THE USE OF SIMULATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN MARKETING CLASSES: NEW CHALLENGES IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

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Description: This research examines the role of instructors and simulation coordinators in implementing simulations in courses, the division of their responsibilities, the importance of training, and the integration of simulation into the learning process, focusing on assessment, peer review, and the resulting learning outcomes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research will focus on the following issues: the guiding role of the instructor during the process of implementing simulation in the course and the division of responsibilities between the instructor and the simulation coordinator (where such a division exists. This depends on the organizational structure followed by each university). Additionally, the importance of training for instructors and simulation coordinators will be examined, specifically how and by whom the training is conducted. In this context, the various concerns of the instructors and problems that arise during the process will be explored. However, the majority of the research will focus on the integration of simulation into the learning process. For example, one issue that this research will address is whether this activity should be assessed or not, and within what frameworks, or, for instance, the importance of peer review and how it influences/shapes the learning outcome.

Method and Data

The methodology for collecting qualitative data was based on conducting face-to-face interviews with academic staff from universities, both private and public, within the European Union (EU). The aim was to examine the views and suggestions of lecturers on the use of simulation in marketing courses. For this purpose, the use of a semi-structured questionnaire was chosen, which was sent to the academics before the interviews, giving them the opportunity to prepare and respond in detail. The sampling was carried out taking into account the participants' specialization in the field of marketing. Specifically, the sample consisted of academics who had experience either in using simulations in their courses or in coordinating the use of these tools in different Marketing courses, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Knowledge of the lecturers' experience with simulations was a key selection criterion, as the aim was to gather information from individuals who had already incorporated this technology into their teaching practice. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing flexibility in the participants' responses and enabling the researchers to delve into specific aspects depending on the responses received. The semi-structured questionnaire included questions relating to the general use of simulations in teaching, the benefits and challenges encountered by lecturers, and suggestions for improvements. Data analysis was based on thematic analysis, looking for common patterns and trends in faculty views in order to draw conclusions about the use and improvement of simulations in the educational process.

Summary of Findings

The use of simulation in marketing and broader business courses highlights significant challenges and benefits, as demonstrated by the personal interviews we conducted with faculty staff in the subject. Many faculty find that simulations are particularly appropriate in situations where there is interaction between two parties, such as seller-customer, business-employee or company-consumer. These interactions allow students to put theory into practice, which is a key advantage.

One of the biggest benefits mentioned is the ability for students to directly see the results of the decisions and strategies they choose during the simulation. Unlike in the real market, where the consequences of a decision can take months or even years to be seen, simulations offer quick feedback. This feature gives students the opportunity to immediately understand their mistakes or successes and learn through the practical application of their theoretical knowledge. At the same time, simulations enhance skills such as teamwork and persuasion. As students work in groups, their opinions are often divided, which pushes them to negotiate and support their views. This element of disagreement and collaboration within an organized context cultivates their negotiation skills, an essential skill for their future careers in management and administration positions.

Key Contributions

We are living in an era where the learning process is constantly changing mainly for three main reasons: First, competition is constantly increasing as far as universities are concerned. Especially after the Covid era where distance education has now entered the game of competition

with different rhythms and frequency. Second, the demands are increasing as far as the quality of study programs is concerned. Third, as the market changes, mainly due to technological changes, the learning process must be revised to keep up with the needs and demands of the market. This could not leave marketing out of the game. It may be the right timing to talk about the need to change course in terms of the way we teach marketing courses. Most importantly, to review the way in which we interconnect the courses with the needs of the market. This research examines the necessity of introducing simulation into marketing courses taught at universities and, more generally, the introduction of new technologies. However, for this to be effective, proper planning is needed. The views of tutors who have experience in using simulation in marketing courses contribute significantly to the discussion. This research is a useful tool for universities that wish to improve their learning process in this specific subject.

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