Chapter 10
New Course Design to Reply Uncertainty: Evidence From Marketing Programs Approaching Innovation Theories

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ABSTRACT

The importance of students’ preparedness to work immediately after university, industry demand of specific graduates, and current trends in marketing studies are pushing university to reconsider their traditional marketing programs by including more interdisciplinary perspectives, such as innovation and technology management. However, innovation theory is relatively new for marketing research, while studies on the extent to which marketing education should encompass innovation theory are still limited. Drawing upon the exploitation of the thresholds concepts, the chapter proposes a new approach to design an innovative course based on the integration of innovation theory with marketing management for postgraduate marketing students to address this challenge. These threshold concepts would emerge as the core concepts for synthesizing innovation theory and marketing management for supporting the development of the new marketing programs.

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INTRODUCTION

Innovation theory is a relatively new approach for marketing research which is increasingly acquiring academics’ and practitioners’ attention (Hagberg, Sundstrom, & Egels-Zandén, 2016; Inman & Nikolova, 2017; Pantano, Priporas, Sorace, & Iazzolino, 2017; Willems, Smolders, Brengman, Luyten, & Schoning, 2017; Xu, Frankwick, & Ramirez, 2016). Traditionally, it is employed by business and management practitioners and scholars to describe and understand the extent to which innovations can be successfully managed and engaged within an organization facing environmental changes (Nijssen, 2017; Pantano, 2014; Pantano, Priporas, Sorace, & Iazzolino, 2017; Schilling, 2012; Tidd & Bessant, 2013). It includes concepts related to the classification of innovation (radical vs incremental), diffusion, life-cycle, adoption, and so on (Nijssen, 2017; Slater, Mohr, & Sengupta, 2013; Tidd & Bessant, 2013; Veryzer, 1998). On the one hand, as industry requires new marketing figures able to manage the emerging technologies (i.e. social media, mobile app, augmented reality, etc.), graduates with such well-developed capabilities and excellent skills in marketing and management of innovation have high prospects for good jobs and are in increasing demand. On the other one, universities have to face the challenge of designing new marketing programs to develop the competences and knowledge that underpin the integration of innovation theory with marketing curriculum to improve students’ employability. Furthermore, this becomes more challenging given that the higher education sector is undergoing a transformation. It is now seeing the entry of students from a wider educational background than ever before (Gale & Parker, 2013) and these students are entering a wide array of disciplines. Due to this heterogeneity of students in higher education, it is common that some students fail to grasp certain parts of their respective curriculum (Meyer & Land, 2006), whereas at the same time, other students are able to grasp these very parts without difficulty. Thus, there is a need for higher education providers to consider specific pedagogical strategies to account for this divergence in student background and comprehension (Karunaratne, Breyer, & Wood, 2016). However, reconciling institutional, staff and educational demand is considered a critical issue for the quality of learning (Biggs, 1996a).

Against this background, this research would reply to this challenge by proposing a new approach to develop a marketing course integrating innovation theory based on the exploitation of the threshold concepts (Meyer & Land, 2003) and to improve the effectiveness of such a course. Although designing new curriculum and courses through threshold concepts is not new for disciplines such as finance (Hoadley, Tickle, Wood, & Kyng, 2015), economics (Davies & Mangan, 2007; Karunaratne, Breyer, & Wood, 2016; Shanahan, 2016), business (Bajada, Jarvis, Trayler, & Bui, 2016; Vidal, Smith, & Spetic, 2015), it is still under explored in marketing education.
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