A REVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF MARKETING PRACTICE IN THE WEB 2.0 ERA.

HAS MARKETING EDUCATION REMAINED RELEVANT?

OBSERVATIONS FROM PRACTITIONERS, ACADEMICS AND STUDENTS.

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Science in Marketing Practice is entirely my own work and has not been obtained from the work of any other, except any work that has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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ABSTRACT

Web 2.0 technologies have transformed the marketing industry and the more closely consumers become connected to digital technologies, the greater the power of the information channel for marketers. When the immediacy and accessibility of digital media is combined with metrics, analysis and customer profiling / segmentation, the online world becomes even more powerful for marketing purposes. Exploratory research was used to generate ideas/hypotheses about this research topic, initially through secondary data analysis, and subsequently through qualitative research, namely in depth, semi-structured interviews with marketing practitioners. The final phase of the primary research, the survey, used descriptive research to describe, uncover and compare the opinions of marketing practitioners, marketing academics and post-graduate marketing students on the evolution of marketing practice in the web 2.0 era and the relevance of marketing education through quantitative research. As the digital revolution charges on and the number of smart devices and machines connecting to mobile networks rise dramatically, companies need expertise in social media and community management, content marketing, mobile marketing/apps development, search engine optimisation and web analytics. This research discovers recruiters find that top talent in these areas is difficult to obtain and demand for these skills will only increase in the future. As employment in marketing jobs becomes increasingly technical and data-driven, this work recommends marketing education evolves correspondingly.

DEDICATION

For Eliza Mae and Markus, each equally my pride and joy.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Context

Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is central to most businesses, regardless of size or sector (Brady et al., 1999). Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) enable the creation, storage, management and dissemination of information by electronic means (Vilaseca-Requena et al., 2007). From database development, website design to market research, Google analytics to search engine optimisation, smart phone app development, direct mail marketing and social marketing, the application of ICT is crucial for economic success and can be considered an integral part of marketing practice (Miller et al., 2013). E-commerce-based websites have also become central to the practice of marketing (Pires et al., 2006). Therefore, ICT capabilities are essential for marketers today. "Thus a core requirement of marketing practitioners is knowledge of IT" (Brady et al., 2002, p.568). Furthermore, Pires et al. (2006, p.937) argue that although these emerging technologies, especially the internet, are enablers of a global marketplace, the growing use of ICTs is swinging market power from suppliers to consumers "From a consumer perspective, access to more information about the market is complemented by larger choice sets due to the global reach of the internet, by the ability to exchange information and opinion with peers, to change their own perceptions and behaviour in a rapid and largely unchecked manner, and to define brands on their own." This poses serious challenges for today's marketing practitioners. McCole (2004, p.535) affirms "Marketing in the twenty-first century is

more challenging than ever due to fragmented media, clever and articulated consumers, and the rise of the "free-thinking" consumer." With the growth of online participation, empowered by numerous blogs, forums, chat rooms, and social networking sites, consumers are wielding greater control over the products and brands they consider for purchase as well as exerting greater control over their media habits (Pendleton et al., 2012). The capacity to recognise the potential of these technologies, master them, and incorporate them into the marketing mission is becoming an indispensable success factor for all marketers (Miller et al., 2013).

1.2. Introduction and Research objectives

The main aims of this research are uncover the opinions of marketing practitioners, marketing academics and post-graduate marketing students on how Web 2.0 technologies have impacted and evolved the practice of marketing and to investigate is marketing education relevant for this changed technological landscape.

To this end the six research objectives are to:

1. Profile the impact and role of Web 2.0 technologies in marketing practice
2. Identify what ICT knowledge, skills, and abilities are required by marketers practitioners
3. Investigate the relevance of marketing education to marketing practitioner needs
4. Explore how an ICT dimension can be incorporated in to third – level marketing courses

5. Present a valuable insight for marketing practitioners, academics and students on the relationship between of ICTs and marketing practice
6. Add to the existing literature on the significance of ICTs to marketing practice

To accomplish the six research objectives, the following three questions will be investigated:

1. How have Web 2.0 technologies impacted and evolved the practice of marketing?

   This will be examined in a literature review and explored during in-depth interviews with marketing practitioners.
2. Has marketing education remained relevant in this new technological landscape?

   This will be also be examined in the literature review and in the survey of marketing academics and post graduate marketing students
3. What are the views of the relevant stakeholders?

   These will be ascertained by a survey comparing the views of marketing practitioners, marketing academics and post graduate marketing students.

1.3. Researcher's reason for interest in the subject area

Since the beginning of the economic collapse in Ireland in 2007, increasing numbers of graduates have been unable to find permanent positions in their chosen field. According to the 'Education at a Glance' survey by the OECD, Ireland has more young graduates than most other countries but they are also more likely to be unemployed.

Between 2008 and 2011, graduate unemployment rose by 5pc to almost 9pc. During this time Facebook, Google, Microsoft, PayPal, Fujitsu and scores of other companies expanded their investments in Ireland, creating thousands of jobs as unemployment hovered near record highs. Paradoxically, not enough people are qualified to fill all the jobs. In some cases, the companies have had to look outside Ireland to recruit candidates with the right skills. After a seven-year economic crisis, academic institutes need to reflect and ultimately take action at course level to address the mismatch.

Web 2.0 technologies have transformed the marketing industry and the more closely consumers become connected to digital technologies, the greater the power of the information channel for marketers. When the immediacy and accessibility of digital media is combined with metrics, analysis and customer profiling / segmentation, the online world becomes even more powerful for marketing purposes. Companies need expertise in social media and community management, content marketing, mobile marketing/apps development, search engine optimization and web analytics. Recruiters find that top talent in these areas is difficult to obtain. According to the IBM (2013) global C-Suite survey by 2018 the US is forecast to have a shortage of approximately 1.5 million managers and analysts with the necessary technical and digital knowledge.

As the digital revolution charges on and the number of smart devices and machines connecting to mobile networks rise dramatically, demand for these skills will only increase in the future. The Irish government and many third level academic institutes'

top-level strategies place significant emphasis on the employability of their graduates, but to what extent is this consistently reflected in Irish business schools and at marketing course level? As employment in marketing jobs becomes increasingly technical and data-driven, the researcher, as a post – graduate marketing student, is questioning – is the researcher's marketing education relevant?

1.4. Chapter outline

- Chapter 2, Literature Review covering the impact and role of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice, the relevance of marketing education to marketing practitioner needs, the CMP (Contemporary Marketing Practice) studies, the development of ICT skills through education and a review of current initiatives in marketing education that are incorporating an ICT dimension.
- Chapter 3, Methodology, discusses the research objectives, research philosophy, research design, data collection methods and analysis chosen in this research.
- Chapter 4, Findings and Analysis, begins with a review of the in-depth interviews, where the opinions of marketing practitioners on the interconnection between ICTs and marketing practice and how Web 2.0 technologies have impacted marketing are analysed. This is followed by an examination and comparison of the surveys to assess the extent of convergences or divergences within the responses to the research questions

of the three groups of marketing practitioners, marketing academics and post-graduate marketing students.

- Chapter 5, Conclusions and Recommendations, presents the overall conclusions drawn from the research along with the researcher's recommendations for the future of marketing education in Ireland.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1. Overview and rationale for the literature review

Defining and identifying what new technologies have impacted marketing in the Web 2.0 era and what are the required ICT skill set for marketers today is a multifaceted process and proved problematic. Not only is there a paucity of research into this area, but perhaps more importantly still is the lack of empirical research that exists into this critical tenet of marketing today. Any literature review that is conducted will present questions surrounding transference and limited generalisability. Indeed, it could be argued that only literature dealing exclusively with the impact and role of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice would be truly transferable. The search was restricted to academic journals in the Emerald database in the LYIT library. Initially, "marketing Web 2.0" were the key words employed to establish what amount of data was available. This search produced 1137 articles which confirmed this topic as feasible for more refined research. Consequently, the following key words and various combinations thereof were employed to identify relevant literature: marketing and Information technology, marketing skills, marketing education and marketing academic-practitioner divide. The search was conducted throughout November/December 2013. Upon inspection, some articles were found to be unsuitable due to being too specific towards a certain topic, e.g. Counter-brand and alter-brand communities: the impact of Web 2.0 on tribal marketing approaches, using Web 2.0 technology in personnel marketing to transmit corporate culture and Web 2.0 promotional techniques in the hospitality industry. In such cases, the studies

were deemed to be non-transferable and were therefore excluded. Further limiters were added to ensure relevant, modern research and to remain within time and accessibility constraints.

The main aims of this research are to investigate how ICT technologies have evolved and impacted marketing practice in the Web 2.0 era and to review the relevance of marketing education. To achieve these objectives it was established literature would be collated under the following heading - the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice, the role of ICTs in marketing practice, an analysis of marketing education, and a review of current initiatives that are incorporating an ICT dimension to marketing education. However, during the literature review it became apparent that any discussion on marketing practice would have to include a section on the reputed and widely cited CMP (Contemporary Marketing Practice) studies. Furthermore, marketing education was deemed too broad and vast a subject to condense any meaningful review in to one section so it was narrowed to the relevance of marketing education to practitioner needs. The section on the development of ICT skills through education was found to be necessary so as to ensure the literature review incorporated an Irish dimension and so therefore, would be relevant to an Irish context.

2.2. The impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice

Defining Web 2.0 is complex as it is a vast topic with a large number of procedures and interconnecting elements. Furthermore, there are varying understandings and the boundaries between Web 2.0 and Web 1.0 are vague. The term was coined by Tim O'Reilly (2005) whilst researching the correlation between companies that prevailed after the dot com crash of 2001 and those that did not. "Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service (SaaS) that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an 'architecture of participation', and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences" (O'Reilly, 2005, p.67). O'Reilly's contribution to the creation and development of the term Web 2.0 has been determinant, although not without contention (Serantes, 2009). However, other stances documented by Andrewson (2006) and Bray (2005) do not question the technology behind Web 2.0. Their interpretation of Web 2.0 is that it has been an evolutionary not revolutionary development, just another stage in the history of the internet.

The key characteristic of Web 2.0 is the 'architecture of participation' that enables users to create, collaborate and share information online (Cooke and Buckley, 2008; Pendleton et al., 2012; Steenburgh and Avery, 2008). Web 2.0 technologies enable collaborative writing (for example – wikis like WikiPedia), content sharing (e.g. text,

video, and images like YouTube), social networking (e.g. Facebook, Google+), social bookmarking (e.g. ratings and tagging), and syndication (e.g. RSS feeds). Therefore, Web 2.0 describes second generation websites that transcend the format of a static publication and which are engaged in cooperation and a reciprocal exchange of values (O'Reilly, 2005). Cooke and Buckley (2008) concur Web 2.0 is constructed around 'social software' that facilitates users to connect or collaborate via computer-mediated communication.

According to Steenburgh and Avery (2008), for marketers, Web 2.0 has presented significant new opportunities to communicate with customers. Marketers can use Web 2.0 tools to get the customer included, encouraging them to contribute to marketing related activities such as customer service, product development and feedback. These technologies present huge opportunities for marketers to have more candid conversations with and between customers and this has allotted marketers the opportunity to connect their customers to the creative process. "While marketers traditionally relied on a simple communications model, where the role of the marketer was to encode a message to be delivered through marketing media such as TV and print ads, a newer Web 2.0 environment requires extending the traditional model to reflect the new active role the consumer is taking in marketing communications" (Pendleton et al., 2012, p.151).

In this paradigm, consumers are now a proactive participator instead of an inert recipient (Pendleton et al., 2012). "As consumers around the world increasingly turn to social technologies, organizations can't pretend the phenomenon isn't occurring"

(Bernoff and Li, 2008, p.40). Pendleton et al. (2012) concur that social networking, blogging, podcasting, online video, peer review websites and wikis are increasingly gaining prominence in businesses marketing strategies. “With the increase in social participation among consumers and the growing sophistication of the underlying technologies, it’s now possible to put social applications on an equal footing with other business projects. That is, they can deliver measurable progress toward significant, strategic business goals” (Bernoff and Li, 2008, p.39).

Social applications have gripped the world. Facebook now has 1.28bn monthly active users, almost half the world’s internet population and a billion of these now use their mobile phones to access the social network (Independent, 2014a). Furthermore, at 2.25million users, the Irish nation uses Facebook more frequently than any other nation in the English-speaking world, with over half of Irish users on the site daily. Additionally, 63 per cent of Irish social-media activity is generated by Facebook, double as much as all other social applications combined and the Facebook app is installed on half of all Irish smartphones (Independent, 2014b). The number of Irish adults with Twitter accounts is 27 per cent, 23 per cent report to have a LinkedIn account, 15 per cent report they have an Instagram account and 6per cent report to have a Pinterest account (IPSOS-MRBI, 2014). Therefore, Irish marketers cannot ignore the significance these social applications can play in attaining strategic business objectives.

Recent research carried out among members of the Marketing Institute of Ireland (MII, 2004, p.4) confirms investment in digital channels is of increasing strategic importance to Irish businesses;

- 8% of brands commit over 50% of spend to digital
- 23% commit between 26% and 50% to digital
- 22% commit between 11% and 25% of marketing spend to digital
- 28% commit between 1% and 10%, while only 4% of brands do not dedicate any spend to digital

Furthermore, 60% of those surveyed plan to increase their digital marketing budget in 2014. Discussing the findings, Gráinne O'Brien, Director of MCsquared, the Consumer & Brands division of Murray Consultants, Ireland's largest independent public relations and issues management agency said: "The 2014 marketing outlook is more positive than at any time over the past six years. Marketing jobs and budgets are expected to increase over the next two years with Digital and Content Marketing set to benefit most from any uplift" (MII, 2014). However, the survey (MII, 2014) also found most marketers are struggling to get their businesses up to speed with the plethora of social media channels currently available. Additionally, many marketers acknowledged their in-house digital skills needed improvement.

Therefore, there is no refuting the fact that Web 2.0 technologies have had a major impact on marketing practice in Ireland and globally, and their influence is predicted to increase over the next few years; however it is clear marketers need a technological skill set to exploit this influence. As Synopsised by Miller et al. (2013, p.

121) Web 2.0 technologies have transformed marketing practice in three well defined ways;

1. Traditional marketing tools have become more accessible to marketers through a variety of technologies.
2. A new generation of information-driven, community-focused tools have enabled more direct, highly interactive communication with customers, both individually and as groups, centered around a common interest.
3. The emergence of low-cost, integrated hosting and content platforms have placed these capabilities within reach of small to medium-size enterprises as well as marketing professionals at a personal level.

2.3. The role of information and communication technologies in marketing practice

For the purposes of this paper, the following definition of Information and Communications Technologies will apply: "IT refers specifically to technology, essentially hardware, software and telecommunications networks. It is thus both tangible (e.g. with servers, PCs, routers and network cables) and intangible (e.g. with software of all types). IT facilitates the acquisition, processing, storing, delivery and sharing of information and other digital content" (Ward and Peppard, 2002, p.3).

Coviello et al. (2001) in their substantial and comprehensive review of the literature around the interface between marketing/IT literature classified four marked philosophies regarding the role and impact of information and communication technologies on marketing practice. The schools of thought are grouped as:

1. New technologies will profoundly change how all organisations relate to their market.

2. New technologies will merely offer tools to support traditional approaches to the market.

3. New technologies will principally offer a new channel to the market.

4. New technologies will offer separate opportunities to separate organisations in separate contexts.

The fourth school of thought is the most inclusive, as the role information and communication technologies play in marketing practice is dependent on the role information and communication technologies play within each specific firm. Brodie et al., (2009, p.374) synopsises "Marketing practices and IT-enabled interactivity initiatives are related, context is critical, and therefore a variety approaches and practices are to be observed".

However, using Information and Communication Technology is central to most businesses, regardless of size or sector. Goldsmith (2004, p. 11) contends "one of the biggest changes in business as a whole and marketing in particular over the last 20 years has been the increasing use of technology. Sales, advertising, distribution, research, order fulfilment, virtually every aspect of marketing has been transformed by the computer, the Internet, and related technologies".

The overall ICT sector is of critical strategic importance to Ireland, with regard to the numbers employed and the sector's economic contribution. However, as Forfás

(Ireland's national policy advisory body for enterprise and science www. forfas.ie) explain "Globally, the sector is in the midst of a disruptive growth and innovation phase. This includes the adoption of cloud computing, the penetration of mobile devices and technologies and the Internet of things, the emergence of Big Data analytics, IT security, micro- and nanoelectronics and the adoption of social technologies in both the personal and business environment" (2014, p.4).

ICTs improve a firms marketing efforts by allowing for faster access to the market, rising selection power, improving communication within the firm and with customers, helping to identifying markets, improving operational efficiency and reducing business costs (Piris et al., 2004; Simmons et al., 2011). Taylor (2003) identified that competitive marketing strategies can be formulated and personal efforts of marketers can be improved though information technology implementation. Targeting skills are a basic feature of all marketing strategies and ICTs enable marketers to identify, filter and approach, both the prospective and profitable customer. Kowalkowski et al. (2013) describe how ICTs provide organisations with opportunities to pursue a differentiation strategy through enhanced services offering. Extensive service offerings have been found to improve customer relations (Penttinten and Palmer, 2007). In fact it has been argued successful relationship marketing can only be practiced through the integration of marketing and ICTs (Fisher et al., 2000). Thus, use of ICT is not limited to any specific domain or process. It can be applied in all the departments to increase business profits. Sahut and Jegham (2008, p.213) concur ICTs "support all key business

processes and significantly enhance both the operational effectiveness and the strategic direction of organisations of all types".

Goldsmith (2004) discusses how technological advances have resulted in an abundance of information and data at marketers' disposal, more than ever before. For example, CRM programs, loyalty programs, brand tracking, satisfaction studies, web logs and transaction records generate vast amounts of customer information. Matthyssens and Vandenbempt (2008, pp. 317) explain this upsurge is due to the increase in:

- Communication
- Availability of information
- Remote accessibility
- Bandwidth
- Connectivity

In addition, mobile technology advancement allows for this information to be accessed and acted on at any time. Therefore, as Struse (2000) contends information technologies increase the complexity, richness, as well as the knowledge mobility of information. Kowalkowski et al (2013, p.) maintain, "Increasingly, new information and communication technology (ICT) makes value creation based more on gathering and using informational content and less on tangible benefits". Consequently, today's marketing managers must have the technological skills to access this information, analyse it and use it appropriately.

Furthermore, marketing research methods have been transformed as technology exerts its influence on research. Goldsmith (2004) describes how developments in technology allow for online surveying, electronic monitoring and even brain scanning methods to gauge consumer reactions. Market researchers now obtain secondary data, conduct focus groups, test advertising, and conduct surveys almost exclusively online. Therefore, additionally for research, marketing practitioners require comprehensive IT capabilities.

Buenstorf (2007) found that the biggest advantage of implementation and use of ICT is the low costs of communications. ICTs allows marketers to use multimedia communication tools such as audio visual material, graphics and text. By using these tools, product presentation as well as demonstration is enhanced significantly (Ward and Peppard, 2002). Automation systems and database applications also allow marketers to respond to customers' needs using these tools as all critical information is readily available. This highly assists marketers in decision making (Brookes et al., 2004). Therefore, having technology skills enable marketers to access better information, in a shorter time span, responding to the customers fast, enhancing the quality of customer interaction and also allows for the provision of a personalised and customised service. Thus, IT capabilities are essential for the effective practice of marketing today. Brady et al., (2002, p.568) concur "A core requirement of marketing practitioners is knowledge of IT".

However, despite a range of benefits that can be availed by marketers, technological skills still remain limited and underdeveloped (Ellen and Pilling, 2002). As Sahut and

Jegham (2008) crucially explain having enhanced Information and Communication Technology is not enough, it is imperative it is accepted and used appropriately by the marketing department, in order to achieve the benefits. Rhodes (2009) argues ICT increases business productivity by enabling organisational change and is not merely a tool for automating existing processes.

Nonetheless, it is obvious numerous ICTs have had a major impact on marketing and the role these technologies play within today's practice of the discipline is indisputable. In fact the practice of marketing is completely intertwined with ICTs. Consequently, those who are responsible for carrying out marketing activities in the company should learn and enhance their ICT and marketing knowledge levels by utilising information technology efficiently and effectively (Fang et.al, 2008). As Brady and Palmer (2004, p.133) contend there is absolute "evidence of a profession which has a whole new Pandora's Box of IT applications, highlighting the need for technological capabilities within marketing. This demands a new skill from marketers, namely the understanding of IT both internally and externally".

2.4. The relevance of marketing education to marketing practitioner needs

"The interrelationship of theory and practice defines marketing as a discipline. In this it differs from subjects like history or sociology; it is more akin to medicine or law. Theory and practice inform each other and when they start to become divorced, problems occur. The discipline loses its focus and distinctiveness and the opportunity to improve practice and drive relevant knowledge forward is lost" (Cox, 2006, p.78).

The apparent chasm (or indeed chasms as there are more than one) between academics and practitioners' concepts of marketing is well documented and has been researched and discussed in numerous articles (Brady et al., 2002; Brady and Palmer, 2004; Brennan, 2004; Clarke et al., 2006; Cox, 2006; Goldsmith, 2004; McCole, 2004; Miller et al., 2012; Stanton, 2006; Stephens et al., 2009) In fact two whole special issues of Marketing Intelligence and Planning (MIP, 2004; MIP, 2006) were dedicated to the topic. Ardley (2008) and Warren and O'Toole (2005) claim this mismatch between theory and practice is increasing. Many critics contend much of the marketing curriculum relates to strategy and high level decisions (Davis et al., 2002). However, as Wellman (2010, p.121) suggests many (if not most) practitioners may possess such knowledge but are employed in operational and tactical roles such as promotions and channel management with limited prospects to apply "the full lexicon of strategic marketing theory and tools". A view endorsed by Brownlie and Saren (1995, p.617) "The high-mindedness of marketing theory and the low deeds of marketing practice".

An influential article by Ghoshal (2005) not only finds examples of business theory bearing little relation to workplace reality but additionally suggests that the theory taught in business schools is responsible for recent bad management practice. Warren and O'Toole (2005) identified that many business academics give effective tuition on scientific methodology nonetheless cannot deal with multidisciplinary matters. Therefore, it is proposed that much of what is taught is of academic interest, but not likely to be of value in every day practice. Tapp (2004, p.4) concurs "marketing is fundamentally a practice".

As Stephens et al. (2010) articulate another major difficulty is that most business theories are developed for large organisations and not pertinent to Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Martin and Chapman (2006, p.161) agree "Academia has been criticised for providing industry with graduates who are theoretically strong but lack practical experience, and also for being neglectful of the SME sector". CSO (2013) figures show SMEs account for 99.8 per cent of all active businesses and employ almost seven in every ten people engaged in the workforce in Ireland. Therefore, the profile of companies in Ireland are heavily skewed towards SME's but yet small companies are neglected in the majority of marketing theory taught at Irish business schools.

As Nicholas et al. (2011, p. 229) maintain "an SME cannot be viewed as a miniature version of a large company". Gray and Mabey (2005) found differences occur in areas including structure, flexibility, policies and management. "For this reason, it is important that academics actively translate theory to an extent that its application(s) can be seen by SMEs" (Stephens et. al., 2010, p.553). Forfás (2004) determined that Irish third-level education programmes were not fulfilling the needs of Irish SMEs and that graduates were lacking in practical business skills. This correlates with the findings of Stephens and Onofrei (2009). Paradoxically, Johnston et al., (2008) maintain education and training is crucial to SME business success. Boter and Lundstrom (2005) established that shortcomings in training and skills are reasons for SME organisational and market failure. Ominously, studies have found low levels of qualifications among Irelands marketing practitioners (Brady and Palmer, 2004; Forfás, 2004).

The health of the SMEs sector is crucial for both the recovery and the continued development of the Irish economy. A Forfás (2004) report suggested third level business curricula could better meet the needs of SMEs by:

- Including modules in third level marketing courses that apply to the practical skills required by SMEs.
- The introduction of industry placements as an element of marketing programmes.
- Improved communication between third-level institutions and SMEs.

Martin and Chapman (2006, p. 169) contend "Traditional marketing courses are too narrow for many SMEs. Graduates need to understand the philosophy, culture and environment of SMEs, and this requires a broader skills base and practical experience. Programmes should be demand-led. Universities should "partner" with SMEs, the professional marketing bodies and business support providers, in order to ensure that a better skill match is achieved".

Therefore, as Ardley (2008, p.372) maintains "Marketing in practice is not constituted by textbook theory, but by context and the individual perceptions of people as they carry out their actions and routines in organisations". Consequently, if marketing is determined by context, when a contextual element such as ICT changes, it can have major repercussions on the reach of the field (Brady et al., 2002). Mintzberg et al. (1995, p.7) contend new technologies change marketing strategy "With few exceptions – largely introduced by modern technology – the most basic principles of strategy were in place and recorded long before the Christian era". Therefore, as

synopsised by Goldsmith (2004, p.10) “The practice of marketing management is continually changing as it reflects the organizational, scientific and technological, economic, and social contexts in which it is embedded. As a constantly evolving discipline, academic marketing should keep up with these changes. Marketing educators must not only impart the timeless marketing principles to students, they must prepare them for the real world where these changes are taking place”.

New Information and Communication Technologies have led to re-mapping of marketing practice. This suggests the need of a recognised technological skill set as an instrumental requirement of marketing graduates. Thus, “It has been argued that contemporary practice is increasingly of an instrumental type; but that an intrinsic approach, which emphasises the ability to think critically about an object, has distinct advantages which should be realised alongside more practical instrumental goals” (Clarke et. al., 2006, p.199).

2.5. Contemporary Marketing Practice (CMP)

“How do we ensure that academics create knowledge that is relevant, reaches the appropriate audiences, informs practice and contributes to further development of the profession and discipline of marketing?” (Cox, 2006, p.77).

The theory – practice debate inspired a group of researchers at the University of Auckland to develop the CMP (Contemporary Marketing Practice) programme of research. It provides a framework within which the practice and application of marketing can be studied. The programme was founded in 1996 and has developed into a global study carried out by a network of marketing academics at numerous

universities. The programme applied an empirical multi-theoretical approach. As Brodie et al. (2008, p.85) articulate "A guiding principle of CMP was to employ multiple perspectives in conducting research and to balance theoretical arguments with evidence of managerial practice". The findings of CMP researchers have been refined and corroborated across a wide range of industries and countries. As (Brodie et. al., 2009, p.366) acknowledge "Nearly 50 CMP-derived journal articles have been highly cited and, as a corpus provide considerable insight to the theory and practice of contemporary marketing organisations".

According to Brodie et al., (2008, p.84) the two objectives of the CMP are:

1. To profile the contemporary marketing practices of different types of firms competing in different markets and sectors, in an international environment.
2. To develop an understanding of how firms relate to their markets in a manner that integrates both traditional and modern views of marketing, and incorporates an understanding of both the experiences and consequences of different practices.

Initial findings suggested four types of marketing are practiced by firms classified as one *transactional* and three *relational* – database, interaction and network (Coviello et. al., 1997).

Coviello et al. (2003) expand:

1. Transaction Marketing - Focuses on the marketing mix to attract and satisfy customers.
2. Database Marketing – Uses database technology to facilitate and personalise customer relationships.
3. Interaction Marketing – Involves face-to-face interaction to develop customer relationships.
4. Network Marketing – Involves committing resources to developing a firm's position in a network of various firm level relationships.

The research maintains that organisations do not engage in one single type of marketing practice but; rather, several types are simultaneously practiced. According to Brodie et al. (2008) the inclusion of ICT in to the original classification was debated but it was confined to Database Marketing as the marketing literature had not thus far developed relating to other ICTs. However, Coviello et al (2001, p.26) recommend incorporating a fifth practice of e-marketing, defining it as "using the internet and other interactive technologies to create and mediate dialogue between the firm and identified customers."

Research was subsequently carried out with the e-marketing dimension incorporated in to the CMP classification scheme by Brady et al. (2002a), Brady et al. (2002b), Coviello et al. (2003) and Brookes et al. (2004). These studies determined the role information technologies played within a firm based on Orlikowskys (2000) three categories - enhancing, reinforcing or transformational. Coviello et al. (2003)

observed the level of e-marketing employed in a firm echoed the degree to whether information technologies played a reinforcing, enhancing or transforming role within the firm. Findings in the studies by Brady et al. (2002a), Brady et al. (2002b) and Brookes (2004) demonstrate a pragmatic adoption of new ITs, highlighting the importance of ITs that reinforced and enhanced rather that transformed a firms marketing practices.

However, more recent studies by Brodie et al. (2007) and Miller et al. (2013) found not only is e-marketing increasing in firms but it is improving marketing performance. Additionally, another recent study by Brady et al. (2008) contents the position of ICTs in marketing is proliferating and appeals for further developments with regard to ICT within the CMP framework. According to Brady et al. (2008, p. 109) "It appears ICT assimilation in marketing occurred in a more evolutionary and measured fashion that reflects the earlier stages of Nolan's (1973) and Zuboff's (1988) stage theory of ICT assimilation – which includes automation, information and transformation". Brady et al. (2008) maintain that marketing practice is conforming to this theory because of the triumph of ICT use for automation and the intensifying significance of information and data, will push firms to the transformation stage.

Furthermore Brady et al. (2008, p.112) contends "that future research on ICT deployment and use within the CMP framework needs to address the skillset required to enable marketers to successfully participate in, or even lead, the cross-functional challenge of ICT selection, implementation, and use". Numerous studies documenting the merger of IT and marketing have recognised marketing's slow

adoption of ICTs and it is argued this is due to a lack of skills rather than a lack of technology. Critically these studies appeal for marketing academics to address marketing practice's lack of a technological skill set (Brady et al., 2002a; Brady et al. 2002b; Brady and Palmer, 2004; Brady et al. 2008; Miller et al., 2013).

"ICT is now not only a normal but a central part of marketing practice, and it is important that marketing academics identify, understand, and cater to the conceptual, theoretical and educational requirements of those practitioners that try to successfully deploy an increasingly large range of complex ICTs both internally in their organisations, and at the customer interface" (Brady et. al 2008, p.112).

2.6. Development of ICT Skills through education

In Ireland, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and development body for higher education and research. Higher Education is provided primarily by 7 Universities, 14 Institutes of Technology and 7 Colleges of Education. 'The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030' is regarded as the future blueprint for the higher education sector (HEA, 2011). In May 2013 a re-organisation of the sector was announced by the Minister for Education and Skills which will allow for the future establishment of Technological Universities and the mergers of institutes of technology (HEA, 2013). Higher education programmes are designed and developed based on the National Framework of Qualifications. The Qualifications Education and Training Act (1999) require the Higher Education Training Awards Council to govern standards of knowledge, skills and competences to be attained. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN www.skillsireland.ie) brings together

industry, academia and State agencies and advises the Government on current and future skills requirements and on other labour market issues that impact on Ireland's economic growth.

The National Skills Database (NSD) was developed in 2003 and it has been designed to gather all available information about the supply and demand of skills in Ireland. As such, it provides a platform for the timely analysis and forecasting of the labour market at occupational level. The information held in the database is used to support the work of the EGFSN. It is summarised and published in two annual reports: National Skills Bulletin and Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply: Trends in Education/Training Outputs. The EGFSN (2012) report specifically highlighted vacancies in digital marketing positions, while the EGFSN (2013) report predicted future increase in demand in the areas of ICT and sales, marketing and customer services.

The overall ICT sector worldwide is in the middle of an innovation and growth phase. The disruptive nature of these innovations means there is lack of professionals with the appropriate ICT skills globally. Furthermore, in Ireland there will be an estimated increase in demand of 5% per annum for these professionals with high level ICT skills until 2018 (Forfás, 2014). A preliminary ICT action plan was developed by industry and government in 2012 to address the issue (Education, 2012). Substantial progress has been made in meeting the targets in the Plan. Previously only 45% of the skills demand was met from domestic higher education programmes, whereas by 2014 domestic higher education systems are anticipated to meet over 60% of industry

demand (Forfás, 2014). This demonstrates the flexibility and responsiveness of the Irish education system. It is clearly government policy to increase the supply of IT graduates in the Irish economy in order to strengthen competitiveness. “There are few drivers which will be more important to global job creation in the coming years than the development of ICT skills. Ireland already has huge strengths in this area: a thriving ICT enterprise base, both indigenous and multinational” (Forfás, 2014, p.3). Irish business and marketing academics should follow the precedent set by ICT action plan and petition to become involved with the scheme or develop a comparable scheme. Consequently, the improvement of ICT skills among business and marketing graduates would have an influential impact on their employability.

2.7. Incorporating an ICT dimension to marketing education

“Thus far, the marketing domain has largely ignored the technological environment's impact on theory. New developments have been discussed as they apply to marketing management practice, and new research topics and approaches have been presented, but one can argue marketing theory will remain incomplete if it continues to ignore the influence of technology “(Goldsmith, 2004, p.15).

The successful integration of ICT in to marketing practice requires that marketers perform roles above and beyond their traditional and authorised areas of competency. For marketers, these transformations are very challenging and require a whole new skill set. Modules that integrate ICT skills should be embedded in the design of all third-level marketing courses. “The enhanced need for technology in marketing must also form a core part of marketing education” (Brady and Palmer,

2004, p.133).This is possible only by the collaborative approach of higher educational institutes and government agencies for learning and skill development. However, as Stanton (2006, p.234) articulates “How can marketing educators adapt to the changing nature of the marketing landscape in a pedagogically sound manner? There is no panacea that will be effective in all settings”.

A paper by Miller et al. (2012) discusses how new technologies such as social applications, e-commerce, business geographic information systems and Web site design tools that include image and video editing and sharing and business mapping, are impacting marketing practice and a university’s effort to integrate the skills needed to use these technologies into the curriculum. The paper argues marketing departments have generally reacted to the evolved technological environment by adding token courses in social media or e-commerce. However, the study maintains ICTs must be incorporated in to a variety of modules to augment the introduction, review, and assessment phases. Miller et al. (2013, p.112) emphasis marketing graduates “must be able to master a broad range of new technologies quickly and exploit them effectively if they are to compete in this new information-rich environment. Thus, the Initiative’s overall goal is to enhance students’ capabilities as independent learners who are able to integrate their understanding of marketing concepts and principles with their mastery of new marketing technologies as they emerge”. The paper also calls for the need to replicate the ‘Emerging Technologies in Marketing Initiative’ at other universities.

Stanton's (2006, p.243) paper describes the development of a course in data mining that was created to aid marketing students in developing analytical and information technology skills and more importantly to facilitate students "position themselves at the nexus of marketing, information technology, and analytics". The paper stresses the significance of imparting graduates with the capacity to use, analyse and interpret the colossal amount of data they will be confronted with in the workforce. "The ability to be "information literate" is a skill necessary for many entry-level positions in marketing and has increasingly become a differentiator among candidates" (Stanton, 2006, p.236). Stanton (2006) maintains information technology should not be perceived as a general skill but as an essential element of discipline-specific knowledge and skills and argues the key to fostering information literacy in students is in subjecting them to hands-on exercises that enable them to select, evaluate, and use information of several types from several sources. Furthermore, the author advocates a cross-disciplinary and cross-functional approach to bridging the academic-practitioner divide, due to the fact that borders between disciplines are becoming tougher to delineate. Stanton (2006, p.234) maintains the development of new courses as the most practical solution because they provide universities "with a greater degree of pedagogical flexibility, and, at the same time, allows for quicker integration of new ideas and approaches that can have a more immediate impact on students". The paper additionally petitions for other universities to adapt their curriculum to more fully deal with technology within marketing.

Harrigan and Hulbert (2011) conduct a comprehensive analysis of marketing textbooks and degree programs in the UK and present an 'old Marketing DNA'. A new

image of marketing education the 'new marketing DNA' is then suggested. Regarding the structure and content of this 'new marketing DNA', it is contended that the pervasive and disruptive nature of technology in marketing is better represented and catered for. The authors then document how at the University of Southampton they have acted on this research and appointed an advisory board of marketing practitioners as well as basing a marketing degree on the 'new Marketing DNA'. Again the authors call for other universities to replicate the initiative so as to respond to the impact of new technologies on marketing practice.

2.8. Conclusion

This literature review has advanced the accomplishment of the main aims of this research by addressing how Web 2.0 technologies have impacted and evolved the practice of marketing and by reviewing the relevance of marketing education via:

- Profiling the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice and demonstrating these technologies have had a major impact on marketing practice in Ireland and globally, and this influence is predicted to increase over the next few years.
- Assessing the role of ICTs within marketing practice and determining the practice of marketing is completely intertwined with the use of ICTs.
- Investigating the relevance of marketing education to marketing practitioner needs and uncovering evidence of marketing education not serving marketing practice needs. This evidence underlines the fact that there is a need to refine and develop higher education programmes so

that the skills required by employers can be transferred to graduates. The literature also finds evidence marketing theory not being applicable to SME'S.

- Examining the findings of the CMP (Contemporary Marketing Practice) studies and demonstrating how the CMP studies provide a framework from within which the practice and application of marketing can be studied. However, more importantly this literature review puts forward arguments that content the position of ICTs in marketing is proliferating and therefore, there needs to be further developments with regard to the inclusion of ICT within the CMP framework.
- Reviewing a general development of ICT skills in educational from an Irish context. Furthermore, this literature review has additionally demonstrated that ICT skills are in demand globally and these will be the skills required most important for global job creation in the coming years.
- Evaluating how universities abroad are pioneering initiatives that are incorporating an ICT dimension in to third – level marketing courses. Articles reviewed describe the principles, development, pedagogical content, and academic structure of initiatives at universities in the US and Britain which are incorporating an IT dimension to marketing education. This suggests universities in other countries have acknowledged the transformational impact of new technologies on marketing practice, recognised today's marketing practitioners are lacking a skill set and have taken action at course level.

In conclusion, this literature review reveals the overall ICT sector in middle of growth and innovation phase with the rapid adoption of social technologies, the advent of bid data and the penetration of mobile devices. The literature has most significantly demonstrated that the successful integration of these ICTs in to marketing practice requires that marketers perform roles above and beyond their traditional and authorised areas of competency. For marketers, these transformations are very challenging and require a whole new skill set. Numerous studies have documented the merger of IT and marketing have recognised marketing's slow adoption of ICTs is due to a lack of skills rather than a lack of technology. Critically these studies appeal for marketing academics to address marketing practice's lack of a technological skill set. Modules that integrate ICT skills should be embedded in the design of all third-level marketing courses, not just the standard offerings such as e-commerce or social media. Furthermore, the literature proves this is possible only by the collaborative approach of higher educational institutes and government agencies for learning and skill development. Additionally, the literature reveals SME's should be incorporated to any initiatives so as to guarantee the correct skill set is achieved.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1. Introduction

There are extensive definitions of research in the published literature, however, Creswell (2008) simply and succinctly defines research as a series of steps used to collect and assess information to enhance our knowledge of a subject or an issue. The steps entail:

1. Proposing a question.
2. Gathering data to solve the question; and
3. Putting forward an answer to the question.

3.2. Research Objectives

The main aims of this research are to uncover the opinions of marketing practitioners, marketing academics and post-graduate marketing students on how Web 2.0 technologies have impacted and evolved the practice of marketing and to investigate is marketing education relevant for this changed technological landscape.

To this end the six research objectives are to:

1. Profile the impact and role of Web 2.0 technologies in marketing practice
2. Identify what ICT knowledge, skills, and abilities are required by marketers practitioners
3. Investigate the relevance of marketing education to marketing practitioner needs

4. Explore how an ICT dimension can be incorporated in to third – level marketing courses
5. Present a valuable insight for marketing practitioners, academics and students on the relationship between of ICTs and marketing practice
6. Add to the existing literature on the significance of ICTs to marketing practice

3.3. Research Questions

To accomplish the research objectives, the following three questions will be investigated:

1. How have Web 2.0 technologies impacted and evolved the practice of marketing?
2. Has marketing education remained relevant in this new technological landscape?
3. What are the views of the relevant stakeholders?

3.4. Research philosophy

A consideration of philosophy is a fundamental phase of the research process as it compels the researcher to explore all perspectives, which leads to both a development of their research skills and a conviction that the most apt methodology is being utilised which will, consequently, increases confidence in the research results (Corley and Gioia, 2011; Weber, 2004). Numerous philosophical approaches to research are possible with the most common in the social sciences being positivism (or functionalism) and constructivism (or interpretivism). However, this research

lends itself more to pragmatism, where the research problem, not the research methods, takes precedent, using all approaches to investigate the problem (Creswell, 2003; Mason, 2006; Prasad & Prasad, 2002).

A pragmatic approach allows the researcher to match philosophy, methodology, and the research problem. In concurrence with this perspective and given the nature of the issues under investigation, mixed methods were deemed be the most apt option for this research. As articulated by Creswell (2003, p.11) "For the mixed methods researcher, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis in the mixed methods study".

3.5. Research Design

The research design applied to this work can be defined as exploratory and descriptive. Malhotra (1999) maintains exploratory research affords the researcher a greater insight to the research problem. Exploratory research was used to generate ideas/hypotheses about the research topic, initially through secondary data analysis, and subsequently through qualitative research, namely in depth, semi-structured interviews with marketing practitioners. The final phase of the primary research, the survey, uses descriptive research to describe the opinions of three stakeholder groups (marketing practitioners, academics and post-graduate students) on the evolution of marketing practice in the Web 2.0 era and the relevance of marketing education through quantitative research. As Saunders et al., (2007) contend descriptive research is a beneficial extension of exploratory research.

3.6. Sampling

Yin (2011, p.88) contends "The goal or purpose for selecting the specific study units is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data, given your topic of study". Therefore, non-probability sampling, which has also been referred to by Maxwell (2005) as purposeful selection or criterion-based selection was undertaken in this research. Convenience sampling was the technique that was applied to the interviewees selected and the survey of post-graduate students. This was due to the researcher having easy access to the participants as they were drawn from the researchers' social networks. This enabled the researcher to achieve the desired sample size in a relatively fast and inexpensive way. Furthermore, the convenience sample allowed for the collection of useful data that may not have been possible using probability sampling techniques, which would have required more formal access to lists of populations.

The criteria selected for the interviewees permitted an emphasis on interviewees with knowledge of the research topic, namely marketing practitioners. The sample size of four was determined by the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives to investigate the attitudes of marketing practitioners in a wide range of organisations. Therefore, interviews were conducted with marketing practitioners in the public sector, a multinational, a national retailer, and a small start –up enterprise.

The sample of post-graduate students was drawn from NUI Galway (NUIG) and Letterkenny Institute of technology (LYIT) and these participants were also accessed from the researcher's social network. The two groups had completed a work

placement as an integral part of their respective MSc. in Marketing Practice programmes and this ensured they had relevant industry experience. This sampling technique resulted in an exceptionally high response rate due to all post-graduate students requiring reciprocal participation in their own personal research projects. Out of the 78 questionnaires sent to post-graduate students, 63 could be used for analysis, which represents an 81% response rate.

For the survey of marketing academics, a list was compiled of third institutes in Ireland - the seven Universities and 14 Institutes of Technology. E-mail addresses for members of all business faculties were then gathered. Institutions were eliminated from the sample if the institution chose not to publish faculty e-mail addresses. Ultimately, out of the 229 sent to marketing academics, 26 could be used for analysis and this represents a response rate of 11%.

The sample of marketing practitioners were drawn from an existing list of e-mail addresses of organisations in the North West of Ireland. The survey was distributed by e-mail to a single respondent in each firm, generically described as the "marketing manager". Out of the 1723 questionnaires sent to marketing practitioners 89 could be for analysis, this represents a response rate of 5%. Malhotra (1999) contends the response rate for mail surveys is usually less than 15 per cent and the results from the two surveys of academics and practitioners correspond.

3.7. Data Collection Methods

Creswell (2003, p.4) maintains "Philosophical ideas must be combined with broad approaches to research (strategies) and implemented with specific procedures

(methods). Thus, a framework is needed that combines the elements of philosophical ideas, strategies, and methods into the three approaches to research". The data collection for this research applied an initial phase of secondary data collection, preceded by a mixed method framework, of exploratory sequential strategy, as described by Creswell (2003), consisting of qualitative research (semi-structured interviews) and quantitative research techniques (survey).

Qualitative research creates rich, detailed and valid data that contributes to an in-depth knowledge of the issue. One of the main objectives of qualitative research is to gain a preliminary insight into research problems (Malhotra, 1999). As Shiu et al. (2009, p.173) maintain "Qualitative research tends to focus on the collection of detailed amounts of primary data from relatedly small samples of subjects by asking questions or observing behaviour". Whereas: quantitative research facilitates reliable, population based and generalisable data collection, in an accurate and objective manner (Mason, 2006). However, Malhotra (1999) and Saunders et al. (2003), argue the importance of viewing both qualitative and quantitative methods as complementary rather that viewing one superior to the other.

The initial phase of secondary data collection for this work comprised of:

1. A content analysis of job vacancy adverts for marketing managers and assistants, which presented data on the ICT knowledge and skills that Irish employers are seeking;
2. A review of all third-level institutes marketing curriculum, which presented data on the ICT knowledge and skills areas covered in Irish marketing courses;

3. A review of all pertinent research reports and academic journal articles – which provided insights into the role and impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice that has been uncovered in previous empirical studies.

This method of secondary data collection was prescribed by Gray et al. (2007), in a widely cited article, and was deemed a relevant methodology to replicate. Information collected from the above secondary sources was used to inform the design of the primary research. Considering the objectives of this dissertation, the primary research for this work consisted of the completion of two phases, namely semi-structured interviews and a survey.

3.7.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

The application of in-formal/semi-structured interviews was deemed a suitable methodological vehicle for this work given the aim of obtaining a depth to the data through an open, detailed and frank discussion with marketing practitioners (Underwood, 2003). Furthermore, the in-depth interview was undertaken as the first step in this research process to produce ideas/hypotheses about the issues being examined so that these could then be examined further in the survey. The opinions of marketing practitioners on how Web 2.0 technologies have impacted and evolved the practice of marketing and a discussion on what skills are necessary to utilise these technologies were discussed. Alreck and Settle (2004) contend that personal interviewing affords an unsurpassed opportunity for close contact and two-way interaction or conversation between the researcher and respondent. Saunders et al. (2003) assert that interviews are a valuable means of gathering reliable data that is pertinent to the research objectives; furthermore this work expands, semi-structured

interviews also permit the researcher to cover a wide range of themes, which allows for great flexibility.

This phase of the research involved four semi-structured interviews with marketing managers from four representative organisations. During the interview, the purpose and context of the study and a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity were conveyed to the participant and it was requested they sign a consent form (see Appendix No. 1 and No. 2 for information and consent form). The value of their contribution to the success of this study was also noted, however, it was stressed their contributions were entirely voluntary. Two face-to-face interviews and two telephone interviews were undertaken in May 2014, (see Appendix No. 6 for interview log). Dillon et al. (1996) contends that to be effective, the researcher must observe six essential procedures, comprising of:

1. The researcher should prevent a condescending manner and utilise only familiar terminologies.
2. The researcher should place questions indirectly and informatively.
3. The researcher should stay detached and objective.
4. The researcher should prevent questions and questions structure that promote 'yes' or 'no' answers.
5. The researcher should use probe questions to ensure all pertinent details, emotions and attitudes are explored.

6. The researcher should present an atmosphere that allows the interviewee to speak freely, yet allowing the discussion to remain focused on the research topic.

Although the interviews were conducted using the preceding protocol, respondents were allowed to expand, illustrate and digress. As prescribed by Carson et al. (2001) questions were not asked in a specified manner, rather the questions were guided by a pre-defined list of issues (see Appendix No. 7 for theme sheet) and instead the interviewees' answers determined the order of questioning. Also, as Saunders et al. (2007) suggest, exploratory research is by nature adaptable and this flexibility afforded the researcher more scope during the interview process with the use of probe questions. This technique was implemented to prevent enforcing the logic of an a priori framework on the interviewees. That is, the interviewees were encouraged to report in their own words the key issues they deemed significant.

Saunders et al. (2003) contend in order to yield reliable data a comprehensive documentation of an interview must be produced in a timely manner. Notes were therefore recorded during the interviews and summarised within twenty four hours. The key advantages to this research of incorporating semi- structured interviews in to the data collection method include personal interaction, question diversity, flexibility and adaptability, use of probing techniques, ability to use physical stimuli, ability to observe respondents, and control over the survey environment. The theme sheet allowed various issues to be explored and examined in-depth.

However, although qualitative data may be gathered within a comparatively short time scope, it is hard to synopsise the data into major findings promptly. As Shui et al. (2009, p.173) suggest "Qualitative data analysis may involve subjective content, interpretation or semiotic analysis procedures that the researcher should be alert to." Further potential weaknesses of personal interviews include researcher bias, costs per respondent, geographic limitations, small sample size, convenience sampling with questionable response rates, and the complexity in getting demographics, which can all limit the interviewee's ability to generalise qualitative data to the population (Alreck and Settle, 2004; Holbrook et al., 2003).

Therefore, as Saunders et al. (2003) maintain, although interviews may be used as the sole method of data collection, it is generally beneficial to combine it with other methods. Consequently, in this work, the semi-structured interviews of marketing practitioners were followed by a survey of the three groups of stakeholders comprising of marketing practitioners, marketing academics and post-graduate marketing students.

3.7.2. Survey

The final phase of the primary research, the survey, attempts to describe the evolution of marketing practice in the Web 2.0 era, the impact and role of emerging ICTs and the relevance of marketing education through quantitative research. As Saunders et al., (2007) contend descriptive research may be a beneficial extension of exploratory research. The data from the survey will be examined by analysis of variance to assess the extent of convergences or divergence among the responses of

the relevant stakeholders of marketing practitioners, marketing academics and post-graduate marketing students.

With the lack of a complete corroborated scales, the questionnaire was designed based on a study of secondary data resources, including a content analysis of advertisements for marketing practitioners, a review of all Irish third-level institutes undergraduate marketing curriculum and an analysis of pertinent research reports and academic journal articles. Partial scales from previous relevant studies were modified and updated for the study. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews undertaken in phase one of the primary research were also used to inform the survey.

The final questionnaires (see Appendix No. 3-5 for copies of the questionnaires) drew on feedback from pilot questionnaires issued to one marketing practitioner, one marketing academic and one post graduate marketing student. The questionnaires differed slightly depending on target group. They were accompanied by a covering letter/e-mail (see Appendix No. 1 for a copy of the covering letter/email) and when posted, a stamped addressed return envelope to encourage a reply. The letter clarified the rationale of the survey and offered guarantees over confidentiality. As prescribed by Dillman (2000) to encourage participation respondents were offered a copy of the research findings. A mixed mode survey (internet and postal) was conducted throughout, May, June and July 2014. Meckel, et al. (2005) content a mixed-mode survey may be used as an incentive to boost the response rate. The questionnaire included four or five sections depending on target group (Fig. 3.1).

Survey Target Group	Marketing Academics	Marketing Practitioners	Post-graduate Marketing Students
A section to classify the organisation/Individual	Yes	Yes	Yes
A section to profile marketing practices in the firm	Not Applicable	Yes	Yes
A section pertaining to the impact and role of ICT's in marketing	Yes	Yes	Yes
A section pertaining to the skills and knowledge necessary for marketing practitice	Yes	Yes	Yes
A section pertaining to the relevance of marketing education	Yes	Not Applicable	Yes

Figure 3.1 Questionnaire sections

3.8. Measurement Techniques

Phase one of the primary research involved semi-structured interviews with marketing practitioners using a theme sheet (See Appendix No. 7) to structure the interview process. The researcher made detailed notes throughout and summarised the findings within twenty four hours.

Phase two of the primary research involved the design of a survey. The surveys consisted of general issues and category questions, mixes of rank-order rating scales, as well as dichotomous questions, to help explore specific issues.

3.9. Data analysis

Data gathered from the findings of the semi-structured interviews were documented, synopsised and examined in terms of the themes and issues explored throughout the interview. The analysis incorporated coding the responses. This synopsised data was then used to identify the main themes and issues that arose during the interview. Answers are presented in narrative form and direct quotations incorporated where feasible.

Data gathered from the survey was analysed using Excel software which permitted the completion of both simple and cross tabulation. The quantitative findings are predominantly illustrated in charts and tables.

3.10. Conclusion

This research was conducted to explore the perceptions of three stakeholder groups –marketing practitioners, academics and students on how Web 2.0 technologies have impacted and evolved the practice of marketing and to uncover has marketing education remained relevant in this changed technological landscape. The nature and requirements of the study research were best served by a mixed method methodology; both qualitative and quantitative methods systematically combined. This methodology can be described as exploratory and descriptive and provided comprehensive data that is rich and extensive. Furthermore, this process yielded evaluative research but also encompassed applied research which provided a greater understanding and awareness of the significance, role and application of Web 2.0 ICTs in marketing practice to the relevant stakeholders. The findings are discussed and analysed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis of the two primary data collection methods used for this research, the semi-structured interviews and the surveys. Phase one of the research analyses four semi-structured interviews with marketing practitioners and phase two discusses the findings of completed questionnaires from marketing practitioners, marketing academics and post-graduate marketing students.

4.2. Phase One: Semi-structured interviews

The interviews will be discussed under the main heading from the theme sheet (see appendix no. 7).

4.2.1. Profile of Interviewees

Interviews were conducted with marketing managers from the public sector, a multinational organisation, a national retailer, and a small start –up enterprise. Interviewees had been employed in their current position from between three and nineteen years and their combined experience in the field of marketing was over forty years. Only two interviewees had a third- level marketing qualification. This correlates with the findings in the literature of Brady and Palmer (2004) and Forfás (2004) relating to the low level of third – level qualifications among marketing practitioners in Ireland.

4.2.2. Profile of marketing practice within their organisation

Marketing practices were profiled by the interviewees using the CMP classification scheme of - transactional, databases, interaction, network and e-marketing recommended by Brady et al. (2002a), Brady et al. (2002b), Coviello et al. (2003) and Brookes et al. (2004) in the literature. The finding from the interviews correlated with the findings from the literature that organisations do not engage in one single type of marketing practice but; rather, several types are simultaneously practiced.

4.2.3. The evolution of marketing practice over the previous five to ten years

All interviewees noted how the economic collapse had an effect on budgets, requiring the marketing department to reduce spending and place more emphasis on accountable communications.

> *"Consumer data derived from web traffic, transactions and loyalty cards and CRM software has transformed marketing over the past few years as it has facilitated huge advances in targeting, segmentation and overall marketing performance"(Marketing practitioner in a national retailer, with nineteen years' industry experience).*

Furthermore, with the rise of the social web and relating technologies, interviewees discussed how marketing practitioners finally had the ability to justify the resources employed as well as the ability to quantify the effects. Within many organisations, marketing moved from a peripheral position to centre stage.

"Marketing used to have great difficulty defining its position in the organisation but over the past decade marketing has become renewed because of social media and the rise of e-commerce websites. SME's can now compete with big business and these small businesses, who would never have considered hiring a marketing person in the past are actively subscribing to all aspects of digital marketing" (Marketing practitioner in a national retailer, with nineteen years' industry experience).

This interviewees recounts the past difficulties of the marketing department to justify its expenditure in measurable results. To wit Henry Ford's infamous quote "Fifty per cent of my marketing dollars are wasted – I just don't know which half." New technologies have now rendered a lot of marketing activities objectively verifiable. Furthermore, this interviewee's assessment is consistent with findings in the literature by Miller et al. (2013, p. 121) that traditional marketing tools have become more accessible to SME's through the emergence of low-cost, integrated hosting and content platforms.

4.2.4. The future of marketing practice over the next five to ten years

"In the next five – ten years we will advance into an environment where a brand experience and a technological one will be unintelligible, the marketing and IT department needs to be interconnected" (Marketing practitioner in a small start-up enterprise, with seven years' industry experience).

Interviewees' unanimously predicted the need for cross-disciplinary teams of marketing and IT to routinely collaborate together. It was articulated that marketing practitioners "need to be on the same page as the IT department" (Marketing practitioner in the public sector, with sixteen years' industry experience).

Furthermore, many interviewees estimated an immense growth in the importance of mobile marketing.

> *"Exploiting mobile devices and platforms to present customers with actual value, functionality and convenience, not just using the mobile platform to interrupt customers, is the future of marketing" (Marketing practitioner in a multinational organisation, with three years' industry experience).*

Again, another interviewee articulated that for most organisations the most powerful marketing medium of the future will be the on the mobile platform.

> *"Successful marketing in the next five years is dependent on marketer's knowledge and expertise of mobile marketing" (Marketing practitioner in a national retailer, with nineteen years industry experience).*

Interviewees discussed the importance for companies to continuously develop new ways to keep abreast of consumer behaviour and attitudes online so as to ensure swift responses to safeguard brand identity.

> *"The future of marketing will include continuous monitoring of sentiment on blogs and forums and constantly engaging in a two-way conversation with consumers" (Marketing practitioner in a multinational organisation, with three years' industry experience).*

4.2.5. Skills required by marketing practitioners

Team work, leadership and creativity were consistently put forward by all interviewees' as vital skills for marketing professionals. Additionally, all interviewee's contended a proficient IT aptitude and skill set will be an integral component to the practice of marketing in the future and the most coveted marketing skills were mobile marketing and analytics.

"My company is now seeking to hire graduates who can code, comprehend analytics and grasp the application of social media, not only personally but on a profession capacity. Of course traditional skills such as creativity and teamwork continue to be important. Marketing graduates nonetheless require them, but together with technical skills too" (Marketing practitioner in a multinational organisation, with three years' industry experience).

This subscribes to Stanton's (2006, p.243) study which suggested academia should aid students "position themselves at the nexus of marketing, information technology, and analytics".

"The paradox is big data, web analytics, mobile, content marketing and social media have transformed marketing practice however, to find marketing graduates with the right skills to make use of these mechanisms is extremely difficult and this presents massive problems for employers and the marketing discipline in general" (Marketing practitioner in a small start-up enterprise, with seven years' industry experience).

4.2.6. Relevance of third-level education to marketing practice

Only two of the interviewees had received a third level marketing qualification. However, they all agreed from experience of working with recent marketing graduates that traditional marketing courses seem to place the greatest emphasis on building soft skills such as creativity, team work and communication. Furthermore, they emphasised that these soft skills just aren't sufficient anymore as employment in marketing becomes progressively more technical and data-driven. The interviewees unanimously agreed finding graduates with the entire range of skills required was virtually impossible.

"From my company's perspective we find it difficult to find sufficiently numerate graduates. We occasionally hire statistics graduates but then they need to be trained to build their comprehension of marketing. The other option is to hire a traditional marketing graduates and subsequently teach them to become more analytically and technically knowledgeable. Our company is not really set up to afford the kind of in-depth training that either of these alternatives entails. Marketing degrees should provide students with the more technical and quantitative skills that they now need" (Marketing practitioner in a small start-up enterprise, with seven years' industry experience).

This analysis also concurs with Stanton's (2006, p.243) paper that described the development of a course in data mining that was created to aid marketing students in developing analytical and information technology skills. Furthermore, Stanton (2006) argued to be technically knowledgeable was essential for even entry level marketing positions.

"To assume today's graduates 'the digital natives' already have the required technological skill set is wrong and I've heard this claim from marketing academics. These graduates are similar to all of us, using technologies with which they are comfortable with regularly and not using others completely. Also, how you use these technologies personally is not automatically the same as how you would make use of it professionally" (Marketing practitioner in the public sector, with sixteen years' industry experience).

Again, this view corresponds to a paper by Miller et al. (2013) that emphasised the need for marketing graduates to be able to integrate their understanding of marketing concepts and principles with their mastery of new marketing technologies as they emerge.

4.2.7. The role of technology within marketing practice

The consensus from the interviewees was that technology and marketing practice are completely interconnected, making it extremely difficult to separate the two from each other. The interviewees were asked to determine the role information technologies played within their firm based on Orlikowskys (2000) three categories - enhancing, reinforcing or transformational. They consistently stated that ITs had transformed their firms marketing practices. This subscribes to Brady's (2008) contention that the triumph of ICT use for automation and the intensifying significance of information and data are pushing firms to the transformation stage.

4.3. Phase Two: Surveys

The surveys will be discussed under the following five main section headings:

4.3.1. Profile of Interviewee/Organisation

The research population in the survey included three groups. Group one consisted of marketing practitioners in organisations in the North West region of Ireland. Group two consisted of marketing academics at the seven Universities and 14 Institutes of Technology in Ireland. Group three consisted of post-graduate marketing students from NUI Galway and Letterkenny Institute of technology who had completed a work placement as part of their MSc. in Marketing Practice. The survey probed academics on the subject of marketing practices in general, whereas, practitioners and students were surveyed on marketing practices in their respective organisations.

Profile of Academics

The profile of the academics demonstrates that the majority were significantly experienced and held senior positions, nearly 90% of the academics who responded had been teaching marketing for over five years, while 22% had been teaching for over twenty years. Over two thirds held a lecturer position, while 17% were professors. Digital marketing and finance were each equally the most common marketing specialism with both at 31%, followed by entrepreneurship at 23%, a further 15% stated social marketing as their specialism, which could also be considered a division of digital marketing. Therefore, these findings suggest marketing academics in Ireland have significant technological knowledge. Paradoxically, the findings of the content analysis of third-level marketing courses in Ireland demonstrated very few academic institutes incorporated any significant degree of digital marketing modules in their courses. Nearly 90% of the academics have consulting experience, and nearly 75% have had over five years business experience, while 26% have over twenty years business experience. These findings are a good endorsement of the stature of marketing academics in Ireland as they prove the majority have pertinent industry experience.

Profile of Practitioner's and Post- Graduate Student's organisations

The profile of the type of company marketing practitioners are employed in is skewed more towards consumer services at 57%, with business to business service at 25%, and FMCG/durables and non-profit both at 7%. Whereas the placement company of the students was split more equally at 40% for both consumer services and business

to business service and 10% for FMCG/durables and non-profit. Both Practitioner and student companies were majority Irish owned with 89% of practitioner's companies and 80% of student's companies. Practitioner's companies were more targeted towards consumer markets at 58%. Whereas student's placement companies leaned more towards business markets at 60%. The majority of both the practitioners and students companies serve the domestic market at 79% and 71% respectively. 80% of practitioners companies are less than twenty five years in operation and 90% of student's placement companies are less than twenty five years in operation. There is a great disparity between the average turnover of the two groups of companies with over half of practitioner's companies at less than 150k per annum, whereas, over half of student's companies greater than 5 million per annum. Again, the companies differ greatly in the number of employees with over half of the practitioner's companies having less than 10 employees, whereas over half of the student's companies have between 25-50 employees. These findings suggest the majority of practitioner's that responded were employed in micro organisations, conceivably respondents holding the position owner/manager/marketing manager. Interestingly, these findings additionally suggest the majority of students received their work placements in larger organisations with much greater turnover and employees than the companies of the practitioners that responded. However, overall, the results demonstrate the profile and classification of both the practitioner's companies and the student's work placement companies have great diversity and variance. This broad spectrum of organisations provided a great depth to the data collected in the surveys.

4.3.2. Analysis of marketing practice within organisation

The CMP (Contemporary Marketing Practice) classification scheme with the inclusion of e-marketing (Coviello et al, 2001) was used to analysis the types of marketing practiced within the practitioner's and student's organisations. This section was omitted from the academic survey. The survey participants were asked to classify which of the following marketing practices their organisation engaged in.

1. Transaction Marketing - Focuses on the marketing mix to attract and satisfy customers.
2. Database Marketing – Uses database technology to facilitate and personalise customer relationships.
3. Interaction Marketing – Involves face-to-face interaction to develop customer relationships.
4. Network Marketing – Involves committing resources to developing a firm's position in a network of various firm level relationships.
5. E-Marketing – Using the internet and other interactive technologies to create and mediate dialog between the firm and identified customers.

The CMP research studies maintain that organisations do not engage in one single type of marketing practice but; rather, several types are simultaneously practiced (Coviello et al, 2008)and the survey finding from this research corresponds. However, findings from this research suggest the level of E-marketing is proliferating with 69% of practitioner's and 83% of student's organisation engaging with this marketing practice (Fig. 4.1). This is a marked divergence from previous studies of Brady et al.

(2002a), Brady et al. (2002b), and Coviello et al. (2008). This suggests that the level of E-marketing is shifting to become a dominant marketing practice within companies.

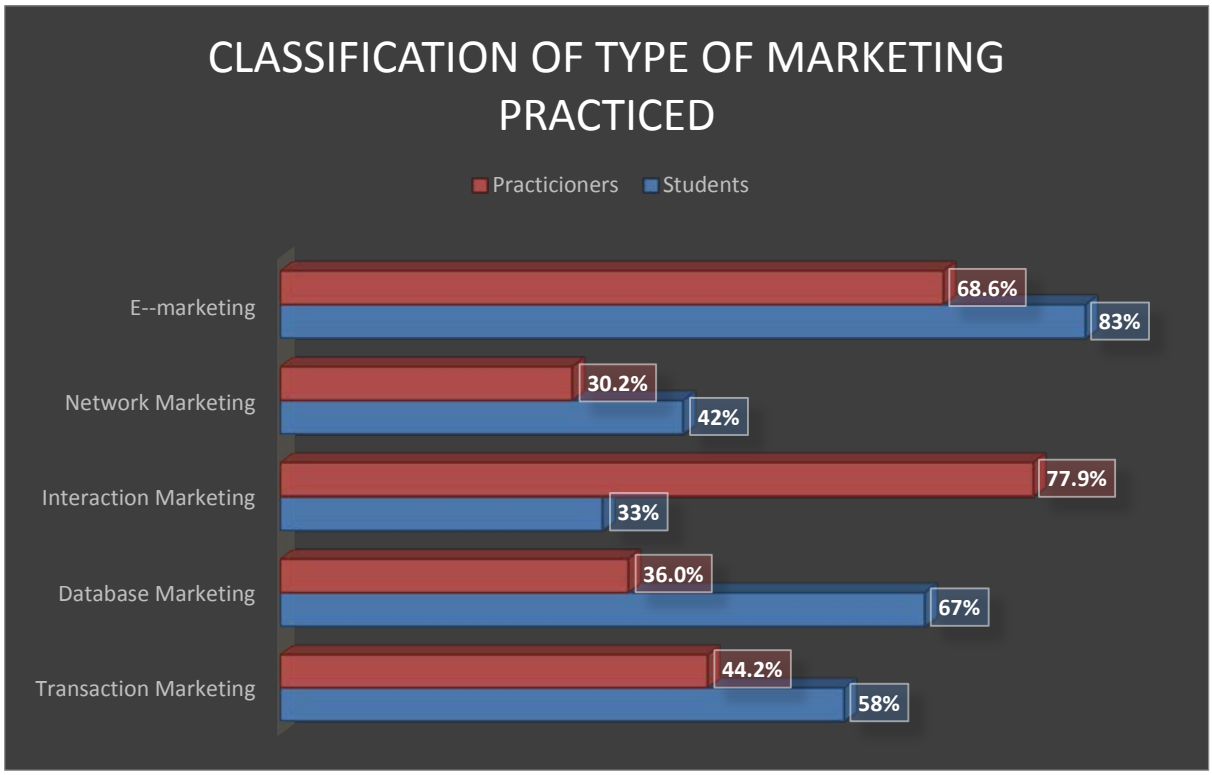

Figure 4.1 Classification of type of marketing practiced

Also, in this section practitioners and students were asked how the marketing budget was divided in their organisations. Findings establish the significance of online marketing, both in practitioner's company's marketing budgets and student's work placement company's marketing budget with online marketing receiving the largest share of the marketing budgets at 36% and 38% respectively (Fig. 4.2).

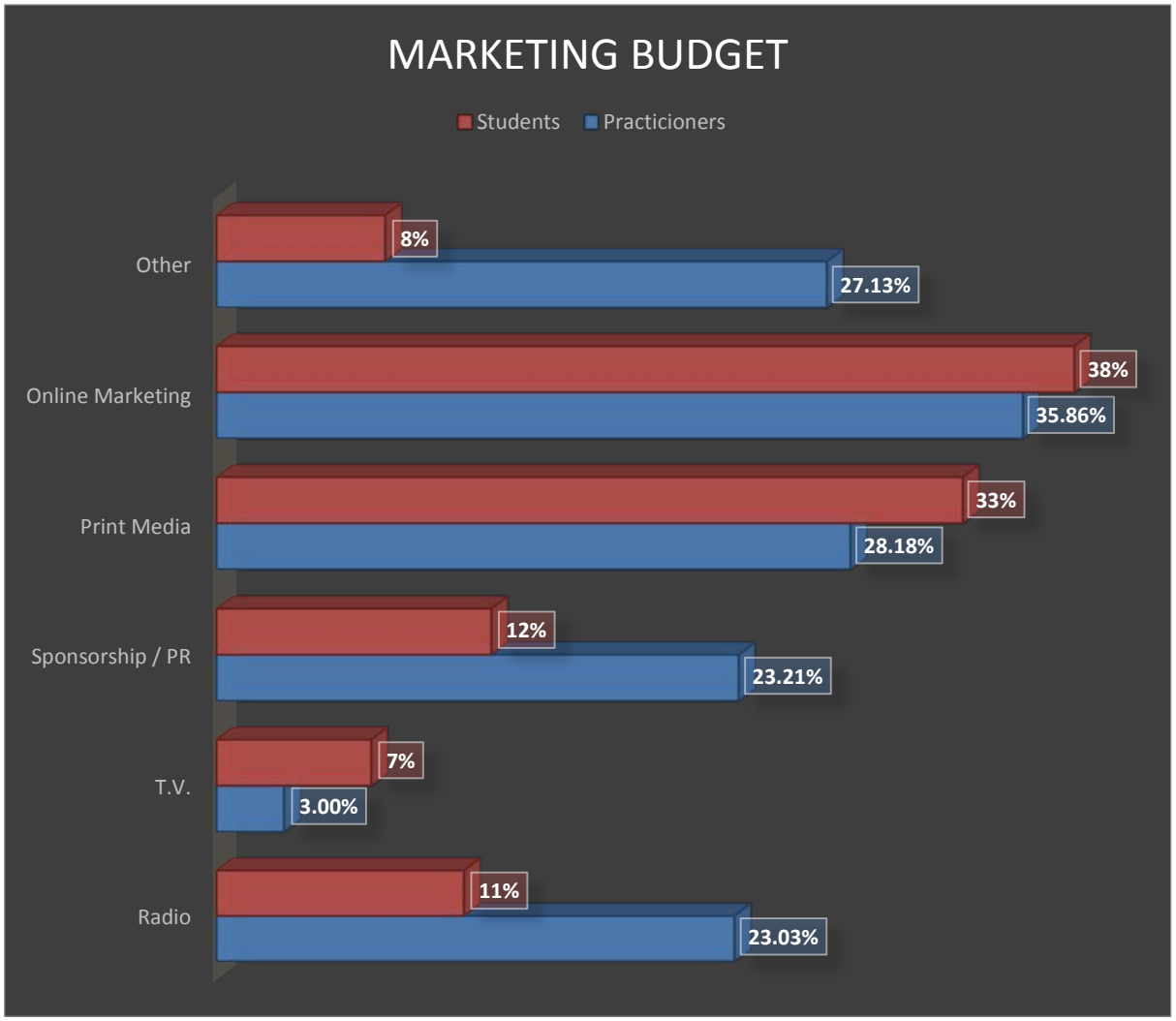

Figure 4.2 Marketing budget

4.3.3. Impact and role of Web 2.0 technologies within marketing practice

The role information technologies played within practitioner's and student's organisations was analysed based on Orlikowskys (2000) three categories - enhancing, reinforcing or transformational. This section was omitted from the academic survey. Findings in studies by Brady et al. (2002a), Brady et al. (2002b) and Brookes (2004) demonstrate a pragmatic adoption of new ITs, highlighting the importance of ITs that reinforced and enhanced rather that transformed a firms

marketing practices. This study corroborates the previous studies but findings indicate (Fig. 4.3) the increased adoption of ITs that are transforming the normal functioning of a firms marketing practices. This support's the view of Brady et al. (2008) that assimilation of IT in marketing will occur in a measured way that reflects Nolan's (1973) and Zuboff's (1988) stage theories of automation, information and transformation as the triumph of ICT use for automation and the intensifying significance of information and data, are pushing firms to the transformation stage.

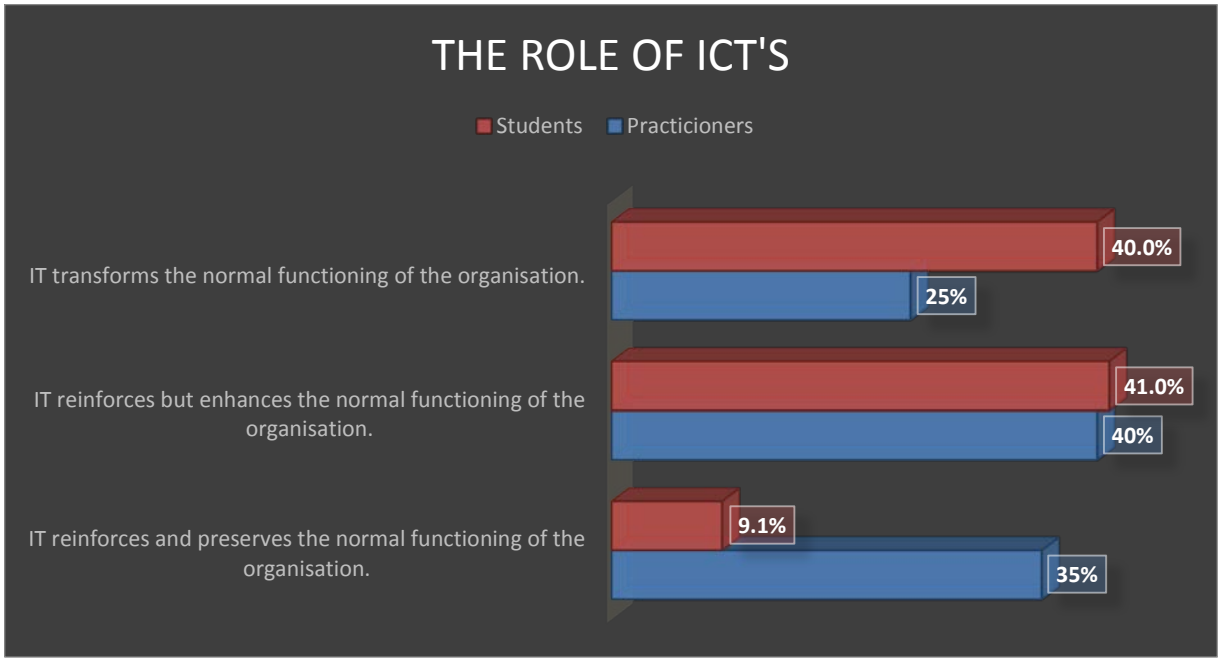

Figure 4.3 The role of ICT's

In the next question in this section marketing academics, marketing practitioners and post-graduate marketing students were asked to evaluate statements with regard to the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice, on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 1 being strongly agree (Fig. 4.4 and Fig. 4.5). Academics were asked to rate the statements with regard to marketing practice in general,

whereas, the practitioners and students were asked to rate the statements with regard to their company/work placement.

Academics agreed Web 2.0 technologies have changed the way marketing serves customers, have provided more channels to reach consumers, have provided more opportunities to make valuable connections and to understand the customer better. Academics agreed digital strategies are gaining prominence in the marketing plans of most Irish businesses. Furthermore, academics believe digital channels increase a marketer's workload which suggest academics believe these digital channels are the responsibility of the marketing department. Additionally, academics were unsure if Web 2.0 technologies changed marketing for the better, have enhanced the ability to satisfy customers, have provided cost saving or aided company growth. Paradoxically these finding suggest academics are hesitant to fully decide on the value of these new technologies.

Both practitioners and students agreed Web 2.0 technologies have provided more channels to reach their customers and generally improved marketing in their respective companies. However, practitioners were unsure if these technologies have changed the way they serve their customers, enhanced their ability to satisfy their customers, to understand their customer, or provided cost saving or aided company growth. Furthermore, practitioners were additionally unsure if these digital channels increased their workload or if they could damage their company's reputation. These findings suggest the practitioners who responded are not up to date with these new technologies. It is worth noting student were only unsure if

digital channels could damage their company's reputation. Otherwise they considered Web 2.0 technologies to have aided the growth of their company, contributed to company profits, changed the way they served their customers, enhanced their ability to satisfy their customers, as well as provided more channels to reach their customers. This suggests the companies the student were placed in are more progressive with regards emerging technologies. This corroborates the findings of Brodie et al., (2009, p.374) "Marketing practices and IT-enabled interactivity initiatives are related, context is critical, and therefore a variety approaches and practices are to be observed".

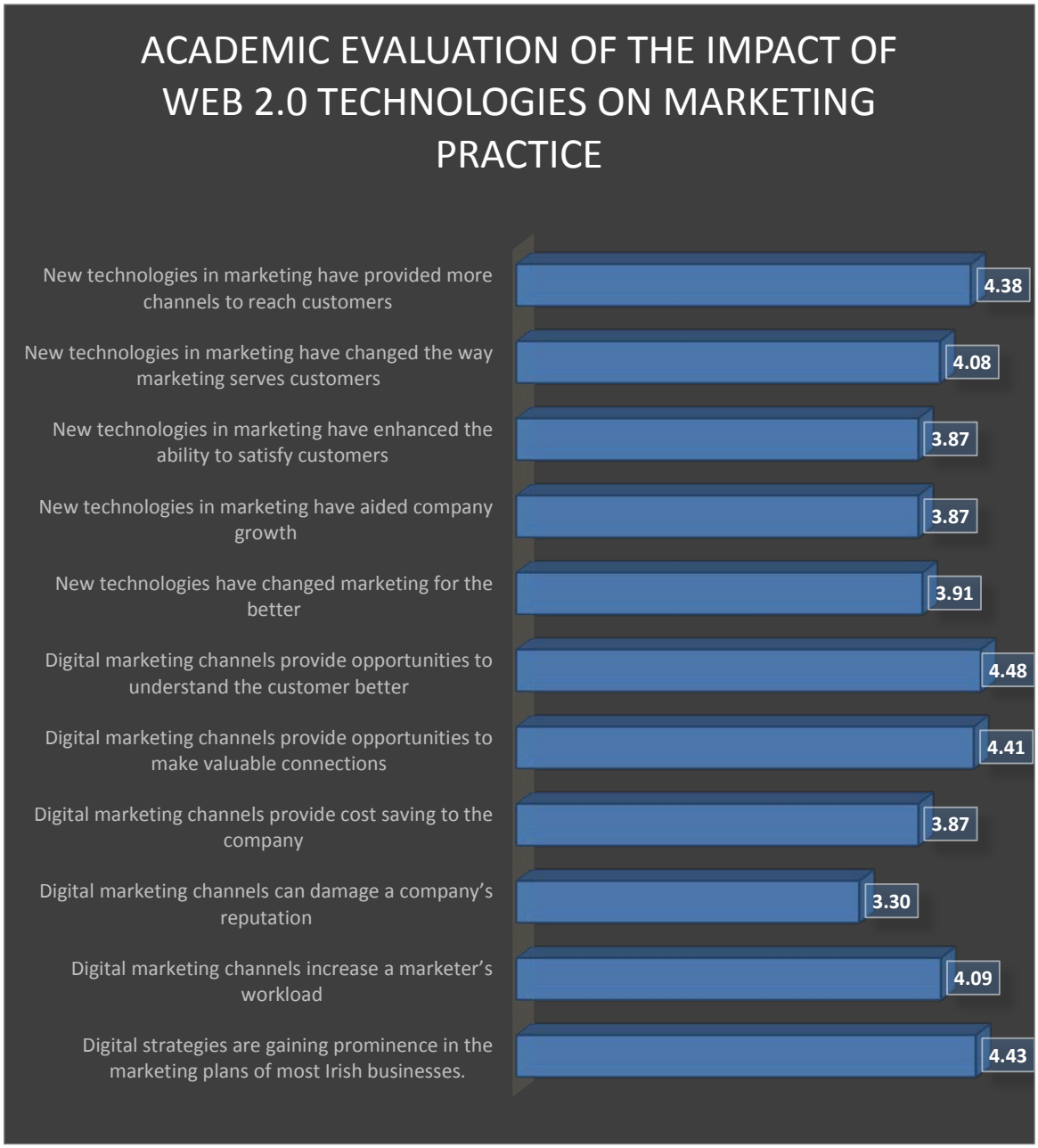

Figure 4.4 Academic evaluation of the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice

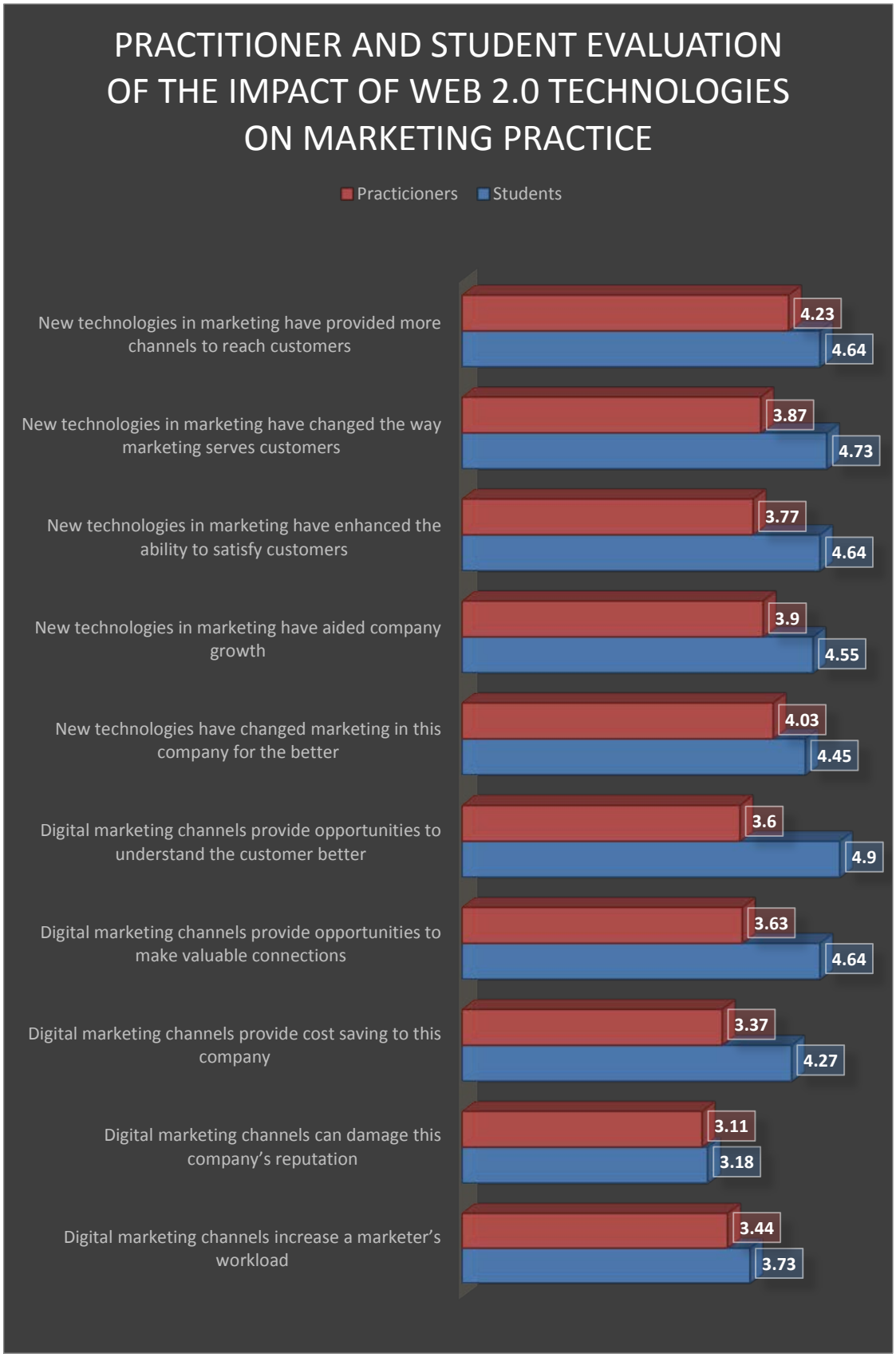

Figure 4.5 Practitioner and student evaluation of the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice

The next question asked marketing academics, marketing practitioners and post-graduate marketing students to evaluate statements with regard to the importance of new digital marketing mediums to marketing practice, on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important (Fig. 4.6). Again, academics were asked to rate the statements with regard to marketing practice in general, whereas, the practitioners and students were asked to rate the statements with regard to their company/work placement. Academics positively regarded search engine optimisation, search engine advertising, viral marketing, online PR, mobile advertising, blogs and social networking and audio/video such as podcasts, of being of importance to marketing practice. Only being unsure of the value of website sponsorship, games, e-mail campaigns, banner advertising and classified. Students were not sure of the value of audio/video, viral marketing, website sponsorship, mobile advertising, games, classified and banner advertising to their placement company. Although, stated their placement company valued the digital mediums of search engine optimisation, search engine advertising, e-mail campaigns, online PR, blogs and social networking. Significantly, practitioners were unsure of the value of the majority digital mediums to their company which suggests they are ambivalent on their application. This supports the numerous studies in the literature that documented the merger of IT and marketing and recognised marketing's slow adoption of ICTs is due to a lack of skills rather than a lack of technology (Brady et al., 2002a; Brady et al. 2002b; Brady and Palmer, 2004; Brady et al. 2008; Miller et al., 2013).

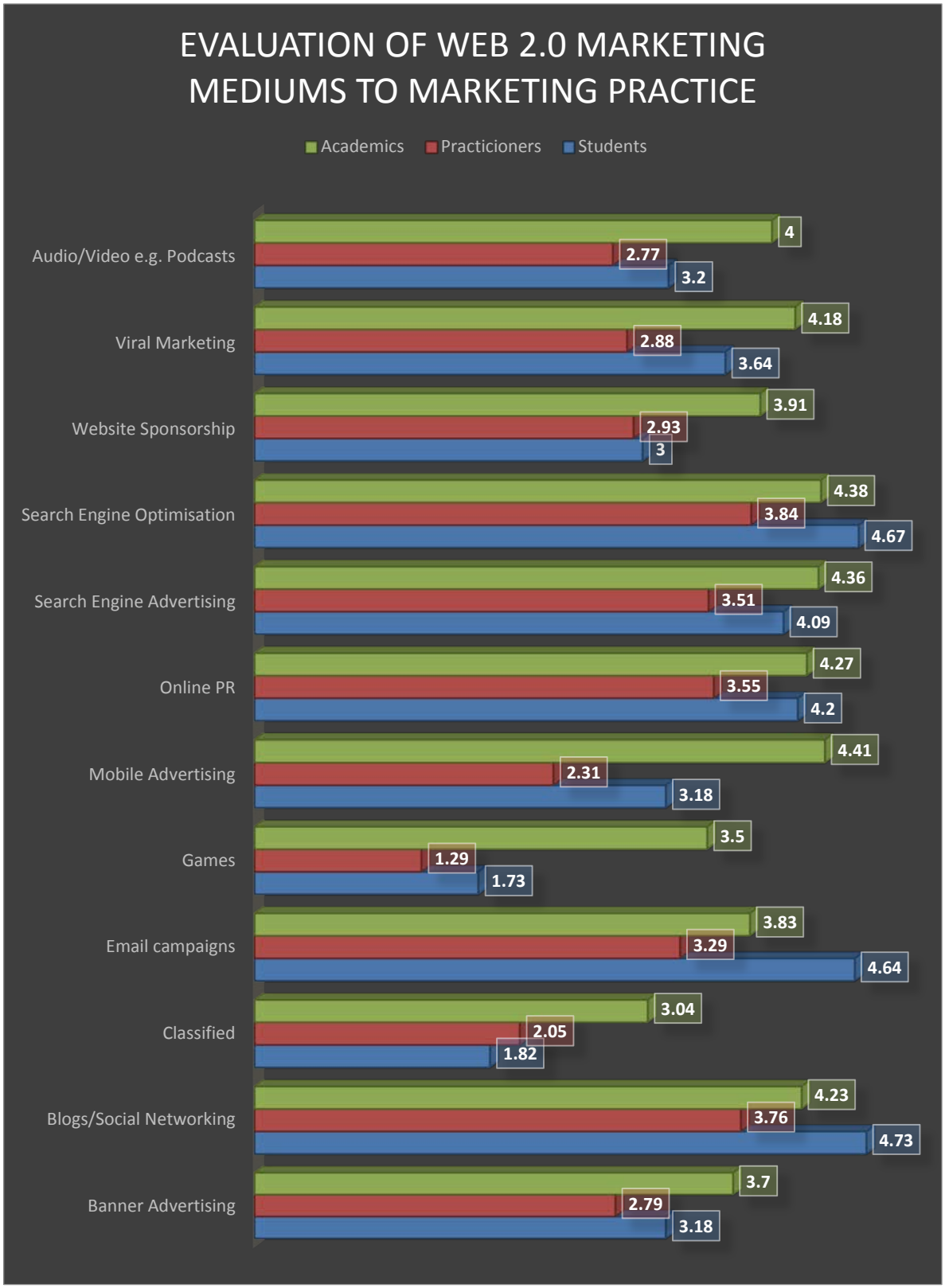

Figure 4.6 Evaluation of Web 2.0 marketing mediums to marketing practice

With the aim to focus minds and to illustrate the extensive range of ICTs available, a list of the main ICTs in marketing is suggested in the final question in this section. This list was applied in a studies by Brady et al (1999; 2002a) and was revised in this study to bring it up to date. In this question marketing practitioners and post-graduate marketing students were asked a dichotomous question to discover which and how many of the ICTs they used to carry out their marketing duties within their organisation/work placement (Fig. 4.7). Whereas academics were asked to evaluate if knowledge of the list of ICTs was of importance to marketing practitioners today, on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 1 being strongly agree (Fig. 4.7). It is clear from analysis of the results from practitioners and students the widespread use of ICTs within marketing practice. Significantly, again the students acknowledged a more intensive use within their placement company, and this finding suggests student's companies are more advanced in the digital realm, however, this would warrant further study. Furthermore, marketing academics also acknowledged the importance of the complete list of ICTs to marketing practice, with the exception of the obvious main frame computer, considering the decline in their use. This suggests academics are completely aware of the necessity to use ICTs comprehensively in marketing practice.

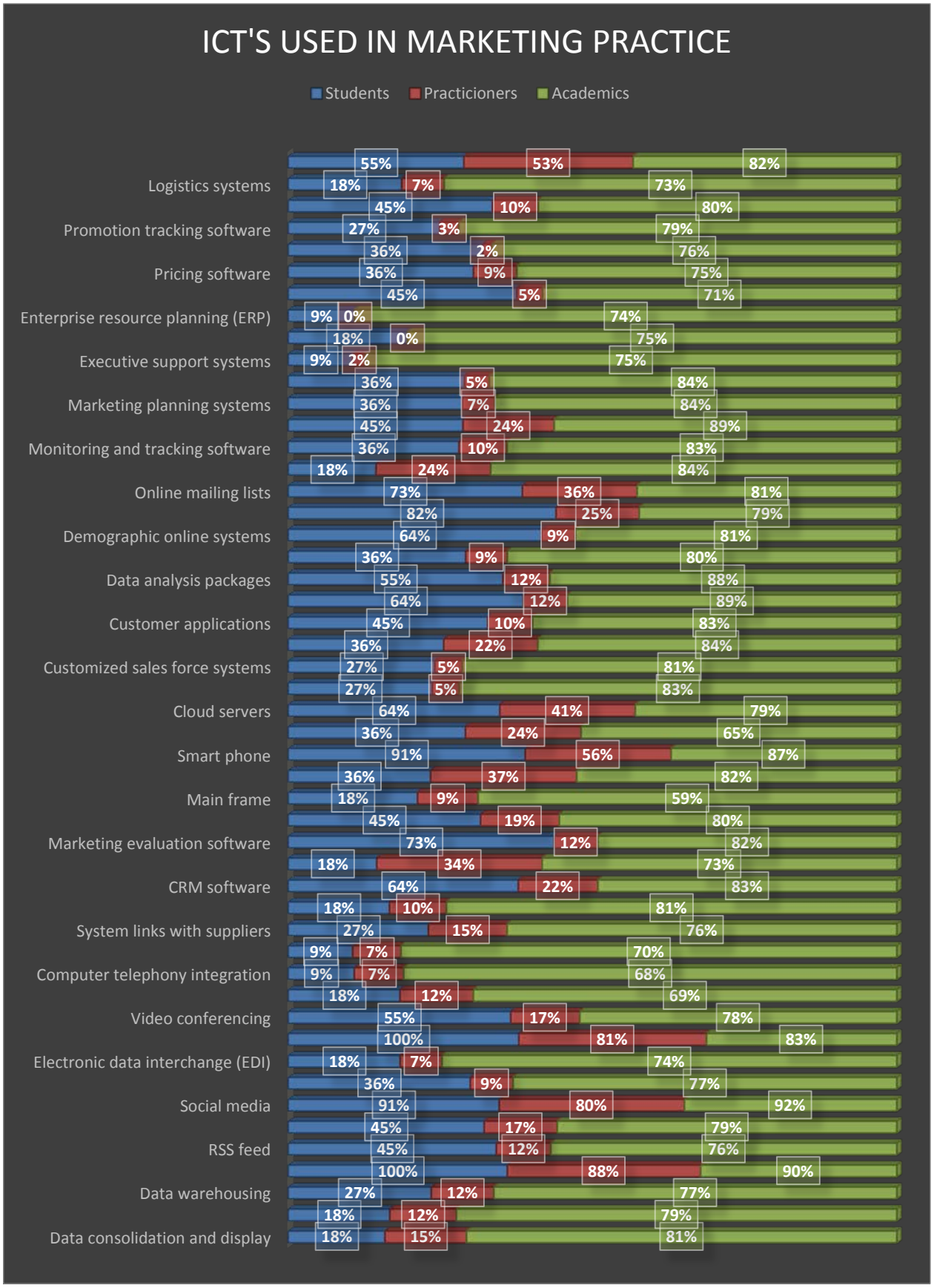

Figure 4.7 ICTs used in marketing practice

4.3.4. An Investigation of the skills and knowledge required by marketing practitioners

Marketing practitioners, students and academics were each asked to rate how important a wide variety of skills were for marketing managers on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important. The listing of marketing skills was derived from a study by Gray et al (2007) and adapted for this study with the inclusion of IT skills. The results are presented in Figure 4.8. It is obvious that there are major disparities in the views of the three groups as to how important certain skills are. Marketing students rate IT skills as the most important skill required for marketing today, followed in joint second place by customer service focus and strong oral communication skills. Whereas, academics consider strong interpersonal skills most important followed by written communication skills, followed by oral communication skills. Practitioners deem the ability to be creative as the most important skill for a marketing manager, followed by the ability to think strategically, and in third place problem solving ability. It is worth noting academics preference for the softer skills. The results for the most highly ranked skills share no commonality with Gray et al (2007) study.

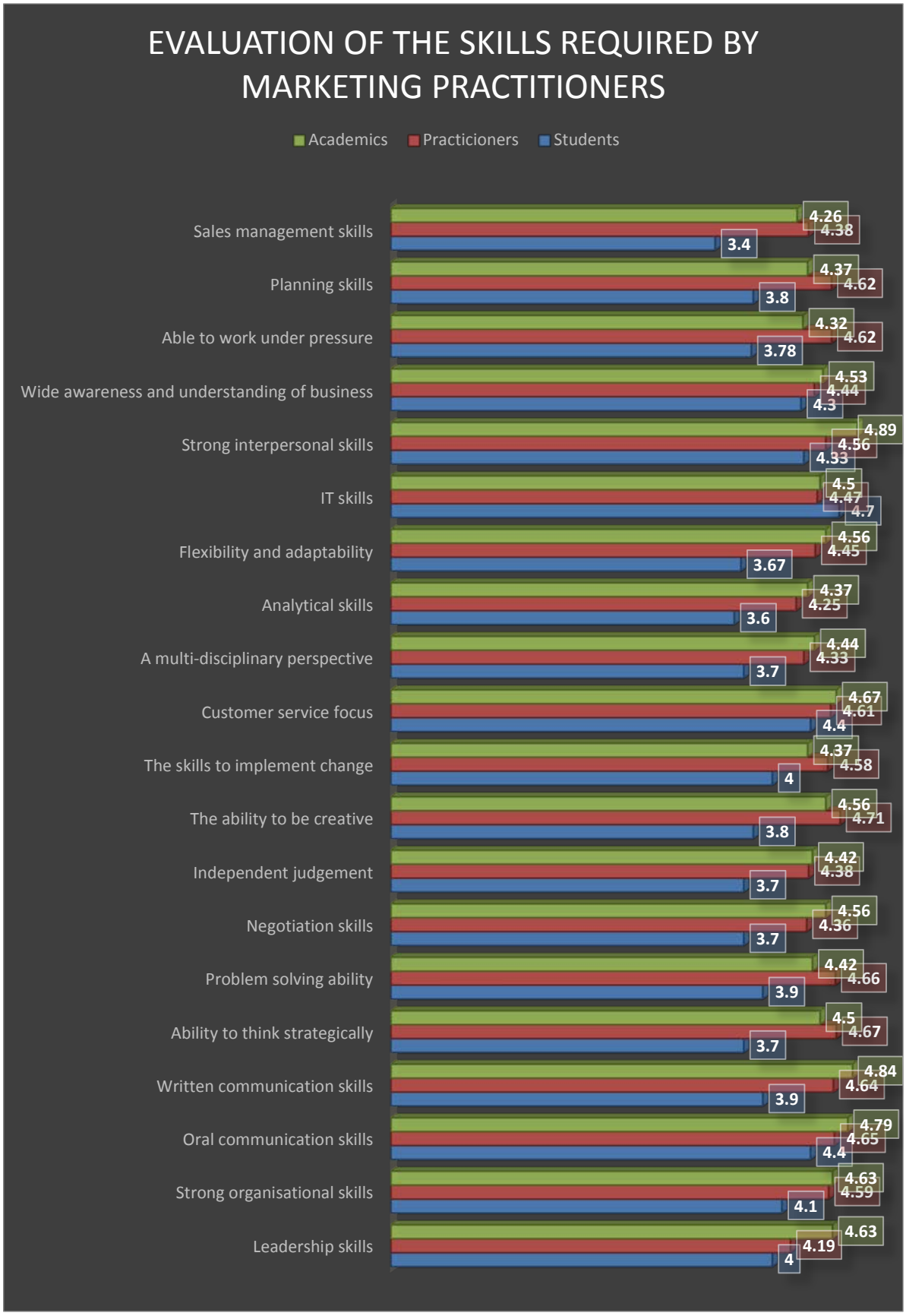

Figure 4.8 Evaluation of the skills required by marketing practitioners

Marketing practitioners, students and academics were then each asked to rate how important a wide variety of knowledge areas were for marketing managers on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important (Fig. 4.9) The listing of knowledge areas were again derived from a study by Gray et al (2007) and adapted for this study with the inclusion of internet marketing and social marketing. Academics ranked marketing communications first, followed by consumer behaviour and internet marketing. Practitioners ranked strategic marketing most highly, followed by consumer behaviour, and market research and analysis. Students considered consumer behaviour most important, and ranked social marketing, internet marketing, marketing communications and market research and analysis all equally important in second place. Although their ratings differ somewhat, all groups consider consumer behaviour a vital knowledge area for marketing practice. This correlated with Gray et al (2007) study. Internet marketing also scored of high importance with the three groups of academics, practitioners and students, at third, fifth and second respectively.

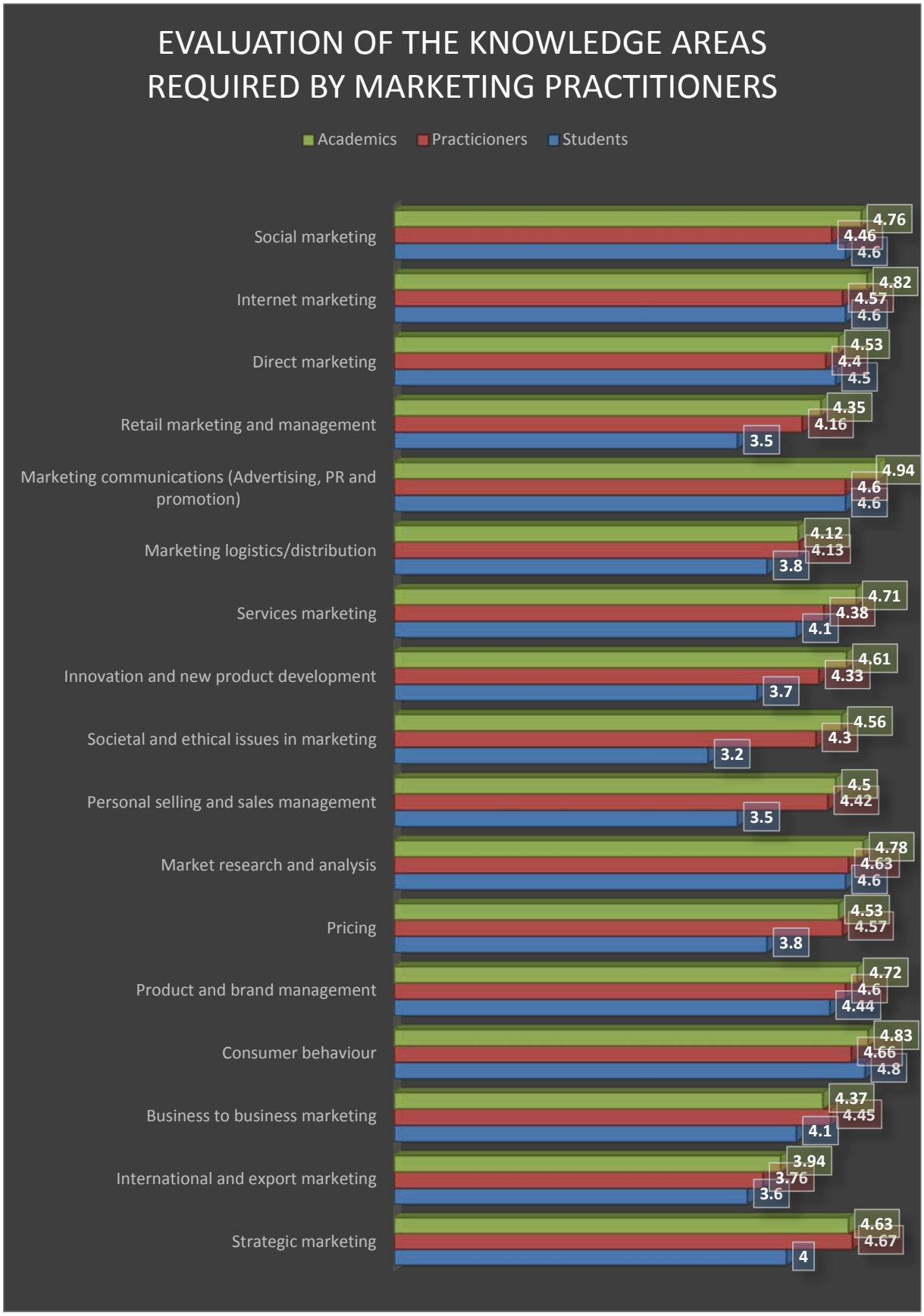

Figure 4.9 Evaluation of the knowledge areas required by marketing practitioners

4.3.5. Evaluation of marketing education

Marketing practitioners were omitted from this section due to evidence uncovered in the literature review and in the quantitative study which found a low level of third – level marketing qualifications among marketing practitioners in Ireland. Therefore, it was deemed practitioners who had not experienced a third – level marketing education could not be expected to put forward an inclusive assessment and it was additionally considered that inclusion of this section may dissuade practitioners from participating in the survey.

In this section marketing academics and post-graduate marketing students (Fig. 4.10) were asked to evaluate statements with regard to marketing education in Ireland, on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 1 being strongly agree. Interestingly, the most highly rated statement at 4.68 by academics and also by students at 4.50 was 'Good IT skills are important to the employability of Irish marketing graduates'. This parallels finding in the literature review around the growing importance of IT skills to employment in marketing today (Brady et al, 2002a; 2002b; 2008). Academics were unsure if 'Academic institutes in Ireland are imparting the most relevant skills for today's employment market on marketing graduates'. Moreover, the students surveyed did not consider that academic institutes were imparting the most relevant skills. Again, these results echo finding in the literature on the academic- practitioner divide in marketing (Brady et al., 2002; Brady and Palmer, 2004; Brennan, 2004; Clarke et al., 2006; Cox, 2006; Goldsmith, 2004; McCole, 2004; Miller et al., 2012; Stanton, 2006; Stephens et al., 2009). Academics were again unsure if 'Irish academic institutes are producing marketing graduates that are theoretically strong but that

lack in practical skills'. Whereas, students agreed. This perspective is also expressed in the literature (Davis et al, 2002; Wellman, 2010). Significantly, academics where unsure if 'Marketing academics often develop knowledge that is more closely aligned to the needs of academic journals and conferences rather than the needs of business'. This suggests academics do not have robust confidence in the value of the academic papers of their peers. The students viewed the knowledge created by academics as not being relevant to business. It was unanimously agreed by both academics and students that 'Academic research should be of practical value to business'. However, both groups disagreed that 'Managers are enthusiastic to adopt ideas from academic research' which suggests that managers do not find academic research applicable to their business. Once again academics were unsure if 'Marketing theory is relevant to the needs of SME's', while students disagreed and the student's position is corroborated by the literature (Martain and Chapman, 2006).

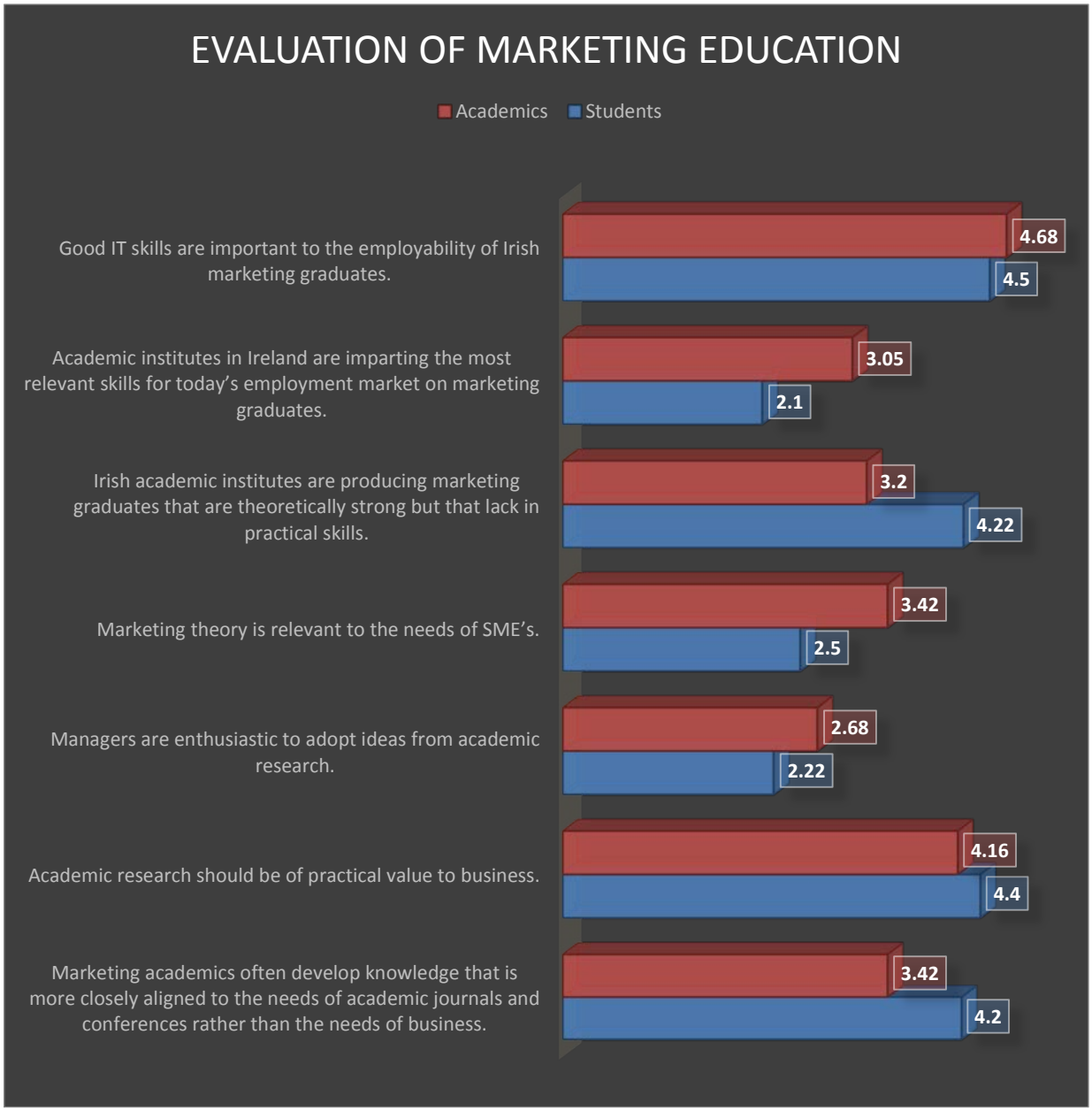

Figure 4.10 Evaluation of marketing education

An additional question in this section was posed to the post-graduate marketing students with regards to their education. The students were asked to evaluate the relevance of their marketing education on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being most irrelevant and 5 being very relevant (Fig. 4.11). Significantly, over half over the students did not find their marketing education applicable to their work placement needs. This suggests Irish academic institutes are not imparting the required skills for industry on their marketing graduates.

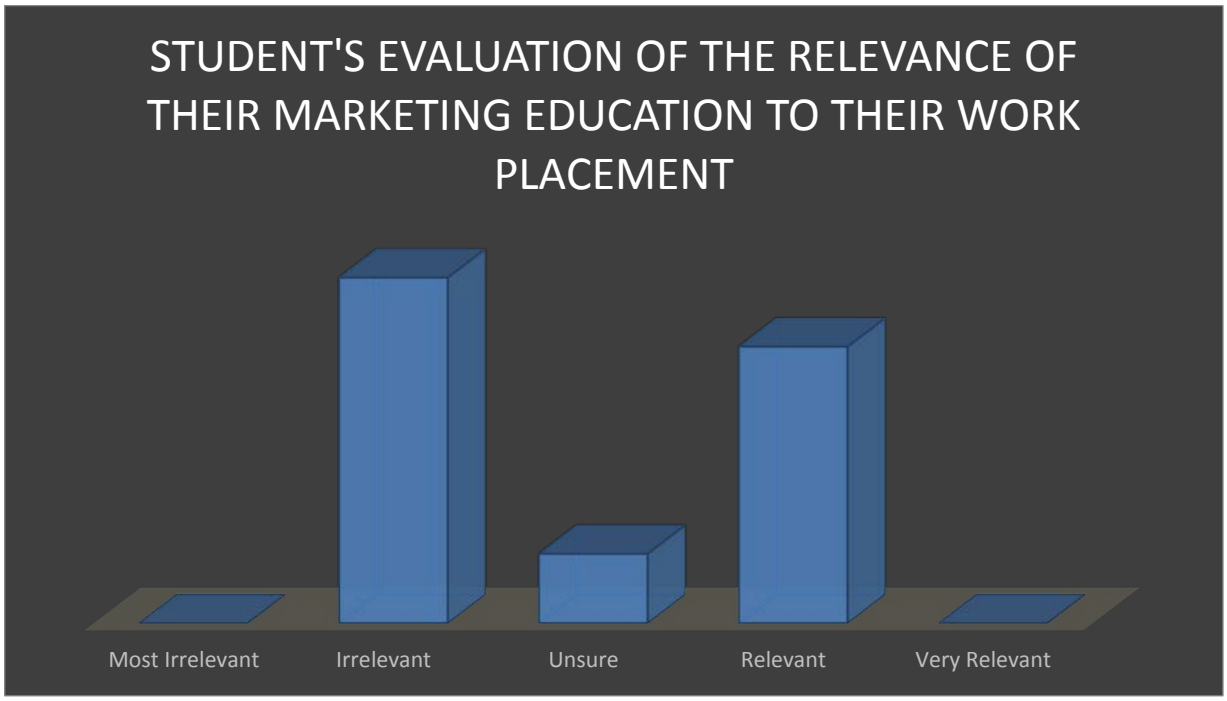

Figure 4.11 Student's evaluation of the relevance of their marketing education to their work placement

4.4. Conclusion

The results met the objectives of the research by providing a comprehensive understanding of the role and impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice and have assessed the relevance of current third- level marketing education in Ireland by contrasting the viewpoints of marketing practitioners, academics and post-graduate students and through recognising spheres of cohesion and disparity.

The primary research findings of this dissertation substantiate and extend many of the studies reviewed in the literature. Results indicate the increased adoption of ITs that are transforming the normal functioning of a firms marketing practices. This supports the view of Brady et al. (2008) that assimilation of IT in marketing will occur in a measured way that reflects Nolan's (1973) and Zuboff's (1988) stage theories of automation, information and transformation. As the triumph of ICT use for automation and the intensifying significance of information and data, are pushing firms to the transformation stage.

Furthermore, as a result of applying Coviello's (2001; 2003) CMP framework that incorporated the e-marketing dimension to the primary research , this work expands on the work by Brodie et al., (2007) that claim 'e-marketing is coming of age', and findings from this dissertation suggest 'e-marketing has come of age'.

However, ironically, findings suggest marketing practitioners are unsure of the role and application of Web 2.0 technologies in marketing practice. This corroborates the numerous studies in the literature that documented the merger of IT and marketing and recognised marketing's slow adoption of ICTs is due to a lack of skills rather than

a lack of technology (Brady et al., 2002a; Brady et al. 2002b; Brady and Palmer, 2004; Brady et al. 2008; Miller et al., 2013).

In addition, this primary research substantiates and expands the literature and uncovers evidence of perceptions of an academic-practitioner divide in marketing from the three groups of relevant stakeholders.

Synopsise of the key findings from primary research:

- The findings acknowledge marketing practitioners, academics and students unanimously agree Web 2.0 technologies have had a significant impact and play a major role in marketing practice today with online marketing receiving the largest share of the marketing budgets in the companies surveyed.
- Practitioners and students have both conceded to the proliferation of use of ICTs within marketing practice. Likewise, academics acknowledge the necessity to use ICTs comprehensively in marketing practice.
- However, results show marketing practitioners were unsure of the value of the majority digital mediums to their company, which suggests they are still ambivalent on their application due to a lack of skills, rather than a lack of technology.
- Significantly, the results illustrate that there are major disparities in the views of the three groups as to what are the most important skills and knowledge areas for a marketing manager.

- However, there was unanimous agreement between marketing practitioners, academics and students that ICT skills are important to the employability of Irish marketing graduates.
- Findings demonstrate that Irish marketing academics are unsure if academic institutes in Ireland are imparting the most relevant skills for today's employment market on marketing graduates, nor are they sure of the value and relevance of academic research to the needs to business.
- Furthermore, results reveal the majority of post-graduate students did not find their marketing education relevant to their work placement needs.

The full conclusions along with recommendations are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This research was conducted to explore the perceptions of three stakeholder groups –marketing practitioners, academics and students on how Web 2.0 technologies have impacted and evolved the practice of marketing and to uncover has marketing education remained relevant in this changed technological landscape. The nature and requirements of the research were best served by a mixed method methodology; both qualitative and quantitative methods systematically combined. The qualitative research generated rich, detailed and valid data on the role and impact these emerging Web 2.0 technologies have had on marketing practice. This contributed to an in-depth knowledge of the issue and was used to inform the quantitative research. The quantitative research allowed for the collection of generalisable, population based descriptive evidence of the opinions of the three groups around the research topic. The descriptive research was a beneficial extension of the exploratory research and has produced comprehensive data, that is rich and extensive and which has provided a greater understanding and awareness of the significance, role and application of Web 2.0 ICTs in marketing practice to the relevant stakeholders. This chapter will combine the main findings of the previous chapters and will draw conclusions in the context of each of the research objectives.

5.2. Profile of the impact and role of Web 2.0 technologies in marketing practice

This research has proved that there is no refuting the fact that Web 2.0 technologies have had a major impact and have a major role in marketing practice in Ireland and globally, and their influence is predicted to increase over the next few years. However, this dissertation makes it clear that marketers need a technological skill set to exploit the influence of these technologies. Even though a range of benefits can be availed by marketers, technological skills still remain limited and underdeveloped and having enhanced technologies is not enough, it is imperative it is accepted and used appropriately by the marketing department, in order to achieve the benefits.

5.3. Identification of the ICT knowledge, skills and abilities that are required by marketing practice

This work has documented the merger of ICT and marketing has recognised marketing's slow adoption of ICTs is due to a lack of skills rather than a lack of technology. This dissertation has demonstrated companies need expertise in social media and community management, content marketing, mobile marketing/apps development, search engine optimization and web analytics and ascertained that recruiters find talent in these areas is difficult to obtain. As the digital revolution charges on and the number of smart devices and machines connecting to mobile networks rise dramatically, demand for these skills will only increase in the future. This work calls on marketing education to address this issue.

5.4. Investigation of the relevance of marketing education to marketing practitioner needs

This dissertation has uncovered evidence of marketing education not serving marketing practice needs. This evidence underlines the fact that there is a need to refine and develop higher education programmes so that the skills required by employers can be transferred to graduates. Furthermore, this work finds evidence that a lot of marketing theory taught to marketing graduates is not applicable to the needs of SME's. A healthy SME sector is crucial to Ireland's economic recovery as SME's account for 99.8 per cent of all active business. The knowledge and skillset imparted on Irish marketing graduates should be skewed towards the needs of SME's. Marketing graduates need to be an attractive option to SME's as potential employees.

5.5. Exploration of how an ICT dimension can be incorporated in to third-level marketing courses

This research has described the principles, development, pedagogical content, and academic structure of initiatives at universities in the US and Britain which are incorporating an ICT dimension to marketing education. This proves universities in other countries have acknowledged the transformational impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice, recognised today's marketing graduates are lacking a technological skill set and have taken action at course level. This research calls on Irish universities to follow suit.

5.6. Presentation of a valuable insight for marketing practitioners, academics and students on the significance of ICTs in marketing practice

This work has addressed gaps in research by contrasting the viewpoints of marketing practitioners, academics and post-graduate students and through recognising spheres of cohesion and disparity. The scarcity of research into the assessments of these three groups is noteworthy, taking into consideration that any disparity may have important consequences for marketing education and practice. These findings should persuade marketing students to give precedence to the attainment of technological skills in their education and also, provide valuable insights into how marketing courses in Ireland should be adapted to reflect practitioner needs.

5.7. Extension of the exiting literature on the significance of ICTs to marketing practice

Numerous studies have documented the merger of ICT and marketing have recognised marketing's slow adoption of ICTs and have argued this is due to a lack of skills rather than a lack of technology. Critically these studies appeal for marketing academics to address marketing practice's lack of a technological skill set (Brady et al., 2002a; Brady et al. 2002b; Brady and Palmer, 2004; Brady et al. 2008; Miller et al., 2013). This dissertation is an extension to this body of research and also petitions for further research on the skills shortage in Irish graduates today.

Furthermore, as a result of applying Coviello's (2001; 2003) updated CMP framework that incorporates the e-marketing dimension to the primary research, this work

expands on the study by Brodie et al., (2006) that claimed 'e-marketing is coming of age', and findings from this dissertation suggests 'e-marketing has come of age'. Furthermore, this dissertation puts forward the contention that the position of ICT's in marketing is proliferating and therefore, there needs to be further developments with regard to the inclusion of ICT within the CMP framework and this corroborates and extends findings by Brady et al (2008).

However, most importantly, findings in this dissertation indicate the increased adoption of ITs that are transforming the normal functioning of a firms marketing practices. This also supports the view of Brady et al. (2008) that assimilation of IT in marketing will occur in a measured way that reflects Nolan's (1973) and Zuboff's (1988) stage theories of automation, information and transformation as the triumph of ICT use for automation and the intensifying significance of information and data, are pushing firms to the transformation stage. This finding warrants further research such as individual case study research and industry-wide quantitative research to examine the extent to which firms are reaching the transformation stage, based on the Nolan's (1973) and Zuboff's (1988) work.

5.8. Recommendations

The CMP framework provides a great structure from within which the practice of marketing can be examined, however, the primary research found irrespective which is the prevailing focus of marketing in organisations, ICT's are increasingly entwined with its application. This dissertation recommends more substantial research

investigating the increased role of ICT in marketing, so as the CMP framework can reflect these technological developments.

It is vital that academia responds to the educational needs of marketing graduates who are required to effectively implement an increasingly wide range of ICTs. This dissertation exposed the significant role and the broad application of new and emerging technologies in marketing practice and found over half of the students surveyed did not find their education relevant to their work placement. Third-level institutes abroad have acknowledged the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on marketing practice, recognised marketing graduates need a technological skillset and have taken action at course level. This research recommends prompt action from Irish third-level institutes to do the same as Irish marketing graduates would benefit from expertise in social media and community management, content marketing, mobile marketing/apps development, search engine optimization and web analytics.

It is clearly government policy to increase the supply of ICT graduates in the Irish economy in order to strengthen competitiveness. Substantial progress has been made in meeting the targets of the preliminary ICT action plan that was developed by industry and government in 2012. This demonstrates the flexibility and responsiveness of the Irish education system. Furthermore, this research uncovered an already high level of digital marketing expertise among Irish marketing academics. This work proposes Irish marketing practitioners and marketing academics join together and follow the precedent set by ICT action plan and either petition to become involved with the scheme or develop a comparable scheme to build the

required ICT skillset of marketing graduates. Consequently, the improvement of ICT skills among business and marketing graduates would have an influential impact on their employability.

In conclusion, this dissertation additionally recommends further exploration of the essential skills sets and knowledge areas required for marketing managers as the primary research uncovered a huge disparity in the viewpoints of the three groups of relevant stakeholders of marketing practitioners, marketing academics and marketing students.

5.9. Strengths and limitations of the research

The major strength of this dissertation is in the accomplishment of all the research objectives. Furthermore, this work has addressed gaps in research by contrasting the viewpoints of marketing practitioners, academics and post-graduate students and makes a noteworthy contribution to the development of thinking around the interconnection between the realms of ICT's and marketing. Additionally, and most significantly this research makes the case that developing an ICT skillset and knowledge in marketing graduates should be a major concern of third-level institutes in Ireland. Nonetheless, it is vital to reflect on the strengths of this research in the context of its limitations.

Although prosaic and clichéd time constraints was the main limitation on this study as it had a major influence on the primary research tools applied. It is worth considering if perhaps interviews of marketing academics and post-graduates students would have been beneficial as they could have been used to inform the

quantitative aspect of their respective surveys. However, it was deemed marketing practitioners were the most pertinent interviewees as their industry knowledge and experience had the potential to contribute most to this study. Also, instead of sending a generic cover letter asking for participation in the surveys it would have been advantageous to personally address the perspective participants. This would have had the potential to greatly increase the response rate from academics and practitioners. Alas, again time constraints ensured this was not possible.

Gaining access to data, people and/or organisations is perhaps the largest limitation and the most challenging part of the research process in the majority of master's level dissertations. Furthermore, it is often more time consuming that expected. Sometimes, access that had been agreed, is then suddenly rejected. It is perhaps the stage of the dissertation process that can cause the most significant delays. While it is contended that convenience sampling may be viewed as a limitation of a study, as it is prone to greater bias than probability sampling techniques, its low cost and ease of use make it the favoured choice and sometimes the only available option for a large proportion of undergraduate and master's level dissertations. The use of convenience sampling in this research ensured that the interview participants had a comprehensive and varied knowledge of marketing practice in a range of sectors, with a combined experience of over forty years employment in the marketing industry. Furthermore, this technique also ensured the post-graduate marketing students selected from LYIT and NUIG had completed a work placement as a marketing intern and so therefore had the required industry experience and it additionally encouraged the significantly high response rate. If random sampling had

been employed, it would not have been possible to control for this, nor would such a high response rate have been likely. However, most significantly convenience sampling enabled the collection of primary research that was wide ranging, rich and varied and all within the time restrictions of this study.

Although the student sample being drawn from a single university and a single Institute of Technology could be deemed a limitation, the methodology could undoubtedly be modified to measure the effectiveness of individual school programmes or provision on a national scale. Finally, the limitation of the word count restriction constrained the detail of the findings, analysis and final arguments of this work.

5.10. Research reflections

This research process presented a significant contribution to the author's intellectual development. The review of literature, the design and implementation of data collection methods and the process of analysing and interpreting colossal amounts of information were thought-provoking, if not taxing tasks. The fulfilment of these tasks and of the dissertation itself has resulted in the researcher gaining a comprehensive knowledge, not only of the practice of marketing, it's interconnection with ICT's and the relevance of the researcher's marketing education, but also of the research process itself. However, most significantly completion of this dissertation has provided a tremendous sense of accomplishment.

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Appendix No. 1 Information Sheet For Research Participants

Department of Business, Letterkenny Institute of Technology – Research Projects

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Purpose of the Study: As part of the requirements for the MSc in Marketing Practice at Letterkenny Institute of Technology, I have to carry out a research study. The main aims of the study are to establish what new information technologies have impacted marketing practice in the Web 2.0 era, what skills are needed by marketers to utilise these new technologies and to determine are these skills being imparted on third level marketing students.

What will the study involve? The study will involve a one hour interview.

Why have you been asked to take part? You have been asked because you are specifically suitable to provide data for the study.

Do you have to take part? No – participation is voluntary. You have the option of withdrawing before the study commences or discontinuing within two weeks after data collection has started and have your data destroyed.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential? Yes. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the thesis. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous.

What will happen to the information which you give? The data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study. On completion of the thesis, they will be retained for a further six months and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results? The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read by future students on the course. The study may be published in a research journal.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part? I don't envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part.

What if there is a problem? At the end of the interview, I will discuss with you how you found the experience and how you are feeling. If you subsequently feel distressed, you should contact the research supervisor – simon.stephens@lyit.ie

Who has reviewed this study? Approval must be given by the Department of Business Ethics Committee before studies like this can take place.
.
Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me: Grace Korbel, 086 372 6834, gracekorbel@gmail.com

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

Appendix No. 2 Consent Form

Consent Form

Research Involving Human Participants

Project Title:

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the technological skills?

Principal Investigator: **Grace Korbel**

The main aims of this proposed research are to establish what new information technologies have impacted marketing practice in the Web 2.0 era, what skills are needed by marketers to utilise these new technologies and to determine are these skills being imparted on third level marketing students. The data collection strategy involves in-depth interviews. Participants will be recruited on the basis of their suitability to provide data for the study. The identity of subjects will remain anonymous and information used for the purpose of the research only. The interviews will be recorded and all data gathered will be stored securely and accessed only by the principal researcher and supervisor.

Declaration: I _____, acknowledge that:

- I have been informed about the research and have an opportunity to ask questions
- I consent to partake in this study
- My participation is voluntary
- I can withdraw at any time

- I consent to the publication of results

Participant's Name: _____

Contact Details:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signature (if over 18): _____

In the event that the subject is under 18 years, consent must be submitted by the parent or guardians, acknowledging that the issues covered in the declaration are understood.

Name of (Parent/Guardian): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix No. 3 Post Graduate Marketing Student Survey

Post Graduate Marketing Students

Welcome to My Survey

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the technological skills?

Thank you for participating in our survey! Your feedback is important.

1. Please indicate which of the following marketing practices are employed by your placement company. You may tick multiple.

Transaction Marketing - using the marketing mix to attract and satisfy customers	○
Database Marketing – using database technology to facilitate and personalise customer relationships.	○
Interaction Marketing – using face to face interaction to develop customer relationships.	○
Network Marketing – using a network of distributors to grow the business.	○
E-marketing - using the internet and other interactive technologies to create and mediate dialogue between the firm and identified customers.	○

2. How much (as a percentage) is the budget for marketing communications divided among the following mediums in your placement company?

Radio	
T.V.	
Sponsorship/P.R.	
Print Media	
Online Marketing	
Other	

Post Graduate Marketing Students

3. Evaluate the importance of the following digital marketing mediums to your placement company.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Neither Unimportant Nor Important	Moderately Important	Very Important
Banner Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Blogs/Social Networking	○	○	○	○	○
Classified	○	○	○	○	○
Email campaigns	○	○	○	○	○
Games	○	○	○	○	○
Mobile Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Online PR	○	○	○	○	○
Search Engine Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Search Engine Optimisation	○	○	○	○	○
Website Sponsorship	○	○	○	○	○
Viral Marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Audio/Video e.g. Podcasts	○	○	○	○	○

4. What role does IT play in your placement company?

- ○ IT reinforces and preserves the normal functioning of the organisation.
- ○ IT reinforces but enhances the normal functioning of the organisation.
- ○ IT transforms the normal functioning of the organisation.

Post Graduate Marketing Students

5. Evaluate the following statements with regard to your placement company.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Digital strategies are gaining prominence in the marketing plans of this business.	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels increase a marketer's workload	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels can damage this company's reputation	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels provide cost saving to this company	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels provide opportunities to make valuable connections	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels provide opportunities to understand the customer better	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies have changed marketing in this company for the better	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have aided company growth	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have enhanced the ability to satisfy customers	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have changed the way marketing serves customers	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have provided more channels to reach customers	○	○	○	○	○

Post Graduate Marketing Students

6. Please indicate which of the following IT technologies you used in order to carry out your marketing duties in your placement company.

Data consolidation and display	○
Data mining	○
Data warehousing	○
Website	○
RSS feed	○
Instant messaging	○
Social media	○
Intranet	○
Electronic data interchange (EDI)	○
Email	○
Video conferencing	○
Call centre	○
Voice over IP (VOIP)	○
Computer telephony integration	○
Voice activated software	○
System links with suppliers	○
System links with customers	○
CRM software	○
Front office and back office systems	○
Marketing evaluation software	○
Contact management software	○
Main frame	○
Tablet	○
Smart phone	○
Local server	○
Cloud servers	○
Sales force automation packages	○
Customized sales force systems	○
Point of sale information systems	○
Customer applications	○
Marketing information	○

Post Graduate Marketing Students

system	
Data analysis packages	○
Geographic information systems	○
Demographic online systems	○
Internet survey	○
Online mailing lists	○
Internet tracking software	○
Monitoring and tracking software	○
Smartphone apps	○
Marketing planning systems	○
Marketing modelling	○
Executive support systems	○
Decision support systems	○
Enterprise resource planning (ERP)	○
Knowledge base	○
Pricing software	○
Project management software	○
Promotion tracking software	○
Media spend analysis packages	○
Logistics systems	○
Office packages	○
Microsoft Office	○

Other (please specify)

Post Graduate Marketing Students

7. Evaluate what you believe are the most important skills marketing managers should ideally have.

	Not Important	Slightly important	Neither Unimportant Nor Important	Moderately important	Very Important
Leadership skills	○	○	○	○	○
Strong organisational skills	○	○	○	○	○
Oral communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Written communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to think strategically	○	○	○	○	○
Problem solving ability	○	○	○	○	○
Negotiation skills	○	○	○	○	○
Independent judgement	○	○	○	○	○
The ability to be creative	○	○	○	○	○
The skills to implement change	○	○	○	○	○
Customer service focus	○	○	○	○	○
A multi-disciplinary perspective	○	○	○	○	○
Analytical skills	○	○	○	○	○
Flexibility and adaptability	○	○	○	○	○
IT skills	○	○	○	○	○
Strong interpersonal skills	○	○	○	○	○
Wide awareness and understanding of business	○	○	○	○	○
Able to work under pressure	○	○	○	○	○
Planning skills	○	○	○	○	○
Sales management skills	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

Post Graduate Marketing Students

8. Evaluate the importance of having knowledge in the following areas for a marketing manager.

	Not Important	Slightly important	Neither Unimportant nor Important	Moderately important	Very Important
Strategic marketing	○	○	○	○	○
International and export marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Business to business marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Consumer behaviour	○	○	○	○	○
Product and brand management	○	○	○	○	○
Pricing	○	○	○	○	○
Market research and analysis	○	○	○	○	○
Personal selling and sales management	○	○	○	○	○
Societal and ethical issues in marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Innovation and new product development	○	○	○	○	○
Services marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing logistics/distribution	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing communications (Advertising, PR and promotion)	○	○	○	○	○
Retail marketing and management	○	○	○	○	○
Direct marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Internet marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Social marketing	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

Post Graduate Marketing Students

9. Evaluate the following statements with regard to your experience of marketing education.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Marketing academics often develop knowledge that is more closely aligned to the needs of academic journals and conferences rather than the needs of business.	○	○	○	○	○
Academic research should be of practical value to business.	○	○	○	○	○
Managers are enthusiastic to adopt ideas from academic research.	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing theory is relevant to the needs of SME's.	○	○	○	○	○
Irish academic institutes are producing marketing graduates that are theoretically strong but that lack in practical skills.	○	○	○	○	○
Academic institutes in Ireland are imparting the most relevant skills for today's employment market on marketing graduates.	○	○	○	○	○
Good IT skills are important to the employability of Irish marketing graduates.	○	○	○	○	○

10. Evaluate the relevance of your marketing education to your workplacement.

Most Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Unsure	Relevant	Very Relevant
○	○	○	○	○

Post Graduate Marketing Students

11. Type of placement company

- ◯ Business to business service
- ◯ Consumer services
- ◯ FMCG/Durables
- ◯ Non - profit
- ◯ Other (please specify)

12. Placement Company Ownership

- ◯ Irish owned
- ◯ Joint ownership
- ◯ Totally foreign owned
- ◯ Division of a larger organisation

13. Placement Company details

Years of operation	
Average turnover	
Average number of employees	

14. Markets targeted

- ◯ Consumer
- ◯ Business

15. Markets served

- ☐ Domestic
- ☐ Export

Appendix No. 4 Marketing Practitioner Survey

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

1. Please indicate which of the following marketing practices are employed by your company? You may tick multiple.

- ☐ Transaction Marketing - using the marketing mix to attract and satisfy customers.
- ☐ Database Marketing – using database technology to facilitate and personalise customer relationships.
- ☐ Interaction Marketing – using face-to-face interaction to develop customer relationships.
- ☐ Network Marketing – uses a network of distributors to grow the business.
- ☐ E-marketing - using the internet and other interactive technologies to create and mediate dialogue between the firm and identified customers.

2. How much (as a percentage) is the budget for marketing communications divided among the following mediums in your company?

Radio	
T.V.	
Sponsorship / PR	
Print Media	
Online Marketing	
Other	

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the

3. Evaluate the importance of the following digital marketing communications mediums to your company.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Neither Unimportant nor Important	Moderately Important	Very Important
Banner Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Blogs/Social Networking	○	○	○	○	○
Classified	○	○	○	○	○
Email Campaigns	○	○	○	○	○
Games	○	○	○	○	○
Mobile Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Online PR	○	○	○	○	○
Search Engine Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Search Engine Optimisation	○	○	○	○	○
Website Sponsorship	○	○	○	○	○
Viral Marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Audio/Video e.g. Podcasts, Youtube	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

4. What role does IT play in your company?

○ IT reinforces and preserves the normal functioning of the organisation.

○ IT reinforces but enhances the normal functioning of the organisation.

○ IT transforms the normal functioning of the organisation.

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the

5. Evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
New technologies have changed marketing in this company for the better.	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have aided the growth of this company.	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have contributed to company profits.	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have enhanced our ability to satisfy our customers.	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have changed the way marketing serves customers.	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have provided more channels to reach our customers.	○	○	○	○	○
Digital channels increase a marketer's workload.	○	○	○	○	○
Digital Channels can damage a company's reputation.	○	○	○	○	○
It is a challenge keeping up to date with digital channels.	○	○	○	○	○
Digital Channels provide cost saving to the company.	○	○	○	○	○
Digital Channels provide opportunities to make valuable connections.	○	○	○	○	○
Digital Channels provide opportunities to understand the customer better.	○	○	○	○	○

6. Please indicate which of the following IT technologies you employ in order to carry out marketing duties in your company.

- [ ] Data consolidation and display
- [ ] Data mining
- [ ] Data warehousing
- [ ] Website
- [ ] RSS feed
- [ ] Instant messaging
- [ ] Social media
- [ ] Intranet
- [ ] Electronic data interchange (EDI)
- [ ] Email
- [ ] Video conferencing
- [ ] Voice over IP (VOIP)
- [ ] Computer telephony integration
- [ ] Voice activated software
- [ ] System links with suppliers
- [ ] System links with customers
- [ ] CRM software
- [ ] Front office and back office systems
- [ ] Marketing evaluation software
- [ ] Contact management software
- [ ] Main frame
- [ ] Tablet
- [ ] Smart phone
- [ ] Local server
- [ ] Cloud servers
- [ ] Sales force automation packages
- [ ] Mobile devices
- [ ] Customized sales force systems
- [ ] Point of sale information systems
- [ ] Customer applications
- [ ] Internet

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the

- [ ] Marketing information system
- [ ] Data analysis packages
- [ ] Geographic information systems
- [ ] Demographic online systems
- [ ] Internet survey
- [ ] Online mailing lists
- [ ] Internet tracking software
- [ ] Monitoring and tracking software
- [ ] Smartphone apps
- [ ] Marketing planning systems
- [ ] Marketing modelling
- [ ] Executive support systems
- [ ] Decision support systems
- [ ] Enterprise resource planning (ERP)
- [ ] Knowledge base
- [ ] Pricing software
- [ ] Project management software
- [ ] Promotion tracking software
- [ ] Media spend analysis packages
- [ ] Logistics systems
- [ ] Microsoft Office
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the

7. Evaluate what you believe are the most important skills marketing practitioners should ideally have.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Moderately Important	Very Important
Leadership skills	○	○	○	○	○
Strong organisational skills	○	○	○	○	○
Oral communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Written communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to think strategically	○	○	○	○	○
Problem solving ability	○	○	○	○	○
Negotiation skills	○	○	○	○	○
Independent judgement	○	○	○	○	○
The ability to be creative	○	○	○	○	○
The skills to implement change	○	○	○	○	○
Customer service focus	○	○	○	○	○
A multi-disciplinary perspective	○	○	○	○	○
Analytical skills	○	○	○	○	○
Flexibility and adaptability	○	○	○	○	○
IT skills	○	○	○	○	○
Strong interpersonal skills	○	○	○	○	○
Wide awareness and understanding of business	○	○	○	○	○
Able to work under pressure	○	○	○	○	○
Planning skills	○	○	○	○	○
Sales management skil	○	○	○	○	○

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the

8. Evaluate the importance of knowledge in the following areas for a marketing manager.

	Not important	Slightly important	Neither Unimportant nor Important	Moderately Important	Very Important
Strategic marketing	○	○	○	○	○
International and export marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Business to business marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Consumer behaviour	○	○	○	○	○
Product and brand management	○	○	○	○	○
Pricing	○	○	○	○	○
Market research and analysis	○	○	○	○	○
Personal selling and sales management	○	○	○	○	○
Societal and ethical issues in marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Innovation and new product development	○	○	○	○	○
Services marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing logistics/distribution	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing communications (Advertising, PR and promotion)	○	○	○	○	○
Retail marketing and management	○	○	○	○	○
Direct marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Internet marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Social marketing	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

9. Type of company

- ○ Business to business service
- ○ Consumer services
- ○ FMCG/Durables
- ○ Non-profit
- ○ Other (please specify)

10. Company ownership

- ◯ Irish owned
- ◯ Joint ownership
- ◯ Totally foreign owned
- ◯ Division of a larger organisation

11. Company details

Years of operation	
Average turnover	
Average number of employees	

12. Markets targeted

- ☐ Consumer
- ☐ Business

13. Markets served

- ☐ Domestic
- ☐ Export

Appendix No. 5 Marketing Academic Survey

Marketing Academics

Welcome to My Survey

Marketing Practice in the Web 2.0 era: Do marketing graduates have the technological skills?

Thank you for participating in our survey! Your feedback is important.

1. Evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Digital strategies are gaining prominence in the marketing plans of most Irish businesses.	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels increase a marketer's workload	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels can damage a company's reputation	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels provide cost saving to the company	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels provide opportunities to make valuable connections	○	○	○	○	○
Digital marketing channels provide opportunities to understand the customer better	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies have changed marketing for the better	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have aided company growth	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have enhanced the ability to satisfy customers	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have changed the way marketing serves customers	○	○	○	○	○
New technologies in marketing have provided more channels to reach customers	○	○	○	○	○

Marketing Academics

2. Evaluate the importance of knowledge of the following marketing communication mediums to marketing graduates.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Neither Unimportant Nor Important	Moderately Important	Very Important
Banner Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Blogs/Social Networking	○	○	○	○	○
Classified	○	○	○	○	○
Email campaigns	○	○	○	○	○
Games	○	○	○	○	○
Mobile Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Online PR	○	○	○	○	○
Search Engine Advertising	○	○	○	○	○
Search Engine Optimisation	○	○	○	○	○
Website Sponsorship	○	○	○	○	○
Viral Marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Audio/Video e.g. Podcasts	○	○	○	○	○

Marketing Academics

3. Knowledge of the following IT's are of vital importance to marketing practitioners today.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Data consolidation and display	○	○	○	○	○
Data mining	○	○	○	○	○
Data warehousing	○	○	○	○	○
Website	○	○	○	○	○
RSS feed	○	○	○	○	○
Instant messaging	○	○	○	○	○
Social media	○	○	○	○	○
Intranet	○	○	○	○	○
Electronic data interchange (EDI)	○	○	○	○	○
Email	○	○	○	○	○
Video conferencing	○	○	○	○	○
Call centre	○	○	○	○	○
Voice over IP (VOIP)	○	○	○	○	○
Computer telephony integration	○	○	○	○	○
Voice activated software	○	○	○	○	○
System links with suppliers	○	○	○	○	○
System links with customers	○	○	○	○	○
CRM software	○	○	○	○	○
Front office and back office systems	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing evaluation software	○	○	○	○	○
Contact management software	○	○	○	○	○
Main frame	○	○	○	○	○
Tablet	○	○	○	○	○
Smart phone	○	○	○	○	○
Local server	○	○	○	○	○
Cloud servers	○	○	○	○	○
Sales force automation packages	○	○	○	○	○
Customized sales force systems	○	○	○	○	○
Point of sale information systems	○	○	○	○	○
Customer applications	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing information	○	○	○	○	○

Marketing Academics

system					
Data analysis packages	○	○	○	○	○
Geographic information systems	○	○	○	○	○
Demographic online systems	○	○	○	○	○
Internet survey	○	○	○	○	○
Online mailing lists	○	○	○	○	○
Internet tracking software	○	○	○	○	○
Monitoring and tracking software	○	○	○	○	○
Smartphone apps	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing planning systems	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing modelling	○	○	○	○	○
Executive support systems	○	○	○	○	○
Decision support systems	○	○	○	○	○
Enterprise resource planning (ERP)	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledge base	○	○	○	○	○
Pricing software	○	○	○	○	○
Project management software	○	○	○	○	○
Promotion tracking software	○	○	○	○	○
Media spend analysis packages	○	○	○	○	○
Logistics systems	○	○	○	○	○
Office packages	○	○	○	○	○
Microsoft Office	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

Marketing Academics

4. What do you believe are the most important skills marketing managers should ideally have? Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important.

	Not Important	Slightly important	Neither Unimportant Nor Important	Moderately important	Very Important
Leadership skills	○	○	○	○	○
Strong organisational skills	○	○	○	○	○
Oral communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Written communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to think strategically	○	○	○	○	○
Problem solving ability	○	○	○	○	○
Negotiation skills	○	○	○	○	○
Independent judgement	○	○	○	○	○
The ability to be creative	○	○	○	○	○
The skills to implement change	○	○	○	○	○
Customer service focus	○	○	○	○	○
A multi-disciplinary perspective	○	○	○	○	○
Analytical skills	○	○	○	○	○
Flexibility and adaptability	○	○	○	○	○
IT skills	○	○	○	○	○
Strong interpersonal skills	○	○	○	○	○
Wide awareness and understanding of business	○	○	○	○	○
Able to work under pressure	○	○	○	○	○
Planning skills	○	○	○	○	○
Sales management skills	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

Marketing Academics

5. How essential is it for a marketing manager to have knowledge in the following areas? Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being not Important and 5 being very important.

	Not Important	Slightly important	Neither Unimportant nor Important	Moderately important	Very Important
Strategic marketing	○	○	○	○	○
International and export marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Business to business marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Consumer behaviour	○	○	○	○	○
Product and brand management	○	○	○	○	○
Pricing	○	○	○	○	○
Market research and analysis	○	○	○	○	○
Personal selling and sales management	○	○	○	○	○
Societal and ethical issues in marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Innovation and new product development	○	○	○	○	○
Services marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing logistics/distribution	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing communications (Advertising, PR and promotion)	○	○	○	○	○
Retail marketing and management	○	○	○	○	○
Direct marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Internet marketing	○	○	○	○	○
Social marketing	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

Marketing Academics

6. Evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Marketing academics often develop knowledge that is more closely aligned to the needs of academic journals and conferences rather than the needs of business.	○	○	○	○	○
Academic research should be of practical value to business.	○	○	○	○	○
Managers are enthusiastic to adopt ideas from academic research.	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing theory is relevant to the needs of SME's.	○	○	○	○	○
Irish academic institutes are producing marketing graduates that are theoretically strong but that lack in practical skills.	○	○	○	○	○
Academic institutes in Ireland are imparting the most relevant skills for today's employment market on marketing graduates.	○	○	○	○	○
Good IT skills are important to the employability of Irish marketing graduates.	○	○	○	○	○

7. Academic status

8. Specialisms

9. Academic Experience (Years)

10. Business Experience (Years)

11. Any Consulting Experience?

Appendix No. 6 Semi- Structured Interview Log

Organisation	Location	Date	Time	Duration
Public Sector	Face-to-face Interview Donegal	7th May 2014	**1.30pm**	1 hour 45 minutes
Multinational Organisation	Face-to-face Interview Dublin	10th May 2014	**10am**	1 hour
National Retailer	Telephone interview	14th May 2014	**9.30am**	1 hour
Small Start-up Enterprise	Telephone interview	16th May 2014	**2.30pm**	45 minutes

Appendix No. 7 Semi- Structured Interview - Theme Sheet

Profile of interviewees

What is your job title?

Describe your main duties?

Profile of marketing practiced in their company

What does marketing mean to this company?

How is Marketing practiced in this company?

- Transaction Marketing
- Database Marketing
- E-Marketing
- Interaction Marketing
- Network Marketing

How is your marketing budget allocated?

How has the marketing budget changed over previous years?

How do you expect it to change over the next few years?

The evolution of marketing practice over the previous 5 – 10 years

How has the practice of marketing changed over the past five – ten years?

In what way have these changes affected your company or the business environment in general?

The future of marketing practice over the next 5 – 10 years

How do you expect the practice of marketing to evolve in the next five – ten years?

How will this affect your company or the business environment in general?

Skills required for marketing practice

What skills and knowledge areas are important for today's marketing practitioners?

How essential is it for marketing practitioners to have good I.T. skills?

Relevance of third – level education to marketing practice

Does your firm employ Business/Marketing graduates?

- Do you think their education is relevant to their employment duties?
- Is there any skills/knowledge areas they are lacking in?

What do you think are the most important skills for today's marketing graduates to prepare them for employment?

The role of technology within marketing practice

How important are digital marketing communications to your company?

How would you assess the use of information technology with in your company?

- Assess the current level of technology use (low to high)

- Expected level of technology use in five years' time

How would you specify the role played by information technology in your company?

- Inertia
- Application
- Change

What Information technologies does your company use to practice marketing communications?

- Assess the current level of technology use in marketing practices (low to high).
- Expected level of technology use in marketing practices in five years' time.

Have information technologies changed the practice of marketing?