACE). Shimp and Sharma (1987, p. 287) reported that Detroit, Michigan, “which is arguably the most threatened of the four [U.S. geographical] areas because of the decline in American manufacturers’ share of the domestic automobile market, exhibits the strongest ethnocentric sentiments and is significantly more ethnocentric than any of the other areas. There has been a dramatic rise of automobile production outside the Detroit, Michigan area over the past three decades but a lack of research on this effect, so regional variation in attitude toward Hyundai Motor Manufacturing of Alabama is one of the main effects analyzed here.

Attitude toward the company (ACOM) is the dependent variable and is comprised of the following fourteen items: (1) Has Good Products - Does Not Have Good Products; (2) Is Well Managed - Is Not Well Managed; (3) Is Involved in the Community - Is Not Involved in the Community; (4) Responds to Consumer Needs - Does Not Respond to Consumer Needs; (5) Is a Good Company to Work For - Is Not a Good Company to Work For; (6) Is Technologically Advanced - Is Not Technologically Advanced; (7) Has Well-Trained Employees - Does Not Have Well-Trained Employees; (8) Is a Good Corporate Citizen - Is Not a Good Corporate Citizen; (9) Cares About Bettering Society - Does Not Care About Bettering Society; (10) Is Socially Responsible - Is Not Socially Responsible; (11) Is Environmentally Friendly - Is Not Environmentally Friendly; (12) Supports Good Causes - Does Not Support Good Causes; (13) Plays a Necessary Role in Society - Does Not Play a Necessary Role in Society, and (14) Contributes to Society - Does Not Contribute to Society. Some of these 7-point items are from Shanahan and Hopkins (2007) or Walsh and Beatty (2007), whereas the remainder are original to this study.

The covariates modeled here include the following hierarchy of effects items: attitude toward the advertisement (AAD); attitude toward the brand (AB); brand beliefs (BLF); and purchase intentions (PI). A complete description of these variables can be found in Neese and Haynie (2015). The 10-item CETSCALE (CET) measure is directly from Shimp and Sharma (1987). Scaled items adopted from Neese and Davis (2017) are used in this model to measure the extent to which respondents identify with the U.S. automobile industry and the companies that form it. These scales measure participant knowledge of the U.S. automobile industry (COG), attitudes about FDI in the U.S. automotive industry (AFF), and employment in the U.S. automobile industry (CON). Finally, familiarity with Hyundai (HYUF) and the automobile industry in general (GENF) are potentially related to the dependent variable (Velasco, Vizcaino and Velasco 2019), so familiarity covariates are also included in this study.

ACOM means for both TRMT and PLACE are significantly different across categories. The Hyundai Facebook advertisement that produced the most favorable ACOM results is the version that features images of employees and the “Proudly made in the U.S.A.” headline, whereas the least favorable results materialized for the same headline with images of the Sonata instead of employees. The two “Proudly made in Montgomery, Alabama” headlines were not significantly different from one another regardless of Sonata or employee content, but the “Proudly made in Montgomery, Alabama” test ad with Sonata content did result in significantly higher ACOM scores than the “Proudly made in the U.S.A.” Sonata version. ACOM means for the USA sample were significantly lower than either the AL or MI sample means, whereas the dependent means between AL and MI are not significantly different. Both AL and MI respondents are positive toward Hyundai Motor Manufacturing of Alabama, but the USA sample with less direct employment in the U.S. automobile industry expressed a significantly lower appreciation for this firm.

The results presented in this paper indicate that Facebook advertising presenting positive images of employees can stimulate a positive attitude toward the foreign-owned sponsor. Given the pattern of job migration over the past 30 years documented in the literature, MI respondents were expected to demonstrate some degree of animosity towards Hyundai Motor Manufacturing of Alabama when exposed to the “Proudly made in Montgomery, Alabama” headlines, but they instead showed an appreciation for Hyundai matching that demonstrated by the AL sample. The broader USA sample was not as positive toward this South Korean-owned Alabama car manufacturer, which is arguably due to its significantly lower employment connection to this industry.

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# TRAVELERS' INTENTION TO SHARE BRANDED DESTINATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Travelers frequently share their traveling pictures through social media. Personal or social reasons can drive their motivation. Sometimes, they can also get a benefit from the brand owner by sharing pictures, for example: a discount or a gimmick for supporting the brand. From the brand owner's perspective, the amplification engagement in the branded experience might support their image and increase the visiting intention of travelers' social networks. In this study, branded destinations are locations that owned by identified owners, where the visitors need to purchase tickets or other payment forms. Examples of branded destinations are theme park, museums, historical places, commercial iconic buildings, zoos, or gardens.

Foroudi *et al.* (2016) identified a place brand into national culture and infrastructure. Travelers engage with place brand actively, that can be existed prior, during, and post the actual visit. They get the information about the place through various channels prior to the direct experience. The integrated relational brand experience factors are online-offline integration, overall activeness, and the center of relationships (Paik and Lee, 2021). Travelers have a distinct experience in each place brand that shaping a subjective memory and inducing them to share with others.

Besides the direct experience with the place brand, the brand owner can enhance the positive experience. Wang *et al.* (2019) revealed that the free gifts lead to intention to visit. This kind of effort indicates the importance of sub-brand strategy (Zelenskaya and Elkanova, 2021). When the brand owners communicate this gimmick as the added value to visit the brand place and they fulfill their promise, the travelers will include these benefits as the integrated brand experience of the visit. This experience is an outcome-based that relates to various variables (Helkkula, 2010). When the travelers share the promise of fulfilment to others, the credibility of the brand owner is validated. It can increase the motivation of prospective travelers to visit the place.

The branded experiences through brand love and trust will influence brand loyalty (Huang, 2017; Khan *et al.*, 2020). Sensory experience drives brand trust more than intellectual experience. Service has an important role in shaping the brand image. Tran *et al.* (2020) found the effect of servicescape on social interaction quality between customer-employee and customer-customer. Brand awareness and value have a positive and significant impact on destination brand equity (Preko *et al.*, 2021). The brand experience makes travelers more meaningful involvement (Legendre *et al.*, 2019). These findings increase the perception of heightening traveler's personal benefit. The brand prestige influences brand relationship quality and attitudinal loyalty. The study predicts that this condition can induce the travelers' intention to share their experience with others through social media. Positive branded experiences can be beneficial for social and individual traveler.

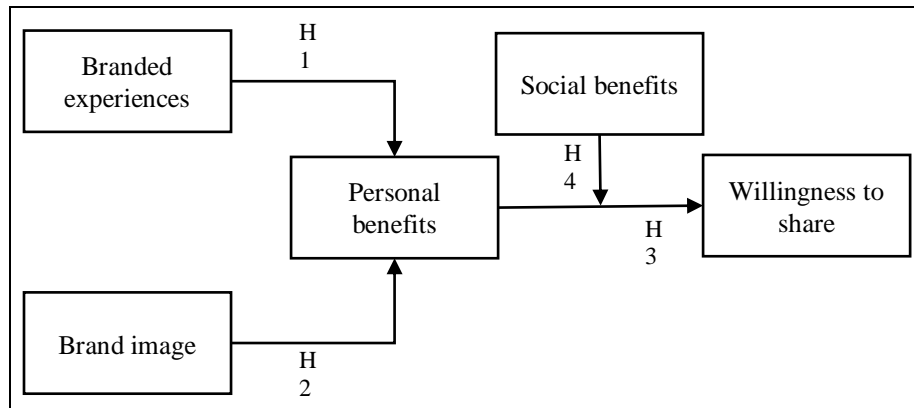
The travelers' participation in the service experience had a positive effect on their well-being, but the complexity of the service could influence the outcomes (Xie *et al.*, 2020). It will cause the willingness for the travelers sharing their experiences through the social media. From the brand owners' perspective, they need to coordinate between the product and tourism of place marketing (De Nisco *et al.*, 2017). The place brand qualities can be determined by its features, accompanied services, and experiences. These dimensions can measure the overall quality of the place brand (Mukherjee *et al.*, 2018). These qualities can shape the place brand image, which when it is confirmed by the travelers, can provide benefits for them. Others might perceive the positive image from communication channels that are used by the brand owner. Travelers can strengthen the image by sharing their experiences through social media. Both communication from the brand owner and the travelers will give benefits to the others toward the brand place.

Travelers' branded experience and brand image are independent variables in this study. The study predicts that they have influences on personal benefits and social benefits. Higher benefits will heighten the possibility of travelers' intention to share branded destination through social media. However, the motivation of sharing can be personal-



centered and/or social-centered. It is worthwhile to examine whether the travelers share their experience for personal or social purpose. This study will examine social benefits as the moderating variable that might influence travelers' willingness to share their experience on the social media.

The research model and hypothesized relationships:



The study comprises two parts of analysis. The first part is to examine whether branded experience and brand image influence the personal benefits, and the second part is to discover the role of social benefits as the moderating variable.

The study examines four components:

1. Travelers' branded experience has an influence on their personal benefits.
2. Branded destination image has an influence on travelers' personal benefits.
3. Travelers' personal benefit has an influence on their willingness to share.
4. The social benefits have a moderating effect on travelers' willingness to share.

The findings from the study will show what factors that influence the intention to share branded destination to others, and to reveal the motivation to share the positive experience.

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# INSIDE THE MARKETING INTERNSHIP: THE COMPARISON OF STUDENT AND EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES AND EVALUATIONS OF INTERNSHIP PERFORMANCE

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Internships have become prevalent in business schools as a way of expanding student experiential learning beyond the classroom. Over 72% of AACSB accredited institutions offer internships as part of their degree program (Delcours et al., 2018). Research on student internships have examined different perspectives toward, and expectations of, the internships from multiple stakeholders including students, employers, and the universities. The majority of student internship research looked at the perspective of the students, concluding the students largely found the internship experience to be favorable and that it enhanced their education (e.g., Dommeyer et al., 2016; Gupta et al., 2010). On the contrary, some research solely focused on the perspective of employers (Rothman, 2017; Swanson & Tomkovick, 2011) concerning the importance of various skills and qualifications. Swanson and Tomkovick (2011) surveyed marketing managers found that the employers rated good communication skills, positive attitude, and willingness to learn as three most important factors. In addition, communication skills and decision-making abilities were also rated highly by employers according to Rothman (2017).

Despite a significant amount of research on various stakeholders' perspectives on student internships, there is still limited research that specifically compares how students and employers (supervisors) evaluate the actual performance in an internship with the exception of Marks and colleagues' (2018) internship research. They found that both students and supervisors (employers) generally gave favorable ratings on students' performance in the internship. However, there were still areas of difference. For example, students rated their computer skills lower than the employers rated them on the same attribute. Moreover, students' self-evaluations of their ability to problem solve, take initiative, and work in a self-directed fashion were higher than the employers' ratings. The authors concluded that these were opportunities for further training and preparing students to be ready for their future careers. They also pointed out that there was a need for more research in understanding the difference in supervisor's evaluation and student's self-evaluation of the internship performance. This research aims to extend the existing research by comparing students' and supervisors' (employers') evaluations of various important skillsets in internships. Specifically, we focus on teamwork, professionalism, the ability to integrate academic learning with practice, communication skills, and overall satisfaction.

Undergraduate students and their internship employers were invited to complete a survey regarding an internship experience that was fulfilled during the fall 2019 and spring 2020 for a Midwestern university. The survey asked the students to rate the extent to which the internship contributed to five different areas in their professional development: teamwork, professionalism, ability to integrate academic learning with practice, communication, and an overall satisfaction. Employers rated the students' performance on the same constructs. The two survey datasets were matched by student name to create a matched pairs configuration, which was tested for the differences between students' self-perceived measure of their professional development versus the employer's assessment of the student's performance. After aligning the data by student name, 70 pairs of usable records (70 students and 70 employers) remained for analysis.

The results showed there was a significant difference in the student-employer rating on teamwork. Interestingly, the students rated their learning and teamwork professional development lower than the employers' rating of the student's ability on this concept. The employer rating was very positive for the students' performance, yet the student's rating, while also highly rated, reported receiving a lower level of professional development from the experience. The

remaining constructs: Professionalism, integrating academic learning with their work, communication (written and verbal), and overall satisfaction, were not significantly different. The student's self-rating of these professional development items were very close to the employer's rating of the student's overall performance, both ratings falling between four and five on a five-point scale.

Internships, especially those that are directly related to the field, have been found to benefit students in both short-term and long-term career goals. To date, there is still limited research that compares student's self-rating to the supervisor's rating of the internship performance. This project found that students and employers had the same perception toward the performance of the internship (i.e., professionalism, ability to integrate academic learning with practice, communication, and overall satisfaction) except for teamwork skill. Overall, students reported receiving significant professional development values from the internship experience. Similarly, employers reported all students performed very well, suggesting that the professional development received by the students was noticed by the employer-raters. These findings are consistent with Gupta and colleagues (2010) and adds additional data to illustrate the perceptions between students and their employers for the internship experience.

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# TAM INHIBITORS: RESISTANCE TO USE & TECHNOLOGY ANXIETY

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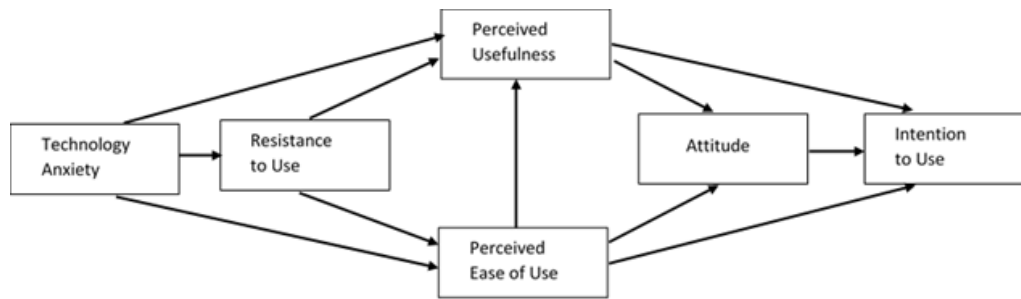
## POSITION PAPER

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is widely accepted as a means for identifying variables that influence consumers' attitudes towards adopting technology, focusing on consumers' positive beliefs regarding technology. Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU) are considered integral to TAM, yet few studies examine external variables that negatively affect PEU and PU and ultimately inhibit consumers' Intentions to Use (IU) retail technologies (Bhattacharjee & Hikmet, 2007; Cenfetelli, 2004). This research aims to narrow the knowledge gap by using Structural Equation Modeling to investigate two proposed inhibitors to PEU and PU: Technology Anxiety (TA) and Resistance to Use (RU). Specifically, we propose that TA influences RU and that TA and RU each directly influence PEU and PU.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is based on the theory of reasoned action. Davis et al. (1989) developed TAM to examine determinants of information technology adoption. TAM's wide acceptance as a reliable model for investigating the antecedents of technology adoption is due to its simplicity and researchers' ability to modify the external variables to make the model situationally specific. For the most part, prior research aimed to identify external variables that positively influence consumers' attitudes towards technology adoption focusing on user's positive beliefs regarding technology (Cenfetelli, 2004). A review of TAM related literature suggests potential inhibitors of technology acceptance (*e.g.*, Venkatesh et al., 2003), however very few studies explore this relationship (Cenfetelli, 2004). Cenfetelli (2004) laid the theoretical groundwork for the importance of understanding inhibitors to technology acceptance but did not identify or test specific inhibitors, which could yield significant implications for retailers and marketers.

Few studies examine variables that inhibit PU and PEU which in turn affect user adoption intentions (Bhattacharjee & Hikmet, 2007). According to Cenfetelli (2004), external beliefs regarding the design and functionality of a system act as enablers or inhibitors, each affecting consumers' attitudes and intentions. An important difference between enablers and inhibitors is that inhibitors act solely to discourage use or adoption of technology. Bhattacharjee and Hikmet (2007) expanded Cenfetelli's (2004) work and found that Resistance to Use (RU) negatively impacts Intention to Use (IU), decreases technology usage, and is positively related to RU (Bhattacharjee & Hikmet, 2007). Their research examined inhibitors to using health information technology among physicians, but similar RU exists related to retail technologies as well. Several studies use TA as an antecedent variable in TAM (*e.g.*, Donmez-Turan & Kir, 2019). Donmez-Turan's and Kir's (2019) meta-analysis on the relationship between TA and TAM constructs, including exogenous variables (PU and PEU), found TA negatively related to both PU and PEU which confirms TA is a negative antecedent of TAM. Conversely, other studies only identified TA's significant relationship with PEU but not PU (*e.g.*, Venkatesh et al., 2000). Additionally, research revealed that TA has a negative and indirect influence on IU the technology (Zhu et al., 2018). Few studies examined the relationship between TA and RU retail technology, yet it is reasonable to expect that consumers who experience TA may resist its use and adoption. Consequently, the current study focuses on RU and TA as inhibitors to consumers' IU retail technologies (Figure 1). Specifically, we propose that TA influences RU and that TA and RU each directly influence PEU and PU.

Figure 1. Technology Anxiety as an Antecedent to TAM



Data collection will be done through Cloud Research. Four constructs will be measured using a seven-point Likert scale (7= strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree) with an additional choice of “Doesn’t Apply to Me” included in each scale. Scales will be adapted from previous research to fit the context of this study. The variables are TA (Meuter et al., 2005), PU (Kamal et al., 2020), RU (Kamal et al., 2020) and PEU (Venkatesh et al., 2000). Attitude will be measured with a six item, seven-point bipolar scale (Alpert & Kamins, 1995). IU will include three items developed by Venkatesh et al. (2012). Structural equation modeling will be performed to test the relationships and mediating effects of the model. We expect TA to have a negative mediated relationship with PU and PEU through RU. Additionally, we expect the relationships between TAM variables PU, PEU, Attitude and IU to conform to previous research.

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# TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING VIA TRANSNATIONAL MARKETING PROJECTS: APPLYING A STUDENTS-AS-PARTNERS APPROACH TO DEVELOP HYBRID HIGH-IMPACT PEDAGOGY

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## POSITION PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to create a model ‘Transnational Marketing Project (TMP)’ that can be generalized to other campuses as well as courses in the field of international business and marketing. A TMP is an academic project where students from two or more countries must collaborate to solve a marketing problem or develop a marketing plan. TMP projects involve three high-impact practices: *Undergraduate Research, Learning communities, Global Learning (Study Abroad)*. TMPs was implemented in International Marketing course in the Fall 2020 and 2021. Clarion students partnered with international students to develop international marketing plans. Findings suggest that TMP helped students learn how to interact with people from a different culture, gain first-hand experience of a new culture, how to respond to the challenges of working with international folks, and how international markets can be different from markets in the United States markets.

We are living in an era of increasing globalization that directly influences businesses and education. In a recent survey on “future trends in business education,” conducted jointly by AACSB, EMBAC, and UNICON, it was found that there is a growing demand for multicultural sensitivity among business students (Executive Core, 2015). This means that opportunities to enhance cultural understanding need to be developed within business education courses. Thus, the purpose of this research project is to provide students with exposure to work in international settings via “Transnational Marketing Projects” (TMPs). A TMP is an academic project where students from two or more countries must collaborate to solve a marketing problem or develop a marketing plan. Students must work on and complete the project together (Singh, 2020). Students in a TMP are active learners and international project partners (Students-as-Partners or SaP). Notably, TMPs incorporate three high-impact practices (HIPs): global learning (or study abroad), undergraduate research, and learning communities, all of which have been shown to enhance student learning and engagement. Additionally, because this project involves learning from culturally different people, it provides transformative learning, which helps students become more skilled in using their judgement to construe prior interpretation(s) in their own context (Mezirow, 1996). The key to transformative learning is human communication (Taylor, 2008), which is the essence of TMPs. TMP was implemented in International Marketing (MKTG 469) course in the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. Clarion students partnered with international students or the International Project Partners (IPPs) to develop an international marketing plan. TMP project involves three high-impact practices, which are as follows:

*1<sup>st</sup> HIP – Undergraduate Research:* research engages students in investigating a problem (or gap) and search for data (or information) to bridge that gap using scientific methods of inquiry. There are five research components to complete this project: (1) Industry analysis using the PESTEL model; (2) Cultural Analysis; (3) Economic Analysis; (4) Market Audit and Competitors Analysis; and (5) Marketing Plan.

*2<sup>nd</sup> HIP - Learning communities:* Clarion students will work with international students and professors to form learning communities. Working with them will bring invaluable learning as they have very different situations and experiences heavily influenced by their culture. Communicating with diverse individuals and asking relevant questions to understand another culture requires creativity. Learning to ask the right questions is the key here.

*3<sup>rd</sup> HIP – Global Learning (or Study Abroad):* Every country has some unique qualities. The differences are stark when comparing culturally and economically different countries such as the US and Asian or African countries.

Appreciation of these differences and learning the nuances and implications of these differences on business and social life contributes to the learning experience. Clarion students will directly work with international students for a semester-long collaboration, where they will get the opportunity to talk, discuss, and share photos and videos freely.



In fall semester (2020) pilot study to assess the feasibility of TMP, students worked in groups with their counterparts in India, South Africa, and Indonesia and developed marketing plans for seven businesses. This collaboration helped students learn to interact with people from different cultures, gained first-hand experience of different cultures, responded to the challenges of working with people from other countries such as time zone and communication, learned about consumer behavior, and differences in international markets as compared to United States. Overall, the course and the project went well. Students' feedback was collected on 15 indicators using a 6-point Likert scale to rate their agreement. Univariate t-test results show students' agreement with learning via TMP (IPPs) approach at 95% confidence interval (p-value <0.01). Additionally, majority of the students confirmed that they enjoyed and learned by TMP, as evidenced from their qualitative feedback (see examples below), which confirms the quantitative results:

- "I really enjoyed this class and feel as though this is much more applicable than many of the classes that I have taken at Clarion through the years", and
- "Wonderful project... interesting, really way more than the catalog class description. Really makes breaching those international boundaries more human, approachable".

Some of the key requirements for TMP approach include:

- International Institutional Partners (IIPs) with preferably similar program and courses
- International Project Partners (IPPs) with similar level in the program
- Written permission for information sharing from all students
- Time commitment from mentors and students
- Frequent communication: Formal and Informal
- Virtual platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, or MS Teams for formal meetings
- Virtual platforms such as Facebook (FB) groups, WhatsApp, GroupMe, or Slack for informal meetings
- Certificate of 'Appreciation' or 'Participation' to all students and faculty mentors from partner institute
- Four phases (to develop Int'l marketing plan): business model, cultural, economic, market audit analyses
- Other resources: government websites, industry databases, and journal articles

Critical events include: (1) at least one formal meeting for each of the marketing plan phases, (2) at least two posts every week on the informal meeting platform from each student in the group to ensure participation, (3) at least two photos and/or videos from each student, (4) faculty mentors should be included as part of the formal and informal meetings, but they may remain mute spectators, and (5) final research presentations on Zoom.

TMP projects fill three major gaps in the current pedagogy: avoiding the traditional lecture format (Abrams, 2002), provide international experience to all segments of the students (Linn et al., 2015; Whatley, 2019), and three high-impact practices. As such, TMPs and SaP provides cultural sensitivity training and access to an international experience (Bringle, 2017; Kuh, 2012) to prepare students as a global workforce. Thus, developing TMP pedagogy will help improve active learning and promote cultural-sensitivity. Experiences such as international exposure, cultural learning in an authentic sense, communication with people from other cultures, and understanding of international consumers and markets will help students develop skills that will equip them to be successful. The TMP project is unique, as it is the first time such an effort has been made to develop a hybrid high-impact pedagogy to provide international experiences to the students. The success of this project will set an example for other courses/disciplines and for faculty members at Clarion and other Universities in similar programs to enhance the educational experience among students.

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# AN ANALYSIS OF NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS PROGRAMS IN NCAA DIVISION I INSTITUTIONS

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## POSITION PAPER

For years, college athletics embraced the amateurism ideal. The notion of student-athlete was held up as the model by which higher education institutions fielded teams. The “payment” student-athletes receive is funding for their education in the form of an athletic scholarship. In return, student-athletes commit their time to training, practicing, and competing while maintaining satisfactory academic progress. The student-athlete ideal has been shaken by the realities of college athletics having evolved into a significant industry. More than 40 NCAA Division I member institutions had annual athletics revenues of more than \$100 million (USA Today, 2021). The riches enjoyed by the NCAA, conferences, and member institutions were gained largely on the backs of student-athletes. They were not experiencing similar payoffs for the value created for their institutions.

A shift in the landscape for student-athlete compensation began in 2019. California became the first state to pass legislation prohibiting schools from limiting student-athletes from earning money for their name, image, and likeness. Several other states enacted similar laws in the next two years. By 2021, 28 states had laws allowing college athletes to earn money from marketing and endorsement deals (Murphy, 2021). At the same time Congress was considering enacting federal laws to govern NIL as an alternative to a patchwork of state laws. One of the leading voices calling for Congress to pass NIL legislation is the NCAA. It prefers a uniform code governing NIL rather than a collection of state laws with differing standards. The NCAA’s stance has shifted from NIL being an “existential threat” to college athletics to being “quite the opposite” of the end of college sports (Caron & McCann, 2021).

Opportunities arising from NIL are not limited to student-athletes. An emerging category in sports marketing is marketing companies that provide NIL-related services to athletes, athletic departments, and brands. These companies offer services such as personal branding, matching athletes with brands for marketing campaigns, contract reviews of endorsement deals, and financial literacy training for athletes. In addition to athletes and brands benefiting from leveraging the marketability of college athletes, institutions where athletes study and play stand to gain from the new NIL landscape. Institutions could potentially reap benefits of proactively supporting their student-athletes’ NIL opportunities. Developing a NIL support program, whether in-house, outsourced to a company specializing in NIL services, or a hybrid approach, could be used as a selling point when recruiting prospective student-athletes.

Given that NIL is in its infancy, institutions could adopt the position that NIL support programs are a form of innovation in their athletic programs. According to Hunt and Morgan (1996), innovation can be proactive or reactive. In the case of NIL support programs, early adoption of initiatives that encourage student-athletes to maximize their potential to earn income based on their marketability could be proactive innovation. Athletic departments that do not have a view of NIL support programs as an organizational resource may be forced to develop programs later as reactive innovation in an attempt to maintain parity with other institutions competing for the same student-athletes. The purpose of this research was to examine if NCAA Division I institutions have developed NIL support programs for their student-athletes and how those programs are being implemented.

The state of Name, Image, and Likeness support programs among NCAA Division I institutions was examined using content analysis. Data were collected from athletic department websites for 358 Division I institutions, which is the population of members in that division. In reviewing the websites for NIL information, data for three variables were recorded. First, existence of a program to support student-athletes’ NIL activity was recorded. Evidence of an institution-level program, participation in a conference-level NIL program, adding NIL support to an existing student-athlete development program, or no NIL program were different outcomes observed. Second, if an institution had its own NIL program (a dedicated program or part of a student-athlete development program) or belonged to a conference-wide NIL program, execution of the NIL program was recorded as handled internally, by an external organization, or a hybrid of internal and external execution. Third, evidence of an institution having a published policy

was recorded as present or absent.

An additional data point was recorded for each institution: whether the institution belonged to a Power 5 conference (Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Pac-12 Conference, and Southeastern Conference). This additional variable will be evaluated to determine if the resource differences that exist between Power 5 institutions and non-Power 5 institutions were reflected in the existence of NIL programs, how they were executed, and if a published NIL policy was in place.

Data analysis will begin with determining frequencies for existence and type of NIL program (dedicated institution NIL program, conference NIL program, add-on to existing student-athlete development program, or no NIL program). Second, frequencies for NIL program execution will be calculated (internally executed, externally executed, or hybrid). Third, frequencies will be reported on existence of a published NIL policy (yes or no). Then, additional analysis of frequencies will compare Power 5 and non-Power 5 institutions to determine if any differences exist.

Findings from this research will reflect early-stage progress in implementing NIL support programs across NCAA Division I institutions. Are athletic departments adequately supporting their student-athletes in taking advantage of the unprecedented opportunities to earn income from their athletic notoriety? To what extent are institutions creating NIL support programs in a way that differentiates their brand as an institution where student-athletes can utilize education, training, and other support to maximize NIL opportunities? Answers to these questions can begin to be addressed through this research. It is possible that creation of NIL support programs for an institution's student-athletes could go beyond being a point of parity with other institutions vying for the same recruits. A program that supports student-athletes in their personal branding and self-marketing pursuits to become a source of competitive advantage that can be touted as a feature that differentiates an institution.

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# EVALUATING COMPLAINT BEHAVIOR IN THE WAREHOUSE CLUB MARKET

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## *POSITION PAPER*

The focus of this research is to examine the wholesale/retail store format by understanding the complaint behavior of patrons. Because these stores straddle both end-users (i.e. consumers) and resale (i.e. other businesses) customers, the desire is to learn more about the expectations that customers have from this type of store. Doing so will derive implications as to the management of relationships with these customers as complaint-handling strategies are particularly important in managing customer relationships in service businesses. A content analysis of the data collected—which are the complaints reported to one of the leading companies of the Warehouse Club/Cash & Carry sector in Turkey—suggest the steps a company could take to resolve the problem situations and ultimately preserve and enhance the relationships with their customers.

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# MANAGEMENT STYLES, AI, AND MARKETING STRATEGIES: A COMPARISON OF KOREAN AND AMERICAN BUSINESSES

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## POSITION PAPER

The phenomenon of globalization implies that individuals in one area of the globe influence people, events, and processes in other parts of the globe (Southcott, 2005). Nations and people collaborate, according to globalization theory, and such collaborations are growing (Robertson, 2003; Reyes *et al.*, 2018; Sahoo and Sethi, 2020). Businesses in Korea and America are not beyond this concept. However, there is still a noticeable difference between the American and Korean economies and cultures. A considerable number of researchers have already compared the Korean and American gift-giving behaviors, clothing motives, cultures, e-service quality, consumers, and consumer brand loyalty. However, there is still a dearth of research comparing the management styles and marketing strategies (Chen *et al.*, 2010; Christie *et al.*, 2003; Kim and Kim 2010; Park 1998; Park *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, this paper explores differences between Korean and American businesses in these areas.

Also, how much expertise a country has in utilizing artificial (AI) depends on its economic status, and economic status differs from country to country. For example, Koch (1989) found that the economies of the United States, Japan, and Korea are distinctive; Korea is a "newly industrialized country", Japan is a comparatively high growth "developed" economy and America is a gradual growth "developed" economy. Korea's information technology infrastructure has become an increasingly essential element of the economy (Ministry of Information and Communications, 1999). Furthermore, as is well known, information technology improves the efficiency of labor, capital, and other production elements (Schwartz, 1990). Recently Kang (2021) finds that South Korea- house of several best inventive tech firms from the world, such as LionRocket, Hyungjun Mun, and Seung Hwan Jeong employs an AI-based text-to-speech engine that, after studying a 20-minute audio recording, can replicate anyone's voice. On the other hand, a study by Nadikattu (2018) shows, in the United States, finds that AI has enhanced applications, created secure systems, and boosted productivity in IT area, and America has experienced the benefits.

The research adopted a survey with structured questionnaires separated into three components- management style, AI, and marketing strategy. Samples were collected from two different cultures: Korea and the U.S.A. A substantial portion (30.3%) of the employees in Korea believe that their companies put zero effort into AI and IT parts of their business, whereas many (25.7%) of the employees from American companies believe the opposite. In other words, the percentage who think that their companies implement IT and AI is almost double in America (20%), than that of Korea (9.1%). In regards to future business, both Korean (48.5%) and American (51.4%) employees value AI and IT most. Almost half of the Korean employees (51.2%) believe that their companies put greater emphasis on products compared to other marketing mix areas, while 44.2% of the American employees think similarly. Both the Korean (9.8%) and American (13.5%) companies put the least effort into pricing strategy. Managers in Korea (18.1%) are less flexible in accepting and considering employees' opinions than that of America (25.7%). 19.4% of the employees in Korea think that the employee-manager relationship is vertical whereas 11.4% of the American employees think the same. In other words, 9.1% of Korean employee-manager relationships are horizontal while that percentage is 5.7% for America.

We also conducted an in-depth interview at the respondent's preferred place. The author moderated each interview and recorded it. The American sample were taken from 11 business managers (7 male and 4 female) who were enrolled in a business school in the Midwest. The samples in Korea were taken from 8 business managers (3 male and 5 female) enrolled in a part-time MBA program in a major university in Gyeonggi province. Participants from the United States had the following demographic characteristics: all were Caucasians born and reared in the United States; 25 to 60

years old with a mean age of 39.4; work in 6 different industries. Participants from Korea had the following demographic characteristics: all were Koreans born and raised in Korea; 27 to 53 years old with a mean age of 33.8; work in 7 different industries. In management, Korean companies encourage horizontal relationships with employees, but there are vertical characteristics.

The results show that American companies put more endeavor into AI and IT compared to Korean companies. So, in terms of managerial implications, when the businesses from Korea want to invest in America, they should be aware of AI and technology use. It also indicates that the companies must implement AI and IT in their business to face the challenges of disruptive innovations. The results also help managers understand that in both Korea and America businesses value IT for future business. Therefore, entrepreneurs from any corner of the globe must realize the value of AI and IT while investing in Korea and America. The study results also help marketers understand which marketing mix elements they need to focus on while selecting marketing strategies. As both countries, Korea and America, are culturally diverse, marketers may focus on products --- how customized the product should be, before entering the markets. As their cultures are diverse, marketers from all over the world should concentrate on their direct marketing, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, and advertising. The study also helps managers plan on the management style in Korea and America. Managers can see that the Korean businesses are less flexible in accepting employees' opinions in decision making compared to America, therefore, thus those businesses from the USA who want to have more participative decision-making in Korea should take extra care of the employee opinion. Lastly, Korea has more frequent horizontal decision making than in their native culture (Kim and Kang, 2014 and Fukuyama, 1995), and thus it helps entrepreneurs from Korea, America or others who invest in those countries. Marketers, managers, and entrepreneurs from other countries can also get a rational idea about the weakness and strengths of these two particular business cultures. This study has implications for strategic marketing actions aimed at attaining customer satisfaction in the diverse business cultures of Korea and America.

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# AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE FEASIBILITY AND POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR LEASING PRICE MODELS APPLIED TO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS DEGREE PROGRAMS

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## POSITION PAPER

According to Schlegelmilch (2020), U.S. Colleges of Business will need radical innovations to survive competitive pressures in the coming years. "Indeed, there may be business schools that work on a subscription basis, offering their graduates the opportunity for continuous professional development as they advance and change throughout their career paths... A one-time intervention, which finishes with the award of a degree, would give way to a lifelong relationship, which starts with a degree. Perhaps, *degrees for rent* [emphasis added] are just around the corner" (Schlegelmilch 2020, p.104). No study has explored leasing price models applied to college degree programs.

This is an exploratory descriptive study to determine if there is interest among U.S. citizens for degree leasing. We hope to determine what populations are interested in leasing a degree from a College of Business, and if so, what population demographics are most likely to benefit from degree leasing. Professor Schlegelmilch was contacted via e-mail and asked where examples of universities that lease degrees could be located, and he replied: "Alas, to the best of my knowledge, there are no existing examples you would be able to find." Our study aims to address this gap in both the literature and practice by testing the feasibility and potential demand for: (1) a straight lease; (2) a percentage lease; (3) a graduated lease, and (4) a rent-to-own lease (Berman, Evans, and Chatterjee 2018). In all four cases, the student would pay a reduced price per course, semester, or term compared to current tuition rates. However, the contract would require continuing education units for the life of the lease, which would either be taught by the home institution or earned elsewhere and counted toward the lease requirements once a fee has been paid.

The primary research question for this study is if people think degree leasing would be a good idea and valuable for society. The AACSB standards that took effect on July 28, 2020 anticipate that "Lifelong learning will become the norm" (p.20) as expressed in Standard 4.3 (p.37). AACSB also requires accredited Colleges of Business to demonstrate "a commitment to positive societal impact..." (Standard 1.4 p.21). Given the widespread discourse over the lack of affordability of a college education, increasing student loan debt, and the declining financial value of college education, degree leasing could help meet both AACSB standards. It is also innovative and will help differentiate early adopters in a favorable way from the bulk of universities still employing purchase-to-own pricing models that have been used since universities began charging for degrees. Along with engagement and impact, innovation is one of the three primary cornerstones required by AACSB for accreditation of Colleges of Businesses world-wide.

A national random sampling of adult household consumers was conducted using an online survey through Qualtrics. Survey data was limited to U.S. addresses and only U.S. citizens 18 years old or older were allowed to participate. After completing a set of demographic questions, each respondent read the script explaining the hypothetical College of Business and the four possible degree leasing options. Standardized instructions were provided along with the common measurement items for each participant to answer after reading the script and ranking their preference for the degree leasing options.

The following eighteen questionnaire items were developed specifically for this survey and measured on a 5-point Likert scale: (1) I do not believe a leasing payment option is practical for a college degree in business; (2) I believe degree leasing is too complicated to work effectively; (3) I believe degree leasing will cause problems with student financial aid; (4) Students should be able to pick between leasing or regular tuition for their college business degree; (5) A business degree leasing program with continuing education requirements can help college graduates keep their job skills up-to-date across the different stages of their careers; (6) I would not want my personal and business contact information on record with the college I attended throughout my career; (7) A degree leasing payment plan can help

control the cost of higher education better than regular tuition; (8) A degree leasing payment plan is better financially for minority students than tuition; (9) Degree leasing payment plans will not have a positive impact on society; (10) The college of business described in this survey has good degree programs; (11) The college of business described in this survey is not well managed; (12) The college of business described in this survey responds to student needs; (13) The college of business described in this survey only cares about money and does not care about a better world; (14) The college of business described in this survey is socially responsible; (15) The college of business described in this survey supports good causes; (16) The college of business described in this survey does not play a necessary role in society; (17) I believe a college degree in business is still worth the financial investment, and (18) I do not generally support college education today.

Demographic variables measured include: (1) Marital status; (2) Sex; (3) Age; (4) Race; (5) Household income; (6) Highest current education level; (7) Political party; (8) Political beliefs, and (9) Primary business discipline of interest to the respondent. Current education level is of particular interest for analysis, and was measured with the following categories: (1) High School Graduate; (2) Active Undergraduate College Student; (3) Inactive Undergraduate College Student with Some Undergraduate College Credit; (4) Earned Bachelor's Degree; (5) Active Graduate College Student; (6) Inactive Graduate College Student with Some Graduate College Credit; (7) Earned Master's Degree; (8) Active Doctoral Student; (9) Inactive Doctoral Student; (10) Earned Doctorate, and (11) Other.

The first implementation of this survey resulted in 329 complete responses. Unfortunately, approximately one-third of these respondents appear to have quickly clicked through the ranking question in Appendix A in order (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4), so those responses are highly suspect and potentially unusable. The average time taken to complete this survey instrument was in the two-minute range according to Qualtrics, which is virtually impossible if adequate consideration had been given to each item. A second major problem with survey results is in the Political Party demographic. Although an even number of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans was requested as a quota from Qualtrics at the beginning of the survey, results of this preliminary survey are that Democrats (n=159) outnumber Independents (n = 77) and Republicans (n=77) by over two times, which essentially renders this independent variable useless in any analysis of variance test. Sixteen respondents marked the Other category, which was not included in the previously-mentioned quota.

The goal of this position paper is to garner constructive feedback, improve the instrument, and launch a second survey to gather more data.

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# EXPLORING CONSUMERS' SHOPPING MOTIVATIONS FOR OMNICHANNEL GROCERY SHOPPING: BOPIS, CURBSIDE, AND THIRD-PARTY DELIVERY INTENTIONS

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## POSITION PAPER

The U.S. grocery retail sector's digital presence rapidly evolved to satisfy consumers' shifting shopping needs during the COVID pandemic by launching contactless shopping options such as buy online pick-up in-store (BOPIS), curbside pick-up, and home delivery options. As shoppers begin to shift back to normal shopping routines, this study positions the consumer as the focal point in discerning what motivates consumers post-COVID to continue utilizing omnichannel options, such as BOPIS, curbside pick-up and third-party delivery intentions. Applying the uses and gratifications theory, we examine how hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations differentially impact consumers' channel option preferences as the pandemic recedes. Insights will help marketers and retailers understand consumers' evolving omnichannel shopping motivations and the new normal for grocery shopping.

The U.S. grocery retail sector has lagged other retail sectors in e-commerce adoption and related omnichannel interactions, with McKinsey (2021) indicating a three to four percent adoption rate among consumers pre-COVID. The primary reasons customers did not adopt pre-COVID were high service fees, concerns over buying perishable food online and the lack of quality website design (Aull, Begley, Chandra, & Mathur, 2021). However, the COVID pandemic drastically increased consumer adoption of online grocery shopping to match contactless shopping needs, with estimates suggesting 20-30% of sales occurring online during COVID-influenced peaks (Aull et al., 2021). By the end of 2020, online grocery shopping settled at 9-12 percent market share, indicating consumers have shifted back to more in-store shopping for groceries and other essential items, in fact the 50% that used buy online pickup in store (BOPIS) during the pandemic has shifted to less than half of the customers who say they will continue to use this feature in the future (ChaseDesign, 2021). Moving forward, retailers need to consider how consumers intend to use these new fulfillment channels to help retailers optimize their omnichannel strategies. While increased demand during COVID was likely fueled by store closures and a demand for contactless shopping, a key question moving forward is how consumers' motivations for omnichannel grocery shopping will shift (ChaseDesign, 2021). In this study, we seek to investigate how consumers' familiarity with omnichannel interactions along with hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations influence intentions to use different omnichannel grocery fulfillment channel options.

Omnichannel has been a recent trend for retail stores and has quickly shifted to more online shopping as COVID has placed tremendous pressure on retailers to supply online shopping value. Since its inception by Parker and Hand in 2009, offering the ability for consumers to shop wherever they choose (Parker & Hand, 2009) to the research definition of omnichannel provided by Verhoef et al, 2015 (Verhoef, Kannan, & Inman, 2015), retailers have been focusing on providing seamless buying opportunities to consumers. The pandemic has forced retailers to become more technologically advanced and retailers have responded, including the testing of drone delivery and self-driven cars ((Said, Zajdela, & Stathopoulos, 2021). The intent of this research is to focus on what omnichannel options customers prefer in the supermarket sector.

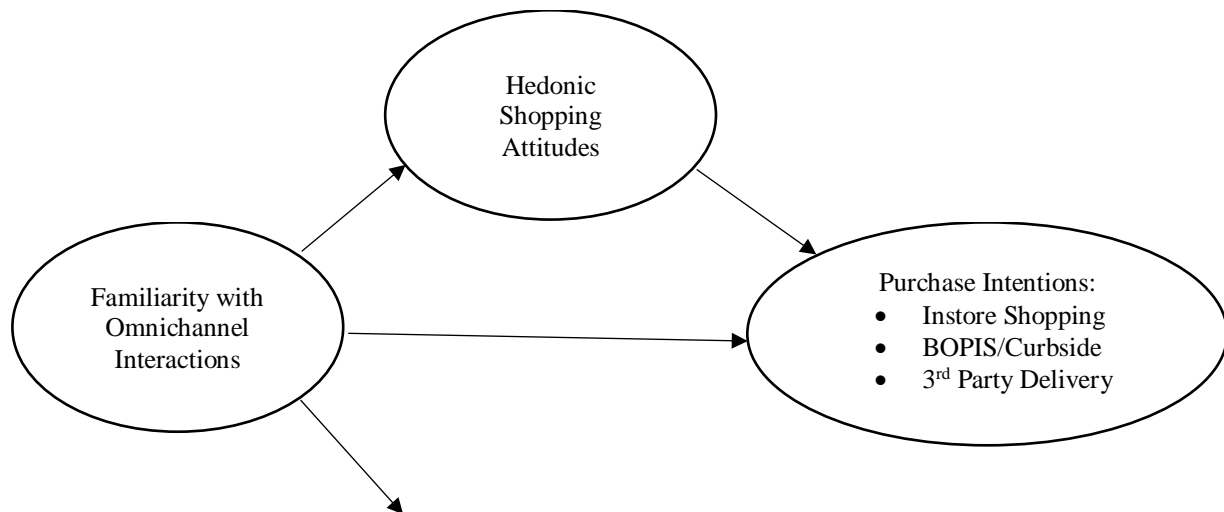
Our research is to understand the familiarity with omnichannel interactions, such as app usage, ease of use, one click shopping, transaction history, ability to see out of stocks, consistent pricing and consistency between all available channels and how these channel options play into shopping intentions, such as in-store shopping, buy online pickup in store, buy online curbside pickup and 3rd party deliveries, such as Instacart and Shipt (Zhang, Ren, Wang, & He, 2018). Using a series of moderating and mediating variables, this research seeks to answer which omnichannel shopping antecedents impact purchase intentions within the supermarket and grocery sector. It is important to note

that research prior to the COVID pandemic revealed that mobile and social media touchpoints resulted in the lowest frequency of touchpoints in a latent class analysis of 23 available touchpoints (e.g., promotional flyers, store signage, radio advertising, etc.) in a supermarket visit (Ieva & Ziliani, 2018). As customers have shifted back to instore shopping, the availability of omnichannel options has increased, studies are showing inconsistencies where customers are stating they will continue to use the BOPIS option (Aull et al., 2021) while others are sharing results that less than half of the pandemic users will continue to utilize online ordering due to food freshness concerns, long wait times, missing order items and product availability (ChaseDesign, 2021). Therefore, the need to find out which omnichannel antecedents customers prefer will be the pinpoint and importance of this research, in addition to whether the customer user experience is hedonic or utilitarian.

The theory we plan to adopt for our research is the uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). The theory dates to the early 1940's and details that a user is an active agent who has control over their intended consumption. In our paper, the active agents are the consumers and their control over what omnichannel options they choose and how this choice will affect their consumer experience and purchase intentions (Katz et al., 1973). Consumers today have a variety of options to shop and the intended use of each of these options is worthy of more research into the consumer and how they shop. The reasons why consumers shop has been studied for decades (Tauber, 1972). Many theories have been established throughout the decades, two most notable being the stimulus-organism-response theory and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Our proposal will utilize the uses and gratification theory to further begin to understand how consumers control the use and familiarity with omnichannel options within the grocery sector (Katz et al., 1973). As of 2021, Babin et al., reviewed the wheel of retailing and how the consumer, not technology, is the person that will drive purchase intentions (Babin, Feng, & Borges, 2021). Omnichannel has increased the number of purchase options, particularly in the grocery sector and to determine which of these options is preferred would be helpful to the supermarket retail industry.

Our proposed model is included in Figure 1. The model is intended to incorporate two important mediators, utilitarian or hedonic; originated by Babin et al. (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994), where we seek to understand how the use of omnichannel options driven by the consumer affect their internal state and purchase intention. The internal state experienced by the customer is whether the experience is hedonic in nature, like feeling the experience of joy or is it utilitarian in nature, to satisfy an immediate consumption need (Babin et al., 1994).

Figure 1: Theoretical Model of Familiarity of Channel Options and Purchase Intentions





Another interesting dynamic we want to incorporate is the wheel of retailing and how the past-present-future will affect one-stop shopping, in-store pickup, home delivery, drone delivery and self-driven cars (Babin et al., 2021). Retailing is still a fundamental shopping experience and even during the pandemic, grocery was deemed an essential business. Customers continued to shop, despite the pandemic. Customers began to adopt omnichannel elements and retailers are interested in understanding which channel metrics will have the most profitable outcome (Babin et al., 2021). As demonstrated by Babin et al., 2021, technology is not a differentiator as it can easily be copied and imitated (Babin et al., 2021). The customer's desire to use the technology for purchase is what our proposal will uncover and whether these channel options are more hedonic or utilitarian in nature. Ultimately, the success of any retailer is to satisfy the consumers' needs as the customer value is of utmost importance (Babin et al., 2021).

We anticipate finding that hedonic and utilitarian experiences will differ based on the channel selected by the consumer. Our sample data will be from actual consumers in the grocery market sector; we will be collecting data with a third-party research company and are targeting 400 useable items.

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# THE FUTURE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: THE ROLE OF CLIENT-BASED PROJECTS IN DEVELOPING CAREER-READY COMPETENCIES

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## PANEL POSITION PAPER

Most educators and employers agree career-readiness is a crucial outcome of a college education. Traditional pedagogy such as lecturing has left a gap between what is taught in the classroom and what is expected from industry. As a result, experiential learning outside of the classroom has increased in recent decades. Client-based projects (CBPs) have been recognized for their value as an experiential learning device and as a way to increase critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, existing literature has not fully explored the relationship between client-based projects and career-readiness skills.

As the world continues to grapple with accelerated technology growth and external disruptions large and small, not only are organizations transforming but so are their talent and skill needs. There is an increased focus on competencies needed in today's workplace, such as growth mindset, creativity, critical thinking, and communication (Udemy, 2020). In 2010, IBM's landmark Global CEO Study key findings stated complexity would rise and ability to manage it would be difficult with creativity as the most important leadership quality required (IBM, 2010). This is still true, today, according to McKinsey's (2021) global study defining skills needed in the future of work. McKinsey identified four broad competency categories of cognitive, digital, interpersonal, and self-leadership containing thirteen skill groups with 56 distinct elements of talent (DELTAs) or foundational skills within these areas. People with university degrees were more proficient in these foundational skills and those with highest proficiencies across the board were more likely to be employed, with highest incomes and job satisfaction (McKinsey, 2021). Over the past two decades, the need for standardizing generalized competencies required for career readiness and career success has increased (Astroth et al., 2004; Davis, 2006; Kaleba & Griffin, 2007; Peckham 2012). The best frameworks employ valid, robust, and consistent assessment (Lester, 2014) such as the one developed by the National Association of College and Employers (NACE) in 2015 (NACE, 2021).

According to NACE, career readiness is based on a foundation of eight core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management (NACE, 2021). The eight core competencies include career and self-development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology. These competencies were developed as a result of research conducted with career services, university relations, and recruiters to develop a shared understanding of what is needed to launch and develop a successful career, a common vocabulary by which to discuss needs and expectations, and a basic set of competencies upon which a successful career is established (NACE, 2021).

Experiential learning in college—such as internships, consulting projects, simulations, case competitions, and serving learning—have long been used to help students apply content (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). In Kolb's model (2014), students participate in hands-on experiences, reflect on these experiences, draw conclusions, and then apply their newly acquired knowledge to new experiences, restarting the cycle. In this type of instruction, the subject matter is the focus and the teacher and student co-create knowledge together. The role of the instructor is dynamic throughout the process, ranging from facilitator to coach. Similarly, the student is challenged to be flexible and address unanticipated situations, growing confidence in their ability to learn and adapt, a key career strength. In fact, it has been shown that students who take part in experiential learning are more successful in their careers (Selingo, 2016).

A subset of experiential learning, CBPs provide students with significant competency development beyond graded content application and address the increasing need for career-relevant internship experiences on resumes.

While communication hiring managers find student-run agency experiences valuable and an employee candidate differentiator (Haygood et al, 2019), and are believed to be beneficial according to advisors, they are poorly supported (Bush & Miller, 2011). Some educators bring CBPs into the classroom to increase relevant experiential learning. Similarly, research regarding the impact on comprehensive career readiness competencies is limited. A few studies focus on specific competencies learned through CBPs such as creative problem solving (Jaskari, 2013), student attitude relationship to problem solving, critical thinking and teamwork skills (Childers et al., 2020), requirements for retail industry (Oh & Polidan, 2018), and qualities required to win competitions (Spiller & Marold, 2015). Ye, Van Os, Chapman, and Jacobson (2017), developed and proved a Project Based Competency Education model that drives college-wide learning goals to direct assessment of outcomes of designed CBPs; however, they start with the university goals versus the hiring employer needs and focus only on online MBA students. Raska and Keller (2021) over ten years cleverly connected two courses with several companies and a student-run organization. They proved client and student impact as measured by the Gallup Big Six, the NACE competencies and Career Management Skills. However, there is no comprehensive study of broad career readiness development impact from classroom CBPs.

Marketing, communications, public relations, and advertising pedagogy, like many other professional fields, has bent to the compulsion of integration of digital/social landscape to accompany more traditional pedagogical practices with the rise of social media research and application (Duhé, 2015) being one of those trends. An issue regardless of the major program, is how to more effectively bridge the expectations of practitioners with what is being emphasized or taught in a classroom setting. “Academics are generally struggling with the overlapping and sometimes competing demands of teaching students with a wide range of competencies, managing courses, providing pastoral care to their students, generating funds, and publishing research” (Sonwalkar & Maheshkar, 2016, p. 88). Herein lie the gaps that experiential learning seeks to remedy as educators build career readiness competencies into the classroom in order to close the gap between the classroom and internships or jobs. Natalia, Svitlana, and Volodymyr (2020) found that continuously updating trends that reflect the objective development trends in marketing worked best to develop students' professional skills, communication, and organizational skills; however, as an example, communication and business education has not fully incorporated artificial intelligence or machine learning despite the fact that these technologies have the potential to help develop skills to become a better professional (Brown, 2019; Petrucci, 2019; Luttrell, et al., 2021).

To help fill this critical student-to-practitioner gap, improve NACE outcomes, and strengthen student capacity, the authors support experiential learning partnered with CBPs to be woven into the pedagogical practice. Evidence for this type of pedagogical practice is growing in scope and is ripe for additional research streams such as: infusion of competency into each class of a major program, student awareness of their competency skill gap, practitioner perceptions of student CBP competencies, the value of simulations and certificate learning, 21st century skill-competencies, and more.

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# USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO TEACH INTERNATIONAL MARKETING: TRANSNATIONAL MARKETING PROJECT

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## **PANEL POSITION PAPER**

The importance of international marketing as a subject area has tremendously grown in past few decades, essentially due to the impact of globalization (O'Brien & Deans, 1995). This is evident by the increase in the number of students attracted towards this major and programs being offered in this area (Boluda & Lopez, 2007). A recent article by Paik (2020) discusses the value of international business and utilizing practical pedagogy (project-based learning and study abroad programs) for transformative learning for students. Another study emphasized the need of innovative programs for twenty first century students (Ortiz, 2004). Thus, the purpose of this study is to discuss different approaches to teach international marketing to assess the use of digital technology in developing a new 'Transnational Marketing Project' approach to teach international marketing.

Teaching approaches can be broadly classified into two broad categories: student-centered and teacher-centered. Teacher-centered approach is teaching mainly to deliver knowledge to the students, so teachers focus on organizing the structure and presenting it in a matter that is easy for the students to understand such as traditional lecture. Student-centered teaching is based on the teacher facilitating student learning. In this method, teachers encourage students to build their own knowledge and understandings such as project-based learning (Kember & Kwan, 2002). Discipline has an effect on approaches to teaching. Lueddeke (2003) and Trigwell (2002) both showed that between 'soft' disciplines such as social sciences and design (Trigwell 2002) and 'hard' disciplines such as physical sciences, 'soft' disciplines were more student-centered. On the basis of cultural and epistemological differences, Becher (1989) classified disciplines into four categories: Pure Hard (e.g., Science), Applied Hard (e.g., Technology), Pure Soft (e.g., Arts), and Applied Soft (e.g., Education) (Coughlan & Perryman, 2011). 'Pure hard' disciplines such as science utilizes lecture method of teaching. Students are expected to memorize facts. 'Pure soft' disciplines such as arts are holistic in nature. Discussions and debates are preferred teaching methods to encourage creativity and expression of thought among students. 'Applied hard' disciplines such as technology, are based on factual understanding of the physical environment and practical application. Preferred teaching methods include simulations and case studies. 'Applied soft' disciplines such as education, focuses on re-iterative process for learning. Personal growth and rational thinking capacity are enhanced using discussion and debate method of teaching (Neumann et al. 2002). Interestingly, courses such as international marketing are way more than just 'applied soft', as they include large breadth of complex by interdependent concepts. For example, students need to understand not just the meaning but also the relationship between concepts like globalization, culture, diversity, politics, economics, technology, and overall environment in different regions of the world. Therefore, there is a need to add a category beyond 'applied soft'.

Some of the existing approaches to teach international marketing include work integrated learning, global immersion, integrating domestic field trips, case study method, or through literature. With the advancement and accessibility of technologies such as internet and video conferencing at an affordable price around the world, transnational distance education phenomena is being incorporated in teaching international marketing. One such approach is COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning). According to Hans de Wit (2019), COIL is defined as a new teaching and learning paradigm that promotes the development of intercultural competence across shared multicultural learning environments. Through innovative online pedagogies, it combines the four essential dimensions of real virtual mobility: a collaborative exercise of teachers and students, applied use of online technology and interaction, international dimensions, and integration to the learning process.

Similar to COIL approach, Singh (2020) developed 'Transnational Marketing Project' (TMP) approach to teaching international marketing. In fall semester (2020) TMP approach was initiated by me to help students learn the core of international marketing, which is in immersing in the other culture. I applied this approach at the Clarion University of Pennsylvania. Junior and senior level students worked in groups with their counterparts in India, South Africa, and Indonesia and developed marketing plans for seven businesses, as part of the course. This collaboration

helped students learn to interact with people from different cultures, gained first-hand experience of different cultures, responded to the challenges of working with people from other countries such as time zone and communication, learned about consumer behavior, and differences in international markets as compared to United States. Overall, the course and the project went well. Students' feedback was collected on 15 indicators using a 6-point Likert scale to rate their agreement. Univariate t-test results show students' agreement with learning via TMP (IPPs) approach at 95% confidence interval (p-value <0.01). Additionally, majority of the students confirmed that they enjoyed and learned by TMP, as evidenced from their qualitative feedback (see examples below), which confirms the quantitative results:

- "I really enjoyed this class and feel as though this is much more applicable than many of the classes that I have taken at Clarion through the years", and
- "Wonderful project... interesting, really way more than the catalog class description. Really makes breaching those international boundaries more human, approachable".

Students were exposed to direct and a more lived-in experience of the other country and culture without leaving their homes. While students in India learned about United States, Clarion students were able to learn about culture and markets in India. This helped broaden the horizon of students and encourage them to think about new opportunities without any barriers in their mind. The key to the success of TMP approach was the use of students from two or more institutions working together for one semester to develop a marketing plan. They used the digital technologies, which are freely available and interacted among themselves on a regular basis under the supervision of the faculty. Additionally, students reported development of international thinking and cultural awareness by understanding of different cultural norms and practices as practiced in India. They also felt improvement in their verbal communication skills and visual digital communication skills. The students also got an opportunity to present their work to an international audience and make long lasting relationships with diverse group of students. TMP helped them in many ways including resume booster.

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