The Teaching of Relationship Marketing Concepts in Undergraduate Marketing Principles and Graduate Introductory Marketing Courses

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A survey was conducted that attempted to determine the extent to which both general and specific relationship marketing concepts are covered in introductory marketing classes at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Factors that explain differences in the coverage of relationship marketing topics are also explored. The results indicate that relationship marketing is more likely to be discussed in depth by recently graduated faculty or by faculty with research interests in channels, sales, business-to-business, or international marketing. Recommendations are made to improve the integration of relationship marketing into these two courses.

The term *relationship marketing* appears frequently in business publications at both the academic and practitioner levels. Leading academic journals have published special editions focusing on relationship marketing and its impact on specific areas of marketing analysis (e.g., the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, fall 1995). In the "Introduction to the Special Issue," the editor praises relationship marketing as a paradigm that places the customer at the center of all enterprise actions (Cravens 1995). Another author has identified relationship marketing as one of six "seismic shocks" that has affected marketing thinking along with the marketing concept, the broadening of marketing, the identification of the exchange transaction, total quality management, and the value chain (Yudelson 1999). The Marketing Science Institute (composed of both researchers and member corporations) selected relationship marketing as one of three capital topics for 1996-98.

Faculty teaching marketing with a relationship marketing perspective often have to cover different topics or modify their treatment of topics covered. For example, faculty members with a transactional marketing perspective may cover topics relating to the need for distributor protection or the need for distributor associations to counteract manufacturer power. In contrast, faculty members with a relationship marketing perspective would stress building trust, the importance of long-term relationships, and the importance of sharing information. Likewise, faculty members with a transactional marketing perspective would not be likely to cover the importance of customized products to build bonds, the need for long-term pricing contracts, or the importance of social bonds in building relationships with customers (see Table 1).

Selected leading executives extol the virtues of relationship marketing in achieving their company's strategic goals. A frequently quoted example of the use of relationship marketing is the partnership of Eaton, a gas valve supplier, and Whirlpool in developing a gas range. The use of relationship marketing resulted in a shorter development time, a sharing of design costs, and reduced overall costs (Rackham, Feldman, and Ruff 1996). Gruen (1997) argued that the focus on relationship marketing generated important new measures of marketing success (customer share instead of market share), the application of new financial tools (such as activity-based costing), and a greater stress on marketing productivity (through tools such as efficient consumer response). Given that relationship marketing appears to be such an important and current issue, one would expect marketing educators to give business students a thorough grounding in the concepts and implications of the subject.

The purpose of the current study is to determine the extent to which marketing educators have introduced relationship marketing concepts in introductory marketing courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. There are significant implications if marketing educators do not keep abreast of major changes in the practitioner world. Graduating students will not have an awareness of significant issues and trends that can materially affect their future and the success of the organizations they join. Another issue of importance to educators is the extent to which the undergraduate Introduction to Marketing course differs from the graduate-level Marketing

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TABLE 1
SPECIFIC CONTRASTS BETWEEN TRANSACTIONAL MARKETING AND RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AS THEY RELATE TO COVERAGE OF THE 4P's

	Transactional Marketing	*Relationship Marketing*
Distribution decision-making focus	Protection from distributor termination. Need for distributor associations to generate power. Management of power and conflict relationships. Can handle an unlimited number of channel partners. Need for secrecy.	Building trust through services offered to distributors, such as electronic data interchange, lead generation programs, joint sales calls, technical assistance. Importance of long-term relationships. Need to restrict channel partners. Importance of database marketing. Role of channel partners in lean inventory planning. Importance of sharing information.
Product decision-making focus	Use of private labels to increase power of wholesalers and retailers. Importance of standardized products to reduce costs.	Joint product development programs between suppliers and their customers. Joint involvement of all channel members on development of private labels. Importance of customized products to increase exclusivity and build bonds.
Pricing decision-making focus	Onetime negotiations. Use of competitive bidding. Importance of price differences in vendor selection.	Development of long-term contracts with flexibility for cost adjustments. Greater importance of customer service over price.
Promotional decision-making focus	Focus on getting new customers. Role of salesperson as a persuader. Need to rotate salesperson from small to large accounts as he or she gains experience. Focus on short-term sales goals. Low cost of getting new customers.	Focus on maintaining present customers. Role of salesperson as a consultant. Importance of social bonds in customer relationship building. Importance of minimizing salesperson turnover. Focus on long-term sales goals. Low costs of keeping current customers. Importance of cooperative advertising.

Management course. Faculty members, as well as departmental chairs and accreditation agencies, should be concerned about the respective levels of these courses. One measure of the differentiation between these courses is the extent to which selected topics in a number of areas, including relationship marketing, are taught. For example, other areas where we would expect differences in teaching emphasis would be strategic planning and supply chain integration.

This article has four sections. The first is a literature review in the area of teaching relationship marketing. The second presents the method for the empirical study. The third analyzes the data and explores factors that could account for differences in coverage of relationship marketing between these courses. The concluding section discusses how coverage of relationship marketing can be expanded in these courses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the earliest notions of relationship marketing in the academic sphere can be traced to Levy and Zaltman's (1975) statement that to maximize the value of exchanges, people and groups need to develop "patterned relationships with one another" (p. 27). Most sources, however, credit Leonard Berry (1983) with originating the term *relationship marketing*. Houston and Gassenheimer (1987) argued that if attention is limited to the study of single, isolated exchanges, then the heart of marketing is ignored. Other scholars state that developing relationships has now become the focal point for marketing attention, replacing earlier preoccupations with service, and before that, product development (Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne 1991). Webster (1992) argued that the relationship marketing paradigm promises to redefine marketing practice and the role of marketing in the firm.

At a practitioner level, many firms have now changed their focus from acquiring new customers to placing greater focus on retaining current customers (Liswood 1990; Vavra 1992). Researchers have examined the relationship marketing practices by firms such as Allied Building Materials (Lewin and Johnston 1997), Caterpillar (Fites 1996), Volvo, GM, Microsoft, W. W. Grainger, Otra (an electrical wholesaler holding company based in the Netherlands), Mori Seiki (a Japanese machine-tool builder), and Shell Chemical (Narus and Anderson 1996). The increased importance of relationship marketing can also be seen by the rise in use of integrated supply management contracts (Narus and Anderson 1996, pp. 115-16). These trends illustrate the overall importance of the relationship marketing paradigm in terms of both theory and practice (Kotler 1992; McKenna 1991; Parvatiyar, Sheth, and Whittington 1992; Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett 1988).

Despite the growing importance of the relationship marketing paradigm in the practical and academic worlds, there has been little published research on the extent to which relationship marketing concepts have been taught at either the undergraduate or graduate level. One study on the teaching of relationship marketing found that faculty members were slow to incorporate relationship marketing into the Principles of Marketing course (Palmer 1994, p. 37). Palmer's conclusion is largely based on his finding that none of the 10 most widely used principles of marketing texts at that time devoted a chapter or a significant section to relationship marketing (Palmer 1994, p. 36).

Palmer (1994) argued that the (then) current method of teaching principles of marketing could leave students with the false impression that marketing decisions are made one at a time, in isolation from one another, and that the end product of these decisions is a series of unique and unrelated transactions between buyers and sellers. Palmer also noted that "the current growth in academic and practitioner interest in relationship marketing and the recognition of its strategic positioning might suggest a case for its incorporation into undergraduate programs" (p. 34).

Since the time of Palmer's research, more of the widely used principles of marketing texts have chapter-level coverage of relationship marketing. For example, Berkowitz et al.'s (2000) book has a chapter titled "Marketing: A Focus on Customer Relationships." Kotler and Armstrong's (2000) work has a chapter titled "Competitive Strategy: Attracting, Retaining and Growing Customers." Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel's (2000) *Marketing* has a chapter called "One-to-One Marketing." At the graduate level, Kotler (2000) has a chapter titled "Building Customer Satisfaction through Quality, Service, and Value." Despite these changes, it is important to realize that a chapter-level coverage does not ensure that individual faculty members will assign, teach, or test students on important relationship marketing concepts.

Based on a review of the literature, it appears that empirical analysis of the type conducted in the current study has not been previously reported. In previous work, Palmer (1994, pp. 39-40) suggested the development of a separate relationship marketing module for undergraduate marketing majors that could be taught via a team teaching approach. Cannon and Sheth (1994) described the development of a multiple course relationship marketing curriculum at the graduate level. Finally, Tanner and Castleberry (1995) discussed the teaching of relationship marketing in a sales course. None of these authors discuss the integration of relationship marketing into the undergraduate principles of marketing or the graduate-level introductory marketing course. Given that most undergraduate and graduate business students who are not marketing majors typically take only one marketing course, it seems essential to incorporate relationship marketing concepts at the point where all students learn about marketing. Only through effective coverage of this topic in these courses would all business school students be effectively exposed to relationship marketing.

The purpose of this study is to empirically evaluate the level of integration of relationship marketing concepts into the introductory marketing curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The aim of the research is to inform marketing educators of the state of current practice and provide guidance for developing course elements that better address the concept and impact of relationship marketing.

METHOD

The method used in this study differs from some earlier studies in this general field that confined their analysis to respondents to American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)-accredited universities (Giacobbe and Segal 1994; McNeeley and Berman 1988). The aim of the current research is to evaluate the teaching of relationship marketing across a broad spectrum of colleges and universities. Therefore, a nationwide group of colleges and universities was included in the mailing to include all types of institutions.

Pretest

The researchers developed a survey instrument that was first distributed to a convenience sample of about 25 marketing faculty members at universities distributed along the East Coast of the United States. The questionnaire was divided into three areas: overall coverage of relationship marketing, coverage of specific topics as they relate to each of the functional areas of marketing, and selected demographic questions.

Each respondent was asked to evaluate the questionnaire and to make suggestions relating to the selected relationship marketing-based topics, the clarity of the questions, and the appropriateness of the measurement scales. The survey instrument was then revised, based on the comments and recommendations of the faculty members. Based on the feedback from the pretest, the researchers used a 5-point semantic differential-type scale to measure the degree to which each topic was taught. A response of 1 represented that "the selected topic was not mentioned at all in class," while a response of 5 indicated that the topic had "an in-depth and extended discussion." The first 8 questions dealt with the teaching of overall issues relating to relationship marketing, whereas the remaining 14 dealt with coverage of selected relationship topics from each of the functional areas of marketing (see Table 2). The other items on the survey asked for selected demographic data.

Survey Sample

The researchers rented a mailing list of faculty members who teach the introductory marketing courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The list provider was a major established mailing list firm used by college text publishers

TABLE 2
EXTENT TO WHICH SELECTED RELATIONSHIP MARKETING TOPICS ARE TAUGHT AT THE UNDERGRADUATE- AND GRADUATE-LEVEL INTRODUCTORY MARKETING COURSE

	Average Undergraduate Response	n	*Average Graduate Response*	n
Overall question				
Define relationship marketing (RM)	3.71	285	3.71	114
Discuss RM in the business-to-business context	3.43	284	3.50	113
Discuss RM in the customer-business context	3.56	284	3.40	113
Discuss trust, cooperation, and commitment in RM	3.07	284	3.12	113
Discuss changes in U.S. business philosophy over time toward RM	3.25	284	3.15	113
Discuss international issues in the RM context	2.36	284	2.50	113
Discuss changes in marketing strategy in the RM context	3.16	284	3.22	113
Discuss channel partner selection in the RM context	2.89	284	3.18	113
Promotion/sales strategy				
Discuss changes in the promotion mix due to RM	2.68	284	2.65	113
Discuss the impact of RM on cooperative promotion	2.45	284	2.47	113
Discuss RM's impact on the role of a salesperson	3.18	284	3.20	113
Discuss the issue of boundary personnel in the RM context	2.06	284	2.34	113
Discuss customer service versus sales in the RM context	3.20	284	3.23	113
Product strategy				
Discuss RM in the new-product development process	2.38	284	2.42	113
Discuss the customization of products in the RM context	2.76	284	2.74	113
Discuss RM's impact on a firm's product portfolio	2.27	284	2.19	113
Pricing strategy				
Discuss buyer-vendor cost adjustments in the RM context	2.11	284	2.39	113
Discuss the impact of RM on long-term pricing issues	2.24	284	2.59	113
Distribution strategy				
Discuss the role of inventory control in the RM context	2.30	284	2.59	113
Discuss just-in-time systems in the RM context	2.51	284	2.79	113
Discuss database marketing in the RM context	3.00	284	3.12	113
Discuss new channel designs in the RM context	2.42	284	2.69	113

NOTE: A 5-point semantic differential scale was used where a response of 1 represented that the selected topic was not mentioned at all in class. In contrast, a response of 5 represented that the topic was covered in an in-depth nature in class.

and other firms seeking to contact college faculty. A total of 2,467 faculty members from all 50 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico were included in the sample. This number represented every second person on the firm's mailing list for the Undergraduate Principles of Marketing list (a systematic random sample) and every name on its mailing list from the Marketing Management list. This last group included instructors who teach either an undergraduate capstone course or a graduate-level introductory marketing course. While faculty members who taught the Undergraduate Marketing Management course were included in the mailing, the questionnaire made it clear that only the instructors of the introductory courses should respond.

Introductory courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels were the focus of study for two reasons. First, these courses are common-body-of-knowledge courses and are required of virtually all business students. If relationship marketing is a truly new paradigm, then all business students, regardless of major, need to be exposed to it. Second, the undergraduate and graduate introductory marketing courses are also typically the courses in the marketing department with the highest enrollments and the most sections, usually with more than one instructor in each institution. Thus, individual differences in faculty coverage could be better studied.

Response Rate

A total of 2,467 surveys were mailed out, of which 87 were returned as undeliverable. Overall, 322 faculty members returned a completed and usable response, yielding a 13.5% response rate. Since the contract for the rental of the mailing list specified a onetime usage, the researchers attempted to increase the response through several strategies. Respondents were offered a choice of two incentives: listing of important Web sites for marketing educators or a summary of the research findings. To illustrate the importance of the survey, each of the authors hand-signed each individual letter asking for respondent cooperation. Respondents were also reminded that there would be no follow-up. Finally, a self-addressed postage-paid envelope was inserted with the questionnaire.

The overall response rate can be attributed to a number of factors. The contract with the mailing list company allowed only a onetime use of the mailing list; therefore, a follow-up mailing was not available. While the response rate in other studies of marketing educators was higher (see Giacobbe and Segal 1994; McNeeley and Berman 1988), these studies used a two-stage process in which the questionnaire was first sent to a dean or departmental chair, who then forwarded the questionnaire to the most appropriate faculty member. The researchers felt that mailing directly to faculty would avoid the association of being forwarded through a chair or dean.

Nonresponse Bias

As a measure of nonresponse bias, the first and last 100 respondents were grouped and compared on the basis of several demographic items. Based on an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, there was no significant difference between early versus late respondents (Armstrong and Overton 1979).

Sample Characteristics

Table 3 provides a breakdown of respondents in terms of institutional demographics (structure of the marketing department, department size, university location, and college/university type) and respondent demographics (teaching responsibilities, total teaching experience, and tenure status).

Faculty members were also asked about their research interests, with many indicating more than one field of interest. The most popular single research interest area was consumer behavior (20.8% of responses). The next most popular areas were promotion (12.2% of responses), international business (12.1% of responses), sales (11.4% of responses), business-to-business (10.5% of responses), and channels (9.1% of responses). Other areas represented the balance of responses (23.9%). See Table 4.

Overall, the respondents were drawn from a diverse group of schools (on the basis of organization and size of department, college/university location, and type of school) and represented a diverse group of faculty (based on length of time teaching marketing, tenure status, and research interests).

TABLE 3
CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

	Number	*Percentage*
Institutional demographics		
Department structure		
Separate marketing department	146	45.3
No separate or joint department	96	29.8
Combined marketing/management department	62	19.3
Other	18	5.6
Total responses	322	100.0
Department size—number of full-time marketing faculty		
0-5	165	59.1
6-10	71	25.4
11-15	30	10.8
16-20	8	2.9
21+	5	1.8
Total responses	279	100.0
University location		
Urban	149	47.8
Rural	91	29.2
Suburban	72	23.1
Total responses	312	100.1[a]
College/university type		
State supported	150	54.2
Private	127	45.8
Total responses	277	100.0
Respondent demographics		
Teaching responsibilities, current semester		
Taught undergraduate courses only	209	64.9
Taught graduate courses only	38	11.8
Taught both undergraduate and graduate courses	75	23.3
Total responses	322	100.0
Total teaching experience		
1-5 years	63	19.6
6-10 years	80	24.9
11-15 years	48	15.0
16-20 years	49	15.3
21+ years	81	25.2
Total responses	321	100.0
Tenure status		
Tenured	187	58.3
Not tenured	134	41.7
Total responses	321	100.0

a. Rounding error.

RESULTS

General Issues Coverage

The following sections report the empirical findings of the survey. The first test conducted analyzed whether a difference existed between the responses to graduate versus undergraduate courses. That is, do teachers deal with relationship marketing more extensively at one student level than at another? We can speculate that some of the more basic topics such as defining relationship marketing, discussing relationship marketing in the business-to-business context, and discussing relationship marketing in the customer-to-business context will be more likely to be covered in the undergraduate course. In contrast, some of the more advanced topics such as discussing trust, cooperation, and commitment in relationship marketing; discussing international issues in the relationship marketing context; discussing changes in U.S. business philosophy in the relationship marketing context; and discussing changes in channel partner selection in the relationship marketing context would be more likely be taught at the graduate level.

Table 2 reports the mean scores of respondents to the items addressing the extent to which relationship marketing is discussed in undergraduate and graduate introductory courses. For both the undergraduate and graduate introductory marketing courses, the same three of eight *overall* relationship marketing topics had the greatest degree of coverage, that is, *defining* relationship marketing (undergraduate 3.71, graduate 3.71), discussing relationship marketing in a *business-to-business context* (undergraduate 3.43, graduate 3.50), and discussing relationship marketing in a *customer-business context* (undergraduate 3.56, graduate 3.40). The lowest overall relationship marketing topic (*international issues* in a relationship marketing context [undergraduate 2.36, graduate 2.50]) was common to both the undergraduate and graduate courses. A test of the means of the graduate and undergraduate responses to each item is not significant (e.g., define relationship marketing undergraduate-graduate; $t = 1.287$, $p = .384$).

TABLE 4
RESEARCH INTERESTS OF RESPONDENTS
(MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED)

Research Interest	*Number*	*Percentage of Responses*
Consumer behavior	131	20.8
Promotion	77	12.2
International	76	12.1
Sales	72	11.4
Business-to-business	66	10.5
Channels	57	9.1
Strategy	44	7.0
Services	28	4.5
Research	18	2.9
Logistics/purchasing	10	1.6
E-commerce/Internet	10	1.6
Entrepreneurship	9	1.4
Public policy	7	1.1
Teaching	5	0.8
Ethics	5	0.8
Other	14	2.2
Total	629	100.0

Functional/Specific Area Coverage

One can also assume that topics that are more basic (such as changes in the promotion mix due to relationship marketing, relationship marketing in the new-product development process, buyer-vendor cost adjustments in a relationship marketing context, and the role of inventory control in the relationship marketing context) would more likely be taught at the undergraduate level. Likewise, more advanced topics (such as the issue of "boundary personnel," the impact of relationship marketing on a firm's product portfolio, the impact of relationship marketing on long-term pricing issues, and new channel designs in a relationship marketing context) would be more likely to be taught at the graduate level.

Of the 14 questions that dealt with relationship marketing topics relating to the functional areas of marketing, the same three topics had the *highest* degree of coverage for both the undergraduate and graduate introductory marketing courses: (1) the role of customer service versus sales (3.20, 3.23), (2) relationship marketing's impact on the role of a salesperson (3.18, 3.20), and (3) database marketing in a relationship marketing context (3.00, 3.12). The same three topics also had the *lowest* degree of coverage for both the undergraduate and graduate courses: (1) the issue of boundary personnel in a relationship marketing context (2.06, 2.34), (2) buyer-vendor cost adjustments (2.11, 2.39), and (3) relationship marketing's impact on a firm's product portfolio (2.27, 2.19). Each of these low-coverage areas involve a different functional area of marketing: sales, pricing, and product planning. As before, a test of the means of the graduate and undergraduate responses to each item was not significant (e.g., long-term pricing undergraduate-graduate; $t = 1.143$, $p = .487$).

RESEARCH INTERESTS AND DIFFERENCES IN RELATIONSHIP MARKETING COVERAGE

We assume that relationship marketing is more heavily covered in the sales and channels literature than in product planning, pricing, or international marketing. Therefore, faculty members with a research interest in the former areas would be more likely to be aware of and teach overall relationship marketing concepts.

Tables 5 through 7 explore potential reasons why there are differences in faculty coverage of relationship marketing topics. The relationship between a faculty member's research interests and the extent to which he or she covers selected overall relationship marketing topics at the undergraduate and graduate levels are shown in Tables 5 and 6, respectively. For purposes of this analysis, the 5-point semantic differential scale is treated as a continuous variable.

Research Interests and Undergraduate Courses

The results of a data analysis using a one-way ANOVA for the undergraduate courses indicate that faculty members with certain specific research interests are more likely to cover relationship marketing in more depth in undergraduate courses (see Table 5). Faculty members with a business-to-business research interest were more likely to cover five *overall* relationship marketing topics. These are business-to-business marketing in a relationship context ($F = 6.939$, $p = .009$); trust, cooperation, and commitment ($F = 6.058$, $p = .014$); international issues in a relationship marketing context ($F = 6.885$, $p = .009$); changes in marketing strategy in a relationship marketing context ($F = 5.714$, $p = .017$); and partner selection in a relationship marketing context ($F = 13.584$, $p = .000$). A research interest in sales was associated with greater coverage of trust, cooperation, and commitment ($F = 6.681$, $p = .010$), and partner selection in a relationship marketing context ($F = 5.571$, $p = .019$). There was also a significant positive relationship between a faculty member's research interest in international marketing and the degree of coverage of international issues in a relationship marketing context ($F = 6.992$, $p = .009$). Only one of the associations studied was negative. That was between a faculty member's research interest in international marketing and a discussion of changes in marketing strategy in a relationship marketing context ($F = 7.056$, $p = .008$). Finally, there was a positive relationship between a faculty member's research interest in channels and in his or her degree of coverage of partner selection ($F = 9.931$, $p = .002$). While all of the above positive correlations are intuitively logical, the negative correlation is difficult to explain.

Research Interests and Graduate Courses

Table 6 reports on the relationship between a faculty member's research interests and coverage of general relationship marketing topics in the introductory graduate marketing

TABLE 5
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST:
COVERAGE OF SELECTED TOPICS IN RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL BY RESEARCH INTEREST OF FACULTY MEMBER

Factor (Research Interest)	Dependent Variable	F Statistic	p Value
Business-to-business	Relationship marketing in a business-to-business context	6.939	.009
	Trust, cooperation, commitment	6.058	.014
	International issues	6.885	.009
	Changes in marketing strategy	5.714	.017
	Partner selection	13.584	.000
Sales	Trust, cooperation, commitment	6.681	.010
	Partner selection	5.571	.019
International	International issues	6.992	.009
	Changes in marketing strategy	7.056	.008
Channels	Partner selection	9.931	.002

TABLE 6
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST:
COVERAGE OF SELECTED TOPICS IN RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL BY RESEARCH INTEREST OF FACULTY MEMBER

Factor (Research Interest)	Dependent Variable	F Statistic	p Value
Business-to-business	Trust, cooperation, commitment	4.575	.012
	Partner selection	5.610	.005
Sales	Trust, cooperation, commitment	5.740	.018
	Changes in marketing strategy	7.293	.008
International	International issues	6.523	.012

course. Once again, faculty members reporting research interests in business-to-business marketing had the highest number of positive associations with coverage of these general topics. Faculty members with business-to-business research interests were more likely to cover these relationship marketing topics: trust, cooperation, and commitment (F = 4.575, p = .012), and partner selection in a relationship marketing context (F = 5.610, p = .005).

A significant positive relationship was found between a faculty member's research interest in sales and in his or her degree of coverage of trust, cooperation, and commitment (F = 5.740, p = .018), as well as in the degree of coverage of changes in marketing strategy in a relationship marketing context (F = 7.293, p = .008). Finally, a significant positive relationship (at the .01 level) was reported between research interest in international marketing and in his or her coverage of international issues in a relationship marketing context (F = 6.523, p = .012).

NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING AND DIFFERENCES IN RELATIONSHIP MARKETING COVERAGE

Given the (relatively) recent discovery of the relationship marketing phenomenon in academic journals, the researchers intuitively assumed that more recently graduated faculty members were more likely to teach relationship marketing concepts than more experienced faculty. For the purposes of this analysis, the number of years teaching was divided into three groups: 0-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11 or more years. This categorization approximates the traditional career path for a faculty member in a business school. That is, the first 5 years of teaching are typically as an untenured faculty member with a newly earned doctorate. The next 5 years are spent as a relatively newly tenured faculty member, and more than 10 years as a senior faculty member with significant teaching experience.

Undergraduate Level

Using a one-way ANOVA test for the eight overall relationship marketing questions, the models for the trust, commitment, and cooperation variable (F = 3.040, p = .049) and for changes in marketing strategy (F = 4.553, p = .001) were both significant at the undergraduate course level. These findings were confirmed by post hoc Scheffé tests (see Table 7). One explanation for this phenomenon is that faculty members with fewer years of teaching experience were more likely to have recently completed their graduate work where the subject and its importance was taught.

Graduate Level

Once more using a one-way ANOVA, with the factor being the number of years teaching and the dependent variable the first eight overall items, only one model was significant (see Table 7). That is, the coverage of "changes in marketing strategy" is different across the number of years of teaching experience (F = 3.582, p = .031). The Scheffé tests reveal the same pattern as before, namely, that faculty members with fewer years of teaching are more likely to cover this subject in more depth than faculty members with more experience. However, since there are only nine faculty members at the level of 0 to 5 years of teaching experience, the result is unreliable.

The results provide partial support for the notion that a faculty member's number of years of teaching experience will affect the level of relationship marketing coverage.

TABLE 7
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TESTS: UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE COVERAGE OF SELECTED RELATIONSHIP MARKETING TOPICS BY NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING

	F Test	p Value	Factor Level	Cell Mean	Scheffé Test
Undergraduate—trust, cooperation, and commitment					
	3.040	.049			0.050
			1. 0-5 years	3.41	1-2 = 0.33
			2. 6-10 years	3.08	2-3 = 0.15
			3. 11+ years	2.93	1-3 = 0.48
Undergraduate—changes in marketing strategy					
	4.553	.001			0.012
			1. 0-5 years	3.60	1-2 = 0.48
			2. 6-10 years	3.13	2-3 = 0.12
			3. 11+ years	3.01	1-3 = 0.57
Graduate—changes in marketing strategy					
	3.582	.031			0.049
			1. 0-5 years	4.11	1-2 = 0.49
			2. 6-10 years	3.52	2-3 = 0.48
			3. 11+ years	3.04	1-3 = 1.07

NOTE: A response of 1 = *topic not mentioned at all*; a response of 5 = *an in-depth, extended discussion.*

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Both the academic and practitioner literature suggests that relationship concepts are now an integral part of the marketing landscape. The central premise of this article is that relationship marketing is an important concept that should be taught by a large proportion of faculty members in the Principles of Marketing undergraduate course and the Marketing Management graduate course. If many instructors continue to ignore relationship marketing and its implications for business students, they are reducing those students' effectiveness in the workplace.

Conclusions

The extent to which marketing educators have recognized the need to accommodate relationship marketing concepts in the introductory courses was empirically tested. The results suggest that there is considerable variance in the coverage of relationship marketing in these courses.

Overall, the results of the survey showed few differences between the coverage of relationship marketing topics in the Principles of Marketing undergraduate course and graduate introductory marketing courses. This finding should be a major concern to faculty, departmental chairs, and accreditation agencies. It is possible that both undergraduate and graduate marketing faculty members have also not adequately differentiated the treatment of other important topics in each of these courses.

The relationship between research interests, the association between years of teaching and coverage of selected relationship marketing topics, and the relative experience of the faculty members were similar across both student levels.

The findings suggest that of the *general* relationship marketing topics studied, international issues; channel partner selection; and the concepts of trust, cooperation, and commitment in relationship marketing are those covered least. (The mean score for the 8 overall items ranged from 2.36 to 3.71.) These results indicate that relationship marketing is given a brief overview without exploring its implications for business-to-business or business-to-consumer activities. The mean score for the 14 functional-area items ranged from 2.06 to 3.23, barely above the middle of the spectrum. The results suggest that relationship marketing may be covered generally but without exploring practical issues.

Among *specific* topics, the issue of boundary personnel, buyer-vendor cost adjustments, and relationship marketing's impact on a firm's product portfolio were covered least. The findings also show that the faculty members least likely to teach general relationship marketing concepts are those who teach the undergraduate introductory marketing course with a research interest in consumer behavior or both the undergraduate and graduate introductory marketing course with a research interest in promotion. In addition, faculty members with more than 5 years of teaching experience were less likely to teach selected relationship marketing concepts.

While the relationship marketing concepts of channel partner selection and trust, cooperation, and commitment were not well covered by most faculty members, there was a significant positive association with high levels of teaching these areas and a faculty member's research interest in business-to-business marketing for both the undergraduate and graduate introductory marketing courses. The teaching of trust, cooperation, and commitment was also positively correlated with a research interest in sales for both the undergraduate and graduate-level introductory marketing courses. These findings suggest the importance of including newer faculty (with less than 5 years of teaching experience) and faculty with research interests in either business-to-business marketing or sales as participants in designing the marketing curriculum for these courses.

Implications

One of the concerns of marketing educators should be whether there are sufficient differences between the undergraduate Introduction to Marketing course and the graduate marketing course in terms of course content, level, and structure. We expected the different orientations of each course to be reflected in the extent to which relationship marketing topics were covered. As educators, we need to be concerned about the differences between each of these courses and the extent to which the graduate-level course builds on material taught at the undergraduate level.

There are several ways of better assuring that each course is sufficiently different. These include using different texts in each course, monitoring coverage of topics that should be treated differently in each course (such as supply chain management, service quality, logistics, market planning), developing committees to monitor course content where courses with similar subject content are taught at different levels, and so on.

Another major implication is the study of why the overall coverage of relationship marketing coverage is so low. The impediments to coverage include faculty concern about the importance of the topic, knowledge of the topic by faculty, the time required to revise course content, the lack of coverage of relationship marketing in many current textbooks, the popularity of other topics (such as E-commerce, value chains, and supply chain management) that compete for class time, and resistance to change. Some faculty members may characterize marketing as "a recent spin on an old concept" or that relationship marketing is a restatement of the marketing concept (see Petrof 1997 and the rebuttal by Gruen 1997).

Whatever the reason for the variance in coverage, the impact of relationship marketing on the practitioner world requires that curriculum committees review the introduction courses to ensure that all significant issues and trends (not just relationship marketing) are adequately covered. This means that a certain level of administrative review with the commensurate structure is necessary.

In reviewing the teaching of relationship marketing in the introductory marketing course, faculty members also need to consider alternative methods of instruction aside from the traditional lecture method with a single faculty member. Role-playing and team-based exercises involving negotiation may be useful alternatives (see Tanner and Castleberry 1995). Palmer (1994, p. 40), for example, advocated the use of exercises for undergraduate students where the students maintain diaries of firms where they have regular dealings (such as car repair shops and banks). Integrated into this exercise are reasons for repeat buying and a retailer's company follow-up procedures (Palmer 1994, p. 40).

Relationship marketing concepts can also be most effectively taught using team teaching. Teams can be composed of faculty members from other departments of the school of business (such as management faculty to explain total quality management and accounting faculty to cover activity-based costing) and faculty from other units of the university (such as social psychology faculty to cover trust, communication, and commitment, and social exchange theory). Cannon and Sheth (1994) discussed the teaching of relationship marketing at Emory's MBA program. At Emory, students in the graduate Marketing Management course are first exposed to the principles of relationship marketing during their 1st week of class where differences between transactional and relationship marketing are discussed. Later in the semester, students spend 1 week examining relationship marketing in both final consumer and business markets.

Faculty members also need to be better aware of current developments in relationship marketing. Two excellent sources of information are the Center for Relationship Marketing at Emory University and the relationship marketing Special Interest Group (SIG). The Center for Relationship Marketing provides funding for Ph.D. dissertations and for faculty research that focus on relationship marketing issues. The center also sponsors a research conference with refereed papers every 2 years. The American Marketing Association's (AMA) Relationship Marketing SIG also sponsors special seminars in relationship marketing (often directly before the AMA's Summer Educators' meeting).

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