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## YÜKSEK ÖĞRETİM KURUMLARINDA PAZARLAMA: GELENEKSEL VE DİJİTAL PAZARLAMA

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### Özet

Başarılı şirketler, üniversiteler gibi, pazarlama stratejilerine ve faaliyetlerine, karşılanmayan ihtiyaç ve istekleri belirlemek, belirlenen pazarın ölçülerini ve miktarlarını belirlemek ve kar potansiyelini belirlemek için daha fazla önem vermektedirler. Üniversitelerin rekabet ortamında rekabet edebilmeleri için sürdürülebilirlik adına pazarlama faaliyetleri ve yönetimleri aracılığıyla kendilerini stratejik olarak konumlandirmaları gerekmektedir. Yüksek öğretime yatırım yapmak, gelecekte istihdam yaratmak, rekabet gücünü artırmak ve üretkenliği artırmak için çok önemlidir. Bu makale, yüksek öğrenim pazarlaması üzerine bir literatür taraması yapmakta ve yüksek öğrenim alanında geleneksel ve dijital pazarlamanın rollerini belirlemektedir. Geleneksel ve dijital pazarlama ve bunların yüksek öğrenim pazarlaması üzerindeki etkileri hakkındaki akademik literatürü araştırır, okur, analiz eder ve özetler. Kullanılan tüm araştırma makaleleri, hakemli dergilerden alınmıştır ve Web of Science, EBSCO, Scopus, Emerald, Google Scholars ve Science Direct gibi çeşitli güvenilir veritabanlarından alınmıştır.

**Anahtar Kavramlar:** Geleneksel, Dijital, Şirket, Yüksek Öğrenim, Pazarlama.

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## **MARKETING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MARKETING**

### **Abstract**

Successful companies, as well as universities, pay more attention to their marketing strategies and activities to identify unfulfilled needs and desires, define the measures and quantities of the identified market, and determine its profit potential. Universities must position themselves strategically through marketing activities and management for sustainability to compete in the competitive environment. Investing in higher education is essential to creating future employment, promoting competitiveness, and enhancing productivity. This paper explores a literature review on higher education marketing and identifies the roles of traditional and digital marketing in the area of higher education. It searches, reads, analyzes, and summarizes academic literature on traditional and digital marketing and their impact on higher education marketing. All used research articles were from peer-reviewed journals and were taken from various reliable databases, such as Web of Science, EBSCO, Scopus, Emerald, Google Scholars, and Science Direct.

**Keywords:** Traditional Marketing, Digital Marketing, Higher Education Marketing.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Every company has to choose between two paths: continuously growing and being a leader in the existing industry, or facing challenges and disappearing in the existing market. The reason for disappearing in the existing industry/market is management failure (Levitt, 1960, 45). Successful companies pay more attention to their marketing strategies and activities. Therefore, proper understanding and skillful usage of marketing is effective in identifying the unfulfilled needs and desires, defining the measures and quantities of the identified market and its profit potential (Kotler, 2019).

Developing and improving higher education is the key to higher living standards. Investing in education means investing in knowledge creation and its dissemination through a society that creates future employment, promotes competitiveness, and enhances productivity (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 84). As the education services are getting improved, it is going to be very hard for universities to survive in the competitive environment. This is why the way universities will position themselves strategically through marketing activities and management for sustainability will become very crucial in order to be able to compete (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 174).

It is very important for universities to analyze and determine the target market, the group of aims, the requirements of the target group, and the best way to communicate with the group

of targets (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 176). They also have to think about their brand equity and how to strengthen it in the local and international markets (Royo-Vela and Hünernmund, 2016, 160). In order to keep their place in the marketplace and be in competitive shape, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) "bombard" students with emails containing information about the rankings of the universities, their place in the top ranking, best offers, top programs, etc. (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 194).

This paper has two objectives: to explore a literature review on higher education marketing and to identify the roles of traditional and digital marketing in the area of higher education. A literature review was chosen as a research method in this paper. To understand the research topic, a detailed review of academic literature was searched, read, analyzed, and summarized. The articles that dealt with traditional marketing and digital marketing and their impact on higher education marketing were evaluated and summarized. All used research articles were from peer-reviewed journals and were taken from various reliable databases, such as Web of Science, EBSCO, Scopus, Emerald, Google Scholars, and Science Direct. Studies from famous researchers in marketing, especially Kottler's "father of modern marketing" papers, were cited in this paper. To prove the idea in the study, some theoretical background related to the topic was also mentioned.

## **2. MARKETING AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Officially or unofficially, organizations and people do collaborate in various activities or events that can be called marketing (Kottler and Keller, 2012, 27). Based on the definition given by the American Marketing Association (2017), it can be noted that: the term "marketing" is the combination of activities, sets of institutions, and processes collected into one whole package in order to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange valuable offers for customers, partners, and society.

The term "marketing" has social and managerial definitions, which are very important in order to understand it. By the social definition, it means the role of marketing in society and the way individuals and groups obtain their demands or requirements through designing, suggesting, and exchanging with others the services and products of their values (Kottler and Keller, 2012, 27). Kotler (2019), the "father of modern marketing" and professor emeritus, defines the term "marketing" as a combination of science and art which explores, creates, and delivers values in order to satisfy the target market and make a profit from it at the same time.

According to Levitt (1960, 45), companies have to decide between two options: overcoming obstacles and remaining in the current market; or continuing to grow and becoming a leader in the industry. Failure in management is the cause of the industry's or market's disappearance. The proper understanding and skillful usage of marketing is effective in identifying

the unfulfilled needs and desires, defining the measures and quantities of the identified market and its profit potential (Kotler, 2019). Managers should conduct a broad investigation of the existing industry in order to define opportunities for growth as well as customer desires and needs (Levitt, 1960, 51). Generally, marketing managers are responsible for preparing the marketing strategies for the companies that are suitable for their requirements. They also should use accurate market segmentation and product differentiation as a part of marketing activities in order to be successful (Smith, 1995, 65) in the market.

It is accepted that marketing is a combination of an art and science when it comes to find creative solutions for the complex problems and challenges especially in the 21st century (Kottler and Keller, 2012, 43). Kotler (2019) defines five key processes of the Marketing:

- Opportunity identification;
- New product development;
- Customer attraction;
- Customer retention and loyalty building;
- Order fulfillment.

He mentions that any company handling these 5 aspects/processes appropriately will taste and enjoy the success while failure in any of these 5 processes will lead the company down without any chances to survive.

Referring to Kotler and Keller (2012, 31) considerations, there are five concepts that the marketing activities of the companies are conducted. These concepts are: the production concept, the product concept, the selling concept, the marketing concept, and the holistic marketing concept. They consider marketing and holistic concepts the core of the marketing concept, and these concepts are used by most organizations today. They define the marketing concept as the way of success in order to achieve the company/organizational goals is to be more effective than the competitors in creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer values to the target markets. They define the holistic marketing concept as everything matters in marketing and an integrated perspective is often necessary. It is based on the development, design, and implementation of marketing programs, processes, and activities (Kottler and Keller, 2012, 43).

Kottler and Keller (2012, 27) in their study mention that there are ten main types of entities which are mainly marketed by the world's marketers: services, goods, events, people, experiences, places, organizations, ideas, information, and properties. In our days, entities called services are more popular among companies than other services. In terms of services, they mean hotels, accountants, lawyers, management consultants, software programmers, etc. HEIs are one of them.

According to Lukic and Lukic (2016, 196), marketing is generally associated with business, but HEIs as non-profit organizations use it as well due to faculty competition. HEIs do not exist to make a profit, and its characteristics related to the service area apply to HEIs because HEIs are service entities (Nicolescu, 2009, 37). According to Ramachandran (2010, 544), marketing theories that are used in business areas cannot be used in HEIs because the HEI area is a unique place where the environment is free and self-contained. He also mentions that if marketing techniques from the business area are applied in HEIs, then students' rights can be violated and relationships between institutions and students can be badly affected.

Developing and improving higher education is the key to higher living standards. Investing in education means investing in knowledge creation and its dissemination through a society that creates future employment, promotes competitiveness, and enhances productivity (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 84). Schüller and Chalupský (2011, 1316) refer to Kotler and Fox to define education marketing as a program that is carefully analyzed, planned, implemented, and controlled to bring about value exchanges to achieve organizational goals with a target market.

Service industries are mainly customer-oriented. This aspect requires the providers of higher education to be highly responsive to the preferences and demands of diverse students and be aware of the expectations of major stakeholders looking for social benefit realizations (Uncles, 2018, 188). As education services are improving, it is going to be very hard for universities to survive in the competitive environment. This is why the way universities will position themselves strategically through marketing activities and management for sustainability will become very crucial in order to be able to compete (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 173). In order to be successful in the competitive environment, management of HEIs must pay attention to marketing. As proof of this, we can see that the marketing departments occupy unique positions in the organizational structures of the HEIs (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 85).

It is very important for universities to analyze and determine the target market, the group of aims, the requirements of the target group, and the best way to communicate with the group of targets (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 176). Before writing and developing marketing strategies for HEIs, marketers should identify the terms "customer" and "product" in HE (Zaksa, 2012, 1509). Discussion about the customers of HEIs was mainly active in the 1990s, and there were two approaches: students as a customer and employers and their companies as a customer (Schüller and Chalupský, 2011, 1316). Zaksa (2012, 1509-1510) in his paper identifies the role of students as citizens of society as well as the university, coproducer, client, customer, partner, and product. He mentions that some researchers argue that students are customers of the universities, others deny this approach and explain that not always students' rights are defended by the institutions.

Universities today are competing for students as well as for their position in the marketplace (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 195). They have to think about their brand equity and how to strengthen it in the local and international markets (Royo-Vela and Hünermund, 2016, 160). In order to keep their place in the marketplace and be in competitive shape, HEIs "bombard" students with emails containing information about the rankings of the universities, their place in the top ranking, best offers, top programs, etc. (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 180).

Students try to be very attentive and careful when making a decision about the courses and institutions where they want those courses to be taught (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 85). In order to fulfill the courses, the universities also make offers to satisfy students' needs (Ivy, 2008, 289). Some students are influenced in their university choices because of the academic staff of the university, which means that the administrative and academic staff of the universities play a very important role both on the front line and behind the scenes (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 189). Since the decision-making process is so hard and takes time, the universities/HEIs keep up with each other in order to recruit skilled students, relying on marketing strategies (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 85).

Omboi and Mutali (2011, 177) mention that marketing units should step into the lives of prospective students since the very early stages of planning to make a choice about the institution where they will study. They note that the information shared by the institutions helps students identify an appropriate program to study and the benefits of it. This is why the shared information should be carefully checked by both the institution and the students in order to help each other and understand the advantages, benefits, and future potential of the chosen program.

Samaddar and Menon (2019, 89) write in their article that in order to promote the HEIs, two significant factors, namely, collaborative learning and digital innovation, should be utilized. According to them, collaborative learning develops students' leadership, critical thinking and self-management skills as well as digital innovation, such as online learning, which helps attract skilled young people.

Omboi and Mutali (2011, 179) explain in their paper the steps of a model of the college selection process for institutions. The first stage is search behavior, in which institutions have to know when prospective students start to search for useful information about the programs and how they can put together detailed information about their offers. The second stage is the application stage. At this stage, students submit their applications to selected institutions, and institutions should deal with the applications as quickly as possible and the registration to keep prospective students happy. The third stage is choice decision, in which prospective students choose one institution among other institutions, and in this stage the institutions have to be very careful and attentive in order to keep contact with the students, answering their questions

carefully and in detailed form, which is very helpful in creating a psychological bond between the institutions and prospective students. The last stage is registration.

After being at the institutions, there are 2 very common situations that occur with the prospective students: 1) they do enjoy being there and are happy with their choices; and 2) they turn the offer down. In order to eliminate the possibility of the second case (offer turned down), the institutions provide some activities such as freshmen's week with several support services to understand and determine the needs of the students.

Study programs, strategies for student recruitment, communication strategies, and other aspects of higher education marketing are researched by scholars and several methods such as marketing mix are applied for the development of marketing strategies (Sarkane Sloka, 2015, 76). The term "marketing mix" itself is the set of controllable tools used by institutions in order to produce a response from various target markets (Ivy, 2008, 289). 4P marketing (price, product, promotion, and place) was first studied in 1989 by Noble K. and Binsardi, who first used it in an HE context in order to attract international students to British universities (Zaksa, 2012, 1512). In the HE sector, Kotler and Fox (1997, cited by Zaksa, 2012, 1512) define the marketing mix as follows: price, place, product, people, market positioning, and promotion. The service sectors use the 7Ps approach to satisfy customers, which is the combination of terms: physical facilities, process, people, product, promotion, place, and price (Ivy, 2008, 289).

To do marketing effectively and efficiently in HEIs, researchers suggest several marketing mix approaches such as 4 Ps (product, price, promotion, and place) and 4 Cs (consumer, cost, communication, and convenience) (Sarkane and Sloka, 2015, 76). Researchers added other 4Ps generally related to the product groups, and researchers added other 3Ps for the service groups: people, processes, and physical evidence (Zaksa, 2012, 1512). Universities use the four Ps to increase program enquiries, applications, and enrollments, but the seven Ps marketing mix approach is more applicable to MBA programs than other marketing mix approaches (Ivy, 2008, 297).

HEIs also need an innovative curriculum to satisfy the requirements and demands of current learners (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 87). Marketers have to make decisions in an internet-fulfilled environment where all the aspects of marketing keep changing rapidly (Kottler and Keller, 2012, 524).

### **3. TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MARKETING IN HEIs**

In our day, HEIs should have a good level of marketing in order to be successful. So what can be noted surely is that "good marketing" is the result of detailed and careful planning and execution where the state-of-the-art tools and techniques are applied professionally (Kottler and

Keller, 2012, 25). Using the market effectively in HEIs is gaining popularity because HEIs are changeable and HE marketing changes depending on the number and quality of the students, provided services, etc., based on the marketing policies of the institutions (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 90).

There is a huge demand for HEIs now as the global middle class is expanding and the number of young adults is increasing (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 87). To be successful in marketing, one must make a firm decision about the specifics of new products or services, such as production and service prices, the amount of budget dedicated to advertising, sales, Internet, or mobile marketing (Kottler and Keller, 2012, 26). While marketing in the higher education sector is quite common now with its increasingly important role in student recruitment (Ivy, 2008, 288). Due to the rapid globalization and development of new technologies, marketers are able to use numerous communication options for marketing (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 174).

The present education system provided by the HEIs prepares the graduates with crucial values and knowledge and makes them capable of critical thinking and decision making while motivating them to deal with diverse problems (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 87). Prospective students are very important for universities, and this is why there are several types of MC tools used in order to attract prospective students, such as: open door days, education fairs and exhibitions, direct mailing, etc., that help universities to be in contact with future students, inform them and persuade the prospective students to select their institutions (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 186).

There are various marketing strategies. Traditional and digital marketing are two of them. Traditional marketing mainly focuses on selling the products to the customers by using the 4Ps and product brand (Hollensen, 2010, 122), and tries to attract the customers' attention (Todor, 2016, 54); however, customers are not well-informed and less knowledgeable about the products/services (Hollensen, 2010, 124). In traditional marketing, players are independent, the market is clearly defined and unchangeable (Hollensen, S., 2010, 404).

The following communication tools are used in traditional HE marketing: TV, radio, newspapers, printed materials for advertisements (posters, brochures, billboards, and flyers), business cards, conferences, face-to-face meetings, and letters. One of the tools of traditional marketing is television advertising, on which marketers have spent a large portion of their budget (Kumar et al., 2017, 272) in order to promote their programs, achievements, and activities to attract customers. In the past, this kind of advertisement was very effective, but nowadays it is not as effective as it was. However, newspaper advertising can be effective these days if readers of it are targeted (Geraghty and Conway, 2016, 2).



Traditional marketing also has advantages and disadvantages. Todor (2016, 54-55) defines the following advantages of traditional marketing: 1) results are faster; 2) to exist for a long time; and 3) it is more trusted than digital marketing. He also defines the disadvantages of traditional marketing: 1) results is difficult to measure; 2) it is more expensive; 3) it is static; 4) it is time-consuming; 5) individuals cannot be targeted; and 6) complex pricing cannot be offered.

There are a lot of developments and improvements, such as: technology, online institutions, open source classrooms, and virtual campuses, that occurred in the educational system that these changes caused to apply the students' demand based model (Samaddar and Menon, 2019, 87). In their paper, Mazurek et al. (2019, 118) mention three levels of using social media in HEIs:

Operational level (to promote image, brand, customer services and to communicate with media users);

Tactical level (to use internet to gain customers); and

Strategic level (to take all advantages from network)

Technological development has affected the communication between prospective and current students and institutions. Along with websites and e-mail communications, institutions also actively use different social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, in order to inform students about the news regarding universities quickly (Zaksa, 2012, 1508). HEIs use the following social media platforms to achieve their organizational goals: social networks (Facebook); online video sharing (YouTube); photo sharing (Instagram); applications for online publishing (Snapchat); blogging (Twitter); networks for professional business (LinkedIn); and online forums and chatting groups (Mazurek et al., 2019, 121). HEIs marketers or management of the institutions can choose what kind of social media tool is suitable for them to reach their target group.

The promotion of products and services innovatively by the usage of distribution channels based on databases in order to reach the consumers and customers in a timely as well as personal and cost-effective manner is accepted both theoretically and practically as Digital Marketing (Wsi, 2013 cited by Todor, 2016, 52). It is also called online or internet marketing, and its main goal is to promote brands, frame preferences, and increase sales through various techniques (Todor, 2016, 52). Digital marketing techniques include social media, internet based newspapers, blogs, online platforms, etc.

Digital marketing has advantages and disadvantages as well. Todor (2016, 52) defines the following advantages: 1) low cost; 2) interactive with customers; 3) Empowering effect; 4) vast audience; 5) duration is permanent; 6) interacts with customers; 7) rich content; 8)

measures easily; 9) easily adaptable and 10) individuals can be targeted. Todor (2016, 52) also defines the disadvantages of digital marketing: 1) can be easily copied by competitors; 2) depends on network; 3) products are untouchable; 4) online payment; 5) users lack of trust; 6) fake customers; 7) age limited target groups; and 8) depend of technology.

Currently, HEIs use both traditional and digital marketing in order to promote their universities and attract talented students. When we compare traditional and digital marketing, we can say that universities should invest more in digital marketing than traditional marketing. Traditional marketing can be effective in attracting local people, but via digital marketing, universities can reach an unlimited audience locally as well as internationally. On the other hand, using digital marketing is less expensive than using traditional marketing tools such as printing and advertising on TV or radio, which are expensive, time-consuming, and less effective. Along with their websites, universities can also use some social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to promote their activities and achievements free of charge.

Moreover, in traditional marketing, there is a one-way communication method that prevents interaction between universities and their customers, but digital or social marketing uses a two-way communication method that allows customers to share their feedback and demands with the universities. At the same time, universities gather useful information about customers' demands, receive complaints and compliments about their services, and eliminate the problems they face immediately.

The effect of the internet will be so supreme that some scholars even predict that the internet will bring the death of traditional marketing functions (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 198). Even marketers know that the adoption of social media decreases the power of the traditional market and reduces their control of media and communication processes (Constantinides and Stagno, 2012, 43). Therefore, universities should pay more attention to digital marketing while preparing their strategies.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

Marketing has demonstrated its importance in public, private, and nonprofit organizations (Quelch and Jocz, 2008, 836). The institutional management pays more attention to the marketing strategies and activities and employs experienced and skilled marketers. However, marketing needs more independence and finance in order to act. Universities, like business organizations, should accept the marketing department as a strategic partner, collect information about the changes inside the country as well as in the world, and analyze their performance. Marketing departments should have their own budget and they have to spend it in the right direction in order to achieve planned results. University management should periodically audit its

opportunities, goals, and resources in order to deal with unexpected problems and challenges and improve its communication channels with target groups (Kotler and Levy, 1969, 14).

With the help of Web-based platforms, people's social behaviors change from the real world to the virtual one. Most customers of public, private, and nonprofit organizations prefer to get information through the internet, so universities have to be more active in using social media. And also, if they want to create a sustainable corporation with customers and earn more profit, they should launch a Web-based strategy (Tiago and Veríssimo, 2014, 704). Although both traditional and digital marketing strategies are used in HEIs, the effect of the internet will bring the death of the traditional marketing functions (Omboi and Mutali, 2011, 182). Adoption of social media decreases the traditional market power of marketers and reduces their control over media and communication processes (Constantinides and Stagno, 2012, 43). Therefore, universities should invest more in digital marketing than traditional marketing.

As it was mentioned before, HEIs are facing challenges in the digital world due to high competition and technological development. In order to survive, HEIs should pay more attention to social media marketing, especially innovative social media marketing, in order to attract their target groups. Paladan (2018, 160) in his study finds that the majority of the top 25 universities in Asia and Africa use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube for their digital and social media marketing. They use digital and social marketing for HEIs to market their programs and give information about events and research. Additionally, most HEIs are using website design and interface as an essential factor on how to present themselves to potential students.

Despite the valuable contributions of scholars such as Kotler, Smith, Ivy, and Levitt to the marketing field, there are several topics that need to be researched more deeply, especially traditional marketing. Due to the lack of literature, marketing of the HEIs also needs to be researched. Existing literature is not coherent and theoretical models for specific contexts are lacking (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006, 316). More research needs to be conducted related to the social media marketing of HEIs, which will help universities establish their general marketing and digital marketing strategies. Also, it is suggested to conduct research on the relationship between traditional and digital marketing in HE and how HEIs marketing has been changed during and after Covid-19.

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