CUSTOMER JOURNEYS THROUGH THE EYES OF UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Communicating the value associated with an undergraduate degree is one of the most vexing problems facing universities' administrators. Universities are at an important crossroads, one that arguably confronts the soul of the academy. One fork in the road is to "stay the course" of traditional liberal education seeking well-roundedness and lifelong learning. The other fork is to acquiesce to growing marketization pressures that emphasize practitioner-related knowledge and skills in support of employment opportunities and efficacy. The current study uses the lens of service dominant logic (SDL) to view this dilemma, because SDL is the emerging general marketing logic based on a standard of achieved value and a stakeholder orientation (which may or may not be perceived equally across stakeholder groups). This exploratory descriptive study evaluates the preferences for perceived value based on marketization versus liberal education approaches using both descriptive and predictive techniques. The results suggest that the marketization versus liberal education choice may prove in the end to be a false choice! This suggests the possibility that the current controversy between advocates of marketization versus marketing may both be placated (to a degree) by creative solutions that merge liberal education with marketization pedagogical goals and measures of success. We believe that our findings provide useful insights for better higher education at this controversial time, particularly vis-à-vis student satisfaction. We also hope our study spurs further examination of the issues related to the marketization and marketing perspectives in higher education.

Keywords: customer journey, higher education, service dominant logic, marketization, perceived value

INTRODUCTION

One of the most vexing problems facing universities' administrators in the 21st century concerns how to communicate the value of an undergraduate degree to key stakeholders. New America's (Fishman et al. 2017) inaugural annual poll about perceptions of higher education in the United States reveals a gap between what higher education is currently providing to students, and what must be done to help students attain their desired level of post-graduation success. That is, Americans believe in the tremendous potential of higher education, but they also feel that higher education is falling short of that promise. We view these mixed feelings among university stakeholders as both a potential opportunity and a potential threat.

Two general perspectives appear to dominate the marketing logic underlying on what and who creates the perceived value in United States based institutions of higher education. First, the literature is replete with opinions related to the "value" of a

bachelor's degree in terms of financial returns on investment (e.g., Ma, Pender, and Welch 2016 report a study suggesting that it takes an average of 12 years to recoup the cost of getting your Bachelor's degree–but that it indeed does pay off financially). Such arguments appear to focus on the economic return on investment is what over the lifetime of individual degree seekers creates value. This perspective can be loosely grouped under the term "marketization." A second alternative argument concerns valuing undergraduate degrees by why it is important to get such a degree (e.g., Stahl 2015 articulates six reasons why any undergraduate degree is work seeking). This second perspective can be loosely categorized under the value inherent in a liberal education argument, where value is created through the degree seeker's attainment of a broad general knowledge and the develop general intellectual capacities, in contrast to a professional, vocational, or technical curriculum (Judson and Taylor 2014). Taylor (2016) reports evidence suggesting that a significant challenge exists for those educators trying to embrace a marketing (i.e., value cocreation) approach based on the latter.

What is clear from these alternative perspectives is that a full understanding of how "value" is perceived vis-à-vis higher education remains a conundrum for marketers associated with higher education. The following study helps address this conundrum by considering the gap in our understanding of value by encouraging discussion concerning the possibilities of value (co)creation within the context of higher education. Tomlinson (2017) presents evidence of the growing trend of student identification with a consumer-orientated approach (i.e., marketization), however, there is also a degree of skepticism in the minds of administrators and faculty about the amount of variability in students'

attitudes and preferences for approaches emphasizing consumerism in higher education. In other words, these groups wonder if a majority of students still perceive the value of higher education in ways that do not conform to the ideal student-consumer approach. Tomlinson (2017) implies that some ambivalence may exist within student preferences for higher education delivery. Runté and Runté (2017) consider four separate discourses for higher education including for enlightenment, to develop human capital, as manpower management, and as consumerism. The dominant discourse on the purpose of higher education is shown to have changed from the traditional learning for enlightenment (i.e., an emphasis on liberal education) to an emphasis on manpower planning and consumerism (i.e., marketization). The separate implications of these distinct discourses are often ill considered as many participants lack awareness of the contradictory nature of rhetoric drawn from more than one discourse at a time. Fishman et al. (2017) report evidence that Americans believe in the tremendous potential of higher education—but they also feel that higher education is falling short of that promise. In short, there appears to be a stark expectations gap between what higher education could—and should—be and what currently exists. Thus, the impact on stakeholders (such as students) resulting from the movement toward students seeing themselves as consumers remains unclear. Specifically, are students' perceptions of the value received from a higher education connected with the value university administrators and faculty strive to create for stakeholders?

We posit that this lack of clarity in discourse has implications vis-à-vis perceived value in higher education. Specifically, the purpose of the following study is to begin to help clarify the current

state of how students perceive value and potentially value (co)creation in higher education. We accomplish this end by first considering the most recent logic generally underlying marketing theory and practice. This logic points toward considering customer experiences (and students' education experiences by extension) as "marketing journeys." Second, we reconcile the literature on customer journeys with the growing debate between "marketization" versus "marketing" perspectives on higher education. Third, we empirically test which perspective of perceived value perceptions is the most consistent with student data from a large sample of US undergraduate students. These analyses utilize a mix of descriptive and predictive analyses involving a number of methodological techniques. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings for service marketing theory in practice, particularly in terms of stakeholder satisfaction, both generally and specific to the marketing of higher education.

Emerging Marketing Theory and Practice
Marketing theory and practice are generally evolving toward a greater focus on service-dominant logic (SDL) rather than goods-dominant logic (GDL: Vargo and Lusch 2016), marketing relationships rather than transactions (Zhang et al. 2016), and customer journeys based on customer's experiences (Lemon and Verhoef 2016). Key emphases in this evolution of marketing theory and practice include (1) a stronger emphasis on value co-creation as opposed to value delivery (Vargo and Lusch 2016), (2) greater emphasis on customer's perception of value-in-use rather than traditional emphasis on value-in-exchange (Ranjan and Read 2016), and (3) multiple touch points among exchange partners associated with customers' experiences along the customer and firm journeys (Homburg et al. 2017). In this view, firms can only offer value

propositions for exchange. Payne et al. (2017, p. 472) further argue that the customer value proposition has a critical role in communicating how a company aims to provide value to customers, defined as "A customer value proposition (CVP) is a strategic tool facilitating communication of an organization's ability to share resources and offer a superior value package to targeted customers."

A student's educational experience, in this view, can be conceptualized as a customer journey. Jain et al. (2017) conduct a literature review and conclude that the concept of customer experience has been approached as both a process and an outcome, and both as a formative and reflective construct. They conclude the following definition based on their review of the evidence (which appears largely congruent with that of Lemon and Verhoef 2016):

> *Customer experience is the aggregate of feelings, perceptions, and attitudes formed during the entire process of decision making and consumption chain involving an integrated series of interaction with people, objects, processes and environment, leading to cognitive, emotional, sensorial and behavioral responses.*

The concept of a "customer journey" originally derives from marketing practice (McKinsey & Co.). Lemon and Verhoef (2016) conceptualize customer experience as a customer's journey with the firm over time during the purchase cycle across multiple touch points; it is the total customer experience as a dynamic process.

Unfortunately, the next section makes clear that higher education is increasingly embracing the arguably dated GDL perspective to guide students' journeys through higher education via marketization.

That is, contrary to the general trend in marketing theory and practice away from GDL toward SDL, moving toward marketization in the delivery of higher education arguably represents a theoretical movement in the opposite direction (i.e., from SDL-consistent liberal education toward GDL-consistent marketization–see Taylor and Judson 2011, 2014; Judson and Taylor 2014). This has led to recent calls for higher education to embrace an SDL perspective as a framework to underlie their marketing practices (Díaz-Méndez et al. 2012; Dziewanowska 2017; Judson and Taylor 2011, 2014; Dean et al. 2016). These calls are strengthened by Bunce et al. (2016) who report evidence that a higher consumer orientation was associated with lower academic performance, and Naidoo et al. (2011) who show how consumerism also promotes passive learning, threatens academic standards, and entrenches academic privilege.

Marketing Versus Marketization, Marketing Logic, and Perceived Value

Tradition has dictated that universities emphasized a higher-order of learning in the form of a liberal education (Zakaria 2015). However, contemporary decisions by university administrators and faculty suggest a trend of moving away from the tradition-based learning objective of universities toward a credentialing/training perspective known as "marketization" (Judson and Taylor 2014). In short, Taylor and Judson (2011) consider marketization, with its emphasis on "relevance" to stakeholders (e.g., job-related training) and student satisfaction, as more akin to a sales orientation than a marketing orientation. We argue that a key difference between the marketization and a marketing perspective involves the nature of perceived value as a stakeholder goal in that marketization typically seeks shorter-term value-in-

exchange (based on value embedded in a resource and as an output of a labor process) whereas marketing seeks longer-term value-in-use (the extent to which a customer feels "better off" through experiences related to consumption).[1]

Specifically, the general trend toward marketization in higher education can be likened to academic capitalism (Schulze-Cleven et al., 2017), suggesting linkages to an underlying economic/business logic. Marketization versus marketing represent the two general marketing logics struggling to become the preeminent tactic used to governed higher educational development and delivery, (Taylor and Judson 2011, 2014; Judson and Taylor 2014). One problem associated with allowing marketization to become the default approach is that it implicitly promotes exchange-value scenarios involving rapidly changing short term customer goals. This strong emphasis on customer centricity would appear on its face to be consistent with the arguments of Gaurav and Shainesh (2017) who generally encourage embracing customer centricity. However, Gummesson (2008) argues that customer-centricity (and the marketing concept itself) are too limited and cannot be fully implemented in marketing practice. Rather, Gummesson (2008) calls for marketing scholars and educators to develop and teach a network-based stakeholder approach that he calls balanced centricity, which envisions all stakeholders as having the right to satisfaction of wants and needs. However, Baporikar (2016) calls for a

[1] Payne et al. (2017, p. 471) suggests three broad perspectives on the CVP: CVPs that are principally supplier-determined, reflecting a value-in-exchange emphasis; CVPs that are transitional with recognition of the customer experience; and CVP that are mutually determined reflecting a value-in-use emphasis.

stakeholder approach to higher education that focuses on "quality" as the core issue of higher education. Baporikar (2016) further argues that there are five dimensions of quality in this context, including quality as (1) exceptional (higher standards), (2) consistency (e.g., zero defects), (3) fitness for purpose (fitting customer specifications), (4) value for money (as efficiency and effectiveness), and (5) transformative (an ongoing process that includes empowerment and enhancement of customer satisfaction). These differences in emphasis have profound implications in terms of the value propositions offered by universities today, which influence perceived value by stakeholders such as students.

Woodall et al. (2014) argue that the concept of value within the context of education has proven to be difficult to define both conceptually and operationally. That said, the general concept of perceived value in customer decision making is becoming better understood. Yang and Peterson (2004) state that perceived value has its roots in equity theory, which considers the ratio of consumers' outcome/input to that of a service provider's outcome/input. Yang and Peterson (2004) argued that customer value generally has both a direct relationship to customer loyalty, as well as an indirect influence through perceived satisfaction. Kumar and Reinartz (2016) more recently argue that creating and communicating value is one of the most important tasks in marketing. In their view based upon a summative review, customer value is a dual concept in that (1) the perception of perceived value, defined as the customer's net valuation of the perceived benefits, result from marketer's manipulation of the marketing mix elements, so that (2) customers can return value through multiple forms of engagement (customer lifetime value, in the widest sense) for the organization.

Emerging service theory further identifies several forms/types of the perceived value construct, including value-in-exchange versus value-in-use (among other forms). Vargo et al. (2008, p. 145) differentiated between these perspectives on value creation as follows: "We argue that value is fundamentally derived and determined in *use* (italics not added) – the integration and application of resources in a specific context – rather than in *exchange* (italics not added) – embedded in firm output and captured by price." Vargo et al. (2008) further associate value-in-exchange with the GDL perspective, whereas the SDL perspective emphasizes value-in-use. This perspective appears congruent with the argument of Judson and Taylor (2014) who argue that specific to higher education: (1) in marketization, perceived value is determined by the producer (e.g., the student or other organizational stakeholders), with the emphasis on meeting stakeholders' more most immediate goals; whereas (2) in marketing, value is perceived and determined by the consumer on the basis of "value in use," which further emphasizes meeting, over a long period of time, a broadly defined view of stakeholders' (including students and society's) normative development goals.

In summary, we posit that short-term value-in-exchange is more closely related to the GDL perspective, whereas longer-term value-in-use is more closely related to the SDL perspective. This difference matters because congruence between the type of perceived value that underlies stakeholder and university perceptions of value is needed to generate the most efficacious marketing outcomes for higher education (e.g., stakeholder satisfaction). Specifically, if universities emphasize (long term) value-in-use as the basis for their value propositions (i.e., a longer term marketing perspective consistent with traditional liberal

education goals), and students seek value-in-exchange related to the immediate attainment of employment objectives as the basis for their perceptions of value (i.e., a marketization perspective), then this incongruence will culminate in a poor perceived (satisfaction and) value rating from students. This would be independent of the quality of educational delivery provided by the university through a parallel value building strategy.

The current research begins to test whether value perceptions can be attained through incongruent value creating approaches. The following exploratory study is conducted using mixed methods (i.e., qualitative and quantitative techniques), where scenarios first explore whether short-term value-in-exchange (associated with GDL) or longer-term value-in-use (associated with SDL) drives perceptions of value in higher education from students' perspective. The study also assesses whether common method bias obscures the interpretation of the obtained results. Finally, a predictive model is assessed based on group analyses (by gender) to help further clarify obtained results.

THE STUDY

We expect that students valuing a marketization emphases from their universities would also prefer value delivery in the form of highly structured (often lecture) courses that essentially package knowledge and deliver it for the tuition price of the course (i.e., value *delivery* consistent with the GDL perspective). GDL in higher education typically has the effect of minimizing risk in evaluative outcomes for students, but often at the expense of emphasizing lower levels of knowledge (Lujan and DiCarlo 2006). We would further expect students attracted to marketization practices to more highly value job-related training and knowledge (easier to

perceive the short-term value) to general knowledge designed to make students more well-rounded (a longer-term value consideration). Students embracing the alternative (SDL-based) marketing perspective, predicated on the concept of value co-creation, would likely tolerate or even desire higher-risk, less structured course delivery (consistent with critical thinking practices) and an emphasis on long-term (life-long) learning contributing to well-roundedness instead short-term, entry level job skills training. This leads to the first research hypothesis:

H1: Given a choice, today's Millennial students will generally prefer higher education structured in ways consistent with marketization practices.

H1 is predicated on an expectation that students will likely perceive more value associated with scenarios framed with a marketization educational delivery perspective than those framed with a traditional marketing perspective (i.e., higher order learning through critical thinking, less class structure, etc.). This second hypothesis is strengthened by the qualitative results reported by Taylor et al. (2011) who demonstrate the predominance of marketization-related goals underlying business students' undergraduate educational pursuits. However, we recognize Tomlinson's (2017) conclusion that today's students' consumer-oriented approach is not necessarily consistent with traditional consumerism expectations (i.e., may be ambivalent in this regard). That is, if students tend to favor marketized classes, then we would expect that this is because they typically perceive more value from such classes. This leads to the second research hypothesis:

H2: Millennial students will generally perceive greater value from courses constructed consistent with a marketization perspective over one constructed based on the traditional marketing perspective.

Finally, social desirability responding from students might provide a possible alternate explanation for the descriptive results reported in Table 1 and the conjoint results. That is, when students are asked if they value marketized or marking perspectives on education, they respond affirmative to both. However, when forced to choose, they most often choose marketized education as potentially the more socially accepted practice. Boateng et al. (2016) investigate socially desirable responding (SDR) in responses to survey questions about financial behavior among college students. Their results identify greater differences between direct and indirect reports of saving and spending behaviors were significantly related to higher scores on the measure of socially desirable responding. They suggest the use of indirect questioning can highlight and may be used to statistically account for and reduce biased responses in future measures of financial behavior. In this convention responders attempt to appear more normal to the direct questioning become identifiable as a different type of respondents that threaten the reliability of research in all fields.

Omitting or failing to control for social desirability in education research could result in harm understanding derived from quantitative results in this literature stream, because there is not a lack of appropriate measurement tools. In the current research, we assess the possibility of social desirability bias in our results as an alternative to Tomlinson's (2017) potential explanation. With this aim it may be possible to narrow the measurement gap

using it as a control during more advanced statistical analysis, leading to the third and final hypothesis:

H3: Social desirability bias is not in operation in Millennial's survey-based responses to questions about the perceived value of a marketized versus marketing basis for business class construction.

METHODS

The research study was divided into two separate activities. First, a descriptive analysis was performed to identify student preferences for marketization versus marketing educational delivery models. These analyses involved both self-report survey items based upon the discussions of Judson and Taylor (2014), and a separate conjoint analysis. The objective of this initial inquiry was to identify any general student preference for higher education delivered based upon marketized versus marketing underlying models. The second major activity involved predictive analyses organized by two scenarios, one reflecting marketization practices and one reflecting marketing–based educational delivery as described herein. The scenarios were randomly presented to respondents using Qualtrics. The predictive results between value perceptions and some basic behavioral intentions were then compared between the two groups. H2 suggests a comparison of direct relationships between perceived value and behavioral intentions for purposes of predictive analyses (see Figure 1).

The measures of perceived value were based on the arguments of Woodall et al. (2014) specific to higher education. Woodall et al. (2014) document how the conceptualization and measurement of the concept of perceived value vis-à-vis higher education has proven problematic. In their review, they embrace an approach similar to

the current research by emphasizing marketing through the management of stakeholders' experiences. Woodall et al. (2014, p. 52) assert that, "…a consensus has emerged implying that customer value is a higher-order construct comprising a number of distinct, formative, dimensions, which can each be represented reflectively." These authors reject the traditional logic-positivistic epistemological conviction underlying this assertion as "less than reasonable." In short, they argue for a "one question" approach to evaluate student value, but admit that the efficacy of their formative conceptualization has yet to be empirically verified. We are less eager to abandon traditional scaling methods based on reflective conceptualizations, and therefore develop a five-item unidimensional conceptualization that arguably captures the common core of value-based on Woodall et al.'s (2014) five value-based research questions (7-item Likert scales).

The behavioral intention measures reflected traditional marketing outcomes such as self-report loyalty intention, course recommendation intentions, and students' concluding that it was "the right thing to do" when selecting the course. 477 students completed the online survey instrument as an extra credit exercise associated with introductory marketing or management course offering over three semesters. The sample included 374 business majors and 108 non-business majors seeking a business minor. The sample was essentially equally divided between genders. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 24.0 or Mplus 8. Appendix A presents the conjoint profiles and Appendix B presents the two scenarios underlying predictive analyses.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the descriptive results based upon Likert, Rank-order, and percentage survey items. The first series of questions involved (7 point) Likert items and were designed to reflect the marketization versus marketing perspectives described by Judson and Taylor (2014). The overall mean of the marketization questions is 4.44, and the marketing questions is 5.35. The only gender difference concerns females having statistically larger emphasis on marketing (Males = 5.24; Females = 5.47); students are statistically equal on marketization items (Males = 4.47; Females = 4.41) Together, the Likert items suggest both marketization-related and marketing-related outcomes are consistent with the perspectives/expectations of this cohort. In addition, the mean scores suggest that both male and female students more strongly agree with marketing over marketization goals. 80% of the respondents across genders expressed a higher mean score for the marketing items over the marketization items.

The second set of descriptive items involved rank ordered items in Table 1 differentiated from highest to lowest the types of knowledge and skills students perceived to be impactful on the perceived value of their educational experiences. Critical Thinking and Job-Related knowledge and skills generally received the highest rankings. Women's ranking of a well-rounded education higher (more desirable) represented a gender difference as job training was more desirable for men.

Together, the Rank-Order items suggest both marketization-related and marketing-related outcomes are consistent with the expectations of this cohort. The final descriptive task involved asking students to identify the percentage of their academic program to date had a marketing

TABLE 1
Descriptive Analyses Results

Question	Concept	Mean Score	Result
Likert Scale Items (1-7)			
Q1: University students today are best considered as consumers purchasing a degree from universities, much like consumers purchase goods and services from retailers.	Marketization	4.92	The overall mean of the marketization questions is 4.44, and the marketing questions is 5.35.
Q2: University students today are best viewed as individuals personally responsible for seeking individual growth through learning in order to help them become contributing members of society.	Marketing	5.68	
Q3: Today's universities are best viewed as selling degrees as commodities that are individually purchased by students.	Marketization	4.34	The only gender difference concerns females having statistically larger emphasis on marketing (Males = 5.24; Females = 5.47); they are statistically equal on marketization items (Males = 4.47; Females = 4.41)
Q4: Higher education today is best viewed as a public good that ultimately is the responsibility of the society at large in which the student lives.	Marketing	4.90	
Q5: I would say that my university provided me with a good educational experience if I learned a lot, even if I do not get a good job soon after graduation.	Marketing	5.41	Together, Likert items suggest both marketization-related and marketing-related outcomes are consistent with the perspectives/expectations of this cohort. However, the means suggest that both male and female students more strongly agree with marketing over marketization goals. 80% of the respondents across genders expressed a higher mean score for the marketing items over the marketization items.
Q6: I would say that the primary purpose of universities today is to prepare students for getting a job upon graduation.	Marketization	5.64	
Q7: I would say that the primary purpose of universities today is to help students learn as much as possible in support of getting a well-rounded and general education.	Marketing	5.42	
Q8: If I do not achieve getting a good job soon after graduation, then I would say that my university failed to provide me with a good educational experience, even if I learned a lot.	Marketization	3.43	
Q9: I would say that my university provided me with a good educational experience even if I did not learn a lot, as long as I get a good job soon after graduation.	Marketization	3.88	
Rank Order Items (1-6)			Critical Thinking and Job-Related knowledge and skills emerge as generally top ranked. The only gender differences concerns females ranking a general, well-rounded education higher (more desirable) whereas males rank job training higher (more desirable). Together, the Rank-Order items suggest both marketization-related and marketing-related outcomes are consistent with the expectations of this cohort.
Critical Thinking Skills	Marketing	2.48	
Job-Related Knowledge and Skills	Marketization	2.61	
General, Well-Rounded Education	Marketing	3.74	
The Ability to Manage Large Amounts of Knowledge or Information in Support of Decision-Making	Marketing	3.69	
Professional Networking	Marketization	3.92	
Job Training	Marketization	4.56	
Learning Experience versus Normative (Should) Belief (Mean Percentage of 100)		Ratio	Ratios > 1 indicate more emphasis in experience than desired. Respondents indicate that they perceive receiving too much emphasis on becoming well rounded and life-long learning, and not enough job-related knowledge, and skills. No observed gender differences.
Learning new knowledge or skills to help me become more well-rounded	Marketing	1.54	
Life-long learning skills	Marketing	1.09	
Job-related knowledge	Marketization	0.98	
Job-related skills	Marketization	0.82	

versus marketization emphases, as well as the student's desired emphasis. Ratios in Table 1 greater than 1 indicate students experienced more of a particular emphasis than the students desired. Results indicate students experienced receiving too much emphasis in their program on becoming well rounded and developing skills related to becoming life-long learners, and not enough entry level job-related knowledge, and skills. There are no observed gender differences. Overall, interpretation of the results in Table 1 suggest students do not devalue traditional liberal education objectives in business, rather, given a choice, choose activities that support goals related to the domain of employment immediately post-graduation. These results are consistent with Tomlinson's (2017) conclusion that there is a degree of variability in attitudes and approaches towards consumerism of higher education.

Students continue to perceive higher education as a multidimensional experience that does not necessarily conform to the "students as consumers" approach. However, we caution readers to consider Chan's (2009) note that self-report importance weights can generally suffer from issues related to (1) construct validity, (2) interpretation of correlations, (3) social desirability responding (and other forms of common method variance), and (4) lack of convergent validity with non-self-report measures. Brener et al. (2003) note that self-report measures of types of health-risk behaviors are affected unequally by both cognitive (comprehension, retrieval, decision-making, and response generation) and situational (social desirability) factors. Hendrick et al. (2013) similarly cautions about the use of self-report attitude scales. Consequently, we are cautious in accepting the self-report measures of attribute importance at face value, particularly in

light of the goal mapping results reported by Taylor et al. (2011) which identified a strong preference for credentialing in undergraduate students' educational pursuits.

We therefore next moved to a conjoint exercise to more convincingly identify a preference when students are given a choice to take a class emphasizing a marketization perspective versus one based on a marketing perspective (see Appendix A for the profiles). We created these profiles based on three categories of attributes designed to capture the major differences between the GDL-based marketization versus the SDL-based marketing perspectives (see Judson and Taylor 2014, Lusch and Vargo 2014).

The first category represented a type of knowledge (job-related knowledge versus the well-rounded knowledge typically associated with a traditional liberal education). The second category represents a temporal perspective (an emphasis on short-term employment skills versus life-long learning skills as frequently identified in university mission statements). The third and final category represents the nature of value creation (value delivery as associated with traditional lecture classes versus value co-creation which emphasizes greater student participation and responsibility in the educational process).

We conducted a traditional conjoint analysis (additive model of part-worths) using the full-profile method (i.e., all profiles presented a once). The conjoint results identify the following importance weights: (1) job-related knowledge = 59.54 (males = 63.20, females = 56.25); (2) value delivery/creation = 27.49 (males = 21.69, females = 35.03); and a focus on short-term employment skills = 12.97 (males = 15.12, females = 8.72). These results clearly demonstrate that students, when given a

FIGURE 1
The Model
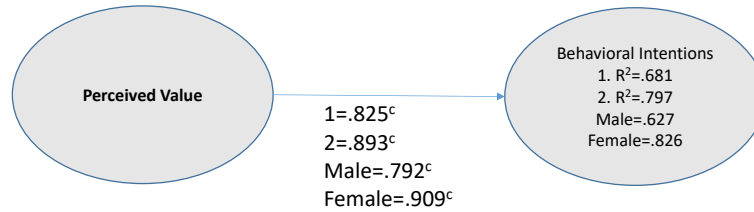
All paths standardized.
1 = Marketization; 2 = Marketing
a = p ≤ .05, b = p ≤ .01, c = p ≤ .001

Model Fit Indices :
Grouping = Marketization versus Marketing -- χ2 = 88.884, df = 50, RMSEA = .069, CFI = .978, TLI = .976, SRMR = .050
Grouping = Male versus Female -- χ2 = 70.723, df = 50, RMSEA = ,051, CFI = .987, TLI = .986, SRMR = .032

TABLE 2
Correlation Matrices of Latent Variables

		Perceived Value	Behavioral Intention
Marketization	Perceived Value	.911/.612	.
	Behavioral Intention	.825	877/.703
Marketing	Perceived Value	.906/.596	
	Behavioral Intention	.893	.821/.609
Male	Perceived Value	.877/.522	
	Behavioral Intention	.792	.831/.625
Female	Perceived Value	.924/.652	
	Behavioral Intention	.909	.860/.675

Diagonal Values Represent Variance Extracted Scores/Construct Reliability Scores
Off-Diagonal Values Represent Latent Construct Correlations

choice, prefer marketized education as described herein. This is true for both males and female students, however, female students as a group appear less strongly committed to the choice for marketized education according to the conjoint results.

We next assess H2 through structural equation modeling using Mplus 8 (see Figure 1). The model fit indices are acceptable across model assessments using the group function for assessed scenarios (marketization versus marketing) and gender (male versus female). The measures are reliable and valid as reflected in Table 2. The hypothesis is that marketization should reflect a greater amount of explained variance in behavioral intentions based on value perceptions related to value. In fact, that is not what we found. While both marketization and marketing perspectives explained a great deal of the variance in traditional consumer-related behavioral intentions (as reflected by the R^2 values), the marketing perspective appears to explain more of the behavioral intentions. Not unexpectedly, the influence of perceived value on students' behavioral intentions is stronger for females than males. These findings appear to support the observed ambivalence students possess vis-à-vis learning versus credentialing goals associated with their higher education pursuits.

While every fledgling domain of research grapples with its own set of debates and doubts, we worry whether some existing dilemmas in survey measurement and the newness of measuring value co-creation in an educational setting leads to conclusions concerning any results being an attribute of an artefact of the respondent's social desirability. The infrequent usage of this measure in this setting limits a researcher's ability to determine its vulnerability to biasing effects of common method effects associated with social desirability. As a result the final hypothesis utilizes techniques popularized by Williams, Hartman, and Cavazottee (2010) and Williams and McGonagle (2016) and to determine social desirability bias is not a significant threat to our results as a result of the measures or collected self-report data in a single administration. Investigating for potential social desirability bias is a relatively novel, but popularity in research within education environments has been lacking and it is our responsibility to utilize available statistically meaningful methodologies rather than leaving this task to future researchers (Lehmann-Willenbrock and Allen, 2017; Malhotra, Schaller, and Patil, 2017). We included social desirability in our measurement to determine the possibility of this important issue, employing the following steps. To empirically test for a social desirability bias we utilized procedures involving latent variables analyses and a marker variable (Williams et al. 2010). These procedures modeled the extent to which the latent variables of our theoretical model share variance with a maker variable (social desirability).

Following Williams et al. (2010) a series of model comparison tests can establish whether the social desirability bias was present and if present does the bias have a uniform or unequal impact to the substantive variables of perceived value or behavioral intentions. To account for common method variance (CMV) within the indicators, several confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model comparisons were made to evaluate through factor loadings the presence and degree of the social desirability bias influence. Based on the results from the model comparisons, using a chi-square difference test, it appears that CMV is not biasing the relationships between indicators or the relationship between the latent constructs of perceived value and behavioral intentions (See Table 3). A non-significant

chi-square difference test also supports not including the social desirability variable in the measurement models as the social desirability bias did not attenuate the relationships between variables. Although we do not observe such support for the biasing effects of common method variance, the model was tested for as a demonstration of a technique that can be followed by others in this research domain. This study is among the first scholarly effort in this setting illustrating the complete analysis and helps provide confidence regarding this measures resiliency to common method effects in this setting. The contribution to education research involves an easily-replicable method for minimizing the worry of social desirability's effects when applied in the educational literature, and opportunities and insights for future research.

DISCUSSION

This study began as a consideration of the vexing question as to the "best" way to deliver undergraduate education in terms of value (co)creation. Universities' administrators and faculty generally perceive that they are at an important crossroads, one that arguably confronts the soul of the academy. One fork in the road is to "stay the course" of traditional liberal education seeking well-roundedness and lifelong learning. The other fork is to acquiesce to growing marketization pressure, which alternatively emphasize practitioner-related knowledge and skills in support of employment opportunities and efficacy.

We view these results as very promising for marketers of higher education. Even as there is a clear documented trend toward greater marketization in the delivery and evaluation of higher education, the results reported herein align with other evidence that marketization alone is not the only path to perceived value with higher education – at least from the students' perspective. That is, the students themselves as a primary stakeholder appear to possess a measure of ambivalence toward marketization versus marketing. We interpret these results as consistent with Tomlinson's (2017) conclusion that there is a degree of variability in attitudes and approaches towards consumerism of higher education. Specifically, students still perceive higher education in ways that do not conform to the ideal student-consumer approach. Therefore, the results reported herein suggest that this may be a false dichotomy. That is, the results demonstrate that students themselves are ambivalent as to which path to pursue. The identified students' ambivalence presents an opportunity to begin more formally developing a general value proposition in higher education that balances and capitalizes on the strengths of both the liberal education and the marketization models. The method to make this a reality is as follows.

First, we add our voice to the growing chorus of voices calling for higher education to adopt the service logic (Díaz-Méndez et al. 2012; Dziewanowska 2017; Judson and Taylor 2011, 2014; Dean et al. 2016). Embracing a service logic in the marketing of higher education arguably provides direction for university marketers (both academic and practitioner). We encourage readers to consider the arguments of Osborne (2017) related to public service-dominant logic versus public service logic as a future research implication.

Second, adopting a service perspective suggests an opportunity for university marketers to begin more formal and serious discussions as to the appropriate balance between traditional liberal education versus marketization considerations in the creation of a commensurable value

TABLE 3

Common Method Variance Test Results across Three Studies

Model	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
CFA	69.507	41	.987	.982	.044
Baseline Model	70.707	48	.989	.988	.036
Method-C Model	69.502	47	.989	.988	.037
Baseline vs Model-C	$\Delta\chi^2$=1.205	Δdf=1	Standard at p=.05 is 3.84		
Method-U Model	64.883	40	.983	.984	.042
Model-C vs Model-U	$\Delta\chi^2$=4.619	Δdf=7	Standard at p=.05 is 2.167		
Method-R Model	69.497	46	.989	.987	.038
Model-U vs Model-R	$\Delta\chi^2$=4.614	Δdf=6	Standard at p=.05 is 1.635		

proposition for universities to generally embrace. University marketers are directed to Payne et al. (2017) as a useful starting place to begin such discussions in terms of framing the concept of a value proposition in this context. Operationally, readers are encouraged to consider using the value proposition canvas method to operationalize the process of value proposition development (see https://strategyzer.com/canvas/value-proposition-canvas).

Third, the value proposition canvas is an ideal way to start to identify the best mix of liberal education versus marketization considerations in the creation of a commensurable value proposition for universities's administrators and faculty to embrace. We further encourage a stakeholder consideration as part of such processes to ensure that all relevant stakeholder viewpoints area considered and have a voice in the process of value proposition development Beerkens and Udam 2017).

Fourth, embracing SDL as the emerging logic of marketing associated with higher education as the path to perceived value appears to be an operationally achievable goal. Taylor et al. (2015) call for positioning human flourishing and well-being as foundations for business school curriculum. Taylor and colleagues recognize the evolution of educational practices toward a greater focus on flourishing and well-being as opposed to a focus on job training and other marketization emphases remains a conundrum for most business educators. However, Taylor et al.'s previous results demonstrate that self-perceived flourishing goal achievement appears to fully mediate the direct effect from social involvement to social well-being for a millennial cohort of university business students.

Fifth, the results suggest research implications as well. It is an intriguing finding that respondents appear to more strongly agree with marketing over marketization goals when they are asked to assess the series of statements that represent both marketization and marketing. However, on the other hand, given a choice, they are more likely to choose the course profiles that focus on a marketization perspective. These findings imply that students have attitude-behavior discrepancy. According to Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory (1957), people experience tension or discomfort when their attitudes do not match their behaviors and they try to reduce the dissonance by changing either their attitudes or behaviors. The cognitive dissonance caused by conscious or unconscious conflicting values can not only induce students' negative perceptions or feelings on

the higher education system but also significantly decrease their performance in classes and prevent them from learning. This places the research question considered herein square into the domain of social cognition generally, and cognitive consistency specifically -- a rapidly growing area of academic inquiry (Gawronski and Strack 2012). For example, our findings suggest that marketing educators should find effective ways that help students overcome their cognitive dissonance that may cause discomfort or stress and less effective learning experience. One possible way is to clarify the role and value of higher education to students by being honest about the coexistence of the marketization and marketing perspectives in higher education.

Moreover, the inconsistency between students' attitudes and behaviors implies that students pursue higher education to achieve both their short-term and long-term goals. They tend to embrace the marketization-based educational delivery that can meet their immediate needs for their successful job market. At the same time, they value on the marketing-based education delivery for their life-long learning contributing to well-roundedness. Based on this understanding, marketing educators need to be clear on what the short-term and long-term goals that students want to attain are in detail and how to do. In subsequent, the educators should develop specialized educational programs that can assist students to gradually achieve their two different goals during their program. That is, some courses could be designed to strengthen students' job-related skills and knowledge to meet their short-term goals and others could be specialized in improving their critical thinking skills or ability to process information in a comprehensive manner. It would be also beneficial to students if they could participate in an educational program that monitors their course of learning from

the very beginning of the semester to the last semester so that they can recognize and keep tracking the progress of their learning over a longer period of time. By doing so, greater perceived value in higher education may be achievable consistent with the changing logic of marketing practices more generally.

In short, the results reported herein suggest the possibility that the controversy between advocates of marketization versus marketing may both be placated (to a degree) by creative solutions that merge liberal education with marketization pedagogical goals and measures of success. We believe that our findings provide useful insights for better higher education at this controversial time. We also hope our study spurs further examination of the issues related to the marketization and marketing perspectives in higher education.

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APPENDIX A -- THE CONJOINT PROFILES

Alternative Course Emphases

Profile 1	Profile 2
• Emphasis on job-related knowledge/skills • Emphasis on knowledge/skills most related to getting a job shortly after graduation • Highly structured classes with instructors alone creating and delivering course content (e.g., inflexible syllabi, lectures, rubrics, available study guides, instructor-only course design and evaluation)	• Emphasis on job-related knowledge/skills • Emphasis on knowledge/skills most related to getting a job shortly after graduation • Highly unstructured classes with an emphasis on instructors and students working loosely together to create and deliver course content (e.g., regular meetings/interaction with faculty, flexible syllabi, student and faculty collaborative course design and evaluation).
Profile 3	**Profile 4**
• Emphasis on job-related knowledge/skills • Emphasis on versus life-long learning-related knowledge/skills. • Highly structured classes with instructors alone creating and delivering course content (e.g., inflexible syllabi, lectures, rubrics, available study guides, instructor-only course design and evaluation)	• Emphasis on job-related knowledge/skills • Emphasis on versus life-long learning-related knowledge/skills. • Highly unstructured classes with an emphasis on instructors and students working loosely together to create and deliver course content (e.g., regular meetings/interaction with faculty, flexible syllabi, student and faculty collaborative course design and evaluation).
Profile 5	**Profile 6**
• Emphasis on well-rounded knowledge/skills. • Emphasis on life-long learning-related knowledge/skills. • Highly structured classes with instructors alone creating and delivering course content (e.g., inflexible syllabi, lectures, rubrics, available study guides, instructor-only course design and evaluation).	• Emphasis on well-rounded knowledge/skills. • Emphasis on knowledge/skills most related to getting a job shortly after graduation • Highly unstructured classes with an emphasis on instructors and students working loosely together to create and deliver course content (e.g., regular meetings/interaction with faculty, flexible syllabi, student and faculty collaborative course design and evaluation).
Profile 7	**Profile 8**
• Emphasis on well-rounded knowledge/skills. • Emphasis on life-long learning-related knowledge/skills. • Highly unstructured classes with an emphasis on instructors and students working loosely together to create and deliver course content (e.g., regular meetings/interaction with faculty, flexible syllabi, student and faculty collaborative course design and evaluation).	• Emphasis on well-rounded knowledge/skills. • Emphasis on knowledge/skills most related to getting a job shortly after graduation. • Highly structured classes with instructors alone creating and delivering course content (e.g., inflexible syllabi, lectures, rubrics, available study guides, instructor-only course design and evaluation)

APPENDIX B -- THE SCENARIOS

Marketization-Based Scenario
Chris is a business major at ISU about to take a new class that has been developed for his major. The student contacts the professor teaching the course to get an idea of how the class will be structured and receives the following feedback:

> "Chris: Thank you for your inquiry. This class will focus entirely on job-related knowledge and skills. The class is very structured. We will meet regularly as a class for lectures, and we will concentrate ONLY on knowledge and skills that you can anticipate needing for a future starting job in your major. We will discuss nothing else, such as how this class relates to the other business majors, or emphasize critical thinking, or consider anything related to life-long learning. We will rely heavily on standardized methods of assessment such a multiple-choice questions to assess your performance in the class.

> You can think of this class as essentially job training, where your instructor makes sure that there is a clear set of standardized requirements to successfully complete the course. In this course I as the instructor create and deliver to you all that you need to know. Your job is to essentially show up, learn what I present, generally follow the instructions in the syllabus. Feel free to contact me with any additional questions."

Your task is to answer the following questions the way that you think Chris is most likely to answer these questions.

Marketing-Based Scenario
Chris is a business major at ISU about to take a new class that has been developed for his major. The student contacts the professor teaching the course to get an idea of how the class will be structured and receives the following feedback:

> "Chris: Thank you for your inquiry. This class will focus entirely on the knowledge and skills necessary to help you become a life-long learner. The class is not very structured. We will meet regularly as a class, but I will not be lecturing. We will not over emphasize the specific knowledge and skills that you can anticipate needing for a future starting job in your major. Rather, we will work together to develop your general knowledge and skills, such as critical thinking and complex problem solving. We will typically use non-standardized methods of assessment such as essays, with editing and frequent feedback and dialogue. We will not use standardized assessment methods such as multiple-choice examinations to assess your performance in the class.

> You can think of this class as essentially life training. The knowledge and skills that we will focus on are less related to getting that first job upon graduation, rather, toward becoming successful throughout life. In this course, you can anticipate that your instructor challenges your ability to think beyond merely knowing the terms and concepts in a book. Therefore, there won't be a rigid set of standardized requirements to successfully complete the course. Rather, you and I will work together to grow your intellectual skills as much as possible. You and I together will create the knowledge and skills you will develop. Your job as a student will require more than simply showing up, learning what I present to you, and simply following the instructions in the syllabus. Feel free to contact me with any additional questions."

Your task is to answer the following questions the way that you think Chris is most likely to answer these questions.