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Value propositions: application of service-dominant logic in transnational marketing management education

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ABSTRACT

This paper adopts service-dominant logic (SDL) to conceptualise transnational education (TNE) as a higher education (HE) service ecosystem. It uses a qualitative multimethod design that integrates document analysis, focus group interviews, projective and elicitation techniques, and research notes, while engaging students as partners. The research demonstrates how involving diverse stakeholders from three universities across the UK, Vietnam and Malaysia transforms traditional business school agendas through co-producing module learning outcomes (value propositions). We illustrate how 'active sensing' in the TNE context mitigates resource misintegration, enhancing students' experiences and well-being. We apply a specific value proposition framework to HE, displaying its transferability and generalisability.

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Service-dominant logic (SDL); value propositions; service ecosystems; resource (mis)integration; value co-creation

Introduction

Twenty years ago, Vargo and Lusch (2004) introduced service-dominant logic (SDL), which has since gained significant attention in the marketing literature and found increasing application in higher education (HE) (see e.g. Cruz et al., 2024; Landry & Furrer, 2023). This study adds to this growing corpus by exploring value propositions within HE. We define a value proposition as one actor's invitation to engage mutually with another actor for benefit (Lusch & Vargo, 2014).

In HE, value propositions can manifest as learning outcomes (LOs). Drawing from the United Kingdom (UK) Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA, 2024, p. 2), we conceptualise LOs as 'statement[s] of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a designated course of study' or a module. This paper focuses on module LOs.

In response to Paredes's (2022) call to encourage students to participate in the design of new value propositions and support dialogue development, we engaged students as

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partners (Healey et al., 2016) in the co-construction of LOs for 'Marketing Management', a second-year, semester-long undergraduate module. By embedding partnerships within the pedagogical domain, our work challenges their prevailing emphasis on extra-curricular initiatives (Matthews et al., 2019). Additionally, it illustrates how *students as partners* can be meaningfully integrated into marketing curricula. This approach underscores the importance of redistributing essential resources to co-create value-in-context (Akaka & Parry, 2019) for all stakeholders through the reciprocal enhancement of well-being (Vargo et al., 2017).

The module 'Marketing Management' is taught by the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) in the United Kingdom (UK) and its franchised institutions, the University of Economics and Finance (UEF) in Vietnam (VN) and Peninsula College (PEN) in Malaysia (MY), providing a transnational education (TNE) context (Council of Europe, 2002). While TNE is not our primary focus, it helps identify actors and define roles. Ignoring these factors can influence expectations, behaviours and processes in co-producing services and co-creating value (Cruz et al., 2024).

Therefore, our research aims to articulate apposite and robust LOs and discuss practices necessary for facilitating value co-creation among actors. To facilitate this, we employ Skålén, Gummerus, et al. (2015) value proposition framework, enabling us to address their call to investigate if this approach can be applied in different contexts. This leads us to pose three research questions (RQs) regarding our 'Marketing Management' module.

RQ1: *To what extent are the current value propositions fulfilled?* This involves identifying problems and unmet student needs. Literature suggests that value-creation fails when, for example, practices misalign (Echeverri & Skålén, 2021; Skålén, Pace, et al., 2015) or value propositions remain unrealised potential (Hilton et al., 2012). We respond to a recent call and utilise Laud et al.'s (2019) typology to identify potential misalignments and issues. As Laud et al. (2019) emphasise,

> the prevention or remedial action of such resource misintegration requires the active sensing of the service system. Future research needs to focus on these issues if service exchanges are to lead to mutual betterment. (pp. 876–877)

RQ2: How can the new value propositions be understood, described and communicated? We then present the new value propositions and explain their internal and external communication. To do so, we draw on pedagogical literature (e.g. Anderson et al., 2001; Biggs & Tang, 2011) and relevant UK HE policies (e.g. QAA, 2023; 2024).

RQ3: How can the new value propositions be fulfilled? We offer recommendations for course managers and higher education institutions (HEIs) and extend this to broader societal concerns to conclude this paper.

Our research directly responds to Skålén, Gummerus, et al.'s (2015) call for further exploration of whether their framework is context-specific or more general. We do so by applying their framework to the TNE context to determine its applicability and relevance within HE. This contributes to a deeper understanding of how contextual factors influence the framework's effectiveness. This application expands the original construction's scope and provides valuable insights that can inform future HE practices and policies. Furthermore, utilising Laud et al.'s (2019) typology, we identify where most misalignments occur within the value co-creation process. Ultimately, our contribution is in promoting the use of appropriate SDL frameworks within the TNE context (MacInnis, 2011). This process emphasises and amplifies the voices of those previously marginalised in curriculum development, especially franchisees and their students. Historically, the latter have been passive, powerless or silent. By implementing this approach, these actors are now acknowledged for their expertise and worth.

The remainder of this article is divided into six sections. In the next section, we provide the research context and introduce our theoretical framework, focusing on value propositions. Subsequently, we outline the research design and methods in the methodology section. The results are then presented in three sections, each addressing one of the research questions. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of future research directions.

Research context

Thomas and Ambrosini (2021) highlight the need for business schools to reassess their value propositions to meet stakeholders' requirements better. They argue that applying SDL to the HE context could help secure business schools' future. Since Vargo and Lusch introduced SDL in 2004, it has become a commonly applied metatheoretical framework to understand (marketing) exchange (Nariswari & Vargo, 2024). SDL centres on value co-creation, produced through resource integration by actors, including beneficiaries, via repeated interactions within service ecosystems (e.g. Vargo et al., 2008, 2017). Value is not simply codified in value-laden products *delivered to customers*; instead, *value emerges in use* amid material, temporal and social entanglements (see Figure 1). As such, value is axiomatically phenomenological (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) and is ' . . . coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements' (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, p. 8). Given these qualities and interest in co-creation in education, it is understandable that SDL has been applied in this context and specifically in HE (Cruz et al., 2024; Paredes, 2022).

We adopt SDL for three reasons, which we discuss while addressing criticisms and distinguishing it from the related yet distinct 'service logic' (SL) theory (Grönroos, 2006, 2008, 2011). Our parsimonious treatment focuses on SDL's definition of service as ' . . . the application of competences (knowledge and skills) by one entity for the benefit of another' (Vargo et al., 2008, p. 145). The following subsections present potential resolutions to the tensions between SDL and SL, framed as three key assertions.

SDL may be best understood as a threshold theory

SDL argues that service marketing curricula should be built on core marketing principles (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). However, O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2009) criticise this approach, claiming that it promotes a technocratic view of marketing. In contrast, Grönroos and Gummerus (2014) contend that SDL, unlike SL, is overly abstract and offers

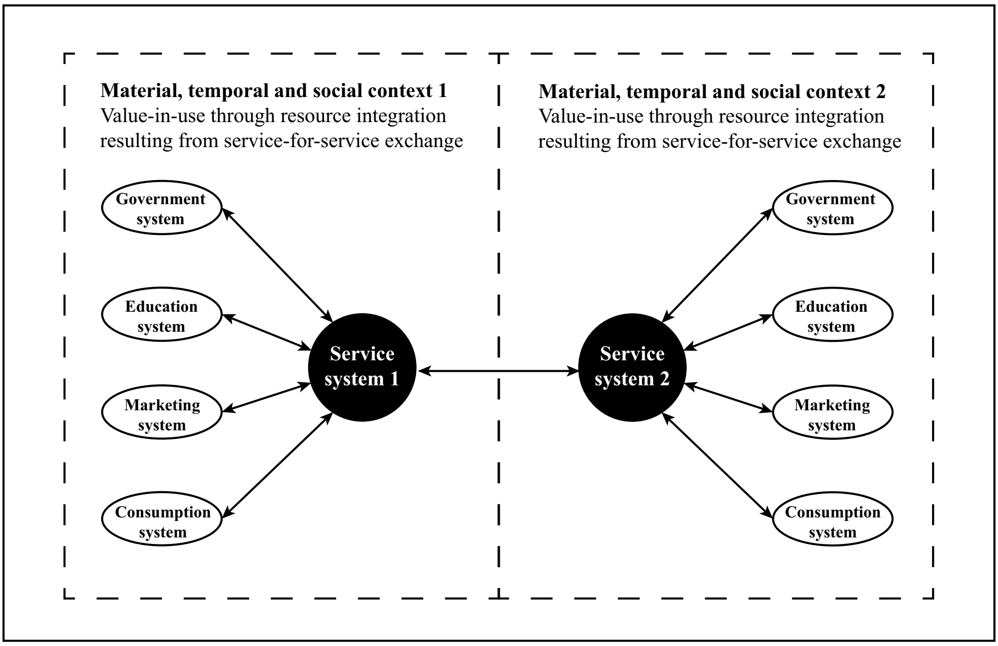

Figure 1. Value co-creation in service-dominant logic (SDL) – based on Vargo et al. (2008).

limited practical value for managers, though it can still provide fresh insights. We propose resolving this tension by viewing SDL as a threshold theory.

Land et al. (2005, p. 54) define this as a theory that '... bind[s] a subject together, being fundamental to ways of thinking and practising in that discipline'. Most recently, Hunt et al. (2022) argued that SDL has the potential to be the central focus of the marketing discipline, because it helps to explain 'how markets work'.

Threshold theories also introduce '... knowledge that is "alien", or counter-intuitive or even intellectually absurd at face value' (Meyer & Land, 2003, p. 2). This is particularly relevant in modules that challenge the knowledge and assumptions learned in introductory work. For instance, SDL can problematise the technocratic and managerialist approach still prevalent in marketing education (Heath et al., 2023) and offer normative guidance (see following subsection for details).

Therefore, SDL may encourage students to

> ... develop their conceptual abilities to identify and question current marketing assumptions, practices, and discourses and to accept paradox and ambiguity. Students require these conceptual abilities every bit as much as they need to develop their technical 'what' and 'how to do' abilities. (Catterall et al., 2002, p. 186)

We propose that a resistant curious pedagogy, which can foster lifelong reflexivity in students (Tadajewski, 2023), will facilitate this process. It requires a 'culture of questioning', encouraging students to be curious, take risks and, most importantly, resist accepting ideas unchallenged (Tadajewski, 2023). Swidler (2020) notes that curiosity necessitates a willingness to embrace not-knowing, uncertainty and ambiguity; it also requires a strong sense of self, providing the inner stability needed to stay grounded while remaining open to challenging and re-evaluating what we know.

Additionally, Baxter Magolda (2007, p. 69) maintains that 'self-authorship' – 'the internal capacity to define one's belief system, identity, and relationships' – is essential for twenty-first-century learning outcomes. The UoG has adopted self-authorship as a core pedagogical approach, recognising that it develops as students acquire a range of graduate attributes (Hill et al., 2016). By fostering self-authorship, learners are encouraged to reflect critically on their positionality within the HE system and society (Preece & Whittaker, 2023).

SDL offers normative guidance

Drawing on MacInnis et al. (2020, p. 4), we argue that SDL can 'offer normative guidance' by considering different configurations of relationship outcomes (e.g. win-lose). Conversely, SL has been described as a more managerial approach (Grönroos & Gummerus, 2014), focusing on practical strategies – what works and how to implement this. Our understanding aligns with Hietanen et al.'s (2018, p. 102) observation that value in SDL is often ' . . . normalized as a generally positive outcome of exchange in benevolent market relations'. However, we challenge the idea that SDL inherently overlooks the darker sides of marketing. For instance, Relja, Zhao, et al. (2024) applied SDL to the buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) context, a new form of interest- and fee-free credit that remains unregulated in the UK. The authors examined five types of symbiotic relationships among consumers, retailers and BNPL providers: Mutualism (win-win-win), Commensalism (win-win-neutral), Parasitism (lose-win-win), Amensalism (lose-neutral-neutral) and Synnecrosis (lose-lose-lose). The study concluded that the long-term well-being of all market actors is sustainable only in the first two scenarios, underscoring the need for a nuanced evaluation of relationship outcomes.

SDL transcends customer-centricity

SDL can offer a productive lens to examine different HE relationship outcomes, emphasising mutual value co-creation among all actors within a service ecosystem. Conversely, SL contends that ' . . . the customer is always a value creator' (Grönroos, 2011, p. 294). A solely customer-centric view is imbalanced and thus problematic (Gummesson, 2008). It can drive HE marketisation (Molesworth et al., 2011) and prioritise student satisfaction with educational services (Nixon et al., 2018). This is particularly relevant when students – and transnational partner HEIs – are viewed as customers. As Nordensvärd (2011) points out, students can also be seen as managers of their learning (or capital) for the labour market and, conversely, as commodities from the viewpoint of the state or market. According to Nordensvärd (2011, p. 162), this shift reflects the idea that ' . . . students go from being consumer queens to investment pawns'.

From the SDL perspective, treating students merely as customers is limiting. It overlooks their potential as active participants who can simultaneously fulfill various roles (Brady, 2013). Moreover, it shifts the focus of education to short-term market outcomes rather than fostering long-term competencies and capabilities that SDL advocates. This commodification can inhibit creativity and critical thinking (Zurn & Shankar, 2020), as students may feel pressured to conform to market expectations instead of pursuing their unique interests. Finally, this view confines students to a transactional role, measuring their worth solely by market demands and satisfaction metrics rather than recognising them as value co-creators (Díaz-Méndez et al., 2017).

SDL defines value as ' . . . a measure of change in viability, [or] wellbeing' of both the service ecosystem and its individual parts (Vargo & Lusch, 2017, p. 54). Value has been widely examined and variously construed, but Blut et al.'s (2023) meta-analysis found that in both business and consumer markets, it is predominantly conceptualised as a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices. SDL-informed value is always emergent (Vargo et al., 2017), changing through the continuous reflection and re-reflection of beneficiaries (Akaka & Parry, 2019). Eggert et al. (2019) pointed out the dynamic interplay in which past value experiences inform expectations of future value experiences. As such, value within SDL is embedded within a temporal and contextual framework, often denoted as the service ecosystem.

Service ecosystems are relatively self-contained and self-adjusting systems comprising multiple actors who integrate resources, like knowledge, to co-create mutual value through service exchanges (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Viewing students as consumers, managers or commodities is not only 'overly simplistic' (Brady, 2013, p. 93), but it also overlooks the many other actors involved, potentially undermining their capacity for change (Cruz et al., 2024). Business schools can benefit from adopting an SDL approach (Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021), which promotes understanding the complex relationships among key actors, such as HEIs/teachers and students, as well as other network actors. Next, we identify several key actors involved in the TNE provision of our second-year undergraduate module 'Marketing Management'.

The module builds on the first-year 'Marketing Principles' delivery and is a foundation for 'Strategic Marketing' in the third year. Since 2016, the 'Marketing Management' module has been taught at the UoG's franchised partner HEIs in Vietnam (UEF) and Malaysia (PEN) as part of its honours marketing courses. These programmes comply with guidelines from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), including the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS). They are regulated by the Office for Students (OfS) and validated by the UoG's Validation Standing Panel, following internal procedures that include consultation with external examiners and, where relevant, with employers. The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), a professional body for marketers in the UK and worldwide, has accredited the marketing courses. This means the LOs align with the CIM's professional qualifications, regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

As an honours degree-awarding body, the UoG ensures that the quality of provisions is comparable across all three countries (OECD, 2005). While some argue that this practice promotes 'educational imperialism' (Pyvis, 2011, p. 733), we contend, following Djerasimovic (2014), that this view restricts the adoption of more constructive approaches to the practical challenges of TNE. From an SDL perspective, these 'rules, norms, meanings, symbols, practices, and similar aides to collaboration' are understood as 'institutional arrangements' (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, p. 6). We propose that instead of being overly controlling, these arrangements should define interpretative agency, ensuring quality assurance through clear boundary-making. Within these boundaries, contextual interpretation remains possible and does not inherently place franchise partners in a subordinate role, as Djerasimovic (2014, p. 209) notes:

> Agency that enables this selective internalisation of ideologies and negotiation of meanings and the use of ideological discursive resources without accepting them as truth is an element that is often found to be missing from critical, structuralist treatment of ideas about discourse and ideology imposition and dominance.

In embracing SDL, we formed a diverse, multidisciplinary team from all three universities to systematically research changes to the 'Marketing Management' module. This team included module and course leaders, teaching and learning innovation leads, quality assurance leads and partnership leads. Their professional expertise, recognised by various bodies, including the CIM and Advance HE, brings practical and academic rigour in course redesigns. Previously, franchise partners and their students were simply consulted, reflecting power imbalances. In contrast, our research took a more participatory approach, collaborating with students from all three countries as partners in redesigning the module within the relevant institutional arrangements.

Figure 2 depicts the key actors involved in this TNE provision. We acknowledge that this representation is UK-centric, as a UK university grants the degree and is also partial. Given the complexity of service ecosystems, a complete overview is not feasible and may be seen as a limitation of the SDL (Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021). We also recognise that the SDL might promote a market-focused view, potentially inhibiting additional change opportunities (Varman et al., 2022). This, in part, reflects the concept of HE being a 'coopetive' service ecosystem, in which actors ' … simultaneously pursue individual and collective goals', resulting in varying relationship outcomes (Relja, Zhao, et al., 2024, p. 99). Market subjectivity and neoliberal governmentality are two possible outcomes (Varman et al., 2011), though they are not the focus of this research.

After justifying SDL as the theoretical lens, the following section presents the paper's value proposition framework. It is based on the idea that value propositions represent

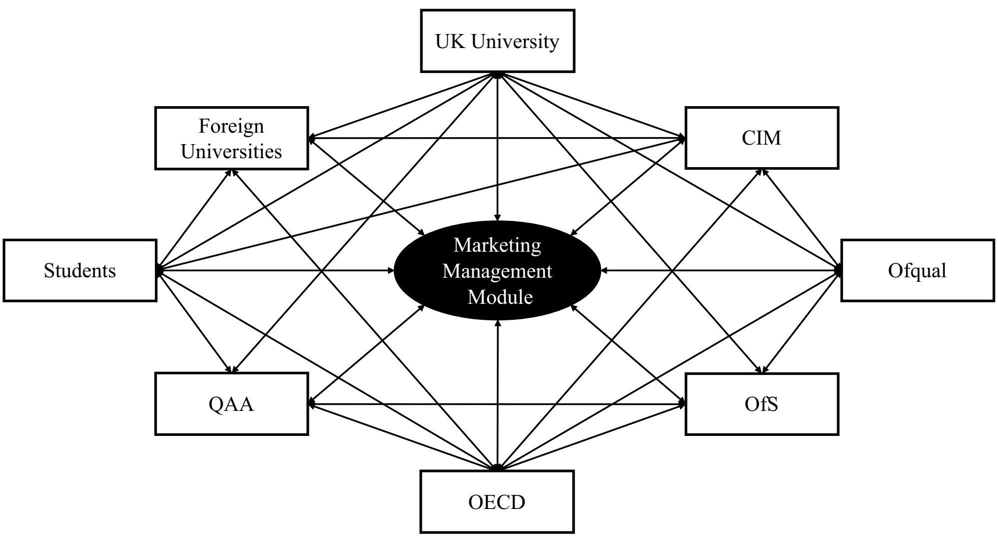

Figure 2. Partial TNE service ecosystem. *Notes*. CIM: Chartered Institute for Marketing. Ofqual: Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. OfS: Office for Students. OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. QAA: Quality Assurance Agency.

promises about *what* is offered and *how* actors co-create value through mutual resource integration, linking promises to practices (Skålén, Gummerus, et al., 2015). Accordingly, we first present LOs as promises of what students should be able to demonstrate, followed by a discussion of the practices necessary to foster value co-creation. The practices are then used to inform our methodological approach and structure the remainder of this paper.

Value proposition framework

The Oxford Dictionary of English (n.d.) defines 'promise' as 'an indication that something is likely to occur'. In education, promises are formalised through LOs, typically framed as *intended* outcomes, since learning cannot be guaranteed (Moon, 2002). LOs are stated at the university (graduate outcomes), course (degree) and module (unit) levels, varying from abstract to specific (Biggs & Tang, 2011). For instance, the UoG has made a career promise, ensuring its graduates are career-ready and can meet their ambitions. A key part of this is fostering self-authorship among students.

As the degree-awarding body, the UoG's course LOs must align with the qualifications outlined in the FHEQ, which also need to be mapped to specific levels of study, such as level five for the second-year 'Marketing Management' module (QAA, 2024). Moreover, the QAA's (2023, p. 1) SBS for business and management details ' . . . what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies'. However, it is crucial to distinguish these module LOs from teaching content, learning activities or assessments (Bloom et al., 1956). Instead, HEIs should define no more than five to six module LOs (Biggs & Tang, 2011), with each outcome containing a single verb to indicate the level of learning (also referred to as Bloom's taxonomy) and a noun to specify the desired knowledge or skills (Anderson et al., 2001).

In SDL, knowledge and skills are operant resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2008), offering actors a strategic benefit (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). Operant resources are human or intellectual resources actively participating in value co-creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In contrast, operand resources, such as LOs, are acted upon or transformed during the service delivery (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). To derive value within a given context, actors such as students must not only access but also adapt and integrate resources before applying them (Akaka et al., 2012). Actors utilise resources to enhance their viability by converting potential resources into tangible ones, which, when effectively applied, can be harnessed to provide service that benefits both oneself and others (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). This multi-directional approach to resource integration sees all parties combining diverse resources to enhance personal well-being while contributing to others' well-being (Vargo, 2008).

Hilton et al. (2012) highlight resources' potential and temporal character and, thus, value. They argue that enhanced resources offer students potential value for skills, qualifications and career growth, often fully realised only after graduation and evolving. As a result, it would be inappropriate to view value as static or short-lived in individual service encounters; instead, value unfolds over time (Lusch & Wu, 2012). To support this extended process, HEIs must implement practices that enable effective resource integration (Skålén, Gummerus, et al., 2015).

The anatomy proposed by Skålén, Gummerus, et al. (2015, p. 144) identifies three aggregate layers of practices that configure value propositions:

(1) Core provision layer. This subsumes three sub-practices (operating, problem-finding and problem-solving) that directly support customer value creation and answer the question, 'How does the firm [organisation] make sure that the value proposition can be used so that value-in-use emerges for the customer, according to the firm's [organisation's] promise?'. As indicated earlier, 'problem-finding' aligns with what Laud et al. (2019, pp. 876–877) term the 'active sensing of the service system'.
(2) Intermediate representational layer. Constituted by three sub-practices (naming and labelling, modelling and interaction), it offers meaning and structure to articulate the value proposition to all actors. It addresses the question, 'How is the value proposition communicated, and what does it mean?'. This and the core layer are deeply intertwined. Representational practices effectively frame the intended value-in-use, whilst those in the provision layer are the activities that help realise this value for the participating actors.
(3) Outer management and organisational layer. The final four sub-practices (organising, staffing and team building, networking and knowledge sharing) support the previous layers. They enable value proposition fulfilment and respond to 'How does the firm fulfill its part of the proposed value?'.

Therefore, these aggregative layers effectively span value proposition development and delivery, communication and enactment. They can also be applied to propositions at multiple levels, ranging from the entire HEI to a single module. Table 1 demonstrates how the layers frame our research questions and provides examples of potential HE resource integration practices.

Within the provision layer, operating practices foreground the necessity of resource integration as codified in value propositions. This emphasises that effective resource integration is a prerequisite for value co-creation and implies that resource 'misintegration' should be avoided as it precipitates value co-destruction, an interactive process based on 'faulty' resource integration (Järvi et al., 2018). Laud et al. (2019) propose that such misintegration can manifest in 10 different ways and across the total service process. For instance, within HE, academics working transnationally may encounter situations where they lack resources, such as knowledge of local professional bodies' requirements. Furthermore, academics may misunderstand how to integrate resources when a TNE-provider-designed module is not sympathetic to local cultures where it is also delivered. Moreover, lecturers may apply resources excessively, for example, when a student pesters staff outside the delivering HEI about assessment details. Such manifestations indicate resource misintegration and warn of impending value co-destruction (Laud et al., 2019). Given this, examining resource misintegration through active sensing of the TNE service ecosystem also offers insights into problem definition and scaffolds problem-solving practices.

Within a TNE context, the representational layer can be applied variously. It encompasses internal and external communication (e.g. validation processes and subsequent course detail publication to recruit students at the franchisor and franchisee institutions). Additionally, it pertains to LO development and articulation, foregrounding the centrality and significance of word choice to scaffold intended value-in-use. As identified previously, there are divergent views on how to frame LOs effectively within pedagogic debates. This

Table 1. The value proposition framework.

Practices and Sub-practices	Definitions (Skålén, Gummerus, et al., 2015)	Research questions (RQs) and example applications in the HE context
Provision practices	' . . . *enable* the value proposition by supporting customer value creation'.	RQ1: To what extent are the current value propositions fulfilled?
• Operating practices	'. . .integrate resources in order to support the value creation of the customer as stated in the value proposition'	. . .creating and validating courses with stakeholders (including students, employers, policymakers, and professional bodies), encouraging and enabling stakeholder feedback, adjusting practices because of discussions
• Problem-finding practices (active sensing)	' . . . identify; (a) problems with the customer's value creation and (b) the customer's need for new forms of creating value'	. . .identify (a) students' cocreation problems with current learning outcomes, particularly course and unit, (b) students' requirements for new learning outcomes
• Problem-solving practices	' . . . help to solve customer problems'	. . .design new learning outcomes, means of delivering and assessments, and supporting student understanding of learning
Representational practices	' . . . involve *articulating* the value proposition, giving it meaning and structure, and are used to communicate the value proposition both externally and internally'	RQ2: How can the new value propositions be understood, described, and communicated?
• Naming and labelling practices	' . . . practices describing the activities of the value proposition and their fulfillment'	. . .practices that enable sense-making and the development of a shared language
• Modelling practices	' . . . create the structure of the value proposition, presenting the value proposition as a meaningful whole'	. . .create a common conceptual framework codified as, for example, a Module Descriptor to present a meaningful whole
• Interaction practices	' . . . enable the firm to communicate the value proposition to its customers, or to cocreate it with them'	. . .enable the module tutor to communicate the learning outcomes to students and then cocreate them
Management and organisational practices	' . . . *fulfill* the promise by aligning, organizing, and managing provision and representational practices, and the resources these practices integrate'.	RQ3: How can the new value propositions be fulfilled?
• Organizsing practices	' . . . organize the work of providing and representing value propositions'	. . .marshal module, course, cross-functional and professional services teams in the work of providing and representing value propositions
• Staffing and team-building practices	' . . . are used to hire staff and form teams that can provide and communicate service'	. . .recruit and forge departments able to engage across HEIs to provide and communicate service
• Networking practices	' . . . are those in which the firm relates to and involves members of its network in order to create, deliver, or negotiate value propositions'	. . . are those where HEIs engage with varied network actors, for example, professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), Advance HE, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) or employers, to create, deliver, or negotiate value propositions
• Knowledge-sharing practices	' . . . entail the dissemination of knowledge and skills, important resources, throughout the company by means of training, best practice sharing, and interaction in order to realize the value proposition for the customer'	. . .include intra- and inter-HEI and professional body knowledge, skills and resource dissemination through scholarly and research activity to realise the value proposition for the student

is exacerbated by considering possible in-group (e.g. HEIs, course managers, students, communities of practice) preferences for specific language forms and is amplified by cultural particularities. As such, representational layer practices are critical in this study.

The outer management and organisational layer for those engaging in TNE focuses on the 'translation' of the provision and representational practices and the resources these practices integrate into the means to fulfill the promise. This underscores intra- and inter-HEI staff collaboration, engagement with varied additional network actors, the need for knowledge sharing and the alignment of organisational practices. Within this research, this layer also raises implications for *who* should participate and *how*. It signals the inclusion of diverse actors and the application of varied forms of research that seek to build a team and offer opportunities for networking and knowledge-sharing. As such, this leads us to consider the methodology applied.

Methodology

This interpretivist study adopted a nested multimethod design by integrating five qualitative approaches to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of students' experiences with the second-year Marketing Management module (Hackett et al., 2016; Mik-Meyer, 2021). *Document analysis* sensitised the research team to the broader HE and TNE context, informed research design and contextualised findings (Bowen, 2009; Dibb et al., 2014). *Focus group interviews* (Krueger & Casey, 2015a) were the overarching method, enabling us to deploy additional *projective* (Relja, Ward, et al., 2024) and *elicitation techniques* (Barton, 2015). *Research notes* (Phillips & Jones, 2024) were taken throughout the data generation and analysis to support reflection, sensitisation and contextualisation. Table 2 provides an overview and justification of the methods used, which are discussed in the following sections.

Our data generation and analysis approach align particularly with Skålén, Gummerus, et al. (2015) provision practices (RQ1) and representational practices (RQ2); outcomes are presented in two separate result sections. The implications of these results are then considered jointly to address management and organisational practices (RQ3).

Data generation

Before initiating empirical work, we conducted a comprehensive *document analysis* to gain a deeper understanding of the internal and sector-wide context (desk research). Reviewing internal documents – including quality policies and procedures, strategic plans, validation documents and student feedback – helped shape the research design and focus. These documents remained a key reference throughout data generation, analysis and co-creation of new policies and module content.

Additionally, various QAA documents were scrutinised, including quality codes, SBS, FHEQ and guidelines on the quality evaluation and enhancement of UK TNE provision. These sources provided continuous guidance during research design, data generation and analysis, as well as in the collaborative development of new value propositions and policies. Similarly, a review of Advance HE frameworks – such as those for internationalising HE, embedding employability and fostering student engagement through partnership – further informed the study.

Table 2. Data generation methods.

Key method	Description	Rationale for method
Document analysis • Institutional documents • QAA documents • Advance HE documents • Textbooks	*Secondary (desk) research* The research team reviewed a range of institutional, QAA and Advance HE documents, including quality policies, strategic plans, quality codes, frameworks for HE qualifications and guidelines for student experience and engagement. The research team reviewed widely used marketing textbooks, selecting works that reflect diverse geographical perspectives, including Asia-Pacific, European and global editions. Definitions of marketing and marketing management were extracted and thematically analysed.	*Sensitise and contextualise* Document analysis addressed RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3. Internal and external documents provided continuous guidance throughout the research design, data generation, analysis and co-creation of new policies and module content. Textbook analysis informed stimulus selection, shaped focus group discussions, guided data analysis and informed the discussion of findings.
Focus groups • Development of Learning Outcomes (LOs) • Validation of Learning Outcomes (LOs)	*Primary (empirical) research* Three focus groups (one per country) were conducted for active sensing of the TNE service ecosystem and the collaborative development of LOs (Duration: two hours per session). After analysing the data from the first focus group, the research team synthesised a unified set of LOs applicable across all countries. To validate these LOs, a second round of three focus groups (one per country) was held (Duration: 30–45 minutes per session). The core of the student body was the same as in the first focus group. Student responses informed subsequent policy and module changes.	*Explore lived experiences* Both sets of focus groups in each country addressed RQ1 and RQ2 by exploring students' lived experiences, identifying issues and uncovering unmet needs. They also examined practice alignment and potential realisation of value proposition, subsequently informing the development of new LOs.
Projective technique • Word association task	*Primary (empirical) research* In the first round of focus groups, students in each country were asked to write down the first three words that came to mind when thinking of 'marketing'. This generated a total of *N*=63 data points, which were analysed using thematic content analysis.	*Access tacit thoughts and beliefs* This method addressed RQ1 and RQ2 by uncovering students' tacit beliefs about marketing and revealing needs that shape their expectations and value perceptions. The insights guided the development of new LOs and informed research discussions.
Elicitation technique • Verbal stimuli	*Primary (empirical) research* Following the projective technique in the first round of focus groups, students in each country (*N*=21) were encouraged to comment on two definitions of marketing, one by the UK Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and the other by the American Marketing Association (AMA).	*Encourage metacognition* This method addressed RQ1 and RQ2 by prompting students to reflect on their understanding of marketing, deepening their awareness of learning and thought processes. Co-developing a shared understanding of the module's focus established a foundation for creating LOs,
Research notes • Field notes	*Primary (empirical) research* The research team documented insights from focus groups throughout data collection and analysis, including observations and experiences.	*Sensitise and contextualise* This method addressed RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3. Research notes aided the contextualisation and interpretation of findings within and between countries and sessions.

Finally, widely used textbooks were analysed (Dibb et al., 2014), encompassing Asia–Pacific, European and global editions, to ensure a comprehensive perspective. Marketing and marketing management definitions were extracted and thematically analysed to identify key conceptual variations.

The primary research comprised six *focus groups*, with two conducted in each of the three countries. The first set of focus groups (lasting 2 hours each) explored participants' experiences, motivations and perspectives regarding the expected learning outcomes of the Marketing Management module, thereby encouraging metacognition about their learning (Tanner, 2012). Focus groups, a qualitative interview method (Mik-Meyer, 2021), are designed as ' . . . planned discussion[s] led by a moderator who guides a small group of participants through a set of carefully sequenced (focused) questions . . . ' (Krueger & Casey, 2015a, p. 506). They can be effectively employed in different contexts (Tadajewski, 2016), including course design and evaluation (Krueger & Casey, 2015a). The terms focus groups, (focus) group interviews and group discussions can be used interchangeably, provided the researcher actively encourages and monitors group interaction (King et al., 2019; Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999). This study adhered to these principles by, for example, carefully designing the moderator guide, prompting participation and highlighting similarities and differences during moderation to negotiate meaning (Barbour, 2018).

We accept the inherent challenges of focus groups (e.g. Krueger & Casey, 2015b) and highlight three issues identified by Smithson (2000) as most relevant to our study, explaining how we addressed them. An initial challenge arises when one or more voices dominate the discussion, requiring the moderator to encourage quieter participants to contribute actively. However, as Smithson (2000) suggests, silence need not be seen as problematic, as it may reflect participants' authentic modes of engagement. The second challenge relates to moderator bias, while the third involves reinforcing normative views. We recruited student moderators who shared characteristics with the focus group participants to address these potential issues. Partnering with student co-researchers (Gravett et al., 2020; Matthews et al., 2018) also helped overcome potential power imbalance. Additionally, independent staff from diverse cultural backgrounds supported the student moderators as needed, facilitating both group discourse and critical reflexivity between student and staff researchers. Independent staff members were not involved in course design, delivery or assessment.

During the focus group interviews, students were initially presented with icebreakers and opening questions about themselves and their learning experiences. Next, the moderators employed a *projective technique*, asking students to write down on sticky notes the first three things that came to mind when thinking about marketing. This task changed the pace and modality of the focus groups, encouraged active and playful engagement (Kalter, 2016) and facilitated the co-production of new meaning. Word association tasks are quick and easy to administer, require minimal mental effort and are less likely to evoke negative responses than other projective techniques (Relja, Ward, et al., 2024). More importantly, they also provide an opportunity to tap into learners' tacit knowledge, implicit beliefs and unconscious motives, thereby granting access to experiences that may not be explored through focus group interviews alone (Relja, Ward, et al., 2024).

Following the projective technique, the moderators employed an *elicitation technique*, which typically uses 'visual, verbal, or written stimuli to encourage people to share their ideas' (Barton, 2015, p. 180). Specifically, students discussed and compared two distinct definitions of marketing with their associations to generate deeper insights into their understanding of the subject. The two definitions (see Figure 3) were sourced from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM, 2015) and the American Marketing Association (AMA, 2017). Our rationale was to highlight the tension arising from the CIM's focus on profitable management and the AMA's emphasis on value creation, as noted in prior

Figure 3. Two marketing definitions used as verbal stimuli in the focus groups.

literature (CIM, 2007; Grönroos, 2011; Skålén et al., 2022). Notably, only a few of the textbooks reviewed (Baines et al., 2022; Blythe & Martin, 2019; Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Masterson et al., 2021) explicitly addressed both definitions, while most remained silent. Our approach promoted discourse through ' … the sharing of ideas, knowledge and experience' (Caridà et al., 2018, p. 70). As highlighted by Kahlke et al. (2024, p. 8), both projective and elicitation techniques are believed to empower research participants because the 'research topic involves investigating complex thinking and meaning-making' and students might feel 'uncomfortable with oral interviews or may find them inaccessible'.

Following the first round of focus groups, the research team analysed the data and identified a unified set of LOs applicable across all three countries. A second round of *focus groups* (30–45 minutes each) was conducted in all three countries to validate the new LOs with students. Where relevant, LOs were refined based on student feedback. Insights from focus groups were documented throughout the study in the form of *research notes*, capturing researcher observations and reflections during data generation and analysis.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis served as the core qualitative approach, enabling an inductive interpretation of data. We adhered to the six phases of the analytic process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022): (1) familiarisation with the data; (2) coding; (3) generation of initial themes; (4) development and review of themes; (5) naming and refining themes; and (6) writing up the findings. In the *analysis of the textbooks*, marketing definitions were extracted into a table. After familiarisation, the data were coded and initial themes were generated. These themes informed stimulus selection for the elicitation task while contextualising the findings.

The *focus groups* were recorded using audio and video for online sessions. Recordings were purposefully transcribed to ensure trustworthy representation (O'Connell & Kowal, 1995; Smith et al., 2022). Data analysis combined inductive (thematic) and deductive (template) approaches using NVivo software to identify and address problems and student needs (Skålén, Gummerus, et al., 2015). A template with a priori codes was created (Brooks et al., 2015; King & Brooks, 2017) based on Laud et al.'s (2019) 'typology of resource misintegration manifestations'. This SDL framework facilitated a systematic examination of the data in phase two, while inductive thematic analysis captured emerging ideas.

For the *projective technique*, word clouds were generated for each country to visually represent the frequency of students' associations with the term 'marketing' and to analyse patterns in their knowledge (DePaolo & Wilkinson, 2014). Thematic content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013) was then applied to interpret these words and identify themes for cross-country comparison. Visual and verbal/written data were analysed in phases three to five of Braun and Clarke's (2022) approach. Data from the *elicitation technique* was integrated with focus group interview data and analysed collectively.

Representational practices (Skålén, Gummerus, et al., 2015) included the development of new value propositions (LOs) derived from the main themes and aligned with the relevant SBS and FHEQ level. LOs were crafted using Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001; Krathwohl et al., 1964). The latter suggests that domain-specific learning can be represented at various levels, with examples in the cognitive domain ranging from 'remember' (the lowest) to 'create' (the highest). Although Bloom's taxonomy is widely applied for LO design (Karanja & Malone, 2021), it presents challenges, particularly in the post-digital age (Panthalookaran, 2021). Newton et al. (2020, p. 4) recently questioned Bloom's alignment with learning science evidence, noting '…that there is a lack of consistency between UK HE providers with regard to the verbs they use to map learning to the different levels'. Recognising tensions from applying diverse subject, paradigmatic and cultural perspectives within and across HEIs, we championed a shared language among key actors to facilitate value creation.

Study participants

After obtaining ethics approval from the universities (#REC.23.14.1b.2), a purposeful sampling strategy was used to recruit second-year undergraduate marketing students in the three countries, all currently enrolled in relevant marketing courses (Patton, 2015). Participation was voluntary. Students were fully informed and gave written consent for their involvement and the publication of anonymised data. We use pseudonyms to protect participant anonymity. Students self-selected to participate in the focus groups within their respective countries. A total of 31 students participated across both focus groups, averaging 9 students per country and group.

Validity

We use Yardley's (2000, 2015) framework to establish the validity of our qualitative study. It is based on four principles. First, our research demonstrates 'sensitivity to context' by attending to students' perspectives, as they are the primary beneficiaries of HE value. We highlight our awareness of the research context by linking SDL and the broader pedagogic literature. Second, the researchers are 'committed' to a thorough and rigorous methodological approach, evidenced by their skills and competencies. Third, we aimed to maintain the clarity of the narrative and offer 'coherent' and robust arguments. This was achieved through methodological triangulation (including focus group discussions, projective methods and elicitation techniques), researcher triangulation (engaging an international, multidisciplinary team with diverse skills at different stages) and data triangulation (generating data with students in three countries to add geographical and cultural diversity) (Denzin, 1970/2009, 2012). Finally, the research aimed to have a real-world 'impact' on students and other actors within our TNE service ecosystem.

Furthermore, we offer new theoretical perspectives by evidencing the applicability of Skålén, Gummerus, et al.'s (2015) value proposition framework to the HE context. Specifically, we affirm the framework's transferability to this new context, thereby deepening theoretical and practical understanding. Moreover, SDL frames the TNE context as a scalable (e.g. institutional versus national versus transnational) service ecosystem capable of producing various outcomes (e.g. win-lose-neutral) for its actors and the network as a whole. Advocating this view emphasises the framework's generalisability and underscores its theoretical contribution (MacInnis, 2011). The following section presents results from engaging with students in provision practices, addressing RQ1.

Results and discussion of provision practices (RQ1)

The first RQ examines the extent to which current value propositions are fulfilled. This section discusses four themes identified through active sensing, highlighting students' needs for new forms of value creation (Skålén, Gummerus, et al., 2015).

Theme 1: future-casting career decision-making

The most important theme for students in all three countries is having an applied and relevant curriculum aligned to future careers, fulfilling the UoG's career promise. By focusing on career development, the educational experience aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills and networks necessary to navigate the complexities of the job market and pursue their career aspirations effectively. Given the rapid and disruptive changes in the marketing landscape, predicting the exact skills needed even 5 years from now is impossible (PwC, 2018). As PwC (2018) notes, employees and organisations must be prepared to adapt to various future scenarios. Similarly, Deloitte (2022) acknowledges the uncertainty of the decade ahead, emphasising that ongoing shifts make it essential to remain agile and responsive to unforeseen events. This theme, therefore, emphasises the importance of aligning educational outcomes with students' interests, values and long-term career goals, fostering a seamless transition from academia to the workforce. Students' need for future-casting career decision-making emanates from a perceived lack of access to resources to support their value creation (Laud et al., 2019).

Two key subthemes – identity and occupation – were developed, and a lack of clarity in either area, now or in the future, often leads to challenges in career decision-making (Gati et al., 1996). Both may indicate resource misintegration (Laud et al., 2019), hindering the development of meaningful and fulfilling career aspirations and the alignment of self-beliefs with career choices. The data indicate an emerging pattern in career decision-making challenges across regions. Students from Vietnam tend to lack a strong sense of identity, expressed as 'not knowing what I want' (preferences). This may inhibit their ability to connect personal beliefs and values with career aspirations:

Sometimes I'm confused that I don't know, when I graduate, what I'm going to do, what job I'm going to pick like that, yeah. (Kate, VN)

I feel so confused about my future–about what I'm gonna do after graduation. (Crystal, VN)

Conversely, Malaysian students showed some appreciation of how course content relates to their future careers, particularly to job characteristics. However, this does not imply complete clarity, as conceptualisations might be too narrow or based on incomplete information:

This module has covered certain theories and concepts which will be useful . . . to analyse market conditions [and] create creative marketing strategies, which will be really helpful in [my] future career. (Millie, MY)

. . . if we. . . would like to manage a team, first we need to identify. . . the team members. (Sophia, MY)

In contrast, UK students expressed identity-related concerns (self-awareness) and occupation-related concerns (knowledge of marketing roles). This highlights a need for support in developing self-understanding and exploring various careers. For example, Elsa lacks an appreciation of her capabilities (What can I do?):

I don't really know what I'm good at. . . I really was hoping that I know, like, 'what's my strength?' (Elsa, UK)

In contrast, Anastasia's comment suggests a somewhat simplistic view of marketing and the roles of marketers by implying a single universal role – potentially ignoring the job differences. However, markets, marketing practices and marketing praxis are increasingly recognised as fluid and context-dependent (Skålén et al., 2022). This underscores the need for a deeper understanding of these concepts.

You know, the thing that I feel like I'm lacking is like the knowledge of what marketers actually do day-to-day in the real world. (Anastasia, UK)

Students' self-knowledge is considered an essential resource for value creation. As Baxter Magolda (2001, p. xvii) emphasises, 'internal self-definition is crucial to balancing external and internal forces in knowing and relating to others', thus playing 'the central role. . .in self-authorship'. External forces, such as social norms and expectations, can evolve and may be codified in HE frameworks like the SBS (QAA, 2023), articulated by professional bodies such as the CIM, or reflected in job advertisements (e.g. DiGregorio et al., 2019). Similarly, identity is also highly temporal. D'Argembeau et al. (2012) note that we draw on our autobiographical memories (past) to make sense of who we are (present) and project our self-understanding into the future. This evolving interaction between internal and external forces underscores the complexities students face in aligning their identities with career goals.

Strikingly, the consistency in students' perspectives suggests that the TNE context does not lead to misintegration. It is conceivable that the operant resources of student identity (self-knowledge) and occupation expectations are primary points for misintegration when modules do not attend to these 'at-hand' student resources but are configured with distinct propositions. If there is limited recognition or an attempt to align knowledge and expectations, it is unsurprising that this becomes a possible source of value destruction (Laud et al., 2019).

Theme 2: composing marketing definitions

Another key theme emerging from the data is the need to compose marketing definitions. A potential misalignment of operant resources stems from students' disagreement on how to integrate resources (Laud et al., 2019). This is reflected in varying opinions on the structure and content of marketing courses and modules. This variation might be related to their identity projects and occupation intentions. For instance, a content analysis of students' associations with the term 'marketing' – expressed in their vocabulary – revealed country-specific differences, illustrated as word clouds in Figure 4.

British students (Panel A) emphasise creativity and communication skills, indicating a view of marketing that involves content creation and consumer engagement. Marketing in the UK context may be perceived more as an *art* than a *science* (Kotler et al., 2019). Conversely, Asian students may lean towards a more scientific approach, valuing proven tools and processes to achieve organisational goals. Vietnamese students' perceptions (Panel B) focus heavily on marketing concepts like 'advertise', 'profit', '4Ps', 'SWOT' and 'PESTL', suggesting an awareness of marketing frameworks and a more technocratic view. Malaysian students' associations (Panel C) concentrate on operational and strategic aspects like 'business', 'analysis', 'planning' and 'strategies'. Overall, there is a clear emphasis on activities (e.g. communicating) and processes (e.g. planning), which is expected given their role in achieving business objectives (Dibb et al., 2014). Additionally, the associations highlight a strong focus on customers and monetary outcomes (e.g. sales and profits), reflecting an ongoing alignment with traditional and managerialist perspectives (e.g. Armstrong et al., 2019, 2020; Blythe & Martin, 2019; Kotler et al., 2018, 2021) that remain prevalent in marketing education (Heath et al., 2023).

Notably, the word cloud reveals little to no consideration for the well-being of broader stakeholders (e.g. Vargo & Lusch, 2017). While some textbooks (Baines et al., 2022; Blythe & Martin, 2019; Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Masterson et al., 2021) discuss both the CIM

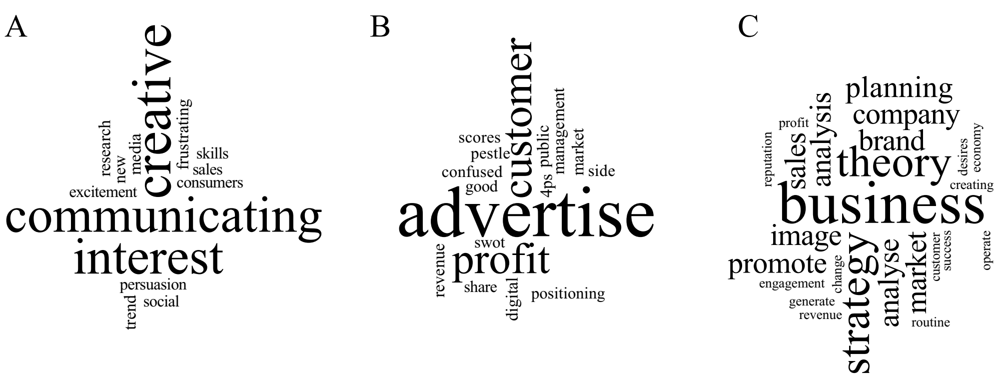

Figure 4. Word clouds illustrating students' associations with the term marketing. *Note*. Panel A: Word associations from UK students. Panel B: Word associations from VN students. Panel C: Word associations from MY students.

(2015) and the AMA (2017) definitions of marketing, only one of the reviewed textbooks explicitly includes the term 'stakeholder' in its definition (Pride et al., 2018). Other definitions remain broad, with stakeholder considerations only implied (e.g. Dibb et al., 2019). However, there are signs of a gradual shift in perspective. More recently, Kotler et al. (2022, p. 578) defined marketing as 'the identification and meeting of individual and social needs', signalling an increasing focus on the broader societal context compared to their definition offered nearly 15 years earlier:

> Marketing [is the] process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational goals. (Kotler et al., 2009, p. 865)

Additionally, there has been a progressive rise in the number of texts directed at 'sustainable' marketing, with most academic publishers (e.g. Palgrave, Pearson, Prentice Hall, Routledge, Sage, Springer) now providing undergraduate titles that may find use across a wide range of marketing modules. There is also a continuance of work around marcomarketing (including that expressed in the *Journal of Macromarketing*) that may gradually inculcate such themes in the thinking of staff and students and the coverage of issues addressed in marketing texts.

Focus group data generally confirm findings from the word association method. For instance, British students expressed their disagreement with the current business focus of the 'Marketing Management' module, whereas Malaysian students disagree with its current marketing focus:

> *I feel that the university is sending people out into the world, kind of like all signed up without the artistic part of it, which you need if you want to be a good marketer, in my opinion. (Heggerty, UK)*

> *I see marketing as not just business... I just want it to balance it out. (Elsa, UK)*

> *I think that this subject [marketing management] is more focused heavily on marketing side rather than ... marketing and management equally ... I hope the two stuff can be equal. (Will, MY)*

> *I will more prefer on the management part cause I'm not so like the creative person, yeah. (Sophia, MY)*

Vietnamese students were less explicit about their marketing configurations. As the following quote suggests, their technical view of marketing was more implicit:

> *... digital marketing tools could be used to, for example, the media platform, right, the media, the website. The AI technology could be used and implemented to find the data ... instead of traditional tool of marketing ... And this could lead to the rise in revenues. (Tracy, VN)*

The analysis suggests a need to bridge the gap between creativity and technical knowledge, addressing confusion and fostering a deeper understanding of how marketing operates 'in the real world'. By incorporating these diverse perspectives, a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to marketing education might better prepare students for contemporary marketing practices (Skålén et al., 2022) with a well-rounded skill set. This also indicates that perceptions attached to the operant resources identified in theme one, 'Future casting career decision-making', are a site for additional misintegration and value co-destruction. The students' identity (self-knowledge) and occupation expectations underscore their responses to the module resources. This essentially creates misintegration amplification and hence helps define a problem that needs attention (Laud et al., 2019). This consideration can provide perspective and alternative viewpoints, helping to co-create changed identity and occupation expectations. If nothing is done, there is scope for this value co-destruction to spill over and create further issues, as is perhaps evident in the following theme.

Theme 3: exploring real-world dynamics

During the focus groups, students from all three countries shared their experiences with simulations used as digital learning environments to provide hands-on, experiential learning opportunities (Chernikova et al., 2020; Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2017). The goal was to understand the perceived value of simulations in students' learning journeys. Insights from this study are intended to inform interventions that align with guidelines (e.g. OECD, 2005), ensuring that TNE education offered by the UoG meets standards comparable to those in the home market. The academic team was concerned that these guidelines might not be fully upheld if British students have free access to simulations and are assessed on these experiences. In contrast, budget constraints prevented partner universities from providing the same experience, access and assessments. To address this, the second author secured research funding from the UoG to provide students across all three countries with time-limited, free access to simulations, enabling systematic investigation into its acceptance and impact on student achievement.

Overall, student responses to simulations were mixed, revealing regional differences. These varied responses might again be said to bear the echoes of the two preceding themes. Aspects might reflect a student's desire to practice applying the creative, technocratic or managerialist skills they value and, in that way, help them pursue specific career aspirations.

Vietnamese students found that simulations offer safe environments for practical learning (Andrew, VN), help them understand real market dynamics (Kate, VN) and facilitate learning through real-life applications (Mike, VN). These views contrast with those of British students, who perceived simulations as unhelpful and burdensome (Anastasia, UK), mentioned that simulations are not assessed (Allaysia, UK) and consequently expressed their uncertainty about the relevance of simulation to the course (Dennis, UK). As a result, British students failed to understand the usefulness and relevance of simulations and whether any actual learning occurred. Their experiences indicate a misunderstanding of integrating simulations (Laud et al., 2019).

Some students also pointed to the universities' intensive application of simulations, making it challenging to integrate them effectively (Laud et al., 2019). Malaysian students highlighted a lack of variety. Their comments emphasised, for example, their excessive focus on profit or their overly serious approach:

The result [of the simulation] is like: You MUST achieve the profit. You must be profitable. Yeah, and then only you can go on for the next level . . . that's more challenging for us. (Hermione, MY)

I think if the simulation is more interesting [focus beyond profit] and more creativity for students, I think it's good for the game. But if it's very boring [like the ones we did] you need to cancel it, I think. (Mia, MY)

Conversely, few British students lamented the overuse of simulations, including:

I think we had quite too many [simulations] already . . . we're up to our third simulation . . . It just kind of feels like filler at times as well, whereas . . . I've paid . . . to listen to a lecture . . . My brain turns off and then I just click a couple of buttons, see if my number goes up. (Dennis, UK)

I think the lecturers hide behind the simulation. And I mean that. As you know, we've gone to lectures and basically do the simulation. . . . the lecturers just kind of thought, you know, that they've got 'a free period'. (Heggerty, UK)

This may indicate the potentially unequal access that Southeast Asian students have to resources, particularly in terms of finances, time and support from educators. Some students were concerned about the cost of simulation software. In contrast, others struggled with multitasking between simulation and assignments or needed more precise instructions from lecturers in their respective countries to avoid the feeling that their resources were being wasted:

The simulation software . . . we need to pay before we use the software . . . I think it would be better if . . . you can consider to make . . . optional. (Millie, MY)

Using the simulation – we have assignment too, you know. I think students will be more struggling to. . . multitasking. . . I think it takes a lot of time. . . it really takes time . . . (Ivy, MY)

I don't know if the lecturer understand it or not, but the way that person explained [it] to us is not really clear and made us really confused and as the result, even though that we can use the simulation and get the good result, but actually. . . we don't understand why we have that result. [That's when] I feel it's [simulation] like wasting time and even wasting money because we need to pay for [it]. (Andrew, VN)

It is worth noting that the students' operand resources (time and money) appear here for the first time in terms of potential misintegration. The tone of the comments suggests considerable amplification of potential value co-destruction based on the enfolding of these resource misintegration vectors.

Theme 4: transforming perspectives

The final theme reflects students' desire to diversify the marketing management curriculum by incorporating multiple perspectives. While it is shared across all countries, it is expressed differently. For example, British students felt educators deliberately prevented them from integrating diverse views, thus blocking resource access (Laud et al., 2019). For example, Heggerty perceives lecturers as limiting and directing focus to a single idea, whereas Anastasia expressed a desire for a broader focus beyond business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing:

I feel like the lecturers kind of funnel you to an idea . . . rather than like: 'There's all these ideas out here!'- It's just, like, now we're gonna narrow in on this one so . . . there's a way that the faculty is trying to institutionalise you, if you like . . . (Heggerty, UK)

There is just like a really heavy focus on B2C marketing . . . It'd be really nice to have a module that maybe looks at . . . charity work or government work and what they do that isn't just driven by profits. (Anastasia, UK)

Vietnamese and Malaysian students, on the other hand, expressed their views more subtly:

You should learn basically like most of them [different perspectives] . . . It's going to help you a lot with your study . . . (Josh, VN)

. . . put yourself in somebody's shoe . . . If we talk to other people [e.g. LGBTQ] we also have to know how . . . do we understand them. So I think the only problem might be a little bit the culture barrier and the people themselves. (Mike, VN)

. . . discussing current issues . . . I think it's beneficial for the student because the student can apply their knowledge and critical thinking skill to real-world problems and challenges . . . the student must have the awareness and empathy for this current issue . . . And I think this is crucial for them. (Mia, MY)

Because of the range of opinions and experiences, we can share our ideas together and everyone with a different kind of background, they have a different way of thinking and their perspective is different from us. So, I think cultural differences may actually . . . positively influence us. (Millie, MY)

The comments evidence value co-creation from integrating knowledge and experiences predicated on cultural or social differences. This starkly contrasts the potential issues raised by the misintegration that emanates from disciplinary perspective expectations seen in themes one and two. The tension presents an interesting challenge and provocation for those managing the development and delivery of marketing management modules.

Results and discussion of representational practices (RQ2)

This section outlines four value propositions (LOs) developed collaboratively with students in a TNE setting. These propositions are grounded in the lived experiences and perspectives of the UK, VN and MY students, ensuring they reflect genuine needs, aspirations and expectations aligned with provision practices. Through iterative dialogue, exploration and reflection, students and researchers co-created these propositions to capture the desired outcomes of the Marketing Management module. This collaborative approach fostered shared understanding and a common language with key stakeholders (representational practices). Table 3 illustrates the connections between provision practices (RQ1) and representational practices (RQ2). Our study revealed that students as partners take ownership of their learning, appreciating the simplicity and action-orientation of the new value propositions, which in turn foster meta-cognition, critical thinking and creativity (e.g. Andrew, VN; Heggerty, UK; Milly, MY; Sophia, MY).

Table 3. Link between provision (RQ1) and representational (RQ2) practices.

Results from provision practices (RQ1)		Results from representational practices (RQ2)
Problem-solving through. . .		*A student passing this module should be able to . . .*
Future-casting career decision-making	→	Imagine and articulate the roles of future marketing professionals through research.
Composing marketing definitions	→	Develop a personal definition of marketing based on research evidence.
Exploring real-world dynamics	→	Evaluate the notion of brand equity using simulation.
Transforming perspectives	→	Outline the impact of marketing practice on service ecosystems.

Proposition 1

The previous section revealed that students felt they lacked access to knowledge about present and future self-identities ('*What do I want?*' and '*What can I do?*') and occupations ('*What job alternatives exist?*' and '*What are the characteristics of these options?*') (Gati et al., 1996). We, therefore, offer the following first value proposition (LO1): '*A student passing this module should be able to imagine and articulate the roles of future marketing professionals through research*.' We do not intend to complement or replace existing academic, professional or personal development modules offered at various study levels. However, in line with our career promise and adhering to Advance HE's (2019) recommended framework for enhancing student success, we purposefully embed employability in our curricula, including issues about 'responsible leadership and management' as stated in the relevant SBS (QAA, 2023). Fougère and Solitander (2023, pp. 399–400) note:

> In the typical business school HC [hidden curriculum], the socialization of *homo oeconomicus* relies on five main subject positions: the consumer, the entrepreneur, the investor, the leader, and the manager. These five subject positions often form the absolute limits of imagination and action in the curriculum . . . Even when students are put in the roles of civil society changemakers, public decision-makers and/or politicians, their sensemaking relies on a rationality grounded in *homo oeconomicus*.

Fougère and Solitander (2023) argue that challenging the status quo in business school curricula requires emphasising structural and ethico-political 'imaginations' over individualised and moral-economic ones. Focusing on the current roles of marketing managers and marketing's contribution to organisational effectiveness – as manifested in the current Marketing Management module – may inadvertently reinforce traditional assumptions. What is more, some marketing scholars claim that

> a return to fundamentals is in order. In a time of soul searching for management studies, Henry Mintzberg paused to ask an overlooked question: What do managers actually do? A similar approach might now be helpful in marketing – the study of marketing practice: What do marketing practitioners actually do? Of course, this is a complex question, given the diverse nature of the tasks marketing practitioners perform. (Key et al., 2021, p. 452)

As argued earlier, the project team proposes that a resistant curious marketing pedagogy (Tadajewski, 2023), with its emphasis on reflexivity, can help develop a more forward-thinking and action-oriented curriculum. The new LO encourages students to envision themselves in future roles and actively shape their professional trajectories, thus marketing praxis (Skålén et al., 2022). This is particularly relevant given the uncertainty around future skill demands in business (Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021). The new LO aligns with the FHEQ Level 5 Descriptor (QAA, 2024), which underscores the ability to apply underlying concepts and principles beyond their original context, including within employment settings. Additionally, it conforms to the relevant SBS (QAA, 2023), which promotes 'people management' skills, such as communication and leadership, alongside research skills.

The new LO requires students to reflect on the evolving roles in marketing and the skills these may demand. Students must demonstrate their ability to encode cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills (Krathwohl et al., 1964) through imaginative thinking, fostering a deeper understanding of the profession and their role within it. Unlike traditional, stand-alone employability modules that focus on, for example, decoding job advertisements, LO1 emphasises creating new concepts (the 'what') informed by research (the 'how'). This approach supports the highest level of cognitive learning and promotes metacognitive thinking (Anderson et al., 2001). Importantly, students are expected to envision, formulate and justify this knowledge to others.

Proposition 2

Student responses and gathered insights have led to the formulation of a second value proposition (LO2): '*A student passing this module should be able to develop a personal definition of marketing based on research evidence*'. This LO reflects diverse marketing configurations across the UK, VN and MY. It is grounded in a constructivist approach, which acknowledges the situated, context-dependent and evolving nature of concepts (knowledge) while emphasising that students actively construct their knowledge (Laurillard, 2012). This value proposition actively opposes the LO in some textbooks (e.g. Padgett & Loos, 2023, p. 1; emphasis added) that students should give 'an *accurate* definition of marketing', as it assumes a static and objectivist worldview. The challenge of a single and accurate definition becomes even more relevant considering recent studies (see Hunt et al., 2022), which have sparked a 'manifesto conversation' about the marketing discipline's fragmented status and evolving identity. Hunt et al. (2022, p. 147) specifically argue that marketing has developed across five distinct eras, leading to a loss of disciplinary coherence, and call for its renewal to reverse its current 'troubled trajectory'.

Building on their experiences and prior learning from introductory modules like 'Marketing Principles', students are now challenged to recognise 'the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge' (QAA, 2024, p. 18). This approach requires self-reflection and an appreciation of different contexts, including cultures (QAA, 2023) and, by extension, learned communities. For example, Shaw and Jones (2005) suggest that marketing management is just one of many schools of thought; it examines how organisations should market their offerings. A critical exploration of different conceptualisations to challenge underlying paradigmatic assumptions and incorporating axiological reflections (Mahajan et al., 2023) can enhance students' affective learning promoted within the SDL framework (Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021). Given students' self-identity and occupation expectations, how this is operationalised will need thoughtful attention. It necessitates the creation of opportunities that foster curiosity without being a possible source of value destruction.

Developing a personal definition requires synthesising research evidence (the 'how') and generating a new, individualised interpretation of marketing (the 'what'). It embodies the highest form of cognitive process and involves metacognition

(Anderson et al., 2001). Students must engage in reflective thinking about the nature of marketing, integrate different perspectives and evaluate how research evidence fits into their views and values. Thus, it requires awareness of one's cognitive and affective processes and the ability to adapt based on new insights. As such, LO2 conforms with the FEHQ L5 descriptor (QAA, 2024) and incorporates intended LOs articulated in the SBS for business and management studies (QAA, 2023). Ultimately, this shift promotes a more holistic understanding of marketing and creates a more significant 'interactive value formation space' (Echeverri & Skålén, 2021, p. 241), actively inviting learners to shape their perspectives as marketing practitioners.

Proposition 3

This research revealed that Vietnamese students value simulation-based learning for its ability to facilitate the exploration of real-world problems in safe environments. In contrast, Malaysian students criticised educators' overuse of profit-focused, overly serious simulations. However, few British students expressed frustration with the frequent use of simulations overall. Additionally, British students struggled to understand how simulations aligned with their learning goals, leading to difficulties in integrating them effectively for value co-creation (Laud et al., 2019).

Instead of entirely removing this learning tool or operand resource (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), the second author secured 'resource support' (Moizer et al., 2009) to study the effectiveness of simulations within the Marketing Management curriculum by addressing the problems identified in current provision practices. As a form of problem-based learning, simulation-based learning supports complex skill development even when learners are unfamiliar with specific concepts and procedures (Chernikova et al., 2020). What is more, simulations can provide an effective learning environment for applying established and novel pedagogies, including 'glitch pedagogy' (Preece & Whittaker, 2023) or 'ludic pedagogy' (Lauricella & Edmunds, 2023).

Glitch pedagogy introduces unexpected tension into the marketing curriculum, exposing underlying orthodox ideologies in HE and creating spaces for resistance and affirmation (Preece & Whittaker, 2023). For instance, simulations emphasising profit maximisation can be a starting point for discussing how these models reflect and reinforce traditional views, prompting students to critically assess alternative business objectives and question the simulations' assumptions. Ludic pedagogy, structured around fun, play, playfulness and positivity, reintroduces the joy of discovery into learning (Lauricella & Edmunds, 2023). For instance, the playful use of simulations can encourage students to explore marketing concepts more freely, reducing the pressure of high-stakes outcomes and fostering a more open, curious mindset that enhances creativity and engagement. We believe that a blend of these pedagogical approaches, along with the constructive alignment of LOs, teaching and learning methods, and assessments (Biggs & Tang, 2011), can help to mitigate relevant manifestations of resource misintegration (Laud et al., 2019).

Consequently, a new value proposition (LO3) was developed to enable students across all three HEIs to explore real-world dynamics: '*A student passing this module should be able to evaluate the notion of brand equity using simulation*'. Through active participation in the simulation, students can critically reflect on the complexities of brand equity, its underlying principles and its implications for businesses and society (Wooliscroft, 2020). This value proposition will also ensure that HEIs maintain OECD (2005) standards on education quality comparability and promises made to prospective students. Importantly, all value propositions remain adaptable and may be revised if there are indications that they do not enhance individual or systemic well-being. Framing brand equity as the value that actors within a service ecosystem attribute to a brand (Winit & Kantabutra, 2022) strengthens the connection between different LOs within the module. This holistic perspective transcends a purely technocratic and managerial approach, encouraging students to acknowledge the interplay of factors that shape brand value. As a result, it deepens their critical understanding of relational marketing dynamics (Vargo, 2009) and allows for exploring various relationship outcomes (MacInnis et al., 2020; Relja, Zhao, et al., 2024).

In summary, LO3 fosters higher-order cognitive learning (evaluation) by engaging students with conceptual knowledge (the 'what') through simulations (the 'how') and their assumptions (Anderson et al., 2001). It aligns with the FHEQ L5 descriptor, encouraging students to ' ... use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis' (QAA, 2024, p. 18). Additionally, it requires students to demonstrate ' ... conceptual, systemic and critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation' (QAA, 2023, p. 15).

Proposition 4

The fourth value proposition (LO4) is rooted in students' desire to transform their marketing perspectives. It has been formulated as: '*A student passing this module should be able to outline the impact of marketing practice on service ecosystems*'. In response to a recent call from researchers advocating for the application of SDL in business schools, LO4 has been designed as an affective LO, as such outcomes are often underrepresented in this context (Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021). Affective LOs

> ... emphasize a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection ... [and] vary from simple attention to selected phenomena to complex but internally consistent qualities of character and conscience. (Krathwohl et al., 1964, p. 7)

At the highest level of Bloom's affective taxonomy, termed 'characterization by a value or value complex', the interplay between cognitive and affective processes is amplified as students integrate knowledge with personal values. This leads to meaningful behavioural changes and long-term commitments (Krathwohl et al., 1964).

This idea aligns with our LO4, encompassing cognitive and affective domains. The term 'outline' corresponds to tier four of Bloom's cognitive taxonomy, focusing on the 'how' (process), while understanding the impact of marketing practice on service ecosystems represents the 'what' of learning, involving metacognitive or strategic knowledge (Anderson et al., 2001). It is also consistent with the FHEQ Level 5 descriptor, which states that graduates should be able to ' ... effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences' (QAA, 2024, p. 18).

Additionally, LO4 aligns with the SBS, which requires graduates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and critical evaluation of ethics, responsibility and sustainability (QAA, 2023), thus embodying the affective dimension. By outlining the impact of marketing practices on service ecosystems, students need to demonstrate ' … an internal consistency to the system of attitudes and values' (Krathwohl et al., 1964, p. 184). We support students in building a coherent value system, or self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001), by implementing a new Marketing Management curriculum with appropriate pedagogical approaches and assessments (Biggs, 2014).

Discussion of management and organisational practices (RQ3)

Skålén, Gummerus, et al.'s (2015) anatomy of value propositions identifies that the outer management and organisational layer supports the two other aggregate layers addressed in the previous sections. As highlighted earlier, the practices managerially and structurally support the fulfilment of the value proposition by defining the actors and the enactment processes. This aggregate layer is inherently directed at the managerial and systematic implications of provisioning and representing value propositions. This section delineates the managerial and HEI implications within a TNE context and suggests broader societal outcomes (see Table 4).

Course manager recommendations

Course managers often prioritise providing materials to franchise partners. However, to enable the TNE ecosystem to offer normative guidance (MacInnis et al., 2020) that generates Mutualism (win-win-win) or Commensalism (win-win-neutral) (Relja, Zhao, et al., 2024) for the students, franchisee and franchisor, foregrounding the centrality of pedagogical approaches is critical. This approach generates the symbiotic relational basis that enhances the long-term well-being of all within the TNE ecosystem. It also creates a more sympathetic space for incorporating more alien knowledge (Meyer & Land, 2003) and facilitates resistant curiosity (Tadajewski, 2023). Additionally, it affords a compelling basis to embrace uncertainty and ambiguity, fostering a solid basis for exploring challenging learning and re-evaluating knowledge (Swidler, 2020). This, in turn, increases the actors' capacity for reciprocity, effectively promoting the disruption of possible unilateral dynamics within the TNE ecosystem. It also necessitates respecting the students from across the different HE contexts as partners in developing and delivering TNE programmes.

To encourage this, course managers must forge TNE course teams that promote positive exchange outcomes (Hietanen et al., 2018) by sharing ideas, knowledge and practices. This will likely see franchise partners and their students enfolded in the franchisor's core practices rather than partitioned within a separable activity stream. By segregating collaborative provision, HE franchisors risk creating a peripheral sub-ecosystem that marginalises the franchisee's staff, often relegating them to 'delivery' (Pyvis, 2011), without realising their power in developing the value proposition (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). It likewise distances the franchisee's students, relegating them to student numbers whose sole manifestation within the system is as a collection of assessment grades.

Table 4. Fulfilling new value propositions in a TNE context.

Management and organisational practices	Recommendations for course managers	Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)	Outcomes for society
Organising practices	Create shared constructs to represent learning outcomes. Rather than simply developing the corresponding module descriptors, teaching content, activities and assessments, course managers must ensure sufficient intellectual capacity for contextualisation within a nexus of united learning approaches across TNE HEIs and allow for value-in-use development over time. This foregrounds the centrality of pedagogical approaches, such as self-authorship, as a foundational organising practice for course delivery to support effective resource integration	Construct intra- and inter-HEI collaborative teams. Create more permeable and integrated TNE systems and partnerships. Reconfigure collaborative practices to fulfill learning outcomes, recognising that value co-creation equally occurs between HEIs and is not unilaterally vested in the franchisor. This seeks to remove any prevailing technocratic, managerialist and neo-capitalist approaches. It also mitigates sites of potential value co-destruction	Enrichment of educational practices and opportunities, enhanced appreciation of contextuality and enhanced knowledge co-creation that responds to present and future societal requirements. Students' long-term development of competencies and capabilities that respond to multiple perspectives
Staffing and team building practices	Forge TNE course teams that share an understanding of the learning outcomes and the practices that enable them	Foster TNE working that celebrates its benefits to ensure teams can provide and communicate service	Greater cultural sensitivity and appreciation in HEI staff across TNE contexts
Networking practices	Engage with varied extra-TNE network actors in each nation to ensure their involvement in shaping and delivering the learning outcomes – for instance, the evaluation of assessments or the scoping of future careers	Ensure varied extra-TNE network actors and the associated resources can be easily integrated to fulfill the learning outcomes	Elevated association with extra-TNE network actors ensures learning outcomes are aligned and respond to service ecosystem requirements, as currently configured and in the future. This supports the co-creation of value-in-use over students' professional life-course
Knowledge-sharing practices	Course-level good practice sharing and interaction across TNE HEIs to realise the learning outcomes	Support professional body knowledge, skills and resource dissemination through scholarly and research activity	Enriched and broader insights encoded within learning outcomes by including knowledge that questions current practices and discourses, enabling students to reflect critically on their positionality within the HE system and society

Course managers must also engage varied extra-TNE network actors in each national context to support the specification and delivery of an appropriate value proposition. Previous research indicates that a more inclusive approach to network actors, such as professional bodies and employers, benefits all members of the ecosystem (Cruz et al., 2024; Díaz-Méndez et al., 2019; Paredes, 2022; Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021). Such inclusivity fosters a robust system that considers what will benefit the varied actors now and in the future (Akaka & Parry, 2019; Eggert et al., 2019). To support this, TNE course-level good practice sharing and interactions are needed to ensure that franchise partners, including the students and extra-TNE network national actors, are not inherently positioned into a subordinate role (Djerasimovic, 2014).

HEI recommendations

The ability of course managers at the micro level to respond effectively to the recommendations outlined earlier is contingent upon the managerial and organisational practices of HEIs. In this specific case, these practices are set within broader institutional arrangements, shaped by powerful network actors such as the QAA, OfS, Ofqual and CIM. HEIs, as with many corporate firms, have also selectively cultivated relations with other organisations within their service ecosystem. Such relationships have progressively become more enmeshed, enabled by a greater integration of systems and technology, and this is also evident within the TNE context. However, many TNE arrangements can further dismantle the cultural and physical structural barriers that are currently evident. This will advance work to counter the technocratic, managerialist and traditionally neoliberal approaches that may still be present (e.g. Catterall et al., 2002; Heath et al., 2023).

However, such a position invariably rests on additional HEI fusion, such as between course teams, systems, technologies, students or, when expressed within the language of SDL, resource integration (Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). This requires transparency and trust, signalling an increased level of symbiosis. This is not without risk; firstly, there is the capacity for resource misintegration (Laud et al., 2019) and associated value co-destruction (Järvi et al., 2018); secondly, it increases potential co-dependencies, and this makes it more challenging to end such relationships when they begin to exhibit Parasitism (lose-win-win), Amensalism (lose-neutral-neutral) and Synnecrosis (lose-lose-lose) (Relja, Zhao, et al., 2024). However, without such practices, the current resource misintegration issues highlighted will persist and generate value co-destruction for the service ecosystem, including students (Laud et al., 2019).

To help mitigate movement into such darker actor relationships, HEIs need to create structures that foster TNE staffing and team-building practices focused on growing ecosystem and individual actor well-being (Lusch & Wu, 2012). This could be done by defining course teams to include franchise partner staff. It is also important to ensure that TNE provision is considered alongside the concomitant courses within the franchisor, rather than being segregated. Equally importantly, positive action to celebrate the benefits of TNE to all actors is needed to ensure teams can provide and communicate service. This could include encouraging staff collaboration across HEIs to develop joint research, including with students as co-researchers and supporting network-wide communication and the celebration of outcomes. It also shifts the temporal horizon of HEIs beyond the immediacy of TNE teaching arrangements and creates a more decisive impetus to consider value co-creation over time (Hilton et al., 2012).

Such higher degrees of amalgamation and broader temporality must be extended to varied extra-TNE network actors. Through course design and validation processes, HEIs often promote the inclusion of external actors, such as professional bodies and employers. However, there is often less engagement with these actors to achieve LOs. Suppose this is to be enacted within a TNE context. In that case, there needs to be organisational-level support and systems that extend across the different HEIs. These are necessary to enable such resources to be integrated by students' value co-creation. For example, this can include involving such actors in teaching and assessment. This necessitates that HEIs enhance their networking practices. These can then be disseminated via scholarly and research activity knowledge-sharing practices.

Societal outcomes

The successful application of Skålén, Gummerus, et al.'s (2015) framework to a TNE context has enabled the development of course manager and HEI recommendations. From these, possible societal outcomes emerge. Firstly, and following SDL precepts, educational practice and opportunity enrichment are possible through enhanced value proposition design, definition and communication that draws on multiple actors. This also acknowledges that students occupy multiple roles in their learning rather than being passive recipients (Brady, 2013). Secondly, it moves the framing of education away from a commodity for the franchisee and all students. In doing so, the temporal horizon extends beyond the present to encourage the consideration of future societal requirements. This also simultaneously encourages students to foreground the development of long-term competencies and capabilities that respond to multiple perspectives, allowing them to explore their particular potential (Zurn & Shankar, 2020).

As might be expected, the application of SDL also precipitates greater cultural sensitivity and appreciation in HEI staff across TNE contexts, given its focus on the (mis)integration of resources to facilitate value co-destruction or, ideally, value co-creation. This approach to TNE, importantly, elevates educational association with extra-TNE network actors and ensures learning outcomes are aligned and respond to service ecosystem requirements, as currently configured and in the future (Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021). Therefore, supporting the co-creation of value-in-use over students' professional life-course. Should this occur, it affords a site for a considerable societal outcome as students can continue to derive value from the degrees by being enabled to reflect critically on their positionality within society (Preece & Whittaker, 2023). If the TNE context affords resources that learners can integrate during their studies, this will extend beyond their national context, both for those at the franchisor and franchisee HEIs. This more expansive position is also enriched by the broader insights encoded within learning outcomes by including a more comprehensive range of network actors in their design and later in their delivery and assessment. Including knowledge that questions current practices and discourses within and across national educational contexts ultimately allows multiple beneficiaries to assess 'value' across their entire experiential educational journey (Ballantyne et al., 2011) and continue to develop the domains studied and the associated educational ecosystems.

Conclusions

In this study, we aimed to articulate robust and relevant LOs as value propositions and explore practices essential for facilitating value co-creation among diverse actors, with TNE as the context. While previous research has examined SDL in HE, our study makes four novel contributions to the marketing literature.

Firstly, the study demonstrates how the redistribution of essential resources may help drive cultural transformation and critically engage with traditional business school agendas (Matthews et al., 2018, 2019). It does so by involving TNE students as partners in designing new value propositions (LOs) and fostering dialogue (Paredes, 2022).

Second, we apply Skålén, Gummerus, et al.'s (2015) value proposition framework to consider the aggregative layers within the anatomy of value propositions and analyse associated practices. In doing so, we demonstrate its transferability to and generalisability in the HE sector, supporting the idea that the framework is broadly applicable rather than context-specific.

Third, by engaging directly with a diverse range of stakeholders – including students, academics, professional services, partnership offices, quality departments and professional bodies – we reveal how HEIs, particularly in TNE, can continuously support, create and sustain unique value for these actors (Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021). Our approach enabled the active sensing of potential issues within the TNE service ecosystem (Laud et al., 2019), reshaping the conventional understanding of TNE students from mere recipients to active beneficiaries.

Finally, we illustrate how applying the value proposition framework can unlock the full potential of LOs while mitigating the risks of resource misintegration and value deconstruction through value co-creation practices (Echeverri & Skålén, 2021; Laud et al., 2019; Skålén, Gummerus, et al., 2015). This was achieved by exploring to what extent current value propositions are fulfilled, how they might be alternatively comprehended, detailed and conveyed, and what might be done to facilitate the fulfilment of the new value propositions. Through this, the intricate process of resource integration within the global HE context unfolded and a nuanced understanding of instances where resource misintegration became apparent.

In summary, this approach offers a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play and provides practical insights for educators and stakeholders involved in TNE courses. By engaging students as partners and enabling them to integrate resources more successfully, the value proposition framework enhances their academic experience and overall well-being within the TNE landscape. Thus, the application of SDL and the value proposition framework are potent tools for theoretical exploration and practical implementation in international education.

Moving forward, several avenues for future research emerge from the findings, not least because there are inherent limitations within this research. Firstly, there is a potential to delve further into the perceptions of Asian learning environments, offering a more comprehensive understanding of students' self-understandings within their academic journey and learning experiences. Exploring nuances in how students in diverse cultural contexts navigate and interact with educational ecosystems could precipitate effective strategies for enhancing cross-cultural educational experiences. This approach could be strengthened by a longer longitudinal exploration of the TNE service ecosystem.

Additionally, future research could benefit from incorporating broader stakeholder perspectives beyond students. Including viewpoints from government agencies, professional bodies, employers and parents would provide a more holistic understanding of the dynamics at play within TNE ecosystems. Understanding the perspectives and roles of these actors could inform policy development, curriculum design and support systems aimed at improving the overall quality and effectiveness of TNE courses.

Finally, researchers might consider adopting a more systemic marketing view in their investigations. For example, by integrating micro- and macro-level analyses, future studies could comprehensively examine the interplay between individual experiences, institutional arrangements and societal contexts. This systemic approach would enable researchers to explore how factors at different levels of the educational ecosystem influence student learning outcomes, resource integration and overall educational quality, all bound up in the cocreation of value.

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