

Chapter 44

From Marketing Education in a Developing Country to a U.S. Master's and/or Doctoral Degree in Marketing

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ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines the pathway to advanced marketing education by students in a developing country. We begin by contrasting the similarities and differences in undergraduate marketing education in Saudi Arabia versus the U.S. The analysis includes the typical markers of language and access to secondary sources, and culture-specific differences in the perception of time and various cultural influences using Hofstede's cultural dimensions. This is followed with a description of the pathway students from Saudi Arabia take to pursue a Master's and/or Doctorate in marketing in the U.S. The chapter concludes with the unique insight - unlike a sizeable number of foreign students in the U.S., most students from Saudi Arabia return to Saudi Arabia and in so doing stem the 'brain drain' so many other countries face when their brightest head to the U.S. for advanced study.

INTRODUCTION

As a marketing educator in the U.S., have you ever wondered about the educational pathway your non-U.S. born marketing faculty colleagues took? You will likely discover that most earned an undergraduate degree and perhaps a Master's degree from their home country, with the vast majority earning their Doctorate in business administration or marketing from the U.S. This journey is a result of a number of factors that includes a major influence from completing an undergraduate marketing course or a marketing major. The purpose of this chapter is to compare undergraduate marketing education in a developing country versus the U.S., and second, to explain how this might lead to an earned Master's and/or Doctorate in marketing from the U.S.

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Compared to all other countries, we are spoilt in the U.S. when it comes to access to a college or university. In the U.S. there are some 4,599 degree granting institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2013) with some 21 million enrolled students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) or 4,566 students per college. In contrast, all other countries have 23,887 universities (Webometrics, 2015) with a total 131 million students (Maslen, 2012) or 5,484 students per college. Most telling is the ratio of colleges per capita. For the U.S. with a population of 318.88 million (U.S. Census, 2015) the number of colleges and universities per capita is 69,837 people. For the world with a population of 7.24 billion (U.S. Census, 2015), the number of colleges and universities per capita is 303,093. The difference is a factor of 4.34 or the greater than four-fold availability of colleges and universities for the U.S. population versus the rest of the world.

The relatively higher number of university seats and the prestige associated with a high quality U.S. education is not lost on the rest of the world. Some 4% or 886,052 of the total U.S. college and university student population is represented by foreign students, of which 50% come from China, India and South Korea, and 6.1% (54,000) from Saudi Arabia (Institute of International Education, 2014)

Initial Cultural Orientation

Prior to entering a foreign nation to live and contribute as a marketing faculty member, it is essential to orient oneself to that nation's culture beyond a review of the school's website. Two sources come to mind. For a broad overview, the best would be the *The World Factbook* (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015) that is updated on a weekly basis offering short two to three page summaries on the nation's history, geography, demographics, government, economy, energy, communications, energy, military, and transnational issues for 267 countries. The second, and perhaps more important source particularly for marketing faculty is the website based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede Centre, 2015) that offers a contrast along six dimensions (power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation and indulgence).

The following sections offer insights from teaching undergraduate marketing courses in a developing country based on five-years teaching at Saudi Arabia's AACSB accredited King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals' business school where all classes are taught in English and the curriculum is based on the U.S. model.

Notable Cultural Influences

When contrasting Saudi Arabian culture to the U.S., the remarkable differences relate to power distance and individualism. Practically speaking, Saudi Arabia's relatively high power distance underscores that society "accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification... a collectivistic society (Hofstede Centre, 2015). However, Saudi Arabia's relatively low score for individualism results in "a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations" (Hofstede Centre, 2015). The implications for the marketing faculty member are (a) in the classroom you are considered the equivocal and sole boss – what you say and require is met with no resistance, though the challenge is to foster an environment conducive to class discussion, and (b) high regard for tribal and family loyalties means that when it comes to group work and projects, take care assigning students to groups.

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