

CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIAL MARKETING IN ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

The training of management students in Brazil is centered on managerial aspects of marketing and, because of this, graduates seem unable to deal with the complexity of the applications of marketing knowledge. Thus, the present research sought to incorporate, experimentally, the social marketing contents within the discipline of marketing administration in the undergraduate degree in administration, in order to analyze their contributions in the formation of the students. For this, the research occurred in two distinct stages: firstly, a social marketing seminar was conducted within the discipline of marketing administration; then, focus groups were held in order to obtain a comparison between the dimensions: poor market conceptualization, disconnection between marketing and society, and uncritical vision, proposed by Bernadinelli and Sauberbron (2017) for the training of the administrator. At the end of the research, it was concluded that social marketing teaching provided students with a better understanding of marketing as a broad-based science, significantly reducing the separation between marketing and society and the stakeholder roles that make up the market.

Keywords: Social Marketing, Marketing Education, Management.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of administration in Brazil at the undergraduate level has grown significantly in the last 15 years, resulting from an intensive increase in the number of courses and the numbers of students enrolled. According to data from the Higher Education Census (2018), the course of administration occupies the third place in the ranking of the most sought-after courses in Brazil, representing approximately 700 thousand enrollments in higher education in 2017. However, this growth was not necessarily accompanied by an improvement in the quality of the Administrator's training (OLIVEIRA et. AL, 2015). In this scenario, it becomes understandable the fact that the scientific community has shown a growing concern with the educational aspects of the training of administrators in Brazil, producing a large amount of work on the theme and reflecting its interest in the area (SCHMITZ et. al., 2015; RODRIGUES MATIAS, 2016; URIAH AZZEREDO, 2017; MULLER SCHUSTER ZONATTO, 2017).

Of course, the teaching of marketing discipline in administration courses has also aroused the interest of Brazilian researchers (BERNADINELLI; SAUBERBRON, 2017), who, in general, found a generalist orientation in the teaching of marketing in the country, with an excessive focus on relations between companies producing goods and services and consumers. This more traditional orientation characterizes the marketing disciplines in the management courses as limited, unreflective and passive to social facts and changes, while disregarding the relationship between Marketing and society (LEE; GREENLEY, 2010). According to Bernadinelli and Sauberbron (2017), the main shortcomings in marketing education in the administration courses in Brazil are characterized by the fact that there is an excessive focus in the area of micromarketing, being neglected the study of Macromarketing and its importance in administrator training.

Therefore, it is important that efforts are made to improve the teaching of discipline by introducing content that provides new perspectives to students, especially those that prioritize the understanding of marketing at the macroeconomic level (BERNARDINELLI; SAUERBRONN, 2017). For

marketing teaching based on a bias that favors students' perception about the relationship between marketing and society, it is important that efforts be made to demonstrate the dynamicity of the application of marketing tools as well as the understanding that can be operationalized by the most diverse market players.

In this impetus, it is possible to affirm that the inclusion of social marketing content can contribute to the improvement of the training of management students in Brazil, since it seeks to develop marketing concepts with other approaches, in the sense of influencing behaviors that benefit individuals and communities in the promotion of social welfare (DIBB, 2014). In the international scenario, it is possible to identify recent attempts to insert the study of social marketing in the subjects of the business courses (RADFORD; HUNT; ANDRUS, 2015; TEKLEHAIMANOT et al, 2017), but in Brazil the similar goal attempts are still in embryonic phase, since there are still no relevant studies in this specific area. It is necessary to undertake an analysis of the contributions of social marketing to marketing education and, mainly, to the training of administrators.

The proposal of this article is to analyze the contributions of social marketing to the training of administrators from the insertion of this content in the discipline of marketing administration of a Higher Education Institution. For the development of this research, the literature review is presented with a brief exposition about marketing teaching and the dimensions of administrator training, as well as a discussion about social marketing. Then, the methodological procedures adopted for experimental analysis of the influence of the social marketing content on the management students' view were presented, which a training action was carried out based on active methodologies and operationalized two focal groups between the participants of the seminar and a control group. Finally, the results observed in the research and the final considerations are presented.

MARKETING EDUCATION AND THE DIMENSIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING

According to Martins (1989), teaching and research in administration and marketing in Brazil began in 1954, with the creation of the School of Business Administration of Fundação Getúlio Vargas (EAESP/FGV), which aimed to train higher level technicians in Administration, being able to be considered as an introductory part of marketing thinking in Brazil, since it formed an association with Michigan States University (COSTA; VIEIRA, 2007). Two other important initiatives to introduce marketing education in the country followed in the creation of the Faculty of Economics and Administration of the University of São Paulo (FEA/USP) in 1989 (MARTINS, 1989) and the Escola Superior de Propaganda, Later called Escola Superior de Marketing e Propaganda (ESPM). In this same period, Brazilian professors went to the United States in the search for developing specific marketing knowledge. Despite these efforts, there was no adaptation of the North American model to the Brazilian reality, only the importation of the curriculum for the administration courses (BOAVENTURA et. al, 2018).

On the other hand, there is a growing concern about the quality of the training of administrators in Brazil (LOURENÇO; TONELLI MAFRA, 2012), with more and more frequent discussions about the teaching of various disciplines that belong to the basic curriculum of undergraduate administration, and an expressive amount of work has been produced that reflects the interest in the subject (RODRIGUES; MATIAS, 2016; URIAH AZZEREDO, 2017; MULLER SCHUSTER ZONATTO, 2017). It is possible to observe through the evolution of the marketing thinking over time significant changes in the discourse about the concept and purpose of marketing, as well as on the change of focus in the product to the focus on exchanges relations and their implications (BARBOZA, 2014). However, at undergraduate level, schools such as social marketing are neglected in the content of marketing disciplines, which impacts on understanding the breadth of application of this content in the training of undergraduate students in administration.

In a recent research, Bernadinelli and Sauberbron (2017) identified, through the exploration of teaching experiences, clear gaps regarding the marketing training of the administrator in Brazil, being: little understanding about the concept of market, disconnection between knowledge of discipline and society, and lack of critical vision about marketing activities. The authors found that the marketing training of the administrator is considered insufficient and that the micro and managerial approach adopted for graduation is seen as reductionist.

In large part, this is because the marketing discipline does not promote a deeper understanding of the student *regarding the market concept*. In addition, Bernadinelli and Sauberbron (2017) pointed out that the content taught in marketing in the management courses promotes *distancing of marketing from society*. The separation between marketing and society in the content of the discipline is pointed out by Tamilya and Veillex (2007) and by Flemming et. Al. (2015) as a characteristic of the contemporary undergraduate courses, focusing on topics of marketing administration and consumer behavior, relegating society to mere “external” factor.

The third gap in marketing education undergraduate management identified by Bernadinelli and Sauberbron (2017) concerns an *uncritical view* in the curriculum of the discipline. This topic is related to both the replication of limited concepts and the lack of content closer to the Brazilian reality. The authors pointed out the need to complement the content currently taught with a broader perspective regarding the implications of marketing activities outside the organization and, consequently, to provide the student with a critical view (BERNADINELLI; SAUBERBRON, 2017). These points of view are in line with Vasconcelos, Costa and Carvalho’s (2016) position, who say that restricting marketing solely to the micromarketing vision also limits the critical and reflective training administration students.

It is possible to say, therefore, that given the overly entrepreneurial focus of the discipline, management students are not developing the ability to solve social problems involving various stakeholders or problems related to complex exchanges. In this scenario, it is evident the need to discuss new proposals for the teaching of marketing in the administration courses, in order to fill the gaps in the training of undergraduates.

SOCIAL MARKETING

Introductorily, Kotler and Zaltman (1971) presented the term “social marketing” to define the use of marketing tools to promote social change (KOTLER, 2013). For this study, a consensus-based definition was adopted, endorsed in 2013 by the International Social Marketing Association (ISMA), the European Social Marketing Association (ESMA) and the Australian Social Marketing Association (AASM), whose understanding is that social marketing develops and integrates marketing concepts with other theoretical approaches to influence behaviors that benefit individuals and communities. In short, the guiding premise of social marketing is the adoption of ethical principles that integrate research, practices, theories, audiences and partnerships with the purpose of informing and promoting equitable and sustainable social change (CARVALHO; MAZZON, 2014).

In general, social marketing seeks to achieve its objectives through the promotion of behavioral changes; however, its results are not measured by number of sales, brand recognition or market share, but rather by results that analyze individual and societal well-being (DIBB, 2014). Social marketing ideas can be applied to a wide variety of problems and populations; in different scopes of action – global, national, regional and even individual, using the marketing principles to enable sustainable social transformations (SAUNDERS BARRINGTON SRIDHARAN, 2015).

Adopting the perspective of the ecological model defended by Wood (2016), scholars reinforce that social marketing actions depend on the relationship between three levels within the same ecosystem. The micro level, called downstream, focuses on social marketing analysis in individuals with problematic behaviors. The meso or midstream level includes the organizational agents such as non-profit organizations, social marketing organizations, and community groups, which can connect directly and indirectly to serve each other and co-create value to promote social change. The final level in the ecosystem is the macro, which includes actors such as legislators, government and the market, and is also referred as upstream in the social marketing literature (BEIRÃO et al., 2017).

For Niblett (2005), the upstream level expresses how policies, laws, regulations and physical environments are altered, that may marginalize or render useless efforts at getting individuals to change their behavior in the face of commercially or environmentally imposed barriers and offers. French, Bennett and Mulcahy (2017) explain that upstream activities and interventions focus on policy formulation, resource allocation, regulation and influence on the strategy of causative agents and determinants of social problems. In addition, it is possible to notice a tendency of social marketing moving towards the midstream and upstream, with less and less importance being given to downstream level actions (DIBB, 2014; BRENAN PARKER, 2014).

In fact, the traditional paradigm of marketing management adopted by social marketing translates into a downstream approach, focused on changing people's behavior through decisions at the individual level (GORDON; GURRUERI, 2014; MAY et al., 2007). However, critics argue that individual focus favors a rational decision model, which is micromarketing-minded, neglecting agency issues and contextual factors, which are strong determinants of individual behavior. (GORDON GURRIERI, 2014). Thus, it is possible to notice a reorientation towards upstream and midstream social marketing, from the context of behavioral change using combinations of structural measures, legislation, community approach and education (DIBB, 2014; FRENCH BENNETT MULCAHY, 2017; KENNEDY KEMPER PARSONS, 2018).

This change has been accompanied by the need for more strategic approaches to delineating interventions. Dibb (2014) states that the interventions needed to solve complex social problems should be holistic and multilayered, making it necessary to integrate the upstream, midstream and downstream, and involve different numbers of agents. In this new reality, social marketing practitioners need to become adherents to work together with the agents involved in delivering upstream and midstream interventions, including politicians, educators, private companies, community organizations and the media (HAMBY; PIERCE BRINBERG, 2016).

Thus, the discussion of the present work is based on the capacity of the social marketing content to be complementary to the management training gaps. This is because such content presents students a broad view of marketing by proposing, as a priority, the resolution of complex social problems.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The present study was conducted in two complementary phases. In the first stage, a seminar was held that aimed to provide basic training on social marketing content, through lectures and the use of active teaching methodologies, delivered to students of the discipline of Marketing Administration I of the undergraduate program in administration of a Higher Education Institution of the Northeast. The seminar was structured to expose social marketing theory, engaging students in practical activities, in order to develop a broad view on the application of social marketing in an attempt to solve complex and real social problems. For this, five meetings were defined, totaling 10 hours/class.

The first two meetings were composed of expository classes held in the classroom with the Marketing Administration I class. The First class aimed to introduce students to social marketing theories, presenting their concept (AASM, ISMA and ESMA, 2013), and its historical evolution (DIBB, 2014). In the second class, in turn, the approach of the ecological model of social marketing (BEIRÃO et al., 2017) was presented.

In the third moment, activities based on active teaching methodologies were initiated, based on the analysis of the film *Thanks for Smoking*, 2006. The objective of the film analysis was to encourage critical thinking and reflection about consumer behaviors, since the film portrays how marketing, with emphasis on public relations, has the power to influence collective social behaviors from the context of the tobacco industry. The analysis of this film allowed us to provide students an appropriate view of the upstream approach in social marketing, because it allows us to visualize the strategies used by social agents at a macroeconomic level as well as their impact on the lives of countless individuals (KENNEDY; KEMPER PARSONS, 2018). Thus, it was possible for students to perceive how the causal and determinants agents of social problems (legislators, non-governmental organizations, large corporations, among others) can directly or indirectly influence the behavior of individuals in a society, which can be both social problems cause and solution (KENNEDY; KEMPER PARSONS, 2018).

The fourth meeting was held collaborative and participatory manner, and group discussions were held around a news panel. The students were divided into groups of five members each, for which news items was distributed on digital media that somehow illustrated social marketing actions developed by midstream actors such as community agents and social organizations. After the group's internal reading and discussion on the subject, each one was asked to share with the others a summary of the situation described in the news, as well as their considerations about the effectiveness and relevance of the actions described. Then all the other groups proceeded to discuss all the news. This activity proposed that students put themselves in the position of social marketing manager, as they reflected on the interventions promoted in the behavior change of communities, families, focusing their efforts on collective behaviors (WOOD, 2016; FRENCH BENNETT MULCAHY, 2017).

Finally, in order to achieve the seminar proposal, in the last meeting, a case for teaching was applied at the last meeting. The case chosen was "Não Zere a Quilometragem, meu Jovem! Marketing Social para Educação no Trânsito" (MORAES; LACERDA, 2016), in order to bring to reality of the management course the discussion about the individual as an executor agent of public policies and regulation in the fight against traffic violence. The main objective of the case was to propose a discussion about the awareness of young people in traffic, inviting students to propose possible solutions to the problems presented. The activity allowed addressing the problems described by the downstream perspective, contextualizing the theory through its application in a practical case pertinent to the local reality, as well as to incite the development of the social marketing thinking and its practical applications in the behavior change of individuals (FRENCH; RUSSELL-BENNETT; MULCAHY, 2017).

In the second stage of the research, three focus groups were carried out in order to evaluate, in a comparative way, the performance of each of the groups in relation to the gaps identified in the marketing education and in the training of the administrator. In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, the focus group data collection tool was used to allow

the researcher to direct the participants' discussions and reflections about the concepts, impressions and conceptions about a given topic.

The construction of the script for the focus groups was based on gaps in the administration training identified by Bernadinelli and Sauerbronn (2017) as regards marketing knowledge, with little understanding about the concept of market; disconnection between the theoretical knowledge of the discipline and its social application in practice; and lack of critical insight about marketing activities; and crisis of relevance regarding the importance of marketing to society. Thus, each question in the script was elaborated in order to initiate a discussion about each of the aspects that compose the gaps, in order to encourage students to discuss the topics. Thus, it was possible to identify the construction collective thinking in order to find out if the groups' exposure to the concepts of social marketing contributed to meet the demands pointed by Bernadinelli and Sauberbronn (2017) on the development of marketing knowledge.

In this way, three distinct focus groups were performed. The first group, named control group in this research, analyzed under the acronym GC, was composed of undergraduate students from the evening period who did not participate in the social marketing seminar. The participants of this group have as a characteristic to have attended the discipline of Marketing Administration I, besides attending other disciplines related to marketing content. The application of this group occurred in May 2018 and counted with the participation of ten students, with a total duration of fifty-five (55) minutes and eighteen seconds (00h: 55m: 00s), recorded in audio; the transcription resulted in nineteen (19) pages with Times New Roman font, size 12 and single spacing.

In addition, two other focus groups, named in this work Group 2 and Group 3 and analyzed under the acronym GE, were carried out with undergraduate students in administration who participated in the Social Marketing seminar in June 2018. The students of these two groups attended the discipline of Marketing Administration I, with the participation of fourteen students, seven in Group 2 and seven in Group 3. Group 2 had duration of fifth two minutes (00:52:00), while group 3 lasted 50 minutes

and 47 seconds (00:50:47), which, after transcription of the audio record, generated, respectively, seventeen and fifteen pages with Times New Roman font, size 12 and single spacing.

In order to data analysis, the content analysis method was used, as it seeks to obtain, through systematic and objective procedures for describing of message content, indicators that allow the inference of knowledge regarding the conditions of production of these messages (ROSSI; SAMUELS JOHN, 2014). For the present work, we used the technique of analysis by thematic categories, which consists of performing operations of dismemberment of the text in units and analog categories according to the regrouping, allowing the creation of categories according to the themes that emerge from the text, when identifying similarity between the elements of it, allowing its grouping (BARDIN, 2011). They emerged as categories of analysis: the relevance of marketing in the formation of the administrator, market conceptualization and agents, uncritical vision, and the connection between marketing and society. The results of the analysis of these categories are explained in the following item.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Relevance of Marketing in Administrator Training

The objective of this item was to understand the student's position on the relevance of marketing in the administration training, based on the results of the focus groups. Thus, in the first analysis, students in the control group believe that the marketing content is essential for the management professional, since it is configured as a set of tools necessary for the organization to achieve success within its market. According to those interviewed, these tools vary within marketing activities, since they emphasize their use to get to know the target audience and their needs. This understanding can be observed in the discourse of one of the participants in the control group.

I see as a very important matter for any manager, for the administrator, because the marketing discipline, you see many tools to do consumer analysis, competitor analysis, and are useful tools in any market (GC5).

For the control group, the marketing content presented at the undergraduate level is important because it allows the creation of value for the organization clients, satisfying it through products or services that meet their desires and needs. Kotler (2013) states that “marketing is usually seen as the task of creating, promoting and delivering goods and services to customers, whether these individuals are individuals or corporations, but this is an overly simplistic view” (p. 27).

This understanding of marketing as an organizational tool originates from the fact that the management courses, at undergraduate level, focus almost exclusively on the study of the so-called micromarketing, which is the study of marketing activities of individual units, such as business and non-profit organizations (HUNT, 1983). Students also identified the marketing as being important in the organization's strategic decisions, being pointed out as the most important area within the company:

Marketing generally seen as strategy, strategic marketing, it is very important. And It is he who guides the other areas. Because Strategic Marketing helps to see demand (GC10).

This vision of marketing as a strategy is part of the client-focused organizational perspective, since the marketing processes are responsible for defining the products and services and the conditions under which they will operate within the markets (KOTLER, 2013). In spite of increasing the importance of marketing within the organization, this vision remains restricted to the company, which, according to Berardinelli and Sauerbronn (2017), causes a gap in professional training, since it does not enable it to solve complex problems involving various agents within the market.

Marketing, it will serve to better understand the relations of exchange in an organization with society. (GE5)

I think just like other disciplines, it will give you a better insight into how the market works. How to better understand the market, and I think starting from that principle there, to be able to see the exchange in a more efficient way. It's getting to see that everything there has an exchange. (GE8)

In this way, it can be seen that the students of the groups who participated in the social marketing seminar present a broader understanding of marketing and its importance. This understanding expands the administrator's field of work, with regard to the content learned in the marketing discipline, because it allows graduates to apply knowledge in more diverse situations, since the marketing science as a study of exchanges must be able to explain the phenomenon of exchange in any manifestation and from any point of view (HILL; MARTIN, 2014).

Conceptualization and Market understanding

This topic analyzes the student's perceptions regarding the market and market agents, being mentioned by Sauerbronn and Bernadinelli (2017) as one of the major gaps in relation to the marketing training of the administrator in Brazil. In fact, Fligstein and Calder (2002) define the market

as being composed of individuals and organizations that are interested in acquiring products or services to obtain benefits that meet a specific need or desire, and which possess the resources necessary to engage in such transaction. In other words, the market is not a physical place, but rather an entire arrangement by which bidders and plaintiffs meet to carry out a transaction (FLIGSTEIN; CALDER, 2002). Participants from the three groups provided definitions for the market that are in line with marketing theory, as presented in the speech:

The market is environment in which the company, the consumer, the government the competition, all meet, and it is there that the exchange of the product or service, the cost and the value perceived by the customer, I think it is the market is this, these exchanges where these agents are involved. (GC5)

It is composed, in my conception, of elements that provide a certain thing to the detriment of another, such as a paper currency, for example, as a transaction object. (...) Basically, it is an environment where relations of exchanges occur between the agents (GE5)

It is the space where customers, sellers, suppliers, the state itself, collecting taxes, all the people who want to take a slice or benefit in some way from that activity, that market. (GE8)

For Bernardinelli and Sauerbronn (2017) the ability to conceptualize the market is of the utmost importance for the student of administration, more important even than knowing the strategies of marketing of companies, because “it does not make the sense to study a universe of strategies disregarding the whole market establishment, all market practices, all market agents” (2017, p.574). In the literature, all entities, organizations or groups of individuals that exert influence within the market, either through exchange or regulation activities (FLIGSTEIN and CALDER, 2002) are considered market agents. In the control group, students were able to identify companies, the state and society as market agents, but it is perceptible that recognition of the latter as a market agent is limited to consumers, whose role in the market is to consume the products and services offered by the other agents, as demonstrated by the speeches of two participants.

Within the market there will be both agents and the claimants. The claimants are the buyers, in this case, the consumers and the bidders would be the organizations, the companies. (GC2)

The client is the complaining agent, his role is to consume, right? (CG7)

This perspective is limited, since it prevents the management professionals from understanding society as a complex agent, whose desires and needs cannot always be supplied by the market. In discussing the role of the State, the students in the control group stated that their role as a market agent is to exercise the regulatory role, as can be observed:

The State acts in its own regulations, often in a rather stupid way, to define what you can sell, how you should sell, to whom you should sell. There are cities in Brazil that you can not sell meat on Monday for example. So this kind of regulation influences the market. (GC5)

(...) The State acts as a regulator of competition, to be in accordance with the established guidelines. (GC9)

Coelho (2014) states that all markets, without exception, are always subject to some form of regulation and always requires rules and principles to function. Thus, it would be up to the State only to ensure the proper functioning of the market, preventing producers from organizing themselves in cartels, or the monopoly of some sector, distorting prices and benefiting only themselves. In this way, the State would benefit directly and indirectly all other agents, including society.

If only one company existed the market would be held hostage, people would have the demands supplied by one company, there would be no way to get a better price, a better quality. (GC5)

When asked about the role of companies as market agents, students in the control group presented the following vision:

The Company's obligation is primarily to know the consumers of a particular market, formatting their products according to their preferences, generating value. (GC8)

Kotler and Armstrong (2014) believe that marketing occurs when people decide to satisfy their needs and desires through exchanges. Thus, it is possible to perceive that the perception of the control group is in line with what was found in the theory, but the participants of this group could not expand the perspective beyond the commercial activities that the company performs.

By analyzing focus groups discourses 2 and 3, it is possible to perceive that participants comprise the society as an active market agent, whose influence is exercised not only on the demand for products and services, but also influencing the other agents to their moral norms, acting through economic, social and institutional power and also exerting pressure in the State. The report reinforces this understanding:

The population itself influences what laws are created, so the population can see this together with the state to create laws that say it cannot be sold a certain product that does harm to the environment for example. (GE11)

Although regulation is an important and even exclusive role of the State, it is not the only one exercised. Focus group students 2 and 3 were able to identify other roles exercised by this agent within the market, as explained in one of the speeches.

State has a regulatory role, collecting taxes, in a way, with the taxes it collects, should invest infrastructure, security, everything that can improve the market as a whole. (GE11).

By this perception, the State is no longer seen merely as an external regulator to the market, and is understood as an active agent responsible for collecting taxes and investing in order to improve the exchange processes among other agents. In this same sense, and unlike the control group, the students in groups 2 and 3 demonstrated a broader understanding of the company's role in the market:

We know that the company has to have social responsibility, of course it must see, but it also has to think about society. Because how am I going to sell a pro-

duct that is impacting society, the environment, now in the present, knowing that in the future it can harm? I as an administrator, with this marketing knowledge I have to think how I can improve these issues. (GE11)

The understanding of the company's role, therefore, surpasses the commercial performance based only on supply and demand, by positioning it not as an entity alien to society, but which makes it preserve and be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. It is worth noting that groups 2 and 3 have always been in favorable to profitability, provided that is achieved in a way that is not harmful to other market players:

I remember that it was said that the social role of the company is profit, because with profit it will be able to pay employees, taxes, so I believe that we should not have that fierce capitalism, of only profit over profit, but that there must be profit. (GE8)

I see this issue of profit, I am in favor of profit, but there is studying ways to have positive impacts on society. (GE9).

Groups 2 and 3 identified a market agent that was not cited during the interview with the control group: non-governmental organizations. Bromley and Meyer (2018) explain that NGOs, especially those that do not target profit, arise as a consequence of the dissatisfaction of certain groups of individuals who did not have their demands satisfied or who were neglected by other agents of market. One student highlighted how non-governmental organizations can act within the market.

For me, NGOs serve to fill a gap that the government cannot achieve. Because not everything the government will be able to supply. The NGOs in this case will exist to meet the needs of the population. (EG1)

By introducing non-governmental organizations into their discourse, students demonstrate a certain level of understanding about complex exchanges, which are those with more than two agents involved. In the example cited, it is possible to place the State acting at the macro level, and

NGOs as agents seeking to meet the needs of the population, acting at the meso level, while having their needs supplied by other agents, including Government, as is the case of financing for social projects.

Relationship Marketing and Society

In addition to a close understanding of the concept of the market, Sauerbron and Bernadinelli (2017) also pointed out that the marketing content in management courses is distant from society. This gap is due to the fact that the marketing perspective presented to the students acts almost exclusively in the analysis of the relationship between production units and consumer units.

An attempt to approach marketing and society permeates a discussion of the concept of corporate social responsibility, which may be associated with the idea of legal responsibility; or it may mean socially responsible behavior in the ethical sense; or can convey the idea of voluntary social contribution and association with a specific cause (OLIVEIRA; FERREIRA LIMA, 2015). Many organizations, however, use social responsibility as a marketing positioning tool, acting from a micromarketing perspective to generate positive results for their own benefit, neglecting the effects on other agents. The students in the control group mentioned this strategy:

The Marketing Vision is at the tip of the iceberg of what people see, in the strategic part is thought about social responsibility and how I can evolve my image, about how I want people to see me. There goes to every branch right, the question of how I want my image to impact society. (GC3)

Although this first comment confirms the group's entrepreneurial perspective, there is an evolution of thinking beyond the business context towards a broader view on the relationship between marketing activities and society. The reflections permeate the negative impact of some products, although the focus of social responsibility is still implicit as an effective tool to promote exchange relations between producing unit and consumer unit.

(...) I Think you can combine marketing and society also at this point when the company arrives in a location it has to come up with a purpose. And that purpose as they have already said is the social responsibility is you understand the objectives of the company, mission, vision, and use for the benefit of society, people who will use the products. (GC2)

(...) In The past decades it was very common for large companies owners to forge studies to favor certain foods. For example, say that fat is bad for selling another product, or even sugar. Sugar is not beneficial to us, it is not prohibited, but daily consumption is not so good. But then marketing sells sugar as an indispensable product and everyone consumes large amounts of it. (GC4)

In turn, one of the participants commented on the use of marketing tools outside the business context:

I see a lot in this relationship between marketing and society of wanting to sell, for example, a political idea as well. I think we see the issue of marketing a lot in that, too, of wanting to sell an idea to people. (GC6)

The ability to understand marketing beyond the relationships between company and consumer is a fundamental competence for the administrator, since to operate within the market it is necessary to understand that other agents also relate to each other, and use marketing tools to perform efficient exchanges (FLIGSTEIN; CALDER, 2002). Tamilia and Veilleux (2007) point out the remoteness between marketing and society in the content of the marketing discipline as being characteristic of contemporary undergraduate courses, since there has been a growing concentration of marketing education in themes of marketing administration and consumer behavior and the tendency to understand society as a mere external factor. Based on the concept and marketing tools developed during graduation, one of the participants in the control group reflects on what aspects of marketing can relate to society:

I understand that marketing influences many social and cultural aspects as well. If I am inserted in a certain group or certain class for me it is a prerequisite to own certain product or use certain service. I think that marketing is this, it mana-

ges to find these spaces and interact and define individuals from the things they are selling. I am seeing from the point of view of the product why at graduation we do not actually see this relationship between marketing and society. (GC1)

When confronted with the same question about the relationship between marketing activities and society, the students in groups 2 and 3 demonstrated a broader perspective than the students in the control group, observing the exchange processes that occurred beyond the relationship between the offeror and the plaintiff. It was possible to observe in their discourses, another understanding about how society is configured, about the complex exchanges that occur between it and the other market agents.

I think that this relationship of marketing activities, they change the behavior of people, type, in this issue of sales and promotion, if the customer is mistreated, generates the behavior of the client does not go there anymore. Thus, marketing activities change people's behavior. (GE3)

It is possible to apply the marketing techniques and use for the good of the population as well. (GE11)

Analyzing the relationship between society and social marketing presupposes that it is possible to modify the people's behavior, and that marketing tools can be used for this purpose. In this impetus, social marketing knowledge enabled to understand that marketing tools can be applied to a wide variety of problems and populations; in different scopes of action – global, national, regional and even individual, using a wide range of approaches that go beyond the proposal of selling, being used to promote sustainable social change (SAUNDERS; BARRINGTON SRIDHARAN, 2015).

Uncritical Vision

The third gap in marketing education in management courses presented by Sauerbron and Bernadinelli (2017) concerns the lack of a critical marketing vision. The authors point to the need to complement the content of the discipline by teaching a broader perspective on the implications of marketing activities, thus outlining a critical view. The students in the control group

were able to point out situations in which the use of marketing knowledge produced a beneficial outcome to society:

I also think these blood banks, these campaigns to incentive the donation, I think it has brought positive results to the society that appealed to the issue also emotional, we see the need of the other is compassionate, because, it can be the people there in the future right? And I brought that appeal and a lot of people donated more, think more about giving so I think it brought a positive result in society. (GC10)

WWF, Greenpeace, Doctors Without Borders, do campaigns that mess with your thinking, you feel the worst person in the world for not giving a real to the guys. They make you look inside, make you take an attitude, and even if it is not (GC9)

This perspective demonstrates, at a certain level, a conscience about the use of marketing knowledge for purposes other than the sale of products or services. However, although correct, this perspective continues within the reductionist spectrum, since it does not cover other marketing activities besides disclosure. In groups 2 and 3, one can perceive a wider level of critical sense regarding the impacts of marketing activities

These marketing activities can be tools for good or bad, if you make a marketing campaign to end plastic bags or consumption of harmful products such as cigarette, then marketing is beneficial, but if marketing is used for the consumerism, to push products into people and they get indebtedness, then it's bad. So I think she can bring good things and bad things, depending on how you use it. (GE8)

I think it's no use you to have that training as an administrator, you have all that marketing and business sense, but if you do not put knowledge into practice with quality, you aim only at profit and damage everything that is around you, the environment, people, society. This is why I believe that with marketing it is possible to envisage this world of value, this world better. (GE5)

To fulfill this gap, it is necessary to understand the marketing tools as amoral, once the impact on society will depend solely on how they are used. It is necessary for students to know all the tools that can be applied in organizations, but it is also necessary for them to understand the impli-

cations and consequences of marketing in society, since the organization exists within a system of marketing (BERNADINELLI; SAUERBRONN, 2017). Within this context, it is possible to affirm that this conception of marketing activities allows the management professional the expansion of the repertoire of applicable solutions in situations of complex exchanges, involving several agents within the same market, analyzing the impacts caused by the undertaken activities..

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The objective of the study was to evaluate the possible contributions of social marketing to the training of management professionals, through the insertion of the theme within the curriculum of the marketing discipline. Thus, social marketing would serve to fill in the gaps in the marketing knowledge expansion present in management courses, identified by Bernadinelli and Sauerbronn (2017) and caused by the teaching perspective focused on micromarketing, relegating broader concepts that are equally necessary to the training of qualified professionals to understand and solve the complex problems present in today's society (TAMILIA; VEILLEUX, 2007).

By analyzing the students' discourses, it is possible to perceive clear distinctions in the knowledge presented by those who participated in the social marketing seminar in relation to those who did not participate. The latter, who composed in this work a control group, attest to the gaps in the marketing training of administrators, since their discourse was largely limited to the discussion of marketing as a business tool. Although it is important for a management professional to know the tools of business marketing, it is necessary that there be a focus reorientation, so that marketing disciplines will cover the relationship between marketing and social problems, the role of marketing in the modeling of the capitalist system and the way in which marketing contributes to the structure and organization of the markets, including the ethical aspects that permeate the activities of companies.

Nesbitt, DeMoranville and McNally (2011) explain that by focusing on solving real problems, seeking individual and collective well-being, it is expected that students themselves, when coming into contact with the discipline, will change in relation to their consciousness, attitudes and intentions to act in the defense of the environment. In Addition, the authors report that, by engaging in social marketing activities, such as the proposals in the seminar described previously, students demonstrate a deeper understanding of the problems that that activity seeks to solve. In this way, they

have greater knowledge about the agents involved in certain situations and the complex relations of exchange that they exert among themselves.

In this sense, the students participating in the activities proposed in the Social Marketing seminar demonstrated the understanding of marketing as an embracing science that studies the relations of exchange between the agents present in the market, as well as an wider understanding about the agents that compose the market, and the roles exercised by each of them. Similarly, they were able to perform a deeper analysis of the relationship between marketing and society, expressing the understanding that marketing activities can be used in order to promote beneficial behaviors for society (DIBB, 2014), while the discourse of the control group on this topic focused on the issue of social responsibility. This demonstrates that while these students understand the need to address social problems, their view remains restricted to the use of an “ethically responsible” discourse to favor the business context.

Thus, it is possible to infer that the teaching of social marketing can be set up as an important tool in the attempt to fill the marketing knowledge gaps presented by undergraduate students in administration. Understanding the implications of marketing in the macroeconomic context, analyzing the relationships between the agents that compose the market and how these relationships can be transformed to shape the environment in which they are inserted provides subsidies for the future professional be able to deal with the complexity of competitive markets (BRENNAN; LU HEIDT, 2018; HOLLBROK, 2018).

The findings of this research, given its experimental and empirical nature, can provide subsidies for marketing teachers to include social marketing content in the curriculum of the discipline. Moreover, the active methodologies were adequate for the development of a complex content and full of layers of analysis. It is suggested the replication of this research in other levels of formation and other institutional contexts, given the descriptive character of the methodology adopted to carry out this research.

Also, it is intended to awaken the interest of researchers about the most social aspects of marketing, which, although they have such a parti-

ment contribution, are still not widespread in Brazil. It is up to the educational institutions to promote collective and individual reflections among teachers, to understand the market demands and the implications that emerge from the rise of the debate on sustainability and sustainable consumption. Finally, there is a need for education professionals to develop new methods and test new ideas that can contribute to the advancement and improvement of quality in the higher education in administration.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present work sought to carry out an experiment of insertion of the social marketing content within the marketing discipline in a course of administration, so that, through a later analysis, its contributions could be identified to improvement in the student's training.

Thus, data collection was made through the realization of distinct focus groups, two of them formed by students who participated in the experiment, and another, called control group, by students who experienced the marketing discipline without a content of social marketing. Thus, the analysis sought to identify, through the speeches given by the students, the existence of deficiencies in higher education, and, if so, whether the content inserted in the discipline contributed in some way to suppress them.

The students who participated in the social marketing seminar obtained different results when compared to that in the focus groups, demonstrating broader knowledge when compared to their peers in the control group, regarding the nature and scope of marketing activities as well as the composition and market agents. Therefore, it is possible to affirm that the general objective of the article was achieved, since it was evidenced the feasibility of the teaching of social marketing as a way to promote the quality of learning of the students of administration, regarding the knowledge of marketing, being this the main contribution of this article.

Among the limitations of this research, we highlight that the realization of the experiment was relatively small sampling compared to the expressive number of undergraduate students in administration, as well as the fact of the need to isolate the other variables that may interfere with the learning process. As a suggestion of future work, it is indicated that new research be undertaken that seeks to expand the marketing discussion, both theoretically and empirically, in order to understand and analyze the insertion of new contents in marketing disciplines and how they can contribute to the improvement of the professional performance of the students and the management courses in Brazil.

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