

REMARKS ON THE MARKETING OF EDUCATIONAL NOWADAYS

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Abstract

This article examines the marketing of educational products and services based on theoretical premises of marketing as defined in the specialized literature; were also identified the main characteristics of the marketing process of the teacher-manager: knowledge, identification and initial evaluation of the students' expectations and needs of training and information. In our daily work, marketing becomes an essential element of the teacher's strategic management, influencing our decisions in the field of course design, organization, coordination and evaluation (of the academic courses).

Key words: *educational environment, marketing concepts, educational marketing*

JEL Classification: I₂₁

A social system is characterized by a permanent exchange between its members and the environment in order to maintain the balance between of production and consumption.

While in the early history of mankind the individual consumed what he produced, nowadays there is a strict specialization of producers, that is a division of labour, which triggered the birth of private property and trade.

The trade activity has continually refined. It has become an important link in the production-consumption chain. Production has to adapt to the requirements generated by needs and once the product is manufactured it has to enter the trade circuit in the most favourable way.

1. Defining marketing

The 21st century has imposed different relations between production and consumption.

The incapacity to adapt to the new type of economic relations can only lead to bankruptcy. In this context marketing has become essential for stimulating demand and supporting customers.

Marketing is a set of principles that contribute to selling of production and to satisfying customers' needs. Its main purposes are to support and assist the economic activities that direct the flows of goods and services from manufacturer to consumer, to assure the orientation of production according to the demand, to customers' needs and the achievement of profit.

Marketing also deals with the adaptation of production to the market environment so that profit should be obtained. The marketing specialist is conscious of the management's requirements, stimulates demand and intimidates competition. A high quality marketing policy is supposed to achieve goals such as: offering the right products and services to customers, assuring a wide range of products and services of the same type, assuring the right prices, at the right moment, for a quantity of products that is enough.

The specialized literature defines marketing as the art of creating the environment that should generate the customers' buying decision. Scientific techniques and methods of investigating the market and adapting production and sales to customers' needs are also part of efficient marketing strategies.

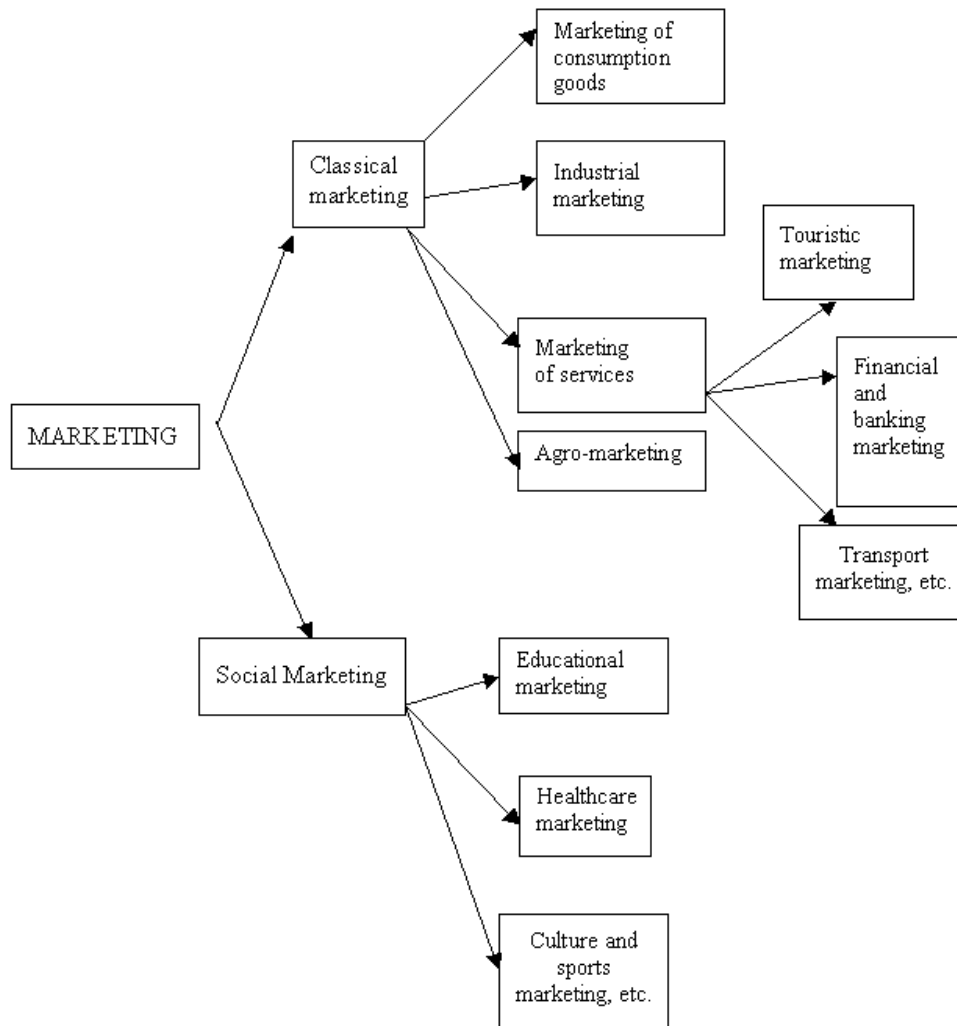
The marketing concepts and methods were first applied in the sphere of tangible goods and later in the field of services. Industrial, commercial, touristic, financial, cultural, educational, political marketing are among the most important types of marketing that have started to be used more and more creatively.

The above-mentioned classification is the result of differentiations based on the specific conditions of the different economic-social activity domains. At a concrete level, we speak about differentiation of objectives, investigations techniques and methods, market behaviour.

According to the nature of different economic activities the following categories of marketing have differentiated:

- the marketing of consumption goods is the oldest type of marketing, having nowadays the widest use and confronting with the most difficult problems. The consumption goods market is a very complex one and is becoming more and more diverse, under the influence of many factors – a situation that may generate difficulties in the process of studying and understanding its components and evolution, imposing therefore a high mobility of marketing.

- the marketing of goods for productive use (productive resources or investment goods), meant especially for industrial consumption; it is also called industrial marketing.



Source: Zaharia Razvan, *Marketing social politic*, Editura Uranus, București, 2001, p. 49.

2. Educational marketing

Pedagogical research has tried to find out students' and parents' expectations regarding education, school, educational institutions, based on which certain operational and strategic decisions may be made. The practical outcome of this is a market oriented planning, a means of developing, improving education, teachers' activity both in a pedagogical and managerial direction.

Educational marketing could be defined as a set of methods and techniques used by a supplier of educational programmes, educational organization or educational system in order to determine the receptivity (i.e. needs and motivations) of potential clients for a certain educational product or service and the promotion of an educational product or service on a certain market. (S. Iosifescu, 2000, p. 30).

The above definition should be completed with the elements referring to the process of providing educational services, distribution and pricing strategy, that are also specific to marketing activity.

Marketing becomes thus an essential element of the teacher's strategic management, influencing his/her decisions in the field of course design, organization, coordination and evaluation.

Psychologically, it represents a means of involving the students in the very process of achieving, learning what they have expressed as their expectations, proposals.

3. Educational marketing nowadays

Nowadays, educational marketing becomes a task of both the central leading staff (Ministry, inspectorates) and the local one (school) – as an aspect of decentralization, a need to balance the relationship between the supply and demand in education, on the background of a very rich alternative educational offer (optional curriculum, private education, on the job qualification, distance learning projects, national and international programmes.

What can teachers do in these conditions? They shall study the domain of educational marketing, collect information regarding students' and parents' expectations, participate in training programmes and apply marketing principles when doing class management. For teachers the market is represented by their activity in the classroom, by the subject they teach; their "buyers" are the students while the "offer" is represented by the projects and educational programmes; the services are their actions, strategies, and resources while the demand is represented by the students' expectations and interests. The teacher actively using educational marketing in his/her activity can apply one of the general marketing strategies – niche marketing, that is he/she offers certain projects and programmes only for the subject he/she teaches, for a determined period of time, for a market segment – the students he/she teaches.

By adapting the principles and strategies of general marketing to the field of education (S. Iosifescu, 2000: 30-37, R.M. Niculescu, 2000: 94-140) we can describe the characteristics of the marketing process of the teacher-manager: knowledge, identification and initial evaluation of the students' expectations and needs of training and information (at the beginning of a curricular cycle, academic year, semester, chapter, lesson). This can be done progressively by training needs analyses, by analyzing the requirements and content of the general and specific curriculum of the subject he/ she teaches (educational planning, textbooks, auxiliary materials) and defining the possibilities of adapting them to the concrete conditions and situation of his / her group of students.

Increasing the competence level in teaching services has to be based on a knowledge of both customer needs and the way they are willing to receive the information contents (Gârdan, Geangu, Andriesei, Gică 2009:167).

As methods and techniques, the teacher may use the analysis of previous results, study of the students' behaviour during different educational activities,

group discussions, questionnaires to be filled in by students and parents, peer consultations, comparative analysis of other schools, analysis of the community from an educational and socio-economic, cultural development perspective.

4. Main elements of the market of educational services

The teacher may then elaborate an improvement project, adapting the curriculum for a short or medium term. This will constitute the offer made to the students, promoted based on its new and interesting elements, before stating the teaching – learning process.

The market of educational services consists of several main elements:

– *The educational services proper* that is the teaching-learning and evaluation didactic activities, in the form of courses, seminars, lessons, projects, tests, examinations. At the level of these components the suppliers of educational services are the teachers, who contribute directly to the shaping of their clients' behaviour and personality by using educational programmes.

– *The auxiliary educational services* are identified as the set of general administration activities supporting a smooth development of the educational process (financial and economic activities, managerial activities, secretarial activities).

– *The educational human capital* consists in the totality of knowledge, abilities and competences acquired by the direct client of educational services. This type of capital values the production capacity of the economy and may have long term effects; that is why the decision to invest in human capital is not an easy one; it is usually a collective decision.

Conclusion

Investigation of the demand for learning needs assessment scale structure and its spatial representation and phased over time, the notification of trend.

Investigation of potential consumers of education requires knowledge of their images on them about values and education services, report on education – culture – civilization. Educated man has a special capacity to obtain social recognition of its value; he puts his knowledge and personal qualities in the service of a better adaptation to social life.

The educational human capital is the result of a long and complex process during which students internalize knowledge, build up their own internal system of values. The client of the educational process that is the student is equally a subject and an object in the process. It both receives and formulates ideas, knowledge, and truths. Both the teacher and the student are active elements in the educational process, educational marketing supporting and enhancing their roles. Promoting the educational needs of marketing managers implies a foundation that consists in dedication, perseverance, consistency, honesty, and respect for students.

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