

KEY ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Today's higher education environment has become increasingly competitive and universities need to assume a strategic approach in communication with prospective students. Numerous studies have shown that modern digital communication channels are increasingly more used to promote the attributes of universities, while traditional channels are no longer considered that important. The principal aim of this study is to examine the importance of certain attributes and communication channels the students in Serbia rely on when choosing the most appropriate faculty. The research was conducted for the period 2007-2013. The results obtained clearly show that the Internet, friend recommendations and presentations at high schools are the most effective communication channels, whereas the university reputation, study system and quality of the study program are considered the most important attributes when making a decision to enroll in a certain faculty. Based on the research findings, the mathematical model for forecasting the respondents' behaviour in the following five-year period was developed. It enables developing the communication platform that would contribute to enhancing the quality of the overall management processes of an higher education institution, market orientation, encourage successful recruitment of prospective students, their enrollment and retention.

Key words: communication channels, university attributes, students, higher education institutions.

КЉУЧНИ АТРИБУТИ УСПЕШНЕ КОМУНИКАЦИЈЕ ВИСОКООБРАЗОВНЕ ИНСТИТУЦИЈЕ СА БУДУЋИМ СТУДЕНТИМА

Апстракт

Окружење високообразовних институција постаје изузетно конкурентно и универзитети морају да се стратешки посвете комуникацији са будућим студентима. Бројна истраживања указују на то да се све више користе актуелни дигитални комуникациони канали у промоцији универзитета и да традиционални канали имају секундаран значај. Циљ рада јесте да испита значај појединих атрибута и канала комуникације које студенти вреднују приликом доношења одлуке о избору

факултета. Истраживање је обављено у периоду од 2007. до 2013. године и добијени резултати експлицитно указују на то да су интернет, препоруке пријатеља и презентације у средњим школама најефикаснији комуникациони канали, а репутација универзитета, систем студирања и квалитет студијског програма представљају најзначајније атрибуте у процесу доношења одлуке да се упише одређени факултет. На основу истраживања, постављен је и математички модел за предвиђање понашања испитаника у наредних 5 година, што омогућава стварање комуникационе платформе која ће допринети побољшању управљачких процеса образовне институције, тржишној оријентацији, односно успешној регрутацији будућих студената, њиховом упису и задржавању.

Кључне речи: канали комуникације, атрибути универзитета, студенти, високообразовне институције.

INTRODUCTION

Internationalisation, globalisation and growing competition have forced state and private universities to keep pace with and adapt to the emerging trends and changes in student preferences (Nedbalová, Greenacre & Schulz 2014; Maringe & Gibbs, 2009). Universities boast their own history, tradition and expertise. Unfortunately, that is no longer considered sufficient in today's modern and highly competitive world. Besides their principal activities (teaching and research), universities need to continuously adapt to the emerging trends and challenges, and develop appropriate marketing strategies compliant with such changes, i.e. to utilize proper communication tools in order to successfully promote and defend their reputation (Popović, Stanković, Đukić, 2015; Shah, Nair, Bennett, 2013; Ivy, 2008; Ivy, 2011; Cubillo, Sanchez & Cervino, 2006; Kotler, Fox, 1995). That implies that branding of higher education institutions has become an increasingly important activity, and universities should pay more attention to this strategy in the future (Hanover Research, 2014). Research shows that numerous foreign universities have hired marketing experts to create strong institutional brands. Efficient strategic planning and brand management in higher education require more than traditional advertising, i.e. to build a brand's identity through designing and managing integrated marketing communications (Edmiston-Strasser, D.M., 2009), so as to achieve competitive advantage in the process of student recruitment and retention (Moogan, Yvonne, 2011; Frølich, Stensaker, 2010;), and to develop strong bonds of loyalty among students, parents, staff, faculties, alumni and the community. The profile of students and learners will substantially change in the upcoming period and will become the dominant variable of the millennial generation, which will alter the communication formula used in interaction between students and universities (Fromm, Lindell & Decker, 2011). Such changes represent an opportunity for strengthening infrastructure and other resources of higher education institutions, which would contribute to enhancing the overall quality of educational services and meeting the dynamic needs of the young population.

Perhaps the largest area of innovation and growth in higher education marketing is in the online and digital space (Hanover Research, 2014; Social Media Marketing in Education, 2011). Easy to navigate and responsive websites that can be viewed on multiple devices and platforms are among the key online marketing tools (Hanover Research 2014; Social Media Marketing in Education, 2011), and they can successfully display the desired content, through navigation bars, visual effects, 'call-to-action' button that motivates the prospective freshmen.

The ongoing forces of change in higher education market have triggered universities to adapt to the new market atmosphere and extreme competitiveness at both local and global level. Accordingly, this generates a wide range of options available at higher education institutions, with the aim to respond properly to the altered "market" requirements (Nedbalová, E., Greenacre, L., Schulz, J 2014), primarily through changing the communication strategy (Maringe, 2006).

Literature Review

Communication of a higher education institution with the target market is considered an important indicator of success of modern universities and it aims to clearly present the brand's image (Chapleo 2010; Cubillo et al., 2006; Maringe and Foskett, 2002; Ivy, 2001).

Modern media have brought about significant changes in communication. According to Hanover Research (Hanover Research, 2014), online technologies that are actively used in communication with the target group are considered the greatest innovation in higher education marketing. Websites that provide the public with the updated and important information (students, parents, partners, employers etc.) represent the first step in the development of successful modern communication. According to Ivy (2008), the use of university websites will no longer be sufficient, as students and other target groups require interactive communication. The second step in the development of successful communication is using the platform by a higher education institution in order to provide feedback in the form of comments which reflect the public opinion. The third step is described as networked communication. Social networks provide an *online* presentation of a university, i.e., they enable interactive communication with the present and prospective students. While numerous traditional media are encountering serious obstacles (some have become unattractive or have even lost their target groups) owing to the emergence of new digital options, the mission and the role of modern universities is to provide "*just-in-time*" information (Social Media Marketing in Education, 2011). Apart from digital environment and its impact on the communication process, it is necessary to take into consideration the importance of personal contact in establishing successful communication with prospective students (Hanover Research,

2014; Ivy, 2008; Maringe, 2006; Cubillo et al. 2006; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003).

In the process of choosing the most suitable higher education institution, prospective students can assess other criteria, such as reputation (Popović, Stanković, Đukić, 2015), program specifics (Cubillo, Sanchez & Cervino, 2006; Cubillo-Pinilla, J.M., Zuniga, J., Soret Losantos, I. and Sanchez, J. 2009; Maringe, 2006, 2005; Moogan & Baron, 2003; Soutar and Turner, 2002), various amenities including the library, restaurant, IT classrooms, employment opportunities and career prospects (Cubillo et al. 2006; Soutar and Turner, 2002; Chapman, 1986), etc. The authors have also examined how the costs of living and transportation costs during the studies affect the decision making process (Cubillo et al. 2006; Maringe 2006; Binsardi and Ekwulugo 2003; Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). Price was also mentioned in numerous research as a significant marketing mix instrument (Cubillo-Pinilla et al., 2009; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Maringe, 2006; Cubillo et al. 2006; Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Ivy, 2001).

The research conducted by Briggs (2006) in Scotland (carried out at six universities on a sample of 651 students) confirmed the complexity of the decision-making process when choosing the faculty. This study pointed out three leading factors: academic reputation, distance from home and university location. Factors that had the greatest impact on the final decision are parents, friends, teachers, promotional activities at high schools and school advisers. According to the research conducted by Maringe (2006) on a sample of 387 students at Southampton University, employment opportunities and career prospects are more important when choosing the faculty than students' interests and preferences. Kabak, Dagdeviren (2014) conducted a research in Turkey and identified three factors as the most relevant for their students when selecting the faculty: employment opportunities and career prospects, scholarships and social life at the university. The factor analysis in Vietnam indicated nine factors as the most relevant in the decision-making process: facilities and services, study program, price, *offline* information, opinions, online information, communication models, program additions, and advertising (Dao, Thorpe, 2014). In Australia, the quality of courses and teachers, as well as the reputation of the institution are seen as influencing and important factors for the choice of the university (Shah, Nair, Bennett, 2013)

Also, the study in the new Bologna context affects the decision of prospective students when choosing a university. Operationalizations of the teaching process, quality relationship with teachers, open educational resources, collaborative virtual environment are mentioned in favor of the new system (Jarić, Vukasović, 2009; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The overall aim of the research was to explore the university attributes and the appropriate communication channels that are considered important by students when choosing the proper university. In order to realize this broad aim, the study identified the following key objectives:

- to unveil the relative importance attached to the attributes affecting the choice of university
- to investigate the possible implications of the findings to university communication strategy using the best communication method

In communication process between a higher education institution and its environment, competitive advantages based on intangible assets are particularly underlined (the know-how and expertise of teaching staff, quality of classes, teamwork, staff development, etc.), which the competition cannot acquire or successfully imitate within a short period of time.

For the purpose of drawing conclusions, two research hypotheses have been proposed:

H1 Determining factors for the choice of university are university reputation, quality of study programs and study system.

H2 Besides the enormous popularity of digital media among prospective students, there is still certain positive correlation between the choice of faculty and a meeting in person.

The research was conducted in three time-series and can be described as changeable in terms of certain university attributes and the appropriate communication channels within the given period of time. The present study is prospective as it measured students' perception of university attributes over the five-year period and the appropriate communication channels. The primary data was collected by quantitative survey research in November 2007, November 2009 and November 2013. The sample included 1252 freshmen (first-year students attending three faculties (Faculty of Business, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management and Faculty of Informatics and Computing) in Belgrade, Serbia. In 2007, the sample comprised 588 respondents (47.0%); in 2009 it included 303 respondents (24.2%), while in 2013, it included 361 respondents (28.8%). It was a face-to-face interview with a not standardized structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions (single choice). The questionnaire was distributed to students during their lectures and they were given 30 minutes to complete it. The students were introduced with the purpose of the questionnaire and they agreed to participate in the research. Participation was on a voluntary basis, and the respondents (full-time students) filled out the questionnaire anonymously. The questionnaire was specifically designed for this research and it included three parts. The first set of questions was related to socio-demographic characteristics (study program, age and gender). The second section was related to their perception of the sources of information (friends, the Internet, presentations in school, traditional media, etc.), the

way in which they collect information, communication channels that are considered most convenient and reliable. The third subset included the questions about the university attributes, such as its reputation, study system, quality of study programs, Belgrade as a place to study, tuition fees, and good employment opportunities. This study was developed with the aim to observe students' perception of communication sources, and their observations on the university attributes that had a considerable bearing on their final choice.

All data are presented as mean \pm sd or n (%), depending on the type of data. The Chi-square test and Chi-square test for trend were used to examine significant differences between groups. All data were analyzed using the SPSS 20.0 (IBM corp.) statistical software. All p values less than 0.05 were considered significant. Regression analysis - the method of least squares - was used for processing the results and modeling of the curve. The purpose was to "preserve" the curved shape of function (monotony, the same number of extremes, the same position of zero function). "The method of least squares," i.e., minimization of the sum of the squared deviation between the data and the model, was used as the approximation quality criterion (Surla, 1998).

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1 shows the difference in the distribution of factors relevant for the choice of faculty per year of study, which is also supported by the Chi-square test ($\chi^2=21.103$; $p=0.020$). In 2007, the majority of respondents emphasized the study system as a significant factor when choosing the university, followed by reputation, quality of studies and good employment opportunities. In 2009, the importance of study system and quality of study program decreased, unlike the rising interest in university reputation. In 2013, university reputation and quality of study program demonstrate a growing tendency, while the study system is considered less relevant than in the preceding years.

Table 1. Decisive factors in the choice of faculty

Year	Reputation	Study system	Quality of study program	Belgrade	Price	Employment opportunities	Total
2007	21.0%	44.9%	17.2%	2.4%	0.9%	13.6%	575
2009	24.1%	42.4%	16.3%	2.0%	2.0%	13.2%	295
2013	30.5%	36.2%	19.7%	3.1%	0.3%	10.3%	351
Total	299 (24.5%)	510 (41.8%)	216 (17.7%)	31 (2.5%)	12 (1.0%)	153 (12.5%)	1221

The respondents expressed their opinion on the importance of various sources of information with the aim to define the paths through which information circulates from the university to its target users (Table 2). The results obtained at all three faculties show that friends are the most important source of information, followed by the Internet and promotional activities at schools.

Table 2. Sources of information about the faculty

Year	Friends	Promotional activities at schools	Traditional media	Internet	Other	Total
2007	76.7%	6.1%	1.9%	9.5%	5.8%	588
2009	71.9%	6.3%	1.0%	15.2%	5.6%	303
2013	59.8%	11.4%	1.1%	19.7%	8.0%	361
Total	885 (70.7%)	96 (7.7%)	18 (1.4%)	173 (13.8%)	80 (6.4%)	1252

Significant difference could also be observed in the distribution of information sources about the faculty ($X^2=34.266$; $p<0.001$). When it comes to information sources, the importance of friend recommendation is decreasing, while the importance of the Internet and promotional activities at schools is on the rise. It is obvious that the role of the Internet in modern communication and information process is tremendous, but that does not undermine the importance of personal recommendation (word-of-mouth).

Table 3. Decisive factors in the choice of faculty and sources of information

Sources of information	Decisive factors in choice of the faculty					
	Reputation	Study system	Quality of study program	Belgrade	Price	Employment opportunities
Friends	226 (26.0%)	337 (43.4%)	144 (16.6%)	16 (1.8%)	6 (0.7%)	100 (11.5%)
Promotional activities	23 (26.4%)	37 (42.5%)	14 (16.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.3%)	11 (12.6%)
Traditional media	3 (16.7%)	8 (44.4%)	3 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (22.2%)
Internet	30 (17.6%)	63 (37.1%)	36 (21.2%)	10 (5.9%)	3 (1.8%)	28 (16.5%)
Other	17 (22.1%)	25 (32.5%)	19 (24.7%)	5 (6.5%)	1 (1.3%)	10 (13.0%)

Table 3 shows the difference in frequency (%) when we perceive both the decisive factors and sources of information. More precisely, those who have obtained necessary information via friends (word-of-mouth) or the Internet were most interested in the study system and reputation, i.e., the

quality of studies. The Chi-squared test shows that this difference is on the border of statistical significance ($\chi^2=36.318$; $p=0.024$).

Modelling the Behavior of Prospective Students for the Period 2015-2020.

The data herein presented reveal that the friend recommendation (word-of-mouth, WOM) is the most significant source of information. A total of 70,7% of respondents highlighted it as the main source of information affecting the final choice. Within the sample (869 respondents), the most important criterion of faculty selection is the study system (41,8%), followed by university reputation (24,5%), quality of the study program (17,7%), etc.

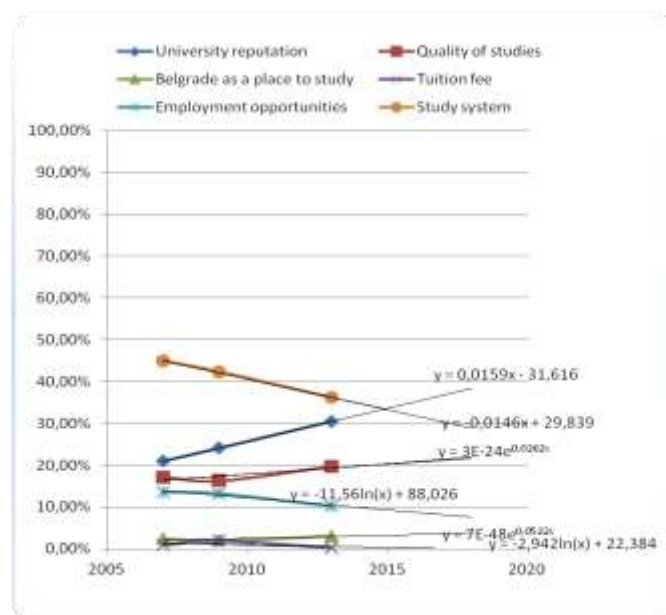
Based on the results of research conducted in 2007, 2009 and 2013, functions were developed, i.e. mathematical equations that present the expected future behaviour of prospective students. Such model predicts the behaviour of respondents in the five-year period, based on the following variables: university attributes and sources of information.

Graph 1 and Table 4 and Table 5 display the functions that show the percentage of respondents in the specified five-year period. The percentages are subsequently aligned with the assumed number of the respondents per year, totaling 100%. Price (tuition fee) is not considered relevant for modelling for the given five-year period, as an insignificant number of the respondents considered it relevant, thus leading to the inability of having a more realistic model (below 1%).

Table 4. Real and modeled values expressed in % according to decisive factors of selection

	University reputation	Study system	Quality of studies	Belgrade as a place to study	Price	Employment opportunities
2007	21.00%	44.90%	17.20%	2.40%	0.90%	13.60%
2009	24.10%	42.40%	16.30%	2.00%	2.00%	13.20%
2013	30.50%	36.20%	19.70%	3.10%	0.30%	10.30%
2015	35.11%	34.91%	21.11%	2.79%		6.08%
2017	37.49%	32.25%	22.09%	3.07%		5.09%
2019	39.80%	29.61%	23.09%	3.38%		4.12%
2018	38.66%	30.93%	22.59%	3.22%		4.60%
2020	40.93%	28.29%	23.61%	3.55%		3.63%

Upon examining the table and the model for the period 2015-2020, it can be concluded that the most relevant attributes when choosing the right university would be its reputation and the quality of the studies. The attribute "study system" will demonstrate a decreasing tendency (as anticipated considering that the overall study system is similar at all universities in the region).



Graph 1. Model diagram with the expected behaviour functions- attributes of the decisive character

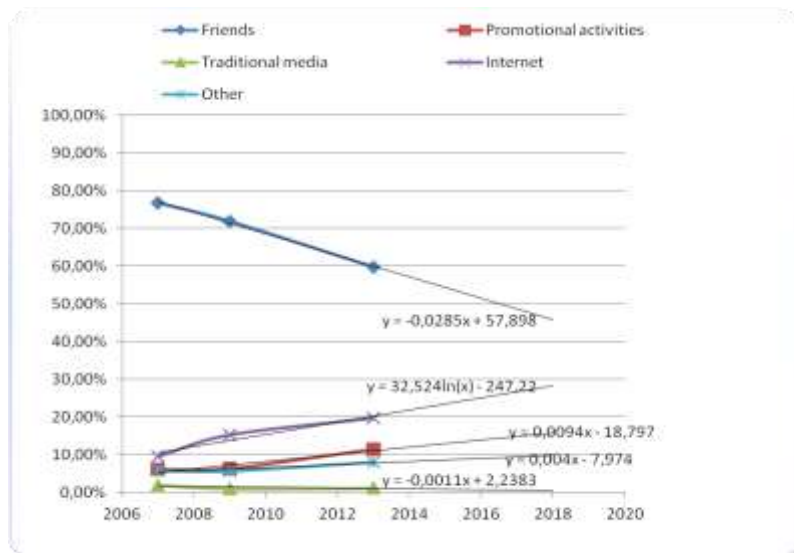
However, the conclusion should be made with reservations since the attribute "university reputation" did not reach the peak of interest in 2020 as the attribute "study system" did (41.8 %).

The attribute "good employment opportunities" did not demonstrate the expected growth, which does not mean that a different sample (especially from 2014-2015) would assign greater importance to this attribute, having in mind the ongoing recession in Serbia and Europe.

Table 5 and Graph 2, were designed to present the respondents' behaviour for different sources of information.

Table 5. Real and modeled values in % according to factor-source of information

Source of Information	Friends	Promotional activities at schools	Traditional media	Internet	Other
2007	76.70%	6.10%	1.90%	9.50%	5.80%
2009	71.90%	6.30%	1.00%	15.20%	5.60%
2013	59.80%	11.40%	1.10%	19.70%	8.00%
2015	49.16%	15.05%	2.28%	24.53%	8.99%
2017	43.21%	17.01%	2.05%	27.91%	9.82%
2019	37.26%	18.98%	1.82%	31.28%	10.66%
2018	40.24%	18.00%	1.93%	29.59%	10.24%
2020	34.29%	19.96%	1.70%	32.97%	11.08%



Graph 2. Model diagram with the assumed behaviour functions-source of information

Having examined the model for the period 2015-2020, it could be noticed that friend recommendations (word-of-mouth) will still remain the most important source of information, though with a significant decrease, while the Internet will feature the most significant growth rate as a factor representing a source of information. The results obtained for "source of information" should be taken as an indicator of future trends, especially if we take into account rapid development and large use of the Internet, in relation to the period when this survey was conducted and the sample was formed.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In accordance with the results obtained, prospective students are primarily interested in university reputation, which supports the first hypothesis. Shah, Nair, Bennett (2013) have conducted research at five private higher education institutions in Australia. According to the results obtained, the main factors affecting the students' choice are: the student's perception of the opportunities available at the university, such as learning environment, quality of teaching staff; quality of study programmes; number of graduates, etc. The results show that around 60% of students enrolling in private universities were mainly motivated by reputation of a higher education institution. Keling (2007) stated that the most influential factor that students would consider when selecting the institution was its reputation. Briggs (2006) also concluded that the university reputation is a very

important attribute that could be assessed prior to making the final decision. Communication, environment, reputation, innovation, financial capacity, social responsibility, quality management, greatly affect the process of building reputation of an education institution, which ensures competitive advantage and loyal service users in the long run (Gajić, 2012).

Research results show that the emphasis of university marketing activities should be on combining modern media (Internet), but should not undermine the importance of personal contacts in communication with prospective students (promotional activities at schools, friends, family). The analysis of the results indicates that modern sources of information (Internet) and promotional activities at schools exhibit a growing tendency and are important for gaining students' trust. The results support the second hypothesis that there is a significant correlation between personal contacts with the teaching and non-teaching staff and the choice of university.

The most common form of marketing communication is related to certain elements of traditional communication mix (Armstrong, Kotler, Harker, & Brennan, 2009). Numerous studies show that student recruitment is successfully carried out through events organized at the university, presentations at high schools, communication with the teaching and administrative staff.

Universities combine traditional solutions, such as websites and billboards, with creative methods, including computer games and competitions (Nedbalová, Luke Greenacre & Schulz, 2014).

Modern media point out to the development of a new effective platform for promotion of higher education institutions. It is necessary to include social networks (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and other social media instruments) in marketing strategy in order to facilitate exchange of information and establish close contacts with prospective students.

In a multichannel marketing area, several contact points should be formed with students. Establishing close contacts with students and getting responses from present and prospective students via electronic channels (Internet and email), print channels (direct mail, magazines, newspapers), broadcasting (TV and radio), telephone services (telephone marketing) and personal channels (direct sales), is rapidly becoming a prerequisite of successful marketing in higher education market. In order to successfully attract and retain students, it is necessary to be able to understand the market as an individual or assignificant groups of individuals.

The importance of these attributes varies each year. Besides the above-mentioned, the employment opportunities (Popović, Stanković, Đukić, 2015; Kabak, Dagdeviren, 2014) represent an attribute which deserves more attention in the future research. The respondents did not consider Belgrade as a place to study and tuition fees that significant when making the final decision.

Students' perception of the attributes assessed when choosing the university has confirmed that reputation and the quality of studies are the key factors that students take into consideration when choosing the most adequate higher education institution. Those who collected information from friends and via the Internet were most interested in the study system, reputation and the quality of studies.

Also, the research has pointed out the sources of information that prospective student mostly rely on, as with development of new communication channels, the importance of information and its delivery assumes new dimensions. Prospective students should choose the university and the study program that corresponds most to their interests and capabilities. When making a final decision, the students have certain expectations concerning the university, study program, teaching process and future career prospects.

Predictions of a demographic change and current trends in higher education market point to a continuous need for the analysis of theory and research related to the process of selecting the appropriate university. The main limitation of this study is that this research was conducted on a sample including only freshmen attending study programs (faculties) in Serbian at Singidunum University. Hence, future research should also include the first-year students from other Universities, as well as those attending study programs in English.

Higher education institutions compete for students on both national and global level. Cubillo (2006) highlights that the process of choosing a higher education institution is very complex, in particular when the analysis is conducted with foreign students. Also, a deeper analysis of enrolment preferences using the focus groups with freshmen and graduates can be the basis for further research, as well as the evaluation upon completion of studies- whether their expectations have been fulfilled.

The expected model of behavior of prospective students is hypothetically presented using the regression analysis - the method of least squares. A hypothetical model was presented for predicting the behaviour of the respondents in the observed five-year period, depending on the following variables: university attributes and source of information. According to this model, "friends" will still remain the dominant source of information, but with a significant decrease, while the "Internet" exhibits a significant growth as a source of information. On the other hand, the model shows that the dominant attribute will be university reputation, while the quality of studies exhibits a continuous growing tendency. The attribute "study system" exhibits a decreasing tendency, as anticipated, but it will still have the prevailing importance in the observed five-year period, as the attribute "university reputation" will not reach the peak of interest in 2020 as the attribute "study system" did (41.8 %).

It is necessary to constantly improve the communication strategy in a contemporary environment, in particular in Serbia, whose higher education market has been undergoing transformation for over a decade. Such changes have been accompanied by numerous political, economic and social crises, as well as greater openness towards the current trends in the region and globally. Considering the benefits of globalization and such trends, we believe that the future marketing research activities should be oriented towards performing a thorough analysis and identifying efficient marketing strategies in communication with prospective local and foreign students.

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КЉУЧНИ ФАКТОРИ УСПЕШНЕ КОМУНИКАЦИЈЕ ВИСОКООБРАЗОВНЕ ИНСТИТУЦИЈЕ СА БУДУЋИМ СТУДЕНТИМА

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Резиме

Променљиве друштвено-економске прилике у Србији, негативан демографски тренд, раст незапослености, али у исто време потенцирање нових стручних знања и вештина – довеле су до велике конкурентности на тржишту образовања. Високообразне институције морају стратешки да се посвете комуникацији са будућим студентима имајући у виду улогу појединих атрибута универзитета и значај одређених савремених комуникационих канала. Резултати спроведених истраживања у иностранству указују на то да се будући студенти пре свега интересују за репутацију универзитета, али међу значајне факторе који утичу на избор универзитета студенати су истицали и следеће: могућности које нуди универзитет, локација, природа и квалитет студијских програма; достигнућа дипломираних студената, технологија која се користи, услови плаћања школарине, понашање наставног или ваннаставног особља, проценат дипломираних, могућност запошљавања итд. Репутација мора да се промовише кроз актуелна средства комуникације, али у

комбинацији са традиционалним медијима. Циљ аутора био је да се испита значај појединих атрибута универзитета: репутација универзитета, систем студирања, квалитет студијских програма, Београд као место студирања, школарине и добре могућности запошљивости, али и канала комуникације путем којих се будући студенти највише информишу (пријатељи, промоција у школама, традиционални медији, интернет и остали извори) како би донели праву одлуку о избору универзитета. Подаци су прикупљени у периоду од 2007. до 2013. године.

Добијени резултати указују на то да су интернет, препоруке пријатеља и презентације у средњим школама најефикаснији комуникациони канали, а репутација универзитета, систем студирања и квалитет студијског програма представљају најзначајније атрибуте у процесу доношења одлуке да се упише одређени факултет. Конкретније, будући студенти који су прикупљали информације преко пријатеља и путем интернета највише су се интересовали за систем студирања и репутацију, односно квалитет наставе. Општи закључак је да би савремени универзитети своје маркетиншке напоре требало да усмере на комбиновање актуелних медија, али не би требало да запоставе промоције у школама, препоруке пријатеља, који и даље представљају поуздане изворе. С обзиром на то да Србија већ читаву деценију пролази кроз процес тржишне трансформације високог образовања, аутори сматрају да постојећа студија може бити корисна у сагледавању важности утицаја појединих атрибута универзитета приликом дефинисања његове комуникационе платформе.