

**A HOLISTIC MODEL OF EDUCATION QUALITY
IN MARKETING MANAGEMENT:
AN EXPLORATORY TESTING IN SPANISH UNIVERSITIES**

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**Documentos de
Trabajo**
Febrero de 2010

N.º 28

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ESAN/Cendoc

RIVERA-CAMINO, Jaime

A holistic model of education quality in marketing management: An exploratory testing in Spanish universities. –Lima : Universidad ESAN, 2010.
– 44 p. – (Serie Documentos de Trabajo n.º 28).

CALIDAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN / EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR / UNIVERSIDADES /
ADMINISTRACIÓN DEL MERCADERO / MODELOS / ESPAÑA

LB 2367 S6E59

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Primera edición
Lima, febrero de 2010

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R ESUMEN

En las últimas décadas, la seguridad de la calidad educativa (Quality Assurance in Education, QAE) ha surgido como un tema importante de política pública. Desafortunadamente, aún no existe consenso en los siguientes temas: definiciones sobre QAE, indicadores esenciales de evaluación, y la fundamental conveniencia de los modelos propuestos. Para llenar esta carencia, se propone un modelo de QAE que identifica empíricamente las variables de recurso-capacidad vinculadas a los resultados en los estudiantes, y su asociación con el posicionamiento competitivo de las universidades.

Palabras claves: Educación en gerencia de marketing, calidad educativa, recursos y capacidades educativas.

A BSTRACT

Over the last decades, education quality (EQ) assurance has emerged as an important public policy issue. Unfortunately, there is still no agreement on the following issues: EQ definitions, essential assessment indicators, and the fundamental suitability of the models proposed. To fill this vacuum, we propose an EQ model that empirically identifies the resource-capability variables linked to learning outcomes of students, and their association with the competitive positioning of universities.

Keywords: Marketing management education, education quality, educational resources and capabilities.

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Jaime Rivera-Camino

Foreword

Considering the methodology, our study used a two-stage least squares regression analysis to test the research hypotheses, after controlling the effect of the public/private character university variable.

Regarding findings, the results validate that educational capabilities can be considered reliable variables to successfully predict the levels of education quality of marketing management programs in Spanish universities.

Our research bears limitations/implications. Future studies might want to replicate this study using more direct objective measures of the theoretical constructs. Also, future research might extend the study in other countries where the educational context could impact differently.

The originality/value of this paper is that this article is one of a few that applies the resource and capabilities dependence theory to analyze the variables associated with the quality of marketing management education. It also presents original multi-item scales to improve the measurement of model constructs.

For practical implications, the results of our study will assist marketing professors in finding out the variables that can be used to implement high quality marketing management programs in universities, and will also be a potential source of information for self-diagnostic tools that determine a university's likelihood of success.

Introduction

Quality in higher education has become an international issue since education is a competitive factor in the new knowledge-based economy (Campbell and Rozsnyai, 2002; Van Dame, 2002). This is a concern not only in the United States, where education is a national priority (Alavi et al., 1997), but also in Europe. Here, the Commission of the European Union has recognized that European universities must achieve and maintain a level of excellence to meet the challenge of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world (COM, 2002; Pawlowski, 2004).

In this context, marketing management education becomes critical to national competitiveness, since marketing managers are regularly involved in major decisions affecting corporate and national economies (Pride and Ferrell, 2000; Sinkovics and Schlegelmilch, 2000). An analysis of the educational system that prepares these managers for their future responsibilities is necessary, because traditional marketing strategies do not work in the current turbulent business environment (Courtney et al., 1997; Fortier et al., 1998), and because of the gap between academia and practice (Tapp, 2004). The literature, however, shows a bias towards a higher academic status awarded to the writing and publishing papers (see Baumgartner and Pieters, 2003; Cabell, 1997-98) rather than marketing education (Straughan and Albers-Miller, 2000). In this case, innovative teaching activities (Albers-Miller et al., 2001), marketing curricula (Athaide, 2005) and course structure to learning key marketing concepts (Eriksson et al., 2004) were also studied. Surprisingly, no sufficient attention was given to the quality of marketing management teaching.

Literature suggests a number of possible reasons for this theoretical and empirical gap. The principal argument is that it is not easy to evaluate the quality of marketing management education, because the different approaches to quality reflect different conceptions of higher education (Barnett, 1992). This lack of agreement makes it impossible to arrive at one set of quality standards for institutional assessment that would be applicable to all countries (UNESCO, 1998). Other opinions maintain that

there are few teachers who participate in the education quality agenda, so we do not know what teachers regard as “quality” in higher education (Watty, 2003). Still another argument is that most of the information about management education is generated in the United States, so its usefulness and generalization to others countries is doubtful (Imbs, 1995). Lastly, the expectations of a diverse public change constantly, so what up to now was considered a highly satisfactory approach for a particular form of business instruction may be completely outdated henceforward (Lengnick-Hall and Sanders, 1997). These opinions make us aware that the move from the “industrial age” to the “information age” has prompted the need to examine the methods and suppositions on which current business education practices are founded, particularly in countries trying to compete on a global scale (Rowley et al., 1998). To fill this research gap, this study presents an exploratory model of education quality to identify empirically the variables that are linked to the learning outcomes of marketing students and to the competitive positioning of universities.

This study uses a sample of Spanish universities. There are several reasons why this research gap should be reduced in this context. First, European Commission experts agree that Spain should develop intellectual infrastructures associated with marketing skills, to advance an economic model based on the highest added value (Vanguardia Digital, 2006) and to boost the lagging enthusiasm for business careers among university students (El Mundo, 2006). Second, the first national survey of the public image of the Spanish university system revealed that few respondents think their training prepares them sufficiently for the labor market (El Mundo Digital, 2006). The results of this situation prompted the European Commission to declare that Spanish universities produce too many candidates for unemployment (El Mundo Digital, 2007).

The study is divided into four sections. In the first section we discuss the theoretical framework that underlies the definition, evaluation and models of quality of education. Second, we present the research design and the main features of the sample. Third, we offer an in-depth analysis of the results, and in the last section we discuss managerial implications and future lines of research.

1. Research background

Despite the abundant literature on experiences in academic quality assurance in several countries, there is no consensus on the following issues: education quality definitions, essential assessment indicators, and the fundamental suitability of the models proposed (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003; Woodhouse, 1996).

Disagreements on the definitions of quality education testify the complexity and multifaceted nature of this concept (UNICEF, 2000; UNESCO, 2002). For many authors, quality is a multidimensional and often subjective concept (PHARE, 1998). since it depends on national and local educational contexts and the individual goals (Adams, 1993; Beeby, 1966). Quality also depends on different views and meanings of educational quality of relevant stakeholders (Benoliel et al., 1999; Motala, 2000). Thus, defining and ensuring education quality is almost an impossible task (Fife and Janosik, 1999).

The choice of quality indicators is also problematic (Campbell and Rozsnyai, 2002). According to Ramina (2003), the definition of quality should be followed by a set of appropriate indicators and a monitoring system, but this has not happened for two reasons. The first issue is that education quality is influenced by different measurable and non-measurable factors. The second issue is associated with the widespread disagreement on the selection of objective indicators. The problem is even greater when trying to quantify the qualitative aspects that characterize the basic tasks of higher education—teaching, learning, and research (Kaiser and Yonezawa, 2003). The difficulty is deeper when making international comparisons or cross-country studies, since the objective data can be hampered by a lack of unified legislation on confidentiality and data protection. Thus, to avoid these previous problems, the use of plain descriptive information must be considered as an alternative (Kaiser and Yonezawa, 2003).

There are many different models for assessing education quality. One model is based on the notion that quality is an ideal standard. In higher education this has

been called the "Harvard Model". According to this, the quality of an institution is measured against that of the most prestigious institution. As a conceptual weakness, this approach takes for granted that all customers want the same thing (Fife and Janosik, 1999). Other models draw from the Total Quality Management (TQM) system, which has also been criticized because they tend to focus on the exercise of control (Barnett, 1994; Radford et al., 1997; Salter and Tapper, 2000) and because the limited adoption of TQM in the academy (Birnbaum and Deshotels, 1999; Vazzana et al., 2000). Since others models focus on prioritizing pedagogical, cultural, social or economic perspectives, the only consensus reached thus far has been that the measurement of "quality in education" is always an elusive concept (Matsuura, 2003).

The following section exposes our definition of education quality, and the corresponding assessment model.

2. Conceptual model and research hypotheses

We selected the input-process-outcome paradigm as our base model because it conceives quality as an on-going process that transforms the participants (Harvey and Green, 1993). This paradigm assumes that quality education is defined in relation to the human and material resources invested and the kinds of processes that take place in educational organizations and classrooms (the processes of teaching, curricula, learning of students, etc.). Thus, quality education may be measured by assessing efficiency in the use of resources (Welsh and Metcalf, 2003) and by examining education outcomes represented by students' performance (Pascarella, 2001). It supposes that the better the education institution, the more it empowers students with specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes, enabling them to live and work in a knowledge society (Campbell and Rozsnyai, 2002; EFQM, 1995). This notion of education quality is especially appropriate when learner profiles experience changes significantly (Harvey and Knight, 1996) like the ones marketing students encounter in a global context.

Additionally, this paradigm is capable of assimilating the resource and capabilities dependence theory (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993) to turn operational our education quality model. The theory explains why some organizations, belonging to the same sector, obtain competitive advantages while others do not (Nelson, 1991). This theory was developed to study companies' performance, but we think its arguments also explain university competitiveness, which is based on the effective management of educational resources and capabilities (Scott, 2003). Therefore, this model allows evaluating the quality education by the positive impact of capabilities used by the universities on their competitive positioning and the level of student learning outcomes obtained through their teaching system. Capabilities are the talents or potential sources of competitive advantage that ensure better performance of a task or skill. They focus on the internal environment of the organization and on the internal decisions and practices that alter the way in which a firm responds to external pressures (Ulrich and Wiersema, 1989). According to literature (Lado and Wilson, 1994; Tumer and Crawford, 1994), capabilities are most frequently classified into four categories: (i) organizational capabilities based on outputs; (ii) input-based capabilities; (iii) managerial capabilities; and (iv) technical organizational capabilities. This capabilities' classification serves to propose the hypotheses associated with the quality of marketing management education.

2.1. The dependent variables of a quality education program

(i) ***The organizational capabilities based on outputs*** steer the firm towards tangible and intangible results that provide added value for clients (Lado and Wilson, 1994). These capabilities include: product and/or service quality, the adaptability of products and/or services to customers' changing expectations, corporate reputation and image, and other beneficial influences of a firm's activities in favor of the local environment (Clark and Wheelwright, 1992; Verdin and Williamson, 1994). Of these organizational capabilities, we chose the educational service quality (learning outcomes) and the firm's reputation and image outputs (competitive outputs) since both generate beneficial influences for the local environment.

- Learning outcomes of marketing management education (LOMME)

Lengnick-Hall and Sanders (1997) defined excellence in management education as the achievement of increased knowledge and skills, the application of new knowledge and skills, and the positive response of students. Although these criteria are useful in evaluating an institution's standard of excellence, they should also address how well a university responds to criticism directed toward management education. Teaching in this field, for example, is criticized for falling short of the demands of new business environments, and for failing to focus on real job markets and on developing links with the business community (Rowley and Rowley, 2000). It also noted that they do not develop interpersonal skills and teamwork (Lerner, 1995). In fact, the literature states that management education should not sidestep conflictive issues regarding social responsibility and the need for leadership training (UNESCO, 1998).

Marketing educators must take into account the criticism of management education, and realize that their graduates require strong disciplinary knowledge and key generic skills to function in an increasingly complex, competitive and changing work environment (Hunt et al., 2004). For example, Canzer (1997) stresses subject knowledge acquisition and theoretical concepts, and the ability to apply this knowledge to real marketing situations. McMullen (1998) suggests that graduates should be able to handle problem solving and effective communication, and exercise managerial judgment, while Walker et al. (1998) favor the ability to integrate and use marketing knowledge in a creative and synergistic manner. Other recommended skills include leadership, people management, power distribution (Adrian and Palmer, 1999; Floyd and Gordon, 1998), team-building or interpersonal skills that promote effective interaction with subordinates, peers and superiors (Floyd and Gordon, 1998; Wright et al., 1994), and linkages to business practice (Stern and Tseng, 2002).

We used these literature-based concepts to evaluate the educational outputs in terms of their adaptation to the needs of companies, their contribution to solving national problems, and the students' ability to solve real problems, work in teams, and develop innovative solutions and leadership behavior.

- *Competitive outcomes of marketing management education (COMME)*

Another perspective adds competitive outcomes of marketing management education to the concept of excellence. Experts agree that private and public universities depend on their own performance to ensure funding for educational programs and high quality research initiatives (Martínez, 2005), so the pursuit of prestige is a common element in the behavior of academic institutions worldwide (Brewer et al., 2002). Thus, universities compete in the market-place of public opinion based on prestige or reputation (Holdsworth, and Nind; 2005), and league tables and rankings are common from the perspective of their prestige will optimize their market position in the educational system, and their receipt of resources (Lombardi et al., 2001).

Since prestige is a form of name-brand recognition derived from historical visibility based on promotional campaigns that project institutional identity, and on the halo effect of real accomplishments, it precedes market share (Bok, 2003). Prestige also differentiates an institution from its competitors in ways that stakeholders find meaningful. Thus, to evaluate the competitive outcomes of marketing management education, we evaluated the universities prestige or reputed position in relation to students, donors, market competitors, and employees.

2.2. The independent variables of a quality education program

(ii) ***Input-based capabilities***. These competencies encompass different resources, knowledge and skills that enable a firm's transformational processes to create and deliver products and services valued by customers. According to Grant's (1991) and Amit and Schoemaker's (1993) definitions, resources are inputs of the production process (financial, physical, human and technological resources). The influence of resource availability on learning achievement is addressed in the literature on education quality for different educational levels (see Carron and Cháu, 1996; Glewwe and Jacoby, 1994). This tendency is reflected at many universities (particularly in the United States) where a well-tended system of incentives attracts and retains the best professors (Henry et al., 1997). These institutions understand

that to meet the challenges of changing business settings, they need physical resources (Rowley et al., 1998). Institutions from other regions (Central, South America and Europe) are now beginning to recognize the link between a university's level of competitiveness and the procurement of financial resources (EUA, 2003). Thus:

H-1.a¹ The higher the level of resource availability, the greater the level of learning outcomes

H-1.b The higher the level of resource availability, the greater the level of competitive outcomes

(iii) **Managerial capabilities** are associated with the manager's unique ability to enact a beneficial firm-environment relationship (Lado and Wilson, 1994). Managerial capabilities also include the distinctive capabilities of the firm's leaders to design the organization and coordinate different functions (Boyatzis, 1999). They are also needed to implement organizational systems such as direction and control, and obtain organizational results (Tumer and Crawford, 1994). Our study evaluated capabilities regarding universities' management styles, teaching actions and methods, and faculty performance assessment criteria.

- Preferred management style in university departments

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) state that the organizational environment of an academic department could be more important for student learning than the subject matter itself; therefore, the purpose of this part of the study was to determine whether the environment in which business professor's work allows students to adequately prepare them for future marketing management jobs. According to literature, participatory management style is a precondition for the unconstrained and optimal fulfillment of university social responsibility (Neave, 1998; UNESCO, 1998), and

¹ Successive hypotheses related to learning outcomes will be labeled (a) while hypotheses associated with competitive outcomes will be labeled (b).

provides an atmosphere in which teachers can focus on instruction and student's achievement (Wyman, 2001). Participatory management style also fosters the creation of "learning" departments (Walvoord et al., 2000) and provides a climate for better adjustment to changing societal conditions (Dill, 2003). Moreover, quality assurance in new organizations is rather based on autonomous total participation of all organizational members to quality, than on explicit external quality control (Frackmann, 2000; Leithwood et al., 1998). Since there are few antecedents to our research we suggest two alternative hypotheses; thus:

H-2.1 The higher the level of participatory management style, the greater the level of
(a) learning and (b) competitive outcomes

H.2.2 The higher the level of non participatory management style, the greater the
level of (a) learning and (b) competitive outcomes

- Teaching actions-methods

Previous literature affirms that many of the teaching problems that plague higher education are related to teaching methods that transmit information in a static way, and fail to develop critical thinking as a problem-solving tool (Bok, 1986; Dubois, 1995). In management more than in any other discipline, it is vital to analyze the way professors teach to determine whether their methods adequately convey the knowledge they wish to impart (Frost and Fukami, 1997). One much-criticized but still widely used method of instruction is the lecture method, which is based on structured learning. Virtually unchanged since its inception in the Middle Ages, the lecture method regards the professor as the authority from which all knowledge emanates (Rowley and Rowley, 2000). Other critics maintain that structured teaching methods activate cognitive resources that are not the resources actually used in business practice (Cova et al., 1994). The students in this learning environment are considered passive receivers of learning (Lengnick-Hall, 1996; Schneider and Bowen, 1995), so they develop an algorithmic reading of reality (Bergadaà, 1990).

On the other hand, marketing management education needs non-structured teaching methods where students are co-producers of their training (Lengnick-Hall and Sanders, 1997) and participate actively in the learning process (Alavi et al., 1995; Leidner and Jarvenpaá, 1995). This use of cooperative learning is consistent with changes experienced in organizations where teamwork is required and good interpersonal skills are necessary to process complex information (Baldwin et al., 1997). Additionally, UNESCO (1998) states that higher education must implement pedagogical methods based on participative knowledge, in order to train graduates how to learn and how to take initiatives to better prepare them for creating their own jobs. Thus, we propose alternative hypotheses:

H.3.1 The higher the level of non-structured teaching methods used, the greater the level of (a) learning and (b) competitive outcomes.

H.3.2 The higher the level of structured teaching methods used, the greater the level of (a) learning and (b) competitive outcomes.

- Evaluation of faculty performance

Literature suggests that faculty performance can be evaluated by government criteria as well as external stakeholders' criteria. From the external perspective, academic quality is equivalent to the quality of teaching at a university (Cave et al., 1997), so students' reaction to a course is a way of determining how well a teaching system is working. This perspective is based on the belief that training is a service, and as in all services, student (customer) participation influences the learning process and the results (Lengnick-Hall and Sanders, 1997). Academic quality is also associated with sharing information on best practices (Zhou, 2000), so the number of textbooks and teaching materials a professor publishes and the consulting contracts or other contracts he/she secures for the home institution are criteria for evaluation systems. These criteria are upheld by critics who maintain that the academic community is incapable of responding to the practical needs of business. Academic research and publishing are additional faculty performance criteria, because they not only complement effective teaching but are sine-qua-non for the achievement of academic

excellence (Braumoh, 2002). If management education must satisfy government criteria as well as external stakeholders, we propose the following hypotheses:

H-4.1 The higher the level of government criteria, the greater the level of (a) learning and (b) competitive outcomes.

H-4.2 The higher the level of other stakeholder criteria, the greater the level of (a) learning and (b) competitive outcomes.

(iv) **Technical organizational capabilities** are the talents that contribute to turning inputs into outputs (Lado et al., 1992). As sources of competitive advantage, they are hard to copy and remain embedded in the tacit routines and practices of the firm (Kogut and Zander 1996) and are often associated with organizational learning (Lado and Wilson, 1994). These capabilities are part of an employee's set of skills, knowledge and expertise (Green, 1999). In our study, we equate these capabilities of the company employee to those of faculty in a university environment. This variable was analyzed in terms of teaching experience, faculty academic level and international experience.

- *Teacher qualification*. Unlike other disciplines in which student competency is achieved using laboratories or technical equipment, marketing management training depends chiefly on faculty knowledge and capabilities. Faculty qualifications are important and must be taken into consideration, since they directly influence the quality of education (Kennedy, 1998).

Much of past educational research proposes a relationship between years of teaching experience and student outcomes (Greenwald et al., 1996), as well as a positive relationship between learning outcomes and teachers' general academic qualifications (e.g. Strauss and Vogt, 2001). These relationships are supported by research on higher educational level, where the degree of higher education quality is also positively associated with the level of faculty education and qualification (Glewwe and Jacoby, 1994; Ramina, 2003; Pawlowski, 2004). Other authors suggest

that there is a relationship between the teaching staff's level of international experience and the quality of education (Ramina, 2003; Heyl et al., 2003). Thus:

H-5 The higher the level of teacher qualification, the greater the level of (a) learning and (b) competitive outcomes.

3. Control variables

Another interesting aspect of this study is the question about whether the private or public character of an educational institution affects the perception and use of variables associated with education quality. The literature offers conflicting points of view on this. One opinion is that the distinction between private and public is less important than the rules of the game to which critical actors of the system respond (Wolff and de Moura Castro, 2001). Supporters of public education feel that with the right policy framework, sustained high quality public education and the promotion of the expansion of private schools can be compatible. Others suggest that private institutions fall behind public ones, because they lack a coherent system of accreditation that monitors for consistently high standards. As a result, private institutions tend to have a reputation for relaxed academic standards and their graduates often find it difficult to compete in job markets where perspective employers are skeptical about the excellence of their training (Bernasconi, 2003). Defenders of private education argue that these institutions are more efficient than public institutions, because they have greater administrative flexibility, and cater to the type and quality of education that students and parents demand (Lockheed and Jiménez, 1994). They point out that stagnant public support has led to a decrease in the perceived quality of public higher education and to an increase in private enrollment.

Recent information states that, in Spain, the private or public nature of a university is a determining factor in conditioning other quality-related variables. Private universities are younger, have a larger faculty, more library resources and, are

generally better equipped. Also, they usually are smaller, more specialized, offer fewer degrees programs and have a specific ideological tendency. In contrast, public universities are crowded and have fewer faculty and administrative staff, but offer more campus and degrees, and their academic level is higher (E-campus 2006). In fact, funding for Spanish public universities is based on the size of enrollment and not on teaching quality (ABC, 2006). Our study accounted for these differences and their potential impact on the variables associated with education quality by including a dichotomy variable: (0) private, (1) public.

4. Research design and results

4.1. Methodological considerations

Our research data consisted primarily of faculty perceptions on variables related to education quality. Although we agreed that quantitative and qualitative data could be used as quality assessment “indicators” (Jones, 2003), we decided to focus on qualitative indicators for various reasons: qualitative information is crucial for monitoring the educational process, and the use of nominal or ordinal scale indicators could capture information beyond the scope of quantitative indicators (Kaiser and Yonezawa, 2003).

Additionally, we used the marketing management instructors as key informants. Literature that addresses the implementation of education quality emphasizes the importance of faculty in the process of outcomes assessment (Morse and Santiago, 2000) and on the implementation process (Carron and Châu, 1996; Palomba and Banta, 1999) because they are the keys to understanding universities as learning organizations (Marks and Louis, 1999).

The process of selecting a sample was determined by individual and organizational cross-level relationships included in the model. Cross-level theories describe the relationship between independent and dependent variables at different levels

(Rousseau, 1985). In addition to the dependent variable, we chose four independent variables including teaching resources, preferred management style in university departments, evaluation of faculty performance, and teaching actions-methods that refer to the organizational level. Teacher qualification variable refers to the individual level. According to Klein's recommendations (Klein et al., 1994), models that mix variables should revise their sources of variability for the independent and dependent measures. We designed our sample to represent the variability among the members, according to educational levels, and organizational contexts (e.g. management style in university departments and teaching methods).

4.2. Data analysis

Three procedures were used to test the hypotheses. The first two, correlation matrix and MANOVA test, describe the associations between independent and dependent variables, and the third validates the direction and strength of these associations. The procedures were exploratory and theory building in nature, because they used measures/variables that are new to this field of research and test a theory unknown to the marketing literature. MANOVA was chosen over structural equation modeling as a more appropriate statistical technique to explore an omnibus impact of the variables of marketing management teaching on a set of outcome learning and competitive performance indicators. The aim was to assess overall effects of these variables rather than causal relationships. MANOVA procedure is the suitable analytic tool for testing theory at early stages of development, when research questions are more concerned with the existence of relationship than with their strength (Pedhauzer and Schmelkin, 1991). If the results are significant, it is appropriate to conduct individual multiple regression analyses for each dependent variable, which we did. The third procedure included a two-stage, least-squares regression analysis. *Outputs capabilities* (LOMME and COMME) were used as dependent variables, while *managerial and technical capabilities variables input* were used as explanatory variables, and the public or private university-type variables were used as instrumental variables.

4.3. Data collection and sampling issues

A self-completion survey was developed and distributed to a wide cross-section of marketing management professors in Spain. Since there were no directories containing the e-mail addresses of all university marketing professors, we created our own list. Initially, we used university web sites and listings of professors who attend marketing conventions to identify our target population. Our final list included individuals who were designated professors of marketing management course at their universities and could be contacted by e-mail or ordinary mail.

The questionnaire was sent to the entire target population to maximize the variability of responses, representation and sample size (particularly since we had no background information on parameters that could estimate the sample). To troubleshoot problems regarding data collection and non-respondents, the questionnaires were divided into quartiles on the basis of the date on which they were received. The first quartile contained the earliest returns and the fourth quartile, the latest. Late returns were treated as non-responses (Armstrong and Overton, 1997). T-tests between cases in the first and fourth quartiles indicated that there were no significant statistical differences on average scores for most measures.

4.4. Sampling distribution

Although we attempted to create a sample that would have at least one professor per university, we finally settled on the number of professors who responded to the survey, which enabled us to maximize the sample size and accommodate multivariate analysis. The sample included 124 instructors from public (70.45 %) and 52 instructors from private institutions (29.55 %), 136 male (77.27 %) and 40 female professors (22.73 %). The total response rate from the listed professors was 14 % overall².

² Five respondents were considered non valid for missing cases.

The following measurements were used:

- ***Input-based capabilities or***

“Resources received for teaching” was evaluated in terms of eight items that measure the perception of resource availability in universities. These items were: government funding for higher education; support for faculty salaries; support for administrative salaries; student library resources; faculty library resources; technical resources; political support; and, private funding for higher education. The responses were graded from 1-5; while 1 = None, 3 = Somewhat, and 5 = A lot. The Alpha Cronbach index of 0.8214 shows an acceptable degree of reliability for this scale. The factorial analysis grouped all variables into one factor (Eigenvalue= 2.93474).

- ***Managerial capabilities***

“Management style” was assessed by four items describing the governance structure or preferred management style in university departments. They were derived from Cameron and Quinn’s (1999) propositions on the association between four organizational values and forms of organizations. The responses were graded from 1-5, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Agree Somewhat, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Since this scale uses classificatory and excluding categories, the internal consistency was tested with Kendall's W measure of the agreement among raters. A Chi square of 17.0226 ($p < .0007$) and W de Kendall = 0.263 indicate a low, although significant, agreement among teachers in their ratings. MS was recoded in two variables: “non participatory management style” (rules and procedures; distinguished professors exercise the most influence); and “participatory management style” (coalitions or political agreements of professors exercise a lot of influence; an egalitarian participatory style predominates regardless of rank).

“Teaching Methods Used”

We chose 7 items to describe the methods used in teaching marketing management. These were derived from research by Roach et al. (1993) and Clow and Wachter (1996) on teaching methodologies used in basic marketing. To determine the level of use, the responses were graded from 1-5: 1 = None; 3 = Somewhat; 5 = A lot. Since this scale uses classificatory and excluding categories, the internal consistency was tested with Kendall's W measurement of concordance among raters. A Chi square of 345.0293 ($p < .0000$) and W de Kendall = 0.3993 indicate low, although significant agreement among teachers in their ratings. Two variables profiled the concept of TMU: “structured teaching methods” (class lectures; structured presentations; conferences); and “non structured teaching methods” (case studies; role playing; business games; internships).

“Evaluation criteria”

Six items, derived from basic governance mechanisms proposed by Braun et al. (1999) and Burton (1983), were used to describe the diverse methods applied in faculty performance assessment. The responses were graded from 1-5: 1 = None, 3 = Somewhat, and 5 = A lot. Internal consistency of this scale was tested with Kendall's W measurement of the agreement among raters. A Chi square of 70.8143 ($p < .0000$) and W de Kendall = 0.3628 indicate low, although significant agreement among teachers in their ratings. Two variables delineated the concept of EC: “government criteria” (seniority, and civil service criteria); and “external criteria” (student surveys, academic and scientific publishing criteria, consultancies).

• **Technical organizational capabilities**

“Teacher qualification” was assessed by three variables: “teacher’s experience”, “faculty academic level”, and “international experience of faculty”. Three scales were developed to measure these technical capabilities. The faculty were asked about their years of teaching experience using a scale graded from 1-3, with 1 = 1-4 years, 2 = 5-10, and 3 = + 10 years. The faculty academic level was based on the highest degree received according to the following options: 1 = Bachelor's degree, 2 = Master's degree and 3 = Doctorate. Next, respondents were asked to indicate

training received outside their home country: 1 = None or some courses; 2 = Bachelor's degree or Master's degree; 3 = Doctorate. A Chi square of 73.2947, and Kendall's W = 0.3290 ($p < .0000$) indicate a significant agreement among teachers in their ratings. The factorial analysis grouped all variables into one factor (Eigenvalue= 1.77515).

“Learning Outcomes of Marketing Management Education” (LOMME) was evaluated in terms of six items that measure the learning outputs of the educational process. These items were: results adapted to business needs; results instrumental in solving country needs; results that help students' problem solving skills; develop student team work; develop innovative solutions; and, results that provide students with leadership skills. The responses were graded from 1-5, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Agree Somewhat, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The Alpha Cronbach index of 0.8584 shows a high degree of reliability of this scale. The factorial analysis grouped all variables into one factor (Eigenvalue= 3.55246).

“Competitive outcomes of marketing management education” (COMME) was evaluated in terms of four items that measure reputation or positioning outputs of the educational process (in terms of students, donors, market competitors, and employees). The responses were graded from 1-5, with 1 = bad positioning, 3 = confused positioning and 5 = good positioning. The Alpha Cronbach index of 0.8098 shows a high degree of reliability of this scale. The factorial analysis grouped all variables into one factor (Eigenvalue= 2.58161).

5. Analysis and results

Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviations are reported on Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive measures of variables

	Mean	Std Dev
Resources for teaching	2.09	.68
Teacher qualification	1.98	.87
Non participatory style	3.09	.69
Participatory style	2.72	1.10
Structured teaching methods	4.02	.67
Non structured methods	2.19	.72
Government criteria	3.36	.75
External criteria	2.78	.89
Learning Outcomes	3.30	.88
Competitive outcomes	3.29	.79

n=176

As an exploratory way of testing whether the variables used in our model were associated with the level of the learning and competitive outcomes items, we used a correlation matrix to initiate the procedure. According to the results shown on Table 2, we observed partial accordance with the hypotheses. The second procedure consisted of a MANOVA test to assess overall effects of the input and *managerial capabilities variables* (resource availability, management style, teaching methods, and methods of faculty performance assessment) on a set of outcome learning and competitive performance variables. The significant multivariate F value (Wilks' lambda: 0.28; $p < .000$) revealed that level dependent variables are related to differences in variations in independent variables.

Table 2. Correlation matrix of Learning Outcomes items and model variables

Hypotheses	Learning Outcomes						L. O. Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
H.1. Resources	.2266*	.2170*	.2918**	.2124*	.2610*	.1151	.2132*
H.2.1. Participatory style	.3290**	.2474*	.2120**	.3473**	.2673**	.2734**	.3501**
H.2.2. Non participatory style	-.0915	.0730	-.0156	.0697	.0382	.1070	.0216
H.3.1. Structured methods	-.2499*	-.0266	-.0577	-.0745	.0581	.0962	-.0577
H.3.2. Non structured methods	.1639*	.2457**	.2330*	.3367**	.3859**	.4710**	.3684**
H.4.1. Government criteria	-.2352*	-.1826*	-.4163**	.0000	-.0967	-.2568*	-.2962*
H.4.2. External criteria	.2976**	.1729*	.3415**	.3115**	.3589**	.2576*	.3722**
H.5. Teacher qualification	.2546*	.1555	.2250*	.2487*	.2489*	.2460**	.2884*

Significant differences: +p < 0.10; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.000

n=176

Learning outputs

1. Are adapted to business needs
2. Are instrumental in solving country needs
3. Help students' problem solving skills
4. Help to develop student team work
5. Help to develop innovative solutions
6. Provide students with leadership skills

Table 3. Correlation matrix of Competitive Outcomes items and model variables

Hypotheses	Competitive Outcomes				C. O. Average
	Students	Donors, market	Competitors	Employees	
H.1 Resources	.2026*	.1424	.1805*	.2391**	.2509*
H.2.1 Participatory style	.1901*	.1109	.0619	.3786**	.2939**
H.2.2 Non participatory style	.0096	.0251	-.0538	-.3769**	-.2656*
H.3.1 Structured methods	.0795	-.0971	-.1543*	-.1556*	-.1365
H.3.2 Non structured methods	.1725*	.0647	.0490	.1596*	.1431*
H.4.1 Government criteria	-.0930	-.2241**	-.2396**	.1538*	-.1611*
H.4.2 External criteria	.2867**	.2699**	.1202	.1906*	.2860**
H.5 Teacher qualification	.2324**	.1748*	.2153**	.0682	.1521*

Significant differences: +p < 0.10; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.000

n=176

5.1. Findings related to the hypotheses

Since the basic assumption of Resource Dependence Theory is that the level of resources and capabilities positively influences the level of LOMME and COMME, the third procedure used two-stage least-squares regression analysis with an SPSS statistical package to assess the direction and the relative contribution of each component of a set of model variables.

- **Learning outcomes hypotheses**

Table 4 shows the results of the regression analysis, which indicate that some of the hypothesized relationships of our model were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. The independent variables appear to explain about 33% of the variation in the learning outcomes of marketing management education (LOMME).

Table 4 also shows the analyses for testing Hypothesis 1.a, which predicted that the greater the availability of educational resources (support for faculty and administrative salaries, faculty and student library resources, and technical and political resources), the more closely LOMME would be obtained by marketing professors. The positive contribution of resources to learning outcomes (H.1) is validated after including the “type of university” variable (model 2). This indicated to us that the relation is conditioned by the type of institution (public or private).

Table 4. A two-stage least squares regression analysis with LOMME as dependent variable

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
H.1.a Resources	1.452+	2.519*
H.2.1.a Participatory style	2.771*	3.370**
H.3.1.a Non structured methods	3.210**	3.746**
H.4.2.a External criteria	1.893+	2.764**
H.5.a Teacher qualification	2.915*	1.336+
<i>Summary Statistics</i>		
Multiple R	.55470	.59774
R ²	.30769	.35729
Adjusted R ²	.27781	.32693
ΔR ²		.04912
F statistic	10.29636	11.76676
p<	0.0000	0.0000

+p < 0.10; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.000

n=176

Results also validate the positive contribution of participatory management style (political agreements of professors and an egalitarian participatory style) to the level of LOMME (H.2.1.a). In contrast, exploratory results shown on Table 3 suggest that the non-participatory system does not contribute at all to the learning results of the educational system. When the *type of university* variable was added (Model 2), the positive influence was increased, which suggests that the influence of management style on learning outcomes is affected by the different work environments of public/private universities. These results are predictable given that private universities have more freedom in decision-making than public universities, where the work environment is conditioned by bureaucratic rules and controls dictated by the Government.

Hypothesis 3 evaluates the influence of teaching methods on LOMME. Table 3 results support the theoretical propositions that marketing education requires non-structured teaching methods (H.3.1.a), because students must participate actively to learn. They also indicate that case studies, role-playing, business games, and internships methods (student centered methods) are greater predictors of learning outcomes than the variables used in our models. Our results suggest that these methods reflect the level of involvement and motivation of teachers in academic activity, which could influence LOMME. Although this is a close and significant

relation, it is also sensitive to differences in the methods used in public and private universities.

Hypothesis 4 tested the contribution of the faculty performance evaluation systems to LOMME. Table 4 shows that external assessment criteria (student surveys, academic and scientific publishing criteria, consultancies) help predict the learning results of students (H.4.2.a). The influence of external evaluation criteria on learning outcomes, however, was appreciable only when the “type of university” variable was incorporated (Model 2). It appears that the positive relationship was conditioned by the kinds of evaluation methods used by universities to assess faculty performance. Private institutions base their assessment on external or market criteria, while public universities stress government imposed evaluation criteria (seniority and civil service criteria)³.

The hypothesized positive contribution of the level of teacher qualification to the level of learning outcomes was partially validated (H.5.a). The findings support theoretical propositions regarding the direct influence of qualifications of professors on the quality of education. Although this relation was also found in Spain on a qualitative exploratory research (see Cambra and Cambra, 2003), in our research it is weaker because the “type of university” variable is included. The positive influence was conditioned by existing differences in Spanish universities in terms of faculty accreditation criteria. In Spain, only public universities control teaching accreditation, but recently, there has been an increased demand for similar regulation in the private sector.

Therefore, the results validate that higher levels of invested educational capabilities (input-based, managerial organizational and technical organizational) produce greater levels of LOMME.

³ The negative association found in the correlations between government imposed criteria and learning outcomes (Table 2) is a product of methods that emphasizes age and experience. Recent studies conducted in Spain show that private universities also experience this negative relation between faculty seniority and the interest in student learning (Chiang, 2004).

5.2. Competitive outcomes hypotheses

The results of the regression analysis on Table 5 show that several of the hypothesized relationships in our model were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. The independent variables explain approximately 42% of the variation in the COMME obtained by universities in our sample.

Table 5. A two-stage least squares regression analysis with COMME as a dependent variable

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
H.1.b Resources	2.016*	2.820**
H.2.1.b Participatory style	3.604**	3.712**
H.3.1.b Non structured methods	2.333*	2.507**
H.4.1.b Internal criteria	-2.398*	-2.116*
H.4.2.b External criteria	2.180*	3.944**
H.5.b Teacher qualification	1.380+	
<i>Summary Statistics</i>		
Multiple R	.5827	.66827
R ²	.3959	.44659
Adjusted R ²	.3659	.4196
ΔR ²		.0537
F statistic	12.64452	16.54306
p<	0.0000	0.0000

+p < 0.10; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.000

n=176

The results on Table 5 also test Hypothesis 1.b, which predicts a positive effect on the level of COMME if educational resources are available. This relationship is validated and incremented after the inclusion of the “type of university” variable (Model 2).

Our findings also validate the positive contribution of the participatory management style to the level of competitive outcomes (H.2.1.b). Table 5 results also support that the participatory management style may favor a university’s competitive strategies. Furthermore, Table 5 results also support Hypothesis 3.1.b that evaluates the influence of non-structured teaching methods on COMME, and show that this influence was increased when the *type of university* variable was added (Model 2).

The results even show that external assessment criteria (student surveys, academic and scientific publishing criteria, consultancies) can predict the COMME (H.4.2.b). As it appears, external assessment criteria are the most influential variable in COMME.

The hypothesis that predicted the influence of teacher qualification on COMME was not validated, since the initial weak relationship (model 1) was eliminated once the “type of university” variable was added. This could be the result of the constant flow of negative publicity regarding university faculty in Spain. An example of this is an article that states that even within universities, the job of a professor is not highly valued (Aguilar, 2001).

Therefore, the results provide initial support for our model, and substantiate the argument that educational capabilities can be considered reliable variables to successfully predict the levels of education quality (LOMME and COMME results) of marketing management programs at Spanish universities.

Conclusions

The primary purpose of this study was to empirically identify the variables linked to the quality of marketing management education, defined as learning outcomes of students and the competitive positioning of universities. The study also examined how this impact is moderated by the effect of the public/private university variable. This is an important contribution given that the literature indicates that researchers know several important things about marketing education, but have been unsuccessful at proposing policies for improvement or implementation. Our results also contribute to the marketing education literature by showing the importance of a comprehensive set of capabilities as prerequisites to generating a successful educational strategy. The study suggests that the implementation of educational strategies is most effectively promoted when various teacher and organizational variables are addressed simultaneously.

Our findings have several implications for policy makers, since our descriptive analysis empirically validates the declarations of public stakeholders regarding the characteristics of Spanish and European education. For example, we found that marketing professors perceived that the availability of several kinds of capabilities at their universities was moderate to low⁴. Especially alarming is the limited funding for teaching. The press has revealed that university funding in Spain lags behind the rest of EU countries and that Europe should invest twice as much in their universities if they hope to reach the level of schools in the United States (El Mundo Digital, 2006). Also significant were the results that placed structured teaching methods at a high level and the participatory style in marketing departments at a low level. This emphasizes the fact that Spanish universities cannot comply with their professional training goals given their governing style. Moreover, it impedes the incentives and the motivation needed to generate a critical mass of good universities in this country (Pérez-Díaz, 2006). In view of this situation, our findings can be useful to policy makers who depend on empirical information to make decisions for funding and implementing global competitive marketing management programs.

The study also has implications for marketing managers. Although the research did not address the relationship between marketing strategy and an organization's performance, it provides useful information for future studies about differential impact of organizational capabilities on a firm's performance. From a theoretical perspective, our results suggest the relative importance of firm-level factors, as opposed to industry factors, in determining organizational performance. Thus, our findings support the significance of manager capabilities and qualified people as critical to business success (Maijor and Van Wittleoostuijn, 1996; Ramaswamy et al., 1994). According to these opinions, marketing managers may be affected by the quality of education in the country where their firms operate, since skilled personnel depend on the quality of those educational programs. This suggests that marketing managers

⁴ This low perception coincides with a study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that shows that 75% of the state universities have budget deficits due to the lack of investment and outdated funding models. (El Mundo, 2004).

should be interested in sharing their business experience with universities and marketing professors.

The study also found that the teacher and organizational variables are a potential source of information for marketing professors, because they serve as a self-diagnostic tool to determine the potential success of educational actions. Since marketing education demands a new mode of teaching and learning professional skills (Hunt et al., 2004; Perry and Ball, 1996), the success of universities will depend on a faculty's ability to identify and implement educational quality-linked variables better than their competitors. This is even more important within the context of the Bologna Accord where some programs and universities will benefit enormously and create global reputations while others will be less fortunate, and may very quickly be under tremendous financial pressure (Ashridge and Judge, 2005). Our results are also important for European marketing professors, since in their case the risk of valuing in-company education more than that offered by universities already exists (Cavallé, 2005).

Our research also provides information for firms that develop training policies for their marketing directors. The results make it possible to identify which teaching methods are most effective for internal personnel training, as well as the potential skills to be expected from a graduate of a particular university. The learning outcomes validated by our study can also assist in setting career development objectives and the best methods to attain them. The learning outcomes also provide parameters that managers can use for self-evaluation or employee evaluation, because they represent standards or ideal management capabilities that every marketing manager should have.

Finally, our research has identified potential problem areas in marketing management training that will need corrective measures in Spain, and raises questions as to whether it will be able meet the challenges of globalization. For example, we found that marketing teachers perceive that the skills taught in training programs give priority to bureaucratic systems (non-participatory style, government

criteria, and structured teaching methods). This is significant if we consider that bureaucratic systems can only partially mobilize and coordinate the intelligence, experience, skills, and imagination of people. Since public education systems are largely organized through bureaucracies, our results are thought provoking, because they indicate that these systems actually hamper faculty and students' attempts to acquire the marketing skills necessary to deal with the challenges of the Knowledge Age. These results are more worrying if we consider that public universities form leaders in the public sector, help to establish the foundations for national research (Brunner, 1996), and provide students with the foundations of social capital that are the basis for the management of government affairs and democratic political systems (Harrison and Huntington, 2000).

The major limitation of this study is one common to all research in education: it is difficult to interpret the results, because the data is imperfect and the descriptions of the underlying structure of educational variables that support hypotheses are incomplete (Todd and Wolpin, 2003). It is also limited by the individual and organizational cross-level relationships in the model, as well as the auto selection bias. Although these are methodological weaknesses that recur in much of the research based on self-reported measures, we hope the sample procedure and reliability tests of our variables reduce these limitations. Future studies might want to replicate this study using more direct objective measures of the theoretical constructs. Also, since the findings reported here are limited to the Spanish context, future research might extend the study to other countries where the educational context could impact differently. In addition, we suggest that this study be replicated according to different levels of marketing education (master's degree and doctorates) and that a new comparative study might consider more variables, and may explore the causal relationships among them.

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Febrero de 2010