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A Critical Review of the Literature for Sales Educators

Shannon Cummins

University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, scummins@unomaha.edu

James W. Peltier

University of Wisconsin–Whitewater

Robert Erffmeyer

University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire

Joel Whalen

DePaul University

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A Critical Review of the Literature for Sales Educators

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Shannon Cummins¹, James W. Peltier¹, Robert Erffmeyer²,
and Joel Whalen³ [AQ: 1]

Abstract

The *Journal of Marketing Education* is publishing a special issue on Sales Education and Training in August 2014. In this article, we review the sales education literature from four primary journals and the business literature at large. The four primary journals are the *Journal of Marketing Education*, *Marketing Education Review*, *Journal of Education in Business*, and the *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*. Of the 107 identified articles, experiential learning, assessment, and career development were the three most prominent topics. Future research opportunities in sales education, including those for the special issue, are offered across nine topical areas.

Keywords

[AQ: 2]

Few marketing educators would be surprised to learn that “sales” is the most common career entry point for marketing graduates. In fact, the seminal study by Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2010) titled “What’s It Worth: The Economic Value of College Majors,” showed that the greatest portion of marketing majors pursue a sales career after graduation. What might be more surprising is that sales as a first career was ranked second for business students majoring in general business, economics, international business, and management. Sales ranked third for students majoring in finance, operations management, human resources, and management information systems. Across campus, sales as a first career choice was ranked second or third for students majoring in the social sciences, natural sciences, physical sciences, liberal arts, communication, and journalism. Although sales as a career choice has broad reach across campus, the fact remains that there is an ongoing and widespread talent shortage of salespeople in the United States and around the world. As evidence, ManpowerGroup’s Annual Survey for 2006–2012 (2012) shows that sales has been a top five shortage area in each of the past 7 years. Moreover, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) projects considerable yearly job growth for sales positions through 2020 in diverse areas such as insurance, business to business, and technical sales.

Universities across the United States have been quick to respond to the demand–supply gap for well-trained sales professionals. According to DePaul’s biannual Universities and Colleges Sales Education Landscape Survey, sales education curricula grew from 44 U.S. universities and colleges

in 2007, to 67 in 2009, and to 101 in 2011. For 2011, 32 of these institutions offered a major, minor, or degree concentration; the remaining 69 offered sales courses without a specific transcript designation (DePaul University Center for Sales Leadership, 2011–2012). Coinciding with this growth in sales curricula is the increase in the number of universities establishing sales centers and institutes. Launched in 2002, the University Sales Center Alliance (USCA) was formed to “increase the professionalism of the sales field, improve the status of sales as an academic discipline, and assist other universities in this mission” (USCA, 2012, <http://www.universitysalescenteralliance.org/>). Since 2002, the USCA has grown from 9 to 33 universities across the United States.

Despite the fact that college graduates have long entered into sales careers and the number of universities offering sales curricula, sales programs, and sales centers has grown dramatically, the marketing education literature has been relatively slow in responding to the needs of students and employers (Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy, 2011). Specific to the *Journal of Marketing Education*, of the more than 800 articles published since its inception (Gray, Peltier, & Schibrowsky, 2012), only 27 have focused “primarily” on

¹University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, Whitewater, WI, USA

²University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, Eau Claire, WI, USA

³DePaul University, Chicago, IL, USA

Corresponding Author:

James W. Peltier, Institute for Sales Excellence, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, Whitewater, WI, USA
Email: peltierj@uw.edu

Table 1. Article Categories and Descriptions.

Category	Description
Assessment	Issues relating to assessing and enhancing the quality of (a) programs/majors, (b) the profession
Career development	Articles targeting ways to prepare students for life beyond college
Course management	Articles relating to how educators manage the classroom size and groups
Ethics	Teaching ethics as a topical area and/or assessing ethical and unethical behaviors
Experiential learning	Real-world and applied learning experiences
Higher level thinking	Articles with a primary focus on understanding higher level learning processes
International	Articles that address global topical issues: sales or recruitment in foreign countries, teaching in foreign countries, or teaching foreign students
Marketing mix	Articles where the primary focus is teaching a particular element of the marketing mix or a related area
Technology	Articles with the primary focus on the discussion and/or utilization of technology

sales education, a dearth that has been noted across the marketing education literature (Anderson et al., 2005; McIntyre & Tanner, 2004). In response, the *Journal of Marketing Education* will be publishing a special issue on Sales Education and Training in August, 2014 (see Call for Papers in the journal issue). This special issue is in partnership with the USCA, which is offering a \$1,000 *Best Paper Award*.

The purpose of the current article is to provide a review of the sales education literature. To accomplish this objective, we first present the method used to classify the sales education literature and offer recommendations for future research directions. Given the importance of effective sales training for those entering the workforce (Lassk, Ingra, Kraus, & DiMascio, 2012), we encourage readers to consider submitting a manuscript for the August 2014 Special Issue on Sales Education and Training.

Method

Journal Selection

Four primary journals were searched for articles relating to sales education. The *Journal of Marketing Education* and *Marketing Education Review* were selected given their prominent status in the marketing education literature. The *Journal of Education for Business* was chosen based on its cross-disciplinary focus on business education. The *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management* was selected because of its position as the most prominent sales journal and its previous publication of education articles. All articles from the inception to the present edition of each journal were considered. Articles deemed relevant to sales education were saved to a data file. The final count from these four journals was 90 articles. Last, an expanded literature review was conducted using “sales education” as the key search term, which yielded 17 additional qualified articles from 12 journals. In total, 107 articles were captured spanning 33 years of publication. Software reviews,

introductions to special issues, editor notes, and book reviews were excluded from the analysis.

Categorization and Coding

Our first challenge was to develop a rubric for categorizing the identified sales articles. Following Gray et al. (2012), a data file was prepared that included each article, journal, volume, issue, author(s), title, abstract, and data source. Each article was coded for the primary, secondary, and tertiary topics. At this point, the topic codes were reviewed and discussed by two authors. The initial codes provided a starting point for identifying content patterns across the articles. Several rounds of discussions resulted in replication of the nine categories developed by Gray et al. (2012) in a review of the broader marketing literature. These categories were found to represent the variety of initial topic codes and allowed for a comparison of sales education literature and the broader marketing education literature over the same time period. As a final check, each article was recoded into one of the final nine categories without the aid of the initial topic codes. Limited discussion occurred to resolve categorization conflicts (e.g., an article discussing a role-play useful in preparing students for interviews could be viewed as either experiential learning or career development). Table 1 presents the final categories along with a description of each. Table 2 classifies subcategories and provides exemplars.

Discussion of General Results

Journal Counts

As would be expected, the two primary marketing education journals have published the greatest number of sales education articles (Table 3). Although *Marketing Education Review* was launched in 1992 versus 1979 for the *Journal of Marketing Education*, *Marketing Education Review* has published 39 sales education articles compared with 27 for *Journal of Marketing Education*. The *Journal of Personal*

Table 2. Categories, Subcategories, and Topics.

Category	Subcategories	Topics
Assessment	Program	<i>History of sales education:</i> correspondence courses, early texts, sales certificate programs, professional foundations <i>State of the curriculum:</i> undergraduate and graduate programs, sales centers, sales chairs, integration within marketing, professional education model, foreign models <i>Course design:</i> project integration, classroom-based selling experiences, textbooks, student preferences <i>Course content:</i> technology, ethical training, relationship marketing, nonverbal communication, supply chain
	Profession	State of the profession and professional associations, sales and career management training, state of sales educator familiarity with sales research, impact of research area and tenure
Career development	Recruitment	Basis for hiring, employer needs, applicant sources, MBA versus undergraduate
	Preparation	Student knowledge and skills, cross-cultural differences, motivation, impact of marketing curriculum on preparedness, job market and career socialization, network development, compensation, memo and cover letters, instructor advice
Course management	Perception	MBA and undergraduate classroom exposure to and involvement with sales, prestige of sales career, intent to pursue sales, impact of culture, race, autonomy, salary in sales career pursuit and career satisfaction
		Suggestions for optimum number of role-plays and how to manage presentation time
Ethics	Measuring ethical behavior	Student scale development, achievement versus relationship orientations, gender differences, impact of training
	Teaching ethics	Integration into the curriculum, cases, games, experiments, scenarios, cross-cultural and gender differences, decision making, moral reasoning
Experiential learning	Using experiential learning	Active learning, feedback, reflection, active listening, student engagement
	Course-specific exercises	Negotiations, presentations, professional activity reports, key account sales, forecasting, case studies, experiments
	Simulations	Use, student engagement, learning effectiveness
	Projects	<i>Sales projects:</i> university-based, nonprofit based, commercially based, selling labs <i>Other projects:</i> service learning projects and extracurricular competitions
Higher level thinking	Role-plays	Assessment, evaluation, coaching, interpersonal communication development
	Teaching and learning frameworks	Critical thinking development and measurement, salesperson knowledge structures, integrated experience and feedback loops, decoding sales communications
International	Cross-culture comparisons	Perceptions of sales and contributing factors across cultures, issues in accessing salespeople in foreign countries
Marketing mix	Integration with sales	Importance of supply chain in retail sales positions
Technology	Integration into the classroom	Incorporation into training models and training for specific applications, impact of course design and learning mode, interactive web cases and videos
	Professional development	Use of technology in professional development and training

Selling & Sales Management has published 17 sales education articles, followed by only 7 for the *Journal of Education for Business*. The remaining 17 articles are from 12 different journals.

Category Counts and Percentages

The three largest categories accounted for 74.8% of the articles identified in this review. *Experiential Learning*

represented 29.9% of the total, followed by 24.3% for *Assessment* and 20.6% for *Career Development*. Although the ordering was different, these three categories were also the top three found by Gray et al. (2012) in their review of *Journal of Marketing Education's* publication history. The remaining categorical coverage rankings of sales education articles in order were *Ethics* (8.4%), *Technology* (5.6%), *Higher Level Thinking* (4.7%), *Course Management* and *International* (both at 2.8%), and *Marketing Mix* (0.9%).

Table 3. Number and Percentage of Articles by Category and Journal.

Category	JME		MER		JPSSM		JEB		Other		Total	
	n	Percentage	n	Percentage	n	Percentage	n	Percentage	n	Percentage	n	Percentage
Assessment	5	18.5	7	17.9	6	35.3	1	14.3	7	41.2	26	24.3
Career development	8	29.6	4	10.3	2	11.8	2	28.6	6	35.3	22	20.6
Course management	0	0.0	3	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	2.8
Ethics	2	7.4	4	10.3	2	11.8	1	14.3	0	0.0	9	8.4
Experiential learning	9	33.3	16	41.0	1	5.9	3	42.9	3	17.6	32	29.9
Higher level thinking	1	3.7	1	2.6	2	11.8	0	0.0	1	5.9	5	4.7
International	1	3.7	1	2.6	1	5.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	2.8
Marketing mix	0	0.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.9
Technology	1	3.7	2	5.1	2	11.8	0	0.0	1	5.9	6	5.6
Total	27	100	39	100	17	100	7	100	17	100	107	100

Note. JME = *Journal of Marketing Education*; MER = *Marketing Education Review*; JPSSM = *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*; JEB = *Journal of Education for Business*; Other = other journals. Percentages are column percentages.

Discussion of Category Results

Experiential Learning

Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand. (Confucius, approximately 450 B. C.)

The largest number of articles in our database explored experiential learning (29.9%). Today's Generation Y students respond positively to experiential learning and the opportunity to garner business experience while still in school (Sojka & Fish 2008). Sales educators have embraced methods that give their students skills, attitudes, and experiences that prepare them for an increasingly competitive, complex, and changing environment (Mantel, Pullins, Reid, & Buehrer, 2002). Inks and Avila (2008) showed that experiential learning is superior in building skills than are traditional learning strategies. Students enrolled in selling courses better internalize concepts when experiential learning models are followed (Neeley & Cherry, 2010). Using Bloom's taxonomy, Healy, Taran, and Betts (2011) offered support for experiential learning of sales skills.

Experiential Pedagogy. Scholars wrote about course-specific experiential learning such as negotiations, presentations, activity reports, key account sales, forecasting, and case studies. Ball (1999) presented a real estate exercise for experiencing a negotiated agreement related to price, move-in date, and furnishings. Williams and Dobie (2011) described a reverse auction negotiation exercise for experiencing sales and purchase management issues. Negotiation exercises were designed to increase students' understanding of group dynamics and relational selling (Macintosh, 1995; Tanner & Castleberry, 1995). Other skills taught via experiential learning included listening (Cost, Bishop, &

Anderson, 1992), estimating small business sales revenue (Shrader, Bozman, & Hickman, 1997), nonverbal communication skills, social interactive working skills, time and office management, and skills managing computerized information systems (Bowers & Summey, 1983). Cross-functional skill building was reported by Bobbitt, Inks, Kemp, and Mayo (2000).

Case Studies. The case method creates an experiential learning setting to teach skills that generalize to real-life sales (Fletcher, Helms, & Willis, 2007). The efficacy of case study versus computer-based simulation was reported by Bobot (2010). Trade accounts, corporate-owned stores, and online/mail have also been used (Deeter-Schmelz, Ramsey, & Gasenheimer, 2011).

Simulations. The MARS Sales Management Simulation was tested by K. J. Chapman and Sorge (1999) and Cook and Swift (2006). Articles also focused on simulations in the form of a sales management in-basket exercise, computerized in-basket exercises, and professional activity reports (Hawes & Foley, 2006; Pearson, Barnes, & Onken, 2006; Shaw, 2007).

Projects. Sales projects with real-world application in either university-based, non-profit-based, commercially based, or through selling labs were reported. Students sold sponsorships and season tickets for college sport teams in courses described by McKelvey and Southall (2008) and Southall, Dick, and Pollack (2010). The 2010 study used the Southall, Nagel, LeGrande, and Han (2003) metadiscrete experiential learning model and the application of this model to a sport-sales specific curriculum as presented by Irwin, Southall, and Sutton (2007).

Role-Plays. The most frequently reported activity-based learning method is role-playing. Role-playing enhances a

student's interpersonal communication abilities and provides real-world information and guidance. Moncrief (1991) tested the effects of videotaped versus live role-plays. A competition element was introduced into experiential role-play exercises and proved to be an effective tool for teaching selling skills (Widmier, Loe, & Selden, 2007). Brief in-class role-plays were used to tap into the learning needs of today's Gen Y students. Brief in-class role-plays are short and realistic and, require students to self-identify with the situation (Sojka & Fish, 2008). Newberry and Collins (2012) used a role-playing simulation across a professional selling and a sales management class. Professional selling students played the entry-level job seeker, and the sales management students played the sales employer. Moncrief and Shipp (1994) addressed the role-play's lack of realism through exercises that incorporated buyer personalities and sales scenarios.

Research Needs. As sales education continues to grow and innovate, articles reporting successful pedagogy, including exercises, projects, role-playing scenarios, and simulations will be needed. The growth of distance learning at universities creates opportunities for scholarship into the best, most practical, and most experiential methods to teach sales online. Future research should also compare analytics used by business people with those offered in the classroom, optimal pedagogy for teaching analytics, and the use of analytics in cases and projects. Research should support methods to teach selling the value proposition via financial metrics. Finally, the increased sophistication and growth of "inside" sales offer research possibilities.

Assessment

If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable. (Seneca the Younger, *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*, approximately A. D. 30)

Articles addressing the assessment and enhancement of sales education comprised 24.3% of the articles from our database. These articles typically discussed the quality of sales education programs and how to enhance them, or they focused on the sales profession.

Program Assessment. The majority of assessment articles presented a literature review and/or a call for improvement of sales education programs. Although undergraduate education was the primary focus, articles also addressed the lack of exposure to sales within MBA courses (e.g., Pettijohn & Pettijohn, 2010). In addition, authors surveyed and compared the state of sales curricula both within the United States and internationally. Deeter-Schmelz and Kennedy (2011) surveyed department chairs to benchmark sales education around the globe, providing faculty and

administrators a listing of courses offered and pedagogical techniques. Improving the sales curriculum was a main focus of these studies, with many suggesting closer connections between educators and business professionals when designing course curricula (Leisen, Tippins, & Lilly, 2004).

A number of articles addressed the development of sales centers or specialized sales programs that are separate from general marketing coursework. Authors discussed how the curricula of these sales programs differ from general business or marketing programs (Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy, 2011), how sales centers affect teaching (Anderson et al., 2005), and they provided examples of early efforts to create such programs (Griksheit, 1979; Neeb, 1988). Reviews of pedagogical techniques noted the need for the integration of sales projects and classroom-based selling experiences when designing sales courses (J. D. Chapman & Avila, 1991; Kimball, 1991). Calls for enhanced course inclusion of relationship development, nonverbal communications, and sales-specific technology and ethics training were discussed (e.g., Anderson et al., 2005; Berman & Sharland, 2002; Taute, Heiser, & McArthur, 2011). Finally, a small group of scholars provided context for the discussion of the current state of sales curricula versus previous sales education eras. These scholars discussed early efforts to train sales professionals through nonformal methods including correspondence courses and sales certificate programs (e.g., Tadjewski, 2011; Witkowski, 2012). They advocated the relevance of a sales certification for today's workforce (Rackham, 2007).

Profession. Reviewed articles also addressed the state of the sales profession as a wider body encompassing sales education and training. One aim of this work is to understand the perception of sales among the public. Swan and Adkins (1980) investigated the prestige associated with sales careers and how education may improve the standing of sales. Hawes, Rich, and Widmier (2004) assessed the legitimacy of sales as a profession. The authors found that progress toward the acceptance of sales as a profession requires the development and enforcement of an ethical code of conduct. Calls were also made to enhance the profession from within by strengthening professional associations (Chonko, 1999; Hawes et al., 2004) and implementing employer-driven strategies that improve the status of sales vis-à-vis university recruitment efforts and enhanced career training (Murray & Robinson, 2001; Peterson, 2005).

Research Needs. As sales curricula continue to evolve and expand, more empirical research on the effectiveness of sales courses and specialized programs is needed. Researchers can investigate the relative contributions to student learning that classroom pedagogical techniques and sponsored extracurricular activities provide. With limited resources, should administrators focus on the development

of traditional sales courses or partnerships where students learn sales skills outside the classroom? Researchers with field experience could elucidate answers for designing sales courses both within traditional marketing and sales-specific programs. There remains too little pedagogical research on critical aspects of selling such as relationship development, nonverbal communications, networking, ethics, and the integration of sales technology. Research that provides a better understanding of undergraduate and graduate training is also warranted. Perhaps the greatest area for improvement in the assessment of sales education lies in our understanding of sales educators. Although numerous studies detail courses, curricula, and students, we know little about the individuals who lead sales courses.

Career Development

Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood. (Helen Keller, 1880-1968)

Articles providing ways to prepare students for life beyond college represented 20.6% of our database. These articles focused on the preparation of students for sales positions or student perceptions of sales careers.

Preparation. This group of articles encompassed a variety of studies that detailed the knowledge and skills that students require on entering sales careers or how to improve or develop these capabilities through education. Studies identified sets of required knowledge, skills, or attributes through surveys of sales professionals or sales hiring agents (Kimball, 1998; Moore, Eckrich, & Carlson, 1986; Raymond, Carlson, & Hopkins, 2006; Tomkovick, Erffmeyer, & Hietpas, 1996). Among these studies, perceived differences of required skills and characteristics between sales managers and sales representatives, and across types of sales jobs, were investigated. The authors also studied the educational factors that contributed to students' success in meeting these perceived requirements. Addressing degree level, Raymond et al. (2006) determined an MBA degree was not necessary to meet entry-level sales position requirements. Weilbaker and Williams (2006) argued that educational area does affect sales preparation, and they suggested that specialized sales programs offer benefits to students and hiring firms. Specific in-classroom methods for improving preparation for sales careers were also addressed in the literature. Unique methods that prepare students for the work world focused on understanding the salesperson application and selection process (Castleberry, 1991; Lollar & Leigh, 1995; West, 2006), salesperson compensation (Wotruba, 1992), job skills such as memo writing (McNeilly & Ranney, 1998) and professional network development (Butler, 2012).

Perception. A large number of articles addressed the perception of sales careers by students. As a group, the studies relied on student and employer surveys to access the factors influencing students' choice of sales careers and their success and satisfaction within professional sales. Though domestic samples were the norm, a few articles included surveys from nondomestic samples. The factors considered included race (DelVecchio & Honeycutt, 2000, 2002), culture (Pettijohn & Pettijohn, 2011), autonomy and salary (DelVecchio & Honeycutt, 2000), and prestige (Swan & Adkins, 1980). Of interest are studies that focused on the impact of sales education on students' perceptions of sales careers and pursuit of selling as a profession. Among the findings were a positive correlation between the curricular exposure to sales and student interest in and likelihood of pursuing a sales career (Bristow, Gulati, Amyx, & Slack, 2006), and a positive impact of sales center education and internships on postgraduation sales performance (Leasher & Moberg, 2008). A study by Lagace and Longfellow (1989) found that interactive rather than lecture-style sales courses improved student attitudes toward sales.

Research Needs. There is a dearth of research that addresses the career development of sales educators with regard to preparation or perception. With the growth of specialized sales curricula, it is important to understand the background and career plans of sales center faculty. Surveys of sales faculty can elucidate not only their educational training and professional preparation for teaching selling courses but also their perception of sales programs, students, and their own career opportunities within the field. In addition, there is a focus within the literature on measuring student attitudes toward sales rather than practical approaches to introducing students to selling earlier in the marketing curriculum. Despite research showing that educational exposure to sales improves perceptions of sales careers and intent to peruse sales professions, it is unknown if students are first encountering sales early or late in their educational careers. Additionally, the field could benefit from research that identifies the best interactive methods or courses for introducing selling. Finally, although variety within sales jobs expands, there is no pedagogical guidance or study of how students choose among various types of sales career paths.

Ethics

A salesperson's ethics and values contribute more to sales success than do techniques or strategies. (Ron Willingham, 2003)

Articles addressing a component of ethics in a teaching situation comprised 8.4% of the total articles reviewed. The articles dealt with teaching ethics and assessing ethical and

unethical behaviors in sales situations. Although the number of studies that focus on ethics in sales education is limited, their number and level of sophistication is increasing. The first group of studies investigates levels of ethical sensitivity by sales students. The second group examines the impact of classroom interventions on ethical decision making, and the third group of publications provides insights into the development of sales-ethics experiential exercises and also suggestions for how the exercises can be incorporated in the sales curriculum.

Measuring Ethical Behavior. Caballero, Dickinson, and Townsend (1984) were among the first contributors on this. They offered a unique perspective on the challenges of selling drawing on the writing of Aristotle on the topic of persuasion. They asserted that understanding the key to successful selling requires a comprehensive understanding of the human nature of both the buyer and seller. A number of studies used the Personal Selling Ethics (PSE) scale as a measure of ethical decision making. Key findings included that female students viewed specific sales practices as less ethical and less acceptable than did male students (Stevenson & Bodkin, 1996) and that students with relationship-oriented values were less tolerant of questionable sales behaviors than were achievement-oriented students (Donoho, Herche, & Swenson, 2003). A revised scale (PSE-2) was developed (Donoho & Heinze, 2011), and using the PSE-2, Donoho, Heinze, and Kondo (2012) identified gender differences that were similar to those reported in past studies. Further analysis investigated the impact of idealism (i.e., the right thing to do) and relativism (i.e., individual characteristics and circumstantial factors trump rules). The authors concluded that students do not view sales dilemmas in an ethically sensitive manner, and ethical training should be vigorously included in sales courses. They offer suggestions concerning how to incorporate materials representing both a morally idealistic and a relativistic ethical framework into the teaching of sales ethics.

Teaching Ethics. Loe and Weeks (2000) examined students' level of Cognitive Moral Development before and after engaging in a series of classroom role-playing activities that included an ethical component and follow-up discussions. Students' scores improved after the classroom training suggesting that organizations can use training programs to help improve moral reasoning in their sales force. Instead of ethical exercises, Nguyen, Basuray, Smith, Kopka, and McCulloh (2008) investigated the impact of a series of lectures on ethical theories. Castleberry (2011) and Milewicz (2012) developed activities where students decide what ethical decisions they will make in realistic sales scenarios. Both exercises encouraged students to reflect on their ethical beliefs as they make decisions, and the exercises included materials to guide their use and assessment.

Research Needs. The articles on ethics present a patchwork of studies with the goal of improving students' ethical understanding. Future research should include large enough populations to have the statistical power to investigate the effects of additional demographic variables beyond gender, such as age, major (especially nonbusiness majors), employment, and internship experiences. Although challenging for this age group, studies with longitudinal measures should be encouraged, particularly after students move into the workforce. Research should address how much and how often ethical training should be conducted to be effective. Additionally, expanding studies to include a more multicountry sample should improve understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities that exist in sales situations. The recent development of ethical dilemma classroom exercises may provide a promising alternative for assessing ethical development. Finally, research should also examine the sales instructor's impact on the ethical learning process.

Course Management

Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely. (August Rodin, *Heads and Tails*, 1936)

Although only a small number of articles focused on course management (2.8%), they are of particular importance as they dealt with how class time was allocated across various activities in sales classes.

Time Management. Focusing on the amount of time devoted to role-play activities, Calcich and Weilbaker (1992) examined the optimum number of iterations before students' performance levels off. Receiving feedback after the role-play is completed is critical to the value of the activity to the student. Carroll (2006) outlined a process for developing a scoring rubric for organizing feedback that enabled multiple raters to focus on the key elements of the sales process. Rather than using role-plays, a different approach to learning is through review and discussion of published work. Haley (1993) described a process of encouraging students to read and present sales-related articles in a seminar format.

Research Needs. The importance of role-playing and individual student interaction places a premium on efficient use of class time. With the increased demand and importance of sales education, this becomes even more critical. Researchers should consider investigating the effectiveness of implementing new technologies in capturing role-plays and the incorporation of feedback from evaluators at distant sites and in an asynchronous environment. Additional attention should be focused on how to incorporate role-playing activities into large classes and how to improve the process and value of student-to-student feedback.

Higher Level Thinking

It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it. (Aristotle, approximately 330 B. C.)

Critical thinking, which representing only 4.7% of the identified articles, is an important and challenging learning goal for sales educators in part because it is difficult to teach (Peltier, Hay, & Drago, 2005, 2006). In the domain of critical thinking, issues such as development and measurement, salesperson knowledge structures, integrated experience, feedback loops, and decoding sales communications have been explored in the sales literature. Clabaugh, Forbes, and Clabaugh (1995) designed a sales course that developed and measured higher level critical thinking skills. The authors outlined a professional selling course that built progressively higher critical thinking skills with inputs drawing on Bloom's taxonomy and Gronlund's Learning Objectives. An advertising model (elaboration likelihood model) was brought into the sales domain by Weilbaker and West (1992) to determine who and what it takes to produce successful salespeople. Their article provided a framework for teaching sales students and made a contribution to sales theory by further developing an understanding of the decoding process in sales communications.

Research Needs. Authors will continue to find an audience for discoveries and insights into how sales educators can help develop their students' higher level reasoning and abstract thinking abilities. As analytics and financial constructs are increasingly applied in sales, sales educators will respond with methods that give students these high-order reasoning skills. The challenge will be more than creating pedagogy that teaches mathphobic sales students how to calculate ratios. Higher level thinking will require students to discover and report the deeper meaning behind the data.

Technology, International, and Marketing Mix

Articles that primarily focused on *technology* (six), *international* (three) and *marketing mix* (one) represented 9.3% of the publications in our database. Surprisingly, of the *technology* articles only two of six were published after 2000 (2010 and 2003). Given the rising importance of technology in marketing education research as noted by Gray et al. (2012), sales education has been slow to respond concerning how to teach and use information technologies. Especially needed is research that investigates learning pedagogy to encourage emerging salespeople to use information technologies and enterprise resource planning platforms (Mallin, Jones, & Cordell, 2010; Shoemaker, 2003). It is anticipated that salespeople will continue to increase their use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

tools and other sales technology. Best practices for teaching information technology usage by sales people is a fertile area for future research.

Virtual sales teams, which is an important area of inquiry in marketing and management literature, has been virtually ignored in business education journals. Although some cross-cultural articles exist within our set of nine categories, there is no educational research that focuses on pedagogy and best practices from an *international* perspective. The limited articles in this area have examined interest in pursuing a sales career (Honeycutt & Thelen, 2003; Karakaya, Quigley, & Bingham, 2011). The differential perceptions of sales around the globe, culturally based buying and selling customs, and operational factors across cultures, are issues of interest to sales educators. Importantly, a better integration of a global focus is warranted in assessment, experiential learning, career development and virtually all of the other categories previously discussed.

Last, only one article focused primarily on how sales curricula can be integrated into other courses in the *marketing mix*. Given that the number of sales programs and courses are growing rapidly, a better understanding is much needed concerning how to integrate sales topics into courses such as principles of marketing, customer relationship management, integrated marketing communications, marketing research, Internet marketing.

Conclusions

Demand for graduates seeking a sales career has never been higher. Universities have responded by expanding their sales curricula, offering majors and minors in professional selling, and creating sales centers and institutes. Historically from a pedagogical perspective marketing and business researchers have been relatively silent. The good news is that the number of sales education articles is trending upward. In our data set, there were 9 sales articles prior to 1980, 31 for the years 1990-1999, 43 during the decade of 2000-2009, and 21 since 2010. The *Journal of Marketing Education* is taking an active role in this continued ascendance through a Special Issue in Sales Education and Training scheduled for August, 2014.

Although we offered a set of research needs for each of our nine categories, the truth is that the sales education literature is relatively underdeveloped. We thus encourage research across wide-ranging topics, including the launch and management of sales centers, the design of sales courses and programs, how to best access program success, faculty and student performance, effective experiential learning exercises and especially those that provide both practical and critical thinking, how to best prepare students for a career in sales, best practices for sales competitions, international competencies, integration of sales coverage into other marketing courses, ethical consequences of selling

behaviors, virtual and interpersonal teams/groups, and the use of technology by salespeople and managers. Last, as noted by Bacon in Gray et al. (2012), “While manuscripts describing novel ideas for improving the effectiveness of marketing faculty and pedagogy are always welcome at *JME*, we are particularly excited by manuscripts that include direct measures of learning” (p. 233).

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