



VILNIAUS GEDIMINO TECHNINIS UNIVERSITETAS
VERSLO VADYBOS FAKULTETAS
VERSLO TECHNOLOGIJŲ KATEDRA

Dovilė Fiodorovaitė

**AUKŠTOJO MOKSLO INSTITUCIJOS E-MARKETINGO MODELIS
HIGH EDUCATION INSTITUTION E-MARKETING MODEL**

Baigiamasis magistro darbas

Verslo vadybos studijų programa, valstybinis kodas 62603S113

Informacinės veiklos vadybos specializacija

Vadybos ir administravimo mokslo kryptis

Vilnius, 2010

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TVIRTINU

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Pagrįsti problemos aktualumą ir išanalizuoti užsienio bei Lietuvos autorių mokslinę literatūrą internetinio marketingo tema. Atlikti apklausą, skirtą studentų nuomonei apie aukštojo mokslo institucijų interneto svetaines, jų svarbą, internetinio marketingo komunikacijos priemonių naudojimą bei jų efektyvumą iširti. Sudaryti aukštojo mokslo institucijos e-marketingo modelį bei pateikti išvadas.....

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Autorius **Dovilė Fiodorovaitė**

Vadovas doc. dr. **Arnoldina Ona Pabedinskaitė**

Kalba

lietuvių

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Anotacija

Baigiamajame magistro darbe nagrinėjama informacinių ir komunikacinių technologijų įtaka bei svarba šiuolaikinės visuomenės gyvenime. Interneto evoliucija paskatino verslo operacijų perkėlimą į virtualią erdvę. Ypatingas dėmesys skiriamas marketingo funkcijoms. Baigiamajame darbe analizuojama internetinio marketingo sąvoka, teoriniai modeliai, internetinio marketingo komunikacijos priemonės, jų efektyvumas. Nagrinėjami interneto svetainių sėkmės faktoriai bei įrankiai komunikacijos proceso tarp aukštojo mokslo institucijos ir busimų bei esamų studentų efektyvumui gerinti. Remiantis internetu vykdytos esamų bei busimų studentų apklausos rezultatais sudarytas aukštojo mokslo institucijos internetinio marketingo modelis.

Darbą sudaro šios dalys: įvadas, internetinio marketingo teorinė dalis, praktinė dalis, išvados, literatūros sąrašas.

Darbo apimtis – 69 puslapiai be priedų, 27 paveikslai, 2 lentelės, 50 bibliografinių ir 4 interneto šaltiniai.

Atskirai pridedami darbo priedai.

Prasminiai žodžiai: informacinės technologijos, aukštojo mokslo institucija, internetinis marketingas, internetinio marketingo komunikacijos priemonės, interneto svetainė.

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Supervisor **doc.dr. Arnoldina Ona Pabedinskaitė**

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Annotation

The final master degree thesis examines the influence and importance of information and communication technologies in the life of modern society. The evolution of Internet has fostered the transfer of business operation to virtual environment. A particular attention is given to marketing functions. The final thesis analyses the concept of internet marketing, theoretical models, internet marketing communication tools and their effectiveness. Further, web site success factors are examined, as well as tools that could improve the efficiency of communication process between high education institutions, prospective and current students. An online survey helped to explore the opinion provided by current and prospective students about high education institutions' web sites, the use of internet marketing communication tools and their importance, according which an internet marketing model was created.

The thesis consists of the following parts: introduction, theoretical part, practical part, conclusions and references.

Thesis volume: 69 pages without appendixes, 27 figures, 2 tables, 50 bibliographical and 4 internet references.

Appendixes are presented separately.

Keywords: information technologies, high education institution, internet marketing, internet marketing communication tools, internet web site.

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Introduction

The twentieth century will be remembered for the rapid changes in technological and political upheavals that changed the life of so many people. Some inventions are of such life-changing significance that they make everyone sit up and take notice. Few technologies can be considered revolutionary regarding the impact they had on society. One from the list is the Internet as a mean of communication. Many people in countries with Internet access have made use of this technology for myriad of reasons, including education, entertainment, information, business and communication. The internet has been a catalyst for change in the way people communicate and has drawn the attention of diverse bodies including government, public sector organizations, educational establishments and many more.

The Internet and related information and communication technologies help organizations to increase the efficiency in both their internal and external processes. From a business perspective, the Internet has had a profound effect on the way firms operate, how they communicate with others, what products they produce, how they deliver products and services, and how they seek competitive advantage. The Internet has changed the “rules” of trading by presenting new challenges and opportunities and altering the way firms engage and build relationships with customers.

Lithuania is a share of a global higher education market and the survival in this market can only be based on being competitive in the world and the European higher education area. Higher education has become the same place for competition as one exists in industry, trade, etc. That means to be constantly prepared to adequately respond to changes and able to solve difficult financing, quality, management problems. The most actual problems of high educational institutions nowadays are education quality, approachability, content, openness and efficiency. Institutions compete not only for scientific achievements, but also for attracting new students, higher financing, greater choice of study programs, high education quality, employees' loyalty. The optimization of high education institution activity is impossible without employment of marketing solutions. Because of a constant competition in this particular market, institutions are obliged to look for new means of user satisfaction. The expanded delivery of products, increased efficiency of customer services and general results of activity are available with employment of modern internet marketing tools the most effective of them being an internet web site. An internet web site is an important mean for an educational institution to spread the information about itself, study programmes, help prospective students during enrolment and serve them later during the study process.

The problem is that many web sites nowadays are being used only as online brochures, or are company orientated without customer approach. Many companies create corporate web sites that basically say what these companies want to say, instead of executing them in such a way – that every

target visitor could find what he/she wants to know. A communication between an educational institution and its customers – students - is long-term; this is the reason a web site has to do the most to help both students and institution to make that communication the most efficient. It is important to find out how such web sites of educational institution are perceived by prospective and current students, analyse their importance and find out the most suitable solutions to increase the satisfaction of their users.

The problem of the diploma thesis is the determination of internet marketing tools that make a web site of high education institution an efficient communication tool between students and institution.

The objective of the diploma thesis is to create an internet marketing model for high education institution that would help to increase the efficiency of communication between current and prospective students and the institution.

The following *tasks* were formulated:

- To accomplish the literature analysis on internet marketing;
- To study the benefits of communication technologies and to reason the use of internet web sites in order to increase the efficiency of communication;
- To do the research in order to find out the opinion of prospective and current students about high education institutions' web sites and the effectiveness of internet marketing tools that are being used;
- To propose an internet marketing model for high education institution that would help to increase the communication between students and the institution.

The master degree consists of two major parts. The first part talks about the scientific literature analysis on the topic of internet marketing and starts with the development of information and communication technologies, the adoption of them in business operations and the advantages they provide. Regarding the fact that the Internet is the most obvious result of ICT development and an example of fast spread all over the world, we analyse the benefits provided by the Internet and the successful transfer of marketing operations to digital environment. Later in the work we analyse various internet marketing communication tools, their advantages and shortcuts and come to the conclusion that internet web sites are the most powerful tool that marketers can employ and which is able to perform many marketing functions online. Literature analysis demonstrates different models of the success factors that help to create an effective web site.

A research that helps to find out the prospective and current students' opinion about high education institutions' web sites and the effectiveness of internet marketing tools that are being used is carried out in the second part of the diploma thesis. The importance of high education institutions' web site is being analysed. Survey participants express their opinion about various internet marketing tools and their preferences regarding them. Results are being analysed and discussed. Going further, an

internet marketing model for a high education institution is created. The success factors are being defined and combined with the goals of educational web site. Each of the goals is analysed separately outlining major internet marketing tools that the model suggests, based on the opinion of survey respondents. The proposed model is supposed to help high education marketing specialists to exploit the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies, increase the efficiency of communication between an educational institution and its target customers and to achieve a competitive advantage in the sector among other educational institutions.

1. Internet marketing

The attributes of the last century could be characterized as rapid development of production technologies and productivity what led to saturation and shortage of markets. This could be the focal point, when the leading positions were taken not by production functions, but by sales and marketing. The most important goal of every business was not to produce, but to sell its product/service. This was what caused the informational revolution – information and knowledge became the cornerstones of every economy and the strategic resource for every business unit. A very important factor is the fact, that information has to be used efficiently, that's why the development of information and communication technologies came along.

1.1. ICT AND BUSINESS VALUE

Modern information and communication technologies (ICT) nowadays are probably being used in every sphere from social to business activity, including production, services, customer services, management systems, banking, education and etc. and the role of ITC is still continuing to grow. Information and communication technologies are one of the basic priorities of research and development in the information society. In recent years, analyses on the impact of ICT on business and economic environment have been widely addressed by policy makers, technology developers, and science and business societies more and more often.

The impact that ICT made to our life or business is huge and further possibilities - infinite. Fast development of ICT has determined the growth of all business and public sectors and has given business and other social activities new mediums to interact with each other. The development of information and communication technologies, the possibilities that opened up with adoption of them in everyday business operations are broadly discussed in scientific literature.

The rapid development of ICT created conditions for businesses to expand and reorganize their processes in that way, which leads to better performance results and became the basic precondition for acquiring competitive advantage. M. Porter (1985, p. 369) supports the idea by proposing an illustration of what impact ICT makes on the whole business value chain (Figure 1). Information and communication technologies have a direct impact on all primary and secondary activities of the company, what leads to increase in production value. Up-to-date ICT helps to process, store and transmit information. This is the reason why information technologies have quickly spread and still continue spreading in all spheres of our life - scientific, manufacturing, services and private.

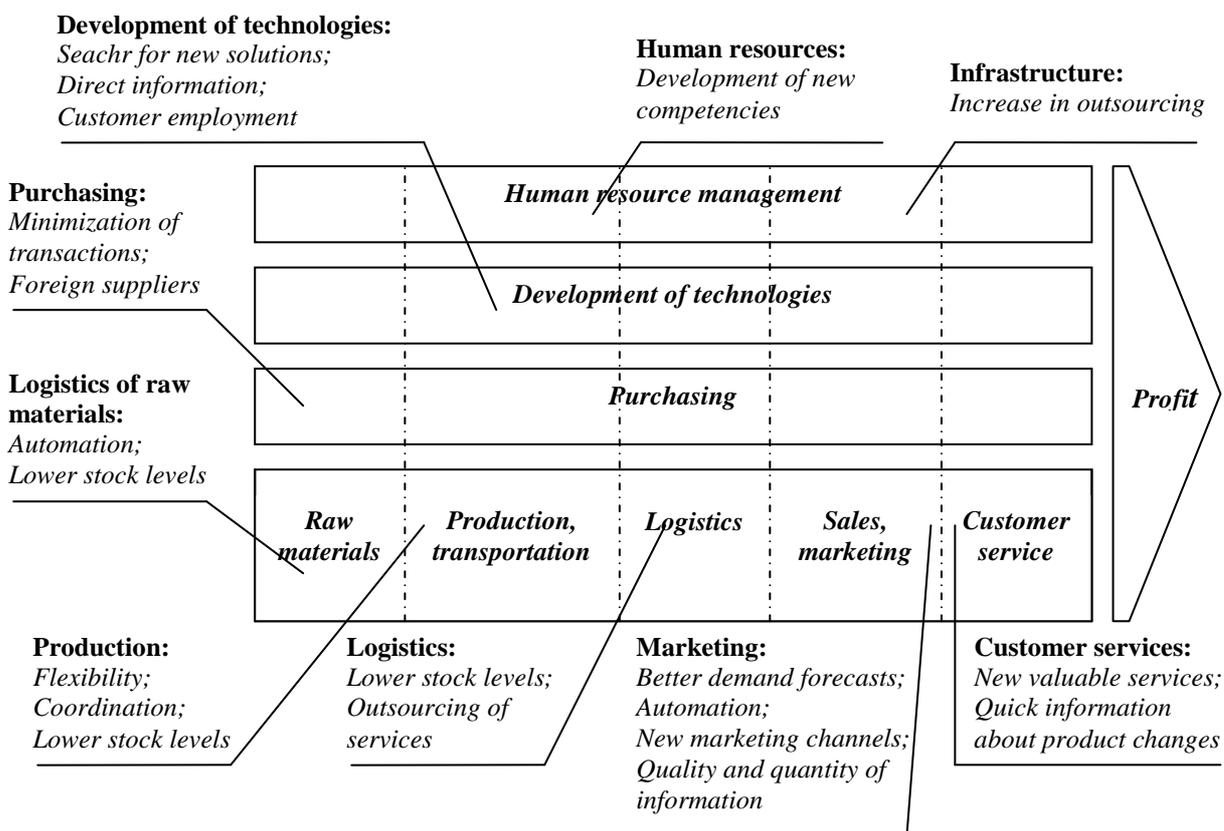


Figure 1: Impact of ICT on business value chain (Source: Porter M.E. 1985)

A complementary idea is proposed by K. Fletcher (1995, p.143), who states, that information technologies create sources of advantages – higher capabilities, competitive resources.

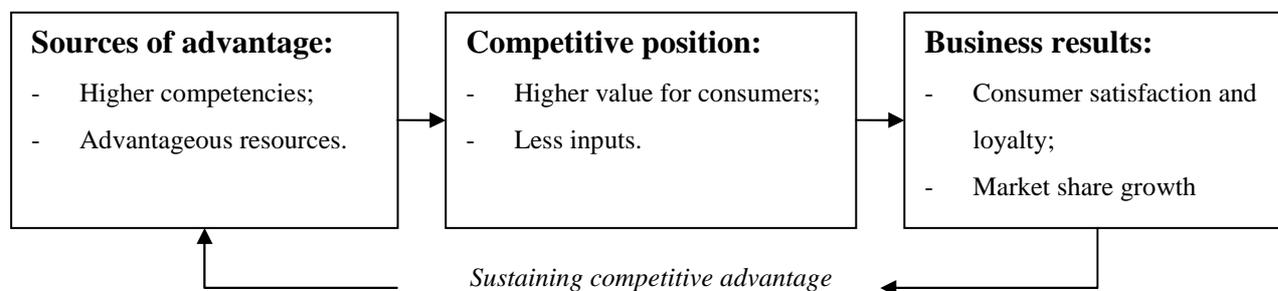


Figure 2: Elements of competitive advantage (Source: Fletcher K., 1995, 141 p.)

These advantages help to achieve competitive position in the market – create higher value for consumers, minimize inputs and reach competitive position, which determines positive business results – consumer satisfaction, loyalty, market share growth, higher turnover, profit, etc (Figure 2). Author emphasizes the importance to sustain these competitive advantages, which will continue to result in expansion of activity, better business results.

Probably the main advantage of ICT is that it speeds up the connection between the two most important markets of buyers and sellers (Figure 3). This connection through traditional channels of communication is much slower. One of the supporters of this idea is G. Ofner (2004, p. 40), who says, that one of the biggest advantages of information technologies is speed.

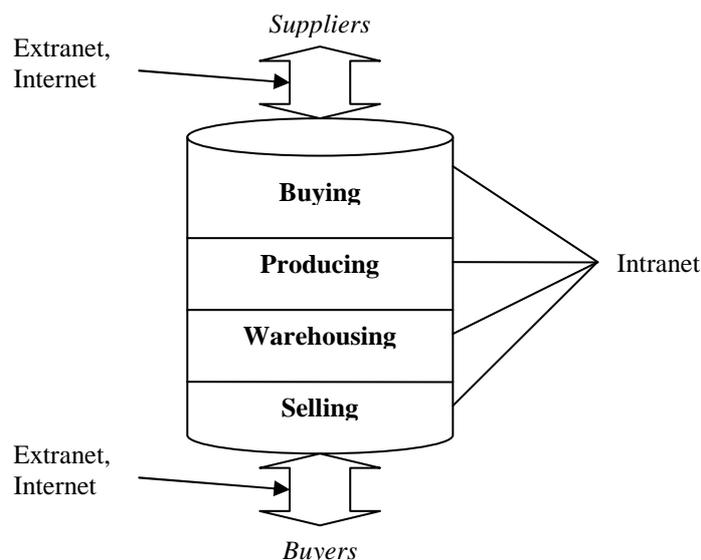


Figure 3: ITT in business activity (Source: Ofner G., 2004, 39p.)

Speed is important factor in nowadays life, and is one of the key determinants for success. This feature is valid not only for business activities, but all other human activities as well and this is the reason information technologies are being adopted by all spheres so fast. One of the most obvious results of ICT development and an example of fast spread all over the world is the Internet.

1.2. INTERNET AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet Protocol Suite (TCP/IP) to serve billions of users worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of millions of private and public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope that are linked by a broad array of electronic and optical networking technologies.

People in 250 countries use the Internet today. There are many services available through the Internet, everything from searching for information, electronic newspapers and e-mail, to discussion groups and ordering of goods and services. Anyone can be present on the Internet through specially written files, or web pages. These appear on the web site, which Internet users can visit, browse, explore in detail, and sometimes interact with. The Web consists of an enormous amount of web sites and a web site can be located on any web server connected to the Internet. Every web site has its own address, which is referred to as URL (Uniform Resource Locator). So called hypertext links connect the pages to each other. By clicking on the hypertext link a user can move from one web site to another.

The Web is popular as a commercial medium due to its ability to facilitate global sharing of information and resources and its potential to provide an efficient channel for advertising, marketing and even direct distribution of certain goods and information services (Thomas L., Michael G., 1996).

According to M. Kiani and G. Reza (1998, p. 185) the Web's potential to support business activities seems almost unlimited.

There are many advantages provided by various authors in favour of the Internet, for example: Internet is open and global (Naughton J., 2006, p. 280); S. Collin (2000, p. 167) says that Internet provides new means to reach customers, is limitless; Internet creates virtual environment for interaction, raises challenges and competencies for users (Jagdish N., et al. 2001, p. 419). T. Bernstein et al. (1996, p. 27) provide a very extensive list of business related Internet advantages:

- Ability to reach global audience – reaching more than 190 countries, the World Wide Web is very cost-effective medium to publish information;
- Operates 24 hours, 7 days a week – from the consumer's perspective as well as from provider's business can be consumed at any time. This fact makes the Internet the most efficient business machine to date;
- Publishing information on the internet is relatively inexpensive – information is distributed to millions of users at a lower cost;
- Product advertising – the Web allows a business to provide timely information on product or service, and the customer is able to make up a decision based on online product/service comparison;
- Distribution of product catalogues – it used to be very costly in terms of time and money to publish and distribute a catalogues. The Internet give another option – update is possible at any time based on various changing market conditions;
- Online surveys – they are performed cheaply and quickly. The databases can then be used to keep a pulse on various opinions and needs of customers;
- Timely announcements – with no virtual lag time, announcements can be distributed to millions of users in a timely manner;
- Technical support – can be provided to users with new information or findings' updates;
- Online discussion forums – they help to find out the opinion and interest of customers and to get know them better;
- Customer feedback – the Internet is ideal for obtaining customer feedback, which can then be read and responded immediately;
- Immediate distribution of information - all new information is immediately available to millions of users, is less costly than publishing;
- Ease of integration with internal information systems;
- Incorporation of multimedia – is one of the major advantages, which helps to display visual and audio information;

- Formatting capabilities – published content can be richly formatted by using various tags and graphic formats. In addition to this, various interactive controls can also be added to web pages. This capability helps web site content developers to create “active” web sites.

The development of the Internet has determined the appearance of *e-business models*. E-business is an overarching term that describes how an organization uses the Internet/Web to transform organizational performance. Electronic business, commonly referred to as e-business, may be defined as the application of information and telecommunication technologies in support of all the activities of business (Beynon-Davies P., 2004, p. 49). Examples of e-business initiatives include Intranets, self-paced e-learning programs for employees, online payroll services, knowledge management systems and other.

There are four most common e-business models observed in the history – three of them business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C) and consumer-to-consumer (C2C) are developing very fast (Figure 4).

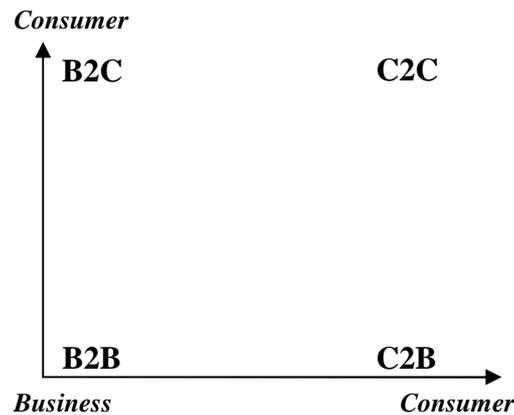


Figure 4: Business relationship matrix (Source: Jackson, P. et al. 2003, 18 p.)

Quite recently, e-business initiatives have started to spread in governmental sector as well with the appearance of such interaction models as government-to-business (G2B), government-to-citizen (G2C), government-to-government (G2G).

Internet and information technologies enable businesses to obtain all dimensions of values - help to reduce costs involved in the delivery of digital products and customer support. Web sites are a major source of data relating to consumer buying habits. Such data provide the possibility of developing a more intimate relationship with customers. In their efforts to obtain business values, business often follow a phased life-cycle pattern in establishing web sites and that can be seen in Figure 5.

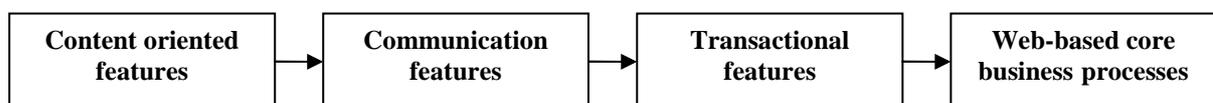


Figure 5: Evolution of web initiatives (Source: Chaudhury A., Kuilboer J. P., 2002. 20 p.)

Rayport and Jaworski (2002, p. 52) in their work give similar four stages e-business development model. They state that organization seeking to benefit from activities in the Internet has to pass the following four stages:

1. *Being in Internet.* Internet site creation first provides information about company, products and services to its customers.
2. *Interaction.* Internet use for interaction with customers: e-mail, interviews and feedback.
3. *Transactions.* Internet use for transactions with customers concluding, control and maintenance.
4. *Co-operation (collaboration).* Use of the Internet for interorganizational activity, which can be available and useful for the company and its partners”.

The use of ICT in all type of business or public activities creates competitive advantages, expands possibilities to act faster and execute business processes more efficiently. This was a background for successfully transferring marketing activities from traditional channels to new channels of communication.

The use of Internet in marketing operations. The Internet and the World Wide Web have had a transformational impact on all functions of the corporation. The marketing function has, arguably, seen the greatest change. Companies now routinely use these information and communication technologies to build brands, facilitate and track consumer communities, share information, disseminate messages, provide customer service, build promotional campaigns, and, in general, gain a competitive edge in the cluttered marketplace.

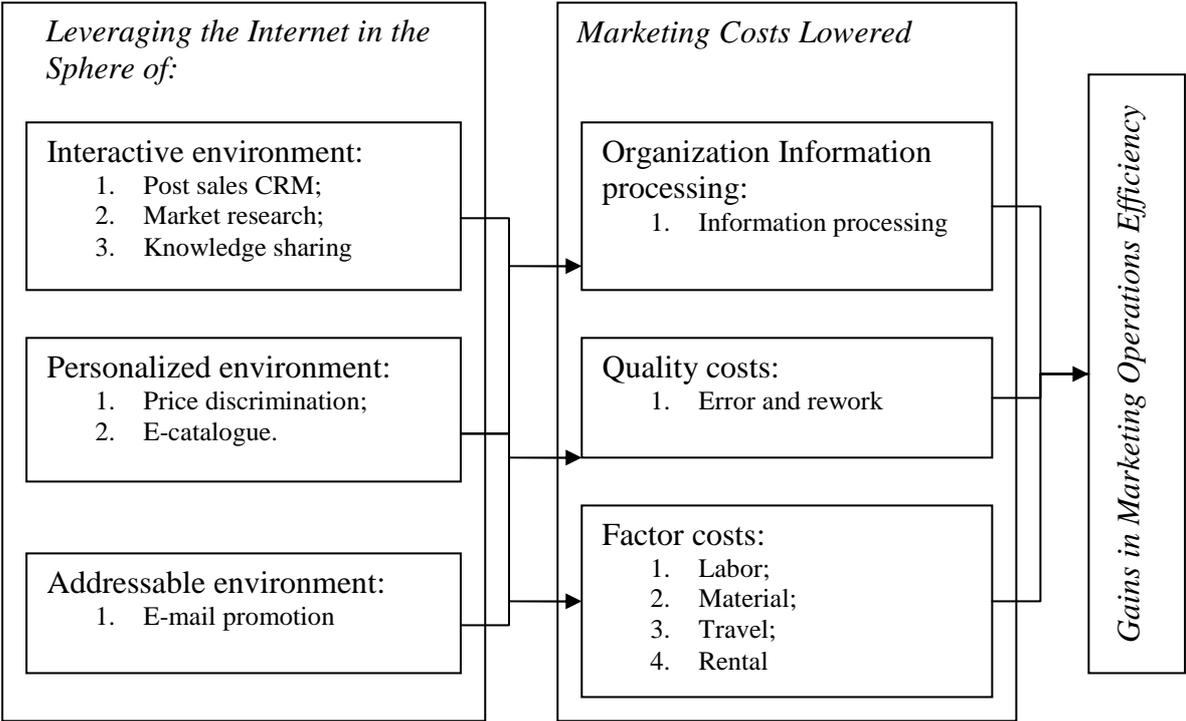


Figure 6: Internet for enhancing marketing operations efficiency (Source: Kalaignanam K. et al., 2008, p. 301)

Internet in marketing operations could be analysed in a lot of dimensions. Kalaignanam, Kushwaha and Varadarajan (2008, p. 301) provide a structured view (Figure 6) how the use of Internet could leverage such spheres as interactive, personalized or addressable marketing environments. Going back to high education, it is important to mention that one of the most characterizing features of it is the consumption of the service, which is prolonged and requiring constant interaction between service provider and consumer, that is why the idea of using such concept as interactive environment is very useful and such aspects as post sales customer relationship management or knowledge sharing are of prime importance. Enhancing the use of Internet in all these spheres, result in lowering of marketing costs, what in turn results in gains of marketing operations efficiency.

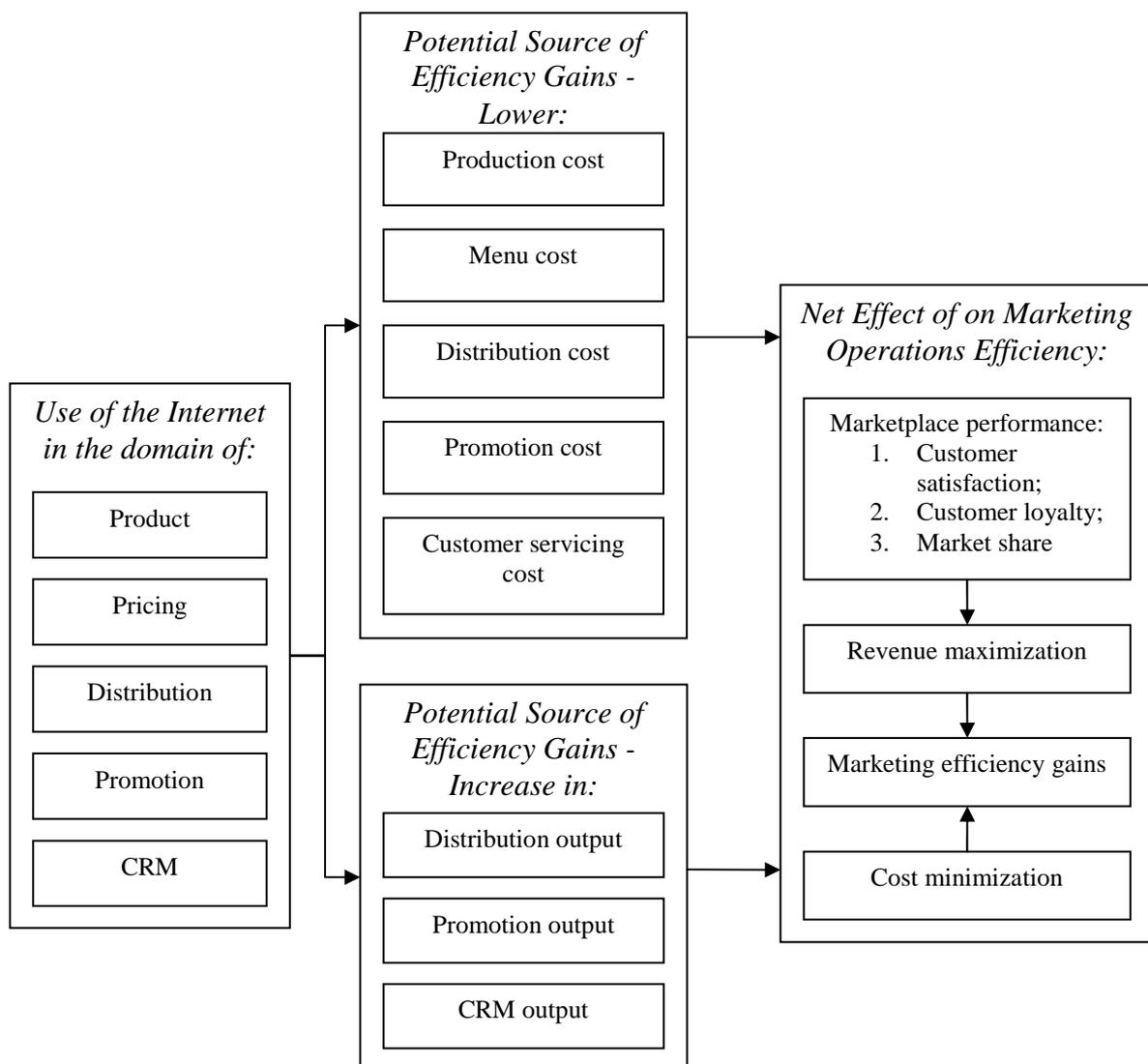


Figure 7: Potential of the Internet for enhancing marketing operations efficiency: a marketing mix centred framework (Source: Kalaignanam K. et al., 2008, p. 306)

Another dimension offered by the same group of authors illustrates the effects that the use of Internet makes to marketing operations, which are centred on the marketing mix (Figure 7). Employing

the Internet in marketing operations, business can increase the potential gains and benefit from lowering production, menu, distribution, promotion and customer servicing costs. On the other hand business is able to increase its efficiency gains in distribution, promotion and customer relationship management outputs. The reduction of operational costs and the increase of operational output lead to overall effect on marketing operations efficiency. Better results are also seen through marketplace performance, taking into account increased customer satisfaction, developed customer loyalty and expanded market share. These gains let the company to maximize its revenue, while the operational cost minimization leads to general cost minimization. Again, talking about high education, promotion of services and customer servicing are the aspects that could be greatly utilized by the Internet.

A. Chaudhury et al. (2002, 12 p.) also agrees that the Internet is firmly established as a new marketing tool - it has become an integral piece of the marketing mix, spawning new products and serving as both a digital distribution channel and electronic storefront. It is also a strong medium for communication with target audiences. In this function it is similar to a magazine or television except that the Internet allows two-way communication. The Internet is a medium for communication whose time has come.

To sum up, we can declare, that ICT is being successfully employed in all business and public spheres but the marketing operations have seen the greatest change. The Web has become extremely popular as a communication channel and a commercial medium due to its ability to facilitate global sharing of information and resources and its potential to provide an efficient channel for advertising, marketing and even direct distribution of certain goods and information services.

1.3. INTERNET MARKETING CONCEPTS

Internet marketing, also generally publicly referred to i-marketing, web-marketing, online-marketing, or e-marketing, suggest that it is probably primarily concerned with marketing of products or services over the Internet. There are many definitions of internet marketing in scientific literature. Theoretically this is a much broader concept, which not only mentions marketing of goods or services online, but also integrates the rest of marketing objectives. C. Combe (2006, p. 118) states: “*Internet marketing* is the use of electronic communications technology, such as the Internet, to achieve marketing objectives”. Another supporter of this idea is internet marketing specialist D. Chaffey, who on his personal website explains that *internet marketing* is achieving marketing objectives by applying digital technologies. These digital technologies include Internet media such as web sites and e-mail as well as other digital media such as wireless or mobile and media for delivering digital television such as cable and satellite. D. Chaffey again (2006, p. 38) defines internet marketing as “...the heart of e-business...adding value to products, widening distribution channels, boosting sales and after-sale service, while getting closer to customers and understanding them better”. J. Strauss and R. Frost

(2001, p. 26) suggest that *internet marketing* refers to the use and application of electronic channels in marketing operations such as planning and executing tasks, allocating resources, promoting, pricing in order to foster the communication between a company and customer and help to reach mutual goals.

Ph. Kotler, G. Armstrong, L. Saunders, V. Wong (2005, p. 49) provide their own understanding of *internet marketing* concept, which says that it is a form of direct marketing using dialogue information and Internet technologies, which create two-way communication systems and connect buyers and sellers.

Summarising the literature and applying all scientific suggestions we can propose a definition which would say that internet marketing is seeking to achieve all marketing objectives by employing digital technologies in order to foster the so much important communication between a company and its consumers and achieve mutual goals.

One of the reasons why many businesses, and in particular e-businesses, go horribly wrong is often because these objectives are not clearly agreed and companies keen to get on with it jump straight to tactical internet marketing tools (such as web sites or banner ads) without first agreeing clearly defined internet marketing objectives and strategies. PR. Smith and D. Chaffey (2002, p. 51) argue that a business must first answer such questions as – what are we trying to achieve; what is the ultimate goal; why are we getting into e-marketing; how e-marketing will help us to reach the objectives; what are the benefits? Authors outline five broad benefits, reasons or objectives of internet marketing, which are:

- Grow sales (through wider distribution, promotion and sales); although this may not be practical for all products, an online presence is still important in supporting the buying decision leading to sales through traditional channels. An online presence also offers opportunities to sell into new markets and reach particular segments.
- Add value (give extra benefits online); could be done at different stages of buying process, whether pre-sales, during or post-sales support.
- Get closer to customers (by tracking, asking questions, creating a dialogue, learning about them); customers are easily accessed through chat rooms, questionnaires, web logs, databases so that their attitudes, interests and buying patterns are learned.
- Save costs (of service, sales transactions and administration, etc.);
- Extend the brand online (reinforce brand values in a new medium).

As observed in the practice, internet marketing is aimed to reach the following specific goals:

1. To improve company's general image;
2. To increase brand identification;
3. To spread the information about the company, its history and policies;
4. To increase sales;

5. To advertise a particular product or service;
6. To expand customer service activities and make them more efficient;
7. To maintain relationships with customers;
8. To maintain relationships with community;
9. To cooperate with representatives of the similar industries;
10. To share recommendations;
11. To enhance communication within the company among employees;
12. To communicate with suppliers and other intermediary parties.

The above mentioned objectives of internet marketing such as grow sales, get closer to customers, extend the brand and other, all could be summarized by one major goal of all current businesses - to increase the efficiency of communication between a company and target audiences. The increase in communication quality and efficiency determines the success in all other goals. In today's competitive and complex business environment, organizational communication and its quality may determine its fate. Organisations that seek to attract the interest of current users, have to constantly disseminate information about themselves and their products or services, communicate with client, be able to demonstrate advantages simply and clearly, and show the customers respect not only when they intend to buy, but even if they only search for information. Talking about high education the communication function should receive a particular attention. Starting with the online visual and brand image, going through reaching for potential students and possibly recruiting them online, the most important of adding value by transferring many of services to online presence have to be taken into account. Having said this, the function of communication has to be explored more deeply.

1.4. INTERNET MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Today's educated society that is always on the run chooses simpler, more interesting and operational methods to obtain information. Modern technologies, that have changed the delivery, allocation, demonstration and retaining of information, help an organization to deliver more telling information (illustrations, sounds, effects) more effectively (allocating it quickly and purposively). The effective transfer of information to audiences makes it easier to sell goods or services, shape the company's image and reputation, to solve problems.

Modern technologies with new forms of marketing communication, not only provide advantages for customers, but save a lot of time, let them to participate in information exchange more effectively, give opportunities to personalize information – to opt out what is a relevant and meet personal goals better. They also provide new instruments and create invisible methods how to know the society better, and this knowledge allows to achieve efficiency in overall business (Christensen, L.T. et al., 2005, 157).

Marketing communication is understood as a process, when a target audience of customers is being reached providing purposeful information through correct communication channels in appropriate time (Clow K. E., Baack D., 2002, 141 p.). The marketing communication process involves nine elements: sender, receiver, message, media, encoding, decoding, response, feedback and noise, the major parties being the sender and the receiver. The major communication elements are the message and the media. It is defined as a sum of all marketing support elements that helps the company to communicate with its target customers. According to Bussy et al. (2000, 138 p.) it is also a heart of management of relations between an organization and stakeholders, for it is by communication with these stakeholders that the organization shapes and forms the relationships with them. Marketing communication is comprised of all promotion elements: advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations (Strauss J., Frost R., p. 452; Kotler P., Armstrong G. 2005, 720 p.)

The use of communication technologies could be: personal, without intermediary parties (most often eye-to-eye); personal communication with intermediary parties (telephone, e-mail, internet chat); mass communication (internet, books, magazines, newspapers, etc). Willing to reach a bigger audience and transfer the information effectively, a company needs to use all of these communication means, combine them accordingly the characteristics of consumers.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, fast development of information technologies has a direct positive influence on any organization, open up new spheres of communication, improvement of products and services. Latter decades are characterized by the intensive use of Internet in strategic and tactical marketing decisions. Fast technological development determines a constant change of internet marketing communication are the reasons why any company should observe it closely in order to keep on track. For several years, a revolution in marketing communication has been developing and dramatically altering the traditional view of advertising and communication media. This revolution has the potential to radically change the way companies do business with their customers (Hoffman et al., 1996, 56 p.). More and more companies nowadays start to use Internet as a major mean of communication that is able to keep active and significant relationships with target audiences and that requires a new approach to communication. Customers are able to receive more information about a wider range of products or services, producers, prices.

D. Chaffey et al. (2006, 38 p.) describes eight key changes in communication characteristics as marketers move from traditional to new media:

1. From *push to pull* – traditional media is known as “push” media which reflects the dominant flow of information from company to consumer; but the Internet is an example of “pull” media, where customers actively seek out the information they require from the websites.
2. From *monologue to dialogue* – The internet allows two way interaction between company and customer through which information can be gathered and relationships developed.

3. From “*one-to-many*” to “*one-to-one*” – The internet allows communications to be tailored so for individual segments or even customers.
4. From “*one-to-many*” to “*many-to-many*” – this model is valuable for providing information, but also allows rapid circulation of bad publicity.
5. From “*lean-back*” to “*lean-forward*” – websites can be described as lean-forward media because visitors give their individual attention.
6. *New media changes the standard communication tools*;
7. *Increase in communication intermediaries* – this would include new models such as portals, search engines and specific online communities, as well as traditional channels;
8. *Integration* – it is important not to focus on one communication media, but rather seek for integration.

According to J. Davis (2000, 95 p.) Internet represents the paradigm change in corporation communication by creating two-way communication model that provides a constant information exchange between an organization and its target audiences. A very big advantage of internet marketing is an ability to create an interactive relationship with a customer. This means, that it is possible not only to provide information about itself, but also to find out the opinion, preferences and comments of a consumer. It is possible to create fan clubs or social networks of a particular company or particular brands. Interactivity is the main feature of Internet through such means as e-mail, discussions, questions and answers and other that enables a company to communicate with its customer. A company has to employ such internet marketing communication tools, which would help to take advantage of all opportunities that are provided by interactivity – the most important being reaching and maintaining long-term relationships with customers that are based on individual needs. This contact is most usually initiated by a consumer, who seeks for information, wants to communicate, receive answers and by doing so finds him-/herself in the middle of the structure of marketing communication and manages it.

1.5. INTERNET MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The number of internet marketing communication tools is constantly growing every day and there is no common agreement how these tools should be named and what amount of them used. Table 1 provides few insights suggested by various authors. Internet marketing communication tools are organized in four major categories suggested by J. Strauss and R Frost (2009, p. 452). These are: internet advertising, marketing public relations, sales promotion and direct marketing.

Table 1: Internet marketing communication tools (provided by author)

Internet marketing communication tools		Author				
		J. Strauss, R. Frost, 2009	L. Harris, Ch. Dennis, 2008	H. Berkeley, 2007	S. Collin, 2000	K. Maddox, D. Blankenhorn, 1998
Internet advertising	Online ads	+	+	+	+	+
	E-mail advertising	+				+
	Sponsorships	+	+			
	Affiliate marketing		+			
	SEM		+	+		+
	Mobile advertising	+				
Marketing public relations (MPR)	Web site	+		+	+	
	Virtual communities			+	+	
	Discussion clubs and forums			+	+	
	Online events	+				
	Press releases					+
	Podcasts	+				
	Online buzz	+				
Sales promotion	Sampling	+				
	Contests, sweepstakes, games	+				+
Direct marketing	E-mail	+	+	+	+	+
	Permission marketing	+	+			
	Viral marketing	+	+			
	Text messaging	+				

There is an obvious tendency, that with the years the number of internet marketing tools is constantly growing, and probably new tools that will appear in the future. This is the reason a company should keep on track with changes in internet marketing communication. Further, all major categories will be analysed in detail.

1.5.1. Internet advertising

Advertising in non-personal communication of information through various media, usually persuasive in nature and usually paid by an identified sponsor. All paid space on a Web site or in an e-mail is considered as advertising. Internet advertising parallels traditional media advertising, in which companies create content and then sell space to outside advertisers.

Internet advertising in the United States began with the first series of banner ads on Hotwired.com in 1994. According to the Internet advertising expenditure 1996-2007 report by PricewaterhouseCoopers online advertising reached \$1 billion in 1998, grew quickly to \$8.2 billion in 2000, dropped 12.3 percent in 2001 and again in 2002, and has finally reached a tipping point when it jumped to over \$21.1 billion in 2007. Most advertisers now believe the internet to be an important medium for reaching their target markets.

Anything goes with internet advertising: text – from a sentence to a page story – graphics, sounds, hyperlinks, animations. The following descriptions give some impression about internet advertising communication tools.

Search engine marketing. Search engine marketing, or SEM, is a form of Internet marketing that seeks to promote websites by increasing their visibility in search engine result pages through the use of search engine optimization, paid placement, contextual advertising, and paid inclusion. Search engines use “link popularity” in locating and ranking sites. This term refers to both the number of other sites linking to the measured site and especially the importance and relevance of the linking sites. Improving the link popularity raises a site in search engine rankings. In 2008, North American advertisers spent US\$13.5 billion on search engine marketing. The largest SEM vendors are Google AdWords, Yahoo! Search Marketing and Microsoft adCenter. The biggest advantage of search engine marketing is that it drives the traffic to particular web site, businessman are able to compose a project themselves with specific settings, although SEM may very rather expensive.

Online advertising. 1. *Rich media ads.* All ads in this category are interactive, at least offering click-through. By clicking on the ad, the user is transported to the advertiser’s Web site, where the transaction or any other objective is actually received. Some display ads enhance the interactivity by sending the position of the mouse on the Web page and animating faster as a user approaches. Other ads have built-in games, drop-down menus, check boxes, search boxes to engage and empower the user. All the following formats can be rich media (Source www.wikipedia.com): banner ad (an advertising graphic image or animation displayed on the Web site in an application, or in an e-mail); interstitial ad (the display of a page of ads before the requested content); floating ad (an ad which moves across the user’s screen or floats above the content); expanding ad (an ad which changes size and which may alter the content of the Web page); polite ad (a method by which a large ad will be downloaded in smaller pieces to minimize the disruption of the content being viewed); wallpaper ad (an ad which changes the background of the page being viewed); trick banner (a banner ad that looks like a dialog box with buttons. It simulates an error message or an alert); pop-up (a new window which opens in front of the current one, displaying an advertisement or an entire Web page); pop-under (similar to a pop-up except that window is loaded or sent behind the current window); video ad (similar to a banner ad, except that instead of a static or animated image, actual moving video clips are

displayed); map ad (text or graphics linked from, and appearing in or over, a location on an electronic map such as on Google Maps); mobile ad (an SMS text or multi-media message sent to a cell phone).

2. *Transition and floater ads.* Transition ads appear while other content is loading. There are two kinds: interstitials and superstitials. Interstitials are Java-based and represent only 2 percent of all Web advertising expenditures (J. Strauss, R. Frost, 2009). The disadvantage of them is that they give impression of lengthening user waiting time. However, user response to them is good if they are entertaining. Superstitials - are feature videolike ads timed to appear when a user moves the mouse from one part of a Web site to another. An advantage is that they do not slow page download time, nor does the user have the impression that they do.

There are many advantages and disadvantages associated with advertising online. The first aspect of advantages is the World Wide Web opens up new communication possibilities for personalized messages to be delivered to targeted individuals (Davis S., 2000, 113). By positioning an advertisement on a website which relates to the target markets specific interests, interest and further speculation should occur. Advertising online enables target marketing, message tailoring, information access, sales potential, creativity, exposure and speed.

Secondly, online advertising has the capability to reach a global audience at a fast rate. This enables extensive exposure and is an important characteristic of online advertising, and a major component of why online advertising is so successful.

Thirdly, marketers undertaking new possibilities to perform traditional marketing strategies in electronic environments push higher chances to create synergy. D. S. Janal (1995, 47 p.) mentioned that the Internet offers the best multimedia tools for presenting information, through the World Wide Web, a hypermedia environment. It is as further explained that it is a place where marketers can present their information with pictures, animation, sound and text. Indeed the power of Internet has impact on the multitude of advertising formats. This can be seen from the numerous web tools such as banners, rich media, interstitials, and interactive broadband commercials as seen on the websites nowadays. These are the multiple forms of online advertising tools used by advertisers over the time aiming towards developing exciting, interactive, eye catching advertisements that can draw consumers' attention, at the same time increasing their brand or sales online. Strauss and Frost (1999, 202 p.) states that the Net's big strength is direct response advertising where direct response leverages the Internet's unique opportunity for two way communication with consumers. Placing advertising in this environment will grants advertises unique opportunity for in the element of interactivity. The interactive capabilities of "cyber ads" offer key advantages for vendors to establish and maintain dialogues with customers (Janal D. S., 1995, 269 p.).

Even though there are many advantages for companies who advertise online, there are also some disadvantages involved. Disadvantages of advertising online include: measurement problems,

audience characteristics, web snarl, and clutter, potential for deception, costs, limited production quality, poor reach and lack of intrusiveness.

E-mail advertising. This is by far the least expensive type of online advertising. It generally comprises a few sentences of text embedded in another firm's content. Advertisers purchase space in the e-mail sponsored by others (e.g. Hotmail). However, based on the definition of advertising, HTML and multimedia e-mail messages sent from a firm directly to the internet users are direct marketing, not advertising.

E-mail Advertising, as effective as it is has both advantages and disadvantages. It is useful to be well aware of both sides of the coin as one embarks on the use of e-mail for their marketing and advertising. Legal and legitimate use of e-mail advertising involves the use of opt-in e-mail lists. Harvesting e-mails from the visitors to a site will usually produce the most effective e-mail lists. However this can take years to achieve and this fact alone can greatly hinder the progress and success of an online enterprise.

Secondly the volumes of spam messages on the web is so high these days that it becomes difficult for recipients of messages to tell the difference between genuine mail that they have requested to receive and spam. This greatly hinders the effectiveness of email advertising.

The good side is that the advantages of e-mail advertising are numerous and far outweigh the few disadvantages. For starters it is extremely cheap. Companies and businesses are able to send out e-mail messages to literally millions of clients and prospects who have opted to receive their messages at a cost that is close to zero. Then it is instant, recipients are able to receive the message and respond instantly. This is in sharp contrast to snail mail, which usually takes days to arrive and it will often cost a bundle to mail a simple message to a few thousand individuals.

In sending out e-mail messages to a targeted market, a company is more likely to reach only those who need its services, solutions or products without bothering those who do not.

E-mail advertising is also very easy to track. Within a few hours of sending out a message, the marketer can tell how successful their marketing campaign has been by simply counting the click through or hits the target web site has received. This dramatically increases the chances of success because a faulty strategy can quickly be rectified and adjusted or a marketer can even quickly go back to the drawing boards and create a totally new plan to avert what would usually be a disaster in the offline world.

While highly personable e-mail advertising enables to personalize and greet every person that is targeted. This helps in creating a special bond with the prospects and allows a company to build customer and reseller loyalty and acquire new customers.

In conclusion, while email advertising may have few disadvantages, the good outweighs those. By allowing to write personalized, effective opt-in e-mail messages, and distributing to targeted prospects, result in a higher profits from your targeted web site.

Sponsorships. Sponsorships are also called advertorials, integrate editorial content and advertising and are important on the Web because allow great interactivity, helps to build synergistic partnerships to provide readers useful content.

Sponsorship offers the possibility of achieving several goals at once. According to D. Schmader and M. Jackson (1997, p. 128), a company can benefit from sponsorship in many ways, such as: enhancing image/shaping consumer attitudes; driving sales; creating positive publicity/heightening visibility; differentiating from competitors; helping with good "corporate citizen" role; enhancing business, consumer and VIP relations.

Mobile advertising. This is paid public, non-personal announcement of a persuasive message by an identified sponsor; the non-personal presentation or promotion by a firm of its products to its existing and potential customers where such communication is delivered to a mobile phone or other mobile device. Examples of mobile advertising would include: WAP Banner ads, mobile search advertising, mobile video bumpers, interstitial ads in on device portals. [26]

One of the many benefits that mobile marketing works well for is the simple fact that it is personal in nature. Instead of advertising on a huge billboard and hoping that those that drive by will see it, a company is giving personal attention to the individual. This personal touch is quite powerful. Another option is the immediacy of mobile marketing. With hundreds of products coming online each day, it is hard to make one product or one service stand out against the rest. With mobile marketing, the target audience get the message about the business and the products that are available immediately and they can then act on them. Mobile advertising continues to grow as the world becomes even more mobile advanced.

Generally talking internet advertising is good for building brand or product awareness as is effective at reaching wide audiences. Repetition of main brand and product positioning helps to build customer trust. A personal approach of such tools as mobile marketing is powerful, although it is hard to achieve a two way communication.

1.5.2. Direct online marketing

According to the Direct Marketing Association, direct marketing is "any direct communication to consumer or business recipient that is designed to generate response in a form of an order, a request for further information, and/or a visit to a store or other place of business for purchase of a specific product or a service (www.the-dma.org). Armstrong et al (2005, p. 512) suggest that direct marketing is designated both to obtain immediate response and to cultivate lasting customer

relationships. It includes such techniques as telemarketing, outgoing e-mail, and postal mail. S. Harridge-March (2004, p. 284) further states, that the Internet is an excellence channel for communicating with customers on its immediate and direct interaction capability. The ultimate role of direct marketing is to gain a response.

Direct marketing is attractive to many marketers, because in many cases its positive effect (but not negative results) can be measured directly. For example, if a marketer sends out one thousand solicitations by mail, and one hundred respond to the promotion, the marketer can say with some confidence that the campaign led directly to 10% direct responses. The number of recipients who are offended by the junk mail/spam, however, is not easily measured.

While many marketers recognize the financial benefits of increasing targeted awareness, some direct marketing efforts using particular media have been criticized for generating unwanted solicitations, not due to the method of communication but because of poorly compiled demographic databases, advertisers do not wish to waste money on communicating with consumers not interested in their products.

E-mail marketing. At the moment e-mail marketing remains one of the most important communication techniques. E-mail is how people communicate with others. E-mail is a word-of-mouth tool when consumers communicate about products with each other. It is the way companies send promotional offers of company announcements to customers, or communicate anything important and relevant to stakeholders. E-mail is used to build buzz about products. E-mail offers the chance for real dialogue with individual consumers, as well as develops broad and deep customer relationships instead of merely using it to acquire customers.

One of the most important advantages of email marketing is that it allows an advertiser to reach global audience with minimum effort. There is no geographical boundary when it comes to email marketing. Although it is still possible to reach global audience with other offline advertising channels like radio, TV and other printed media, email marketing is definitely the cheapest.

Moving to the disadvantages, C. Y. Yuan (2006) explains that the biggest of them is that emails are sometimes deemed as spam. Today, people are bombarded with lots of unsolicited emails. Email service providers have taken action to enforce more powerful spam filters. Although spam filters are good at blocking spam mails, sometimes they also block legitimate emails too.

Permission marketing: opt-in, opt-out. In order to understand the benefits of using permission marketing, firstly we should understand the concept itself. Permission marketing (also called invitational marketing) envisions every customer shaping the targeting behaviour of marketers. Consumers empower a marketer to send them promotional messages in certain interest categories. Typically, this is done by asking the consumer to fill out a survey indicating interests when registering

for a service. The marketer then matches advertising messages with the interests of consumers. The advertiser obtains the average profile of the consumer.

Thinking about the benefits of using permission marketing, R. C. Blattberg and S. Neslin (2004, p. 38) think that this is all about narrowing down customer base to the people who will truly be interested in particular product. It saves company time, energy, and money, when all of it could be spent on the customers who might really come through. This is the first step in developing strong, intelligent bonds with company's customer base.

Viral marketing. Viral marketing is a technique, when individuals forward e-mail to friends, co-workers, family, and others on their e-mail lists. This is a type of digital word-of-mouth, but not only. This is a combination which makes the use of websites, social networks, emails, and instant messaging. In order to achieve superior results through viral promotion it is important to implement viral techniques that grab the attention of the customers towards products or services.

The advantages of viral marketing are low costs, great reach, high credibility, high efficiency and the possibility of continuous campaign adjustments. Although the downfalls include the extent of the reach of failed campaigns, the lack of control, risks that the viral message is perceived as spam and the limited possibility for segmentation.

1.5.3. Marketing public relations

Public relations (PR) are to build good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favourable publicity, building up a good "corporate image" and handling or heading off unfavourable rumours, stories and events (Armstrong G. et al., 2005, p. 425). In the field of public relations, the use of Internet makes it possible for public relations professionals to communicate with various key constituents without the gate-keeping function of other mass media. According to Jo S., Jung J. (2005, p. 31) the Internet can be used to facilitate traditional methods of PR as well as expand the depth and breadth. The Web can widen the distribution of news releases with a help of such online tools as viral marketing. Smith et al. (1998, p. 75) state that newsgroups and influential discussion groups can be targeted with information

Online publicity offers distinct advantages over traditional public relations. With online services, corporate communicator can take PR into their hands and influence their publics directly as well as build relationships with media (Janal S., 1997, p. 86). The role of web sites in imparting information is both economical and effective, provided that people are persuaded to visit the site, assimilate and believe the information contained therein. The drawback is that the Internet has also the potential to create negative publicity, outside the control of the organization.

PR consist of activities that influence public opinion and create goodwill for an organization among a number of different publics including company shareholders and employees, the media,

suppliers, the local community, as well as consumers, buyers, and other stakeholder groups. Marketing public relations includes brand-related activities and non-paid third-party media coverage to positively influence target markets.

Marketing public relations activities using internet technology include the Web site content itself, online events, discussion forums, online releases for press and many other ways to buzz online. All of these tools will now be characterized separately trying to understand their importance and benefits in the new era of advertising.

Forums. The forum is the formal mechanism the community uses to exchange information, generally through posted messages that are organized into “threads”, which are subject headers for a discussion. Online forums support communities formed around a preferences, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and use of products/services specific interest. One of the benefits of online forums to marketers is that a range of consumer marketing data can be gathered on such communities.

Newsletters. Like print counterparts, electronic newsletters may appear either regularly or irregularly but changes their content. The basic purpose of a newsletter is to disseminate information quickly in a field of interest. Some items that are typically found in a newsletter include research updates, reprints and interviews (Zimmerman J., 2001, p. 94).

Some advantages worth to mention of having a newsletter system are: newsletters help to promote a business. Basically a newsletter motivates customers to buy a particular product/service from particular company; a general newsletter contains articles and an appropriate vision and mission of the business. This information helps customers to understand a business; Newsletters are an effective communication tool. Creative newsletters can be appreciated by the clients and hence increase the communication between businesses and clients. As mentioned above, a newsletter is a cost effective tool, but it can be used as a source of income by putting advertisements in it.

Along with the advantages, the following are two major disadvantages of the newsletter: to receive a newsletter client must provide their email address, which in some cases people reluctant to do so fearing that their email address could be passed to other organisations, resulting hundreds of junk emails; In some cases a newsletter may not be received by the recipient. Reasons for this could be the spam filters used by many people. So a newsletter might not get through to those who have subscribed because is rejected as spam.

Newsgroups. Newsgroups provide a way to share discussion with specialized audiences. They are essentially electronic bulletin boards that are available for Internet users to post their questions and replies without charge. Newsgroups function like mailing lists in some ways, but they offer several different methods of sending messages. A user can post a message for everyone in a group or respond to someone else’s comments on a particular topic. (Heinen J., 1996, p. 11)

Newsgroups help you solve many of the same problems that mailing lists are good for, but newsgroups have some additional advantages. Newsgroups are generally a bit more structured, so they are likely to be around longer. They are also easier to find, and more likely to have a moderator (person or program in charge, who keeps the group civil and on - track). In order to avoid answering the same questions all the time experienced members of the group post a FAQ with the most common questions and answers.

Online community. An online community depends on combining communication and content to foster the exchange of information. Some sites build community through online exchange chat rooms, discussion groups and online events (Strauss J., Frost R., 1999, p. 462).

In real life most communities are formed through geographical proximity, but online communities are mostly formed around a shared interest or need, and are a powerful tool for building trust and relationships, word of mouth marketing, and knowledge acquisition and exchange.

Web site. The importance of a web site as an online marketing communication tool has been widely discussed in literature and has probably received the most of attention comparing to other internet marketing communication tools. J. Strauss and R. Frost (2009, p. 469) state that many web sites are designed to serve as public relations vehicles. S. Jo and J. Jung (2005, p. 32) agree that the World Wide Web could facilitate media relations, employee relations and communications, government and customer relations and communications, due to its interactive function. For any company with an online presence, the web site is the platform used to communicate with customers and to facilitate business transactions. The web site may also become one of the main factors in judging a corporation. Web sites are the main interface between business and consumers (Kim S. et al., 2003, p. 20).

According to S. Janal (1997, p. 64), the web site is the key tool communicators have because it serves as an electronic brochure, including product and company information. Web sites can entertain (games and electronic postcards), build communities (online events, chat rooms, and e-mail discussion groups), provide a communication channel with customers (service and feedback), provide information (product selection and purchase, recommendation, referrals, etc) and assist in other ways.

C. Liu and P. K. Arnett (2000, p. 25) say that the primary functions of a business web site can provide are advertising, sales support, customer service, public relations and e-commerce. Some web sites are for sales support, while the others can improve the performance of sales and post-sales. A customer service internet site provides a different function. Kent et al. (2003, p. 63) supports the idea by saying that most organizational websites are designed to provide information, to showcase advertising and marketing, and for some customer service communication and feedback. Web sites provide benefits for both companies and consumers. A company can display its identity and advertise its products and services to many interested parties. Also, it can get feedback directly from customers. A web site enhances the company's image and provides tangible benefits both to the organization and

to its leadership. A web site can also improve communications with other corporations, thus improving the efficiency of business process by increasing direct sales and reducing cost.

Azzone G. et al. (2000, p. 472) mentions a characteristic of speed and recognizes that the web site is a new bi-directional and quick communication tool, which allows companies to communicate, sell and/or offer services to their customers using electronic interface, without geographical and temporal limits. The introduction of a web site represents an opportunity to analyze communication strategies and marketing activities of a company. The web site is a formidable opportunity to build consistency in communication. Excellent companies take that opportunity to improve their communication performances, other companies prefer not to touch consolidated internal balances and consequently build inconsistent contradictory web site.

N. M. Bussy et al (2000, p. 138) emphasizes the importance of stakeholders of any business and explains that the rapid growth and adoption of the Internet and the web sites in particular have constituted not only a fundamental change in the nature of business, but also because they have revolutionized the way in which companies communicate with their stakeholders. The Internet has an important role to play in stakeholder service process. A stakeholder in an organization is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievements of the organization’s objectives. These stakeholders may be internal to the organization, such as employees or managerial coalition, or external in a form of suppliers, buyers, local authorities, shareholders, competitors, agencies and the government. Further stakeholders’ comparison is made according the market domains (Table 2). Customers talk not only with a company, but also among themselves, and they can furthermore communicate with other stakeholders, such as employees, government, suppliers, intermediaries and investors. Likewise, all other stakeholders can communicate with the organization, and with each other, and indeed among themselves. Stakeholder communication is no longer unidirectional, and as stakeholders increasingly communicate with each other, the communication becomes infinitely more complex.

Table 2: Comparison of six stakeholder market domains
 (Source: revised from Christopher et al. 2004; Payne et al. 2005)

Stakeholder market domains	Christopher et al., 2004	Payne et al., 2005
Customer markets	Existing and prospective customers as well as intermediaries	Buyers, intermediaries and final consumers
Referral markets	Existing customers who recommend their suppliers to others and referral sources	Customer referrals, non-customer referrals, staff-referrals

Influence markets	Financial analysts, shareholders, business press, government and consumer groups	Financial and investor groups, unions, industry bodies, regulatory bodies, business press and media, user and evaluator groups, environmental groups, political and government agencies, competitors
Employee/recruitment markets	Concerns with attracting the right employees to the organization	All potential employees together with the third parties that serve as access channels
Supplier markets	Traditional suppliers as well as organizations with which a company has some strategic alliance	Strategic suppliers, key suppliers, approved suppliers and nominated suppliers
Internal markets	Internal departments and staff	Follow the segmentation used for potential employees in the recruitment markets

Summarising, the Internet and web sites have become extremely important avenues for firms in many industries to interact with their customers and stakeholders. With the successful adoption of a web site, a company may benefit from facilitation of business transactions and customer relations, as the Web becomes the main interface for interaction between buyers and sellers. A web site serves as an online brochure and works well for providing information. It can also be designed to build online communities or provide sales support and customer service. For whatever reason the web site is designed, it helps to increase the corporate image on the Internet and in general. No other internet marketing communication tool is so successful in providing such a wide range of functions that is why internet web sites, their goals and success factors are analysed in the thesis.

1.6. A WEB SITE – AN ONLINE MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOL

We have agreed that an organizational web site is a massive representational and communicational tool. It helps to promote not only products or services, but the entire activity of an organization, increase brand awareness, introduces novelties and promotions, helps to find out users' opinions, requests and comments. A web site helps to create an image, communicate with stakeholders, it saves time of communication and increases quality of customer service.

Many companies nowadays recognize a need for maintaining a web site, but are not sure how to use it effectively according the laws of communication (Budman M., 2003, p. 15). Many of them have a web site full of brochures and information that is usually being sent to suppliers. A situation among the younger generation of progressive leaders is different. They believe that a web site is not a burden for an organization, but an engine for perfection. In this digital age, other communication tools

are usually found in the web site. This leads to flexibility of uploading, accessing, amending of information quickly and effectively (Chandler R., 2008, p. 62).

A web site may have multiple goals: boost sales, increase brand awareness, provide information and customer service. In order to implement these or any other goals, the activities of web site development should be interconnected with them and a clearly defined vision, and benefits that are being sought. Although organizations have spent millions of dollars on the creation and maintenance of their web sites, they still struggle with how to effectively evaluate user satisfaction and how to find a key to the success of the web site.

Measuring success is a difficult task because the definition of success changes depending on the perspective that the stakeholder adopts. There are two opposing perspectives that can be taken in the determination of success: 1) the website user and 2) the organization or party who hosts the website. From the perspective of the end-users, their expectations need to be met and their interaction with the website has to be a positive experience, in order for the website to be considered successful. From the perspective of the firm, success varies depending upon the objectives and goals of the site. For example, an e-commerce site's objective would be to sell their products or services and to maximize profit. However, the objective of a search engine's website, such as Google.com, would be to quickly gather relevant information in a timely manner with the goal of creating repeat visits. The perspective taken is critical in the determination of success. From the organization's perspective, the definition of success is the website's ability to create an on-going relationship with a consumer (user), which will either immediately or eventually lead to a transaction of some sort (Cao, M., Zhang, Q., Seydel, J. 2005, p. 646).

To understand the factors that impact the effectiveness of the web site better, it is useful to turn on information systems and the studies that examine the effectiveness of information technologies and the adoption of new information systems by an organization.

Many theoretical models have been proposed for measuring success of information systems. Out of them, W. H. DeLone and E. R. McLean's (1992, p. 85) web site success model (Figure 8) is one the most highly cited. By synthesizing previous IS success models, authors' model demonstrates the interplay of six information systems success factors including information quality, system quality, use, user satisfaction, individual impact, and organizational impact. W. H. DeLone and E. R. McLean state: System quality and information quality singularly and jointly affect both use and user satisfaction. Additionally, the amount of use can affect the degree of user satisfaction – positively or negatively – as well as the reverse being true. Use and user satisfaction are direct antecedents of individual impact; and lastly this impact on individual performance should eventually have some organizational impact (1992, p 83–87).

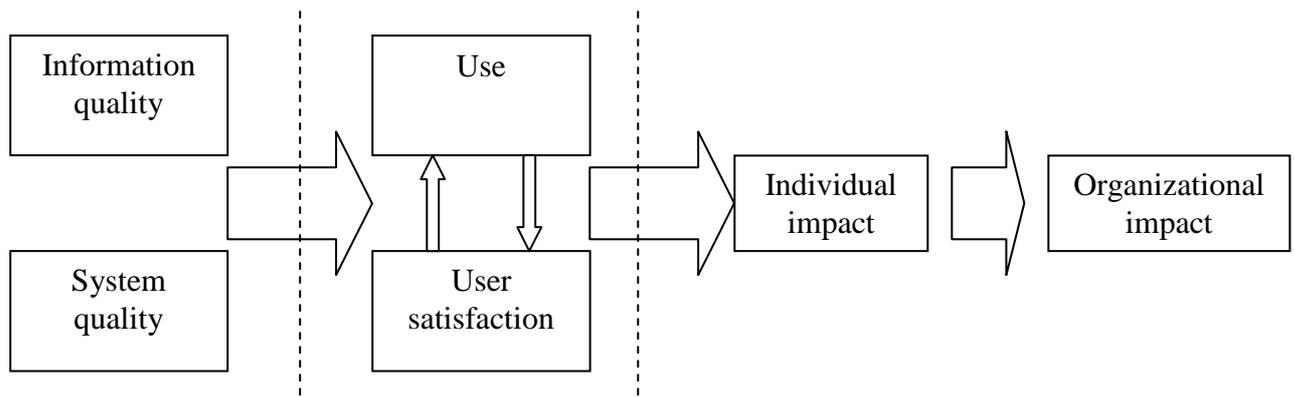


Figure 8: IS Success model (DeLone W.H., McLean E.R. 1992, p. 85)

The success of a web site mostly depends on the opinion of its users, this is a reason an internet web site should be organized so, that it would be able to transfer the biggest attention from an organization to the customer. Yang Y. et al (2006, p. 198) is confident – in order to achieve the success on the Internet, one should follow the guidance of modern marketing and communication rules, evaluate organizational goals and put the biggest emphasis on customers. The extensive knowledge about them allows to create and interesting and useful web site content. It is important to create precise goals, which would be results and future oriented. Only after defining the goals of a web site, it is possible to make sure that every page of a web site encourages a user for an action and leads a company in the way of reaching the defined goals.

J. A. Castaneda et al. (2007, p. 384) have made an analysis of those factors, that encourage an internet user to return to a particular web site and propose an internet web site acceptance model (Figure 9). Authors state that Internet experience plays a big role and those users who have bigger experience concentrate on perceived usefulness. A model is valuable because it points out such internet web site's success factors as: simplicity of use, usefulness, internet experience, but does not explain how to achieve those goals.

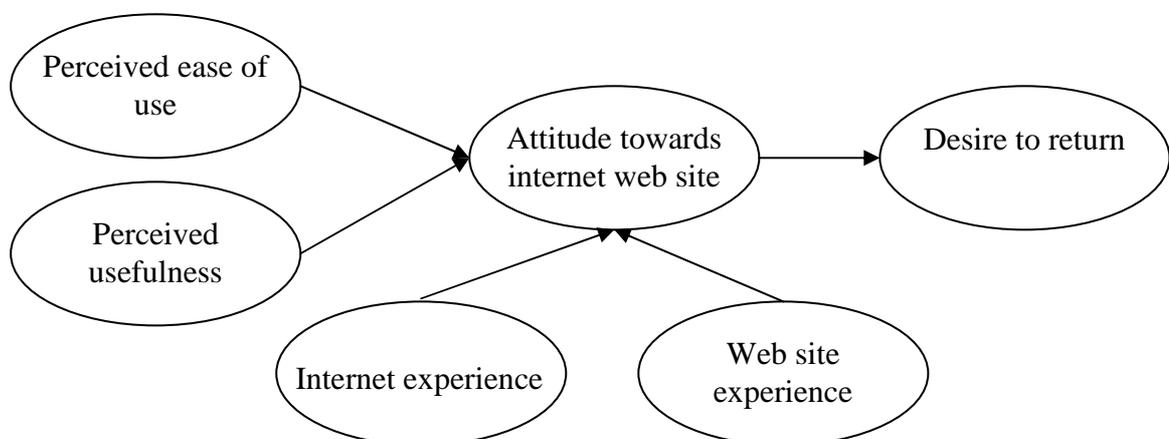


Figure 9: Internet web site acceptance model (Source: Castaneda, J. A. et al., 2007, p. 387)

Another model is provided by T. Ahn et al. (2007, p. 263), who states that user's perception starts from the quality of a web site (Figure 10). A quality concept comprises of such components as system, information and service quality that all determine perceived usefulness, perceived usage simplicity and pleasure. Web site quality secures positive attitude towards it and desire to use and reuse it again. The advantage of the model is that it clearly defines what cause perceived usefulness and pleasure – web site designer should concentrate on such aspects as system quality, information quality and service quality.

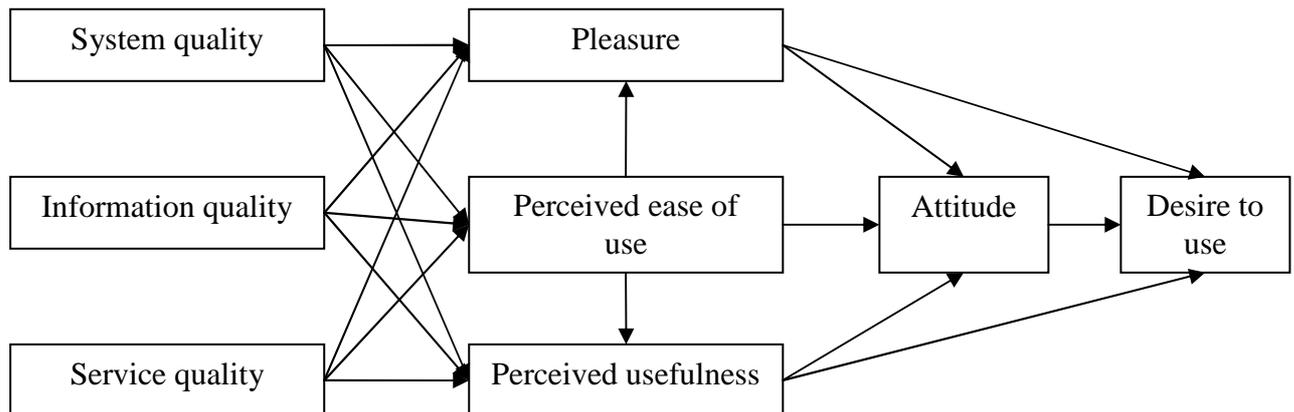


Figure 10: Model of internet web site's qualities (Ahn, T. et al., 2007, p. 264)

J. Ruževičius and N. Guseva (2006, p. 79-83) suggest that for evaluating a web site, a VPTCS model, primarily proposed by Gateau and Sloim (2000, 2001) and which stands for visibility, perception, technique, content and services should be used.

Visibility is the accessibility of a web site to a potential user. Usually this is the first step in the search process that could be fatal in further success.

Perception is usually referred to the first impression of a user. Different interests of system simplicity and integration of fun technologies (e.g. flash) should be matched to achieve the optimum result. The web site has to possess the integral technical aspects while the growing demands of web site users force web masters to amend and improve them constantly.

Technical aspects have to secure simplicity of web site use. Sometimes it is better to opt out several flashing options but to implement an integral collection of constructive ideas.

Content is the factor that is being given the highest importance and the evaluation firstly depends on users, whose needs and interests sometimes change. Information is being treated as essential and complying with web site goals, when it lets the user to execute desirable actions and achieve personal goals (Bernard, 2002). The quickest way to loose the trust of users is to provide information which is out-of-date (Nielsen, 2003).

Service quality. Willing to evaluate the quality of services provided on the web site, it is important to answer the following questions: if those services are often used by web site visitors; are there many complains regarding the quality of services; is there an information what type of services are actually needed by web site visitors; how effective the services are being provided.

McMillan (2008, p.45) outlines a fact that a key to web site success is the content – the most important element. It has to be interesting and relevant for the users. It has to be minded that content defines the tone of a web site and is a factor that influences the type of audience that visit a particular web site. Interactive content and personalization secures, that a visitor most probably will come back. J. Santos (2003, p. 238) opposes the idea by saying that a good content of a web site is not only articles, information and design, but a close connection and mutual communication with the target audience, guidance about a company, its believes, new products or services.

Another approach to web site success is presented by L. Ch. Schaupp, W. Fan, F. Belanger (2006), who state that building a successful website it is imperative that the design matches the organization’s objectives, which should be well defined. Clearly, different types of websites will have different goals. Thus, determining success across websites is both goal and context specific. One measure of website success is satisfaction, and the resulting intent to return to a website. L. Ch. Schaupp, W. Fan and F. Belanger (2006) propose a model (Figure 11) for evaluating web site success. It starts with success measures such as information quality, system quality, perceived effectiveness and social influence that lead to outcome measures – web site satisfaction and intention to reuse a web site.

Apart from talking about the same factors of information, system, effectiveness quality, this approach takes into consideration an important factor of social influence.

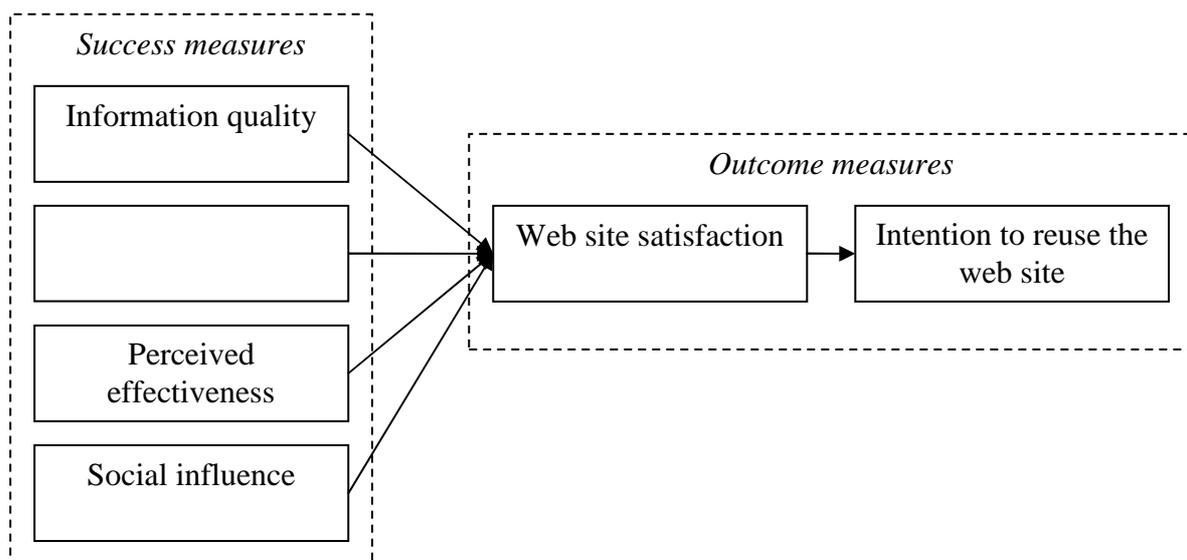


Figure 11: Web site success model. (Source: L. Ch. Schaupp, W. Fan, F. Belanger. 2006.)

D. Chaffey et al. (2006, p. 38) proposes the following success factors for a web site:

- *Attraction* – it is important to secure for a user to be able to access a desired web site. Such aspect as using key words lead to successful a search;
- *Community* – the possibility to pull a community in a web site. This is a big advantage in order to achieve user come back;
- *E-commerce* – a web site, the design of it and a content have to directly or indirectly lead to any kind of transaction;
- *User orientation* – this is a design oriented to different target groups, so that each of them could find required information easily;
- *Credibility* – using the Internet any organization has to manifest credibility for its users. This is possible through brand awareness and information reliability.

C. Ranganathan and S. Ganapathy (2002, p. 459) in their survey have derived four key dimensions of business-to-consumer (B2C) web sites – information content, design, security, and privacy – that have an impact on the online purchase intent of consumers.

Summarising it is important to mention that most of the authors agree on such major factors of web site success as content quality, technical quality, service quality and online community. These are only very general ideas and could be differently interpreted in the context of separate companies. For example, technical quality of web sites, which represent an airline company providing online transaction via global reservation systems, or a bank with all online banking services, would probably meet very high requirements. But the local bakery shop would be much more modest in this sense. Any other company could be famous for its online community strength, where customers are willing to share ideas with each other and suggest product or service improvements. The idea says that it is important to unite the internet marketing and communicational tools on the web site in order to find a unique success combination. Sometimes, smaller companies achieve that more easily, because they don't have to juggle with complex brand names, languages, geographical variations, but larger organizations that are able to combine the information into one web site and thus show integral personality can achieve a lot.

Educational institutions as any other business or social activity nowadays could not survive without marketing. Incorporating information and communication technologies into marketing operations they have already acknowledged the importance of having an internet web site, which could help to communicate the ideas, increase the quality of customer service and provide many other functions successfully. It was mentioned before that the customers of educational institution develop long-term relationship with service provider, thus the quality and efficiency of these relationships determine customer satisfaction.

Whether or not intended, an educational institution's web site communicates a brand and vision. Some key questions to ask when developing or reworking a web site include: How does the

web site convey higher educational institution's image/brand? How do prospective students perceive the institution? What does the functionality of the web site say about the desire to engage prospective students in a dialogue? In short, does the web site allow initiating and developing a relationship with prospective students as they explore their higher-education options or whether the web site is user-friendly for those currently in education and wishing to receive high quality of service online? And many more. Though higher education web sites will never completely replace printed brochures, course catalogues and a physical visit to the campus, web site is one of the key medium for reaching prospective students. The Internet should be viewed as a medium that complements other traditional communication channels. By taking the time to consider how institutional web site represents the brand, engages prospective students through interactive features, and complements traditional marketing methods, higher educational institution can stay one step ahead.

2. Internet marketing for high education institution

2.1. ADOPTION OF SURVEYS IN MARKETING RESEARCH

One of the most appropriate methods for obtaining analytical marketing data is a use of various types of marketing research methods. Marketing research is the systematic gathering, recording, and analysis of data about issues relating to marketing products and services. The term is commonly interchanged with market research; however, expert practitioners draw a distinction, that a market research is concerned specifically with markets, while marketing research is concerned specifically about marketing processes.

Consumer marketing research is a form of applied sociology that concentrates on understanding the preferences, attitudes, and behaviours of consumers in a market-based economy, and it aims to understand the effects and comparative success of marketing campaigns. The field of consumer marketing research as a statistical science was pioneered by Arthur Nielsen with the founding of the ACNielsen Company in 1923.

Thus, marketing research may also be described as the systematic and objective identification, collection, analysis, and dissemination of information for the purpose of assisting management in decision making related to the identification and solution of problems and opportunities in marketing.[3] The goal of marketing research is to identify and assess how changing elements of the marketing mix impacts customer behaviour.

Once we perform these surveys, we are able to obtain grounded conclusions and create information flows between organization and its end users.

According to V. Kindurys (1998) a marketing research is a complex concept that may comprise all types of research related to marketing management. The very research methods fall into two categories of those based on questioning and the others based on observations. Marketing research methods that are based on questioning again fall into categories of qualitative and quantitative research.

A *survey* – is one of the most widely prevalent types of qualitative marketing research methods. The popularity of the method could be explained by the fact of being relatively simple, cheap, and its possibility to obtain big amounts of important data easily and quickly.

There are following *types of surveys*: written questionnaires, personal interviews, mail questionnaires, telephone surveys, and surveys through mass communication mean for example online surveys and other. The questionnaire is the type of survey that prevails in Lithuania, while interviews and mail surveys are rarer. Questionnaire survey is a technique of gathering important data, where the respondents answer to the questions of the questionnaire themselves. A questionnaire has to possess

the qualities of being clear, reliable and unambiguous. It has to encourage the respondent to collaborate, answer the questions fairly; this is why the respondents' requests and the suggestions have to be taken into account while composing the questionnaires.

K. Kardelis (2002) says that the purpose of the questionnaire questions is to find out as much as possible about the exploratory phenomenon. The questions are like indicators that help us to find the qualities and aspects of the phenomenon. It is important to find those indicators that represent the exploratory phenomenon the best.

With a help of mass communication means, especially the Internet, the execution of researches has become extremely easy consuming less time and saving financial resources. In Lithuania, research Web portals such as www.apklausa.lt, www.e-apklausa.lt , www.publika.lt and few more provide an easy way to create any type of online questionnaires, publish them, forward to target respondents, conveniently obtain and import results to personal computers for further investigation free of charge. Due to these facts the Web portal www.apklausa.lt was chosen to compose, publish the questionnaire and to obtain data for further conclusions and suggestions.

The problem of the research. As discussed earlier, internet marketing is becoming more and more relevant issue for all types of businesses or other non-profit seeking activities and all these activities are facing the true reality - if you are not on the Internet – you are nowhere. But just the fact of being on the Internet is not enough. Proper tools and techniques have to be developed to address target audiences that most probably have different interests, tastes and preferences. This is why the reaction to proposed internet marketing tools most obviously would be different.

The abundance of internet marketing tools present today on the Internet sometimes puts a marketer in an awkward position of being lost, while improperly chosen methods may cause reverse effects on targeted audiences – they may be perceived as irritating and repellent. Suitably chosen internet marketing techniques will increase the traffic to the website, trigger the interests of all groups of visitors, induce them to action and keep the users satisfied with the service.

Talking about high education internet marketing, we first of all focus on educational institutions' web sites that are the prime gates to the most important customers of education – potential or current students. Educational institution's web site itself as a communication channel is able to perform such actions as attract, inform, serve and pull the community, that is why it is important to execute a research in order to find out which internet marketing tools are the most suitable to perform the above mentioned actions.

The goal of research is to collect information about the potential and current students' opinion on the use and effectiveness of internet marketing tools that are or are to be used in educational institutions web site and later using the collected data to propose an internet marketing model for high educational institution.

In order to execute a successful research the following *tasks were formulated*:

1. To compose a questionnaire that would let us find out the general information about the targeted respondents and the specific data related to respondents' preferences of internet marketing tools found on the educational institutions web site.
2. To publish a questionnaire on the selected web portal specifically designed to upload surveys.
3. To collect sufficient data in order to make grounded conclusions and to propose an internet marketing model for educational institution.

Research scenario and procedures. In order to achieve the goal of the research the following procedures were planned:

1. The preparation to the research and composition of the questionnaire (February 1 – March 20, 2010);
2. Publishing of questionnaire and data collection (March 20 – April 20, 2010);
3. Data analysis, interpretation and formulation of suggestions (April 20 – May 2, 2010).

The questionnaire containing 21 questions was composed in Lithuanian (see Appendix 1) and English (analogous translation) languages and both published on the web portal www.apklausa.lt separately. The link to the Lithuanian on-line survey was later forwarded to personal contacts through all types of channels (email, social network web sites, etc) and to university bachelor, master and doctoral degree students. The link to the English version of survey was forwarded to Erasmus students and later to personal contacts abroad.

The survey contains two parts – a short demographical and the main part, although in the main part they could be grouped into blocks according research object. All questions were composed closed and compulsory in such a way to minimize ambiguity and provide clear answers. Some questions contained one or multiple choice answers, while the others were given a score scale ranging from 1 to 10 (10 being the highest score) to find out the effectiveness or importance of those indicators. In that case all provided possible answers had to be evaluated by a score. All respondents had to express their opinion about factors influencing their choice of particular educational institution, information being provided, aspects representing high educational institution on its web site, important qualities of a website, participation in various discussion clubs, ratings, social networks, etc.

After receiving the results from both surveys, most of the answers were later added together in order to provided a single result. Those questions, where the answers by Lithuanian and foreign students were prominently different, were discussed separately to emphasize the disagreement in opinion groups.

2.2. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

2.2.1. Socio-demographical portrait

Respondents’ general demographical characteristics were needed to draw a concise social-demographical portrait. Significant socio-demographical characteristics in this research were – respondents’ gender (see Figure 12) and study level - master, bachelor or doctoral degree (see Figure 13).

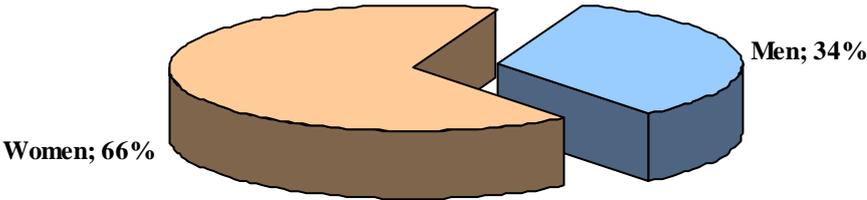


Figure 12: Respondents, by gender

Respondents’ age was omitted because it in most cases could be related to study level. The survey was addressed to school students as well, and the assumption that only 11-12 grade students would be interested replying the questionnaire was made.

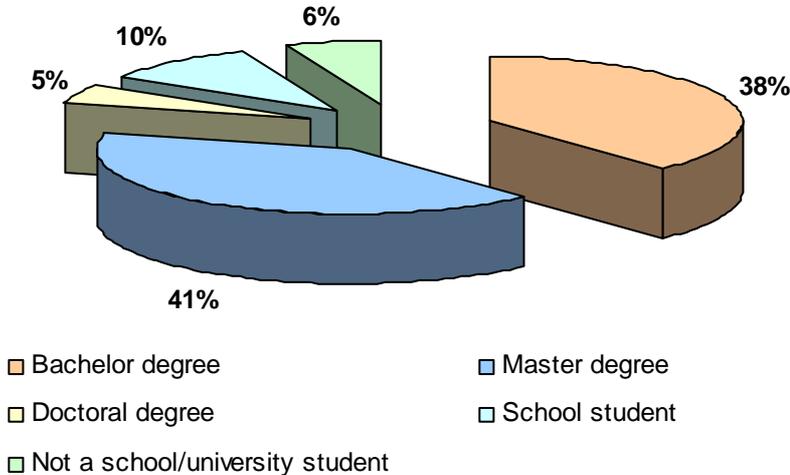


Figure 13: Respondents, by study level

As we can obtain from Figure 13, there are two major groups of respondents. These are master degree students, with a score of 41 % and bachelor degree students reaching 38 % of total number of respondents. Doctoral degree students always represent the smaller numbers of those studying at universities, thus 5 % is quite a number. The opinion of those respondents, who are neither at school nor at universities, is also valued assuming their have already graduated having fresh memories about the issues being discussed on the survey.

Talking about foreign respondents, it is worth mentioning, that there were no school or master degree students. Majority of respondents were again bachelor or master degree.

A short conclusion could be made that an average respondent was a woman currently studying bachelor or master degree.

2.2.2. Internet using habits

Internet usage. Talking about high educational institution internet marketing we first of all have to find out how much time the respondents spend on the Internet daily and what type of information is most of the time being searched. The question is important because it may reveal the respondents' priorities and needs.

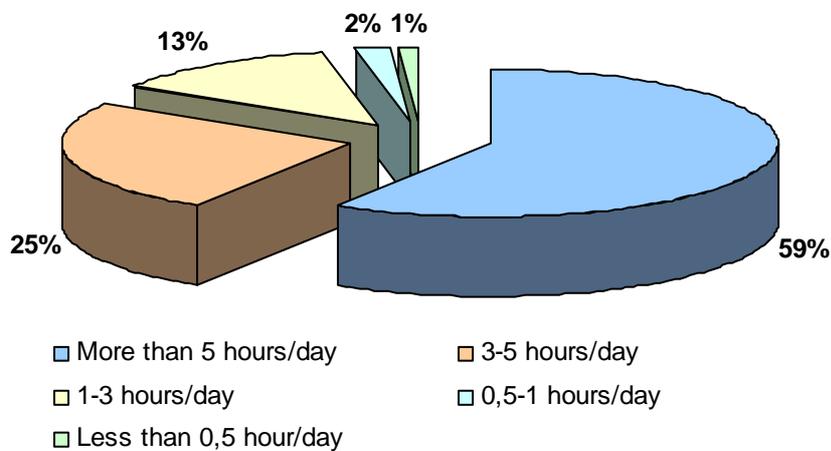


Figure 14: Internet usage, daily

The figure above provide the astonishing truth that even 59% of respondents spend more than 5 hours a day browsing the internet, searching for particular information, etc. This is a lot of time having in mind that the second highest score of 25% spend 3 to 5 hours on the Internet daily. If we put these two groups together that would make 84% of respondent spending vast amounts of time on the Internet.

Type of information searched on the Internet. Another important issue was to find out the type of information respondents look for on the Internet (see Figure 15). It is not a surprise, that the Internet is an important aspect in our lives. It has become the gates to the world of information. It is being used for work, studies, leisure time, entertainment, and for all other possible reasons. Given in this research, we have found out that almost all respondents use the Internet for leisure time needs (93%). The second most popular answer indicated that the Internet is being used for studies (89%). We may only assume that information related to studies most probably is communication with university staff or academic personnel, preparing homework, searching for related news, etc. Work and entertainment take up consequently the 3rd and 4th places with scores 77% and 74%.

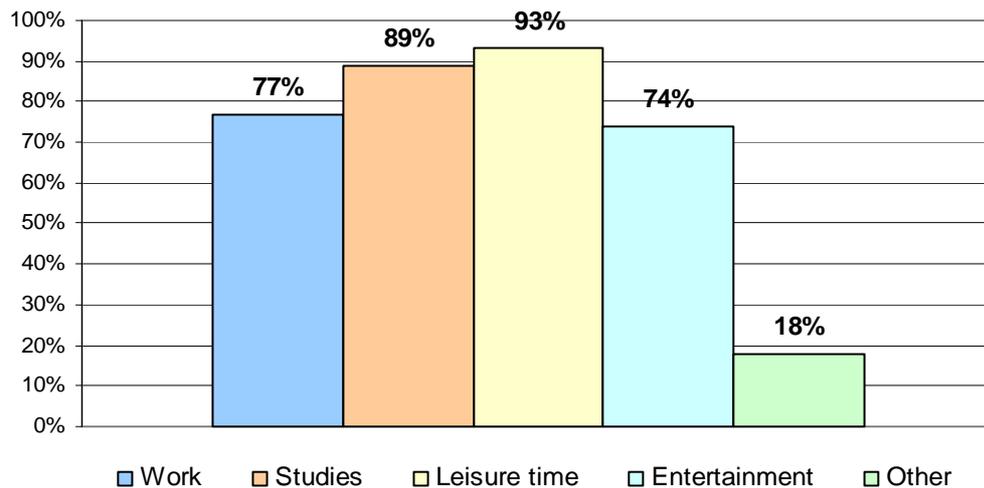


Figure 15: Information respondents look on the Internet for

To sum up, we are able to say, that according to the results of the survey, an average Internet user, in our case a woman currently in bachelor or master degree, spends more than 5 hours a day searching on the Internet for information relating leisure time and studies.

2.2.3. High education: what, where, why?

Going on, the following block of four questions were primarily composed to discover school graduates' opinion about sources where information related to studies in educational institutions was looked for and where, to their opinion, it was provided the most comprehensively. Factors that made the greatest influence on their decision to study at a certain educational institution were also important being either information provided, family's advice, friends' references, etc. Although these questions were primarily composed having in mind the school graduates, university students' opinion is also valuable as have recently gone through that, or will have to face that choice one more time in case they decide to proceed their studies to master or doctoral degree.

Sources of information. Figure 16 shows us that the leading source of information regarding studies in educational institutions is educational institution's website that scored total of 79% and followed by various publications (49%). Multiple answers were possible, having in mind that respondents would probably not focus on one information source only.

The results let us conclude how important educational institution's web site is an information related to study programmes, admission dates, other general issues relevant to entrants has to be carefully presented, organized and placed. Only one fourth of survey participants admitted "open-door" days at educational institutions to be effective source of information.

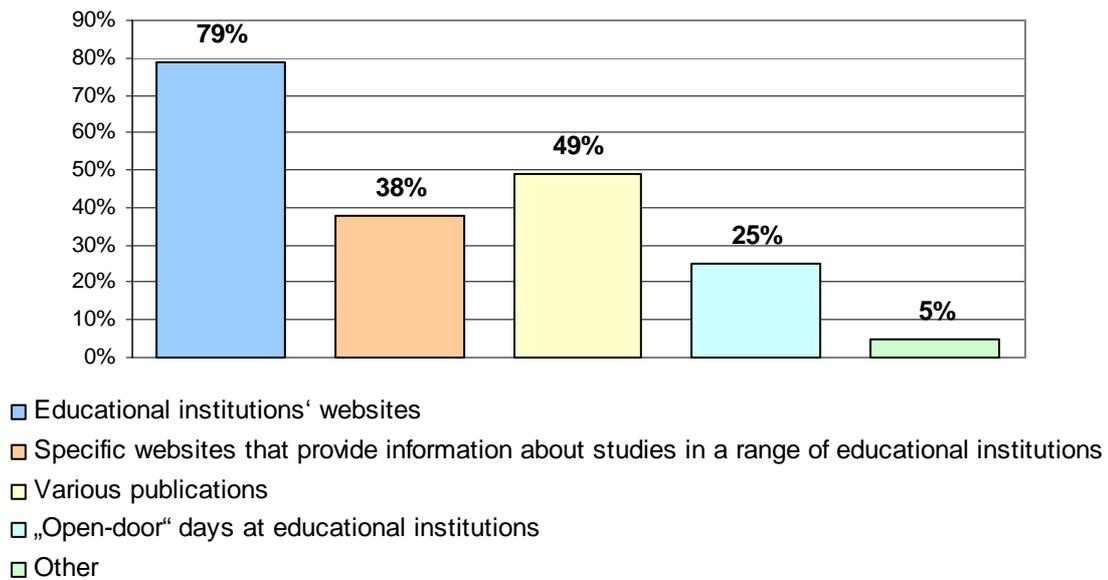


Figure 16: Sources searched for information about studies in educational institutions

Comprehensiveness of provided information. The abundance of provided information does not guarantee its comprehensiveness. School graduates face a difficult choice to search and filter all possible information about educational institutions before they choose one.

In the question that asked to indicate the source that provided the most comprehensive information related to studies in educational institutions, the same (as of the previous question) answer choices were given and 49% of total respondents agreed that information presented the most comprehensively could be found in educational institutions' web sites. The second most popular answer with a score of 27% was "open-door" events, while the rest of votes were allocated between specific web sites and various publications scoring equally 11% each.

Comparing the two above discussed questions we can draw a conclusion – though educational institutions' web sites were the top information source regarding the studies in educational institutions for 79% of respondents, only 49% find that these web sites contain the most comprehensive information. That gives us couple of unsatisfied users.

Factors of influence. The choice of particular educational institution is usually influenced by many factors. Sometimes, an advice of a reliable person is much more valued than any other information. Respondents were asked to score the aspects that to their opinion make the greatest influence on a choice to study in a particular educational institution (see Figure 17).

Summarising the results we can say, that information provided on the web site of particular educational institution was given the highest scores of 10 and 9 just by 13% of respondents each. The highest percentage of respondents (13%) gathered around the score of 8 and 5, both equally. Recommendations by admission commission were treated as irrelevant as did not receive any high scores by majority groups. Family members' advices were valued more – 25% and 27% of respondents

evaluated this aspect consequently 7 and 8 points. Friends' advices were voted 8 by biggest group of research participants (33%).

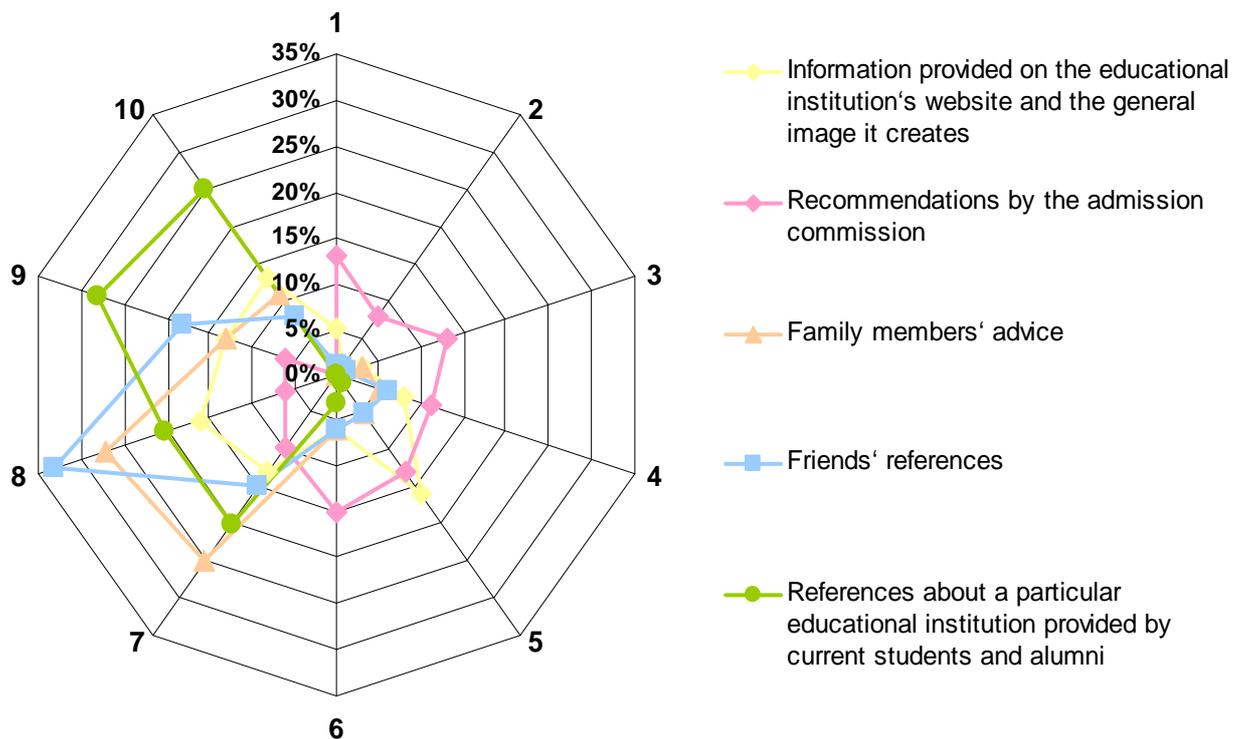


Figure 17: Aspects, that make the greatest influence on a choice to study in a particular educational institution (scores from 1 to 10)

The last aspect – references provided by current students and alumni has received the highest evaluations in general, where the majority of 28% and 25% of respondents scored this aspect being the most important and influencing (consequently 9 and 10 points).

Lithuanian and foreign students' opinion regarding this question matched as foreign students mostly rely on students' or alumni references as well (more than 50% of respondents gathered around 9 and 10 points).

Representing aspects on a web site. Any educational institution is not just about the study programmes. It is also about history and traditions, people, science, achievements, campus, etc. All these factors create a certain image which is communicated to the public.

Figure 18 indicates that survey participants have chosen these aspects that represent an educational institution on its web site the best: participation in public projects (20%, 25%, 16%, 6% of respondents gave consequently 7, 8, 9 and 10 points), participation in international projects (6%, 25%, 28%, 11% voted consequently 7, 8, 9, 10), international partners and a number of studying foreign students (a total 64% of respondents gave four highest scores), both study programmes and scientific activity indicators received a great approval (a total 83% of respondents gave four top points in both cases). Participants of this online survey were also interested in educational institution's achievements (scientific and non scientific, in home country and abroad), staff's achievements in home country and

abroad and current students' and alumni achievements in home country and abroad. The last aspect is most probably important for school graduates, who are not very sure how each of the study programmes could be later used in career development and valued in a real job market. Not just the fact of obtaining a high degree diploma is important, but also the vision of possible opportunities later.

Talking about aspects representing an educational institution on its web site and the results provided by foreign respondents, it is worth mentioning that a greater interest was expressed in: traditions and creative activity, participation in international projects, international partners and number of foreign students, study programmes and virtual tour.

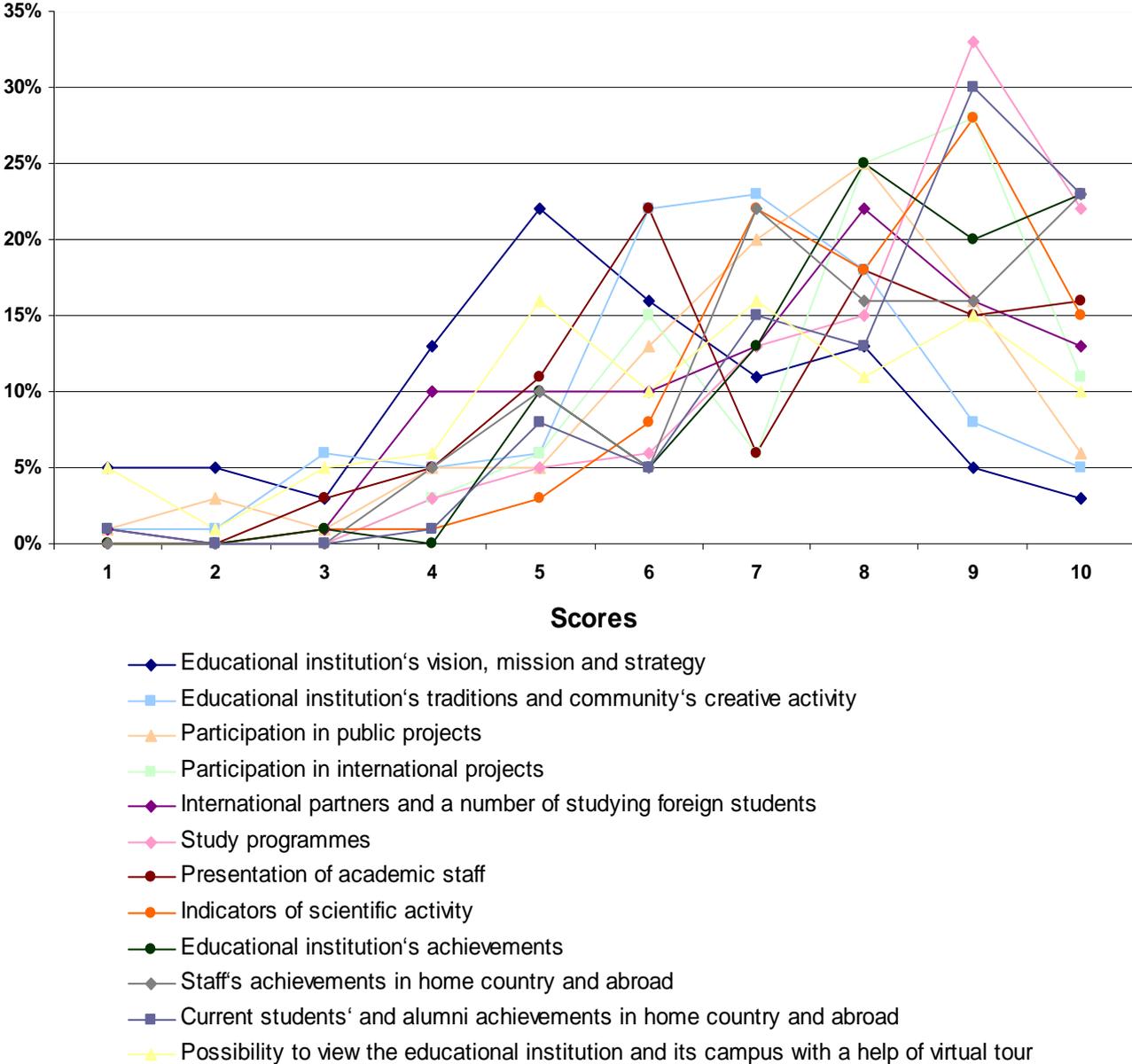


Figure 18: Aspects that represent the educational institution on its web site the best (scores from 1 to 10)

Summarising the block of questions regarding the choice of particular educational institution we once again remember that the prime source of information was educational institutions web site

where the information provided was supposed to be the most comprehensive, although the most important influencing factor on the decision were references provided by current students and alumni.

2.2.4. High education internet marketing tools

Later in the research the questions were aimed to find out the usage of the educational institution’s website, its relevant on-line services and valued qualities.

The majority of respondents being asked how often they connect to educational institution’s website voted for couple times a week and couple times a month, consequently gaining 28% and 33% of votes. Only 5% of participants told that they check the website daily.

Relevance of online services. In order to increase the effectiveness of a study process and facilitate it an educational institution may consider relocating some of its services from the form of physical delivery to online delivery.

The most relevant on-line services that are available through educational institution’s website are displayed in Figure 19 (results of Lithuanian respondents only).

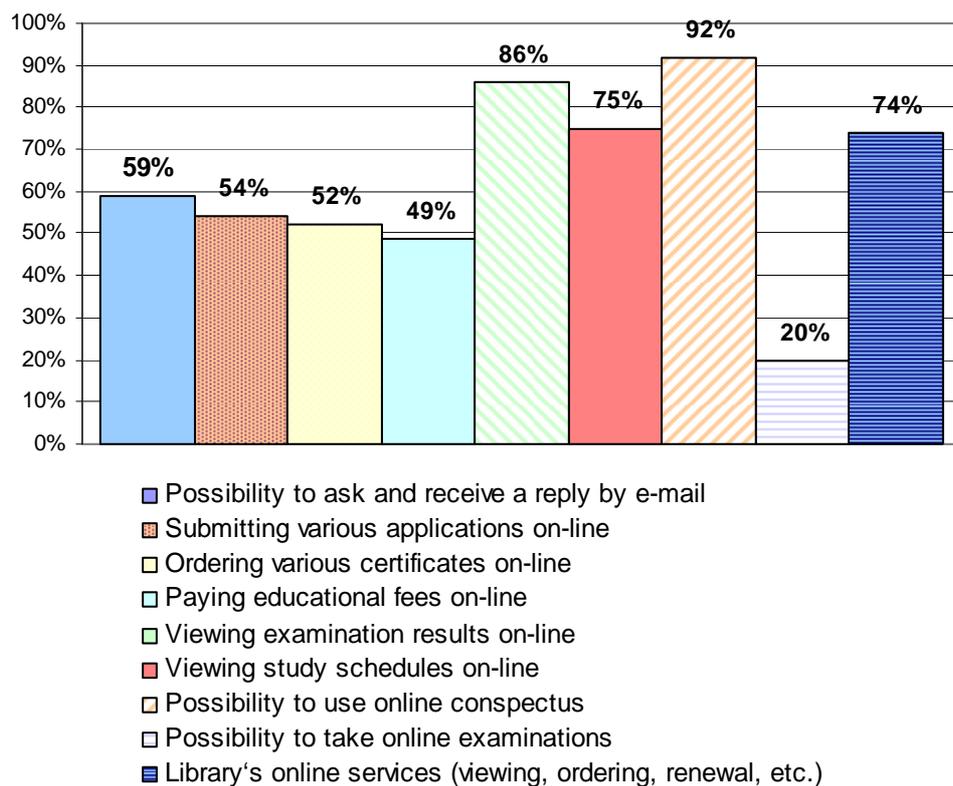


Figure 19: Most relevant educational institution’s online services

Viewing examination results and schedules, possibility to use online conspectus and library’s online services were the top answers voted by the majority of respondents, while the least popular answer was taking online examinations (only 20% of participants found it relevant). The rest of the online services reached just around the average of 50% respondents’ interest.

Foreign respondents expressed a slightly bigger interest in all answer options, although greater interest was observed in possibility to ask and receive a reply by email (86%), viewing schedules (89%) and taking online examinations (43%)

Important aspects of high education institution’s web site. Any visitor of any internet web site forms a certain opinion about it. Whether it is web site’s graphics, or a very convenient navigation, it all reflects in visitor’s satisfaction, or on the contrary – irritation.

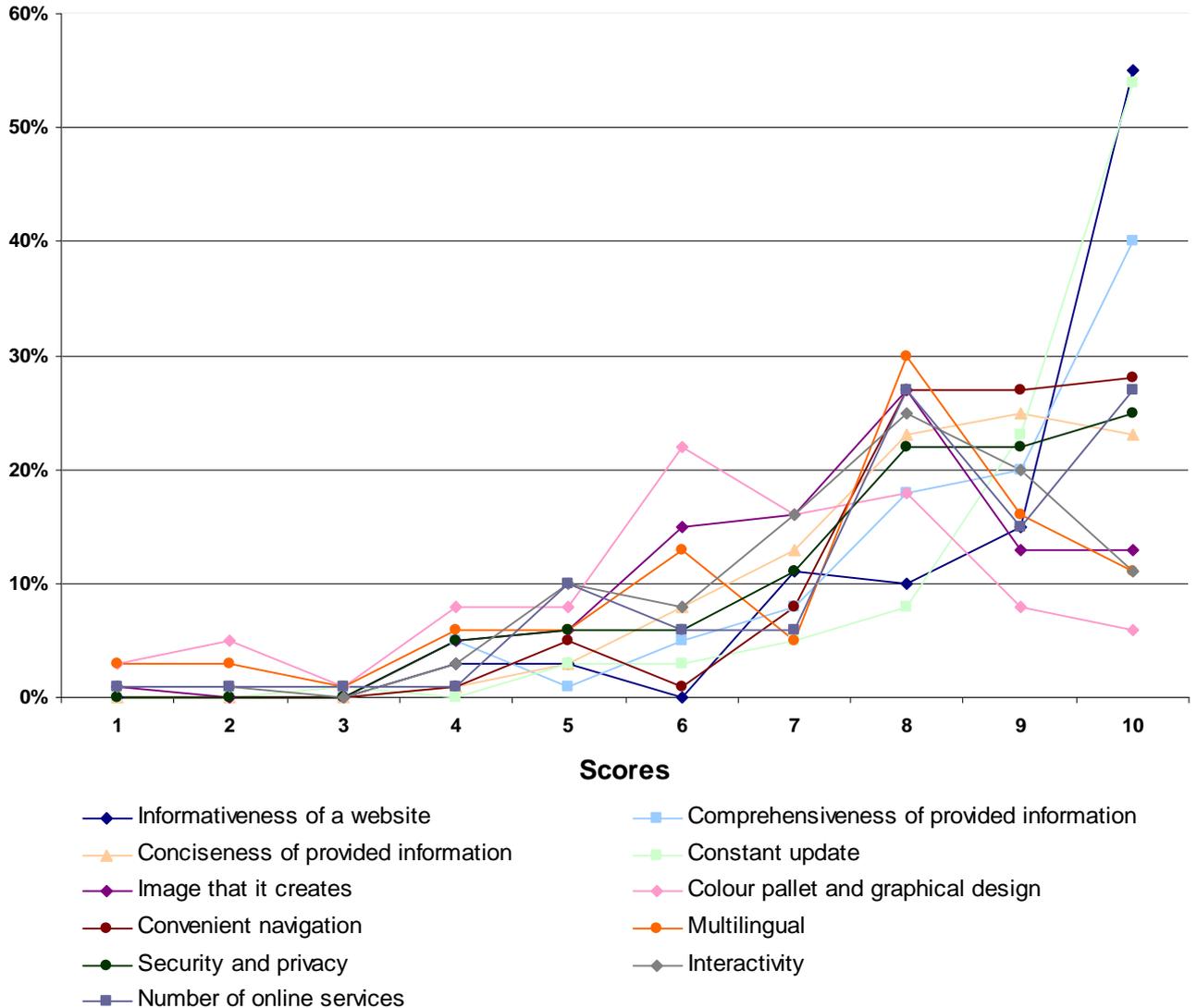


Figure 20: Aspects of educational institution’s web site, according their importance

Figure 20 let us observe an obvious tendency (represents Lithuanian respondents only) - all listed educational institutions web site’s aspects were treated as rather important. Informativeness of a web site, comprehensiveness of provided information and constant update were voted as top three answers (over 40% of respondents granted each of the aspects the highest score of 10 points). The same aspects were chosen by the majority of foreign students, although few other like colour pallet and graphical design, image that a web site creates, multilingual option received a bigger amount of votes (67%, 59% and 62% votes by respondents gathered around 8, 9, and 10 points).

Preferred types of rich media. Going further the research carried the focus on types advertisement found on the Internet. The opinion regarding this question is rather important as educational institution may possibly advertise itself on certain web sites often visited by its target customers to draw the traffic to its own web site and raise the interest about its services, especially before the yearly admission period. The results of the question show that there was no strong opinion about the issue. The answers to mostly all questions were scattered across the scale, with no strong preferences to one rich media type or another.

Brandmarks and poltergeists were considered not effective at all as the biggest percentage of respondents gave these two types the majority of smallest scores. Text links and both animated and non animated banners were considered to be a little bit more effective than other forms of rich media (the highest score of 10 was granted by 10% and 13% consequently).

The most effective type of advertisement found on the Internet according to all respondents was video ad, where the votes of 53% of respondents scattered from 7 to 10 points in the scale of effectiveness.

Educational practice. Many study programmes in most educational institutions include summer (sometimes longer) practice as a compulsory component of study programmes in order to acquire some practical knowledge in a field of study. Universities tend to provide just a token help for students finding a placement by providing couple opportunities, which are far from enough for all those who need. The question inquired about most effective way to find a placement for practice and the results revealed the following numbers (Figure 21).

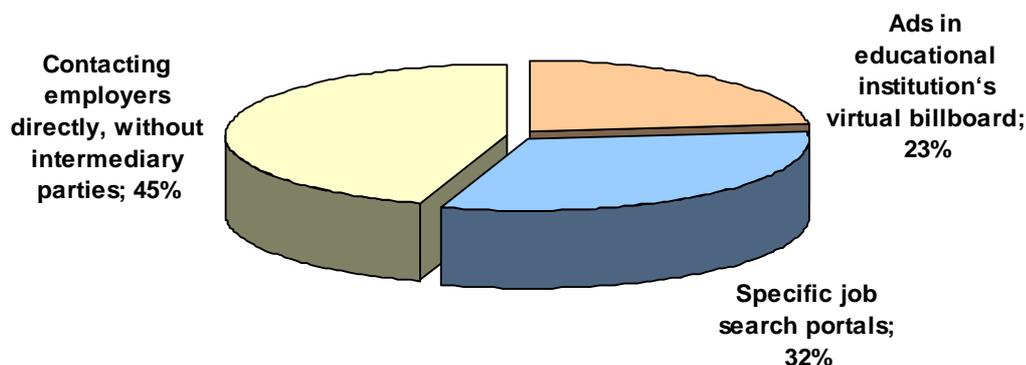


Figure 21: The most effective way to find a placement for practice

It is now obvious, that students have moved that responsibility on themselves searching specific job portals (32%) or contacting employers directly without intermediary parties (45%).

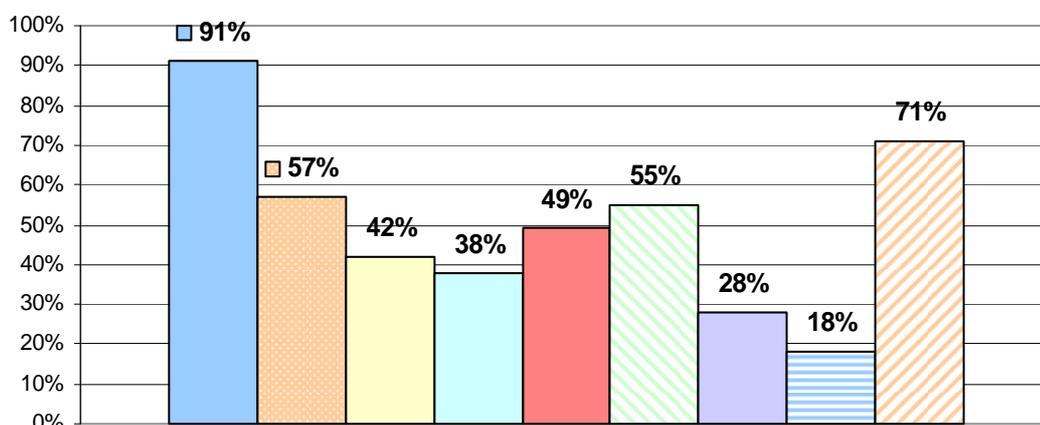
Way to get university news. During the study process every student needs to keep a close contact with his/her educational institution. All type of news and announcements regarding study process or after-study activities have to be somehow communicated to all of the students on time, whether it is by hanging paper notes on the wall of university, short notice on the web site, or an email.

The majority of survey participants (40%) preferred a possibility of news subscription, and

just about the same number (38%) chose to find the announcement placed on educational institution's web site themselves.

Most relevant university news. Talking about news, the further question asked to opt out the most relevant issues for every respondent (see Figure 22).

The answers provided by the respondents were allocated as following: the most relevant news and the number one popular answer was information regarding studies, scoring a total of 91% of all voters; the second most popular answer was information regarding new employment possibilities (71%). This number let us insight the employment problem of young and inexperienced people and the fact that they expect a grater communication among educational institutions and their business partners. Department news and announcements, information regarding life of educational institution, invitations to take part in community's recreational activities, competitions, seminars, various courses, news by international study centre all scored just about the average ranging from 38% to 57%.



- Information regarding studies (timetables, deadlines, exam dates, etc.)
- Department news and announcements
- Information regarding life of educational institution (events, exhibitions, etc.)
- Invitations to take part in educational institution's recreational activities
- Invitations to take part in competitions, seminars, various courses, etc
- News by international study centre regarding participation in student exchange programmes
- News and announcements by study directorate
- News and announcements by admission commission
- Information regarding new employment possibilities

Figure 22: Type of news most relevant to respondents

Interactive presentation of a course. Taking apart distant learning, a traditional study process may be complemented by interactive online tools that usually are accepted by students with bigger interest.

The question about the effective methods of course's interactive presentation was asked having multiple possible answers and the opinion of the respondents is pictured in Figure 23, where all answer choices received a high interest getting an average of votes and more. But the absolute majority of 81% picked the use of teacher's personal website for uploading course material.

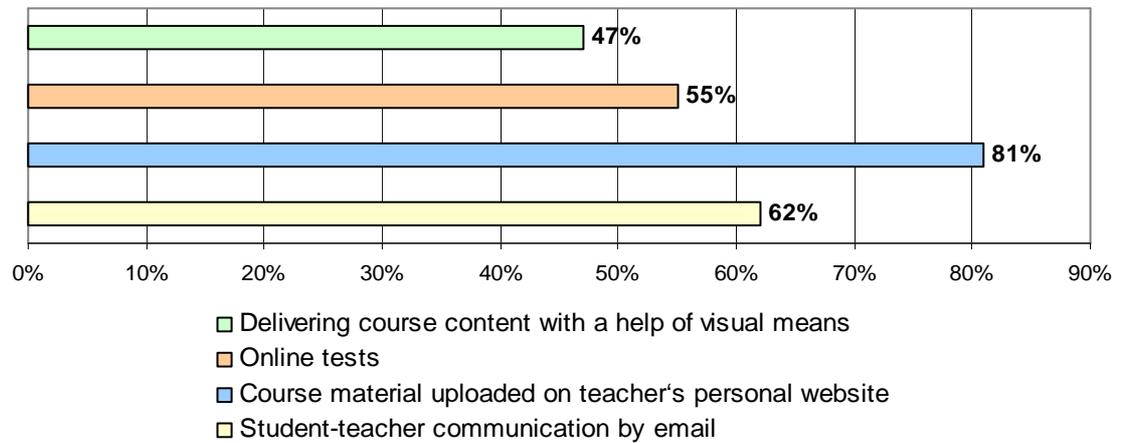


Figure 23: Preferred methods of interactive presentation of the course

Online discussion clubs. The appearance of new communication channels and methods have influenced the way people interact with each other on personal, work, and educational issues as well. The internet and various discussion clubs and forums gather the communities sharing mutual experiences together. People discuss their relevant problems, share experiences, and give advice to others. This word-of-mouth information is valuable as everyone is sharing personal experiences and opinions.

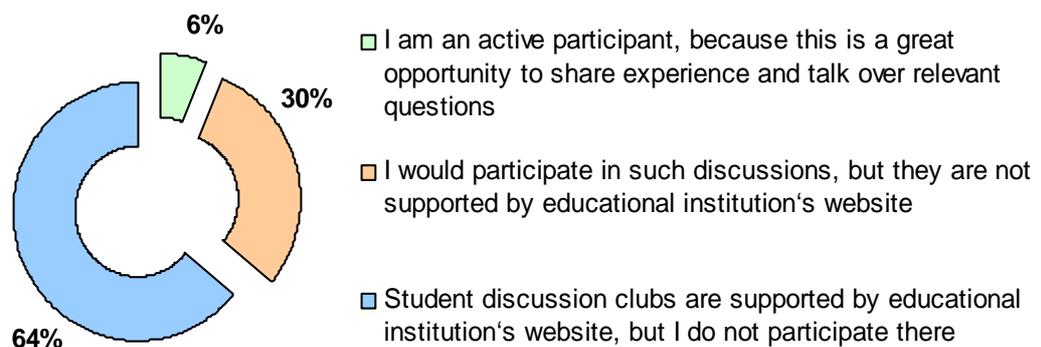


Figure 24: Participation in discussion clubs

Figure 24 presented above shows that almost two thirds (64%) do not participate in discussion clubs supported by educational institution's web site, while the rest 36% split into 6% of those who are active participators and 30% of unsatisfied users who would be willing to participate in such discussion clubs, but they are not supported by institutional web sites.

Online ratings. Time to time most of educational institutions organize various ratings where respondents express their opinion about quality of studies, personal experiences with educational

institution, effectiveness and importance of study programmes. On-line ratings are an easy form to execute them, usually uploaded in educational institutions web site or distributed to all target audiences through other channels, like email.

Half of the respondents (52%) confessed these rating are not relevant to them and thus are being skipped. Only one fifth of the respondents told they participate in ratings, although few of them (11%) complained ratings are rather rare.

Online questionnaires. A questionnaire is a type of survey often used by many students in order to collect relevant data for graduation thesis. Students forward them by email to friends, or most often upload on specific web sites. A shortcut of those web sites is that they contain thousands of shorter or longer questionnaires uploaded by individuals or companies, where a certain questionnaire is easily lost to accidental visitor.

The majority of respondents agreed on the fact that student questionnaires could be uploaded on educational institutions website. 66% of survey participants thought that by uploading the questionnaires conveniently on institutions website students would be able to help each other (see Figure 25), but 27% were positive about the fact, that those survey questionnaires could be uploaded on specific web sites.

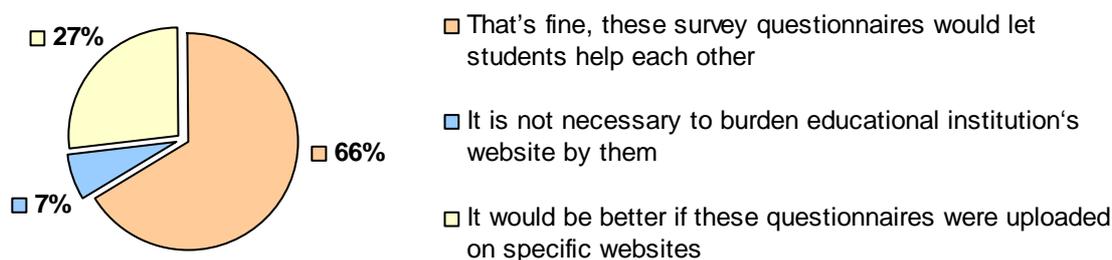


Figure 25: Students' survey questionnaires on the web site of educational institution

Paying fees on-line. An administrative service of paying university fees on-line is an important aspect to many students nowadays. On-line payment history, managing of fees, direct links to internet banking are the features that make payment procedures easier and faster. Being asked if respondents use those links to internet banking systems, 28% of all told they did not pay for their studies. From the rest of 72% of those paying, only 23% were using the links, while 13% of respondents complained there were no direct links to their internet banking systems.

Online social networking. Social networking – is the way 21st century communicates now. While actual distances between people grow, keeping internet relationships becomes more important. Social networking websites function like an online community of internet users. Depending on the website in question, many of these online community members share common interests or hobbies. Members of social networks are able to see their friends' status, make comments and much more. This is a kind of permission marketing – become my friend and get the latest news about me. This is the

reason social networking web sites are being used not only by individuals, but by all types of organizations, companies, brands, etc.

The fact, that social networking is very popular was again approved by survey results (see Figure 26), where only 3% of all respondents confessed they were not members of any online social networking web sites.

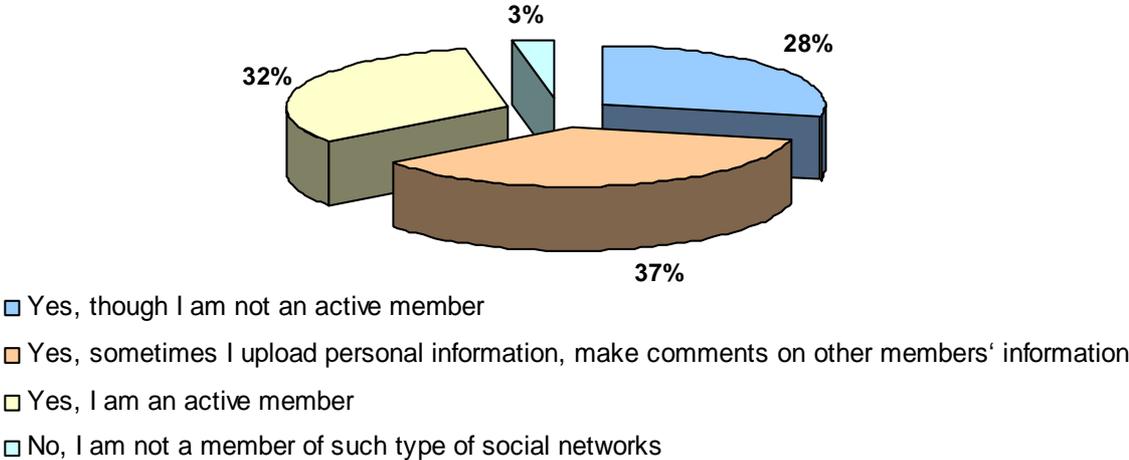


Figure 26: Participation in online social networking

The rest of 97% were either rather inactive, active, or very active members of online social networking web sites. This information gives some background for consideration of information related to educational institution sharing on social networking web sites. As these sites are being treated by the majority as friendly and fun (voluntary participation), the acceptance of information provided there could be higher.

Summarising survey results we can now draw a short picture of an average respondent who is a woman currently studying bachelor or master degree and spending more than 5 hours a day searching on the Internet for information relating leisure time, studies and work.

According to survey results we are able to conclude that educational institution's web site is a top information source for many respondents in a search of information regarding studies, although a decent amount of them confessed that web sites were not as great in respect of information comprehensiveness.

The top answer to the question of the most important influencing factors voted by both Lithuanian and foreign students was references provided by current students and alumni. Friends' references were valued more than family's advice, and the information provided on educational institution's web site did not make any difference.

Later on, the opinion of local and foreign respondents diverged. Viewing examination results and schedules, possibility to use online conspectus and library's online services were the top answers voted by the majority of Lithuanian respondents. The rest of the online services reached just around the average of total respondents' interest. A slightly bigger interest by foreign respondents were

observed in such options as possibility to ask and receive a reply by email, viewing schedules on-line and taking online examinations. The reason of this could be the faster development of internet and information technologies in foreign countries that had an influence in the field of high education as well.

All listed educational institutions web site's aspects were treated as rather important. Informativeness of a web site, comprehensiveness of provided information and constant update were voted as the top three. The same aspects were chosen by the majority of foreign students, although few other like colour pallet and graphical design, image that a web site creates and multilingual option received a bigger amount of votes.

Talking about rich media forms, the most effective type of advertisement found on the Internet according to all respondents was video ad. All other answers scattered across the scale.

Later in the research the respondents were asked to express their opinion about educational practice and an effective method to find a position. It became obvious, that students have moved that responsibility on themselves searching specific job portals or contacting employers directly without intermediary parties.

University news and announcements were preferred to be ordered by news subscription by majority of respondents, and just about the same number chose to find the announcement placed on educational institution's web site themselves.

The answers regarding relevant news provided by survey participants were allocated as following: the most relevant news and the number one popular answer was information regarding studies, followed by information regarding new employment possibilities. This reflection emphasizes the employment problem of young and inexperienced people and the fact that they expect a grater communication among educational institutions and their business partners. Department news and announcements, information regarding life of educational institution, invitations to take part in community's recreational activities, competitions, seminars, various courses, news by international study centre all scored just about the average.

According to survey results the interactive presentation of a study course was approved by most of respondents, where all interaction methods received averagely half of votes and more with the use of teacher's personal website for uploading course material being the top choice.

The next block of related questions inquired if respondents participate in student discussion clubs or various ratings. The results show that almost two thirds do not participate in discussion clubs supported by educational institution's web site, while the rest split into those who are active participators and few unsatisfied users who would be willing to participate in such discussion clubs, but they are not supported by institutional web sites. Half of the respondents confessed rating are not

relevant to them and thus are being skipped. Only one fifth of the respondents told they participate in ratings.

The majority of respondents agreed on the fact that student questionnaires could be uploaded on educational institutions web site and thought that by uploading the questionnaires on institutions website students would be able to help each other. One third was positive about the fact, that those survey questionnaires could be uploaded on specific web sites.

Being asked if respondents use the links from educational institution web site to internet banking systems, around one third of all told they did not pay for their studies. From the rest of two thirds, few were using the links, while the rest of respondents complained there were no direct links to their internet banking systems.

The fact, that social networking is very popular was again approved by survey results where absolute majority of all survey participants were members of at least one social networking web site. Considering the fact that social networking web sites are being successfully exploited for among businesses as well, educational institutions may also take into account sharing related information on these web sites. As these sites are being treated by the majority as friendly and fun (voluntary participation), the acceptance of information provided there could be higher.

2.3. DEVELOPING AN E-MARKETING MODEL FOR HIGH EDUCATION INSTITUTION INSTITUTION

After receiving the research results, we can approach to the essence of this master degree thesis – a creation of an internet marketing model for high education institution. The research examined various dimensions of high education institution web site - its importance as a source of information about high education institutions and their primary service, most important aspects of a web site regarding content, technical qualities or visual presentation, the use of a high education institution web site for customer service purposes relocating the preferred ones from physical to virtual delivery and the effective community pull tools. The research respondents expressed their opinion regarding all questions favouring some of them, while omitting the others. According this opinion an internet marketing model for high education institution was composed (see Figure 26).

There are many stakeholder groups of an educational institution. Every group probably expects to find some sort of relevant information or service dedicated specifically for it. That makes the web site a very complex system and hard to describe. It is easier to split it into the blocks according the target users who have similar interests and preferences. Our proposed model concentrates on the most important target group of high education – service consumers – students (both prospective and current). The model represents all type of internet marketing tools and options that are grouped into

blocks according web site goals they help to achieve. The most important goals of educational institution's web site, which are directed to both prospective and current students, are:

- ✓ To attract prospective students and to provide them sufficient information;
- ✓ Effective customer service;
- ✓ To build a community.

These goals were combined with the web site success factors of content quality, technical quality, service quality and online community and later in the work will be discussed separately. Two goals of attracting prospective students and providing information will be discussed together, although in the model they are displayed separately.

Attract prospective students and provide sufficient information. A high educational institution as well as any other commercial or non commercial establishment is nothing without its consumers, or in our case – students. The decision about a certain institution is not accidental or occasional, as it does not induce the need for the service, but the need derives from a person him-/herself based on his/hers personal social background and motivation. The decision is usually carefully thought through evaluating various options and facts. Taking into account the spread of Internet users among teenagers, it is not a surprise educational web sites are the primary search source for information. This is the reason one of the goals of a web site is attracting potential customers and providing information. This section is split into two groups of content and both technical and visual means. According to survey results the content is more important, as respondents reached an agreement that such factors as study programmes, scientific activity, participation in public and international projects and the rest from the group are well representing. It is important to mention that both university, staff, current students and alumni achievements were treated as important information, based on that future students make assumptions about quality of studies, and the value they create. Every student wants to become a member of an educational community that has strong traditions, is active, innovative, resourceful, and competent in the fields of study, a strong player in high education market. Achievements increase value and image; they are something that has to be shouted out loud. A university that raises students, who able to compete locally and globally has nothing to want more. A university graduate, who has gained strong and competent knowledge and is able to achieve personal career goals has nothing to want more, but is satisfied with a “purchase”.

A very useful fact about the research is school graduates' reliance on current students and alumni reference as a major influencing factor on decision making about a certain educational institution. This can be successfully exploited on high education's institutions web site as references provided by “happy users”, thus these references would be treated as reliable, not occasionally found anywhere on a random Internet web site.

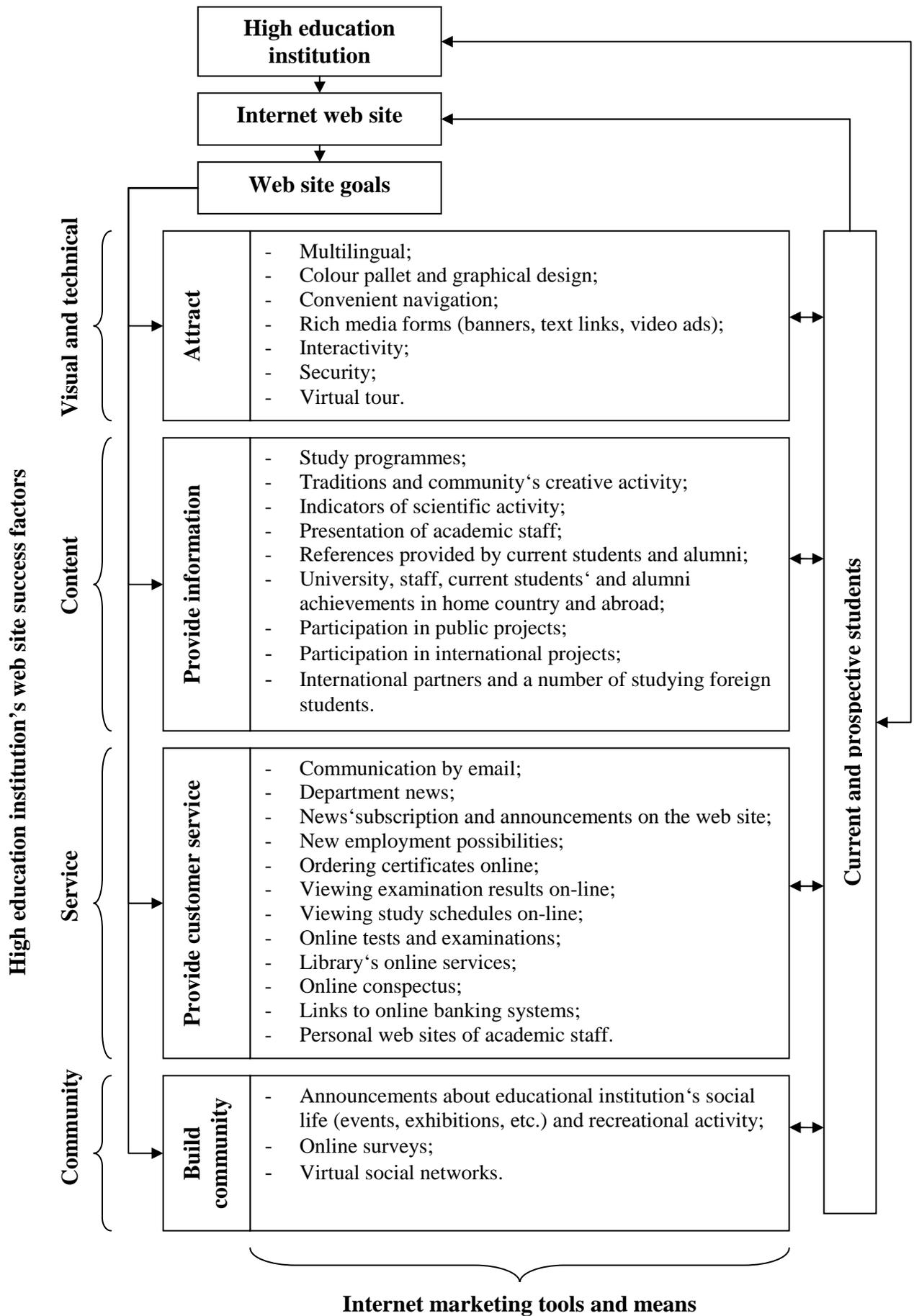


Figure 27: High education institution internet marketing model (provided by author)

Few of the content options should be intentionally directed towards foreign students from abroad. Participation in international projects, active collaboration with foreign partners for scientific and educational purposes have been long ago acknowledged as strong and advantageous factors for any educational institution. Students all over the Europe and the rest of the world are getting more and more active enrolling in various student exchange programmes, internships every year. Clearly defined study options, indicators of scientific activity, number of studying foreign students all help to consider a certain educational institution as a solid option. It is worth mentioning, that foreign students participate in exchange programmes with the goal not only to gain educational experience in guest country, but to explore it, get involved in various cultural and recreational activities as well.

A second block of means that help attract and inform potential customers, is named as technical and visual, because they deal with such aspects as navigation, colour pallet and graphics, interactive options, etc. The need for the web site to be rather dynamic than static with ordinary presentation of facts and figures has been much talked about by various experts. Meaningfully selected background colours and graphical presentation enhance the image and brand of educational institution in the web presence. Psychological contiguities between colours and impressions are able to enhance the message of being dynamic, revolutionary, innovative, professional, leading, fun, friendly, etc. Rich media forms may successfully be exploited on educational institution's website as well in terms of content presentation (for example video shoots), rather than any type of advertising that they are primarily associated with. Another important factor is convenient navigation.

Any educational institution has a lot of information to share with its stakeholders of any kind. All this information could be successfully communicated through the web site with a help of convenient and logically grounded navigation. Navigation has to follow a natural human mind-flow ensuring any visitor easily finds expected information.

Another reasonable aspect is a possibility to view educational institution and its campus with a help of virtual tour, whether presented in format of pictures or video. Home country students are able to attend "open day" events to get the feeling what a university is like, while foreigners have to rely on the impression formed on the web. Maps, location, buildings, hostels, local infrastructure are the factors that count.

Provide customer service. Another block of means is related to customer service activities. Efficient customer service in both real and virtual worlds helps to enhance loyalty, increase satisfaction and guarantees effective collaboration between interacting parties. High education institution has a wide range of administration services that are often delivered physically. The research results revealed those options that respondents considered to be effective on-line. An internet marketing model includes such administrative services as communication by email (between department and students), ordering certificates on-line, receiving announcements regarding studies, new employment possibilities.

Delivering all of these services virtually an educational institution is able to increase productivity of customer (student) service administration. Nowadays any information update is expected to be appearing first virtually and can be accessed from any location. That guarantees increased notification of customers about any changes, novelties, etc.

Few of the online services from the block are possible as self-services, or own profile administration. Students prefer to view examination results or study schedules online, pay fees using links to online banking systems, use library's online service administrating their orders or using online conspectus.

An interaction between a student and a teacher – certain communication aspects – should be moved to the web through personal web sites of academic staff. It is convenient to upload study material, useful links or interesting facts. A teacher can at any time replace, renew or supplement information that can at any time be easily accessed by students. Online tests are convenient way of preparation to examinations where every student can check the level of knowledge or discover gaps. The general information regarding study programme or requirements should be able to answer all predictable questions that may arise, in order to minimize unnecessary communication by emails. It is time-consuming task at the beginning, but later is an ease in communication process.

Build community. As notion before was made, that every high education institution is not only about programmes but about people as well. The consumption and delivery of a service determine long-term relationship development between service providers and consumers, or separately among service consumers themselves. Sometimes few relationships are life-long. Stronger relationships increase sense of involvement and important community member.

There are many interest groups at educational institution that can be divided regarding scientific activity or let's say hobbies. If not the physical, then at least virtual share of ideas or knowledge has to be secured. With a help of online social networking web sites, which according to survey results are extremely popular, the communication among group members can effectively take place. A university department may have its virtual account, where all members, both teachers and students, could share interesting information, links or announcements to future events related to field of study. New group members will be able to join each year with every new enrolment bringing some fresh ideas.

An educational institution usually engages in some type of social life that survey participants were interested in. Various events like exhibitions, celebrations, or recreational activities take place. The success of them is guaranteed not only by apt execution, but by attendance as well. The message should be spread to gather community members together to celebrate one or another occasion and share mutual impressions.

Another aspect that received a great interest and thus is a part of the internet marketing model is online surveys uploaded on the web site of educational institution. Students at any degree level face the need to perform some kind of research. Although there are specific web sites for these purposes, students thought it would be great to help each other – members from the same community, let it be another department, but at least the same educational institution, and not to get lost in abundance of online surveys.

The proposed internet marketing model for an educational institution concentrates on examining the purposes of an educational web site, particularly basic four – attract and inform prospective and current students, deliver efficient customer service and build an online community. It lists all possible means that help to achieve those goals, based on previously executed opinion survey. The main emphasis were put to find out the reasons why one or another educational institution is being chosen, what form of communication students prefer and what they expect from a web site in regard to help them achieving their goals and satisfying needs.

A proposed internet marketing model for an educational institution that is based on student expectations and is believed to help high education marketing specialists to exploit the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies, increase the efficiency of communication between an educational institution and its target customers and to achieve a competitive advantage in the sector among other educational institutions.

Conclusions

1. Marketing on the Internet has become one of the most effective methods to attract customers and build relationships with them.
2. The number of internet marketing communication tools is constantly growing every day and there is no common agreement how these tools should be named and what amount of them used, but scientific literature summarized them under four basic categories of internet advertising, public relations, sales promotion and direct marketing.
3. Some of the internet marketing tools are very successful reaching specific goals for a company, like increasing sales, or raising product and brand awareness, but an internet web site is generally considered to be a most powerful communication tool for bringing multiple benefits for every company, as agreed by many internet marketing specialists. A web site may have multiple goals: boost sales, increase brand awareness, provide information and customer service. In order to implement these or any other goals, the activities of web site development should be interconnected with them, a clearly defined vision and benefits that are being sought.
4. To understand the factors that impact the effectiveness of the web site better, it is useful to refer to information systems and the studies that examine the effectiveness of information technologies and the adoption of new information systems by an organization.
5. Many theoretical models have been proposed for measuring success of information systems or web site success factors and the most commonly mentioned elements are these: system quality, information quality and service quality. Regarding the web site of high education institution it is important to incorporate one more element of community. Many high education institution's stakeholder groups form an academic community, thus a virtual environment has to strengthen those relationships as well.
6. The problem is that many web sites nowadays are being used only as online brochures, or are company orientated without customer approach. Many companies create corporate web sites that basically say what these companies want to say, instead of executing them in such a way – that every target visitor could find what he/she wants to know. It is important to find out how web sites of educational institutions are perceived by prospective and current students, analyse their importance and find out the most suitable solutions to increase quality of communication and satisfaction of their users.
7. A survey, which was executed online, aimed to examine prospective and current (Lithuanian and foreign) students' opinion about the use and effectiveness of internet marketing tools on educational institution's website.

8. The survey results showed that an average respondent was a woman (66%) currently studying bachelor (38%) or master degree (41%), spending 3-5 hours on the Internet daily (84%) searching information related to leisure (93%), studies (89%) and work (77%). The significance of high education institution web site in the context of a source of providing information was proved by 79 % of survey respondents, although a decent amount confessed that web sites were not as great in respect of information comprehensiveness. The most important influencing factors on a decision of a certain educational institution were references provided by current students and alumni (53% - 9 and 10 points). The most relevant online services were: viewing examination results (86%) and schedules (75%), possibility to use online conspectus (92%) and library's online services (74%), while the rest reached just around the average. Foreign respondents were interested in such options as possibility to ask and receive a reply by email (86%) and taking online examinations (43%). All listed educational institutions web site's aspects were treated as rather important - informativeness of a web site, comprehensiveness of provided information and constant update (over 40% each) were chosen by the most of survey participants. Foreign students added few more as colour pallet and graphical design, image that a web site creates and language option. According to survey respondents an educational web site should consider such aspects as employing rich media forms, provide news subscription possibilities (40%), enriching study programmes by interactive presentation (81%), uploading questionnaires (66%), links to online banking systems and building communities via social networks (97%). Participants opted out to receive such type of university news: information regarding studies (91%), new employment possibilities (71%), department news and announcements (57%). Information regarding life of educational institution, invitations to take part in community's recreational activities, competitions, seminars, various courses, news by international study centre all scored just about the average.
9. The proposed model represents all type of internet marketing tools and options that are grouped into blocks according web site goals they help to achieve. The most important goals of educational institution's web site, which are directed to both prospective and current students, are: attract prospective students and to provide them sufficient information; provide effective customer service; support community relations. The model combines these goals with the web site success factors of content quality, technical quality, service quality and online community.
10. The proposed model should help high education marketing specialists to exploit the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies, increase the efficiency of communication between an educational institution and its target customers and to achieve a competitive advantage in the sector among other educational institutions.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Studentų nuomonės tyrimo apie internetinio marketingo priemonių efektyvumą bei naudojimą universiteto interneto svetainėje anketa

1. Internetu naudojātės:

- a) Daugiau nei 5val/dieną;
- b) 3-5 val/dieną;
- c) 1-3 val/dieną;
- d) 0,5-1 val/dieną;
- e) Mažiau nei 0,5 val/dieną.

2. Internetu informacijos ieškote (galimi keli variantai):

- a) Darbui;
- b) Mokslui;
- c) Laisvalaikiui;
- d) Pramogoms;
- e) Kita.

3. Informacijos apie studijas Lietuvos aukštosiose mokyklose ieškojote (galimi keli variantai):

- a) Aukštųjų mokyklų interneto svetainėse;
- b) Interneto svetainėse teikiančiose informaciją apie studijas daugelyje aukštųjų mokyklų
- c) Spaudos leidiniuose;
- d) Aukštųjų mokyklų organizuojamuose “Atvirų durų” renginiuose;
- e) Kita.

4. Jūsų manymu išsamiausia informacija apie studijas aukštosiose mokyklose pateikiama (pasirinkite vieną variantą):

- a) Aukštųjų mokyklų interneto svetainėse;
- b) Interneto svetainėse teikiančiose informaciją apie studijas daugelyje aukštųjų mokyklų;
- c) Spaudos leidiniuose;
- d) “Atvirų durų” renginių metu;
- e) Kita.

5. Kas Jūsų manymu daro didžiausią įtaką apsisprendimui studijuoti konkrečioje aukštojoje mokykloje? Įvertinkite balais nuo 1 iki 10 (10 – daro didžiausia įtaka):

- a) Aukštosios mokyklos interneto svetainėje pateikta informacija bei jos sukurtas įvaizdis;
- b) Aukštosios mokyklos priėmimo komisijos patarimai;

APPENDIX A (continued)

- c) Šeimos patarimai;
- d) Draugų rekomendacijos;
- e) Esamų studentų bei absolventų atsiliepimai apie konkrečią aukštąją mokyklą.

6. Įvertinkite balais nuo 1 iki 10 aspektus, kurie reprezentuoja aukštąją mokyklą jos interneto svetainėje (10 – reprezentuoja geriausiai):

- a) Aukštosios mokyklos vizija, misija ir strategija;
- b) Aukštosios mokyklos tradicijos bei bendruomenės kūrybinė veikla;
- c) Dalyvavimas visuomeniniuose projektuose;
- d) Dalyvavimas tarptautiniuose projektuose;
- e) Tarptautiniai aukštosios mokyklos partneriai bei studijuojančių užsienio studentų skaičius;
- f) Studijų programų aprašymai;
- g) Pedagoginio personalo pristatymas;
- h) Mokslinės veiklos rodikliai;
- i) Universiteto laimėjimai (mokslinėje bei kitoje veikloje Lietuvoje ir užsienyje);
- j) Universiteto darbuotojų laimėjimai Lietuvoje ir užsienyje;
- k) Absolventų bei esamų studentų pasiekimai Lietuvoje ir užsienyje;
- l) Galimybė apžiūrėti universitetą ir universiteto miestelį virtualaus turo pagalba.

7. Ar dažnai tenka prisijungti prie aukštosios mokyklos interneto svetainės?

- a) Kasdien;
- b) Kelis kartus per savaitę;
- c) Kartą per savaitę;
- d) Kelis kartus per mėnesį;
- e) Rečiau nei kartą per mėnesį.

8. Kokios aukštosios mokyklos e-paslaugos Jums yra aktualios? (galimi keli variantai)

- a) Galimybė paklausti ir gauti atsakymą el. paštu;
- b) Įvairių prašymų pildymas el. būdu;
- c) Pažymų užsakymas internetu;
- d) Įmokos už mokslą internetu;
- e) Egzaminų rezultatų peržiūra internetu;
- f) Paskaitų tvarkaraščio peržiūra internetu;
- g) Galimybė naudotis dėstomų dalykų e-konspektais;
- h) Galimybė laikyti egzaminą el. būdu;
- i) Bibliotekos e-paslaugos (peržiūra, užsakymas, terminų pratęsimas ir kt.).

APPENDIX A (continued)

9. Įvertinkite šių aukštosios mokyklos interneto svetainės aspektų svarbumą balais (nuo 1 iki 10, 10 – svarbiausias):

- a) Svetainės informatyvumas;
- b) Pateikiamos informacijos išsamumas;
- c) Pateikiamos informacijos glaustumas bei konkretumas;
- d) Pateikiamos informacijos naujumas;
- e) Sukuriamas aukštosios mokyklos įvaizdis;
- f) Svetainės spalvinis bei grafinis dizainas;
- g) Paprasta bei patogi navigacija;
- h) Daugiakalbystė;
- i) Saugumas bei privatumas;
- j) Svetainės interaktyvumas;
- k) E-paslaugų skaičius.

10. Įvertinkite praturtintų reklamos formų efektyvumą balais (nuo 1 iki 10, 10 – efektyviausia):

- a) Animuotos bei neanimuotos reklaminės juostos;
- b) Animuoti ir neanimuoti dideli grafiniai reklaminiai skydeliai;
- c) Tekstinės reklamos nuorodos;
- d) Videoreklama;
- e) Reklama interneto svetainių fone (watermark);
- f) Pilnaekranė animuota užsklanda (poltergeist);
- g) Animuotos užsklandos (floating ad);
- h) Didėjantys reklaminiai skydeliai (flash-expanding billboard);
- i) Animuoti, dalinai turinį uždengiantys skydeliai (brandmark).

11. Koks Jūsų nuomone yra pats efektyviausias būdas studijų praktikos vietai susirasti?

- a) Aukštosios mokyklos virtuali skelbimų lenta;
- b) Specializuotos darbo paieškos svetainės;
- c) Pasiūlymų siuntimas darbdaviams el.paštu tiesiogiai be tarpininkų.

12. Kokių būdu norėtumėte būti informuojami apie aukštosios mokyklos naujienas?:

- a) Skelbimai aukštosios mokyklos interneto svetainėje;
- b) El. paštu prenumeruojamos naujienos;
- c) Tiesiogiai siunčiamos naujienos el. paštu.

13. Kokios aukštosios mokyklos naujienos Jums yra aktualios? (galimi keli variantai):

- a) Informacija susijusi su studijomis (tvarkaraštis, terminai, egzaminų datos ir t.t.);

APPENDIX A (continued)

- b) Katedrų naujienos bei pranešimai;
- c) Informacija susijusi su aukštosios mokyklos gyvenimu (renginiai, parodos, ir t.t.);
- d) Kvietimai dalyvauti aukštosios mokyklos bendruomenės pramoginėje veikloje;
- e) Informacija susijusi su aukštosios mokyklos, dėstytojų, studentų pasiekimais bei laimėjimais tiek Lietuvoje, tiek užsienyje;
- f) Informacija skatinanti dalyvauti įvairiuose konkursuose, kursuose, seminaruose ir t.t.;
- g) Užsienio ryšių direkcijos naujienos bei skelbimai susiję su galimybėmis dalyvauti studentų mainų programose užsienyje;
- h) Mokslo direkcijos naujienos bei skelbimai;
- i) Priėmimo komisijos naujienos bei skelbimai;
- j) Informacija susijusi su naujomis įsidarbinimo galimybėmis.

14. Kokie interaktyvūs dėstomo studijų dalyko pateikimo būdai Jūsų nuomone yra efektyvūs? (galimi keli variantai)

- a) Dėstytojo-studento bendravimas el. paštu;
- b) Dėstytojo asmeninėje svetainėje talpinama dėstomo dalyko medžiaga;
- c) Dėstomo dalyko bandomieji egzamino testai;
- d) Dėstomo dalyko turinio pateikimas vizualinėmis priemonėmis (filmuotas interviu, dokumentinio filmo ištrauka, reklamos pavyzdys, ir t.t.);

15. Kokia Jūsų nuomonė apie aukštosios mokyklos studentų diskusijų klubus?

- a) Dalyvauju diskusijose, nes jose galima pasisemti ankstesnių studentų patirties bei aptarti aktualius klausimus;
- b) Dalyvaučiau tokiuose klubuose, tačiau aukštosios mokyklos svetainė jų nepalaiko.
- c) Aukštosios mokyklos svetainė palaiko studentų diskusijų klubus, tačiau juose nedalyvauju.

16. Ar dalyvaujate aukštosios mokyklos organizuojamuose įvairaus pobūdžio reitinguose?

- a) Taip, mėgstu išreikšti savo nuomonę studijų kokybės bei kitais klausimais;
- b) Dalyvauju, tačiau tokio pobūdžio nuomonių tyrimai yra labai reti;
- c) Dalyvaučiau, tačiau tokių reitingų aukštoji mokykla neorganizuoja arba jie yra nepastebimi;
- d) Nedalyvauju, man neaktualu.

17. Kaip vertintumėte aukštosios mokyklos interneto svetainėje talpinamas studentų vykdomų apklausų anketas?

- a) Gerai, vykdomų apklausų anketų bazė leistų studentams padėti vieni kitiems;
- b) Nebūtina jomis apkrauti aukštosios mokyklos interneto svetainės;
- c) Apklausas galima vykdyti per šios paskirties specializuotas svetaines.

APPENDIX A (end of appendix A)

18. Ar naudojate tiesiogine nuoroda iš aukštosios mokyklos interneto svetainės į banko apmokėjimų sistemą?

- a) Ne, nemoku už mokslą;
- b) Taip, tai patogus būdas susimokėti už mokslą;
- c) Naudočiausi, tačiau nėra nuorodos į mano banko apmokėjimo sistemą;
- d) Ne, už studijas sumoku kitu man priimtinu būdu.

19. Ar esate prisiregistravęs prie virtualių socialinių tinklų (tokiu kaip Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn ir kt.)?

- a) Taip, tačiau nesu aktyvus narys;
- b) Taip, retkarčiais talpinu atnaujintą informaciją apie save, komentuoju kitų narių pateikiamą informaciją;
- c) Taip, esu aktyvus narys;
- d) Ne, nesiregistruoju tokio pobūdžio svetainėse.

20. Jūs esate:

- a) Vyras;
- b) Moteris.

21. Jūs studijujete/mokotės:

- a) Bakalauro studijose;
- b) Magistratūros studijose;
- c) Doktorantūros studijose;
- d) Esu moksleivis;
- e) Nei mokausi, nei studijuoju.