Research Article

Top 6 literacies in marketing education: State-of-the-art approach

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ABSTRACT

To educate capable and literate citizens in the current digital age, high adequacy in all facets of education is required. One could argue that innovation necessitates educational needs and specific knowledge including general literacy for a more profiled human activity towards new emerging technological, digital and social standards. The way that teaching and learning are traditionally understood in relation to the idea of literacy is affected by this shift. The traditional conception of teaching and learning with regard to the idea of literacy is impacted by this remodeling as well. It becomes clear in this case that financial literacy, digital literacy, or economic literacy cannot be regarded as the only, best, or most appropriate kind.

With respect to the concept of literacy in marketing, the current study explores the educational requirements that stem from the broader definition of literacy. Utilizing a state-of-the-art approach and a mixed methodology, the authors explore the needs for specific literacies in marketing and search for a new model for their application in marketing itself. The focus is on how the students feel about needing a particular kind of literacy. Certain aspects of the literacies set and their requirements within the context of higher education institutions are related, according to the findings of a questionnaire survey. This study's discussion attests to the intricacy and dynamic nature of education at the tertiary level and reveals the concept of literacy in its widest sense.

Keywords: marketing education, basic literacies, state-of-the-art approach

INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of technology in the new times and with the criterion of faster and larger-scale information transfer, it is clear that digital and social dynamics are present both as a requirement and as a solution to most of the processes in modern times. The new technology-oriented world is a necessary reality for economics and business, for social relations and relationships, for policies and for progress at every level of human activity. This world also affects education consequently. As the main issues become visible precisely in the business world, the confrontations between education and the new digital and innovative world appear reasonably in the field of marketing. In this sense, the first attempts to better correspond the contemporary needs lie precisely in marketing education. The most important goal is keeping pace with the use of digital tools, innovations and technology to prepare students for the digital world (Unni, 2005). This calls for a specific kind of literacy, or a set of literacies indeed. This research explores the view via state-of-the-art approach towards the literacy concept in marketing education.

Now, at the beginning of the millennium, marketing education is focusing on novelties and challenges and the optimum goal is to achieve executive education for the purposes of marketing in business (Narayandas, 2007). These goals affect national educational policies but also gain importance in terms of learning and

teaching (Kelley, 2007), and real business (Kyurova & Koyundzhiyska-Davidkova, 2007). Of course, this line of analysis is a consequence of the previous action on the international marketing curriculum (Andrus et al., 1995), but it also opens the way for more questions concerning the profile of the international marketing course. Without being new in the early 21st century, the internationalization of marketing education (Bell et al., 2001) sheds light on the three main actors in learning: students and their choices (Chen, 2008), business relationships and business needs, and digital technology and progress. Thus, the efficacy of learning in the scholarly field of marketing increasingly marks the need to direct marketing education towards the various aspects contained in the modern types of literacies.

ADDRESSING ISSUES OF MODERN-ORIENTED LEARNING TOWARDS THE MODERN LITERACY SET IN MARKETING EDUCATION: THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the rapidly evolving landscape of global business, the field of marketing is undergoing significant transformations driven by digitalization, globalization, and shifting consumer behaviors. Despite these changes, modern education in marketing often remains narrowly focused, primarily emphasizing traditional marketing concepts, theoretical frameworks, and basic technical skills. This narrow approach inadequately prepares students for the complexities and demands of the contemporary marketing environment, where a broader set of literacies is essential for success.

While digital marketing is increasingly central to business strategies, many educational programs fail to provide comprehensive training in digital literacies. Students often lack practical experience with advanced digital tools, data analytics, and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, which are critical for making informed marketing decisions in today's data-driven world.

As a result, there is a pressing need to redefine and broaden the scope of marketing education to ensure that students and professionals are equipped with the comprehensive set of literacies required to navigate this evolving landscape. Establishing an agenda for marketing literacy in education is essential to address the gaps in current curricula and to prepare the next generation of marketers for the challenges and opportunities of the modern marketplace.

Inadequacies in Addressing the Broader Scope of Literacies in Marketing Education

Marketing education as exposed to turbulent technological constraints has to overcome significant challenges. Rapid transformations caused by digitalization and globalization lead to changes in consumer behaviors. The result is that traditional marketing concepts have to adapt to the complexities of the contemporary marketing environment. Some of the main key issues include integration of digital literacies, focus on cultural and ethical literacies, financial and strategic consciousness and a concern for emotional and communication values in marketing.

Digital marketing is often acknowledged as crucial for business strategies, but many educational programs fail to provide comprehensive training in digital literacies. The main gap is that they fail to equip students with practical experience. As a result, advanced digital tools knowledge may become missing, i.e., for data analytics, and new technologies. In modern competitive environments, cultural backgrounds have gained relevance. Thus, cultural sensitivity and ethical considerations are essential, but often also undervalued indeed. The main challenge hereto is to prepare students to navigate international markets and to raise awareness for culturally appropriate and sometimes more ethically sound marketing campaigns.

Financial and strategic literacies are often seen as already achieved, given the body of academic disciplines taught. From this view, the integration of financial literacy into modern marketing education can have a grounded justification. Emotional and communication literacies can also be considered lacking, since the scope of marketing education is often directed towards more practical aspects.

The inadequacies in addressing these broader literacies in marketing education result in a workforce that is not fully equipped to meet the demands of the modern marketing profession. Graduates may struggle to effectively engage with diverse consumer bases, leverage digital tools, or create innovative, ethically

responsible marketing strategies. This fact represents the next gap which can negatively affect the future career success of students.

Need for Curriculum Reform

To address challenges in the modern marketplace and based on the discussed perspective, it is clear that marketing education needs a curriculum update. Future programs should include a wider range of literacies, including attitudes more purposeful attitude towards digital, cultural, ethical, financial, emotional, and communication skills. This can have an over whole impact on students during their study. The current approach is insufficient, and curriculum reform is needed both for industry and society. From a second point of view, a set of literacies can have a holistic impact. A curriculum which can provide a deeper understanding of different kinds of literacies could better offer knowledge from various disciplines from fields like psychology, sociology, culture. Finally, students can develop their own understanding corresponding to the bigger picture in the marketing domain.

Application of State-of-the-Art Approach Towards the Literacies in Marketing Education

State-of-the-art is a well-known methodology tool application for qualitative descriptive research, practically appropriate to the social domains of knowledge. According to Vargas et al. (2015), this approach includes the three phases of

(1) planning and design,

(2) management and analysis, and

(3) formalization and elaboration.

As an analytical matrix state-of-the-art has specifically been successfully applied in various fields such as comparative law (Cioffi et al., 2000); In the field of library research, Gonzalez (2017) finds not only some useful application in regard to documental research but also claims the idea of the state-of-the-art approach to be relevant to the other means of a systemic conceptualization of scientific knowledge. Further impacts of the state-of-the-art technique in social science research (Blossfeld, 2010) in general or in relation to teaching research methods in the social sciences (Wagner et al., 2011), in particular. The exact sciences also do not fail to note the advantages of this research approach to legal, political and security aspects (Belova & Georgieva, 2021), and in particular, it has been successfully applied to the specific body of knowledge in areas such as mobile media research (Goggin & Hjorth, 2014) as well as in new branches of economics in education (Trencheva et al., 2024). Being a kind of a scientific overview but not only, state-of-the-art is also accepted by the authors as a suitable tool and an analytical approach for digital marketing education as well.

The application of state-of-the-art approaches to the set of literacies in marketing education can be a relevant response to the latest pedagogical strategies. Its relevant use can transform marketing education into a modern one which better fits the marketing landscape. With a possible focus on new machine tools, such a curriculum design would allow students to better understand behaviors and consumer data, to predict trends, and finally, to make marketing strategies personalized. Teaching students how to use marketing platforms can enable efficient to develop management skills and can foster brand engagement, which can be seen as a next step in their development.

Other needed skills are big data analytical skills, which is also to be included in each modern marketing education. On the other hand, it can enable students to better understand big amounts of data and to forward this kind of knowledge towards informed decision-making. Educating students on customer relationship management can thirdly help them better understand customer mapping.

Understanding consumer behavior is one of the crucial factors for marketing success. Students not only can but they need to use behavioral analytics tools to predict audiences choices based on their online activity or purchase history. Thus, knowledge for personalized marketing campaigns can be useful for acquiring better tools knowledge, analyzing individual customer data and reasoning details of content engagement.

Applying state-of-the-art approach in marketing education via literacies' enlargement can ensure that the education is aligned with industry demands. The emphasis on processes connected with decision-making, cultural and ethical issues will allow marketing education to effectively prepare students for the challenges of

the marketing world. Finally, a state-of-the-art approach is a justified tool to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in their careers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODS AND DESIGN

The identification of key literacies in marketing education is closely tied to two main factors: first, the alignment between the views of the academic community and business, and second, the students' assessment of the courses studied. In this context, the authors pursue two primary research questions, whose answers can offer a deeper understanding of the specific marketing literacies required. Based on these insights, both educators and university administrators can make informed decisions when selecting the most appropriate disciplines for the curriculum.

The main research questions, presented with state-of-the-art approach towards the appropriateness and needs of literacies in marketing education are to estimate *what the essential literacies are required for modern marketing education* (**research question 1**) and what the significance is of newly emerged and traditional literacies to marketing education in the eyes of students? (**research question 2**).

 The purpose of the first research point is to present the conceptual foundations of the researched issues through a theoretical justification of literary sources, as well as to identify key literacy skills emphasized in academic research and industry reports. The authors apply for this stage *a comprehensive literature review* focusing on key literacies such as digital, financial, strategic, ethical, and cultural competencies. Recent studies and White paper, as well as industry guidelines have been included in order to map out literacies deemed critical for modern marketing.

Based on the perspectives of various authors, previous research, and business analyses, a sub-goal of the empirical research was established: to identify key literacies, categorized by their relevance to different marketing functions (e.g., digital marketing, global marketing, and data analysis). The exploration of the Research question 2 was driven by the need to understand how students perceive literacy related to marketing education. To address this, the authors conducted a survey. Thus, traditional marketing and educational literacies can therefore be contrasted with those customized in more recent contexts.

The survey on the top literacies for marketing education aims to capture diverse insights by targeting students from three specialties in bachelor and master's programs at South-West University Neofit Rilski in Bulgaria. The *online survey* was designed towards collecting data from students across different specialties and educational levels. The sample size with total population of 98 students was estimated appropriate for getting validity and representativeness. The *selection of the sample* involved targeting similar students' rate the Bachelor and Master's marketing programs. This choice was based on the following reasoning: By selecting students from multiple specialties (such as marketing, digital marketing, business marketing, and advertising), the sample captured diverse insights into different areas of marketing. This approach allowed the survey to encompass a broad range of literacies relevant to the field. Targeting both bachelor's and master's students ensured the consideration of varying levels of marketing knowledge and experience.

The *research design* was developed in relation to the set research aims and objectives of the study. The survey was conducted during the period February to May 2024. The opinion of the bachelor's and master's students about the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field of marketing have been estimated to bear the central point of this research.

The distribution strategy involved Google Forms and the social media groups of the students in the marketing department, which was conducted anonymously. The survey design took the form of mobile-friendly content and easy access. There were 4 survey sections planned and analyzed:

(1) demographic information,

(2) overall assessment of literacies,

(3) specific literacy questions, and

(4) closing questions.

The response categories included *open-ended answers* (e.g., suggestions and examples), *Likert scale responses* (e.g., 1-5 ratings) and *multiple-choice selections* and provided a richer context and understanding of

students' perspectives. The setting of the survey design opened the possibility for a structured and systematic approach, allowing incorporating the literature review and identifying the key literacies based on the rating scale given by the students. Qualitative insights have been secured using open-ended questions.

The study used simple random sampling. The research methods used for the purpose of the study were mixed and included analytical method, indexed method, synthesis method, graphical method and methods of comparison. Formulative methods were used in the study of secondary data. Data processing and analysis were performed using statistical analysis. The structured and systematic quantitative approach was used to establish causal relationships. In order to gain deeper insight and a more comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes toward studying certain disciplines to acquire specific marketing skills, qualitative methods were considered the next pillar of the research.

Using the advantages of state-of-the-art thirdly was accepted by the authors as a suitable analytical tool for literacies assessment in marketing education. Since the literacies under study derive from modern domains of life, the chosen methodology employed this approach to assess the most relevant literacies.

This study, while presenting both a scientific overview and a contemporary applied research, is bound to some limitations. After reviewing the literature, it has become evident that a complete and standardized system for measuring general marketing skills has not been established. For this reason neither the creation of a consistent way to evaluate students' knowledge nor the assessment of the general literacies needed can be taken as a standard. The limitations can also be linked to the absence of a clear method for prioritizing different literacies in the scope of education and curriculum design. From the other back of the coin, the needs of the industry are not directed towards established specific kinds of literacies.

FINDINGS

Overview of the Body Knowledge on *Basic Literacies*

Having in mind that in the landscape of marketing, the demand for a comprehensive understanding of various skills has become increasingly crucial and in order to achieve an up-to-date picture of the literacies set in marketing education an exhaustive literature review was provided. In accordance with the methodology, the review was directed to estimate with literacies are of highest importance in the domain of marketing. As basic literacies related to marketing education the authors conceive these literacies which provide foundational skills and knowledge areas, and which students need most to effectively understand and engage in marketing practices. These literacies encompass a range of competencies that are essential for success in the field of marketing. After the literature review the basic literacies' set was established and comprised of the following literacies:

(1) financial literacy,

(2) emotional literacy,

(3) digital literacy,

(4) data literacy,

(5) media literacy,

(6) cultural literacy,

(7) visual literacy,

(8) communication literacy,

(9) strategic literacy,

(10) technological literacy, and

(11) AI literacy.

Financial literacy is a fundamental ground in economics and is often conceived as basic cognitive skill (Breuer et al. 2014). Financial literacy mainly represents how to manage money effectively and to make financial decisions. Other interpretations relate it to budgeting, saving, investing, and even managing debt. In regards to marketing, its connection can be revealed against the backdrop of financial evaluation of products and services or online banking skills. The applicable part of the financial literacy in marketing is that it can

thus provide marketers with the necessary competencies market behavior (Firmansyah & Susetyo, 2022; Gezmen & Eken, 2020; Jose & Ghosh, 2024). Additionally, it relates to the abilities of how to follow current trends and social changes (Ramanathan & Indiran, 2021; Remmele, 2016; Sekita, 2011). Some new perspectives of financial literacy are also directed to the next kind of literacy, which is digital literacy.

Digital literacy is conceived as the ability to use digital technology, communication tools, and networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to function in a digital world (Chetty et al., 2018; Murray et al., 2020; Spasov, 2021). Digital literacy is a critical competency for today's future professionals (Umboh & Aryanto, 2023; Wu & Mao, 2024). Related to education, digital literacy can be treated as a fundamental skill for success (Lee, 2014; Lo Prete, 2022; Matthews, 2021; Zdravkova et al., 2022). Its key components include understanding how to use digital tools effectively and can be to information literacy (Bridges & MacDonald, 2023). Digital marketing is also closely connected to digital literacy since both require a strong understanding of how to use technology and to follow the latest trends and innovations. One other aspect of digital literacy for marketing education is the importance of data analytics. From a narrower point of view, digital literacy involves understanding of social media. Since almost every enterprise has created its own online profile, knowing how to effectively reach and engage with target audiences through social media is essential for success in marketing today. In this regard one can find the next closely related aspect, content optimization, which guarantees a better response to the latest trends. It is important for marketers to adapt to these requirements accordingly. By doing so, they can stay ahead of the competition and effectively reach their target audience. In turn, this will result in increased brand loyalty and to establish a strong reputation in the market, leading to sustainable growth and profitability.

The third literacy is **strategic literacy**, which is focused on understanding the overall goals and objectives of the brand in order to create a long-term roadmap for success. Strategic literacy empowers marketers to make well-informed decisions that align with organizational objectives. Some authors argue that that type of literacy helps marketers to navigate complex markets. This type of literacy can be interpreted as the ability to make informed decisions that align with the brand's strategic direction or to the strategic management as a whole (Bailey et al., 2018). In a narrower view, brand literacy can also refer to understanding the specific messaging and visual elements that make up a marketing identity. Related to marketing education is the concept of brand literacy, which is essential for effectively communicating a brand's message to consumers. Having this in mind, strategical literacy can be crucial to developing successful marketing campaigns and ensuring that brand messaging is consistent across all platforms. Marketing education needs, for this reason, to emphasize the importance of strategic literacy in order to prepare students for the complexities of the modern marketing landscape. It is essential that students understand how to analyze market trends, identify target audiences, and craft messages that resonate with consumers.

When dealing with communication messages, the next type of literacy appears. It is **communication literacy**. It is the ability to effectively convey ideas, emotions, and information through various forms of communication. In the realm of marketing education, this would mean developing strong advertising campaigns that effectively communicate the brand's message to its target audience. It is a crucial skill for success in the field. Communication literacy is essential for building brand awareness and fostering customer loyalty. Especially in today's digital age, where consumers are constantly bombarded with messages from multiple sources. It is important for brands to effectively communicate their value and differentiate themselves from competitors. This can be achieved through targeted marketing strategies and creating a unique brand identity. Ultimately, successful branding can lead to increased customer loyalty and retention. This can ultimately result in higher profitability and market share for the brand.

In this way, the next kind of literacy emerges. It is **media literacy**. Media literacy is essential for navigating the saturated digital landscape and consuming content responsibly. It allows individuals to critically evaluate information and make informed decisions about the media they consume. In today's society, media literacy is increasingly important for individuals of all ages. Being able to distinguish between fact and fiction is crucial in order to avoid falling victim to misinformation and propaganda. Fake news and biased reporting can have serious consequences if not recognized and addressed. That is the reason why media literacy has to be conceived as being essential to marketing education. One example is the ability to identify credible sources and fact-check information before sharing it with others.

The next literacy is **data literacy**. Data literacy involves understanding how to interpret and analyze data effectively. One example of data literacy is being able to contribute to the geo-spatial understanding of data (Juergens, 2020). Data literacy is essential in today's data-driven world, and it has relevance to marketing education as well. Data literacy is crucial for making informed decisions and driving successful marketing campaigns. It allows marketers to effectively analyze data and utilize it to improve their strategies. Data literacy is a skill that is increasingly in demand across various industries. As businesses continue to rely on data-driven insights for decision-making (Starobin & Upah, 2014). It is essential for professionals to develop their data literacy skills in order to stay competitive in the modern workforce. As businesses continue to rely on data-driven insights for decision-making, professionals must continue to enhance their data literacy skills (Trencheva, 2022). This will enable them to effectively analyze and interpret data to make informed decisions. They will also be better equipped to communicate data findings to others within their organization. By doing so, professionals can contribute to a more data-driven and successful business environment.

Taking the last two literacies in mind, the next literacy that future marketing specialists have to focus on is **visual literacy**. Visual literacy is crucial in communicating messages effectively through images, videos, and other visual media. It involves the ability to interpret, understand, and create visual messages. It allows marketers to convey their brand's story and connect with their audience on a deeper level. Visual literacy helps consumers engage with content more effectively and can lead to better brand recognition and loyalty. Visual literacy also has a communicating value by making complex information easier to understand and more memorable. In the scope of marketing , visual literacy plays a key role in creating eye-catching advertisements and captivating visuals that grab the attention of consumers. But it is more important for designers to also consider the emotional impact of their visuals on the audience.

Deriving from that very thought, the next literacy is **emotional literacy**. This means that designers must understand not only how to create visually appealing content, but also how to evoke specific emotions in their audience through their designs. Emotional literacy in marketing would mean understanding how to connect with customers on a deeper level and create a more memorable and impactful brand experience. It also involves the ability to anticipate and respond to customer needs and desires effectively. Emotional literacy, in this sense, implies understanding the psychological and emotional factors that drive consumer behavior.

Having not a particular target audience in mind can result in a diluted message that fails to resonate with anyone. Similar to emotional literacy is **cultural literacy.** It involves understanding the cultural values, norms, and customs that may influence consumer preferences and decision-making. Cultural literacy is essential for effectively reaching diverse audiences and creating impactful marketing strategies. In the scope of marketing education, rising cultural awareness can be achieved through the means of cultural literacy. It is important for marketers to understand the nuances of different cultures and how they impact consumer behavior. In other terms, cultural literacy corresponds with the ability to effectively communicate messages in multicultural environments. In order to successfully connect with diverse audiences and tailor marketing strategies accordingly. It is important to understand the values, beliefs, and customs of various cultures. Another aspect of cultural literacy in marketing education is to transfer knowledge of different communication intercultural styles and preferences. Intercultural dialogue can help create more effective marketing campaigns that resonate with diverse audiences and build stronger connections with consumers around the world. This can ultimately lead to increased brand loyalty and revenue for companies. Ultimately, helping companies achieve their business goals and objectives.

Following the newest trends in technology the last two types of literacies are technological literacy and **AI literacy**. Technological literacy involves comprehending and effectively using technology, while AI literacy focuses on understanding and applying artificial intelligence technologies, enabling individuals to adapt to the increasing role of AI in society.

These literacies are essential for marketing professionals to stay competitive in the modern workforce and contribute to a more up-to date and successful business environment. These literacies are essential for marketing professionals to stay competitive in the modern workforce and contribute to a more up-to-date and successful business environment by effectively utilizing data analytics and social media platforms, various marketing strategies and techniques, and the latest technology and trends.

The suggested literacies are integral to marketing education and equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of the modern marketing landscape. Mastery of these literacies enables marketers to create effective, ethical, and sustainable marketing strategies that meet the needs of both businesses and consumers.

Quantitative Ranking for the Top 6 Literacies Related to Marketing Education

The provided analysis has a structured approach to analyze the qualitative responses from 98 participants in a survey on key literacies in marketing education. The objective is to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights that can give a state-of-the-art representation of literacies needed for marketing education and thus inform educational strategies and curriculum development.

The quantitative results of the survey are derived from the four survey sections:

(1) demographic information,

(2) overall assessment of literacies,

(3) specific literacy questionnaire, and

(4) closing questions and feedback.

This stage of the results analysis is directed towards the Likert scale responses (1-5 ratings) in the overall assessment and in the specific literacy questionnaire. and one open-ended response question. The thematic framework is directed towards the identification of high leveled literacies. The first research question concerned a detailed synthesis and review on the most discussed literacies in the body of literature. Thematic frameworks were identified, with high-level themes such as perceived importance of literacies like digital literacy, data literacy, strategic literacy, communication literacy, and AI literacy were ranked. Current integration and gaps in education were identified, including insufficient coverage, need for practical application, emerging technologies and trends, challenges in learning, lack of resources, complexity of tools and concepts, variability in educator expertise, and suggestions for improvement.

Sub-themes included **digital literacy**, which was rated highly important by over 80% of respondents, and **data literacy**, which was high but faced challenges in understanding complex data analytics tools. Recommendations included more real-world data projects, workshops on tools like Tableau, and collaboration with data professionals. Strategic literacy was essential for aligning marketing with business goals, and there was a gap in education regarding the integration of strategy in marketing courses. Communication literacy was crucial for effective marketing communication and brand management, and there was room for improvement in digital communication.

Recurring themes included integration needs, practical experience, resource availability, emotional literacy, and cultural literacy. Top-ranked literacies were digital literacy (65%), data literacy (55%), strategic literacy (45%), and AI literacy (40%).

The quantitative data summary can be overviewed, as follows (**Figure 1**):

(1) digital literacy (ranked 1st by 65% of respondents),

(2) data literacy (ranked 2nd by 55% of respondents),

(3) strategic literacy (ranked 3rd by 45% of respondents),

(4) AI literacy (ranked 4th by 40% of respondents),

(5) communication literacy (ranked 5th by 38% of respondents), and

(6) emotional literacy (ranked 6th by 35% of respondents).

Qualitative Ranking for the Top 6 Literacies Related to Marketing Education

The next stage of the survey was directed towards the estimation and relevance of the literacies (**Figure 2**). The qualitative results at that stage are derived from the last survey sections (4) closing questions and feedback. The results are grounded on the open-ended responses and the feedback. This framework is directed towards the justification of the selected literacies and the practical implication.

According to the established top 6 basic literacies for marketing education the following components, presented in the mind-map below, appeared as most essential: data literacy, digital literacy, strategic literacy,
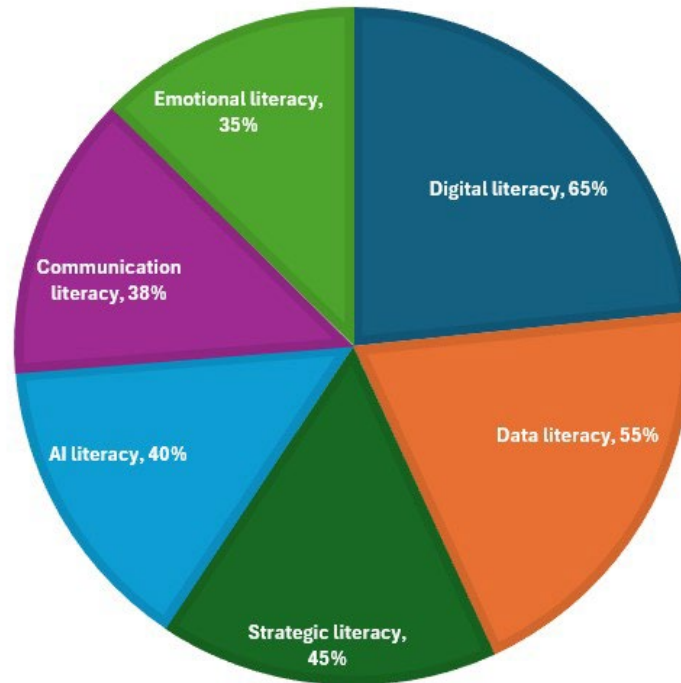
Figure 1. Top 6 literacies (percentages can go over 100 because respondents can give more than one answer) (Source: The authors' calculations based on an own survey)
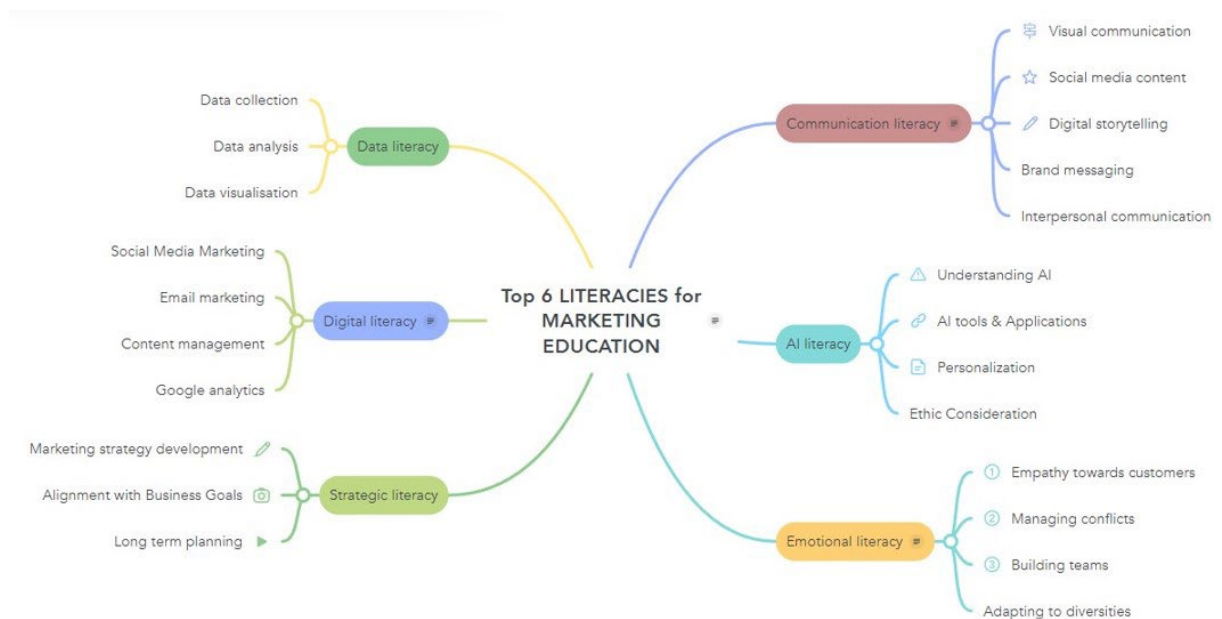

Figure 2. Components presentation of the established set of top 6 literacies (Source: The authors' own representation in a mind-map based on the answers)

communication literacy, AI literacy, and emotional literacy. Additionally, the discussion results were directed towards some perceived gaps in education, where the identification showed that many of the students believed that digital and data literacies were underrepresented in current curricula. They also indicated that there is a gap in practical terms for the marketing industry. Some suggestions and improvements were also made, i.e., curriculum adjustment, industry orientation and more hands-on experience included in applied disciplines. The qualitative results also showed a clear demand for a more comprehensive integration of key literacies in marketing education.

One can notice that some of the literacies, despite being discussed in the literature review and found and crucial for the future profile of marketing specialists, did not achieve top rankings. The growing emphasis on the work with data analytical methods and decision-making in marketing may have its justification for students to prioritize data, digital, and AI literacies, as these skills are in high demand by employers.

The shift towards the analytical domain in marketing can also be seen as a reason for students to view these literacies as more immediately applicable to their career prospects. While important, financial and cultural literacies did not achieve high ranking results and did not seem as directly applicable to marketing tasks in the views of students. Cultural literacy, for instance, is viewed as a broader social skill and financial literacy was estimated as crucial to more marketing-specific roles, estimated by the master students.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was directed towards the estimation of it marketing education is changing its focus on and if this shift has to resonate in education. Due to new technological advances the roles in modern marketing are in an increased demand for up-to-dated technical, communicative, and even emotional intelligence skills. These views reflect the needs of the marketing industry itself, which embraces more advanced digital tools, data-driven decision-making and new communication practices. From this perspective the study was directed towards the understanding of how students estimate not only technical skills but also critical thinking, creativity, and ethical awareness. The study was designed as qualitative and quantitative research aiming at the identification of top-literacies in marketing. The study has identified 6 top literacies: technology-related skills (digital, data, and AI literacy), emotional intelligence skills (communication and emotional literacy), and the strategic oriented ones (strategic literacy).

According to the results of the state-of-the art approach and following the results of quantitative and qualitative sections in the provided survey, the listed top 6 literacies are related to **technology** (like digital, data, and AI literacy) and **emotional intelligence** (like communication and emotional literacy). Digital, data, and AI literacy become more and more essential in marketing. The reasons hereto derive from the rapid digital transformation, where operating in highly digital environments, mastering tools for social media, digital content, analytics, and automation is not an advantage but a must. The set of six most needed literacies, as a result, opens new views for application of marketing education as well.

If considered, the application of a state-of-the-art approach and the list of literacies can ensure that graduates become well-equipped to navigate the landscape of marketing. Additionally, it prepares them to adapt to new technologies and trends in the industry.

The results of this study highlight a need for a clearer shift toward a marketing profession that is technology-oriented, data-inclusive, and emotionally inclusive. To keep pace with these changes, marketing educators need to provide education with curricula focused on the top 6 literacies as per suggested in these research. By integrating digital and data literacy with strategic thinking, communication, and emotional intelligence literacies, students will not only be equipped for current challenges but also prepared to face the marketing landscape of tomorrow. Making these literacies central to marketing education will produce graduates who are adaptable, and ready to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving, tech-oriented and future oriented marketing industry.

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