

AN ASSESSMENT AND COMPARISON OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETING COURSE

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ABSTRACT

While the early internationalization of business school curricula was essentially in response to corporate needs and expectations, a major instigator of curriculum change was the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Four general questions were addressed by the AACSB (Nehrt 1981):

1. Why should business schools teach international business and what subject should be taught?
2. How should the international dimension of business operations be integrated into business school curricula?
3. How should the international dimension be related to international studies in the rest of the university?
4. What are the needs for research and instructional material in the field?

In 2003, AACSB International (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business to reflect its worldwide stature) adopted a new set of standards that reaffirmed its commitment to a global workplace. While accreditation assessment procedures now expect international inclusion, Tyagi (2001) asserts that the internalization of business education is still a key challenge facing colleges and universities in the United States.

The main objective of the current study is to determine the degree of consistency across marketing academic departments with respect to international course content and teaching methods. If, as Tyagi (2001) maintains, marketing academic departments should take the lead in preparing students for an internationally oriented business world, then it would follow that marketing academicians should begin to set some standards or expectations for international marketing courses. However, Andrus, Laughlin, and Norvell (1995) report that, "Little is known about the international marketing course even though this is a major channel for providing international marketing information to marketing students" (p. 9).

In order to explore course content and teaching methods for international marketing courses, we requested syllabi from 640 schools using the AMS membership directory as the sample frame. The ensuing content analysis was based on 89 syllabi used at the graduate and undergraduate levels, representing a 12 percent response rate. Four independent judges were used to categorize and code information into a database for analysis.

Content of international marketing courses was examined in terms of text used and topics included. Environmental topics were included in a high proportion of syllabi. Other topics mentioned often were international trade, culture, business customs, and geography. Internal factor topics include marketing research and the marketing mix. Regarding pedagogy, there is consistency across syllabi examined. A project/plan is used by 73 percent of respondents with an average weight of 33 percent of the course grade. A case component is included in 53 percent of courses; there is a wide variation in case usage by region of the United States. Finally, learning outcomes were largely in terms of application of marketing principles and creation of an awareness/understanding of the international marketplace. Full details are available in the complete manuscript, available from the authors.

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