Effective Marketing At Education: Importance of Communication Materials[1]

Remziye Terkan
Department of Public Relations,
Faculty of Communication, Girne American University,
Kyrenia, Northern Cyprus. Email: remziyeterkan@gau.edu.tr

ABSTRACT: Written and visual communications are effective for people in every area. Importance of communication materials has recently understood fast and written and visual communication materials are effective also in marketing. They are like impressive tools and also they are influential for every organization even in higher education in the world. The significance of written and visual communication materials in educational institutions is evaluated in tis study. The role and importance of visual and written materials in marketing process of education sector and its relation with communication materials effectiveness on educational institutions achievement is investigated.

Keywords: Communication; marketing; communication materials
JEL Classifications: M31

1. Introduction

Communication is production and exchange of meanings verbally, as well as via visual and written materials. Locke (1990:2) explained communication as "the practice of social relationships" to emphasis on the significance of social relationships. Communication is set of social acts and with no doubt; via the results of these social acts some social gains are also obtained. These social gains which are symbolized, plays an important role in social process of everyday lives. Moreover, Bıçakçı (2006:17) mentioned that communication "is the process of transferring the message from source to receiver". This definition is focused on a one way process, where initiation of communication is dependent on the source. Sources which are accepted as starting point and cornerstone of the process are assumed as the most important point. The message, rather than what the sender sends, is communiqué which occurs when the receiver gives meaning to it. Receiver is as important as the source in the process of communication. They play effective role during the communication process, however, the way receiver interprets the message should not be ignored to guarantee the interaction within this process. As well as the purpose of sending the message, its interpretation and recognition plays an important role during the process. It is assumed that there is a cycle where messages are taken, evaluated and then sent back to the source. So two ways communication can be considered as a shared communication, and shared communication can be defined as common consensus.

It is necessary to understand the receiver's needs, wants, expectations and perception for effective communication. Sender should be able to analyze the receiver accurately, in order to define needs and wants which are required. Whenever process is established accurately, effective communication may occur dependently to both the sender and receiver. Communication is not an achieving which happens within a specific environment but via changing and developing technologies it crosses the boundaries of the countries as well. In addition to this, by the technological change and development, communication process changed in both interpersonal and inter-communal relations as well.

---

[1] An earlier version of this paper has been presented in "International Confrence on Social Sciences, Izmir, Turkey, 5-6 October 2012".

1.1. Communication, Marketing and Marketing Communication

As it is mentioned before communication is the cornerstone of every single system, which articulates every single part to each other such as education, tourism, human resources, public relations and etc.

Through this, Grunig (1992:2) explained importance of communication that "communication affects the success of organizational objectives and aims." He mentioned that effective communication and excellent public relations department make successful organizations. Thus it is possible to claim that communication is as a key for achievement of organization. It encourages the organizations to become a leader in their industry.

Communication is described as a process that affects individuals and groups attitude and behavior. Therefore, communication plays an important role in marketing. During the marketing process structure of the communication activities may change in order to influence individuals and/or groups of people. Desired goal of communication activities are to create closer relationships with individuals and groups. Needs and wants of individuals and groups can be understood easily than before by the developing technologies. So, marketing is changed dependently on preparation of accurate and effective visual and written materials.

There is a strong relationship between communication and marketing. Thus, in relating with communication, marketing communications cannot be considered separately. For every organization, marketing is as important as communication in reaching people and to make the potential consumers out of them. When organizations provide products and services to the market (commodity), these products and services accepted by the consumers through means of communication and at the same time it reflects to the marketing. Göksel et al. (1997:15) claimed that "Marketing communication is organization's efforts of describing the products and services in the market". Marketing communication is as process which explains product and services that are provided by businesses. Thus, it would not be enough to gain information via communication. Marketing communications can be considered as a persuasive communication process. Thus, create programs of marketing communication is essential in communication process.

Managers provide priority via prepare effective marketing communication programs. Marketing managers control marketing communication programs to create and sustain demand for the products and services. In addition to this, Delozier (1976:168) defined marketing communication "as a process that wakes up the desired reaction on consumer audience, change messages of business and create communication facilities, with communication channels, receive messages from market, explanation and act".

Marketing is stated as a social activity focused at satisfying needs and wants between consumers and producers through exchange processes (Kotler, 1976). Needs and wants are not stable, always changeable. Marketing activities arise parallel to the influences of communication. Therefore, effective communication is necessary to understand consumers' behavior and attitudes at their final decision making. The main point is to understand what organizations want to provide for them and to be understood. In other words analyzing people and market is necessary.

There is no unique definition of marketing. Marketing defined as actions that create teamwork between organizations and customers. Thus, organizations and customers should be defined clearly and they need to understand each other to improve communication between them. Relationship between organizations and customers may demonstrate the sustainability of life. Jefkins (1983: 2) is stated that Chartered Institute of Marketing defined marketing "as responsible from the management process to identify and to predict the needs of the consumer". Relating with these definitions, responsibility of the management for every single institution should be considered as a serious issue, thus they will be able to define their direction. Approaches of the organizations, enables managers to understand every consumer, thus to solve their problems and to understand their needs and wants. To sum up "to understand and be understood" has a central place in marketing.

1.2. Communication and Visual/Written Materials in Marketing

In every organization trying to understand the consumers' needs and wants, brings to necessity to find out the necessary tools and materials used for determining the consumer needs and wants together. Organizations, try to determine the characteristics and expectations of consumers by using different means for achieving maximum consumer satisfaction. Therefore, they can provide useful products and services to consumers.

According to Pathak (2007:252) "with visual communication, charts, graphs etc. are easily grasped and understood by the viewers and makes comparisons easy". Visual materials are as important as written materials in marketing. Consumers are affected easily by visual and written materials. Thus, these materials can be prepared carefully. Socio-cultural position of consumers' is crucial in marketing studies. Visual and written materials should be impressive and memorable and should create picture in consumers' mind.

Written and visual communication should be suitable with consumers' cultural beliefs. Whenever written and visual materials fit to consumers' culture, it would be possible to talk about accurate communication. Consumers detect and accept written and visual communication materials, if they fit to their culture. Written or visual statements should be adapted to consumers' beliefs as mentioned before.

Communication materials are effective in marketing, they are like impressive tools and they are influential for every organization even in higher education in the world. Achievement at effective marketing in education is deeply dependent on written and visual communication. The desired results can be obtained via effective marketing communication. The role of communication cannot be denied at marketing activities, identifying needs and wants to satisfy the consumer demands and expectations at individual and institutional levels. Satisfying communication is main instrument to measure marketing effectiveness. Via communication, it is possible to influence individual and groups, as well as enlighting to them about what they want to do. Hayes (2012:456) suggested that "visual materials enhance personal thinking and learning skills". Communication materials are influential at decision making process of students. Students are influenced by the materials, which may change their ideas which are already formed at choosing university to students.

1.3. Communication Materials and Technology in Marketing

Universities are consisting of different types of students. Communication materials that will be used are dependent to the peculiarities of students. Brochures, CD's, logos, DVD's, figures, colors which are prepared through the expectations of students as prepared by using new technologies are as arbitrator between universities and students. The developments in communication technology cause essential changes in communication behavior among peoples (Lo and Lie, 2008). Most important communication tools are accepted as computers after the internet has born which take place in our lives dynamically (Altun, 2006). Computer is the most used communication tool for receiving information via internet. In addition improvement of technology provides communication among peoples, organizations and different market segments of market. In education sector, universities use their CD's, catalogues, brochures, especially web sites via internet and reach to different types of students from every country today.

All communication materials, especially internet and universities web pages can be more effective to change students' behavior and attitudes. Written and visual materials of universities give an idea about their position and their achievement to students and audiences. Written and visual materials of universities enable analyzing demands of students who want to study at there. Universities are in educational sector which can be defined as a market place. Universities have to use all visual and written materials to reach their vision, because their communication materials provide and show their achievement in a market place.

Lancester and Reynolds (2002:5) defined marketing as "the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably". Every organizations which provide products and services in market, questions their benefits. In addition to this, as they are in the market, they will look for being the best and the most known for every potential customer. An institution tries to understand consumer behavior and their needs and wants to gain image.

Nowadays, communication is much easier than it was before; conditions have improved, technology has developed and provides easier and faster communication facilities throughout the world, Universities are the main users of technology for the convenience of their image and image development. Especially in last decade, the increased number of universities in the world is creating increasing the rate of competition among the world universities. Marketing concept is becoming more and more important as the rate of competition among the competition universities becomes inevitable. They have to be careful for every point of their communication and marketing. It is very essential for educational institutions to follow technological developments in order to improve them, to develop, to

satisfy their customers and to be able to compete with other universities. Thus, developed technology with using of successful materials creates recognition to customers.

Therefore, in the present study, written and visual materials are asked to high school students, who are going to be the potential students of universities.

1.4. Significance of Communication Materials in Education Sector

According to Mc Kay, Davis and Fanning (2009:1) "communication is a basic life skill, as important as the skills" communication is a basic life skill, as important as the skills by which you make your way through school or earn a living". As it is known communication is as old as history of human being.

Erdoğan and Alemdar(2010) claimed that life cannot be considered without communication. Moreover, for continuation of life, following the developments and changes, for qualified life, communication is essential as well as being important factor. They claimed necessary conditions of communication for existence of human being and to construct society. Erdoğan and Alemdar (2010:27) mentioned "people cannot sustain their life in society without communication".

As a sector of education, growth and development of an education, marketing activities with communication materials became much more important than before. Göksel et al. (1997:15) stated that "process of planning of marketing components, implementation and control for satisfy target customer, consumer and community needs for people profit". In order to understand consumers via written and visual materials, production of goods and services to fulfill expectations of consumers is crucial in the process of marketing. In education sector, visual and written materials are vital to attract students and to increase their demand for studying at the university which uses their materials wisely. Thus market share of university can be increased.

According to Yull(2007:20), "written communication has again become fashionable, especially amongst the younger generation with the added bonus of convenience, flexibility and its ability to be interactive". Yull (2007) also added that visual communication can be more interactive than other forms of communication. In effective communication; to define the target consumer via attractive visual and written materials is an significant issue. By visual materials, messages can be more understandable. Jitendra(1999:375) claimed that "visual communication is powerful and creates a greater impact and is best at communicating complex concepts". It would be much more understandable when the words expressed with charts and graphs. Because of the fact that, every single individual has different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, their perceptions may also differentiate.

In the present study is to carry out the research related with a role and importance of communication instruments and their roles for marketing effectiveness. The significance of the present study is to figure out the importance of marketing materials at education sector. Moreover, differentiation of expectations and understanding of students as audiences, and effectiveness of communication materials are analyzed.

2. Visual/Written Communication and Persuasion

Emotions and thoughts are expressed with words, shapes, colors and these are important for obviously understand of the message. Wood (2010: 95) insisted that, "words are symbols, which are arbitrary, ambiguous, abstract representations of other phenomena. For instance, house is a symbol that stands for a particular kind of building. All language is symbolic, but not all symbols are language". Words are symbol that represent feelings and thoughts. Signs, symbols, shapes and colors should be reflect the content of feeling and thoughts. Yatkın (2003:53) stated that "language plays an important role to understand and give a meaning to environment and individual own self. Here, tones, speed, intensity of voice are effective".

In addition to this, written communication was started with discovery of the writing. Aziz (2010:45) defined written communication as "written communication is transmission of the message in written symbols". There should be skills of reading, writing, and understanding of writings for communication. Written communication is done on a text or document. Yatkın (2003) stated that written communication is important for 'do not lose the contents' of the message.

According to Bıçakçı (2006:28) "today in addition to newspapers, magazines, brochures, computers have an importance in written communication". Especially, organizations are using

computers and they reaches to wide range of audiences. When they prepare their indexes, they use some common signs and symbols and effective cultural factors like color or shapes.

In education sector, institutions give an extra importance to their advertising and promotional activities in today competitive world. They are gain new audiences and increase their market share via promotional activities. O'Quinn et al. (2010) stated that promotion include advertising types, qualified salespeople, personal selling programs, sales promotion like coupons, contests, sweepstakes, trade shows, it also include activities of public relations, direct mail or telemarketing, event sponsorships and internet communications. So, promotions of institutions have a critical importance on persuade the audiences. There are lots of choices but persons select the best alternative for them. Their success is depending to their decision making and also organizations success is depend to persuasive promotions.

Persuasive promotions of organizations lead to make decisions of people in favor of the organization. On the other hand, Brock and Green (2005) identified persuasion is an indication of attitudes and opinions. Attitudes and opinions can be changed toward social events, cultural differences, organizations, individuals and products and services. Persuasion is essential at that point; decisions are directed with persuasion power.

Persuasion is occurred through a person's, groups or an organization's communicating with each other. Persuasion aim is change the system of thought peoples. O'keefe (2002:4) stated that "persuasion is ordinarily conceived of as involving influencing their mental states (rather than by somehow influencing their conduct directly)". In addition to that view, O'keefe (2002:5) added to definition of persuasion "a successful intentional effort at influencing another's mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuader has some measure of freedom". People do their decisions, and their way of attitudes and opinions are changed and specified with persuasion, this is critical in social life and also in a consumer market. Lives of individuals are specified by giving decisions which are solutions of persuasion. Organizations are responsible to inform and persuade the target audiences. They can do it via perfect communication process. As like Lamb et. al.(2011:254) have pointed out that the marketers "targeting consumers in foreign countries must also worry about the translation and possible miscommunication of their promotional messages by other cultures. Global marketers must decide whether to standardize or customize the message for each global market in which they sell".

Organizations use persuasion techniques for changing an approach of peoples. Their main aim is to make a profit and create an image. These are relevant with persuasion of people. When people are persuaded, it means organization was successful and it is preferred. Preference of organization shows the demand of people to goods and services. Thus, it could be said that communication and marketing strategy work right and organizations do the best of their promotion.

Promotion mix has a vital role at organization preferences which are public relations, advertising, personal selling and promoting sales. Activities of advertising and publicity became essential for survival of organization. Moreover, variations of cultures are also important for advertising and publicity activities. It creates people interesting and dynamic influences on consumers. Especially for education that provide a future to high school students, universities web sites and their promotional activities has a great importance in education market. Their visual and written materials must be effective and stay in their mind permanently. They have to prepared carefully that consider all different cultures and present new possibilities which are based on the reality. University should not miss for students with these visual and written materials.

3. Hypothesis and Research Method

3.1. Hypothesis

Written and visual communication materials are effective in meeting the marketing targets of higher education. Effective communication materials used for marketing purposes in higher education determines and improves the student recruitment capacity.

3.2. Research Method

In order to bring clarity to the study, forty-nine close-ended questions will be asked to 265 students at High School in Government College which is in T.R.N.C.

The questionnaire begins with six questions that deal with respondents' demographic information (gender, age, education level) the other questions have a five-point Likert Scale with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree at all will be used.

The aim is understand of student ideas about foreign high education and evaluation of foreign universities according to their visual and written communication materials.

In this study, using Likert Scale for helps analyzing the importance of the visual and written communication materials for high education and communication materials effects on students' university preferences.

3.3 Limitations

The study is limited with the one government High School College in T.R.N.C. Private Colleges was not to recognize. If it would be possible to prepare questionnaire and apply to the students in all High School Colleges (public and private) in the country, it would give more effective and reliable results.

4. Evaluation of Communication Materials by High School Students

According to the survey majority of the students were registered to Ö.S.S. with 64.5% who wish to study in Turkey after they finish high school. Only 44 students with 16.6% want to study in T.R.N.C. The other 18.9% of students do not know where they want to go to study

While deciding which university students would wish to go to, university web pages were most effective in students' choice. According to the survey, 182 out of 265 students with 68.7% agreed that web sites were effective, 170 students with 64.2% found the internet as very effective. The other communication tools like university catalogues, CD's, newspapers- magazines, TV-Radio were followed them. Results of the survey demonstrated that web pages and internet channels are most effective to attract students. They are interested in and take a decision easy. Color, design and shapes of the web sites provide effective communication. Students reach every knowledge, comments and channel with web pages and internet every time they want. Success of the university web pages make students as its part. While students search the page, they have to feel themselves that they are part of the university.

According to the survey most preferable countries are Turkey, England and America for high education. Universities of these countries promote their universities very well according to students. Students think that the universities of these countries use written and visual communication materials via their web sites more effective than other universities. Students' decisions are affected with shown success of universities in the web sites.

Reasons of preference at studying abroad are searched in the study. Out of the 265 high school students, 204 with 76.98% students stated it was the high standard of education, 30 students with 11.32% were intrigued by the social atmosphere, 11 with 4.15% students were familiar with the cultural heritage, 6 students with 2.26% stated that it was due to economic reasons and 6 with 2.26% students stated that the geographic distance was a big factor to study abroad.

According to the evaluation of the results of the survey, students' family and teachers are groups that important for students' decision for universities abroad. In addition, university representatives are third important groups for students' university decision. Thus, universities which are most preferable, their web pages prepared to think students' families. They give detailed information to families and give answers to frequently asked questions. Web sites are designed effectively and exactly they promote themselves. Visitors of the page think that the university is trustable and right education institutions for them.

Evaluation of the results of the survey, students believe universities abroad give quality education because they show their success in their web pages thus they use communication materials effectively. Demonstration, advertising and promotion of universities are successful if they are prepared effectively according to high school students.

5. Conclusion

According to the survey, students defended that effectiveness use of communication materials at universities increase student demand, thus materials affect the competition in the education market. Thus, visual and written communication materials should be attractive and comprehensive. Visual and written communication materials are crucial factors for any organization also at universities. Effectiveness of communication materials and every detail that are given by these materials opens the door to one extra student. They are like a mirror of universities and important for marketing of universities. Satisfaction and persuasion of students are the main principle of education marketing.

Thus, visual and written communication materials have to satisfy and persuade. Success of communication materials create demand and provide positioning to a university. They become preferable and known as an international university with effective materials. Therefore, visual and written communication materials have a critical importance for improvement of every university.

References

Altun, N.E. (2006). Effects of Different Types of Tasks on Junior ELT Students' Use of Communication Strategies in Computer – Mediated Communication.Unpublished Master Thesis, Boğaziçi University.

Aziz, A. (2010). İletişime Giriş. 3. Basım. İstanbul: Hiperlink yayınları.

Bıçakçı, I. (2006) İletişim ve Halkla İlişkiler. Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım. 6. Baskı. İstanbul, Kapital Medya Servisleri. MediaCat.

Brock, T.C., Green, M.C. (2005). Persuasion. Psychological Insights and Perspectives. SAGE Publications, Inc. Second Edition. U.S.A.

Delozier, M.W. (1976). The Marketing Communications Process, McGraw Hill Book Company.

Erdoğan, İ., Alemdar, K. (2010). Öteki Kuram. Ankara. Pozitif Matbaacılık.

Grunig J.E. (1992). Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. U.S.A.

Göksel, A.B., Kocabaş, F., Elden, M. (1997). Pazarlama İletişimi Açısından Halkla İlişkiler ve Reklam. Yayınevi Yayıncılık. İstanbul.

Hayes, D. (2010). Encyclopedia of Primary Education. USA and Canada. Published by Routledge.

Jefkins, F. (1983). Modern Marketing M+E Handbook Series, 2nd Edition.

Jitendra, M.D. (1999). ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT. New Delhi. Anmol Publications.

Kay, M. Mc., Davis, M. & Fanning, P. (2009). Messages The Communication Skills Book. 3rd ed.USA: New Harbinger Publications.

Kotler, P. (1976) Marketing Management, 3rd Edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice - Hall.

Lamb, C.W., Hair J.F., McDaniel, C. (2011). MKTG. What's Inside: A Student-Tested, Faculty-Approved Approach to Learning Marketing. Student Edition 5. South Western.

Lancester, G., Reynolds, P. (2002). Marketing: The One Semester Introduction. Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.

Lo, S.K., Lie, T. (2008). Selection of Communication Technologies – A Perspective Based on Information Richness Theory and Trust. Technovation, 28, 146-153.

Locke, J. (1990) Introduction to Communication Studies. 2nd edition. Published by Routledge.

O'Guinn, T.C., Allen, C.T., Semenik, R.J. (2010). PROMO.Student edition. What's Inside: A Student-Tested, Faculty-Approved Approach to Learning. Integrated Marketing Communications. South-Western. Cengage Learning.

O'keefe, D.J. (2002). Persuasion. Theory & Research. Second Edition. Sage Publications, Inc. U.S.A.

Pathak, B.V. (2007). Industrial Psychology and Sociology. 5th Edition. Pune.Published by Nirali Prakashan. Mumbai.

Wood, J.T. (2010).Communication Mosaics. An introduction to the field of communication. Sixth Edition. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Yatkın, A. (2003). Halkla İlişkiler ve İletişim. 1. Basım. Nobel Basımevi, Ankara.

Yull, S. (2007). BTEC FIRST ICT PRACTITIONERS. Oxford, UK: Published by Elsevier Ltd. Nownes.