Global Awareness of Marketing Students

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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate and MBA Marketing programs typically include education goals such as:

"To prepare students for a changing domestic and global business environment characterized by organizational and cultural values, diversity, opportunity, and growth."

They also include learning objectives such as:

"Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to think strategically about the global business environment."

Presumably this approach to educating undergraduate and MBA students will prepare them to become 'global citizens.' The question may be asked about what undergraduate and MBA marketing students know about changes in global extreme poverty, education access for women around the world, and number of people killed in natural disasters annually? This research utilizes the work of Hans Rosling, with his famous charts of global population, health and income data (TED Salon, Berlin June, 2014). Rosling demonstrates in his presentation that people have a high statistical chance of being wrong about what they think they know about global events. This research is designed to assess marketing students' global knowledge on three aspects of the world they will work in.

INTRODUCTION

Global education is defined internationally to mean the 'academic field concerned with teaching and learning about global issues, events and perspectives' (Hicks, 2003). This view of global education has four dimensions.

1. Issues—Five major problem areas (and solutions to them) are identified as: inequality/equality; injustice/justice; conflict/peace; environmental damage/care; alienation/participation
2. Spatial—This dimension involves exploration of the local–global connections that exist in relation to the five issues, including the nature of both interdependency and dependency
3. Temporal—Involves exploration of the interconnections that exist between past, present and future in relation to such issues and in particular scenarios of preferred futures are identified
4. Process—This dimension involves a participatory and experiential pedagogy which explores differing value perspectives and leads to politically aware local–global citizenship

The underlying assumption is that 'global education' is necessary for students to develop knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed for future employment in a global marketplace (Crawford and Kirby, 2008).

In the USA global education has been encouraged by two organizations: The American Forum for Global Education (www.globaled.org) and Global Education Associates (www.globaleduc.org). These organizations provide resources and professional newsletters for grade school and high school teachers. The American Forum has produced detailed guidelines for global education focusing in particular on three areas:

1. Global issues, problems and challenges
2. Culture and world areas
3. US and the world global connections

Detailed knowledge, skill sets, and participation objectives are available from The American Forum for each of the three areas.

These efforts are all directed at grade school and high school students. At the university level, there is no specific organization that focuses on marketing students and globalism. We typically have specific learning objectives mentioning globalism and operating in a global market in individual courses, and sometimes have a core business course aimed at operating in a global business environment. The ETS Major Field Test which is used as the standard for assessment of business knowledge in graduating seniors has a section on International Issues but the content is overlapping and drawn from other content areas above in the ETS Major Field Test.

The present research involves an exploratory tracking study of the global knowledge marketing students in undergraduate and MBA marketing courses over five years. Differences in the percentage of correct answers on three questions are tested for:

1. Year (2014-2018)
2. Gender
3. Course Type (Not a Course, Core, Major, MBA)
4. Grade Level (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, MBA)

The Not a Course Type category consisted of special marketing student events such as guest speakers for the whole major.

METHODOLOGY

The global assessment consisted of three questions that first appeared in a widely viewed TED Salon video of a Berlin June 2014 event titled 'How much do you know about the world?' Hans Rosling, with his famous charts of global population, health and income data, showed that most

people are no better than guessing at correct answers to global questions and have a high statistical chance of being wrong about global issues on disasters, poverty, and education.

The questionnaire adapted from Hans Rosling's approach is below.

WORLD QUIZ

Please answer the following questions by putting an X in front of one answer you consider correct.

How did deaths per year from natural disasters change in the last century?

A. It more than doubled

B. It remained about the same

C. It decreased to less than half

Women aged 30 spent how many years in school?
(Men of the same age spent 8 years)

A. 7 years

B. 5 years

C. 3 years

In the last 20 years, how did the percent of people living in extreme poverty change?
(Extreme poverty is defined as not having enough food for the day)

A. It almost doubled

B. It remained more or less the same

C. It was almost cut in half

What is your gender?

A. Male

B. Female

C. Rather not say

What is your class?

A. Freshman

B. Sophomore

C. Junior

D. Senior

E. MBA/MAcc

RESULTS

The sample distribution appears below for the classification categories.

Table 1
Academic Year

Year	N	%
2014	204	32.0%
2015	64	10.0%
2016	139	21.8%
2017	166	26.1%
2018	64	10%
Total	637	100%

Table 2
Grade Level

Grade Level	N	%
Freshman	43	6.8%
Sophomore	59	9.3%
Junior	141	22.1%
Senior	309	48.5%
MBA	82	12.9%
Total	637	100%

Table 3
Course Type

Course Type	N	%
Not a Course	241	37.8%
Core	81	12.7%
Major	257	40.3%
MBA	58	9.1%
Total	637	100%

Table 4
Disaster Question Distribution

Response	N	%
Wrong	280	44.0%
Wrong	177	27.8%
Correct	180	28.3%
Total	637	100%

Table 5
School Question Distribution

Response	N	%
Correct	234	36.7%
Wrong	341	53.5%
Wrong	62	9.7%
Total	637	100%

Table 6
Poverty Question Distribution

Response	N	%
Wrong	245	38.5%
Wrong	234	36.7%
Correct	158	24.8%
Total	637	100%

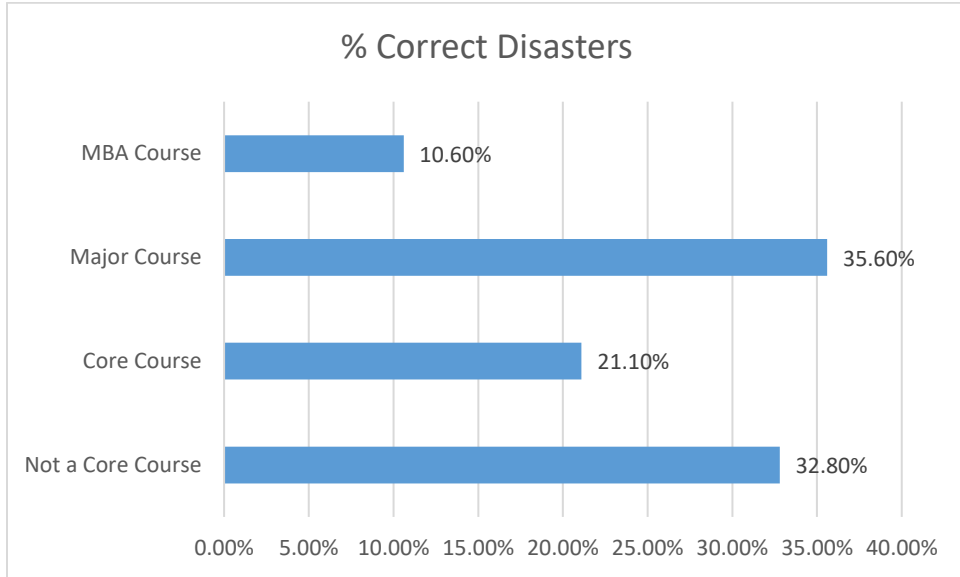Chi-Square tests were performed on the classification variables:

1. Year (2014-2018)
2. Gender
3. Course Type (Not a Course, Core, Major, MBA)
4. Grade Level (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, MBA)

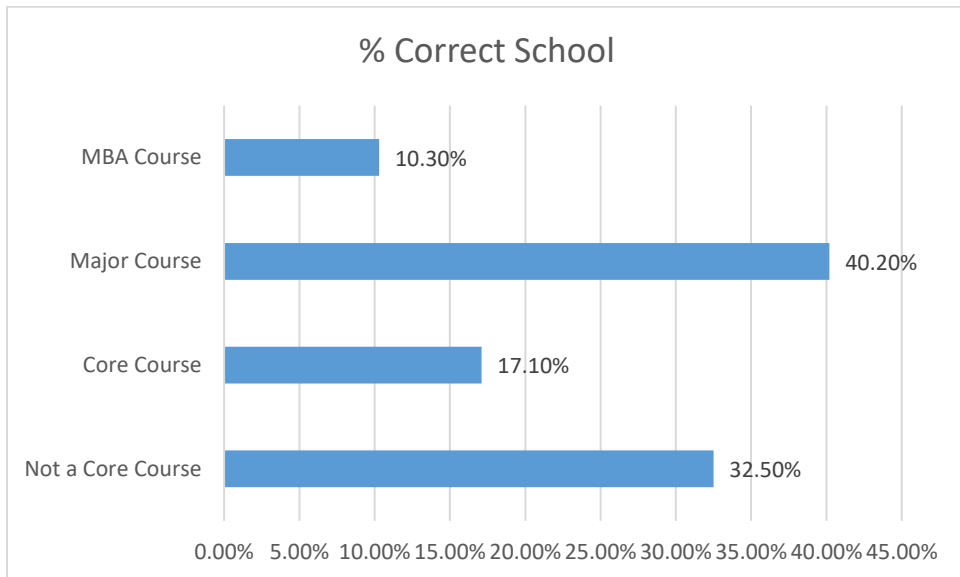The results show the following significant differences.

There were significant differences for Course Type and across Years in all three measures of global awareness: Disasters, School, and Poverty (Chi-Square with 6 degrees of freedom for Course Type and 8 degrees of freedom for Years). The percentage correct for each of the three questions for the Course Type and Year categories are graphically displayed below.

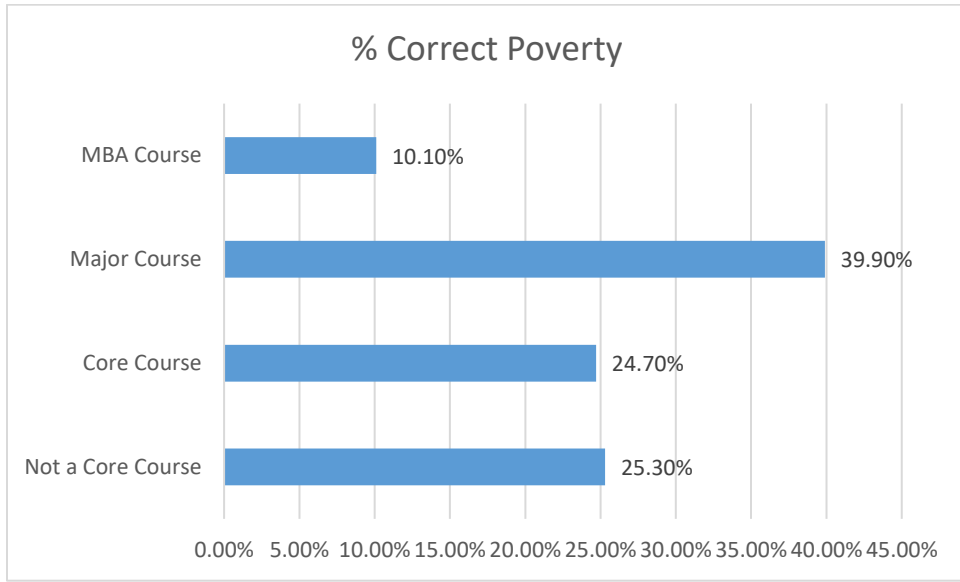Figures 1 through 3 display the data for Course Type.

Figure 1
Differences in Course Type for Disasters

% Correct Disasters

Course	%
MBA Course	10.60%
Major Course	35.60%
Core Course	21.10%
Not a Core Course	32.80%

0.00% 5.00% 10.00% 15.00% 20.00% 25.00% 30.00% 35.00% 40.00%

Figure 2
Differences in Course Type for School

% Correct School

Course	%
MBA Course	10.30%
Major Course	40.20%
Core Course	17.10%
Not a Core Course	32.50%

0.00% 5.00% 10.00% 15.00% 20.00% 25.00% 30.00% 35.00% 40.00% 45.00%

Figure 3
Differences in Course Type for Poverty

% Correct Poverty

Category	%
MBA Course	10.10%
Major Course	39.90%
Core Course	24.70%
Not a Core Course	25.30%

The students in a Marketing Major Course and a Marketing Course that is Not a Core Course score better on all three questions than students in an MBA Marketing Course and those in a Marketing Core Course.
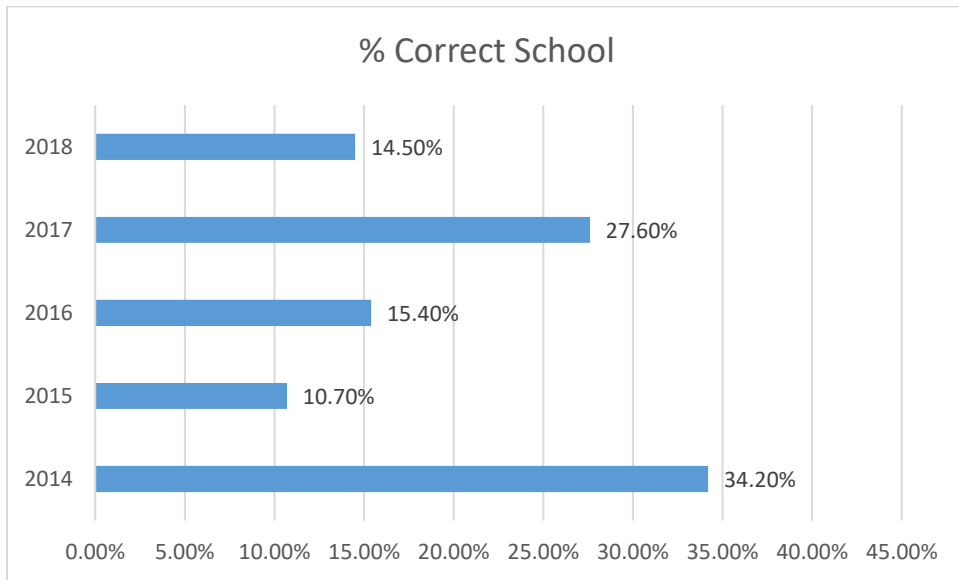
The following three graphs show differences in percentage of correct answers for the three questions across years from 2014 to 2018.
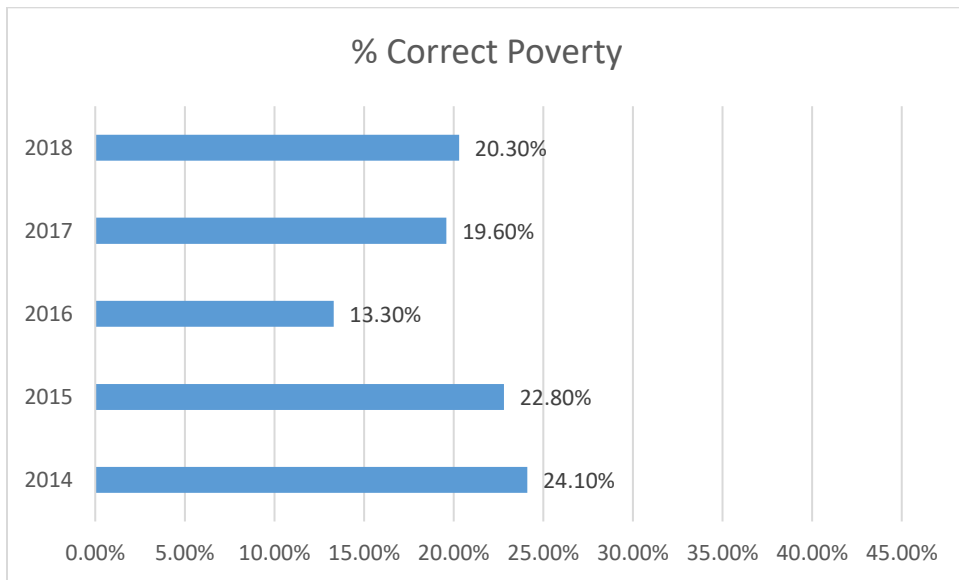
Figure 4
Differences in Years for Disasters

% Correct Disasters

Year	%
2018	17.20%
2017	21.10%
2016	20.00%
2015	16.10%
2014	25.60%
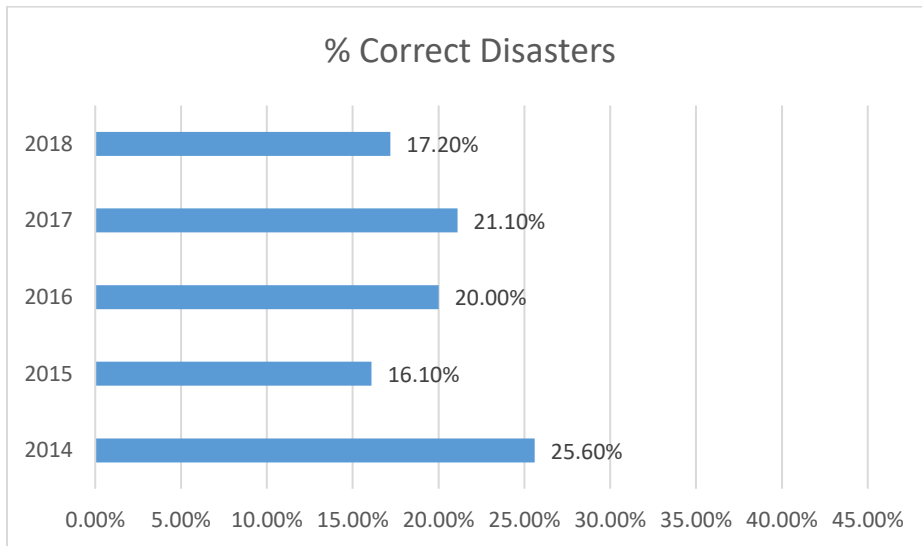
Figure 5

Differences in Years for Schools

% Correct School

Year	% Correct
2018	14.50%
2017	27.60%
2016	15.40%
2015	10.70%
2014	34.20%

Figure 6
Differences in Years for Poverty

% Correct Poverty

Year	% Correct
2018	20.30%
2017	19.60%
2016	13.30%
2015	22.80%
2014	24.10%

For an unknown reason, marketing students in years 2017 and 2014 scored better in the percentage of correct answers for the three global awareness measures.

There were no significant differences for Gender or Grade Levels on any of the three global awareness measures.

CONCLUSIONS

In his TED talk, Hans Rosling famously notes the audience does not do well on answering the three global awareness questions. With a 33% correct value as the chance level his audience and the marketing students studied here did not do well compared to chance. However, there six cases where the marketing student group equaled or exceeded the 33% chance value. These included:

1. Disasters Major Course 36% and Not a Core Course 33%
2. School Major Course 40% and Not a Core Course 33%
3. Poverty Major Course 40%
4. School Year 2014 34%

Clearly, more attention to global awareness and issues is needed in the undergraduate and especially MBA marketing curricula. In addition, an assessment measure is needed to ensure future marketing students understand the global environment they will live and work in.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Latta (PhD Iowa State University) is the former Associate Dean and Associate currently Professor of Marketing in the Wall College of Business at Coastal Carolina University. He has also held business positions in sales, marketing research, product management, strategic planning, and forecasting with AstraZeneca, Boehringer Mannheim, DuPont, and Wyeth. He is also Executive Director of YTMBA, a research and strategy consulting firm specializing in Predictive Analytics.