

Socially Responsive Curriculum: Powerful Knowledge in the Marketing Curriculum in South Africa

Devika Pillay

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5849-0554>

Abstract

There is a growing consciousness of sustainability in relation to the concern for people and the planet. Consequently, the call for a socially responsive curriculum aligned within the paradigm of a sustainability ethos becomes integral to curriculum transformation in higher education institutions. A socially responsible curriculum is explored in the context of the marketing discipline that is entrenched in a dominant social paradigm. This dominant social paradigm is juxtaposed against Critical Marketing Theory that promulgates the need for marketing curriculum transformation. The need for the inclusion of the sustainability marketing approach is interrogated through highlighting the existing historical, powerful and dominant epistemological context of marketing knowledge found in prescribed textbooks of higher education institutions. This becomes the focal point in signalling a departure from a purely performance-based marketing ideology to incorporate new forms of knowledge through curriculum transformation.

Keywords: Critical Marketing Theory, curriculum transformation, dominant social paradigm, marketing sustainability, performance-based ideology, socially responsive curriculum

1 Introduction

Against the backdrop of a growing sustainability consciousness, marketing ideology requires fundamental transformation.

This would be a compelling case to understand the existing ideological context of the Marketing Theory and to interrogate what transformation should occur in the Marketing Theory. The ‘marketing concept’ derived from neo-classical economics, is founded on the principle that all decisions in marketing are guided by demand, thereby providing economic and social validity for a firm to exist (Varey 2010). The marketing concept is, therefore, a representation of the Marketing Theory which is founded primarily on the promotion of consumer needs.

Within the context of the marketing concept, the ‘Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP)’ characterised by political, technological, and economic dimensions (among others) has dominated Marketing Theory (Kilbourne & Carlson 2008; Kilbourne *et al.* 2002). This resulted in consumer purchase behaviour being associated with individual growth within an economic system of exchange that ironically benefitted the firm’s interest. This was supported by Stubbs and Cocklin (2008), who highlighted that the DSP served to legitimise a performance-based ideology of marketing to encourage economic growth (within a neoclassical dominant worldview) for firm success through purchaser consumption.

However, there have been challenges made to mainstream marketing and consumer theory through locating phenomena in social, political and historical contexts to expose embedded power relations and ideologies (Cova *et al.* 2013). These challenges can be considered criticisms levelled at the limited (economic) theoretical foundation of the discipline. In response to these criticisms, Critical Marketing Theory emerged as an ideological defence of the Marketing Theory. Critical Marketing Theory was an attempt to make visible, power relations that characterised the dominant social paradigm of the marketing theory and to diminish the focus on satisfying consumer needs (Tadajewski 2010a; Tadajewski 2010b; Tadajewski 2008; Tadajewski & Brownlie 2008; Brownlie 2006).

However, from the Critical Marketing Theory background, the marketing discourse that discovers the impact of power relations, and social, political and historical contexts in relation to academics and the marketing curriculum, is an area for further investigation. The problem highlighted here, reflects on the interplay of power with regard to the existing marketing curriculum and the role of academics in the marketing curriculum transformation in a socially responsive context. The marketing curriculum offers an example of the ways in which the authority (power) of the curriculum

‘deagentises’ academics and makes them technocrats or implementers. This is an area where the issue of the marketing ideology can be debated, contested, or even harmonised.

2 Literature Review

Foucault (1981), as cited in (Fougère & Skålén 2012), views power as discursive and embedded within scientific forms of knowledge that are considered to be the truth. The marketing discourse would therefore be subject to such embedded power, and marketing knowledge would be considered the truth. Whilst sovereign power is exhibited visibly, discursive power and knowledge power is not readily observed. Foucault (1981) as cited in (Fougère & Skålén 2012), has also linked discourses with subjectivity, which is not reduced to the individual itself, but is based on discourse. Therefore, the power/knowledge that would reside in discourses such as marketing managerialism is not just enduring beliefs of power holders, but is reproduced by universities that are actors in the form of power and knowledge, hence upholding avenues of viewing the world (Fougère & Skålén 2012).

In trying to encapsulate the dominant social paradigm of the marketing discipline, underpinned by the ‘*marketing concept*’, academics in the marketing discipline have been very efficient in promoting theoretical concepts such as the 4Ps, namely product, price, place and promotion. There has been limited consideration within the marketing curriculum given to issues such as the impacts of marketing on the planet, the influence of marketing on consumption ideology or even sustainability. Difficult issues such as race, class, gender, as well as sources and consequences of social objectification, are issues to consider in a classroom, to highlight democracy as praxis (Pautz 2010).

Greene’s (1978) emphasis on ‘*transcendence*’ in *Landscapes of Learning*, highlights the importance of understanding one’s experiences within their landscapes and to use this as a way of creating social change and connecting to a moral life. Perhaps, in this regard, the marketing curriculum has emphasised the importance of profiteering and taken for granted how the discipline emphasises customer satisfaction built through the mechanism of purchasing products and promoting the need for ownership. This is the message that is communicated to customers and it is what is taught to students as part of their marketing curriculum.

There is a growing sense of powerlessness that leads to numbness with regards to moral and ethical issues (Pautz 2010). Being powerless contributes to a failure in understanding how the impact on a broader social and ecological level has not been considered in the landscapes of the marketing discipline, including marketing practice. Hence, the nature of knowledge and how this may have influenced the development of a socially responsive marketing curriculum is important and would need to be explored through understanding marketing in a historical context.

3 The Historical Context of the Marketing Theory: ‘4 Eras of Marketing Thought’

Historically, marketing as a discipline has moved through various phases that have impacted on its academic discourse. Consequently, understanding the characteristics of these phases may provide insight into the choices academics make in adopting a marketing curriculum orientation. Wilkie and Moore (2012) refer to the ‘4 Eras of Marketing Thought’ that they developed in 2003, to provide a historical context for marketing. These ‘Eras’ are represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The ‘4 Eras of marketing thought’

Era	Distinctive characteristics
(Before 1900) ‘Pre-Marketing’	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There exists no field of study to distinguish it, as the issues related to it are entrenched in the field of economics.
I. ‘Founding the field of marketing’ (1900–1920)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marketing is emphasised as distribution• Emphasis is on defining the purview of marketing’s activities as an economic institution (derived from the field of economics).• First courses are developed with the title ‘marketing’.
II. ‘Formalising the field’ (1920–1950)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is general acceptance and development of the ‘foundations’ or ‘principles of marketing’.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge development infrastructure is established for the field: professional association (American Association of Marketing), conferences, journals (<i>Journal of Retailing</i> and <i>Journal of Marketing</i>).
III. 'A paradigm Shift ... Marketing, Management and the Sciences' (1950-1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• USA experiences mass market growth and an expanded marketing body of thought.• Two standpoints are developed to dominate the marketing mainstream:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) The 'managerial viewpoint'(2) The behavioural and quantitative sciences as avenues to future knowledge development.• Knowledge infrastructure is expanded and evolves in line with these changes Journal of the Academy of Marketing Sciences begins in 1973).
IV. 'The Shift Intensifies: A Fragmentation of the Mainstream' (1980 – present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New tasks emerge in the business world: short-term financial focus, downsizing, globalisation, re-engineering.• The main perspectives are criticised in the philosophy of science debates.• 'Publish or perish' mindset exists, academics are pressurised.• Expansion and diversification of knowledge infrastructure is seen in specialised interest areas.

Source: Wilkie and Moore (2012: 55)

In Table 1, the names of the four eras are represented in the first column; however, the '*Pre-Marketing*' era should be noted. This period signified the absence of marketing as a disciplinary field of study. The American Association of Marketing (AMA) and the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS), are represented only by their acronyms in Table 1. Each of

the four eras is also described in the table in terms of the defining characteristics of marketing during that period.

The contribution of the '*4 eras of marketing thought*' is the proposed link it made to the role of marketing beyond existing Marketing Theory. Specifically, Wilkie and Moore (2012) extended the role of marketing scholarship to include societal concerns. The major contributions to the Marketing Theory are outlined through the descriptions offered in Table 1.

A Characteristics of the 'Eras'

The movement of marketing from an unknown discipline in the '*pre-marketing*' era to becoming a discipline moulded according to economic principles in the first era is significant. This characterised the theoretical foundations of the marketing discipline as an economic discourse and marketing activities as economic functions. A position which is supported by Wilkie and Moore's (2012; 2006), assertion that knowledge generation of marketing through economics journals gave rise to the *commodity approach* (all marketing actions engaged in a certain category), the *institutional approach* (operations of specialised marketing agency such as wholesaler or broker), and the *functional approach* (focused on the purpose served by several marketing events).

The movements to the second era signalled the development of marketing as an academic discipline. This period was heralded by the development of marketing knowledge and marketing research. This justified the impetus for the professional representation of marketing through institutions and journals.

The third era placed emphasis on the marketing concept, as population growth increased. The managerial concept of marketing depends on the importance of behavioural and quantitative approaches to the Marketing Theory. The fourth era highlighted the shifts in marketing thought that questioned existing dominant perspectives. The discipline was expanded into specialised areas. This era emphasised the pressure placed on academics to publish marketing knowledge.

The role of societal concerns in marketing scholarship proffered by Wilkie and Moore (2012), offered an extension to the existing academic marketing discourse. The actual link between the movement through the phases and the specific response of academics to include this as part of the

marketing curriculum is unclear. Specifically, the movements through various phases does not account for how power and academic agency evolved as the marketing academic discourse evolved.

The inclusion of societal concerns in the marketing curriculum should be further interrogated through a deeper understanding of power and the managerialistic ideology of the academic marketing discourse that is seen to be dominant in the eras of the marketing academic discourse.

B Power and Managerialism

The managerialistic ideology of the Marketing Theory in Fougère and Skålén (2012) is problematised in the context of Foucault's work on power. Managerialism is ideologically underpinned by the marketing concept or '*customerism*' in the case of Skålén *et al.* (2008) and is consequently reproduced in the academic marketing discourse. *Customerism* relates to the organisational context for serving customers and the obligation of organisation members to do so. This provided an interesting perspective as the ideology of marketing presented in critical marketing literature is often based on the standpoint of the consumer. Marketing Theory has been admonished for promoting consumption as a way of life through various examples of Critical Marketing Theory.

Consumer culture theory (CCT), proposed by Arnould and Thompson (2005), is a form of consumer research that highlights the cultural elements of consumption. Another example is the *macromarketing perspectives* that criticised the DSP for promoting individual self-interest (Kilbourne *et al.* 1997). *Stakeholder theory* placed value on relationships that a firm has with its external stakeholders in pursuing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals (Brower & Mahajan 2012) and *anti-globalisation movements* which drew largely from Marxist ideas, critiqued marketing as usually not serving the requests of poor people, countries and indigenous cultures (Witowski 2005). The ideology of marketing is viewed differently in the case of Fougère and Skålén (2012) whose focus has been on schools of academic marketing thought that have shaped the managerial Marketing Theory and developed the subjectifying power of the marketing ideology in organisations. This is linked directly to their conceptualisation of the term '*customerism*' that referred to the organisation and the organisation's members.

In addition, Foucault's theories of power are used to understand

ideology, managerialism and subjectification in the Marketing Theory. This is an important departure, because it is focused on the organisational context and the organisational marketer (Fougère & Skålén 2012). The extension being made here is that academics are members of a university and it would follow that, as marketing academics they would represent the '*marketers*' of interpretation (Fougère & Skålén 2012). Also, the university can be considered the '*organisation*' to which they belong. The academics are therefore subjectified by power in curriculum development. The subjectifying power of the managerialist ideology is thereby embedded in the marketing curriculum.

C Curriculum and Knowledge

Young (2013) and Muller (2009), highlighted the epistemological issues relating to truth questions and the reliability of different forms of knowledge and how these problems have philosophical and sociological dimensions. This has also been emphasised by Barnett (2009) who epistemologically focused on the process of knowing and ontologically, on what knowing is.

Luckett (2010) also emphasised the importance of knowledge in curriculum from a social realist tradition and highlights caution in the consideration of Africanisation and contextualisation of the curriculum in higher education. She considered the idea of redefining knowledge in a powerful, decontextualized and abstract way. A focus on what knowledge is important, is inherent in these views about curriculum.

Young (2013) made a case for '*powerful knowledge*' in disciplines that fall outside the natural sciences where rules about the concepts of the discipline are debated but have an extent to which the range of meanings can be recognised and made fallible. Such knowledge cannot be considered as general knowledge and is often focused on a discipline. Following on from this, it can be suggested that the specialisations that occur in a university curriculum, such as those that may be found in the marketing curriculum, are based on powerful knowledge that is defined by rules about its content and transmission. This can be seen in the inclusion of specific topics that form part of the official and enacted marketing curriculum. However, what knowledge is important for marketing may be subject to scrutiny in terms of whether the existing powerful knowledge should remain by itself and not include socially responsive knowledge content. This is considered in the next section, in terms of how marketing knowledge occurs within a social context.

4 Social Context for Curriculum: Engaging Social Responsiveness

The idea of questioning what counts as valid knowledge within a changing South African context, has been extended to consider '*social responsiveness*' and how this may impact and influence change in teaching and research (Favish & McMillan). The South African Higher Education White Paper of 1997 and the Ministry of Education's National Plan for Higher Education (2001) highlight the role of education in developing citizenship, as well as that of highly skilled professional and knowledge workers who contribute towards the country's social transformation agenda through social responsibility.

This created the impetus to lean towards a '*scholarship of engagement*' that is not purely dedicated to the development of academic theory. At present, universities are committed to providing knowledge and skills to a new generation of scientists in support of government and industry (Gibbons 2006). He further added that the focus placed by universities on disseminating research results in a one directional manner in academic journals does little to change the universities existing role in higher education. They may appear isolated from other stakeholders around them. Hence, Gibbons (2006) calls for a redefining of the social contract between university and society that produces knowledge in multiple ways within what he calls an '*agora*' or a '*transactional space*'. It is in these spaces that stakeholders external to the university and academics can all collaborate in the valuable exchange of learning in an environment of problem generating and problem-solving (Gibbons 2006).

Considering the deeply divided, impoverished society bequeathed to South Africa by apartheid (Ensor 2004), this placed responsibility on universities to consider the type of graduates they produce and what pedagogical practices can help in also providing '*indigenous knowledge*'¹ that is contextually relevant. Therefore, the significance of social responsiveness in the consideration of what knowledge is produced and how it can be engaged in marketing curriculum transformation needs to be considered. Hence, the four themes of social responsiveness in curriculum as espoused by Favish and McMillan (2009: 173) decided the theoretical and conceptual framing of this study.

¹ African countries often stress the importance of their own knowledge in contrast to the knowledge that is commonly based on Western ideologies (Paden 2007).

These themes include:

1. Contextualising the curriculum in relation to an obligation to produce graduates with the knowledge and competencies to face the issues in the South African society.
2. The leading epistemologies and practising models of knowledge generation that propagates from local knowledge, and university-local community collaboration.
3. Facilitating the interface between theory and practice.
4. Transforming the curriculum to reflect new notions of professional practice.

The interesting components of the social responsiveness approach lies in its participatory approach to developing theoretical knowledge that defines academic scholarship beyond unilateral dimensions of existing knowledge. Most noteworthy, are its actionable elements of practice that are linked not only to academic theory but also to professional practice. This may serve the marketing discipline well, given the strong practice-oriented component of marketing in a professional context.

The issue of power can be seen to influence the academic marketing discourse in various ways. The implication of this is that it influenced a customer centred view of marketing, whereby marketers were obligated, and in this context academics too, to pursue a managerialist marketing ideology within the marketing curriculum. Through its historical movement, the discipline has maintained this orientation and in the broader context of socially pressing issues this may signal a need for transformation and greater levels of agency on the part of academics to move the discipline forward.

5 Research Methodology

A critical approach to research focuses on the context, conflicts and contradictions in modern society and seeks to be emancipatory, eliminating the reasons for alienation and domination (Maree 2007: 62). These issues when considered in the context of the marketing curriculum would question within its social context, the nature of power. The power dimension would consider how a socially constructed marketing curriculum might result in emancipatory outcomes for students and lecturers. Hence, whose interests are served by the

curriculum, what type of curriculum would allow for emancipation and social justice, and how power influences the teaching and learning process (Grundy 1987), is inherent in these critical approaches. These sentiments are also echoed by Cohen *et al.* (2011), who suggest that the justification for a selection of knowledge reveals the ideologies and power in decision making in society and the curriculum and shows how the powerful retain their power through the curriculum. The critical approach will therefore question the ontological assumptions of what constitutes marketing knowledge, as it is represented in the official marketing curriculum.

Against this backdrop, the initial research analysis was done by evaluating prescribed marketing textbooks. The list of prescribed textbooks collected from various higher education institutions in South Africa, which included, the University of South Africa (UNISA); University of Pretoria (UP); University of KwaZulu- Natal (UKZN); Durban University of Technology (DUT); Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA); Regent Business School; Oval International Higher Education; University of Cape Town (UCT); University of Stellenbosch (SU) and the University of the Free State (UFS) were evaluated. Tables were used to list prescribed textbooks against the dominant themes that emerged. These themes were derived from reviewing the chapter content lists of the textbooks as well as reviewing the actual chapter contents of these textbooks. Textbooks from each university and higher education institution were obtained via Google Scholar or the University of KwaZulu- Natal's library. It should be noted that some higher education institutions prescribed the same textbooks within their marketing curriculum. Also, the evaluation of textbooks were done for both undergraduate and postgraduate marketing curricula, however, it should be noted that the prescription of textbooks at the post graduate level was not commonplace. Additionally, not all textbooks were obtainable for review and hence, these were excluded.

6 Research Findings

A content analysis was done of 74 textbooks utilised in the marketing curriculum of South African higher education institutions. The delineation of the textbooks into undergraduate and post graduate was not the focal point, instead, the emphasis was placed on the content specific aspects of marketing knowledge. The number of textbooks utilised at these various institutions are

summarised in Table 2. This table revealed that the University of South Africa, the University of Pretoria and The University of Kwazulu-Natal prescribed the highest number of textbooks. However, this should be viewed cautiously, because factors such as larger student populations, more academic marketing offerings in some institutions and the ability to access all textbooks would be limiting factors. However, despite these limitations, a significant number of 74 textbooks were included in the study, and would still provide adequate representation of the actual content of marketing curricula.







Table 2: Summary of textbooks used in South African of Higher Education Institutions

Universities/ Higher Education Institutions	Number of textbooks
University of South Africa	25
University of Pretoria	18
University of KwaZulu-Natal	12
Durban University of Technology	4
Management College of Southern Africa	1
Regent Business School	2
Oval International Higher Education	2
University of Cape Town	2
University of Stellenbosch	1
University of Free State	7
Total	74

In the next section, the various themes that emerged from a review of these textbooks are presented.

7 Thematic Categories of the Textbook Review

In this analysis 74 textbooks were evaluated. Many textbooks are prescribed at more than one university or higher education institution. The six main themes that emerged included:

	Theme 1 – Marketing mix/4Ps of marketing
	Theme 2 – Sustainability marketing & ethics
	Theme 3 – Marketing communications mix
	Theme 4 – Marketing environments
	Theme 5 – Market research
	Theme 6 – Consumer behaviour

A Theme 1 – Marketing Mix/ 4Ps of Marketing

The marketing mix also known as the 4Ps of marketing consisted of product, place, price, and promotion. Product decisions included packaging, labelling, new product development, product types such as convenience, shopping, and speciality products. Place or distribution referred to distribution costs and channels of distribution, namely retailing and wholesaling. Pricing included strategies such as market skimming, penetration, price adjustment, and pricing products based on demand and supply. The last P, promotion, is related to marketing communications. This formed a new theme for this study.

The marketing mix for service marketing differs from the product marketing mix. It includes pricing strategy and distribution such as franchises, agents, and intermediaries. Promotion is not included.

Business to business products have a different marketing mix. It relates to managing products and services, brands in B2B, and distribution channels which are direct and indirect.

International products follow the traditional marketing mix, product policy differs from country to country. Pricing also differs around the world. International distribution is more complicated as it involves exporting, licensing, strategic alliance, and wholly owned subsidiaries.

B Theme 2 – Sustainability Marketing & Ethics

Sustainability marketing is the behaviour of consumers with regards to sustainable practices. Sustainability marketing has a different set of values, objectives and strategies from traditional marketing. The sustainability marketing mix differs from the traditional marketing mix as it related to consumer solutions, consumer cost, communication, and convenience known as the 4 Cs of marketing. Sustainability branding, sustainability product development, sustainable product life cycle, marketing communications, and

delivering sustainability is part of sustainability marketing. This needs to be incorporated into marketing, reframing marketing curriculum towards sustainability marketing.

Socially responsible marketing is a new type of marketing that relates to social criticisms of marketing, the target market and the marketing influence on consumers and society. It encompasses enlightened marketing, cause-related marketing, social benefit causes, consumer ethics, corporate social responsibility, and the social marketing mix.

Environmental management includes green marketing and green consumerism, environmentalism, promoting sustainable farming and raising awareness of socio-ecological problems. The physical environment such as natural resources, climate change, energy, pollution, and environmental hazards are foregrounded, with awareness of scarce resources being raised and recycling, non-wasteful packaging, and the use environmentally friendly ingredients being promoted.

Another aspect of this theme relates to ethics in general, ethics in advertising and regulation in advertising. Advertising is often touted as being untruthful, deceptive, offensive and done in bad taste. This being the case, it is unsurprising that marketing has gained a reputation for having targeted and manipulated vulnerable groups such as children in particular and consumers in general. Advertising has utilised stereotypes, offensive messages, subliminal advertising, misleading claims, and over aggressive promotions that inspire overeating and overspending. Consequently, this has influenced social behaviours. Another issue that emerged related to the regulation of nutritional labelling of products. The regulation of nutritional labelling is directly linked with ethical and regulatory issues pertaining to the communication of factual information regarding products.

C Theme 3 – Marketing Communications Mix

The marketing communications mix consisted of tools used to promote and provide information about products, service, organisations, and brands. There are many different tools used, depending on the product and the target market. These tools included advertising such as radio, television and magazines, sales promotion, personal selling, digital marketing, internet marketing, direct marketing, publicity, public relations, support media, trade shows, sponsorships, one-on-one marketing, e-marketing, celebrity endorsements, search en-

gine optimisation for marketing, social media marketing, mobile marketing such as via short message service (SMS); word-of-mouth referrals, event marketing, and outdoor marketing. There were also online communication tools such as email; viral marketing, public relations, blogging and affiliated marketing. The communication process referred to choices marketers made about what media to use. A choice between mass media, also known as non-personal or traditional media, and personal media must be made. This also involved choices made between verbal and non-verbal communications and interpersonal communication.

D Theme 4 – Marketing Environments

The marketing environments consisted of the micro (internal) environment and the macro (external) environment. The micro or internal environment referred to the organisation's mission statement, resources, objectives, customers, government, international market, industries, competitors, intermediaries and suppliers, resource-based analysis, performance analysis, value chain analysis, and functional analysis. The macro or external environment refers to external factors that affect the organisation such as demographic, economic, ecological, technological, political and legal, international, cultural, and social factors, as well as those relating to the physical environment.

E Theme 5 – Market Research

The process of market research started with the problem definition; the research objectives stated, followed by the research plan. The research design must be decided: either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods could be used. Secondary or primary data and the methods which are exploratory, descriptive or causal must also be decided on. The identification and collection of information is also emphasised. Emphasis is placed on sampling, which can either be non-probability or probability. The design of questionnaires, types of interviews, for example, personal, telephonic and mail, as well as other methods of collecting information are also important. These include observations, experiments, or online market research. Processing information referred to validating, editing and coding raw data, capturing data for display in tables and graphs. Statistical techniques include Chi-square, co-variance, ANOVA, t-test, correlation, covariance, correlation, regression, factor analysis, SPSS and

scaling techniques, which are used to analyse data. Hence, analysing data, interpreting results, presenting findings (reporting) and planning research projects and budgets are important.

F Theme 6 – Consumer Behaviour

This theme focused on market segmentation which referred to choosing and developing attractive segments. Markets can be divided, based on the geographic location, demographics and lifestyle factors such as age, gender, families, and households, on economic, psychographic, behavioural and socio-cultural factors such as social class, on ethnicity; and on cultures and subcultures, which are other segments. Included in this theme is targeting that referred to undifferentiated, differentiated, concentrated, niche, mass customisation and multi-segmentation. Linked to this was positioning which most organisations traditionally use. If similar or the same products are sold across the globe, then marketers use global positioning. This theme also emphasised the consumer decision-making process or decision-making model. This mode highlights the five steps in the process of consumer decision making: recognising the problem, searching for the information, alternative evaluations, purchase and post-purchase evaluation.

Consumer behaviour in service marketing also forms part of this theme. Hence, consumers progress through five different steps when purchasing the kinds of products mentioned previously. The factors affecting consumer behaviour such as consumer perception; consumer learning, attitude formation, diffusion, innovations, social life, personality, and psychological characteristics are also considered important.

Therefore, these themes that have been discussed thus far are what predominates the marketing curriculum within the South African HEIs. Hence, these themes constitute the powerful knowledge that is found in the scholastic epistemologies of marketing curriculum. In the next section, these themes will be interrogated further in the context of their relevance to HEIs.

8 Prominent Themes at Higher Education Institutions

The most prominent theme found at UNISA was the *marketing communication process* and the least were *sustainability marketing and ethics, macro and*

micro environment, and *market research*. At the University of Pretoria (UP) and the UKZN the theme that appeared the most was *sustainability marketing and ethics*; the least was *macro and micro environment*.

At the Durban University of Technology (DUT), the least prominent theme was also the *macro and micro environment* and the most were *the marketing mix* and *sustainability marketing and ethics*. At the Management University of South Africa (MANCOSA) and the University of Stellenbosch (SU), all themes were equally represented.

At Regent Business School, the *macro and micro environment* were not represented. At the University of Cape Town (UCT) *sustainability marketing and ethics*, *marketing communications* and the *macro and micro environment* were not represented. At Oval International Higher Education, the most prominent themes were the *marketing mix*; *sustainability marketing and ethics* and *market research*; the other three themes were underrepresented. At the University of the Free State (UFS) *marketing communications* was most prominent and the least prominent was the *macro and micro environment*.

In operationalising the research design, it was considered important to review the content of marketing curricula across Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to identify what constituted the official curriculum and the planned curriculum. Also, in reviewing the official and planned curriculum, the extent to which socially responsive content were included, silenced, or absent from the official and planned marketing curricula, would be established.

The findings were that the courses offered at undergraduate level have a predominantly marketing management focused perspective. There was a strong emphasis on the foundational aspects of marketing, in particular the 4Ps. The importance of branding and global marketing was also evident. There were few institutions that featured modules with an ethical or societal context. These modules were specifically related to social marketing, ethics, governance, consumerism and ethical behaviour.

At the postgraduate level, the marketing management perspective featured predominantly as well. Again, similarities were seen with the undergraduate modules where subjects such as Strategic Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Advertising, Branding, and Global Marketing are offered. In the case of postgraduate modules, there were few institutions that included societal

marketing, ethics in business as well as social and cultural issues. Consumer behaviour featured strongly at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. As a subject area, it does consider some issues related to ethical and societal contexts. However, the focus on those areas was minimal. The summation of the data in this the study made it necessary for further probing regarding the dynamics that dictate curricula content and what this may mean for the discipline of marketing. The findings suggest that socially responsive content in marketing was absent or silenced from the official and planned marketing curriculum.

9 Conclusions

This article has acknowledged the absence of the sustainability marketing discourse, as evidenced in the research findings. There exists a general inertia surrounding knowing about sustainability marketing and hence, not including it as a part of powerful knowledge. These scholastic epistemologies placed emphasis on the maintenance of the dominant social paradigm of marketing. This was evidenced in the dominant themes found in the textbooks considered appropriate for the marketing curriculum. However, in order to move the marketing discipline from rhetoric to actualisation of sustainability marketing in the marketing curriculum, this would require academics and marketers to view the sustainability discourse of marketing as theoretically relevant to the academic and business context of marketing. Essentially, the business context for sustainability cannot be contained as the only actionable component of marketing through initiatives such as green marketing. This would make marketing sustainability a superficial discourse with no theoretical foundation.

Therefore, the move to actualisation would require the engagement between business and academia to develop the discipline beyond a practice-based ideology and a skilling rhetoric. This could be achieved through curriculum redesign, which would engage the discipline and its constituents (students) through the introduction of critical thinking and by offering students the option to debate and contest what is presented to them in the form of the curriculum.

Academics remain powerful in the choices made for curriculum content and the continuous representation of marketing in its existing curriculum format would offer students limited opportunity to engage with a socially responsive content. Hence, the questioning of who would benefit from this type of curriculum would be foregrounded.

The ‘silo’ mentality in which academics engage does not make visible what others may engage in, in the field of sustainability generally and sustainability marketing specifically. The fact that sustainability marketing is a global megatrend that is minimally represented in the curriculum is a testament to this. The marketing curriculum requires redesign; however, this can only be achieved through the broader engagement of how marketing sustainability is relevant to the marketing curriculum.

Traditionally, a sustainability discourse would be located in the ‘hard’ sciences discipline such as environmental sciences. However, the inclusion of a sustainability marketing discourse in marketing curriculum would displace an older and historical tradition of the Marketing Theory and make visible the nuances of socially responsive curricula.

This being the case, the sustainability megatrend needs integration within the mainstream academic disciplines of business and marketing domains. This would infer that universities (management and academics) would have to take on the call for sustainability discourses to be mainstreamed across disciplines. Subsequently, this could be filtered into individual departments and academic disciplines.

This predisposition toward such social agencies could be considered as moves toward greater levels of sustainability marketing awareness. This would form the basis of sustainability actualisation and serve as a catalyst to speed up the marketing curriculum redesign process. Consequently, those with knowledge of sustainability marketing could offer their input in developing sustainability marketing curriculum and those without this knowledge would be engaged in discussion to consider these issues. Ultimately, such impetus for discussion around belief systems would offer the opportunity for academics and stakeholders alike to consider how the future of marketing might be represented.

The South African higher education context has made a case for developing socially responsive curriculum. However, it remained at the level of rhetoric for the business and marketing disciplines. Henceforth, it is suggested that higher levels of marketing sustainability consciousness would lead to the ideological disruption of the Marketing Theory and therefore effect curriculum redesign.

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Devika Pillay
School of Management, Information Technology and Governance
Supply Chain and Marketing
Westville Campus
University of KwaZulu-Natal's
pillayd6@ukzn.ac.za