

THE ROLE OF MARKETING IN THE EDUCATION'S PROCESS

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Over time, marketing has become a propelling factor in any field of human activity, being also a primary tool in achieving the objectives of an organization. Identifying the main strategies in correlation with the marketing mix and its application on easy terms is a premise for each organization to achieve their targets. The essential objectives of the study are: 1). presenting the main functions of education, the role of marketing in education, 2) highlighting the main features of the education market in Romania; 3). presentation of the main strategies used by educational institutions in Romania; 4). application of marketing mix in education.

Keywords: marketing, marketing mix, education, strategy.

Cod JEL lucrare: M31

The functions and the role of educational marketing

Philip Kotler, regarded by many specialists in this field, “the father of modern marketing”, believes that, in general terms, marketing must be seen as “human activity orientated in the direction of satisfy the needs and wishes through exchange processes.”⁸⁴⁰ The single term, "marketing" means a combination of methods, techniques and tools which analyze the market, explores the market's factors in order to adapt supply and it can represents a new optic regarding the reality of life, the practice, is more precisely a new way of life. Based on the variety of definitions of marketing concept and extend it in areas of activity is emerging the concept of “non-profit marketing.” Non-profit marketing concerns different fields, so that, together with social marketing, green marketing, health marketing, cultural and sports marketing can be also the educational marketing. The educational marketing aims “the marketing application service”⁸⁴¹ and enjoys the attention of regarding the individual training objectives.

The role of educational marketing is to:

- investigate the market, its definition and understanding and identifying potential consumers of goods and services;
- providing appropriate products and services to customer's needs at the time, place and right price;
- providing customers with optimal, quality and reputation educational services;
- attracting consumers by targeting their needs and aspirations intuition.

The educational marketing has several functions, namely:

- research of the market by trying to find the main consumers of education;
- marketing's policies linking the main requirements of the education market;
- adapting education's services to the needs, expectations and demands of consumers for products and educational services;
- promoting optimal efficient management, using materials and information resources in order to achieve the main objectives set.

The education market in Romania has the following characteristics:

⁸⁴⁰ vezi Philip Kotler, „Principles of Marketing”, Third Edition, Prentice Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1986, p.4.

⁸⁴¹ A. Novak, „Marketingul educațional –Cercetări de marketing privind satisfacerea cererii de educație”, Teză de doctorat, ASE, București,p.20.

- Is a complex market which is facing two distinct segments, such as supply and demand.
- The offer is unique (a place in the classroom, a teacher, a certain hour of the day, etc.).
- The demand for products and educational services may be small or too high, or vary irregularly.
- Education services market depends on the number of consumers of information, which may be, on the one hand, environmental agents in the economy, and secondly those who attend educational training.

Concrete marketing strategies for educational institutions

Strategy is a plan that an organization should use to successfully meet the objectives and proper use of elements of a marketing strategy enables long-term development of organization's business environment. A firm, and hence an educational institution can develop activities that take one or more of the following policy options⁸⁴²: it can penetrate existing markets with existing services, they can develop services through the introduction of services on existing markets, can expand the market by attracting new customer segments, or it can diversify their activity by offering new products in new markets.

The educational marketing mix

A reputed educational specialist, MJ Baker appreciated that the marketing mix "is one of the oldest and most useful marketing concepts"⁸⁴³. The concept of "marketing mix" occupies the central place in the concerns of an organization and it is able to successfully meet market objectives pursued. Marketing mix is an effective tool in guiding the work of an organization, more specifically, is the key "to open all the gates of success."

There is some controversy about the number of typical components that make up the marketing mix: product, price, promotion and placement. They are often called the four P, which correspond to the four C's customer: the call, its cost, convenience in purchasing and communication. Although interesting, these proposals come from prestigious personalities of the field: Valerie Zeithmal, Mary Jo Bitner, Adrian Payne, Christopher Lovelock, Peter Eiglier, etc. and they are not yet sufficiently convincing. They reflect the efforts by each author in part towards highlighting features of the area. Thus, for a better knowledge and understanding of marketing education we have used the model, "4P" because it gives the most important tool for marketing mix analysis in education.

Product policy

We all wonder about the product and try to find out what is a product. Ph. Kotler defines the product as, "something that can be offered to the market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption in order to satisfy a desire or a need"⁸⁴⁴. This product category includes intangible items, services, people, places, organizations and ideas. Product policy in the field of education includes many actions and through them the educational institutions makes their goals, performs their activities that are based on choosing effective strategies used to adopt the necessary measures in education.

Defining educational product can be viewed from two viewpoints. First, the product can be represented by pupils or students who are actually "placed" to the traders on the labor market. Secondly, the product can be described as a wide range of services provided by schools, colleges or universities, to the pupils or students. The services provided are lectures, seminars, applied activities, specifically, may include all activities carried out by teachers in the education process.

In all the fields are new trends and changes occurring. And also can occur new knowledge in education, the new generations of students, emphasizing the idea that nothing disappears, everything turns and evolves. "The life" of a product in education is not limited, and it enriches and develops gradually. The consumers want products that can offer certain quality standards, which have an absolute or relative novelty, and which are performing. For this reason, the organizations should work towards continuous improvement of the product.

Price policy

⁸⁴² Vezi Valerică Olteanu, „Marketingul serviciilor. Ediția aII-a”, Capitolul 6, p.159.

⁸⁴³ Vezi Michael J. Baker, „Marketing”, Ed. S.C. Știință și Tehnică S.A., București, 1996, p.64.

⁸⁴⁴ Philip Kotler, „Principiile Marketingului”, Editura Teora, București, 1998, p.653.

In the economic literature, the price is the sum of all the values that “the consumers” offered in exchange to have or use the product or service.⁸⁴⁵ The price is a complex variable, and is influencing the variable of product, promotion and placement. In education "price" means the students or school fees that they must pay. According to the definition of DEX, the fee is the amount of money payable to an institution in exchange for services rendered or of certain rights. The issue of training fees in education services has led a number of concerns of specialists in the field.

In the literature review are outlined six steps, that should be covered by an educational institution when sets the fees:

- carefully determining market targets;
- to analyze the structure and dynamics of demand;
- to identify the costs and services;
- to identify and analyze major competitors' prices;
- to use a method for defining and determining the prices;
- establish the final price efficiently and correctly.

A series of internal and external factors, are guiding decisions of educational institutions in setting fees (tariffs). The key factors are: marketing objectives, marketing strategy, costs, organization-setting fees, demand, the prices and offers of competitors, economic conditions, legal framework, the government measures, etc.

The student is the one, who pays a fee in order to acquire knowledge and information provided by any educational institution. He changes the value (money) to another value (benefits of using the product). The claim, “Essential is the value, not the price” (Robert T. Lindgren), explains, metaphorically, that what is valuable is invaluable. The value is observed best in education. The school forms people with great potential, with special moral capacity. To pay a price for being a true man is impossible. Indeed, “Essential is the value, not the price.”

Distribution policy

In the field of education the distribution process refers to:

- the information offices, where the messages are received and where the student gets explicit information. These information offices are even the secretariats schools;
- placing graduates in enterprises. According to some polls, due to economic instability and weaknesses of the educational system, about 40% of graduates are intending to leave the country to achieve professional. Of course, immigration would bring them the salary that in Romania would probably never have.

Is urgently needed an in-depth reform of the entire education system. The Romanian education should be oriented towards the organization, a process that may trigger mechanisms such modern Romanian society to move towards modernization and a rising trend.

Promotion Policy

Promotion, as part of the marketing mix, expresses “the combination of action and media that attracts potential buyers to the selling points in order to meet their needs and desires and thus increasing the efficiency of economic activity of the producing company.”⁸⁴⁶ Promotion has a primary role, namely, in informing the market and the consumer. An effective promotion can create a prestigious image of the company in the minds of potential consumers. For this reason, to convince customers that the products or services offered by an organization are of a superior quality than the competitive products and services, are used promotional instruments in conjunction with an effective communication between manufacturer and customer.

In field of education are identified three major types of promotion:

- advertising, using television, radio, press;

⁸⁴⁵ Philip Kotler, „Principiile Marketingului”, Editura Teora, București, 1998, p. 773.

⁸⁴⁶ D. Patriche, „Marketing industrial”, Editura Expert, București, 1994, p.215.

-public relations: outdoor events, organizing exhibitions, symposiums, scientific communication sessions;

-A special place occupies the printed publicity like: brochures, letters, Christmas cards. There are also objects like: pens, pencils, bags, key rings, badges, garments which have printed the name and emblem of the educational institution.

To highlight the role of education in the life of a student from a Romanian University was made a questionnaire that was distributed to students of that institution.

Analysis and interpretation of questionnaire results led to the following conclusions:

-The image is formed and we can say it tends to be favorable. The students of this university appreciate the fact that the university's labs are equipped with powerful computers and they agree with the interior of the university.

-In this study, the activity of teachers is generally favorable. The University's professors show their interest in both the educational process and the students' problems.

-On classroom conduct, summarizes information received from students, is a clear fact that the documentation is determined to be favorable.

-Is very important the work of university teaching staff, and also the work of non-teaching staff. The university's information office, specifically the university secretariat provides clear and timely information required by students.

In the future, this university has to adopt a strategy to attract potential students. Students should be aware of the benefits brought by instruction and educational activities of university in their life.

"Everybody as "consumers" of science (or technical) should be aware not only with what is new and effective in this area, but also with what is valid and beneficial to a man"⁸⁴⁷. The school of tomorrow doesn't want to be a school of intelligences, or technology. The future school will teach the pupil or the student how to cope with various demands of life. The teachers should continuously contribute to educating and training young generation in the spirit of passion for everything new and valuable in science, culture, education, technique.

Conclusion

Today marketing is often present around us. Throughout this paper we have tried to emphasize the main aspects that refer to the application of marketing in education, in relation to the marketing mix. Educational marketing mix is a combination of four variables (product, price, distribution and promotion) that are also presented in the paper, with clear connections highlighting the role of marketing in education. Using marketing mix elements can accurately determine and implement the main objectives of the organization. Location and function of each component in all marketing mix clearly stand out the main practical issues relating to educational marketing.

The education, seen as a complex way of actions made and applied in a continuous way by educational managers is focusing on modeling communication skills of the consumers of educational services, training and promoting them.

The quality of education depends to a large extent to the quality teaching education conditions, to the quality of teachers involved in this continuous and complex process like education.

Education's consumers are represented in education by students or pupils. They want to satisfy their various needs of knowledge, information, affirmation, and for that they must take part to the education process. The pupils or students motivated by the feeling of creativity are "buying" educational products offered by schools. The teachers wine the needs of pupils or students with information that are offered throw teaching.

An important aspect that must be mentioned is the one relating to marketing policy which has a decisive role in education. The marketing policy adopted in the general education system is trying to adapt education to the work of economic dynamism in the contemporary context. An education reform should

⁸⁴⁷ vezi Constatntin Cucoş, „Pedagogie. Ediția aII-a revăzută și adăugită”, Editura Polirom, București, 2006, p. 215.

take into account both the requirements outlined as internal marketing as well as the external marketing in education.

Student-teacher relationship in the learning process is a prerequisite of interactive marketing education. The teachers who have teaching skills, pedagogical tact and the receptive, attentive students with a capacity to assimilate new and valuable knowledge are the two basic ingredients of educational marketing. The lack of education makes it impossible to conduct the process. In conclusion, the process of education should be regarded as an essential factor for economic and social development.

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