

Evaluating Marketing and Trendy Topics from Marketing Managers' Perspective: Do the Work of Marketing Academicians 'Make Sense' to Marketing Managers?*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal how the new concepts and marketing practices, which have recently been trendy topics in the marketing literature, are perceived by the marketing managers as the target audience practitioners. The research is exploratory and adopts a phenomenological method. With purposeful sampling, data were obtained from 14 marketing managers through semi-structured in-depth interviews and analyzed with the grounded theory approach. Research findings show that marketing knowledge has two important effects on marketing managers: the interaction between academic knowledge and marketing practitioners and the interaction among marketing practitioners. Education – especially post-graduate education – is an important element that determines the direction of this interaction. While the practitioners with post-graduate degrees keep less distance with academic knowledge, the ones without post-graduate degrees use marketing with basic tools like price, promotion and underestimate knowledge. Having academic knowledge is seen as an important means of status and social discrimination in the relationship among marketing managers. As an original finding of the study, academic language is the tool that most clearly reveals this distinction. Although the distance between theory and practice is preserved despite the critical literature in this field, the individual requests of managers towards knowledge allow this gap to be diminished.

Key Words: : Marketing, Trendy Topics, Marketing Managers, Practice of Topics, Education, Theory-Practice Gap.

JEL Classification Codes: M30, M31, M39, M121

1. INTRODUCTION

More than half a century has passed since the 1950s, the concept of marketing was introduced. Developing technology, the disappearance of market boundaries, and changing competition conditions in line with changing consumer preferences (Appadurai, 1990) have also revealed new marketing concepts. Especially with the flow of information accelerated by technological developments, the spread of new concepts is also gaining momentum. These concepts, which academics in Turkey follow closely or have to follow, generally consist of concepts «imported» from other countries and included in literature by adopting in Turkish.

An important purpose of academic research in the marketing literature is to suggest marketing strategies that marketing practitioners can benefit from and to contribute to the development of the business world. However, recent literature covers how marketing knowhow is transferred (Aydin & Terpstra, 1981; Simonin, 1999), what the definition/concept of marketing should

be (Levy, 2002; Lusch, 2007; Wilkie & Moore, 2007; Brooksbank et al., 2010; Keelson, 2012) or how marketing practices are interpreted by marketing academics (Levy, 2002; Gök & Hacıoğlu, 2010; Brooksbank et al., 2010; Bolajoko et al., 2013; Zeithaml et al., 2020). One of the studies trying to understand the marketing managers' conceptual perspective towards marketing concepts is Contreras & Ramos (2016)'s quantitative study. The authors reveal that marketing is reduced to a tactical dimension and perceived as promotional activities. Webster et al. (2005) reflected senior managers' perspective that marketing functions are disembodied. They are now embedded in product engineering and field sales as they are closer to the consumer.

This article aims to reveal how the new concepts and marketing practices, which have recently been included as trendy topics (can also be defined as "hot" topics in academic conversations) in the marketing literature, are perceived by the marketing managers, as target practitioners. In line with this, we will try to question

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the dimensions of the relationship that practitioners have with academic knowledge through marketing concepts. Although it is stated that academic knowledge is not visible to practitioners and marketing education is significant (Levy, 2002; Brooksbank et al., 2010), clarifying the question of how practitioners define this invisibility and in which areas they experience it is crucial.

The pursuit of this study, unlike the literature, is to understand the direct response of concepts in real life and practical evaluation of theory by practitioners who use them by directly asking them. The manifestation of marketing knowledge in concepts and activities (Akaah et al., 1988) has become a divergent approach in the abstract marketing literature and elaboration of marketing managers' practices is generally based on the interpretation of marketing academics. The reflection of these elaborations on marketing managers is uncertain. Accordingly, bringing out an explicit point of view of practice will contribute to the marketing literature and will also be an opportunity for interdisciplinary evaluation.

In the data collection process due to the emphasis on the importance of marketing education, the inclusion of education as a factor has come up and thus the sense of marketing education on the use of concepts has also been examined in the study.

2. Literature review

2.1. Development of Marketing Concepts and Trendy Topics

Discussions in the field of marketing start from what marketing is and bring its functions, scope, and activities to the agenda. The most important shift in the marketing perspective is from the distribution of products and services to the distribution of intangible elements such as ideas and values; from the distribution of physical elements to mental elements; from economy to non-economic issues, and from entrepreneurship to social activities (Bartels, 1974). At the core of all these discussions, there are concepts, topics, and definitions that will form the basis of marketing (Bolajoko et al., 2013). This will also utilize a framework to understand the development of marketing discussions with a spectrum encouraging trendy concepts.

One of the first marketing definitions accepted in the marketing literature presents a corporate perspective in which all marketing activities are integrated and coordinated, and as a result, these activities are blended with other corporate functions aiming to ensure long-term profitability as a basic goal of production (Felton, 1959).

Shortly after Keith (1960) centered on customers, not the company, and described this as a marketing revolution. Examination of the difference between marketing and sales (Levitt, 1960), marketing mix elements (Borden, 1964), and the social aspect of marketing (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971) have advanced the definition of marketing.

In the 1990s, the concept of market orientation (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993) was introduced, and academic discussions highlighted how the marketing concept should be applied. Eventually, value-based marketing emphasized that the companies aimed to make a profit by creating value within the framework of long-term relationships (Slater, 1997; Doyle, 2000).

The digital revolution, which left its mark on the marketing world in the 2000s, accelerated the flow of information and started a new era for both the academy and the business world. In this period, new concepts like digital marketing, which offers a new field and tool especially in the implementation of marketing activities (Bala & Verma, 2018; Desai, 2019), relationship marketing (Steinhoff et al., 2019; Steinhoff & Palmatier, 2021), experiential marketing (Lin, 2019; Soliha et al., 2021), mobile marketing (Narang & Shankar, 2019), social media marketing (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Jacobson et al., 2020; Wibowo et al., 2021), content marketing (Kee & Yazdanifard, 2015; Koiso-Kanttila, 2004), event marketing (Gupta, 2003; Wood, 2009), agile marketing (Poolton et al., 2006; Accardi-Petersen, 2011; Hagen et al., 2018; Moi & Cabiddu, 2021), visual hammer (Ries, 2013), pop-up shop stores (Marciniak & Budnarowska, 2009), non-marketing (Akin, 2014; Memiş, 2017), new concepts such as brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012; Roy et al., 2013), microblogging (Yazdanifard et al., 2011) have emerged in the marketing literature. These concepts also demonstrate a more glimpse perspective instead of a holistic one conducting academicians to specialize in their theoretical discussions.

As marketing escalates its importance in social context enriching concepts and topics, it also becomes generic (Bolajoko et al., 2013). For this reason, the evaluation of the perspectives of the managers working in the field of marketing will also enable us to determine how much of the intellectual accumulation is reflected in practice. The presence or absence of these trendy concepts in practice will also reveal the value, pertinence, and the 'necessity' of these concepts.

2.2. Practice of Marketing Concepts

Discussions on whether marketing is a science or not have brought different evaluations in terms of practice and theory. Taylor (1965) mentioned that the development of rich conceptual schemes should turn into usefulness that allows marketing managers to see the results of their decisions, and this usefulness should change the patterns in the market environment.

Marketing studies are considered a science through the process of theoretical contribution and art through practice (Taylor, 1965: 53). While Bartels (1983) mentions that the outcomes of education should be attributed to the relationship between academia and business, he resides marketing to empirical research. Years later, Simkin (2000) is concerned that marketing is not a science and ends his discussion with the following statement: "The basic marketing toolkit is applied differently and requires more than minor "tweaking" to tackle the characteristics of many industrial business-to-business products, target markets, and even marketing managers." (p. 158). This approach has justified the treatment of marketing as a discipline (Akaah et al., 1988). For this reason, the application of marketing know-how manifests itself in the concepts and activities in the discipline (Akaah et al., 1988).

The fluid-structure of marketing and micro-theoretical discussions provoked the gap between marketing practitioners and marketing literature (knowhow). Recent discussions refer to the fact that marketing academics are irrelevant to the process, confusion about the definition of marketing complicates the work of marketing managers resulting in a deterioration in marketing discipline (McDonald, 2009). The top of marketing mind issues is generally borrowed from different fields impeding discipline-specific knowledge and discussions are forced to adapt to a theory instead of focusing on the stakeholder problems augmenting the gap between practice and theory (Zeithaml et al., 2020). The use of the most appropriate marketing theory to the problem encountered in practice is the point where marketing knowledge is put into practice (Carson & McCartan-Quinn, 1995). For this reason, the development of a marketing practice approach for problem-solving is an important evaluation point in the reflection of the academic discussions to practice (Hunt, 2007; Zeithaml et al., 2020).

3. Methodology

The aim of this study is to examine how the trendy concepts in marketing literature are understood and applied in the business world, and therefore we address to shed light on this field of marketing literature from a different perspective. Thus, we direct to present a discipline evaluation to both practitioners and academicians working in this field of marketing in addition to the relations between academia and practice.

The study is designed as exploratory research, and the qualitative research method was used to examine the subject in depth. Qualitative research supports the nature of exploratory studies by enabling researchers to delve deeper into the subject on the basis of the participants within the research field. The exploratory nature of this study helps both to understand how current marketing concepts are evaluated by managers as practitioners and to obtain representative feedback on academic education.

As a data collection method, the phenomenological in-depth interview technique was used to enable participants to express their experiences and opinions (Pollio et al., 1997). The aim of the phenomenological interview is that the participants freely make sense of their own experiences and reveal their subjective approaches (Hopkinson & Hogg, 2006). Accordingly, the researchers were in the field with the list of dimensions to be discussed within semi-structured interviews, but the participants were allowed to guide the interviews.

The profile of the participants participating in the research is shown in Table 1.

The purposive sampling method was used to determine the participants participating in the research. In this context, in the first stage of the data collection, we contacted via email marketing and/or sales executives working in private sector companies operating in Izmir and doing a master's with non-thesis degree (post-graduate) in Business Administration or Marketing Management programs in Izmir. Master's with non-thesis programs address private sector practitioners and for graduation, instead of a thesis, they accomplish a project including research in their program specialization. Course programs were adapted to their working hours. As follows, these programs are means to bridge marketing academic knowledge and practice so that our motivation to include them in sampling. In-

¹ Whether to receive a master's with non-thesis degree in Business Administration or Marketing.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

| Participants (P) | Gender (F: Female, M: Male) | Education ⁵ | Interview Duration (min.) | Position in the Company |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| P1 | F | Master with Non-Thesis | 46:10 | General Secretary of the Board of Directors (Sales-Marketing Department) |
| P2 | M | Master with Non-Thesis | 42:01 | Izmir Regional Sales Chief |
| P3 | F | Master with Non-Thesis | 25:17 | Marketing And Corporate Relations Specialist |
| P4, 5 | F, F | Master with Non-Thesis | 37:52 | Sales-Marketing Manager, Agency Operations Manager |
| P6 | M | Master with Non-Thesis | 38:42 | Turkey Sales and Marketing Executive |
| P7 | M | Master with Non-Thesis | 46:28 | Izmir Regional Dealer Manager |
| P8 | F | Master with Non-Thesis | 44:35 | Marketing Manager |
| P9 | F | Graduate | 46:59 | Assistant Product Manager |
| P10 | M | Graduate | 48:10 | Company Manager |
| P11 | F | Graduate | 38:04 | Product Manager |
| P12 | F | Graduate | 41:04 | Turkey Sales Director / Marketing Manager |
| P13 | M | Graduate | 53:23 | Sales Representative |
| P14 | F | Graduate | 35:46 | Marketing Expert |

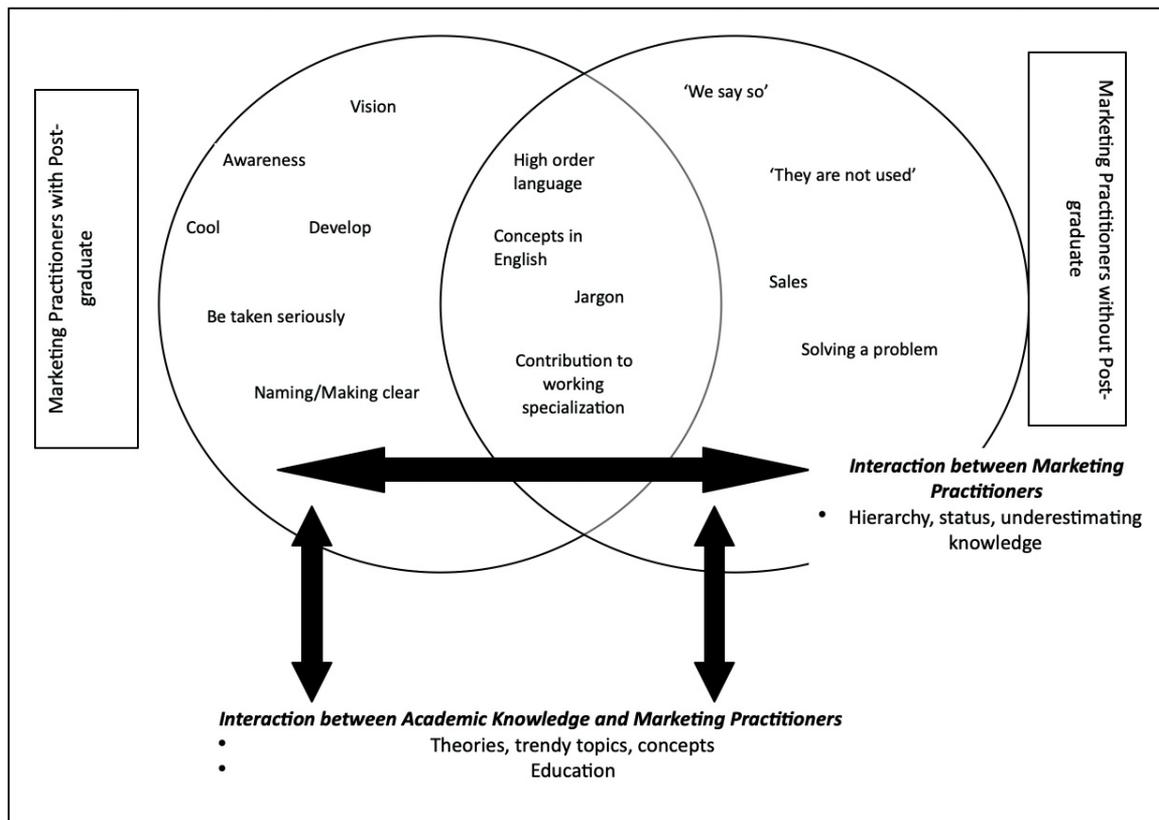


Figure 1. Representation of Focus Concepts and Interaction Expressed Around Marketing Concepts by Participants with and without Postgraduate Education

depth interviews were conducted with the volunteer participants. The criterion in the selection of the sample is to reach the marketing managers of the companies that are active in the consumer/industrial market. At this stage, we interviewed 8 marketing managers till we revealed the 'patterns' at the data saturation point of adding nothing new with new data (Mason, 2010). In this process, the most important factor affecting the views of the participants on marketing concepts was education. The fact ideas of our participants with post-graduate are reflected in the findings as their proximity to current and fundamental concepts, knowing the content of the concepts, and using these concepts greatly to affect their «vision» in their working life. For this reason, in the second stage of the study, we aim to answer the question of «How do marketing managers who do not have a post-graduate approach to these concepts?». At this stage of the data collection process, interviews were held with people who did not have a post-graduate in the aforementioned fields. Interviews were held with 6 marketing managers fitting this criterion, and after the interviews, we followed the grounded theory approach in coding the data allowing the text to guide the researchers instead of predetermined themes (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

4. Findings

On the academic side of marketing, the discussions about determining and meeting consumer needs, ensuring the long-term «existence» of the company in the market, increasing profitability, and directing the development of activities, plans, strategies, or tactics in this direction (Taylor, 1965; Bass, 1993) are taking place, these are turning into tools for practitioners in the market. These actors are intermediates by turning academic knowledge into practice for business purposes and contributing to academia with their outcomes.

Our findings reflect two angles: The interaction between academic knowledge and practitioners and among practitioners through academic knowledge. In Figure 1, we illustrate the basic concepts of our findings. These two angles are discussed with a blend of education as an important threshold value that changes the perspective.

4.1. Findings Between Academic Marketing Knowledge and Practitioners

Recently the news titled 'Professor, no one is reading you!' (<https://t24.com.tr/haber/profesor-hic-kimse-sizi-okumuyor,298153>) called attention to the willing/unwilling disconnection of communication/

interaction between academics and non-academics and within the academy itself. It was provoking to think about education, practice, and theory and serve as a motivation to study. Our findings contribute to this discussion in terms of post-graduate education with a declaration: **'Maybe they don't read but they listen'**.

"[Trends] I don't think it's possible for me to reach every single one of them completely, but [with post-graduate] at least I read a book at work or look at a book about a concept I've heard at school, at least I try. you can't sit down and study everything because then you cannot work, maybe we don't know a lot of things in detail, like you, you know, many terms of marketing are your skills. For you, it is a skill, not knowledge. Well, it is not possible for us to be like that, but if we heard of its existence at least once, we opened it and looked and what was it? What's in it? So, we can go back again" (P1)

"[With post-graduate] You start not looking at things the same way, especially if you work in the same industry for a long time, it starts to go blind. You start doing the same things involuntarily. When you learn something, when you add something new, you want to apply it too, and this is already reflected in your success. The brand is renewed, the brand identity is revived" (P 3)

Post-graduate guides managers in adopting new approaches and implementing them. While the dynamic structure of working life makes it difficult for practitioners to follow the academic literature, continuing education facilitates the adoption of new concepts to the extent that they match the work done. Thus, as long as they continue their education, they ensure that the practical theory that comes with the concepts such as the content, application, results and difficulties of the concepts are taken together and enable them to deal with the application with a holistic approach when they go into practice.

"This is the best part of the training we have received. The education we receive overlaps with our work at this point. At school, they say us to make people dream so we come here to learn how to make people dream and we put it into sentences here somehow." (P5)

4.1.1. Approaches to Marketing and Dealing with Marketing Concepts

Postgraduate education is effective in creating awareness of the importance of marketing activities, while enabling participants to understand what marketing really is. Therefore, it also helps them develop

a critical perspective on the general functioning of the marketing concept in Turkey and their performance.

"In Turkey, it is something like imm, in companies like us, marketing is just memo pad, fair preparation is like a billboard" (P1)

"Are we doing marketing? We question this every time after the course. It creates a very interesting perception." (P4)

While postgraduate education is a real 'vision' element for the participants, it helps them to adopt more innovative approaches and develop a perspective that aims to 'take it further'. Therefore, marketing activities are more of a *purpose*.

"What interests me is the movements that can be captured in real-time, that is, being able to catch the consumer at that moment, being able to respond at that moment on social media. There are software related to this that work in the background, maybe to apply them, to surprise the consumer. To collect and analyze that information of the consumer and send a message to him as soon as he is at that moment. For example, there is beacon technology, so when you pass by the store, if Bluetooth is on, you can catch it and there is a special discount for you. I think this is the point to come. But there is not enough awareness about it, and we cannot implement it now. I'm just reading, so we can't do that right now." (P3)

Participants without post-graduate, on the other hand, focus more on the effectiveness of marketing. It shows that they have a perspective of how marketing works but from a selling concept (Keelson, 2012) that they treat it more as a **tool** focusing on 'earnings'.

"Sales and marketing in Turkey are the same, you know, sales-marketing, sales- marketing. Actually, sales are different, marketing is different. It starts with marketing, maybe the first step is promotion, relationship with sales, and relationship with marketing. That's my perception because marketing is a bit of perception management." (P13)

"[...] Marketing is all about perception management for me, I mean. After the sale .. The important first step is sales, but of course, you still need visuals and the necessary instruments to reach the consumer in order to create a perception while making the sale." (P11)

"I can't say that things won't change if scientific research reaches us, but it might change, but as I said, I'm not sure if it will create such an incredible effect and move it to a completely different point. I don't think it will be like that" (P9)

Participants with post-graduate education know and use basic concepts such as 'social media marketing', 'relationship marketing' and they know concepts such as 'visual hammer', which can be considered a trendy topic. They also express their unfamiliarity with the concepts that they don't know. Besides, they develop 'awareness' of some new trendy marketing concepts (guerrilla marketing, content marketing, etc.) in the blogs they follow, in line with their academic interest in post-graduate education. On the other hand, participants without post-graduate education focus on the content required by their job description. Therefore, concepts matter if they provide practical benefits like solving a problem or increasing sales (Hunt, 2007; Zeithaml et al., 2020).

"[Asking green marketing] Can you explain? [Explained]. Unfortunately, we did not have such studies. Why not? It's beautiful. We want to turn to social responsibility projects a little bit to create the perception there again in terms of marketing. It's a different project, but it's still like a branch of marketing." (P11)

The main difference between the two groups is 'vision'. The basic distinction here is the above-mentioned 'instrumentality' and 'purposiveness'. This is fed by the approach to marketing. Because how marketing is discussed determines how marketing concepts are discussed. While the participants with post-graduate education apply the trends and follow the results for improvement of work, the participants without post-graduate education deal with the trends to solve the problems they observe.

"[Marketing concepts] I think they will work as long as they solve a problem." (P11)

"I think one of the most important things in the marketing trends right now is to use more active sense organs and we are directing workers to launch this to the end customer, and the customers like it. Previously, when purchasing a [product name], people only looked at the year, but now they wonder about the taste and smell, they ask about it, and we started to move in this direction, we saw that it works." (P2)

"R: For example, there is a concept called content marketing."

P12: speak more of this term. to We use it as the market. We have our own concepts within ourselves, as I said, everyone determines a concept according to their own needs. Or it sets a slogan. These can obviously differ from company to company. In other words, each company can organize a slogan according to itself."

"R: How did you learn about beacon technology?

P3: We use this term more as 'speak to the market' [said in English]. We have our own concepts within ourselves, as I said, everyone determines a concept according to their own needs."

While the threshold created by education sheds light on the reality that the concept of marketing does not show a fixed structure and is constantly changing, it also enables them to understand the depth of marketing. Therefore, marketing trends and concepts represent the 'alive' feature of marketing. However, the instrumental importance of marketing welcomes marketing concepts as 'unnecessary'.

"Some concepts are very similar to each other. Even I have a hard time separating them. I don't think I know it very well, because when you don't really apply those concepts start to resemble each other in a way. It also makes you a little unhappy, you know, am I not enough? Got a lot of terms and can't seem to catch it? Or you are worried that your job does not improve you, but at the same time it is a good thing. After all, you see that this sector, that is, the **field, is not dead and is constantly alive**, so the emergence of something new, in a way, also directs the brands to work. In other words, when a marketer reads these, he wants to apply it in his industry and that term somehow comes into our lives over time. **So, we are being renewed in the same way.**" (P3)

"I mean, if there is such a thing, we can say, ' Oh yes, this is the company, I saw it from that advertisement' and create familiarity in those matters, but is the concept very important? I don't think it matters that much, frankly. In other words, it may not be so important for us to appear using that concept. But it is of course very good to be known, it is a plus for everyone, but it is not a must." (P12)

"[...] [by knowing the concept] You can at least search for this word as a source of information. If you enter 'respond quickly to my customer', you will not find it easy on the internet. But these names, these top headings actually make it easier for us to access information. At least we can search by that name. [...] So, imagine a main street and you are going. Yes, you can go, but if there are no signs, you will not know where and how many kilometers are left. So yes 40 km. I guess I have a long way to go, yes, but when he shows you it, I think you can go much more comfortably, safely, and knowingly." (P1)

Realization of marketing activities comes to life in line with the goals of the managers but in two directions. While the participants with post-graduate education get ahead of the market with an attitude that sees

'beyond marketing', participants without post-graduate education operate with the aim of 'saving the day'.

4.1.2. Naming Things "Already" Implemented

Practitioners in marketing, whether they have a post-graduate education or not, have to fulfill their responsibilities by making the necessary decisions in the context of their job descriptions. Therefore, the concepts developed by the marketing literature only make sense for the actors who use them. Marketing activities are already carried out and if you are operating in the market environment, there will be practices that you need to maintain within the existing order and system. However, the awareness gained through post-graduate education develops an understanding that reveals the value of the concepts. By the way, we stress 'post-graduate education' to indicate proximity to marketing literature.

"I'm doing something, but it's like doing it instinctively, without knowing what it's called. Or I do it because I think it's right. Now I can name the things I do [...] As you learn, you realize that there is an incredible work behind it, an incredible effort. So, it is not an easy thing." (P1)

"Knowledge sometimes creates this awareness: Oh yes, I used it here, I can say that I have had created it then. That's why it's definitely a plus for me. Once my vision is developing" (P4)

On the other hand, managers who have a distance from marketing knowledge have an attitude that concepts are 'unnecessary'. The striking result of this situation is that the marketing activities of the participants in this profile are carried out in a narrower framework and will only serve to complete the requirements of the job, that is, reflect the awareness of 'fulfilling the task'. Therefore, the marketing literature has difficulties in reaching such actors, due to the nature and attitude of the actors, or even cannot reach them.

"Imm we do marketing activities, as you mentioned, without using those concepts in daily life. In other words, we do not necessarily have to use that marketing concept to be able to engage in marketing activities. We have a Facebook at our disposal right now, we have followers, everyone has a circle of friends, there is Instagram, there is LinkedIn, if we want to share something about that, when there is something new about our company, we can share it there and show it to everyone." (P2)

"How can I say Turkish equivalents since they are mostly in a foreign language? I haven't come across those terms very often. And yes, I realize things that I see in accounting

and finance courses. You know, again in Turkish, but in marketing, it seems to be a little more different. It helps to understand what you mean when you read an article, but there is no time to think about it when running an operation in daily life. Or yes, we are not saying that we are doing guerrilla marketing right now. It may be done, but it is not done under that term in general." (P9)

4.2. Findings among Practitioners through Academic Knowledge: Negotiation of Status in Hierarchy with Academic Knowledge, and Language in Workplace

Language has been a prominent element, especially in terms of marketing concepts and has shed light on different approaches. Using marketing concepts in **practice**, in professional working life brings out these different interactions:

- Among managers with and without a post-graduate education (managers with post-graduate degree may be subordinate or superior, upper hierarchical relationship)
- Between participants who have and/or have no post-graduate degree and other marketing managers (horizontal relationship)

Another function in which language acts as a separator is the balance between **academia and practice** positioning academic knowledge in a higher status.

While the participants with post-graduate degrees develop attention to using these marketing concepts correctly and appropriately, they show a more comfortable attitude in expressing that they do not know the concepts they have heard for the first time. In an approach where marketing is accepted as the goal, it is not a problem for them to say, 'I do not know', since the main thing is to 'learn'.

For participants with post-graduate degrees, since language is a tool to 'show oneself', it manifests itself more as 'pretending to know' or expressing 'not using' rather than expressing that they do not know. It is evident in the contradiction between their body language and narratives with diminishing usage rate of concepts in conversations (Wilkie & Moore, 2007) and critics of 'there is repetition in academia, not in practice'.

"It's more of us here, actually relationship marketing is the heart of our company, the truth of the matter. The reason I'm still involved in sales at work is relationship marketing." (P1)"

"[About relationship marketing] It is inviting our customers, that's like a marketing technique. Factory tour, total participation in surgeries, surgery with another doctor using our product. [bringing out experiential marketing in conversation] I don't say that we do this. I call it relationship marketing because it's about the distributor and the distributor's affiliate doctor." (P11)

"[Giving some examples of marketing concepts] I've heard of these concepts, of course. We use it at work. We are launching a new product these days and we always say 'marketing', 'marketing' (laughs)." (P11)

"As I follow these [marketing concepts such as relational marketing, visual hammer] as I have said a lot, I especially follow documents or publications in English, and I **have definitely heard the name** pop-up marketing, in the form of visual hammer, is very new English concept.." (P10)

Pretending to know is a basic coping strategy in conversations like these. This is because the capability of using academic language and trendy concepts in conversations offers managers the opportunity to 'differentiate themselves from others' like between managers or in a subordinate-superior relationship. Therefore, it carries individuals in a relatively 'advantaged' position in the eyes of managers or their colleagues compared to others in the workplace. The most basic indicator of visibility is to use new marketing trends at the right place and time, in the right way.

"These concepts we use here **make you look cooler** like that in business life. For example, in one of my last meetings, they gave us training. It is customer segmentation, so what are the factors that affect marketing, these are the things we always use in the field and pay attention to, but when you get up and say something in the academic language here and there, everyone turns to look at you. 'How do you know?' You say that I had this education, I graduated [post-graduate] from the marketing department, or the person who gave this education gets up and says to you, 'Of course, you have a master's degree in this department.'" (P2)

"P3: [Learning the concepts through education] When you use the word he [managers at the workplace] uses technically, you make the other party feel **that you know the job. The other party takes you more seriously.**

R: Has there been a change in behavior?

P3: Yes. In my interview experience, of course, he already feels it when meeting with someone in my field, and the interviewer **doesn't even extend the interview too**

much, especially in the interviews you have for the first time like HR. He asks you a few questions, starting with what the difference between sales and marketing is, when you use a few terms there, apart from the classic answers, 'Yes, you know this job, you have developed yourself very well', the other party already makes you feel and does not extend it 'Okay enough, you know, I've had it.' (P3)

"If I don't know those terms in a meeting, I feel uncomfortable because I'm in the meeting at that time, I don't have the opportunity to research at that moment and I get nervous because I may not fully understand what you mean. Or I worry that I won't be able to give an adequate answer." (P9)

"[If you say a new marketing concept to someone who doesn't know] When they hear that, they say 'Yes, yes, let's do that, you're right,' but you can feel from the sentences that he does know nothing about it. If he was in competition with you and what you said was hostile to him, if he felt that it was revealing his ignorance, you were dead (laughs). Every sentence you make about him will come back negatively to you (laughs)" (P5)

Thus, marketing trends enable employees to be visible and respected in the working environment, and by creating an advantage over employees who do not know the trends. Working culture, in this context, actually separate individuals who have post-graduate degree as most of the practitioners have graduate degrees. This condition reaches to peak to make practitioners feel 'disturbed' when they do not know the concepts or trends.

The effort of the participants with post-graduate degrees to use marketing trends and concepts correctly enables them to realize the 'errors' in discourse and develop critical discussions towards language.

"[Academy and business] I don't think it reflects it exactly. Especially if the staff does not have academic knowledge such as a master's degree, there are actually strategies that they apply with their experience, foresight and talent without knowing what their name is. Maybe it's true, but when they explain it, they use the wrong terms. Since I have my master's education, I can use the right term in the right strategy as much as I can, but still, when you give a break, you become dull again. Because in fact, they use the right thing wrong, so you have to accept that wrong as right over time. They say this is this for us and you can't actually explain it there because it has been named that way for years." (P3)

"Concepts are definitely misused. In this society, we are already emptying ourselves for every profession. In other

words, we have even already emptied the concepts of sales and marketing. Sales and marketing get mixed up a lot. Hot sales, marketing, strategy, these concepts are all intertwined. Maybe something will happen if we can find new words or if those of us who receive this education today can put these concepts into place in a decade or in 15 years and use them appropriately. [...] There are so many wrongs out there. In order for us to eliminate these, maybe the academy needs to provide education for practice." (P5)

Another prominent situation regarding language is that employees create a 'higher end order language' among themselves and this upper language manifests itself with marketing concepts. This suggests that this situation encourages a 'status' structure. It creates a given class distinction by setting a threshold between employees.

"[The use of marketing concepts] Frankly, the automotive sector is not a structure with a very high level of education. Sales consultants are either high school or university graduates. But we are not a structure that has a great command of jargon, especially in terms of marketing-sales, and follows them in an academic sense. We speak within ourselves (in the company) using these jargons from the academy, yes, but apart from that, there is nothing clear that I can say we use such things specifically within the company. Because this is all about the level of education and whether he understands what you are saying when you say it. In other words, if the person in front of you will not understand when you use this jargon, you will say it in Turkish and put it into practice in a way that he can understand." (P10)

"The people we are dealing with are not very conscious, frankly. I do not go to them with the concept of marketing anyway, I go with advertising, promotion, etc. This is the way they go and since they are not very well-equipped due to the sector, of course, I cannot offer a clear recommendation on a strategy, but other than that, we use marketing concepts a lot." (P4)

"I studied marketing [post-graduate education], but I can't go directly to my sales team and tell them what I saw in the course here. Because the language used here is very different, the language used in the field is very different. Here, I use a Turkish translation of it, at school the language used is an academic language, but the language used in business life is a different language, so you just said that this is one of the most important differences between business life and academia. You change it and explain it to your team in an understandable language." (P2)

This situation 'equalizes' managers, regardless of education level, against actors such as 'other' employees and even the consumer group. In addition to all these dimensions, the academy, which represents the 'ideal' in language, is seen as an element that includes all managers and all other stakeholders.

The language used as 'jargon' among practitioners turns into a 'high end language' framing the relationship between theory and practice and creating a 'natural barrier' between practitioners and academics.

"The biggest difference I see is that in all academic studies there is a lot of repetition. In other words, I am reading some articles, for example, I am reading a similar paragraph, a similar explanation may have taken place in three or four places. It doesn't happen again in real life. So, we don't have that much time. We don't have time to repeat so much, make very long sentences or give too many details at work. In real life, we try to act with short sentences, short sentences as much as possible, which is reflected even in our speech, in general with shorter sentences and fast sentences. We don't talk too much about details. I think that gap in reaching the conclusion is longer in academics, of course, but since we have less time in real life, I always say, how nice it would be if we could summarize academic articles (laughs)." (P1)

Academy is a 'reliable' alternative to the internet for managers. In terms of presenting 'approved', 'checked' information, it is a more valid source compared to the internet environment full of 'false' and 'copy-paste' information. However, due to the nature of the academy, repetitions and long narratives relatively lose their functionality in the agile market structure.

"How CRM came into our lives as we used it like many concepts used in theory. Those who are concepts today will be part of our lives twenty years later. New concepts emerge with technology. In theory, it is presented in the article as if it is on it, but then as people start to use it and begin to function, they turn it into a positive or negative perception. [...] Yes, someone has to write those theories, they have to name those concepts. It needs to be worked on. Swedish scientists² have to be real so that new trends we can apply twenty years from now, new markets and new words." (P5)

"There is scientific research on the one hand, and a constantly changing field factor on the other. I am also a little against this: as a result of scientific research, don't say

that this is useful, it is an effective application in terms of marketing, it is a useful application, we did research, and the figures show this part. Because there is a field variable there! The human factor. People can do an experiment and hundred times they may do the same movement but different in hundred and first. It is due to field variability. Therefore, in the academic part, I think the field factor can be forgotten. It can be acted as pure research. In business life, on the contrary, academic studies can be left in the background, and direct action is taken in line with the feedback from the field. But that also has to be mixed somewhere." (P2)

The detailed structure of the academy conflicts with the practical need of the application, which reinforces the distance between the practice and theory. It is even seen as 'unnecessary' for managers who instrumentalize marketing.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Research findings reveal that marketing practitioners develop unique interactions with academic knowledge and unique interaction among themselves through academic knowledge. Figure 1 reveals the prominent elements in this interaction and the factors that are effective in this interaction. As the tendency to view marketing as a firm function increase, so does the perception that marketing concepts are useful (Akaah, 1988). While the results of the research support this finding, it is seen that this belief is stronger for the participants with post-graduate degrees creating awareness about the usefulness of concepts at this point (Stephens et al., 2010).

Especially postgraduate education is the threshold in providing the relationship between theory and practice. The savvy of 'necessary concepts' is thus an indicator of this threshold discriminating between post-graduate and graduate degrees (Wilkie & Moore, 2007). Gamble et al. (2011) reveal that marketing managers and marketing academics still use a different language and jargon which creates a gap between marketing academics and practitioners. Despite the studies raising awareness about the gap between practice and theory, it can be said that this gap still endures. The gap decreases for managers with a post-graduate degree in marketing, and managers converge to the academic language. Contrary to Brooksbank et al. (2010)'s self-styled marketing experts due to fast 'fads' of marketing, the university was prioritized as a source of information for our study offering an opportunity to reach practitioners, as the main stakeholders of the marketing academy.

² 'Swedish scientist' is a joke here. This concept is used in advertisements (especially toothpaste advertisements) in Turkey's 1990s as experts as a promotional tool. Years later, people started to make fun of it with questions like 'What was the deal with them?', 'Why did we trust them?', especially on social media.

Another question that comes to mind at the end of this study is whether practitioners should be close to academic language. This study approaches this question from the point of view that they should. Marketing concepts should be relevant to social life and create social awareness (Gamble et al., 2011). While education is the area where marketing practitioners approach academia, what the academy can do to fill this gap is the subject of another study. Therefore, as Levy (2002) states, it is understood that education acts as a bridge between theory and practice.

Companies generally start to implement marketing when they transform from a start-up to a medium-sized business, and they evaluate it as nothing but the cost (Carson & McCartan-Quinn, 1995). In today's competitive world, although the importance of marketing is emphasized, from a practice perspective, it is not well-understood. Therefore, knowledge is not enough to turn into action. It is thought that this is because marketing is not accepted as a professional discipline (Hunt, 2007). Research findings reveal that some marketing managers question their positions and job descriptions and show that managers who have developed awareness of marketing are more collaborative in searching, learning, and using the right information. The effort of participants with the post-graduate degrees to learn the academic equivalent of the strategies they currently apply and to 'name' them also shows that academic knowledge reflects real life and adds value to practitioners (Stephens et al., 2010). However, theory-practice matching is experienced when managers show individual efforts to make it. Therefore, it is important to discuss a system structure that will ensure the sustainability of theory-practice harmony.

The most basic criticism of academic knowledge is that it is not reflexive to the market environment. In a competitive environment where quick decisions must be made, the 'repetitive' structure of academic knowledge and the lack of time flexibility in the field keep practitioners away from marketing knowledge. At this point, it is possible to comment that the functioning of the academic literature is not market oriented. Therefore, the definitions generally reflect the ideal to reach but have difficulties and barriers to be realized.

Marketing managers negotiate their status and power based on academic knowledge among themselves. The desire to have an education and get a post-graduate degree is a social situation in which managers distinguish themselves by confirming that they know - especially confirmation from their superiors - and by highlighting

their education in the group. It creates an identity negotiation process (Creed & Scully, 2000). Therefore, having academic knowledge becomes a criterion of status and respect within the group (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010) and this shows that marketing knowledge creates a side value for practitioners. The pros of this situation are that it may be the main motivator for the post-graduate degree but on the other hand, it may hinder the sustainability of the link between theory and practice.

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