

A Study on Blended Teaching of Basic Marketing Courses in Secondary Vocational Schools in the Digital Era

Chaojun Wang*

Wuzhong Secondary Vocational School, Jiangsu 215000, Suzhou, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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Abstract: In the digital era, adopting blended learning approaches in marketing fundamentals courses at secondary vocational schools not only enhances teaching efficiency but also enriches students' learning experiences, cultivating marketing professionals equipped to meet digital age demands. This study proposes blended learning strategies including curriculum optimization, unified online-offline teaching objectives, diversified instructional formats, strategic selection of digital platforms, and development of scientific evaluation systems. The research demonstrates that effective implementation of blended learning can significantly improve teaching quality in vocational marketing courses, providing robust support for cultivating digital marketing talent.

Keywords: Digitalization; Secondary vocational schools; Marketing; Blended teaching

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1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, vocational schools' marketing programs are embracing innovative teaching approaches. Traditional methods increasingly fail to meet the demands of cultivating digital-era marketing professionals, leading to the rise of blended learning. This hybrid model combines the strengths of online and offline instruction, effectively boosting student engagement and enhancing educational outcomes. Research on blended teaching for marketing fundamentals in vocational education not only optimizes instructional frameworks but also provides actionable guidance for developing high-caliber marketing talent that meets modern digital requirements. These practical implications underscore the significant real-world value of such pedagogical innovations.

2. The value of blended teaching in a basic marketing course in a digital context

2.1. Improve teaching efficiency and optimize teaching resource allocation

The implementation of blended learning in vocational marketing curricula has significantly enhanced instructional efficiency in the digital age. Constrained by time and space limitations, traditional teaching methods struggle to deliver comprehensive knowledge within limited class hours, while the reach of educational resources remains restricted. Digital

technologies have empowered blended learning by integrating diverse online resources, including high-quality instructional videos, case studies, and digital assessments. Educators can upload explanatory videos to learning platforms for students' pre-class self-study, freeing up classroom time for problem-solving sessions, case analyses, and interactive discussions. This approach not only saves time on delivering foundational theories but also allows students to revisit materials at their own pace, reinforcing understanding through repeated exposure. Moreover, online resources overcome geographical barriers, enabling schools across regions to access premium educational content and optimize resource utilization.

2.2. Enhance students' learning experience and stimulate their interest in learning

Blended learning delivers a fresh learning experience that effectively sparks students' interest in marketing courses. The integration of digital tools and platforms makes the learning process more dynamic and engaging. For instance, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies allow students to immerse themselves in realistic marketing scenarios, such as simulated mall promotions and market research. This immersive approach proves more compelling than traditional classroom lectures. Moreover, online learning platforms offer diverse formats, and students can freely select materials like texts, images, audio, and videos based on personal preferences ^[1]. During the learning process, students can interact with teachers and peers in real-time through online forums and social media, exchanging insights and experiences to foster a positive learning environment that further boosts motivation.

2.3. Cultivating interdisciplinary marketing talents to meet digital era demands

In today's era of rapid digital advancement, the marketing field is undergoing profound transformations, with growing demands for versatile professionals. The blended learning approach in vocational marketing curricula effectively cultivates interdisciplinary marketing talent suited for the digital age. This pedagogical model emphasizes dual objectives: First, it enhances students' digital competencies through online learning platforms and tools, equipping them with expertise in data analysis, social media marketing, and e-commerce operations – essential foundations for future careers. Second, it fosters innovative thinking and practical skills by providing hands-on project engagement and case studies. Through collaborative online-offline team practices, students develop real-world problem-solving capabilities that align with the dynamic nature of modern marketing challenges.

3. Strategies of blended teaching of basic marketing course in secondary vocational education under the background of digitalization

3.1. Optimize the content of basic courses and integrate digital elements

The marketing fundamentals curriculum in secondary vocational education covers core concepts including market research, consumer behavior analysis, and marketing strategy development. In the digital era, these foundational elements require optimization and integration of digital technologies. For market research, educators can employ big data analytics tools such as specialized software to help students extract valuable insights from massive online datasets. Leveraging social media analytics features enables tracking consumer discussions and emotional responses to products, providing comprehensive data support for market research. Additionally, instructors can teach students to use online survey platforms like Wenjuanxing (a popular Chinese survey platform) to design and distribute digital questionnaires, efficiently collecting large-scale sample data to enhance research effectiveness.

In consumer behavior analysis, traditional content primarily focuses on theoretical studies of consumer psychology and purchasing decision-making processes. By integrating digital elements, big data analysis results from e-commerce platforms can be combined with consumers' purchasing preferences and behavioral patterns across different time periods and regions for comprehensive presentation ^[2]. For instance, analyzing sales data from platforms like Taobao enables students to intuitively grasp trending product sales trends, thereby deepening their understanding of the relationship between consumer behavior and digital marketing environments. Additionally, educators can employ virtual reality (VR)

and augmented reality (AR) technologies to simulate consumer responses in various shopping scenarios, effectively enhancing students' intuitive comprehension of consumer behavior.

When formulating marketing strategies, traditional textbooks particularly emphasize the 4P (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) strategy. In the context of the digital era, textbooks should incorporate more digital marketing strategies, such as social media promotion, search engine optimization, and content marketing strategies. Taking social media marketing as an example, by leveraging the characteristics of popular social media platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok, it explains how to develop targeted marketing strategies, such as promoting products through TikTok short videos and using WeChat Moments ads to precisely reach target customers. At the same time, analyzing successful and failed digital marketing cases helps students understand the effectiveness and precautions of different marketing strategies in practical applications.

3.2. Pay attention to the effective unification of online and offline teaching objectives

Online and offline teaching should form an organic whole centered around shared educational objectives. The fundamental marketing curriculum in secondary vocational education aims to equip students with essential marketing theories, methodologies, and practical skills, while developing their market analysis capabilities and marketing planning competencies. Online instruction should focus on knowledge transmission, enabling students to independently study core marketing concepts, principles, and classic case studies through digital resources. For instance, high-quality MOOC courses can systematically teach theories of market segmentation and target market selection. Additionally, assigning online learning tasks such as quizzes and case analysis reports helps students complete assignments promptly, thereby cultivating self-directed learning skills and time management abilities.

The primary objectives of offline instruction focus on deepening knowledge acquisition and enhancing practical competencies. During classes, instructors can provide detailed explanations for issues arising from online learning, while employing teaching methods such as case analysis, group discussions, and role-playing to reinforce students' application of marketing theories^[3]. For instance, organizing market research projects guides students through developing research plans, collecting and analyzing data, and ultimately compiling research reports, enabling them to master market research methodologies through hands-on practice. Additionally, teachers may arrange corporate visits and internships to expose students to real-world marketing environments, helping them understand marketing strategies and operational processes, thereby strengthening their practical skills and professional competence.

To effectively unify online and offline teaching objectives, educators should strengthen the seamless integration between these two approaches. Before initiating online learning, teachers should first clarify the key topics for offline instruction, guiding students to engage in targeted online learning. During offline sessions, they should review online learning essentials and conduct in-depth analysis through practical case studies. Additionally, establishing communication channels like online discussion forums and WeChat groups should be prioritized, enabling students to share learning insights and questions at any time, with teachers providing timely guidance and feedback.

3.3. Enrich the implementation of blended learning mode

Project-based learning utilizes real-world marketing projects as teaching vehicles, breaking down course content into manageable sub-projects to enable students to apply knowledge during project execution. For instance, when developing a "market launch strategy for a new product," students conduct in-depth market research, devise effective marketing strategies, and create corresponding promotional plans. Collaborative group work is encouraged, combining online research with on-site field investigations and discussions to complete tasks. This approach cultivates teamwork, problem-solving, and innovative thinking skills. Additionally, case-based teaching integrates successful marketing examples from domestic and international markets with textbook knowledge through in-depth analysis. These cases may originate from companies across various industries and scales, covering diverse marketing strategies and methodologies. During classes, instructors guide students in analyzing case studies, identifying challenges, and proposing solutions, followed by group

discussions to exchange perspectives. Digital tools like videos and animations enhance case presentations, making them more engaging and visually appealing.

The flipped classroom model transfers traditional lecture sessions online, allowing students to independently study new knowledge through instructional videos before class, while teachers focus on organizing discussions and practical activities during sessions ^[4]. For example, when teaching the “Promotion Strategies” chapter, instructors pre-record instructional videos on various promotional methods for students to study independently. During class, teachers organize case analyses, group discussions, and presentations of promotional plans for evaluation. Additionally, educators can design marketing knowledge through interactive games, such as a “Marketing Simulation Game” where students assume the role of corporate marketing managers responsible for product development, pricing, channel selection, and promotional planning. Through competitive and collaborative gameplay, students gain deeper insights into marketing processes while enhancing learning engagement ^[5].

3.4. Selection and use of digital teaching platforms and tools

Vocational schools may utilize comprehensive online teaching platforms with user-friendly interfaces, such as Chaoxing Learning Hub. These platforms provide multifunctional tools, including course management, resource sharing, online assessments, assignment grading, and discussion forums. Teachers can deploy teaching materials like lesson plans, presentations, and video recordings, conduct virtual quizzes, and monitor student progress. Students can study independently, submit assignments, and engage in discussions through these platforms. Furthermore, vocational institutions should employ data analytics tools to examine both academic performance and market research data. For instance, Excel can be used for basic data processing and chart creation, while SPSS and other statistical software handle complex data analysis and modeling ^[6]. By analyzing student learning data, teachers can track academic progress, identify learning challenges, and adjust teaching strategies accordingly. Market research data analysis helps students better understand the relationship between market trends and consumer needs, providing actionable insights for marketing decisions ^[7].

Vocational secondary schools can utilize social media tools such as WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok for teaching activities. Teachers can post learning materials, case analyses, and industry updates on WeChat official accounts to facilitate student interaction; use Weibo for topic discussions to guide students in focusing on trending topics in marketing; create short instructional videos through TikTok, delivering knowledge in an engaging and entertaining format. Additionally, vocational secondary schools can introduce virtual simulation tools like marketing simulation software and virtual laboratories. These tools can simulate real-world marketing environments and business processes, enabling students to complete practical operations in virtual environments ^[8]. For example, through marketing simulation software, students can simulate the entire process of corporate market research, product development, pricing, channel selection, and promotional activities, experiencing the impact of different marketing strategies and enhancing their practical and decision-making abilities.

3.5. Build a scientific mixed teaching evaluation system

A scientific blended teaching evaluation system should encompass diverse evaluators, including teachers, students, and enterprises. Teachers’ assessments focus on knowledge mastery, skill application, and learning attitudes. Student self-evaluation and peer reviews enable reflection through learning from others’ strengths. Enterprise evaluations assess students’ practical work skills and professional ethics. For instance, during internships, corporate mentors may provide feedback based on students’ performance, teamwork capabilities, and problem-solving abilities. Additionally, teaching evaluations should combine formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments evaluate the learning process, including online participation, assignment completion, group discussions, and project progress. Summative assessments aim to evaluate students’ understanding and practical application of course content, such as final exams and marketing strategy presentations ^[9].

In educational assessment, personalized evaluation criteria should be established based on students’ learning characteristics. For students with strong theoretical knowledge, focus should be placed on assessing their practical skills

and innovative thinking. Those demonstrating strong practical abilities should emphasize cultivating their theoretical understanding and application capabilities. Additionally, evaluations should incorporate factors like students' interests and career planning, with corresponding assessment indicators^[10]. For instance, students with entrepreneurial aspirations should receive enhanced evaluation of their marketing planning skills. Schools must promptly provide feedback to students regarding assessment results, enabling them to understand their learning progress and identify areas for improvement. Teachers can adjust teaching strategies accordingly, offering targeted guidance to address students' weaker areas. Furthermore, students should be encouraged to self-adjust and refine their approaches based on feedback, thereby continuously enhancing learning outcomes and overall competence^[11].

4. Conclusion

In the digital era, implementing blended learning in marketing fundamentals courses at secondary vocational schools holds significant value. Educators should adhere to principles including student-centered approaches, goal-oriented instruction, integration of online and offline learning, and combining practicality with innovation. By adopting practical implementation strategies, teaching quality can be effectively enhanced. Going forward, educators must continuously explore and refine blended learning models to better meet the demands of the digital age, ultimately cultivating more market-ready marketing professionals for secondary vocational institutions^[12].

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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