

# Monographic versus Multiple Essay Dissertations: A Comparison of Journal Publications in the Marketing Discipline

William C. Martin, Mary K. Askim-Lovseth, and Connie Rae Bateman

**Purpose of the Study:** Multiple essay dissertations have become increasingly common in marketing Ph.D. programs, but the research outcomes of those who employ this comparatively new format have not been investigated. In this study, we compare the total number of journal publications and the number of top-tier marketing journal publications across marketing Ph.D. graduates who used traditional, monographic dissertations and those who used multiple essay dissertations. We also investigate the impact of the marketing Ph.D. program ranking on the effectiveness of these two formats.

**Method/Design:** An observational research method is employed whereby the dissertation format, number of journal publications, and Ph.D. program and hiring institution ranking for 896 marketing Ph.D. graduates from 2003 to 2013 are investigated.

**Results:** Marketing Ph.D. graduates who complete monographic dissertations publish significantly more journal articles than do graduates who complete multiple essay dissertations. There is no significant difference in the number of top-tier marketing journal publications between those who complete monographic or multiple essay dissertations. The ranking of the Ph.D. program has no significant effect on the results, nor does the graduates' gender. No significant differences are found between two-essay and three-essay dissertations, and dissertation format has no relationship with the rank of the graduates' initial hiring institution.

**Value to Marketing Educators:** The results suggest that monographic dissertations lead to more journal publications for marketing Ph.D. graduates and call into question the effectiveness of the multiple essay dissertation format in improving the research productivity of these graduates.

*Keywords:* dissertation format, observational research, monographs, multiple essays

**William C. Martin, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Marketing, Department of Marketing and Finance, College of Business and Public Administration, Eastern Washington University, 668 N. Riverpoint Blvd. Suite A, 357, Spokane, WA 99202, U.S.A., Tel: 509-828-1255, Email: [wmartin10@ewu.edu](mailto:wmartin10@ewu.edu). **Mary K. Askim-Lovseth, Ph.D.**, Professor Emeritus, Department of Marketing, College of Business and Public Administration, Stop 8366, Grand Forks, ND 58202-8366, Tel: 701-777-2930, Email: [maskim@business.und.edu](mailto:maskim@business.und.edu). **Connie Rae Bateman, D.B.A.**, Professor and Chair of Marketing, Department of Marketing, College of Business and Public Administration, Stop 8366, Grand Forks, ND 58202-8366, Tel: 701-777-4201, Email: [connie.bateman@business.und.edu](mailto:connie.bateman@business.und.edu).

## Introduction

For well over 100 years, the dissertation has been one of the hallmarks of doctoral education, with the dual purpose of acting as an all-inclusive instructional tool for doctoral students and requiring them to provide a significant contribution to knowledge in their discipline (Berelson 1960). Yet, based on insufficient research, a substantial change has been made to the dissertation in recent years, potentially impacting the likelihood of being hired at a high-quality institution in many disciplines, including the marketing discipline. The risk therein is of doctoral programs over promising and under delivering in terms of building the graduates' ability to build a marketable 'brand' based upon quality research publications. This momentous change has come in the form of the multiple essay dissertation, a format that involves doctoral students completing a number of papers of journal-length rather than a single,

monographic document. An increasing number of doctoral granting institutions now either mandate that their students complete a multiple essay dissertation or provide them the option of doing so in lieu of the traditional, monographic dissertation. Many benefits have been lauded of this new format but perhaps most especially that it should serve as a superior instrument in teaching doctoral students how to author papers which can be readily published in academic journals in addition to providing them with multiple papers which can be submitted to journals before and/or after graduation. Doctoral granting institutions are reportedly switching to this relatively new format in an effort to improve their graduates' success in publishing their work, which may, in turn, strengthen the institutions' prestige. And if graduates are able to have more manuscripts available for submission to academic journals, doctoral granting institutions may be hopeful that their graduates will be able to secure positions at

higher ranked institutions with the multiple essay dissertation format than might be possible otherwise.

Despite the growing popularity of this new dissertation format, its outcomes in terms of the publications of graduates have not been compared to the monographic dissertation in the marketing discipline. Since the stated aim of many doctoral granting institutions who have switched already to this new format or are considering doing so is in order to enhance their graduates' publishing success, there is a great need for these institutions and the marketing discipline as a whole to understand the effectiveness of this new format in this regard. To date, the only empirical work that has yet compared the comparative outcomes of multiple essay and monographic dissertations has been in the economics discipline, and while graduates who completed multiple essay dissertations published more journal articles, the results varied significantly across the two relatively brief time periods investigated (Stock and Siegfried 2013). Consequently, some ponder whether the movement toward the multiple essay dissertation format is appropriate for doctoral graduates as well as doctoral granting institutions (Baggs 2011; Bartula and Worrall 2012).

As such, the research question addressed herein is whether there are differences in the comparative outcomes, specifically, the quantity and quality of academic journal publications and the rank of the graduates' initial hiring institution, of marketing Ph.D. graduates who complete monographic dissertations and multiple essay dissertations as well as the impact of the doctoral granting institutions' rank on this process. Investigation of this research question provides a contribution to the marketing education literature by furthering understanding of the instructional value of two widely used but disparate dissertation formats. Many purport that multiple essay dissertations may better equip doctoral students for the realities of publishing in academic journals. Empirical investigation of this assertion may help to enhance understanding of how doctoral students in marketing best learn the skills needed to publish their work. This research also provides valuable information to doctoral granting institutions in marketing regarding the role of dissertation format in their graduates' subsequent research endeavors. If the multiple essay dissertation format is indeed superior to the monographic dissertation format in training doctoral students and helping them better succeed in publishing their work, then more institutions should consider switching to this new format. Otherwise, changes to the long-standing notion of a dissertation being a monographic document detailing a single, more comprehensive research endeavor may be unwarranted or even deleterious to doctoral students and the marketing discipline. In this exploratory research, we primarily investigate the differential outcomes of the dissertation format used by marketing Ph.D. graduates in terms of journal publications.

The rest of the manuscript is organized as follows. Extant literature and perspectives on dissertations are

reviewed in the following section. This is followed by the methods used to conduct the empirical research along with the results. Finally, we provide a discussion of our findings in addition to the study's limitations and directions for future research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Beginning in Germany in the mid-1800s, the dissertation has, arguably, become the cornerstone of doctoral education. Its purpose has traditionally been viewed as being twofold: (1) to serve as a comprehensive learning exercise for the doctoral student and (2) to provide a substantial contribution to knowledge in the discipline (Berelson 1960). Recently, a third dimension to the dissertation's purpose has evolved and captured the attention of students, programs, and hiring institutions: a concerted focus on building the human brand capital of the doctoral student in marketing to increase the likelihood of successful placement at an institution (Close, Moulard, and Monroe 2011; Stock and Siegfried 2013). Current thought on optimizing the brand capital of a person extends brand positioning theory to professionals (Dion and Arnould 2016; Khedher 2014). Authoring a dissertation can be considered part of the process of establishing a graduate's brand identity, setting themselves apart from others in the field (Khedher 2014), building their cultural capital (Khedher 2018), and acting as an important signal of a graduate's research productivity, potentially the most important aspect of the graduate in the academic job market (Zamudio, Wang, Haruvy 2013). Relatedly, the quality of the socialization mechanisms, both formal and informal, engaged in by the doctoral student play an important role in positioning his or her 'person brand' as a job candidate (Parmentier, Fischer, and Reuber, 2013). The dissertation could be considered a formalized program-level or 'university-driven' socialization instrument designed to build field-specific capital in the graduate (Trocchia and Berkowitz 1999). Understanding the power of both formal and informal social networks among marketing scholars (e.g. the co-author network) has been identified as "the highest-priority research topic in marketing" (Goldenberg, Libai, Muller, and Stremersch 2010, p. 561).

Applied in the context of seeking a first marketing faculty position, effective branding may be more likely if the faculty member has not only intellectually and experientially learned the expected professional practices in the academic field but has also behaviorally conformed and fit to those expectations and enriched his or her field-specific capital in such a way as to significantly differentiate from others seeking the same position (Parmentier, Fischer, and Reuber 2013; Patton 2013). Marketing doctoral students experience felt connections between their perceived future market (person-brand) value in the academic community and the ability of the granting institution's program and faculty to produce results in and through them (Trocchia and Berkowitz 1999). There appear to be five definable human brand cues for doctoral students seeking their

first marketing faculty position (Close, Moulard, and Monroe 2011). Three of these brand cues are extrinsic to the candidate and, in order of salary predictor strength, are (1) the corporate brand or research productivity of program faculty, (2) the co-brand or research productivity of their advisor, and (3) engagement with the AMA-Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium. The two brand cues intrinsic to the candidate are (1) a defended proposal at the time of initial interviews and (2) manuscripts that are in or have made it through the review process of top-tier marketing journals. Relatedly, the present study investigates the relationships between dissertation type used, with hiring institutional rank; rank of doctoral institution; and research productivity after the initial hire.

Until recent years, the dissertation was, almost universally, viewed as “a lengthy document (typically 200-400 pages in length) on a single topic presented through separate chapters for the introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and conclusions” (Duke and Beck 1999, p. 31); herein, we refer to this format as a monographic dissertation. There has been an ongoing call for change to the monographic dissertation format, in part due to concerns that graduates utilizing the format are not optimally prepared or trained to be productive researchers. One of its biggest criticisms is that its audience is almost invariably quite limited; very few individuals apart from the dissertation committee ever read the document, and even fewer monographic dissertations are published in their entirety (Duke and Beck 1999; Morton 2015). As it is quite rare for an individual to ever compose more than one dissertation, the generalizability of this format is also questionable (Duke and Beck 1999). Lastly, the perception of the monographic dissertation as being a monumental effort is viewed by some as a contributing factor in the failure of fifty percent of doctoral students to graduate (Barnes and Randall 2012; Sheppard, Nayyar, and Summer 2000).

Consequently, institutions have been searching for another dissertation format, one which would better serve students and the discipline. As early as 1991, nearly 20% of U.S. graduate schools surveyed had already approved alternative formats to the monographic dissertation (Council of Graduate Schools 1991), though alternatives have been more common in the ‘hard’ sciences (Duke and Beck 1999). The most common alternative to the monographic dissertation is the multiple essay dissertation, sometimes referred to as the manuscript option, whereby a series of papers arranged for independent publication are collectively treated as a dissertation (Gross, Alhusen, and Jennings 2012; Krathwohl 1994). Unlike the monographic dissertation, where it is generally necessary for the author to condense the document into a length acceptable for an academic journal, split the dissertation into multiple manuscripts, or both, the intended product of the multiple essay dissertation is a number of papers ready to be submitted to academic journals in their existing form (Bartula and Worrall 2012; Sheppard, Nayyar, Summer 2000; Stock and Siegfried 2013). Purportedly, the multiple essay dissertation may

reduce the time it takes for doctoral students to publish their work (Stock and Siegfried 2006), a major concern among doctoral coordinators (Bearden, Ellen, and Netermeyer 2000).

Further, and perhaps of greatest interest to many, the multiple essay dissertation may lead to a greater number of publications for the graduate, thus fueling an early start to productive scholarly activity and not only enhancing the competitiveness of their personal brand in the marketplace but contributing to the quality image of the advisors, program, and school (Ostriker, Kuh, and Voytuk 2011). Indeed, one study of Ph.D. graduates in economics found that, compared to graduates who completed monographic dissertations, those who completed multiple essay dissertations published an average of almost one additional article within five years of graduation, though these findings varied significantly across the two time periods investigated and across institutions with differing rankings (Stock and Siegfried 2013). The formal socialization structure of the multiple essay dissertation is designed, in part, to foster co-authorships with advisors and/or committee members. This may better train and socialize doctoral students for the realities of publishing in the current environment as the number of authors per journal publication has been increasing over time (Talanga and Chia 2010).

If marketing Ph.D. graduates who complete multiple essay dissertations are successful in publishing more journal articles than graduates with monographic dissertations, one would also expect them to have more publications in top-tier marketing publications. Higher ranked institutions may be more successful in adapting to the relatively new format of multiple essay dissertations as well. One would also expect that, due to the presumption that they will be more successful in publishing their work than others, graduates who complete a multiple essay dissertation would be viewed more attractively by hiring institutions, leading to an improvement in the ranking of their hiring institution compared to graduates who complete monographic dissertations.

Despite the purported benefits of multiple essay dissertations, some have expressed trepidation with substituting the monographic dissertation with this comparatively new format. Perhaps foremost among these worries is that the multiple essay dissertation may not be as effective of an instructional tool as the monographic dissertation. Compared to monographic dissertations, papers of journal length, as each of the manuscripts in a multiple essay dissertation are intended to be, lean towards lesser discussion of relevant literature, research methods, and implications (Reid 1978), causing some to ponder whether doctoral students need the experience of writing a monographic dissertation in order to learn the necessary research skills in academia (Robinson and Dracup 2008). Some faculty believe that the scope of a multiple essay dissertation will be broader than that of a monographic dissertation, thereby lessening the depth and rigor of the former (Thomas 2015). When queried about the possibility of replacing the monographic dissertation for the multiple essay dissertation, one faculty member

commented that “[w]riting a dissertation requires some skills (e.g. drafting a book manuscript, planning of larger work, more extensive execution of lit [sic] review, methodology and analysis, etc.) that merely writing shorter papers does not require or cultivate” (Bartula and Worrall 2012, p. 18). This concern is shared by Duke and Beck (1999, p. 35), who affirmed that “we should not lose sight of the fact that the traditional dissertation provides training in developing a substantial, coherent research plan through a single research study.” Some suggest that doctoral students’ ability to do independent academic work may be diminished if multiple essay dissertations are substituted for the monographic dissertation, even going so far as to assert that such a change could result in dilution of the value of a Ph.D. (Bartula and Worrall 2012; Stock and Siegfried 2013).

Existing faculty may not be supportive of the multiple essay dissertation, and without the such support and collaborative efforts from faculty, doctoral students utilizing this format may experience difficulty in producing essays that may be published later. A majority of the criminal justice professors and instructors in one survey were not supportive of the multiple essay dissertation, particularly those who possessed a Ph.D. (Bartula and Worrall 2012). Some argue that the longstanding and widespread use of the monographic dissertation in doctoral education across a myriad of disciplines necessarily implies that it has been a successful format (Duke and Beck 1999), leading one to question whether adopting a new format such as the multiple essay dissertation is called for. Changing the ‘tradition’ of the monographic dissertation may not be easy for many academics: “It’s a hazing ritual passed down from another era, retained because the Ph.Ds. before us had to do it” (Pannapacker in Patton 2013, p. A20). Some doctoral students are concerned that completion of a multiple essay dissertation may adversely impact their success in obtaining a desired academic position after graduation (Thomas 2015).

Finally, multiple essays may lead to intellectual property issues. Determining which dissertation committee members should receive authorship and in what order may be more problematic with multiple essays as opposed to a monographic dissertation (Baggs 2011; Bartula and Worrall 2012). Determining whom the authors of each essay should be as well as the order of authorship may be exceedingly challenging (Gross, Alhusen, and Jennings 2012). In such cases where a published manuscript is a requirement of graduation, students may experience undue hardship and delays in graduation when the manuscript is rejected by journal reviewers (Duke and Beck 1999). Journal editors report receiving submitted manuscripts with cover letters explaining that the author cannot graduate unless the decision is to create a pathway for acceptance which places the editor in an untenable position (Morton 2015). And while it is now common for universities to make dissertations publicly available online, some journals view this as publication of the work(s) and will not consider it for review (Baggs 2011),

which may limit the number of outlets that graduates who complete multiple essay dissertations may publish their essays in.

In an effort to shed light on the comparative outcomes of graduates who complete monographic and multiple essay dissertations, we evaluate the relative number of journal publications achieved by marketing Ph.D. graduates in absolute terms and across multiple factors. While this topic has been researched by Stock and Siegfried (2013) with regard to doctoral students in the economics discipline, our research is notably different in four ways. First, rather than examine a narrow cohort group, we investigate a large percentage of marketing Ph.D. graduates in the U.S. over an eleven-year period, providing significantly greater generalizability. Second, we examine Ph.D. graduates in the marketing discipline; differences in the economics and marketing disciplines may well manifest themselves in the outcomes of doctoral graduates. Third, we investigate not only the impact of rankings of Ph.D. programs, a factor known to impact graduates’ success on the academic job market (e.g. Volkov, Chira, and Premti 2016; Zamudio et al. 2013), on the productivity of graduates with monographic and multiple essay dissertations but also the impact of dissertation format on the ranking of the graduates’ hiring institution; Stock and Siegfried (2013) found that Ph.D. graduates from higher ranked doctoral institutions who used the multiple essay dissertation published more journal articles than did graduates from lower ranked doctoral institutions using the same. Fourth, in addition to examining the total number of journal publications authored by the Ph.D. graduates, we also investigate the number of top-tier marketing journal publications they produce. The impact of the Ph.D. graduates’ gender on the number of journal articles published is also examined as Stock and Siegfried (2013) found that male graduates publish significantly more journal articles than female graduates. Details on the methods used are discussed in the following section.

## METHODS

Data collection began by assembling a listing of all marketing Ph.D. graduates listed in the Who Went Where survey published annually by the American Marketing Association’s Doctoral Student special interest group from 2003 through 2013. These reports provide information about a very inclusive, though admittedly not exhaustive, list of marketing Ph.D. graduates in the U.S. along with the institution granting their Ph.D. and the graduates’ hiring institution. Participation in the survey is encouraged by doctoral program coordinators across the U.S. and solicited through the ELMAR listserv, the Association for Consumer Research, and the Doctoral Student special interest group. These surveys provided the names, doctoral granting institutions, and hiring institutions for 1,150 graduates.

Each graduate’s dissertation was then examined using the University of Michigan ProQuest dissertation database, the largest repository of graduate

dissertations in the world, to determine the type of format used; examination of the table of contents of dissertations readily reveals both the dissertation format as well as the number of essays included for multiple essay dissertations. Two techniques were used to determine the number of journal publications of the graduates as well as the journals themselves, with particular attention to top-tier marketing journals. The preferred method was to examine graduates' current curriculum vitae for a listing of their publications. When this was not possible (e.g. no current curriculum vitae could be located), a search for publications by each

graduate was conducted using the Business Source Premier database and Google Scholar. After eliminating graduates for whom complete data could not be compiled, a total of 896 graduates remained in the dataset. Rankings of both the doctoral granting institutions in marketing as well as the graduates' hiring institutions followed those developed by Urbancic (2008). Granting and hiring institutions were categorized by quartiles such that the top 25% highest ranking institutions were placed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile, etc. Sample descriptive statistics by quartile rank of institution and by gender can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
Sample Descriptors

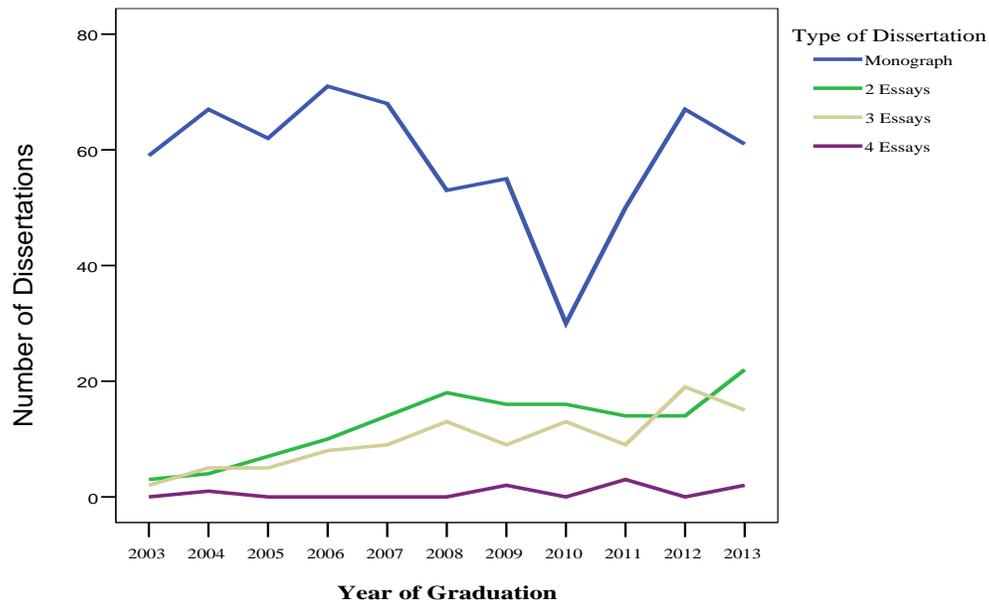
<b>Male Doctoral Student Monographic Essay: Institutional Rank, Publications, and Top Tier Journal Productivity</b>								
	<u>Granting Institution (GI)</u>				<u>Hiring Institution (HI)</u>			
Institution (Quartiles)	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q1</u>
Institution (Public %)	72.8	85.9	94.3	79.2	61.5	58.3	75	86.7
AVE Quartile Rank of GI <sup>1</sup>	11.13	28.89	49.09	69.32	20.6	31.39	30.75	34.04
AVE Quartile Rank of HI <sup>2</sup>	35.68	38.16	45.93	61	11.04	31.29	47.71	70.73
Students (#)	92	92	53	53	26	24	24	30
Essays (#)	92	92	53	53	26	24	24	30
Articles published # (AVE)	659 (7.49)	713 (8.10)	459 (9.98)	321 (6.17)	332 (12.77)	255 (11.09)	158 (6.58)	264 (9.78)
Articles published in Top Jnls # <sup>3</sup>	54	36	37	26	16	14	10	16
Articles in Top Jnls (%) <sup>3</sup>	8.2	5	8.1	8.1	4.8	6.2	6.3	6.1
<b>Female Doctoral Student Monographic Essay: Institutional Rank, Publications, and Top Tier Journal Productivity</b>								
	<u>Granting Institution (GI)</u>				<u>Hiring Institution (HI)</u>			
Institution (Quartiles)	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q1</u>
Institution (Public %)	62	95.3	93.2	88.9	22.2	85.7	80	75
AVE Quartile Rank of GI <sup>1</sup>	11.64	29.61	48.41	69.78	25.06	31.5	35	36.27
AVE Quartile Rank of HI <sup>2</sup>	31.77	38.23	42.11	43.88	9.67	32.07	48.8	69.63
Students (#)	50	64	44	36	18	14	15	16
Essays (#)	50	64	44	36	18	14	15	16
Articles published # (AVE)	367 (7.34)	502 (7.84)	407 (9.93)	220 (6.88)	165 (9.17)	149 (10.64)	99 (6.60)	203 (13.53)
Articles published in Top Jnls # <sup>3</sup>	19	38	26	19	11	10	10	5
Articles in Top Jnls (%) <sup>3</sup>	5.2	7.6	6.4	8.6	6.7	6.7	10	2.5
<b>Male Doctoral Student Multiple-Essay: Institutional Rank, Publications, and Top Tier Journal Productivity</b>								
	<u>Granting Institution (GI)</u>				<u>Hiring Institution (HI)</u>			
Institution (Quartiles)	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q1</u>
Institution (Public %)	69.4	44.4	84.6	72.7	40	66.7	53.8	75
AVE Quartile Rank of GI <sup>1</sup>	13.97	31.26	51.35	69.27	27.75	23.6	29.1	30.14
AVE Quartile Rank of HI <sup>2</sup>	35.35	31.64	38.86	59	12.2	29.33	48.62	68.63
Students (#)	36	27	26	11	15	12	13	8
Essays (#)	84	71	64	27	36	27	29	19
Articles published # (AVE)	208 (5.94)	103 (3.96)	178 (6.85)	56 (5.09)	82 (5.47)	77 (6.42)	91 (7)	49 (6.13)
Articles published in Top Jnls # <sup>3</sup>	15	13	15	2	5	3	10	8
Articles in Top Jnls (%) <sup>3</sup>	7.2	12.6	8.4	3.6	6.1	3.9	11	16.3
<b>Female Doctoral Student Multiple-Essay: Institutional Rank, Publications, and Top Tier Journal Productivity</b>								
	<u>Granting Institution (GI)</u>				<u>Hiring Institution (HI)</u>			
Institution (Quartiles)	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q1</u>
Institution (Public %)	68.4	64.3	90	84.6	66.7	63.6	66.7	61.5
AVE Quartile Rank of GI <sup>1</sup>	11.95	31.18	48.6	67.23	31.92	39.33	37.33	25.91
AVE Quartile Rank of HI <sup>2</sup>	42.27	40	46	31.17	13.4	32.73	48.67	71.38
Students (#)	38	28	20	13	15	11	9	13
Essays (#)	89	74	51	30	34	28	22	31
Articles published # (AVE)	215 (6.52)	170 (6.80)	141 (7.83)	55 (4.58)	122 (8.71)	52 (5.20)	55 (6.11)	32 (2.91)
Articles published in Top Jnls # <sup>3</sup>	12	13	11	6	7	4	3	6
Articles in Top Jnls (%) <sup>3</sup>	5.6	7.6	7.8	10.9	5.7	7.7	5.5	18.8
<sup>1</sup> Subsample GI rank compared to rank of HI.								
<sup>2</sup> Subsample HI rank compared retrospectively to rank of GI.								
<sup>3</sup> Top-tier Jnls: <i>Journal of Marketing</i> , <i>Journal of Marketing Research</i> , <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> , <i>Marketing Science</i>								

## RESULTS

Over the eleven-year period investigated, the number of graduates in the dataset who completed a multiple essay dissertation certainly increased, as illustrated in Figure 1. Among this group, the most common number

of essays completed was two or three; only eight dissertations that consisted of four essays were included in our dataset. In 2003, three two-essay and two three-essay dissertations were completed; by 2013, this had expanded to twenty-two and fifteen, respectively.

**Figure 1**  
Number and Type of Dissertation Completed in Marketing by Year of Graduation



A comparison of the number of journal articles published by graduates using the different dissertation formats was then conducted; the results are shown in Table 2. Considering that the number of graduates with multiple essay dissertations has expanded considerably across the period covered in the dataset, the length of time since graduation was included as a covariate as this should lead to more journal publications. An ANCOVA indicates that graduates with monographic dissertations authored more journal articles ( $n = 643$ , mean number of publications = 8.25) than those graduates with multiple essay dissertations ( $n = 253$ , mean number of publications = 6.08), a

difference which is statistically significant ( $F[1,894] = 4.92$ ,  $p = .027$ ); length of time since graduation is a significant covariate ( $F[10,885] = 5.99$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Further, a comparison of graduates with two-essay and three-essay dissertations in terms of articles published indicates that there is no significant difference between these two formats ( $n = 138$ , mean number of publications for two-essay graduates = 5.84;  $n = 107$ , mean number of publications for three-essay graduates = 6.25;  $F[1,894] = 1.95$ ,  $p = .164$ ); four-essay dissertations are not included in this comparison due to there being so few in the dataset.

**Table 2**  
Number of Publications across Dissertation Formats

	Monographic Dissertations	Multiple Essay Dissertations	p-value for Difference
Sample size	643	253	
Mean number of publications	8.25	6.08	0.027
Mean number of top-tier marketing journal publications	0.50	0.43	0.929
	Two-Essay Dissertations	Three-Essay Dissertations	p-value for Difference
Sample size	138	107	
Mean number of publications	5.84	6.25	0.164
Mean number of top-tier marketing journal publications	0.45	0.40	0.635
	Male Graduates	Female Graduates	
Sample size	491	352	
Mean number of publications	7.64	7.64	1.000
Mean number of top-tier marketing journal publications	0.5	0.46	0.440

The quality of journal publications was also compared across the dissertation formats by comparing the number of publications authored by the graduates in top-tier marketing journals, namely, the *Journal of Marketing*, the *Journal of Marketing Research*, the *Journal of Consumer Research*, and *Marketing Science*. Graduates with monographic dissertations published an average of .50 top-tier marketing journal publications, and graduates with multiple essay dissertations published an average of .43 of the same, an insignificant difference ( $F[1,894] = .01, p = .929$ ). Again, length of time since graduation is a significant covariate ( $F[10,885] = 3.87, p < .001$ ). A comparison of graduates with two-essay and three-essay dissertations in terms of top-tier marketing journal publications reveals no significant difference between these two formats (two-essay = .45, three-essay = .40,  $F[1,894] = .23, p = .635$ ).

The impact of the ranking of the Ph.D. granting institutions on the graduates' number of journal article publications was also examined. This indicates that there is no significant interaction between the dissertation format and the ranking of the Ph.D. granting university ( $F[41,854] = .61, p = .969$ ), indicating that an institution's ranking does not appear to have an impact on its graduates' journal publications across the dissertation formats. Similarly, a comparison of graduates with monographic and multiple essay dissertations in terms of top-tier marketing journal publications by the ranking of the Ph.D. granting institution revealed no significant interaction between dissertation format and the ranking of the Ph.D. granting university ( $F[42,854] = .49, p = .996$ ); the graduating institution's ranking does not appear to have an impact on the number of its graduates' top-tier marketing journal publications across the dissertation formats.

The impact of dissertation format on the ranking of the graduates' hiring institution was investigated. There is no significant difference between the rankings of graduates' hiring institutions across multiple essay and monographic dissertations ( $F[1,894] = 1.45, p = .229$ ). In order to examine for a potential confounding effect, the relationship between the ranking of Ph.D. granting institutions and graduates' hiring institutions was also investigated; this indicated that there is a very weak, though statistically significant, relationship between the two variables (Spearman's rho = .170,  $p = .011$ ). As this relationship is quite weak, its potential to confound the results appears low.

Finally, we examine the impact of gender. Regarding the number of publications produced by the graduates, there is no significant interaction effect between gender and the number of essays ( $F = .301, df = 3, p = .824$ ); no significant main effect is present either ( $F = .000, df = 1, p = 1.000$ ); interestingly, both males and females authored an average of 7.64 journal articles. Similarly, regarding the number of top-tier marketing journal publications authored by graduates, there is no significant interaction effect between gender and the number of essays ( $F = .232, df = 3, p = .874$ ) and no significant main effect (mean number of top-tier marketing publications for males = .50, mean number of top-tier marketing publications for females = .46,  $F = 1.034, df = 1, p = .440$ ).

## DISCUSSION

In an effort to improve its effectiveness as a teaching tool, many have desired for changes to be made to the doctoral dissertation. One of the most notable changes in recent years has been the move among many doctoral granting institutions to allow or require their

students to complete multiple essays as a substitute for a single, monographic length dissertation. This relatively new format is purported by many to be superior under the presumption that it better trains graduates in the development of journal-length papers as opposed to the far less used monographic format, in addition to providing graduates with multiple papers ready for submission to journals. Our findings clearly suggest that there is a trend among doctoral granting institutions in marketing toward greater use of the multiple essay dissertation format. Two-essay dissertations appear to be somewhat more common than three-essay dissertations, while the four-essay model is rarely used.

Despite this trend, within the marketing discipline it appears that multiple essay dissertations do not result in more academic publications for Ph.D. graduates. Conversely, graduates who complete traditional, monographic length dissertations appear to produce more journal articles, even when accounting for the trend toward greater use of the multiple essay format over the period investigated. There is no difference in terms of the number of publications in top-tier marketing journals across these two formats. Counter to prior research (Stock and Siegfried 2013), we find no difference in the effectiveness of either dissertation format across the ranking of the graduates' Ph.D. programs, nor are significant differences observed across graduates' gender. Finally, there is no significant difference in the ranking of graduates' hiring institutions across the two dissertation types, implying that institutions of all ranks are equally accepting of both formats.

Given the movement toward multiple essay dissertations, our findings might seem counter-intuitive to some, but there are a number of plausible explanations. First, it may well be that existing faculty's concern regarding the lesser ability of the multiple essay dissertation as an instructional tool (Bartula and Worrall 2012) is justified. The ability of the monographic dissertation to provide "training in developing a substantial, coherent research plan through a single research study" may not hold true with alternative formats such as the multiple essay dissertation (Duke and Beck 1991, p. 35). While a monographic length research document is not commonly used after the doctoral student graduates, the effort devoted to a single, in-depth project may provide greater and/or longer lasting instructional value.

Second, the frequent need for a paper to be written for a specific journal (Summers 2001) may at least partially negate one of the purported benefits of the multiple essay dissertation. When doctoral students are crafting each of their essays, concerns about meeting the requirements of the dissertation committee or the institution may override their desire or ability to compose the paper in the format and style demanded by a specific journal. As noted by Baggs (2011), the final version of a dissertation essay accepted by a journal may be very dissimilar from what was originally submitted to the dissertation committee. Such significant revision to the paper might comprise no less

effort than would be involved in condensing and reworking material from a monographic dissertation, thereby annulling one of the key proposed benefits of the multiple essay format.

Third, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is common for graduates using the multiple essay format to never publish one or more of their essays and/or to combine their essays in order to publish their work in academic journals. In both instances, the advantage of having multiple papers to submit to journals may be at least partially negated. Perhaps this occurrence is due to dissertation advisors and committee members being more likely to perceive significant contributions to the discipline among each of the essays than journal reviewers.

Fourth, it appears to be common for at least one of the essays in a multiple essay dissertation to be conceptual in nature. With a two-essay dissertation, for instance, it seems typical for the first essay to be conceptual and the second essay to be empirical. Given that the overwhelming majority of published articles in the marketing discipline are not purely conceptual, this may create a significant hurdle for graduates attempting to publish such an essay. This may necessitate that graduates either gather empirical data pertinent to a conceptual paper, which may well be superfluous if they have already collected such data for another of their essays, or leave them with comparatively few publication outlets interested in their work.

Fifth, universities' practice in posting graduates' dissertations to the Internet, whether they are comprised of a monograph or multiple essays, may inhibit the graduates' ability to publish the work later. Certain journals refuse to consider manuscripts for publication if they have been posted to the Internet with public access, citing this as publication of the work (Baggs 2011). This is likely to be a far greater threat to graduates who complete multiple essay dissertations since their essays are intended to already be in a similar length and layout to that desired by academic journals, whereas graduates who complete monographic dissertations must usually condense their work into one or more manuscripts of journal length.

While the specific causal mechanisms underlying the observed differences between the two dissertation formats are not precisely known, we cautiously offer some potential recommendations for doctoral granting institutions in the marketing discipline on the bases of our findings and the literature. First, these institutions should carefully evaluate whether they should switch to this comparatively new format or, if they have already made this change, whether they should at least provide their doctoral students with the option of completing a monographic dissertation. Highly ranked doctoral institutions should be warned that our findings do not suggest that their graduates have been more successful with multiple essay dissertations than other graduates. Assessment efforts play an important role in this potentially momentous decision (Barnes and Randall 2012) and should be conducted regularly by marketing doctoral programs to establish and track the outcomes of graduates to determine whether it is

producing their desired results. Further, institutions' whose goals for multiple essay dissertations go beyond improving their doctoral students' subsequent success in publishing their work may find this format to be appropriate.

Second, doctoral granting institutions using the multiple essay format might wish to specify that all or, in the case of three or four essay dissertations, at least a majority of the essays completed have an empirical component. Doing so may improve graduates' success in publishing their work as there are substantially more outlets for empirical than solely conceptual manuscripts. Third, for institutions using the multiple essay format, dissertation committees should be particularly mindful as to whether the contribution to knowledge made by each of the essays will be viewed as significant by potential journal reviewers. The need for graduates to often combine multiple essays in order to publish their work suggests that this may often not be the case. Fourth, doctoral granting institutions should consider limiting the public's access to multiple essay dissertations in particular as this practice may preclude graduates from subsequently publishing their work in certain academic journals.

## REFERENCES

- Baggs, J.G. (2011). The dissertation manuscript option, Internet posting, and publication. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 34, 89-90. doi:10.1002/nur.2041020
- Barnes, B.J., and Randall, J. (2012). Doctoral student satisfaction: An examination of disciplinary, enrollment, and institutional differences. *Research in Higher Education*, 53, 46-75. doi:10.1007/s11162-011-9225-4
- Bartula, A. & Worrall, J.L. (2012). Criminology and criminal justice faculty perceptions of a multi-paper option in lieu of the dissertation. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 23(1), 1-22. doi:10.1080/10511253.2011.590510
- Bearden, W., Ellen, P.J., & Netermeyer, R.G. (2000). Challenges and prospects facing doctoral education in marketing. *Marketing Education Review*, 10(1), 1-14. doi:10.1080/105280008.2000.11488688
- Berelson, B. (1960). *Graduate education in the U.S.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Close, A.G., Moulard, J.G., & Monroe, K.B. (2011). Establishing human brands: determinants of placement success for first faculty positions in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39, 922-941. doi:10.1007/s11747-010-0221-6
- Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S. (1991). *The role and nature of the doctoral dissertation.* Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S.
- Dion, D., & Arnould, E. (2016). Persona-fied brands: managing branded persons through persona. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32(1-2), 121-148. doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2015.1096818
- Duke, N.K. & Beck, S.W. (1999). Education should consider alternative formats for the dissertation. *Educational Researcher*, 28(3), 31-36. doi:10.2307/1177255
- Goldenberg, J., Libai, B., Muller, E., & Stremersch, S. (2010). The evolving social network of marketing scholars. *Marketing Science*, 29(3), 561-567. doi:10.1287/mksc.1090.0539
- Gross, D., Alhusen, J., Jennings, B.M. (2012). Authorship ethics with the dissertation manuscript option. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 35, 431-434. doi:10.1002/nur.21500
- Khedher, M. (2014). Personal branding phenomenon. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, 6(2), 29. Retrieved from [http://www.ijibm.site666.com/IJIBM\\_Vol6No2\\_May2014.pdf#page=34](http://www.ijibm.site666.com/IJIBM_Vol6No2_May2014.pdf#page=34).
- Khedher, M. (2018) Conceptualizing and researching personal branding effects on the employability. *Journal of Brand Management*, 1-11. doi.org/10.1057/s41262-018-0117-1
- Krathwol, D.R. (1994). A slice of advice. *Educational Researcher*, 23(1), 29-32. doi.org/10.3102/0013189X023001029
- Morton, P.G. (2015). What is the future of the Ph.D. dissertation? *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 31(1), 1-2. doi:10.1016/j.profnurs.2014.12.002
- Ostriker, J.P., Kuh, C.V., Voytuk, J.A. (2011). A data-based assessment of research-doctorate programs in the United States. *Committee to Assess Research-Doctorate Programs (Eds.)*. National Research Council, 322 pages. <https://www.nap.edu/rdp/#download>.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While the sample used in this study is quite broad and inclusive of the target population, it does rely indirectly on data collected using the survey method and, as such, is potentially affected by self-selection bias. Additional research is needed to identify and elaborate upon the specific mechanisms underlying our finding of monographic dissertations resulting in more journal publications than multiple essay dissertations for marketing Ph.D. graduates. Also, while the data are not publicly available, future research examining the impact of graduates' teaching loads at their hiring institution as well as the impact of demographic variables and other characteristics of the graduates (e.g. graduates' age, time in doctoral program) may be valuable. There may be a relationship between graduates' dissertation format and their teaching load, the latter of which could easily have a negative effect on their output in terms of publishing success. Further investigations in these areas could incorporate the role of other aspects of the graduates' demographics and/or experiences (e.g. length of time in their doctoral program, publication record of their dissertation advisor).

- Parmentier, M.-A., Fischer, E., & Reuber, A.R. (2013). Positioning person brands in established organizational fields. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41, 373-387. doi:10.1007/s11747-012-0309-2
- Patton, S. (2013). The dissertation can no longer be defended. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 59(23), A20-A23.
- Reid, W. M. (1978). Commentary: Will the future generations of biologists write a dissertation?. *BioScience*, 28(10), 651-654. doi.org/10.2307/1307396
- Robinson, S., & Dracup, K. (2008). Innovative options for the doctoral dissertation in nursing. *Nursing Outlook*, 56(4), 174-178. doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2008.03.004
- Sheppard, J.P., Nayyar, P.R., & Summer, C.E. (2009). Managing your doctoral program: a practical orientation. *Production and Operations Management*, 9(4), 414-437. doi:10.1111/j.1937-5956.2000.tb00467.x
- Stock, W.A. & Siegfried, J.J. (2006). Time-to-degree for the economics Ph.D. Class of 2001-2002. *American Economic Review*, 96(2), 467-74. doi:10.1257/000282806777212134
- Stock, W.A. & Siegfried, J.J. (2013). One essay on dissertation formats in economics. *American Economic Review*, 103(3), 648-53. doi:10.1257/aer.103.3.648
- Summers, J. O. (2001). Guidelines for conducting research and publishing in marketing: From conceptualization through the review process. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29(4), 405-415. doi:1177/0379450094243
- Talanga J. and Chia S-L. (2010). A study of journal publication patterns of marketing faculty. *Marketing Education Review*, 20(3), 215-228. doi:10.2753/mer1052-8008200303
- Thomas, R.A. (2015). The effectiveness of alternative dissertation models in graduate education (Master's thesis). Retrieved from Brigham Young University ScholarsArchive.
- Trocchia, P.J. & Berkowitz, D. (1999). Getting doctorated: a proposed model of marketing doctoral student socialization. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33 (7/8), 746-759. doi:10.1108/030905699102744366
- Urbancic, F. R. (2008). A multiattributes approach for ranking PhD programs. *Journal of Education for Business*, 83(6), 339-346. doi.org/10.3200/JOEB.83.6.339-346
- Volkov, N., Chira, I., & Premti, A. (2016). Who is successful on the finance Ph. D. job market?. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 37(April), 109-131. doi.org/10.1016/j.jcorpfin.2015.12.012
- Zamudio, C., Wang, Y., & Haruvy, E. (2013). Human brands and mutual choices: an investigation of the marketing assistant professor job market. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(6), 722-736. doi.org/10.1007/s11747-013-0341-x