



Chief marketing officer role design

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Abstract

Reports suggest some concerns with chief marketing officer (CMO) performance. We introduce CMO Role Design and theorize it is a critical factor impacting CMO performance outcomes. Employing a role theory lens, we develop a conceptual framework of CMO Role Design and provide an initial empirical examination of three characteristics from the broader model. We theorize that effective CMO Role Design requires alignment between specific characteristics to enable better performance outcomes. Surprisingly, we find that more than half (54%) of CMO roles are misaligned, indicating how challenging it is for firm leaders to design effective CMO roles. As the first conceptual model of CMO Role Design, this paper establishes a platform for future research, identifying over 25 new research questions. For CEOs, executive recruiters, and CMOs, this research offers insight into the importance of CMO Role Design and provides a template to consider when designing and staffing CMO roles.

Keywords Chief marketing officer · Chief marketing officer role design · CMO role · CMO role design alignment · CMO role design misalignment · CMO experience · CMO position · Marketing capabilities · Upper echelons role design · C-level roles · C-level role design

Managerial reports suggest that CEOs generally believe that chief marketing officer (CMO¹) performance could be better. For example, 43% of CEOs grade their CMOs a “C” or “D” on “ability to drive company growth” (16% of CMOs received an “A”), and only 32% of CEOs trust their CMOs, compared to 90% of CEOs who trust their CFOs (Boathouse, 2022; Fournaise, 2012). While many CEOs may view CMO performance as lacking, most CMOs in our research suggest

they do not have the right role design to maximize marketing performance outcomes. Indeed, a recent McKinsey study finds that although 90% of CEOs believe that CMO roles are well-defined, only 22% of CMOs share this view (Coffee, 2023). We posit that problems in the design of CMO roles are a significant contributor to this CEO-CMO divide.

While academic interest in CMOs has grown since the early 2000’s (e.g., Webster Jr et al., 2004), much of the research has focused on discrete aspects of a CMO role (e.g., Germann et al., 2015; Nath & Mahajan, 2008; Wiedeck & Engelen, 2018), individual CMO characteristics (e.g., Homberg et al., 2014; Winkler et al., 2020), or descriptions of CMO positions (e.g., McAlister et al., 2023; Whitler & Morgan, 2017). Although previous research has considered singular aspects of a CMO role (e.g., managerial discretion), no comprehensive understanding of a CMO role or insight into how role elements can be configured to enable better performance outcomes currently exists (Moorman & Day, 2016; Whitler et al., 2021).² Yet, appropriate role design is a fundamental precondition for effective performance. Given that many CEOs voice concerns about CMO performance,

¹ The term CMO is used in this research to refer to the head of marketing, regardless of actual title.

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² The management literature has similarly called for more research into job crafting—the design of specific roles (e.g., Oldham & Fried, 2016).

most CMOs highlight issues with role design, and CMO tenure is typically the shortest among C-suite executives, exploring CMO Role Design is both timely and important.

The primary focus of this research is to: (1) introduce CMO Role Design as a key mechanism that can impact CMO performance outcomes; (2) develop a new conceptual model of CMO Role Design to shape and guide research; (3) offer initial evidence supporting the validity and utility of the framework, (4) identify a research agenda that can serve as a platform for scholarly research, and (5) provide a template for CEOs, ERs, and CMOs to design and assess CMO roles. We draw on role theory and extensive fieldwork to identify key characteristics of CMO Role Design, specify ways in which these characteristics interact via a conceptual framework, and conduct an initial study of three characteristics from the model (i.e., responsibility, CMO experience type, and status). We conceptualize a CMO role as the position- and person-related characteristics associated with a head of marketing job. We introduce CMO Role Design as the specific configurational choices regarding the types and levels of position- and person-based characteristics of the CMO role, given the context in which the job is being performed. We theorize that CMO Role Design Alignment—the degree to which the position- and person-based characteristics fit with one another and the role context—is critical in determining whether the role enables marketing tasks to be accomplished in ways that deliver desired outcomes.

Results from the initial empirical examination indicate that a majority of firms (54%) have misaligned CMO roles (i.e., position-person role characteristics do not fit with one another and/or the context in which they are performed), contributing to lower firm marketing capability and performance. Insights from executive recruiters (ERs), CEOs, and CMOs interviewed for this research suggest that a mismatch between the position and the role occupant can result in CMOs failing to activate a role's potential, leading to inefficient and/or ineffective resource allocation, and ultimately less revenue growth. John Connors, Founder and President of Boathouse, a strategic marketing firm that works with CEOs and CMOs, highlights the negative ramifications of CMO Role Design Misalignment:

*"The obvious impact is that there is a high likelihood for the CEO to replace the CMO. The less obvious impact is that ... the marginalization of marketing can stunt brand development and growth as the new CMO takes time to get up to speed and takes the organization in a new direction. Beyond these effects, however, are the consequences for the CEO. Misalignment can disrupt the CEO's vision, strategy, and plans which then impacts the company's growth and performance, and ultimately the CEO's reputation...."*³

³ The comment was provided during an interview and was approved for use with attribution.

This research makes three primary contributions. First, we introduce CMO Role Design as a key construct influencing role performance outcomes, develop a new theoretical model that disaggregates CMO Role Design into its relevant subcomponents and then offer theory and initial evidence for the impact of CMO Role Design on performance outcomes. We find evidence for our thesis that firms are struggling to design effective CMO roles and that both the problem and solutions are non-obvious as most firms in our sample have a misaligned CMO Role. This addresses an important gap in knowledge (Moorman & Day, 2016; Whitley et al., 2021) and helps explain why CEOs and CMOs are experiencing frustration. As the first study to offer a conceptual framework exploring CMO Role Design, this research also provides a significant new platform for future investigations.

Second, our study extends role theory by introducing and conceptualizing the integration of key aspects of an executive role. The primary focus of empirical work in role theory has been on individual, person-based role attributes (e.g., role stress) in the context of more junior roles (e.g., a salesperson). We go beyond individual role constructs to conceptualize and explore how the design of a complete role (i.e., CMO role) can impact firm outcomes. Given the absence of a conceptualization of a C-level leader role in extant role theory (including the CEO role), this research provides the basis for more complete and comprehensive conceptualizations of executive-level roles across all functional domains.

Third, this research contributes important new insights that address marketing leadership challenges facing upper echelons leaders (e.g., Morgan et al., 2019; Whitley et al., 2021). Greg Welch, partner at leading executive recruiting firm Spencer Stuart, indicates the degree of challenge for CEOs:

*"Of all executive level positions, there is none with greater variance than that of the CMO...The CEO's challenge is to figure out the right structure and find the right person...when it comes to marketing, it's simply not clear."*⁴

Absent theory and evidence concerning how to configure and design aligned roles, CEOs and CMOs have only their limited personal experiences to draw from. By developing a new conceptual framework of CMO Role Design and providing initial supporting evidence, this study reveals why designing and staffing the CMO role is so challenging, and provides a template for CEOs, ERs, and CMOs to use to help address these problems.

Because of a lack of both theory and existing evidence regarding CMO Role Design, the paper proceeds as follows.

⁴ The comment was provided during an interview and was approved for use with attribution.

First, we draw on role theory to develop a conceptual model of CMO Role Design and identify CMO Role Design Alignment as a critical element in converting the potential of a role into superior performance outcomes. We then assess the validity and utility of the conceptual model by empirically examining how three CMO role characteristics (i.e., responsibility, CMO experience type, and status) can be combined to create (mis)aligned roles that have differential impact on firm outcomes. Finally, we discuss results, limitations, and provide a robust set of more than 25 questions for future research and a template that CEOs, ERs, and CMOs can use to assess CMO Role Design.

A conceptual model of CMO Role Design

Upper echelons theory posits that firm outcomes are a function of the top management team's (TMT) strategic choices, which are affected by TMT members and role characteristics (e.g., Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Using this lens, researchers have examined myriad C-level characteristics that may impact firm outcomes but without a comprehensive view of a complete C-level role (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2009; Whitler et al., 2021).

We draw on role theory, which concerns the behavioral patterns characteristic of people and positions, to provide a foundational theoretical lens that enables the development of a base-level understanding of CMO Role Design and its impact on role performance outcomes (e.g., Biddle, 1979; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Linton, 1936). Role theory's core tenet is that the role an individual inhabits impacts how they see themselves and are viewed by others, influencing their behavior and performance (Anglin et al., 2022). Using terminology adapted from the theater, "roles" are composed of a position (i.e., the "part" in theatrical terms) and a person (i.e., the "actor" playing the part) that are performed in a particular context (e.g., the "stage" on which the role is performed). From this perspective, CMO Role Design concerns the characteristics associated with the position (e.g., responsibilities assigned), the person (e.g., type of experience they possess), and the context within which the role is performed (e.g., in a firm where marketing is highly valued) which combine to differentiate CMO roles from other C-level roles and enable desired CMO role performance outcomes (e.g., marketing capability).

While role theory consists of dozens of constructs, our framework focuses on those that are highlighted in the role theory literature, are suggested through our fieldwork (described in detail later), and most directly connect to the characteristics that can affect role design and activation (see Web Appendix A for construct definitions). In Fig. 1, we provide a conceptual model of CMO Role Design that

identifies key position- and person-based characteristics that interact with the context to impact role performance outcomes.

The position-based characteristics included in the model reflect considerations and decisions that CEOs make when constructing the boundaries and composition of the CMO "part": (1) responsibilities (duties and obligations assigned), (2) expectations, (3) resources, (4) accountabilities, and (5) discretion assigned to the role. The decisions made regarding the resources assigned to the CMO position, the expectations associated with how the role will be performed and the outcomes to be delivered, the degree of freedom given in decision making (i.e., discretion), and the measures and methods used to hold the role occupant accountable are theorized to each impact the degree to which a CMO position can potentially deliver desired role outcomes (e.g., marketing capability development). Individually, these characteristics represent key position-based components of a CMO role; collectively, they represent the CMO position.

The model also highlights several choices CEOs can make when determining the person-based characteristics sought to fill a CMO position, including: (1) the required competencies of the role occupant (e.g., leadership, strategy setting), (2) the type of experience needed (i.e., profit and loss versus staff), (3) the amount of marketing experience acquired, (4) how much of that experience should be as a CMO, and (5) education. Each of these characteristics represents different amounts and types of knowledge and skill that the role occupant has acquired. Consequently, these characteristics are theorized to collectively determine the ability of a role occupant to convert the position-based role characteristics into desired role outcomes (e.g., enhanced marketing capability).

However, the CMO role is neither designed nor exists in a vacuum. There are contextual factors ("role activation context factors" and "role design context factors") that can further impact the degree to which an individual can effectively and efficiently convert a role's potential into positive outcomes. We identify eight role activation context factors that are distinguished by the speed with which they can be changed. Five factors are more "transient," in that a CEO could quickly make a meaningful change in them: the status afforded the CMO Role relative to other C-level roles (e.g., Piercy, 1986), whether the CMO is included in the TMT (e.g., Germann et al., 2015), the role of the CMO in the TMT (e.g., Whitler et al., 2021, 2022b), the inclusion of CMOs in board of directors (BOD) meetings (e.g., Whitler et al., 2022a), and the role of the CMO in the BOD (e.g., Whitler et al., 2022a). Three factors are more "durable" in that significantly more time is required to affect meaningful change: the firm's market orientation (e.g., Jaworski & Kohli, 1993;

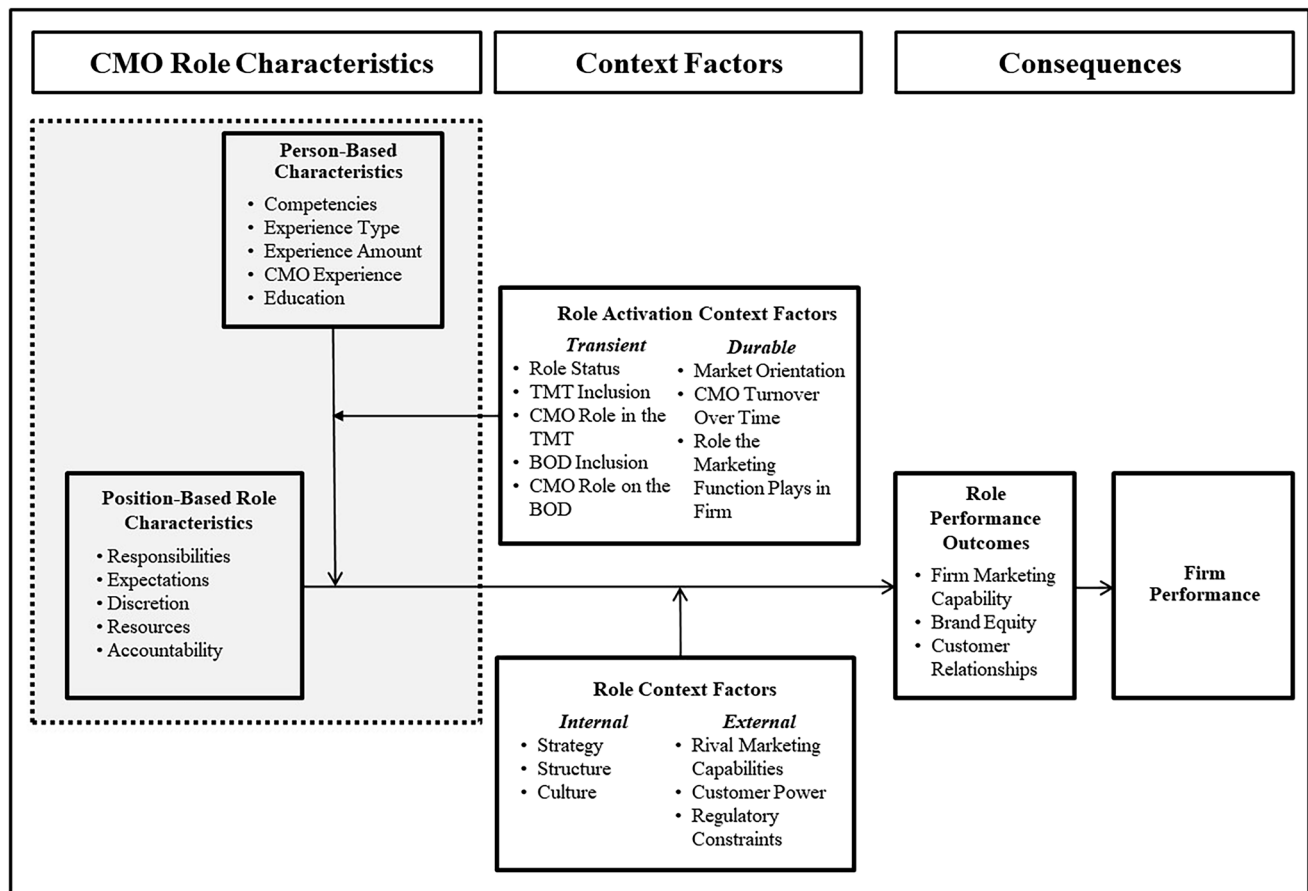


Fig. 1 A conceptual model of CMO Role Design

Narver & Slater, 1990), CMO turnover over time (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2009), and the role the marketing function plays in the firm (e.g., Whitley et al., 2022a). What connects all of these factors is the degree to which firm leaders value the CMO and marketing.

We also theorize that there are internal firm-related and external industry and marketplace factors (i.e., Role Design Context Factors) that can impact role design outcomes through their interaction with CMO position characteristic choices. The internal factors include firm-level strategy choices (e.g., differentiation, niche, mass, etc.), structural choices (e.g., centralization, brand portfolio, etc.), and cultural choices (e.g., hierarchy, adhocracy, clan, etc.). The external factors include customer power, rivals' marketing capabilities, and regulatory constraints. Combined, these factors interact with the CMO role characteristics to either enhance or impair the design to enable desired role performance outcomes.

The conceptual model posits that the interaction of the CMO role characteristics and the context within which the role is performed should impact proximal role performance outcomes (e.g., marketing capability, brand equity,

and customer relationships). Furthermore, those outcomes ultimately impact more distant firm financial performance outcomes (e.g., revenue growth). The model also helps illuminate the number of factors that can impact CMO role performance, and therefore, how challenging it is to design an effective role.

CMO Role Design Alignment

CMO Role Design Alignment is the degree to which choices regarding the types and levels of position- and person-based characteristics fit with one another and the context in which the CMO role is performed. We theorize that alignment between position-, person-, and context-based characteristic choices is a critical factor enabling CMOs to deliver desired role performance (i.e., effectively converting available resources into desired firm marketing outcomes). Using cinema as an analog, some actors playing the part of 007 in the James Bond film series (e.g., Sean Connery) have been perceived as having skills and experience that were a better fit for the position than other actors (e.g., Roger

Moore; Bieber, 2022). Importantly, while Sean Connery was perceived to be a good fit for the 007 role, there were other roles in which he was not a good fit (e.g., Sir Billi), reinforcing the importance of alignment between the person-, position-based characteristics and context in which the role is performed (e.g., Starkey, 2021).

An actor may have characteristics (e.g., age, physique, prior experience, etc.) that make them a better or worse fit for a theatrical part performed in a particular context, ultimately impacting performance outcomes. We posit that the same is true for a CMO. The design of a CMO role serves as the mechanism through which the person who heads a firm's marketing function performs. Thus, when the role is designed such that there is alignment between role characteristics (i.e., position and person) and the context, then there is a greater chance that a CMO can effectively deliver desired performance outcomes. In contrast, if these role characteristics do not fit with one another, it is more difficult for the CMO to effectively convert the potential of a role into positive performance outcomes. Having conceptualized CMO Role Design and the criticality of alignment between sub-components, we provide initial insights into the value of the model and its predictions.

Building a model to explore the effects of CMO Role Design

To provide an initial assessment of how CMO Role Design Alignment can impact role performance outcomes, we conducted fieldwork to identify a subset of characteristics on which to focus and generate specific insight into their likely interrelationships and outcomes (e.g., Tuli et al., 2007; Zeithaml et al., 2020). The fieldwork involved a sample of 160 CMO job specifications (specs), augmented with insight from 15 interviews, used to identify and then develop measures of the subset of the key constructs from the CMO Role Design model. Below, we detail the methods used to obtain insight from the job specs and interviews.

Job specifications We employed a theories-in-use approach to identify specific role characteristics by analyzing CMO job specs, which serve as a mental model or “script” of the characteristics of a CMO role by those who design them (see Schank & Abelson, 1977). CMO job specs are a novel source of insight as they are developed by ERs based on interviews with a client's CEO and are approved by the firm as the primary conduit through which information about a CMO role is conveyed to a prospective candidate. By reviewing the key elements of job specs, we are able to observe how ERs, CEOs, and CMOs view the specific “pieces and parts” of CMO Role Design. C-level job specs are extensive (4–12

pages in our sample), typically confidential, and specific to an individual position and firm. A sample of 160 CMO⁵ job specs was collected for a wide range of industries and firm sizes created by 30 ER firms. A coding protocol was developed by the primary researcher with two research assistants (blind to the study's purpose) coding all job specs. This yielded an interrater reliability of 0.89, with inconsistencies resolved after discussion. To add insight to findings from the job spec analysis, we conducted 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with informants of three different types (5 CMOs, 5 ERs, and 5 CEOs) who were drawn from a variety of industries, firm sizes, and geographies (though all have U.S. operations).

CMO role characteristics used for testing We reviewed the primary information categories in the job specs to identify key characteristics to use in the initial empirical assessment of the model. All job specs included three categories of information, representing how stakeholders view the requirements of a CMO role: 1) job responsibilities, 2) ideal CMO candidate experience, and 3) the status of the position. Notably, these categories fit within our hypothesized model: position (responsibilities), person (experience), and role context (status) characteristics. As an ER from a global recruiting firm explained in our interviews:

“Job specs represent the most important aspects of filling a CMO job. First and most important are the responsibilities...and then are the candidate qualifications we need to find to fit the job.”

CMO position-based role characteristic: Responsibilities The job specs suggest that the responsibilities, or the duties and obligations assigned to a position (e.g., Amatea et al., 1986; Dunn & Legge, 2001), are a key aspect of CMO role variance. An ER provided an example of two rival firms:

“They are both global firms and compete with each other. However, you couldn't have two more different organizations in how they approach marketing. Company X's CMO not only manages marketing but is the key leader who develops the strategic plan...and develops the innovation go-forward plan...Company Y's CMO is given a much smaller set of responsibilities and has almost no impact on strategy and innovation.”

The job specs data indicated wide variance in responsibility scope, with the number of responsibilities ranging from 3–19 (median 9). Some responsibilities identified fall under broader responsibilities (e.g., public relations are a

⁵ The job specs (2013–2021) were for the highest-level marketing position in the firm, regardless of formal title.

Table 1 CMO job specs: Responsibilities associated with CMO position

Responsibility area	(%)
Marketing strategy	94%
Marketing implementation	93%
Brand strategy	83%
Market research and analysis	83%
Marketing communication/Media	78%
CRM/Loyalty	48%
Sales	44%
R&D/New product development	37%
Pricing	13%
Corporate strategy	10%
New business development	9%
Distribution	6%

part of marketing communications), while others were only mentioned in a few job specs (e.g., cause marketing), and others were industry specific (e.g., retail). The 12 remaining responsibilities included: brand strategy, marketing strategy, marketing implementation, marketing communications, research, pricing, distribution, CRM, sales, product, new business development, and corporate strategy. Importantly, the job specs indicated a wide level of variance in the degree of responsibility CMOs have for marketing-related activities. For example, 94% of the job specs included marketing strategy as a CMO responsibility, while only 37% listed new product development. See Table 1 for a list of responsibilities.

The job specs suggest two primary types of CMO positions. The first has a *narrower* scope of responsibility (i.e., brand strategy, marketing strategy and implementation, marketing communications, and research), with most of the job specs (70% +) indicating CMO responsibility for these activities. A second group of CMO positions has responsibility for a *broad*er set of activities that includes the five above plus pricing, distribution, CRM, sales, product, new business development, and corporate strategy. Hereafter, we focus on these two types of CMO positions that have a narrower or broader scope of responsibility.

CMO person-based role characteristic: Experience type The job specs suggest that the type of experience CMOs possess is another priority characteristic. While responsibilities refer to the duties assigned to a position, CMO experience type concerns the prior work and training that characterizes the knowledge and skills the person who occupies the position is expected to have acquired (e.g., Biddle, 1979).

The job specs were used to identify skills and experiences sought in CMO candidates. A common type of experience identified was “P&L (profit and loss)/Brand Management,”

with the majority of job specs requiring that candidates possess this experience. ERs explained that in practice, CMO experience is generally viewed as being one of two main types: Staff or P&L. As one ER explained,

“A common way many recruiters distinguish between types of marketers is whether they come from the P&L or staff side. CMOs who have more experience in running the entire business and being connected to tangible profit and loss results tend to have P&L experience while those who tend to support the P&L function are pegged as staff.”

Each experience type provides different foundational training which leads to a dominant logic through which CMOs learn to view and fulfill their role requirements. The two experience types inherently create different belief systems about what marketing is, who marketers engage with, and how they are supposed to impact the firm.

For example, an ER indicated that one CMO who spent his career in a staff role at a B2B firm was “trained to believe” that marketers should “support” the P&L drivers of the firm, which was a function other than marketing. The ER contrasted this experience with another CMO, who had primary experience in a beverage firm and was trained to believe that marketing should “drive the business” and lead other functions in designing and implementing programs to achieve profitable growth. This experience typology categorizes CMOs based on the way in which they are trained to impact the firm—by either supporting the P&L drivers (i.e., staff experience) or by being the P&L driver themselves. For empirical testing purposes, we focus on these two experience types: P&L and staff.

CMO role context characteristic: Status The third common CMO Role Design characteristic noted on all job specs was *status*—the degree of importance afforded the CMO position relative to peers (e.g., Biddle, 1979). While all job specs identified who the CMO reported to as an indicator of status, job specs also used descriptions of the role that suggest relative status: “more important,” “central,” “more essential,” “critical,” and so forth. Interviewees indicated that the CMO role is endowed with positional status that can be more or less than that of other TMT leaders. This relative status then either enables or hinders the CMO to convert the role into positive performance outcomes. The CMO of a large retailer suggested:

“I’ve interviewed for several CMO positions over the past 10 years. In some, the CMO job doesn’t come with as much stature and, therefore, doesn’t have as much influence as the CFO or other peers...it is harder to have maximum impact.”

These three characteristics (responsibilities, experience, status) included across all job specs are used as the focus for an initial empirical assessment of the broader CMO Role Design model in Fig. 1. The objective is to offer initial insight into the validity and utility of the CMO Role Design framework and our central proposition that alignment between CMO position-, person-, and context-based characteristics can significantly affect role performance outcomes. In combination, the alignment of CMO responsibilities (narrow or broad), the type of marketing experience the CMO possesses (P&L or staff), and the relative degree of status afforded the CMO position serves as the basis for a testable subset of our conceptual model.

To assess the impact of these role design characteristics requires identifying a common role performance outcome. While research has considered the impact of CMO presence on firms' accounting and stock market performance (e.g., Germann et al., 2015), we sought to identify a more proximal mechanism by which CMO Role Design affects firm-level outcomes. The fieldwork identified a range of consequences that fell into three categories: resource-related outcomes (e.g., degree of employee turnover); process outcomes (e.g., speed, quality, and efficiency of marketing decision-making and implementation); and firm-level performance (e.g., sales growth, etc.). Although not precisely articulated as such, this suggests that CMO Role Design impacts *marketing capability* development—the firm's ability to acquire and deploy resources to perform marketing activities (processes) that deliver desirable outcomes (performance) better than rivals (e.g., Morgan, 2012). As one CEO suggested:

“The CMO role impacts the processes and strength of marketing in the company...determines whether the marketing function runs efficiently and effectively... and can have a significant impact on the company.”

Thus, we examine the effect of CMO Role Design Alignment among the three characteristics on marketing capability.

Hypotheses

To test the effects of CMO Role Design Alignment on firm-level marketing capability, we adopt a “fit as moderation” approach (Hughes & Morgan, 2008; Venkatraman, 1989) and examine the interaction effects among the key variables. This requires first establishing a baseline direct effect by examining the impact of CMO responsibility on marketing capability. We then hypothesize how a CMO's experience type aligns with (moderates the effect of) specific responsibility types. Further, we theorize how the status afforded the CMO role aligns and interacts with particular

responsibility-experience type configurations to yield superior marketing capability outcomes.

CMO responsibility and marketing capability CMO responsibility refers to the “*charter of delegated powers*” (Dunn & Legge, 2001, p.74) assigned to the position, identifying the domain of activities within which the CMO can make and act upon decisions (e.g., Freund, 1960). A key CEO task is determining how responsibilities are allocated across TMT members; they may choose to assign all or some of a firm's marketing-related activities to the CMO position. While there is some debate regarding how dispersing marketing activities may affect firm outcomes (e.g., Krush et al., 2015), we expect that when CMOs have a greater scope of responsibility for marketing-related activities, firms will be more likely to develop stronger marketing capability for three reasons.

First, the individuals in the sub-unit with whom employees performing marketing tasks interact defines their “community of practice” which can improve learning, the acquisition of task-relevant knowledge, and collaboration (e.g., Brown & Duguid, 1991; O'Hara et al., 2002). Such learning is less likely when some employees performing marketing activities are dispersed in non-marketing departments. Second, there is likely a benefit of coordination when CMOs have greater responsibility for marketing activities because dispersed responsibilities across multiple TMTs require increased inter-unit knowledge-sharing and decision-making efforts, making coordination and integration more difficult (e.g., Krush et al., 2015; Tsai, 2002). When a CMO has responsibility for a broader scope of marketing responsibilities, it helps ensure all employees managing and executing these tasks operate in a unit with the same paradigm (e.g., outside-in, market oriented), enabling more streamlined decision-making, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of aligning marketing decisions, and enabling greater coordination in implementation. Third, when marketers manage more marketing-related tasks, it should help to attract, retain, and develop marketing talent. The specific TMT member managing a department impacts the type of knowledge and skill being developed in employees. Marketing knowledge and skill growth are likely greater when managed by a marketer rather than another TMT member (e.g., Wang & Noe, 2010).

Collectively, these benefits applied across a broader scope of marketing activities should facilitate the development and use of common marketing language, frameworks, and tools. This, in turn, increases the ability of personnel to effectively and efficiently develop and execute marketing programs. Thus, we expect that:

H1 The broader a CMO's scope of responsibility for marketing activities, the stronger the firm-level marketing capability.

Alignment between CMO responsibility and experience type Our model suggests that the type of experience a CMO possesses can interact with assigned responsibilities to impact role performance outcomes. CMO experience type refers to an individual's prior work history, which affects the knowledge and skills they have acquired, impacting how they view and perform their role. This is consistent with research suggesting a manager's dominant logic—the way in which they interpret a business and execute their role—is based largely on their prior experiences (e.g., Kor & Mesko, 2013). Thus, a CMO's prior experience determines their assumptions, heuristics, and schemas that impact their decision-making and actions (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2009) and their ability to fulfill the position's responsibilities (e.g., Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Resick et al., 2007).

Below, we theorize how P&L and staff experience align with a broader or narrower scope of CMO responsibility. Using a “fit as moderation” lens we argue that each experience type will align better with a specific scope of responsibility and that when a CMO's experience aligns with a position's responsibility scope, a higher level of firm-level marketing capability will result.

While greater authority over a broad scope of marketing activities provides the CMO role occupant with more opportunity to build firm-level marketing capabilities, a CMO with P&L experience is likely to be best equipped to effectively leverage this potential. P&L-experienced CMOs think and operate like general managers as they have been held accountable for leading development and execution of strategies that have top- and bottom-line impact (e.g., Pielow, 2010). With support from other staff functions, P&L-experienced CMOs have been inculcated to lead rather than follow other functions and are more likely to have developed greater understanding and experience in managing disparate, enterprise-wide operations. They should be equipped to leverage a broader scope of responsibilities into desired marketing outcomes as their training imbues them with the belief that marketing should take a leading role and provides them with the knowledge and skills to work with a broad set of cross-functional partners in doing so.

In contrast, staff experience provides knowledge and skills more suitable for managing a CMO role with responsibility for a narrower set of marketing activities—and may better qualify such CMOs to fulfill these roles than P&L-experienced marketers. Staff experience endows CMOs with deeper, more specialized marketing knowledge that they can leverage to support the P&L driving function(s) of the firm. The more limited lens through which such CMOs view marketing's role may also lead them to be more comfortable managing a narrower set of responsibilities, enabling them to focus on developing their assigned “territory” to the best of their ability rather than fighting to expand it. In addition, a narrower scope of marketing responsibilities

suggests that other functions lead some marketing-related activities, requiring CMOs to defer to their leadership. Staff-experienced CMOs are used to supporting the P&L-driving function and should be more accustomed to working in an “influence” versus “leadership” position—required to effectively fulfill the duties associated with a narrower scope of responsibility.

Staff-experienced CMOs should therefore have deeper knowledge and skills in the narrower group of areas over which they have responsibility. They should also have greater comfort and experience in effectively playing a supporting role, allowing them to more effectively leverage a narrower set of responsibilities. Thus, we expect that a P&L-experienced (staff-experienced) CMO better aligns with a broader (narrower) set of responsibilities and is better able to convert the position into firm-level marketing capability.

H2 The effect of a broader (narrower) scope of responsibilities on marketing capabilities is stronger for CMOs with P&L (staff) experience.

Alignment between responsibility, experience type, and status Even when a CMO has the necessary experience to effectively fulfill their assigned responsibilities, their ability to fully leverage it can be influenced by the role's status—the relative importance afforded a position (e.g., Anderson et al., 2007; Biddle, 1979). While CMOs are responsible for specific activities, many tasks still require cross-functional support to deliver outcomes (e.g., Moorman & Rust, 1999). People occupying a position in a context where the role carries higher status are more likely to be perceived positively by peers, requiring them to exert less effort to influence others (e.g., Fragale et al., 2011; Sekiguchi et al., 2017), which can endow higher-status CMOs with greater respect and deference from peers. This, in turn, improves CMOs' ability to acquire needed inputs, gain cross-functional cooperation, and effectively coordinate with other functions to enhance value creation while minimizing the costs of doing so. Thus, higher status should enable CMOs to activate the role more effectively (e.g., Henderson & Fredrickson, 2001).

When role alignment is achieved through a broader scope of responsibility given to a CMO with P&L experience, higher status is likely useful in the speed and level of support required from other functions. It should also help in ensuring appropriate and timely cross-functional cooperation in delivering marketing programs. When role alignment is achieved through a narrower set of responsibilities given to a CMO with staff experience, the role should also benefit from occupying a higher status position. In this case, the status should help the CMO use “soft power” and influence to give them a stronger voice in determining what and how marketing inputs can best support required outputs.

- H3** When a CMO role has higher status, the positive effect of alignment of P&L experienced (staff experienced) CMOs with a broader (narrower) scope of responsibilities on firm marketing capabilities will be stronger.

Methodology

Primary survey data was required for testing the hypotheses derived from our conceptual model. To create the survey measures, we combined insights from the literature, job specs, and interviews detailed earlier, using primarily constructs from extant literature. Surveying senior executives is challenging, making careful survey design and execution imperative (e.g., Cycyota & Harrison, 2006). We therefore began by testing a draft survey with three CMOs, five doctoral students, and three faculty members. They each took the survey and were interviewed with respect to the questions capturing their intended meaning with refinements subsequently made. Next, we ran a pilot study involving 44 CMOs attending a CMO conference to validate the survey instrument and test the email invitations. Incorporating feedback from attendees, we modified the invitation and further streamlined the survey to ensure completion took less than 10 min (e.g., Groves et al., 1992).

To minimize common method variance concerns, we took steps suggested in the literature (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2003; Rindfleisch et al., 2008), including measuring the independent and dependent variables on different scales, reducing item ambiguity by using simple wording, employing different scale endpoints, and separating the dependent variables. We also assessed the potential presence of key informant bias by recruiting additional knowledgeable respondents from a sub-sample of firms. Correlations between the respondents within a firm ranged from 0.74 to 0.82, indicating strong validity for the measures.

Data was collected in two waves to enhance the generalizability and robustness of the findings and to reduce common method variance. Wave 1 was implemented with participant invitations sent from a third-party media company to all 1,560 senior marketing executives in their database, yielding 500 complete responses (32% response rate), of which 303 were from CMOs (i.e., heads of marketing), in line with the response rates achieved from executive surveys (e.g., Cycyota & Harrison, 2006). Differences between early and late responders on key construct measures were small and insignificant, and those between responders and non-responders on available demographic information (e.g., seniority, industry, length of relationship with third party) were likewise insignificant. A year later, we sent the 303 CMO respondents from Wave 1 the same survey instrument to obtain a second wave of data. Wave 2 yielded 195 valid responses (total of 390 CMO-year observations,

Table 2 CMO survey: Descriptive statistics

CMO and firm attributes		Statistic
Firm attributes		
Firm sales (\$ Millions)	(Mean)	\$3,240,000
Firm age (Years)	(Mean)	39.715
Firm type (1 = Public, 2 = Private)	(Mean)	1.770
CMO attributes		
Firm-level CMO turnover (# of CMOs in 10 years)		
Turnover (1 CMO)	(%)	49.2%
Turnover (2–3 CMOs)	(%)	37.5%
Turnover (4 + CMOs)	(%)	13.3%
CMO tenure		
Tenure (1–5 Years)	(%)	43.4%
Tenure (6–10 Years)	(%)	32.0%
Tenure (11–15 Years)	(%)	15.2%
Tenure (16 + Years)	(%)	9.4%
CMO Experience (1 = Staff; 2 = P&L)	(Mean)	1.692
CMO Status (0–100 Index)	(Mean)	50.000
CEO attributes		
CEO Selection (1 = Inside; 2 = Outside)	(Mean)	1.524
CEO Background		
Background (Acctg/Finance)	(%)	21.9%
Background (Marketing/Sales)	(%)	20.0%
Background (Ops/Manufacturing)	(%)	22.5%
Background (Other)	(%)	35.6%

across both waves), which we leverage in our analyses to verify the robustness and stability of the findings and provide repeated measures for the constructs (Rindfleisch et al., 2008). Table 2 provides descriptive statistics, and the Web Appendix provides instrument and data collection details (Web Appendix B), CMO titles (C), industries represented (D), early versus late respondent analysis (E), and items/scale source (F).

CMO responsibility Insights from the fieldwork determined the 12 items that comprised CMO responsibility, and an established scale (Piercy, 1986) was used (a 7-point scale, anchored at (1) “No responsibility at all” and (7) “Total responsibility”). As expected based on the job specs and pre-test data, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the responsibility area indicators represents a single latent variable. Additionally, we find some evidence that the construct may also reflect two separate but related sub-dimensions of CMO responsibility—Narrow Responsibilities (marketing strategy, marketing implementation, marketing communications and media, market research and intelligence, and brand strategy), and Broad Responsibilities (CRM/loyalty programs, pricing, product development, distribution, selling/sales management, corporate strategy, and new business development). Additional analyses and a separate

two-level confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) suggest that Narrow Responsibilities (five indicators) and Broad Responsibilities (seven indicators) are first-order factors, with both representing a higher-order factor—CMO Responsibility—estimated using the 12 responsibility area indicators which loaded onto their respective first-order factors. Overall, the CFA estimates reveal indicator loadings ranging between 0.59 and 0.72, and the average variance extracted (AVE) was 95% with model fit statistics acceptable for exploratory research (RMSEA = 0.089; SRMR = 0.078 and CFI = 0.853). The CMO Responsibility measure was scaled as a 0–100 index and then mean centered so that positive values identify broad responsibilities and negative values reflect narrow responsibilities.

CMO experience type Based on the CMO job specs, we measured the CMOs' previous experience in terms of the two categories identified in our fieldwork: Staff and P&L experience. CMO respondents were asked to identify which of these two types of marketing experience most closely represented where they had spent most of their career. These categories and their labels emerged from the job specs and interviews and were validated during the survey development phase, the pilot study, and post-survey respondent discussions. This binary categorical variable is used in our empirical analyses.

CMO status Research has demonstrated that self-awareness of relative status is highly accurate, as an individual's assessment of their own status closely matches "the group's perception of their status" (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 1094). Consequently, we used an approach based on prior research (Hayhurst & Wills, 1972; Piercy, 1986), with respondents asked about CMO status relative to the following positions: CFO, COO, CTO/CIO, CHRO, and Head of R&D. We used a 7-point semantic differential scale "Status of the CMO position relative to the head of..." anchored between (− 3) "A lot lower than" and (+ 3) "A lot higher than." An EFA indicated that three of these indicators captured most of the variance in the CMO status construct—CMO relative to CFO, COO, and CIO. A CFA of the measurement model revealed factor loadings ranging from 0.69 to 0.86, an AVE of 82% and appropriate fit statistics (RMSEA = 0.078; SRMR = 0.092 and CFI = 0.933). We use this estimated factor in our empirical analyses, scaled as a 0–100 index, and mean centered, with negative values representing low CMO status and positive values identifying high CMO status.

Marketing capabilities We included the following nine items used in prior research: strategic planning, product development, distribution channel management, marketing communication and media, selling, market research and intelligence, developing marketing strategy, pricing and marketing implementation (Vorhies & Morgan, 2005). Respondents were asked how well

their firm performed these activities using a 7-point scale, from (− 3) "Much worse than competitors" to (+ 3) "Much better than competitors." We assessed the measurement properties of the construct via CFA of all nine indicators to load into a single latent variable. Loadings ranged between 0.54 and 0.76 with an AVE of 87%, and acceptable fit statistics (RMSEA = 0.088; SRMR = 0.065 and CFI = 0.864). The estimated latent variable was scaled as a 0–100 index and is used in our empirical analyses.

Firm performance We asked respondents to "rate the firm's performance over the past year, relative to competitors" using three indicators: market share, sales, and profitability (e.g., Luo et al., 2006) on a 7-point scale with anchors of (− 3) "Much worse than competitors" and (+ 3) "Much better than competitors." Measurement properties were assessed via CFA modeling all three indicators to load on the performance latent variable, with loadings ranging from 0.77 and 0.94, an AVE of 92%, and good fit statistics (RMSEA = 0.053; SRMR = 0.043 and CFI = 0.917). The estimated latent variable was scaled as a 0–100 index. For the subset of public firms in our data ($n = 112$), the correlation between EBIT scaled by assets and the profitability survey indicant is 0.91, and with the estimated latent variable is 0.71, indicating strong validity for the performance measure.

The CMO responsibility, CMO status, marketing capabilities, and firm performance construct measures were estimated using the regression scoring method since this approach yields the smallest mean squared error. We confirmed the objectivity of the estimated measures by verifying their equivalence to the factor scores generated via the Bartlett scoring method. To enhance comparability and interpretation, all construct measures in our analyses were rescaled to a 0–100 index scale, with CMO responsibility and CMO status mean centered, so negative and positive values can be interpreted as low versus high levels of the underlying construct. We also include a set of firm, TMT, and industry characteristics as controls. To capture firm heterogeneity, we used firm size (annual sales revenues), firm age (years since incorporation), and firm type (public versus private). We control heterogeneity in the firm's TMT via CMO turnover (number of CMOs the firm has had in the past 10 years), CMO tenure (number of years as CMO in the focal firm), CEO functional background (i.e., accounting, finance, marketing, operations, etc.), and CEO selection (inside versus outside). Finally, we control for competitive context using industry-fixed effects based on each firm's primary SIC code. See Web Appendix F for the scales.

Hypothesis testing

We use a conditional mixed process (CMP) method to test our hypotheses for four reasons. First, CMP can address simultaneous codependent error structures, such as those

in our marketing capability and performance equations. Second, it is robust to various distributional assumptions, including non-continuity and truncation of the dependent and independent variables. Third, CMP also addresses heteroscedasticity and other estimation efficiency concerns. Finally, it is robust to small samples and mimics full-information maximum likelihood, yielding efficient and unbiased estimates (Gefen et al., 2000; Roodman, 2011). We then empirically tested our conceptual model and proposed hypotheses using CMP to estimate the following system of equations:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Firm Performance}_{it} = & \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Marketing Capabilities}_{it} + \\ & + \alpha_2 \text{CMO Responsibility}_{it} + \alpha_3 \text{CMO Status}_{it} + \\ & + \alpha_4 \text{Firm Size}_{it} + \alpha_5 \text{Firm Age}_{it} + \alpha_6 \text{Firm Type}_{it} + \\ & + \alpha_7 \text{CMO Turnover}_{it} + \alpha_8 \text{CMO Tenure}_{it} + \\ & + \alpha_9 \text{CEO Selection}_{it} + \alpha_{10} \text{CEO Background}_{it} + \\ & + \text{Industry Fixed - Effects} + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned} \quad (1A)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Marketing Capabilities}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_2 \text{CMO Responsibility}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{CMO Status}_{it} + \\ & + \beta_4 \text{Firm Size}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{Firm Age}_{it} + \beta_6 \text{Firm Type}_{it} + \\ & + \beta_7 \text{CMO Turnover}_{it} + \beta_8 \text{CMO Tenure}_{it} + \\ & + \beta_9 \text{CEO Selection}_{it} + \beta_{10} \text{CEO Background}_{it} + \\ & + \text{Industry Fixed - Effects} + \zeta_{it} \end{aligned} \quad (1B)$$

where i identifies each individual firm, and t identifies the time-period (Wave 1 or 2). *Firm Performance*, *Marketing Capabilities*, *CMO Responsibility*, and *CMO Status* are the latent variables described above. The other variables and industry fixed-effects are as described earlier, with the following adjustments: *Firm Type* is an indicator variable coded 0 for public firms and 1 for private firms; *CMO Turnover* is a categorical variable⁶ coded 0 if the firm has only had one CMO within the past 10 years, 1 if the number of CMOs that have served is between two and three, and 2 if four or more CMOs have served; *CMO Tenure* is also a categorical variable, coded 0 if the respondent has served five or fewer years as CMO, 1 if served between six and ten years, 2 if served between 11 and 15 years, and 3 if served 16 or more years; *CEO Selection* is an indicator variable, coded 0 if the current CEO was selected from within the firm, and 1 if the CEO was selected from outside the firm; finally, *CEO Background* is a categorical variable, coded 0 if the CEO functional background was finance or accounting, 1 if the functional background was marketing or sales, 2 if the functional background was operations or manufacturing, and 3 for all other functional backgrounds. *Industry Controls* represent a set of mutually exclusive industry dummies (based

on the firm's primary SIC) that capture industry-specific fixed effects. Finally, ε_{it} and ζ_{it} are random errors, which can be adapted to fit a variety of distributional assumptions, as well as being allowed to covary. The estimates for β_2 allow us to test H1.

Additionally, we examine the hypothesized CMO responsibility-experience fit and CMO responsibility-experience-status fit (H2, H3) boundary conditions on the relationship between CMO responsibilities and marketing capabilities by estimating model specification detailed in Eqs. 1A/B following the fit as moderation approach by including interactions between CMO responsibility and CMO status, and three-way interactions between CMO responsibility-status-experience (staff vs. P&L).

Data and hypothesis testing results

Table 3 summarizes descriptive statistics while Table 4 reports construct and indicator correlations for the complete sample (i.e., 390 respondents).⁷ Overall, constructs and indicators exhibit appropriate distributional properties. Correlations between indicators suggest good levels of convergent and discriminant validity and are stable and consistent across survey waves, demonstrating construct reliability. Of the CMOs in our sample, 31% report staff as their primary experience type, while 69% indicate P&L.

Supporting H1, Table 5 estimates reveal that the breadth of CMO marketing responsibility is significantly predictive of the level of a firm's marketing capabilities ($\beta = 0.337$, $p < 0.001$). Our estimates also confirm previous findings relating marketing capabilities to firm performance ($\beta = 0.706$, $p < 0.001$). A first-differences model specification using data for the 195 observations common across the survey waves to calibrate changes versions of the variables, yield estimates that are substantively identical to those for the levels model specification (Web Appendix G).

We test the hypothesized CMO role alignment boundary conditions (H2 and H3) by estimating model specifications equivalent to those specified in Eqs. 1A/B, using CMO status and CMO experience as moderators of the effect of CMO responsibility on marketing capabilities. The first column in Table 6 replicates the estimates reported in Table 5, while the second column reports the estimates of equivalent models that also include two-way interactions between CMO responsibility, CMO experience, and CMO status to test H2. The final column reports estimates for a model specification that includes a three-way interaction between responsibility, experience, and status in order to test H3.

⁶ We use categorical versions of some continuous controls because the data indicated (1) observation clustering around a few mass points, and (2) non-linear association with the dependent variables.

⁷ Wave 1 and Wave 2 specific construct and indicators correlations (not shown) match those reported in Table 5.

Table 3 Construct & indicator univariate statistics

Constructs/Variable	Wave 1 (<i>N</i> = 195)					Wave 2 (<i>N</i> = 195)				
	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Median	Max	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Median	Max
CMO responsibility	0.000	12.176	− 28.520	0.528	26.111	0.000	12.028	− 29.687	0.196	24.210
Marketing strategy	6.670	0.728	3.000	7.000	7.000	6.708	0.585	3.000	7.000	7.000
Marketing implementation	6.678	0.752	2.000	7.000	7.000	6.779	0.495	5.000	7.000	7.000
Marketing communications	6.730	0.742	2.000	7.000	7.000	6.667	0.866	1.000	7.000	7.000
Marketing research	6.019	1.297	1.000	6.000	7.000	6.092	1.317	1.000	7.000	7.000
Brand strategy	6.435	1.032	1.000	7.000	7.000	6.554	0.813	3.000	7.000	7.000
CRM/Loyalty	5.349	1.839	1.000	6.000	7.000	5.528	1.786	1.000	6.000	7.000
Pricing	3.770	2.001	1.000	4.000	7.000	4.005	2.022	1.000	4.000	7.000
Research & development	4.054	1.919	1.000	4.000	7.000	4.262	1.902	1.000	4.000	7.000
Distribution	3.954	2.081	1.000	4.000	7.000	4.359	1.901	1.000	5.000	7.000
Selling & sales	3.522	2.019	1.000	3.000	7.000	3.831	1.926	1.000	4.000	7.000
Corporate strategy	4.738	1.596	1.000	5.000	7.000	4.851	1.524	1.000	5.000	7.000
New business development	4.343	1.804	1.000	4.500	7.000	4.559	1.753	1.000	5.000	7.000
Marketing capabilities	50.128	9.795	7.943	50.562	71.704	49.758	9.812	15.158	49.416	70.910
Strategic planning	0.903	1.538	− 3.000	1.000	3.000	0.738	1.509	− 3.000	1.000	3.000
Product development	0.503	1.571	− 3.000	1.000	3.000	0.390	1.625	− 3.000	0.000	3.000
Channel management	0.305	1.430	− 3.000	0.000	3.000	0.282	1.380	− 3.000	0.000	3.000
Marketing communications	1.232	1.383	− 3.000	1.000	3.000	1.241	1.417	− 3.000	1.000	3.000
Selling & sales	0.565	1.417	− 3.000	1.000	3.000	0.626	1.467	− 3.000	1.000	3.000
Market research	0.600	1.499	− 3.000	1.000	3.000	0.610	1.479	− 3.000	1.000	3.000
Marketing strategy	1.424	1.303	− 3.000	2.000	3.000	1.477	1.261	− 3.000	2.000	3.000
Pricing	0.378	1.330	− 3.000	0.000	3.000	0.277	1.409	− 3.000	0.000	3.000
Marketing implementation	1.381	1.333	− 3.000	2.000	3.000	1.256	1.307	− 3.000	1.000	3.000
Firm performance	50.441	13.849	5.272	51.505	75.507	49.162	15.576	5.901	51.112	75.487
Market share	0.886	1.310	− 3.000	1.000	3.000	0.800	1.498	− 3.000	1.000	3.000
Sales	0.819	1.358	− 3.000	1.000	3.000	0.687	1.516	− 3.000	1.000	3.000
Profitability	0.970	1.434	− 3.000	1.000	3.000	0.836	1.584	− 3.000	1.000	3.000
CMO status	0.000	15.729	− 32.169	− 1.163	34.482	0.000	13.668	− 29.735	2.091	36.350

Column 2 results for the model specification that includes CMO responsibility-experience interactions support H2. Results show that for CMOs whose primary experience is P&L (coded + 1), the effect of broader CMO responsibility on firm marketing capabilities is enhanced ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.05$). Since CMO experience type is a binary variable (with staff experience coded − 1), these results also indicate that when the CMO position's responsibility is narrower, staff-experienced CMOs are better able than P&L-experienced CMOs to leverage this narrower responsibility scope into firm-level marketing capabilities.⁸

Finally, for the model that includes a three-way interaction between responsibilities, status, and experience type, consistent with H3, we find that the positive effects on firm marketing capabilities of broader CMO responsibility-P&L experience fit ($\beta = 0.248$, $p < 0.001$) are further enhanced when paired with higher CMO status.⁹ Conversely, this result also indicates that when a broader responsibility position is misaligned and occupied by a staff-experienced CMO, higher status afforded to the position will amplify the negative effects of the misfit and lead to lower firm-level marketing capability. Overall, this result supports the H3 logic that the positive effects of aligning relative

⁸ Since CMO responsibility is mean centered, broader CMO responsibilities are identified by positive values and narrower CMO responsibilities by negative values on our measure. Therefore, the interaction between CMO Responsibility and CMO Experience yields a positive effect when they are matched.

⁹ The CMO status measure is also mean-centered, with positive values indicating higher status, and negative values identifying lower status. Therefore, when higher CMO status is paired with P&L Experience or lower status is paired with staff experience, the overall effect size is amplified.

Table 4 Construct and indicator correlations (combined waves $N = 390$)

Correlations	A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	B	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	C	22	23	24	D
A CMO Responsibility	1.000																											
1 Marketing Strategy		1.00																										
2 Marketing Implement.		.42	1.00																									
3 Marketing Comms.		.39	.47	1.00																								
4 Marketing Research		.36	.21	.24	1.00																							
5 Brand Strategy		.51	.38	.50	.31	1.00																						
6 CRM/Loyalty		.20	.26	.22	.37	.17	1.00																					
7 Pricing		.27	.14	.03	.30	.15	.33	1.00																				
8 Research & Development		.23	.13	.09	.32	.23	.34	.60	1.00																			
9 Distribution		.14	.13	.05	.14	.10	.25	.39	.42	1.00																		
10 Selling & Sales		.13	.09	.06	.16	.07	.24	.42	.36	.50	1.00																	
11 Corporate Strategy		.32	.14	.11	.27	.34	.24	.42	.44	.35	.40	1.00																
12 New Business Develop.		.17	.12	.08	.21	.12	.26	.39	.44	.40	.57	.43	1.00															
B Marketing Capabilities	.378													1.000														
13 Strategic Planning		.17	.02	.01	.07	.10	.08	.14	.14	.20	.15	.27	.20		1.00													
14 Product Development		.09	.03	.07	.11	.07	.14	.16	.23	.21	.09	.20	.15		.52	1.00												
15 Channel Management		.13	.05	.02	.10	.08	.16	.12	.17	.28	.13	.13	.11		.44	.46	1.00											
16 Marketing Comm.		.15	.11	.15	.05	.17	.04	-.08	.02	.08	-.01	.08	.05		.44	.35	.39	1.00										
17 Selling & Sales		.13	.10	.04	.03	.05	.07	.07	.07	.14	.19	.11	.12		.35	.28	.47	.38	1.00									
18 Market Research		.11	.01	.02	.28	.07	.13	.10	.16	.17	.15	.18	.15		.44	.32	.36	.41	.33	1.00								
19 Marketing Strategy		.23	.15	.10	.14	.17	.10	.08	.12	.16	.09	.21	.14		.53	.34	.33	.57	.35	.55	1.00							
20 Pricing		.16	.12	.07	.17	.00	.15	.26	.22	.22	.20	.21	.14		.37	.38	.35	.27	.43	.35	.39	1.00						
21 Mktg. Implementation		.21	.20	.12	.09	.14	.09	.00	.03	.12	.04	.11	.08		.40	.29	.33	.61	.39	.40	.63	.34	1.00					
C Firm Performance	.198													.672										1.000				
22 Market Share		.14	.10	.03	.06	.11	.10	.03	.08	.08	.04	.13	.11		.37	.34	.35	.41	.39	.26	.37	.30	.38		1.00			
23 Sales		.13	.06	.01	.07	.05	.10	.06	.10	.06	.05	.14	.10		.36	.34	.35	.35	.50	.25	.35	.37	.36		.82	1.00		
24 Profitability		.11	.07	-.01	.08	.07	.15	.09	.17	.11	.13	.15	.14		.38	.32	.34	.28	.42	.26	.28	.35	.32		.57	.63	1.00	
D CMO Status	.373	.13	.10	.08	.21	.16	.20	.34	.27	.23	.21	.31	.27	.279	.27	.19	.18	.16	.10	.22	.25	.23	.13	.095	.09	.06	.07	1.000

Correlations larger than 0.099 (in absolute value) are significant at $p < 0.05$; Correlations larger than 0.130 (in absolute value) are significant at $p < 0.01$

responsibility breadth with CMO experience-type will be magnified when the CMO role is afforded higher status.

To provide insights into the relative effect sizes involved, we also estimated the average marketing capabilities for different scenarios of the CMO responsibility-experience-status fit. We begin by estimating the marginal effects of narrower and broader sets of responsibilities on marketing capabilities using the following version of Eq. 1B:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Marketing Capabilities}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{CMO Responsibility}_{it} + \\
 & + \beta_2 \text{CMO Status}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{CMO Experience}_{it} + \\
 & + \beta_4 \text{CMO Responsibility}_{it} \times \text{CMO Status}_{it} + \\
 & + \beta_5 \text{CMO Responsibility}_{it} \times \text{CMO Experience}_{it} + \\
 & + \beta_6 \text{CMO Status}_{it} \times \text{CMO Experience}_{it} + \\
 & + \beta_7 \text{CMO Resp}_{it} \times \text{CMO Status}_{it} \times \text{CMO Experience}_{it} + \\
 & + \text{Firm, CMO, CEO and Industry Controls} + \zeta_{it}
 \end{aligned}
 \quad (1C)$$

Estimating marginal effects involves calculating the marginal change in the marketing capability dependent variable, given a marginal change in the CMO responsibility independent variable. Given the role alignment moderation, the marginal effect is conditional on CMO status and CMO experience. Specifically, the marginal effect of CMO responsibility on marketing capabilities is $\beta_1 + \beta_4 \text{CMO Status} + \beta_5 \text{CMO Experience} + \beta_7 \text{CMO Status} \times \text{CMO Experience}$. Since the

Table 5 CMO responsibility, marketing capabilities & performance

Model specification	Levels ($N = 390$)	
Standardized estimates	Marketing capabilities	Firm performance
Marketing capabilities		0.706***
CMO responsibility	H1: + 0.337***	0.158***
CMO status	0.158**	− 0.080*
Firm size	− 0.103**	0.176***
Firm age	0.027	− 0.053*
Firm type (Private)	0.110**	0.127**
CMO turnover (2–3 CMOs)	− 0.012	− 0.038
CMO turnover (4 + CMOs)	− 0.141**	− 0.022
CMO tenure (6–10 years)	− 0.036	− 0.027
CMO tenure (11–15 years)	0.135**	− 0.003
CMO tenure (16 + years)	0.064	− 0.003
CEO selection (Outside)	0.054	0.057*
CEO background (Mktg/Sales)	0.045	− 0.018
CEO background (Ops/Mfct)	0.061	0.035
CEO background (Other)	0.106*	0.028
Industry controls	Included	Included
Time/Wave control	0.006	− 0.032
Pseudo-R ²	25.39%	47.21%

*** significant at $p < 0.001$; ** significant at $p < 0.01$; * significant at $p < 0.05$. -- indicates omitted variables in the differences model since these variables either do not vary longitudinally or only a small number of observations exhibit longitudinal variation. Industry controls are time-invariant and not included in the differences model

Table 6 CMO responsibility-experience-status and marketing capabilities

Standardized estimates		Marketing capabilities	Marketing capabilities	Marketing capabilities
CMO responsibility	H1: +	0.337***	0.361**	0.371**
CMO status		0.158**	0.147**	0.145**
CMO experience (P&L)			0.005	0.008
CMO responsibility × CMO status				0.057
CMO responsibility × CMO experience (P&L)	H2: +		0.287*	0.313*
CMO status × CMO experience (P&L)			0.218*	0.233*
CMO Resp. × CMO Status × CMO Exp. (P&L)	H3: +			0.248***
Firm size		− 0.103**	− 0.126**	− 0.125**
Firm age		0.027	0.004	0.010
Firm type (Private)		0.110**	0.130**	0.150**
CMO turnover (2–4 CMOs)		− 0.018	− 0.032	− 0.027
CMO turnover (5 + CMOs)		− 0.136**	− 0.154**	− 0.155**
CMO tenure (6–10 years)		− 0.036	− 0.040	− 0.042
CMO tenure (11–15 years)		0.135**	0.129**	0.126*
CMO tenure (16 + years)		0.064	0.079	0.084
CEO selection (Outside)		0.054	0.069	0.068
CEO background (Mktg/Sales)		0.045	0.037	0.031
CEO background (Ops/Mfct)		0.061	0.081	0.082
CEO background (Other)		0.106*	0.117*	0.120**
Industry controls		Included	Included	Included
Year/Wave control		0.006	− 0.011	− 0.010
Pseudo-R ²		25.39%	30.81%	32.15%

*** significant at $p < 0.001$; ** significant at $p < 0.01$; * significant at $p < 0.05$

estimates reported in Table 6 are standardized, we can use these to calibrate the marginal effects for low versus high levels of CMO status (± 1 standard deviation) and staff versus P&L CMO experience (dummy coded variable).

The average effect size of CMO responsibility on marketing capabilities is 0.371. For average levels of CMO status, when the CMO's responsibility is aligned with their experience type (i.e., narrow responsibility-staff experience and broad responsibility-P&L experience), the marginal effect of responsibilities on marketing capabilities increases to 0.462 (bootstrapped- $p < 0.001$), a 25% improvement. When there is complete misalignment between the CMO's responsibility, experience, and status (i.e., narrow-P&L-high status and broad-staff-low status), the marginal effect of CMO responsibility scope on marketing capabilities drops to 0.215 (bootstrapped- $p < 0.001$), or 42% below the average marginal effect. These marginal effect sizes clearly indicate the degree to which CEO decisions with respect to CMO Role Design and staffing can affect role performance outcomes.

Additional robustness checks

We performed several robustness checks to assess the validity, stability, and generalizability of the reported findings. First, to ensure that measurement error did not bias our results, we re-estimated the model specifications using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, which produced substantively identical findings. Next, we assessed the sensitivity of our

findings but failed to find any outlier and influential observations. Additionally, we re-estimated all model specifications with winsorized data at the 1st and 5th percentile, and the findings remained substantively identical. We also assembled “unbalanced” versions of the dataset, by including all 303 observations from the Wave 1 survey, resulting in a sample of 498 observations, 390 common across survey waves, and 108 “unmatched” observations from the Wave 1 survey. We used this “unbalanced” dataset to re-estimate the levels model specifications summarized in Tables 5 and 6 and found that the estimates were substantively identical to those reported using the balanced dataset. Additional analyses are reported in the Web Appendix: first differences (G), mixed model analysis (H), subsample analysis (I), responsibility distribution by industry (J), and a summary of quotes (K).

Post-hoc analyses of CMO role misalignment

Given the absence of prior research on CMO Role Design, we provide some descriptive data that may offer initial insight on potential differences between firms with aligned versus misaligned CMO roles (see Table 7). In terms of Firmographics, companies with an aligned CMO role tend to be younger, have less revenue, pursue a multi-brand corporate strategy (versus a mono-brand strategy), and have CEOs who are promoted from within the company (versus hired from outside the firm). Interestingly, we also find that CEOs with marketing/sales backgrounds are more likely

Table 7 Characteristics of aligned and misaligned CMO roles

CEO/CMO/Firm characteristics	Misaligned CMO roles	Aligned CMO roles
CEO background		
Finance/Accounting	48%	31%
Marketing/Sales	23%	39%
Operations/Manufacturing	29%	31%
CEO appointment		
Inside	47%	53%
CMO characteristics		
Years as CMO	7.5	7.8
Years as head of marketing	3.6	4.7
# CMOs (past 10 years)	2.1	2.0
CMO responsibilities		
Corporate strategy	66%	71%
New business development	60%	67%
Pricing	52%	58%
R&D	56%	62%
Sales	44%	54%
Firm characteristics		
Marketing capabilities	60%	63%
Multi brand strategy	42%	46%
Public	71%	72%
Firm age (mean)	48 Years	40 Years
Revenues (mean)	\$6,080 M	\$2,550 M
Assets (mean)	\$212 M	\$186 M

to lead firms with an aligned CMO role while CEOs with finance/accounting backgrounds are more likely to sit atop firms with a misaligned CMO role. Furthermore, firms with a more aligned CMO role also tend to have CMOs with more head of marketing experience. These descriptives suggest the degree of marketing knowledge, perspective and expertise as one potential explanation for role design alignment differences between firms.

To provide practical insight into the prevalence and scale of CMO role position-person misalignment problems, we created a CMO Responsibility Emphasis metric, using a ratio of the sub-dimensions of CMO responsibility (narrow and broad responsibility types). We estimated both sub-responsibilities as comparable indices (0–100 scale) giving the CMO Responsibility Emphasis metric a theoretical range from zero to infinity, with an observed range in our data from 0.78 through 1.60 and a mean value of 1.12. CMO Responsibility Emphasis values larger than one indicate that the CMO role emphasizes broader scope of responsibilities, while values smaller than one suggest that narrower scope responsibilities are emphasized. We use the CMO Responsibility Emphasis metric to classify firms into narrow versus broad responsibility scope emphasis and assess the degree of misalignment with the CMO experience type (i.e., staff versus P&L).

Regarding CMO experience and CMO responsibility fit, for 18.5% of the firms in our sample CMO staff experience is aligned with CMO narrow responsibility emphasis. For another 36.4% of firms, CMO P&L experience is aligned with CMO broad responsibility emphasis. For the remaining 45.1% of firms, the CMO's experience is not aligned with the position's responsibility scope.¹⁰ When we consider the CMO status within the organization, more firms experience misalignment. For instance, status-role-experience is misaligned for 49% of the firms reporting high status to their CMOs, and for 59% of the firms reporting low status to their CMOs, for an overall misalignment in 54% of all firms in our sample.

Beyond these effects on marketing capabilities, CMO responsibility-experience misalignment has important firm performance implications. For instance, average firm performance is 60.9 for the 142 firms where the CMO role with broader responsibility is aligned with their CMO's P&L experience but drops to 57.2 for the 128 firms where the CMO's P&L experience is misaligned with a narrower responsibility position. Similarly, the average performance is 56.8 for the 72 firms where the CMO role has a narrower responsibility set that is aligned with a staff-experienced CMO and drops to 55.9 for the 48 firms where a broad responsibility set position is misaligned with staff-experienced CMOs (see Table 8).

Additionally, we find that at high levels of CMO status, the average performance of firms with narrow responsibility-staff experienced CMO alignment increases to 62.5 (+ 9.9% or 0.38 of a standard deviation), while the average performance of firms with broad responsibility-P&L experienced CMO alignment increases to 62.6 (+ 2.9% or 0.12 of a standard deviation). Conversely, at high levels of CMO status, average firm performance decreases by 3.3% (0.13 of a standard deviation) for narrow responsibility-P&L experienced CMO misalignment and decreases by 2.5% (0.10 of a standard deviation) for broad responsibility-staff experienced CMO misalignment. These findings suggest that CMO status can significantly increase firm performance when the CMO responsibility-experience type is aligned. However, firm performance can be reduced when high status is afforded to roles in which CMO responsibility and experience are misaligned.

We also supplemented this model-free evidence using mixed-model estimation to leverage the statistical power of the entire sample while allowing us to calibrate “by-group” equivalent estimates. Overall, these mixed model analyses

¹⁰ Pearson's chi-squared, Kendall's tau, and Fischer's exact statistics indicate that CMO experience and CMO responsibility are associated, suggesting that the experience-responsibility misalignment is not random.

Table 8 CMO responsibility-experience alignment and average firm performance

CMO Experience	CMO Responsibility	
	Narrow Emphasis	Broad Emphasis
Staff	56.8 (<i>n</i> =72)	55.9 (<i>n</i> =48)
P&L	57.2 (<i>n</i> =128)	60.9 (<i>n</i> =142)

Notes: Average Firm Performance (Market Share; Sales; Profits Index), by CMO Responsibility and CMO Experience. Cells highlighted in green (red) represent CMO Responsibilities-Experience alignment (misalignment).

CMO responsibility-experience alignment and average firm performance by CMO status

High CMO Status		
CMO Experience	CMO Responsibility	
	Narrow Emphasis	Broad Emphasis
Staff	62.5 (+9.9%; +0.38SD)	54.4 (-2.5%; -0.10SD)
P&L	55.3 (-3.3%; -0.13SD)	62.6 (+2.9%; +0.12SD)

Notes: Average Firm Performance (Market Share; Sales; Profits Index), by CMO Responsibility and CMO Experience for firms with High CMO Status. Percentage difference relative to average Firm Performance (and standard deviation equivalent) in parentheses. Cells highlighted in green (red) represent CMO Responsibilities-Experience alignment (misalignment).

Low CMO Status		
CMO Experience	CMO Responsibility	
	Narrow Emphasis	Broad Emphasis
Staff	55.2 (-2.9%; -0.11SD)	56.4 (+0.9%; +0.03SD)
P&L	55.8 (-2.3%; -0.09SD)	56.9 (-6.6%; -0.27SD)

Notes: Average Firm Performance (Market Share; Sales; Profits Index), by CMO Responsibility and CMO Experience for firms with Low CMO Status. Percentage difference relative to average Firm Performance (and standard deviation equivalent) in parentheses. Cells highlighted in green (red) represent CMO Responsibilities-Experience alignment (misalignment).

confirm the above model-free findings and the previous analyses estimated via Eq. 1C (see Web Appendix H).

Discussion and implications

Managerial evidence indicates that CEOs largely believe CMO performance could improve. While much of their dissatisfaction is understandably focused on the individuals who occupy CMO positions, this research provides the first evidence of a structural explanation for performance outcomes—CMO Role Design. The complexity associated with aligning position-, person-, and context-based factors highlight how challenging this can be for firm leaders. The initial empirical examination of just three of the characteristics identified in our conceptual model demonstrates the difficulty. We find that while, on average, the allocation of a broader scope of responsibilities to the CMO position aids the building of firm marketing capabilities, this alone is insufficient to maximize the potential of the CMO role. A second key design decision concerns aligning the CMO's primary experience type with the scope of responsibilities to enable the occupant to leverage the position into desired marketing outcomes. We also show that a third key role design decision concerns the status afforded to the position. When the position's responsibility type and the role occupant's experience type are aligned, giving higher status to the position can significantly enhance the CMO's ability to strengthen marketing capability. However, we also find that giving high status to a CMO whose experience type is misaligned with the responsibility type can actually *lower* performance outcomes. Thus, results suggest that for CMOs to effectively contribute to a company's outcomes, the CMO role should be designed with a compatible blend of responsibilities, experience, and status.

Importantly, all three elements of CMO Role Design we show to be important in the initial empirical test are largely within CEO control. This suggests CEOs can increase firm performance by designing (responsibility assigned the CMO position) and staffing (experience sought and required in the CMO appointee) CMO roles within a particular context (status relative to peers) to achieve alignment. However, our analysis reveals that 54% of the firms sampled have CMO roles that are at least partly misaligned, significantly reducing marketing capability and performance. Thus, we find that CMO role design misalignment is both common and consequential. Since the aspects of role alignment we show to be important are controllable, the prevalence of misalignment suggests that designing a role and hiring for alignment is not obvious to CEOs who approve the design and staffing, ERs who influence job design and screen CMO candidates, or CMOs who could negotiate the role design or refrain from accepting roles for which their experience is not a good fit.

Implications for theory

This study offers three key implications for theory. First, this research introduces a new mechanism—CMO Role Design—that can impact firm marketing and performance outcomes. The conceptual model developed identifies a number of characteristics and factors that interact to influence CMO role performance outcomes, suggesting the need for a substantial new body of research to understand, measure, and determine their impact. Our initial investigation shows that alignment between CMO experience, the responsibilities assigned, and the role's status is crucial to understanding whether and how CMOs are destined to succeed or fail. The model and results highlight that a reason CMO Role Design is difficult is because it requires making independent choices about different characteristics *and* an appreciation and consideration of key interdependencies between them. This highlights the need for more exploration into the alignment of different role characteristics. Importantly, the CMO Role Design model provides a new platform for such work to further examine how specific constructs (mis)align to impact role performance outcomes.

Second, by providing the first theory-based, multi-dimensional conceptual model of a CMO role, our research has important implications for upper echelons theory and research. Using a role theory lens, we decompose a CMO role into position-, person-, and context-based elements and use extant literature along with insights from fieldwork to identify important characteristics of these aspects of a CMO role. This research demonstrates the value of moving beyond the view that the TMT is a monolithic group and provides a model for how functional leader role design can be usefully explored to understand how C-level leaders impact outcomes (e.g., Krause et al., 2022).

Finally, this research identifies the building and leveraging of marketing capabilities as a key proximal role performance outcome of effective CMO Role Design. This is important because it provides the first insight into a primary mechanism by which the design and staffing of CMO roles contribute to firm outcomes—by enhancing the firm's marketing capabilities. In addition, although the importance of marketing capabilities in driving firm performance has been established, little is known about where such capabilities originate and how they are maintained. Our results suggest that CMO Role Design is an important antecedent of the development and maintenance of firms' marketing capabilities.

Implications for practice

This study also has clear and important implications for practice. For CEOs, understanding CMO Role Design and the need to align key characteristics for effective

Table 9 CMO Role Design template for firm leaders

CMO role issue	CMO Role Design questions
CEOs/ERs assessing, evolving, or developing a CMO role	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the required marketing and firm-level outcomes expected from the CMO role? 2. In light of the context within which the role is to be performed, what are the key position-based tasks and resources needed to accomplish them? 3. Are the role's position-based characteristics arranged in a way that is internally consistent to enable the required outcomes to be delivered (e.g., responsibilities match resources and discretion, accountability and expectations)? 4. Given the context with which the role will be performed and the characteristics of the position, what are the key person-based knowledge and skills that will be needed for the role occupant to be effective in the position? What kinds and levels of education, training and experience are needed to develop a CMO with the required knowledge and skills? 5. Does the CMO job spec delineate this information (position- and person- based characteristics required) clearly?
CEOs assessing CMO Role Design causes for weaker than desired performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the expectations of the CMO role? 2. Do the position-based responsibilities, resources, and means to deploy them align with the tasks required to deliver these expectations? Are the role's accountabilities aligned with these elements? Is the position design clear and sufficient to guide and motivate the CMO? 3. Do the CMO's knowledge and skills match the responsibilities assigned to the position? If there is a gap, are there mechanisms to upskill the CMO or support the CMO with direct reports that can fill the gap? 4. Is the status associated with the CMO Role aligned with the other role characteristics? How well do the other contextual factors match the position and enable the CMO to leverage the position's potential?
CMOs assessing a current or potential CMO role	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the desired marketing and firm-level outcomes expected from the CMO role? Are they clearly specified? 2. What is the responsibility assigned to the CMO role? If the impact expected requires enterprise-wide influence (vs. more narrow impact), does the responsibility fit expectations? Does the position provide access to the resources necessary to effectively leverage the responsibilities? Are the accountabilities of the position clear and aligned with the responsibilities and resource access provided? 3. What are other position-based characteristics and do they align with expected outcomes? If not, why not? 4. Do you have the type of experience required to manage the responsibility set and other position-based characteristics? If not, is the gap surmountable through either upskilling (training, classes, etc.) or ensuring a direct report has the experience? 5. What is the status (and other context-based characteristics) of the CMO role relative to other C-suite peers? Does the status (and other context-based characteristics) align with the other CMO Role characteristics? If not, can you negotiate for greater alignment (e.g., inclusion in board meetings)? 6. Does the status (and other context-based characteristics) align with the other CMO role characteristics? If not, can you negotiate for greater alignment (e.g., inclusion in board meetings)? 7. Stepping back, to what degree does the CMO Role Design set you up for success and can you negotiate to strengthen the alignment?

performance sheds light on critical questions they are struggling to resolve. With CEOs and CMOs expressing dissatisfaction and the evidence that the CMO has the highest C-level turnover (e.g., Korn Ferry, 2020), it appears that a common CEO solution to their disappointment is to replace the CMO or for CMOs to quit. Our research indicates that a key priority should be to focus on CMO Role Design to assess and understand the issue. For example, it is possible that the position-based role characteristics do not align with the context of the role. Replacing a CMO will not solve this fundamental design flaw. The frequency of misalignment

observed in practice in our sample indicates that effective CMO Role Design is not obvious to most firm leaders. Further, given that this initial empirical analysis only considered three role characteristics, the degree of misalignment in practice is likely far greater once considering the design of a complete role. A template is provided in Table 9 to help leaders design, assess, fill, and evolve CMO roles.

This research also identifies an opportunity for ERs to better educate and help CEOs design and staff CMO roles. We generally find that CMO roles assigned a broader set of marketing responsibilities are more likely to enhance

Table 10 Platform for future CMO Role Design research

Research area	Research questions
CMO Role Design framework: position- and person-based characteristics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leveraging role theory, what additional position- and person-based characteristics impact CMO role performance and outcomes? For example, role coherence, role stress, role ambiguity, and role complexity are a few role constructs that could potentially impact role performance 2. Leveraging upper echelons theory, what additional position- and person-based characteristics impact role performance and outcomes? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does a CMO role occupant's industry experience (amount, type, and sequence) impact performance outcomes? • How does an occupant's within-firm experience (amount, positions, levels) impact performance outcomes? • How do an occupant's skills (amount, type, and sequence) impact performance outcomes? • How does an occupant's board experience impact performance outcomes? 3. Research can further decompose categories of characteristics, such as "responsibilities," "expectations," "experience type" and so forth into measurable sub-components. For example, what are the major categories of expectations CEOs have of CMO roles?
CMO Role Design framework: contextual factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using role theory's theatrical analog, how does the location in which a part is performed impact outcomes? Should a CMO role in a global firm be designed differently from a U.S.-based or Chinese-based firm? If so, how? 2. Using a traditional marketing strategy lens, what is the relationship between firm strategy elements and CMO Role Design? For example, how should a CMO role be designed at a firm with a multi-brand portfolio versus a mono-brand firm? 3. How does a firm's purpose relate to CMO Role Design? Is it relevant, and if so how? Are there person-based characteristics that make it more/less relevant? 4. Does the experience of the CEO (and potentially key C-suite peers) impact CMO Role Design? If so, how? 5. Does the Board of Directors impact CMO Role Design? If so, how? 6. Does the way in which a firm engages with consumers (direct or indirect, B2B or B2C) impact CMO Role Design? If so, how? 7. Do firm size and growth goals impact CMO Role Design? For example, should a CMO role be designed differently for VC, PE, or public firms?
Factors impacting CMO Role Design in practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why are CMO roles so difficult to design and align in practice? 2. More generally, how are CMO roles designed? More insight on the specific roles of different architects (CEOs, CHROs, ERs, etc.) and how they may vary can help augment the conceptual framework. 3. In what ways is CMO Role Design impacted by that of other C-level roles (CEO, CFO, etc.)? 4. More generally, what are the characteristics and attributes of firms, CEOs, and ERs that are better able to design aligned CMO roles? As an example, are CEOs with marketing/sales experience and ERs with former marketing experience better equipped to design aligned CMO roles? 5. From the empirical study findings, what causes some CMO roles to be designed with a narrower or broader scope of responsibility? For example, is it because of CEO or board beliefs about what marketers are "supposed to do," the strengths and abilities of a CMO and their peers, and/or advice from ERs or CHROs? Alternatively, could it be that CEOs are assigning limited responsibilities to their CMO position because they understand and calibrate contextual contingencies (currently unknown to academic researchers) that make it appropriate to do so?
Causes of (Mis) Alignment in CMO Role Design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the specific factors that influence CMO Role Design (Mis)Alignment beyond the significant complexity associated with configuring all of the different characteristics? 2. With the high incidence of CMO Role Design misalignment, are there additional patterns that help distinguish firms with aligned CMO roles from those that are misaligned? For example, does functional representation on the board of directors have any impact? Or the CEO's prior experience? Or the ER firm or specific executive recruiter's experience? Or the CHRO? Or the CMO? All of these individuals may play a part in designing roles, so understanding their individual and collective impact can be instrumental 3. ERs are paid to create aligned CMO roles, so why are ERs struggling to help CEOs and CMOs do so? Has this always been the case? Why does it seem to be less challenging for other C-level roles? 4. What are the mental models that ERs use to create CMO roles? Are there any best practices that can be identified through testing?
Consequences of CMO Role Design (Mis)Alignment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are additional consequences of CMO Role Design (Mis)Alignment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does CMO Role Design impact CMO turnover, CMO satisfaction, brand equity, marketing department power, CEO/board satisfaction with a CMO, and objective measures of performance such as sales growth and goal accomplishment? • How does CMO Role Design (Mis)Alignment impact CMO performance that ultimately affects outcomes? For example, does it impact strategic decisions, the way CMOs structure the department or lead the organization, or the way in which they engage and work with peers, CEO, and/or the board?

marketing capability. Yet many CMO roles have a narrower responsibility set, which we show requires appropriately experienced CMOs and aligned role status to leverage into positive outcomes. Further, the research highlights the deleterious effects of low status. ERs specializing in C-level marketing placements need to be able to: (1) articulate the key aspects of role design and explain the role configuration options; (2) ask the right questions of CEOs to elicit needed information regarding optimal role design and influence CEO decisions (and provide “push back” when necessary); and (3) assess the degree of fit between the position, candidates, and context.

For CMOs, our research suggests that when interviewing for jobs, they should seek to understand the role characteristics and relevant contextual factors. More specifically, they should understand a position’s responsibilities and question how well these fit their own experience. Importantly, given the impact of low status, they must also understand the relative status (and other contextual factors) allocated to the role and negotiate to drive alignment. If the role is not well-defined or alignment with their own experience is not obvious, then they should seek to proactively propose and negotiate the CMO role responsibilities to ensure such alignment. If the responsibilities cannot be adjusted to suit the candidate’s experience, then it may be prudent to look for positions elsewhere.

Limitations and future research agenda

There are important limitations that should be taken into account when considering the new conceptual model and initial empirical results. First, in terms of the new conceptual model, the specific position-, person-, and context-based characteristics we identify are derived from existing literature and informed by fieldwork. However, these characteristics should not be assumed to be either exhaustive or equally applicable to all circumstances. Rather, the model should be viewed as a conceptual platform, and the characteristics identified as an initial stage of theory development that may be subject to future development and refinement. Second, in terms of the initial empirical aspects of the model examined here, the interpretation of responsibility areas and experience type questions and items in our survey may vary somewhat across respondents. However, the risk to our results and their interpretation is limited because (1) these emerged from the job specs, (2) we did extensive pre-testing to ensure a common understanding, and (3) while it may create noise, it would not explain our results. Third, despite our tests and research design efforts, there remains the possibility of sample selection bias in our survey results. However, the composition of the firms and the CMOs in our results is diverse across key attributes (e.g., firm type, firm size, firm industry,

etc.), providing a degree of confidence in the sample and our ability to generalize from the data and results.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this research offers important new insights into the consequences of CMO Role Design and provides a robust platform from which to develop the next generation of CMO research. Table 10 provides a list of over 25 different questions in five categories from the CMO Role Design Conceptual Model where future research can help expand knowledge and provide greater direction for firm leaders. Specifically, key categories include identifying additional characteristics to augment the conceptual model, conducting research to understand the causes and consequences of role (mis)alignment, and identifying the factors that can impact design in practice (e.g., the roles of the different players, the process by which roles are designed and job specs are crafted, and so forth).

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