

# THE NECESSITY OF USING RESEARCH IN DIRECT MARKETING OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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**Abstract:** *Currently, the use of research in direct marketing is in a continuous dynamic as the traditional and non-traditional direct marketing have been developed in a convergent direction. Moreover, the integrated marketing communications have been developed, and service providers have taken a number of measures to be as close as possible to their clients. In this context, higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova, as they stand on a market for developing educational services, where the major competitors are becoming more experienced and sophisticated, appear to create the necessary conditions that would allow to attract as many students as possible. Thus, the specialized higher education institution in the field of "Sports Sciences" is in a position to establish and authorize more attractive programs, capable of differentiating from similar ones from local academic system.*

**Key words:** *direct marketing, research, higher education institution, physical education.*

## 1. Introduction

Higher education institutions in the country are trying to promote as much as possible the study programs through different advertising materials sent by post, in schools in the republic or directly

among young people by any means of communication. [7]. Research can help higher education institutions emerge from these stereotypes, better understanding the needs and demands of different client groups, beneficiaries of educational services, even addressing them more directly and efficiently, developing new

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offers and to perfect their visual and message elements. This fact can lead to increases in response rates and the consolidation of the reference institution's image in the process of promoting services [6].

The research can stimulate the higher education institution of physical education and sports to develop more efficient prospecting programs by acquiring a deep understanding of the types and number of "potential clients with high inclination for access to studies in the field " and by transforming these consumer segments into target groups that can be accessed directly.

## **2. The Research**

### **2.1. The purpose of the research**

Consists in presenting the necessity of using the research in the direct marketing of the higher education institution of physical education and sports, as a main way of identifying new clients, beneficiaries of the educational services with high growth potential, determining the most dynamic segments from the competitive market.

### **2.2. Research methodology**

Consists in specialized literature analysis, sociological questionnaire, observation, data interpretation and graphical method.

### **2.3. Research hypothesis**

We assumed that the use of research in the direct marketing of the specialized higher education institution will contribute to the increase of the graduates' number in studies and in positioning the study programs as well, being favorite ones in the hierarchy of the demands of the future specialists in the field.

## **3. Accumulation and Interpretation of data**

A total number of 117 people were involved in the research:

- graduates in the accredited study programs of specialized higher education;
- graduates;
- teachers from the field;
- parents;
- representatives and human resources employed in different sports organizations.

To verify the research hypothesis, we applied a sociological questionnaire to these categories of study participants, consisting of 12 questions.

Further, the most relevant answers are shown to the addressed issue.

The most important question regarding marketing research was: "Do you know when to spend money for marketing research?" Most respondents gave negative answers to this question (Figure 1).

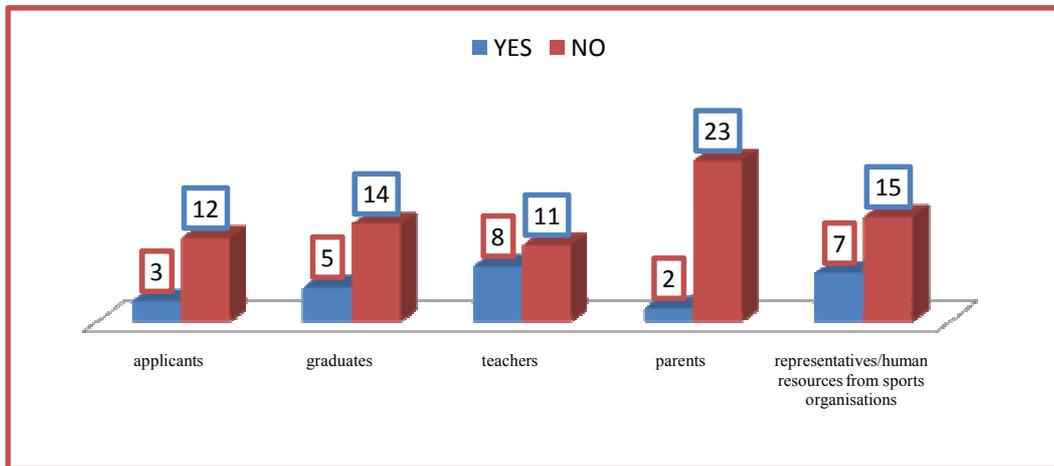


Fig. 1. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the time of spending money for marketing research

It can be seen from the graphical reflection of the answers that most of them do not know the reasonable moment of spending some money for marketing research of the provided educational services. According to the specialized literature, large amounts of

money for research can be allocated in the most efficient way for the evaluation of the strategic problems in order to establish the certainty that it is worth to spend money for new programs [1].

In Figure 2 we present the complete process of a marketing research.



Fig. 2. The complete process of a marketing research, according to Stone B., Jacobs R., modified by us

**The analysis of the situation** is important to reflect the dynamism of the market and the competition, from the point of view of the benefits that each educational product or service of the competition will bring them to the market and the reasons why consumers (potential candidates for studies) are attracted by them. The final result of this situation analysis must involve the identification of the best value points for which a study program can be created, authorized and developed [2, 3].

**The pretesting** consists in the development, establishment and improvement of the newly educational service marketing created before testing them on the educational market. At this stage, the following issues are addressed:

- determine if the new product / service offers a feature or benefit which the beneficiaries want;
- develop and improve the creative side and the offer;
- use the research to determine future educational offer procedures.

**Testing** is dynamic and continuous. The basic objectives of testing are to learn, modify and improve. This stage includes:

- the educational product or service;
- the method of reaching out the beneficiaries;
- the moment or the season;
- advertising and communication;
- offer or promotion.

Post-testing evaluation is the most important field for marketing research. This refers to the analysis of the answers to the questionnaire or the applied test, as well as to the development of the diagnostic information to determine why certain answers have been obtained and which would be the way to increase the preferences in this direction. For example, the questionnaires applied to the respondents may include the following aspects:

- the degree under which the respondents were attracted by the educational offer;
- the degree under which the image of the educational product / service meets expectations and has been promoted;
- the degree under which the beneficiaries of educational services could be listed as regular clients.

On the question “Do you consider that it is necessary to carry out a direct marketing research when opening a new study program?”, we can see from Figure 3, that most of the categories of respondents gave affirmative answers to this question.

From the accumulated answers we can point out the necessity of such research, since through it we can achieve important information on the attitudes, behaviors and powered elements of the educational service consumers in a higher education institution and which are relevant.

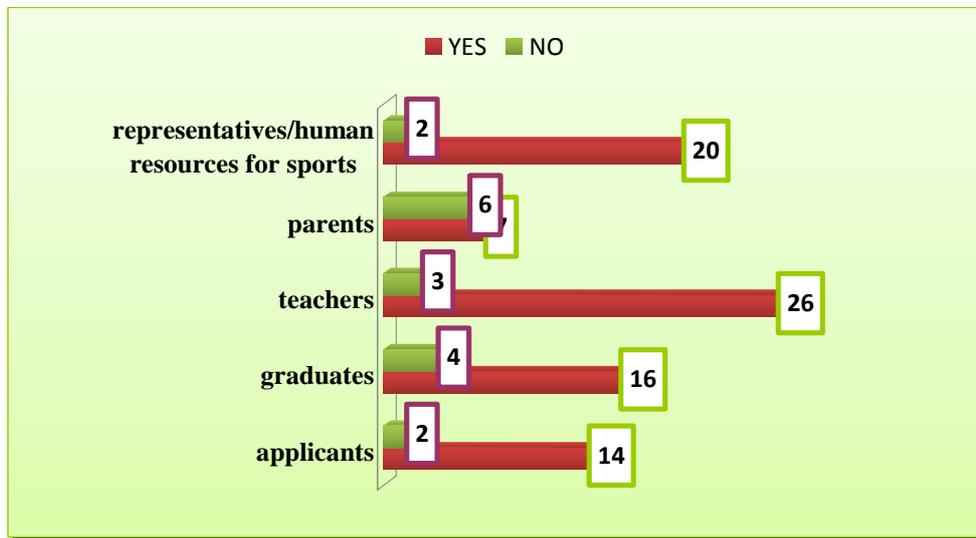


Fig. 3. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the necessity of a direct marketing research

Also, in order to define, understand, access and communicate realistically to the target group of educational services, it is absolutely necessary that direct marketing research treat consumers from the point of view of the indices reflected in Figure 4.

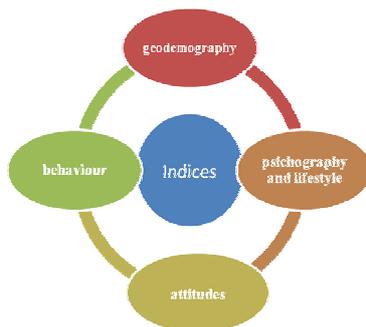


Fig. 4. Treating consumers according to indices

These indices need to be integrated to configure an image of the real consumers: who they are and where they live, what are their basic values and attitudes towards life, what are their perceptions,

attitudes and appreciations regarding different product categories / educational services, and last but not least, the way in which these perceptions, attitudes and appreciations are transferred into the factors of making the selection on the competitive market. [8]. At the end of the research, a profile of the target group can be built which is essential to be achieved in the following two situations:

- for the elaboration of a new program;
- to extend and continue the existing programs.

Sometimes there is not enough information available for formation of profiles, especially if entering a new market. In this case, the higher education institution should achieve direct basic information from potential beneficiaries of educational services by means of qualitative information (interest groups or personal depth interviews) and / or quantitative data (surveys).

#### 4. Conclusion

We can say that it is necessary that the higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova provide a marketing department that will proceed with the accumulation and processing of new information regarding the development of the organization according to the requirements of the potential beneficiaries. They also need to understand how they can store certain data that could help solve some of the problems that may arise. Therefore, it is important to focus on informing clients (beneficiaries of educational services) about the concept of the study program, as well as solving a problem that they were not sure they had. At the same time, the institution's strategy regarding the development of study programs in terms of innovation, credibility and its ability to convince candidates that the program is one of the most attractive on the educational service market, and not least that it is compatible with other international education systems.

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