Developing Marketing Undergraduate’s International Perspective: By the Outcomes-based Case Teaching Method

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Abstract. This article implements an outcomes-based case teaching method to achieve training objective of international perspective for marketing major. In this article, we conclude that there are three components in the implementation process: identification of teaching objectives, selection of assessment method and development of rubrics. Based on this process, we further discuss how to effectively implement the outcomes-based education throughout the process.

Introduction

As globalization has an ever increasing influence on the business of today, business school students need to adapt to global competition. As perspective marketers, marketing undergraduates in particular should be able to evaluate the rapidly changing global environment and plan marketing strategies and tactics accordingly, and therefore developing “international perspective” is very crucial for marketing majors.

To specify to the context of Business College of Beijing Union University, the school has been adopting the accreditation system of AACSB (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), aiming to build an international business school and cultivate international business practitioners. To meet the quality standard of AACSB, business college implements the concept of OBE (outcomes-based education) which needs to clearly specify the student training objectives, and “developing student’s international perspective” is one of the crucial objectives. Therefore, faculties should give more succinct teaching objectives in tune with the training objectives in the curriculum development.

It is for the above reasons that this article discusses how to develop the marketing curriculum and course syllabus to achieve training objective of international perspective for marketing major. The implementation process will be discussed as follows.

Methodology

This research presents an exploratory study that discusses the process of embedding “international perspective” into the course curriculum. The marketing undergraduate’s curriculum innovation offered by Business College of Beijing Union University provides a case study of identifying the “international perspective” and developing this training objective into an implementation process in the marketing curriculum.

Interviews and seminars were held with students and faculty peers to collect information and opinions about how to integrate the teaching contents and pedagogy to develop the implementation process.

Findings

Through the case study of the marketing curriculum development program in business college of Beijing Union University, the article concludes that the implementation process has three components
in turn: 1) identification of teaching objectives, 2) selection of assessment method and 3) development of rubrics.

**Identification of “International Perspective”**

At the outset of research, seminars were held focusing on the marketing-major undergraduate’s ability objectives, the faculties discussed how to define the ability objectives of international-perspective for marketing undergraduates, draft for the ability objectives were established.

Following this step, interviews were conducted with experts in the fields of international marketing and international business. After the draft revision, training objective of “international perspective” was broken into two ability objectives: a) Ability to identify cultural diversity in the international market. b) Ability to analyze cultural diversity’s influence on the international marketing campaigns (as seen in Table1).

After the establishment of ability objectives, the faculties in marketing teaching section further discussed the course objectives which align with the ability objectives.

Therefore, by sorting out all the relevant literatures, teaching staff in the marketing section screened the knowledge points and analysis tools related to ability 1 and ability 2, and integrated and developed course objectives in the aspects of consumer behavior and international marketing separately (as also seen in Table1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training objective</th>
<th>Ability objectives</th>
<th>Teaching objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International perspective</td>
<td>Ability to identify cultural diversity in international marketing campaigns.</td>
<td>Through the comparative analysis of consumer demand preferences in different countries, students can identify cultural diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to analyze the impact of culture on international marketing campaigns.</td>
<td>Through the study of cultural differences in corporate marketing activities, and the analysis of the impact of political economy and culture on international marketing activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Selection of Assessment Method**

Various assessment tools such as close-book exam, research report and case study have been used to assess students’ performance in the academic discipline. In the process of selecting assessment method for the outcomes-based educational process, close-book exam was eliminated at the outset of the selection, because close-book exam highlights the assessment of basic knowledge and theory, however shows less effective in assessing students’ practical marketing competency. Following this process, market research and case study became two possible options for assessment.

As it was stated “the justification today for competency-based programs focuses on the flexibility, efficiency and affordability” (Gallaher, 2014). Case study of international market is believed to improve higher-order skills and more approachable and differentiable compared to first-hand international market research which asks for more comprehensive competencies and recourses. Hence, case study was chosen as the assessment method.

After extensive discussion based on the criteria for outcomes-based programs, the outline of case-study assessment was designed to identify and analyze cultural diversity problem in the specific international marketing context.

**Development of Assessment Rubrics**

After identification of teaching outcomes and adoption of case study method, the next step is to integrate the two components and design outcomes-based case teaching method.

The implementation process is listed as follows (Lu & He, 2015): First, focusing on the teaching objectives in the process of developing the actual business case. Second, integrating subtasks into cases and guiding students to complete sub-tasks step by step.

Based on this process, the research firstly develops the case focusing on teaching objectives, and each objective is broken into sub-objectives. The detailed process goes as follows:
Teaching objective 1 (evaluation of the ability to recognize cultural diversity) is divided into two sub-objectives: analysis of the impact of culture on consumer behavior and analysis of cultural value differences based on differences in consumer demand preference.

Teaching objective 2 (evaluation of the impact of cultural factors on international marketing activities) is divided into two sub-objectives: analysis of diversity of international marketing activities and analysis of cultural values in corporate’s international marketing activities.

The final step in our teaching program is to set rubrics to make each sub-objective clearly and concisely measurable.

Discussion

First, identification of “international perspective” is a two-step process: (1) Transforming training objective into ability objective for marketing major; (2) Transforming ability objective into teaching objectives.

In step 1, before identifying the course objectives, the essential focus of marketing was reviewed by faculty participants. The focus of marketing is identifying and meeting customer needs and satisfaction. Therefore, capturing the marketing discipline’s essence and core value of marketing job which differentiates marketing major graduates from non-marketing major graduates is the basis on the initial stage of the identification and enables us to define the boundary of marketing.

In step 2, the marketing faculty team integrated the teaching resources from the syllabus of consumer behavior and international marketing. In this step, communication and cooperation of cross-course teaching in the discipline of marketing was conducted.

Second, the selection of assessment method is a crucial part for the process in practicum which entails a multi-criteria estimation. Flexibility, efficiency and affordability of the assessment methods are all taken into consideration in the screening process. For example, in the process of the selection, a draft plan adopting the method of international market research report was proposed, requiring students to interview international customers and operate a systematic qualitative research. Feedbacks from both faculty peers and students questioned the efficiency and differentiability of the design, and thus the method of research report was eliminated in the process of selection.

Third, based on identification of teaching outcomes and adoption of case study method, outcomes-based case teaching method was used for the eventual measurement of the training objective. Grading rubrics for each sub-objective identify students’ learning outcomes in the context of the specific business case. It’s still worthy of note that future revisions of rubrics and case material are necessary, giving the fact that the context is ever changing, and the rubrics are highly contextualized.

Summery

This article implements an outcomes-based education into the curriculum development to develop student’s international perspective.

Firstly, the general training objective is developed into two ability objectives for marketing major. Secondly, each ability objective is further developed into teaching objective. Finally, each teaching objective is broken into sub-objectives in the context of specific case study. And as the implementation tools, both teaching method and grading rubrics are all developed to measure the effectiveness of the teaching method based on accepted assessment objectives.

References


