

Identifying and prioritizing marketing strategies in educational institutions.

Abstract

In today's world, organizations operate in a dynamic and competitive environment, and this complex environment causes customers to have different ideas about the organization's outputs. Creative marketing is an influential factor in attracting customers and improving the performance of various organizations. Creative marketing is essential for the management of an educational institution, so **the purpose of this study is to identify and prioritize the factors affecting creative marketing using a hierarchical method for the management of an educational institution.** This research is based on the "survey-descriptive" method. In this study, we examine the most important factors for identifying and prioritizing the issue of "creative marketing" for the management of an educational institution using a hierarchical method. The statistical population of this research is 15 managers of an educational institution in District 2 of Tehran. After collecting the required information and statistics through a questionnaire (designed by the researcher), Expert Choice 11 software was used to review this research and analyze the information. The findings of this study show that among the factors related to the creative marketing approach, the following factors are the most important:

- 1- Proper pricing of services
- 2- Suitable communication channels
- 3- Creative designing

Keywords: creativity, marketing, educational institution, hierarchical method

1- Introduction

In today's world, A creative mindset deals with the belief that creativity and creative skills can be improved with time and practice, thereby improving business performance (Karwowski, 2014). The purpose of creativity and change in products and services and production and distribution methods is to respond to the needs of new markets and customers. Creativity is essential for a business to thrive and survive and compete in the market, so all organizations need creativity to grow and thrive and compete. With the help of creativity, organizations can respond to the needs and wants of their customers (Aspara & et al., 2018). Needing for creativity to have a competitive advantage means that companies must be dynamic and flexible. Many

organizations team up with another organization to access its skills and capabilities. Through alliances with other organizations, they not only want to complement and strengthen their pivotal competencies but also want to maintain and strengthen their competitive position (Hiong & et al., 2020).

The combination of creativity and marketing has created a new subject whose dimensions are not clearly defined and Drucker refers to it as entrepreneurial tasks (Drucker, 2002). The first person to combine the two concepts was Peter Drucker who calls marketing and creativity "entrepreneurial tasks." The relationship between marketing and creativity is an interaction, and by creating a relationship between creativity and marketing, we can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Mohanty, 2017). Creative marketing is not only about creating new products but also about all marketing processes (from the smallest to the most fundamental changes), all of which aim to make more profit (Puente-Díaz & Cavazos-Arroyo, 2017). Creative marketing has a passive approach to market demand and, in a continuous process, leads managers to take advantage of new opportunities (Aksoy, 2017).

2- Research background

Contemporary society is not only a society of knowledge but also a competitive society. Educational institutions, in their capacity as providers of educational services to the whole society, are responsible for specific marketing actions to popularize their educational offer in response to the needs of society, in accordance with the resources and culture of the respective organization. In other words, the main task of educational marketing is to identify and understand both trends in the field as well as educational and training needs of the consumers of the educational market (Lepkova, 2009).

Through the use of adequate strategies, methods and tools for the investigation of existing requirements at the level of the educational market, the marketing activity must ultimately be seen as a human activity aimed at satisfying needs and wishes through exchange processes (Kotler, 1998).

Regardless of how we define educational marketing, it becomes very clear that the educational institutions, like populations and organizations, occupy physical, temporal, symbolic, and social

space. It is reasonable, then, to assume that these institutions are characterized by ecological dynamics (Abrutyn, 2012). The success of actions taken towards increasing the institutional visibility of the educational institutions will ultimately depend on the degree of satisfaction of the following three indicators: Quality of the educational process, quality of administrative and secretarial services, and the quality of additional services (accommodation, meals, entertainment). The institutional development is thus dependent on the success of institutional management activities and implicitly on the educational marketing as a specific function of management. The marketing tools and activities help these entities to improve the educational programs and adapt them to the individual needs of the clients, to keep the production costs under control, which are limited by the small public budget, and to perform and promote these services efficiently, leading to an increased organizational performance (Barbu, 2012).

Although the principles and action directions of the educational marketing are universal, it should not be forgotten that different educational markets have different educational needs and even if the concepts of educational marketing are applicable in all these markets, there is still a need for local analysis and local adjustments (Enache, 2012).

Creativity is a critical factor in competitiveness and promotes organizational growth, increases the likelihood of future success and allows companies to perform better in the global economy (Borysova & et al., 2018). Therefore, companies must have new products and processes in this regard and use advanced technologies in order to be able to survive in the market and compete (Borysova & et al., 2018). In fact, creativity is the key to companies entering future competitions, so there is competition between companies in the field of creativity. Nevertheless, implementing creativity requires culture for an organization to be creative; otherwise, it will be complicated to implement creativity. Creativity is achieved when an organization encourages its employees to share their skills with others. If an organization succeeds in this, then employees will share values, beliefs and behaviours, and such an existing culture can lead to creativity. After this, the organization can continue to develop and acquire new knowledge and thus be more creative (Grimpe & et al., 2017).

Creative activities have become the main focus of theoretical and experimental research in industrial economics and economic growth. Also, in most economic studies in the field of industry, the issue of research and development by firms is of great importance so that technological changes affect distribution, product quality, occupation, wages and profits.

Successful R&D activities also not only have benefits concerning the performance of businesses but also play an essential and decisive role in economic growth and improving social status (Musawa & et al., 2019).

The main goal of creativity is to improve production methods and create new products, which has two forms: First, a business succeeds in creativity. It is creativity that leads to the production of new products and thus increases productivity in the production of this business. Second, firms use creativity that belongs to other firms (Medrano & et al., 2020). *Creativity* is a process that involves technical design, research and development, production, management and business activities (such as marketing a new product). Effective creativity in product production is an essential issue for the survival, growth and profitability of most businesses. In today's competitive markets, organizations are increasingly facing challenges related to improving product quality and service delivery. By addressing these challenges, they want to introduce new products and services to the market faster than competitors (Adefulu & et al., 2020).

Creative marketing is not only related to the development of new products, services and technologies but also one of the main factors that small and medium-sized businesses can use to meet the needs of their customers in a highly competitive environment and thus survive. Give. In relation to the issue of creative marketing, issues such as innovation, taking advantage of opportunities, providing new solutions to meet the needs and improving the quality of new products and processes to implement and improve organizational performance are considered (Jun 2021). Creative marketing culture also focuses not only on producing new products but also on all marketing processes and aims to make more profit. Creative marketing actually means the implementation of a marketing method that includes significant changes in product design, product packaging, product positioning in the market, product promotion and product pricing (Purchase & et al., 2020).

It can also be said that creative marketing means being creative in strategies, mechanisms and methods of marketing products. Creative marketing includes various aspects of market management (such as market knowledge, advertising, market making, marketing management and etc.). Many market creations are the result of incremental creativity-related activities. Creative marketing involves introducing a new brand, reaching a new market and introducing new approaches to sales (Grimp & et al., 2017). Creative marketing is the implementation of a new marketing method that involves significant changes in product design and packaging,

product placement, pricing or product promotion. The goal of creative marketing is to better meet customer needs, enter new markets and increase sales. To achieve this goal, consideration should be given to identifying new segments, redesigning promotional messages or introducing new methods for selective pricing (Syahza & et al., 2021).

In marketing articles, the issue of creative marketing is a kind of gradual creativity. It should be noted that gradual creativity is added to previous creativity (without changing its original context). A company must follow a market-oriented approach to demonstrate its creative marketing capabilities. These creative marketing capabilities help the company to develop or maintain its competitive advantage. Competitive advantage also allows the company to perform better and survive in an economic crisis (Ramirez & et al., 2017). Characteristics of successful creative marketing include appropriate marketing strategy in the market, management skills within the company and specific organizational culture that are difficult for competitors to copy. The specific combination of these factors determines whether creative marketing for the company can create strategic value or not. We can also divide marketing factors into four general sections. These factors are the basis of creative marketing, which includes product, service, distribution and sales. Understanding these basic levels of marketing is essential. Experts agree that all forms of creativity can contribute to competitive advantage and increase competitiveness (Aspara & et al., 2018).

Creative marketing has six parts: 1- Marketing variables 2- Change and modification 3- Customer oriented 4- Integrated marketing 4- Market making 6- Special position (Ramirez & et al., 2017).

Brands can provide a strategic direction through the use of high-tech processes or advanced training programs. This strategic direction helps local resellers to think creatively in the face of business opportunities. Resellers need to support the brand in various aspects, such as training-based skills, marketing investments and technical knowledge in the industry (Purgis & et al., 2020).

Identifying sales opportunities in a competitive market through resellers and those who use brand resources, as well as ensuring successful product distribution, are part of the prerequisites for a brand's creative approach to marketing through resellers. The credibility of a creativity-based company depends on the position of the resellers and the promotion of competitive brands through alliances with the resellers. The ability to provide services to larger customers, the need

to create competitiveness among sales agents and less attention of sales representatives to competitive brands or complementary products. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify and prioritize the factors affecting creative marketing for the management of an educational institution.

3- The background of this research and related articles

Rahimi & et al. (1399) showed that there is a relationship between creative marketing and company performance. Hekmat & et al. (1396), in a study, examined the factors affecting creative marketing in the field of date trade in Khuzestan province; and showed that "educational-promotional" factors have the most direct and indirect effects on the dependent variable. Khairuddin & et al. (2021) in a study, examined creative marketing related to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in agriculture and food for peninsular Malaysia. The results showed a positive relationship between the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in agriculture and food and creative marketing strategies, where creativity has the most robust relationship in market leadership and its performance. Molina-Castillo & et al. (2019) in a study, examined the impact of a business model goals on creative marketing activities. The findings show distinct results in relation to the acceptance of creative marketing based on the goals of a business model and the type of company (active in the field of production or service delivery). Sánchez-Gutiérrez (2019) showed that management capabilities in the field of customer relations and how to transform the knowledge of these capabilities into solutions to meet customer needs for specific market choices has a positive impact on customer value, financial performance, cost optimization and technology use and we can use it as indicators of competitiveness. Han & et al. (2019) showed that to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing activities, companies must consider creative marketing. Ungerma & et al. (2018) showed that there are differences in how the effects are observed by small and medium-sized enterprises and large enterprises.

4- Research methodology

The purpose of research is to enhance educational intuitions by advancing knowledge through the development of scientific theories, concepts and ideas. A research purpose is met through answering questions, collecting data, analysing results, forming conclusions, implementing findings into real-life applications and forming new research questions.

This research is applied research in terms of purpose and descriptive survey research regarding how to collect data. Also, in this research, the library method has been used to determine and complete the theoretical foundations and background. The information required for analysis and conclusion was obtained using the field method and paired comparison questionnaire. The statistical population of this research is the managers of an educational institution in District 2 of Tehran. In this study, to evaluate the identification and prioritization of factors affecting creative marketing using the hierarchical method for managing an educational institution, 15 managers of an educational institution in Tehran Region 2 were selected based on a purposive sampling method. Here a pairwise comparison questionnaire was used to collect information. Expert Choice 11 software was also used to evaluate the purpose of the research. Based on the aforementioned description; present study tries to answer to the following question:

1-which factors has affection on education marketing strategies?

2- Which factors has the most affection on education marketing strategies?

5- Analysis

Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a traditional MultiCriteria Decision Making (MCDM) methods developed by Saaty (Asadabadi et al.2019). in order to analyze the Expert Choice 11 software has been used to evaluate and prioritize the factors affecting creative marketing, the results of which can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1 - Prioritize the factors that influence creative marketing

Indicator	Coefficient
market approach (Ramirez & et al., 2017).	0.540
providing services	0.297
communication channels	0.163

In Table 1, you can see that the factors related to the market approach have a coefficient of 0.540, the factors related to providing services have a coefficient of 0.297, and the factors related to communication channels have a coefficient of 0.163.

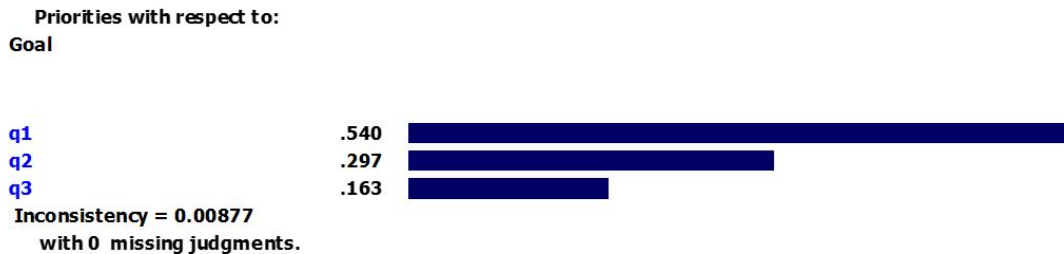


Figure 1- Prioritize the factors that affect creative marketing

Then the results of prioritization of each of the factors affecting the indicators of market approach in this study are reported.

Table 2: Prioritize factors related to the market approach that influence creative marketing

Indicators related to the market approach (Ramirez & et al., 2017).	Coefficient
Ability to adapt to market changes	0.182
Maintain a creative approach	0.164
Fulfill customer expectations	0.079
Have information related to proper pricing for services	0.319
Awareness of the situation of competitors and their spectrums	0.256

In Table 2, you can see that having information related to the proper pricing of services with a coefficient of 0.319 has the highest value and meeting customer expectations with a coefficient of 0.079 has the lowest value.



Figure 2 - Prioritize factors related to market approach that influence creative marketing

Table 3 - Prioritize factors related to communication channels that influence creative marketing

Indicators related to communication channels (Ramirez & et al., 2017).	Coefficient
Awareness and use of communication channels	0.143
Welcomes the appropriate communication channel for the distribution of services	0.429
Introducing services in communication channels	0.429

In Table 3, you can see that the introduction of services in communication channels and the reception of a suitable communication channel for the distribution of services with a coefficient of 0.429 has the highest value and knowledge and the use of communication channels with a coefficient of 0.143 has the lowest value.



Figure 3 - Prioritize factors related to communication channels that influence creative marketing

Table 4 - Prioritize service delivery factors that influence creative marketing

Indicators related to service delivery (Ramirez & et al., 2017).	Coefficient
Provide creative designs for services	0.371
Ability to respond to customer needs	0.192
Provide excellent services based on existing standards	0.121
Provide appropriate learning opportunities for customers	0.097
affordable services	0.219

In Table 4, you can see that providing creative designs for services with a coefficient of 0.371 has the highest value and providing appropriate learning opportunities for customers with a coefficient of 0.097 has the lowest coefficient.



Figure 4 - Prioritize service delivery factors that influence creative marketing

6-Conclusion

The aim of this study was to evaluate the prioritization of factors affecting creative marketing using a hierarchical method for managing an educational institution. The results of this study indicated that factors such as market approach, service delivery and communication channels have the most significant impact on creative marketing. The results of evaluating the factors related to the market approach showed that having information related to the proper pricing of services is the most important and meeting customer expectations is the least important. Many service-based businesses struggle to come up with a fair and profitable pricing strategy. Unlike product pricing, marketers can't exactly quantify all the costs that go into providing a service. In evaluating the factors related to communication channels, it was found that the introduction of services in communication channels and the reception of a suitable communication channel for the distribution of services is the most important and the knowledge and use of communication

channels is the least important. The introduction of services in communication channels goes beyond the delivery of a simple message or slogan to encompass the full range of ways in which people individually and collectively convey meaning. Among the powerful tools employed by introduction of services in communication channels programs are mass media, community-level activities, interpersonal communication, information and communication technologies and new media.

These results also showed that in evaluating the factors related to service delivery, having creative plans for service delivery is the most important and creating appropriate learning opportunities for customers is the least important. Based on the findings of present study; it can be argued that competitiveness can be considered as a bases for creative marketing. The competitiveness of a business in the market demonstrates its ability to attract customers using creative marketing ideas and business communications. In fact, the goal of creative marketing is to better identify customer needs, create new markets or identify the new position of the company's products in the market based on the component of increasing sales (Dabrowski et al., 2019). Here we can assume that creative marketing improves product status and thus performance. The results of this study are also consistent with the results of studies by researchers such as [Khairuddin & et al. \(2021\)](#), Molina [Castilo & et al. \(2019\)](#), Gutters & et al. [\(2019\)](#), [Hun & et al. \(2019\)](#) and Angerman & et al. (2018) has it. On the other hand, all research has inherent limitations that challenge researchers and this generalization of results are sometimes difficult.

This research also faces inherent limitations including not generalizing to all educational institutions and the possibility of a level of error in the questionnaire. We suggest that to improve the creative process in educational institutions, creative projects in providing customer service to be used to attract them more and strengthening awareness and using communication channels to improve the creative marketing process in educational institutions. We suggest that future research in this field be reviewed in a different spatial domain, and then the results of this review be compared with this research. Also, during the research, the existing challenges in improving the creative marketing process be evaluated.

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