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DEVELOPING TEACHERS' COMPETENCE IN PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN A DIGITAL CONTEXT

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The design of promoting educational services in a digital context involves planning and delivering online marketing communication to persuade beneficiaries to engage with educational offerings, combining four key components: identifying the target group, creating the marketing message, selecting communication channels, and integrating feedback. Developing teachers' competence in promoting educational services in a digital environment is a complex and imperative process, involving participation in training situations aimed at acquiring a set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes aligned with these four components. This article presents a series of specific strategies focused on developing this competence, providing a guiding framework for the continuous professional development of teaching staff and strengthening the capacity of educational institutions to respond effectively to the demands and challenges of the digital education market.

Keywords: *competence, competence in promoting educational services, digital environment, strategies, teaching staff.*

DEZVOLTAREA COMPETENȚEI DE PROMOVARE A SERVICIILOR EDUCAȚIONALE ÎN CONTEXT DIGITAL LA CADRELE DIDACTICE

Designul promovării serviciilor educaționale în context digital presupune proiectarea și furnizarea comunicării de marketing online pentru a-i convinge pe beneficiari să acceseze ofertele educaționale, prin îmbinarea următoarelor componente: identificarea grupului țintă, crearea mesajului de marketing, selectarea canalelor de comunicare și integrarea feedbackului. Dezvoltarea competenței de promovare a serviciilor educaționale în context digital reprezintă un proces complex și imperativ, prin implicarea cadrului didactic în situații de formare care urmăresc achiziționarea unui ansamblu de cunoștințe, capacități, valori și atitudini în cheia celor patru componente. În prezentul articol sunt reflectate un șir de strategii specifice, orientate spre dezvoltarea acestei competențe, care constituie un cadru orientativ pentru formarea continuă a cadrelor didactice și pentru consolidarea capacității instituțiilor de a răspunde eficient cerințelor și provocărilor pieței educaționale digitale.

Cuvinte-cheie: *competență, competența de promovare a serviciilor educaționale, mediu digital, strategii, cadre didactice.*

Introduction

The growing role of education in building a knowledge-based society, together with globalization, internationalization of the educational services market, and negative demographic trends, places educational institutions in the Republic of Moldova in a highly competitive environment. In this context, an institution's market performance depends on its ability to accurately assess current realities, understand the functioning of the educational market, and adapt strategically to change. Given the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of the current environment, institutions must transform challenges into opportunities, revising their vision, educational offerings, and marketing strategies to remain relevant and competitive [10, p. 4].

In the context of the growing importance of digital education, the European Union has launched the Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027, a policy initiative designed to support the sustainable and effective adaptation of education and training systems in EU member states to the digital era [7, p. 3].

As digital technologies advance, the educational process becomes increasingly visible and accessible through online platforms, digital resources, and interactive tools. This transition necessitates the development of effective strategies for promoting educational services in digital formats, capable of attracting and

retaining prospective learners. Today's generations select institutions and study programs under the influence of online environments, taking into account reviews, social media presence, and digital marketing strategies.

In this context, adopting an integrated digital marketing approach becomes essential for educational institutions. Managing the development of competence in promoting educational services in a digital context is a global imperative, given the expansion of digital technologies across all areas of social, economic, political, and cultural life. Integrating these technologies into education transforms digital promotion competence into a necessary skill for teaching staff to meet the demands of educational marketing in the digital era.

Therefore, digital marketing is not merely an operational tool but a strategic mechanism for adapting to the dynamics of the contemporary environment, contributing to the relevance, efficiency, and sustainability of educational institutions in a competitive educational market.

The Specifics of Promoting Educational Services in a Digital Context

Under current conditions, no institution can afford to operate without a clear vision, both in the short term and the long term, that ensures not only its very existence but also its rationality and efficiency in an environment that is becoming increasingly complex and dynamic.

In response to the multiple changes occurring in both the microenvironment and the macroenvironment in which it operates, an institution must adopt a specific behavioral and attitudinal stance. This stance materializes in the delineation of strategic directions and the practical modalities for their implementation, and is reflected in the content of the institution's marketing policy [2, p. 310].

Communication and the development of an educational institution's image in the market—through public relations and advertising—within the framework of marketing strategies constitute a particularly important objective, as they fundamentally contribute both to increasing the demand for the specific services provided and to enhancing their perceived quality [2, p. 310].

Indeed, "without the ability to attract students, teachers, specialists, facilities, and equipment, schools will cease to exist" [2, p. 313]. The acquisition of resources is achieved through exchange. Educational institutions offer courses, educational programs, career preparation, and other services on the education market. In return, they receive the necessary resources: tuition fees, donations, time, energy, and positive word-of-mouth from parents.

In the context of digitalization, one of the fundamental objectives in the field of communication policy for educational institutions is the extensive use of online promotional opportunities. This task is inherently complex and entails the implementation of a set of actions, such as the development and continuous optimization of the institution's official website, promotion through search engines, the strategic use of social media platforms, and ensuring a consistent presence on various educational portals and forums [11, p. 118].

The promotion of educational services in the digital context has become an essential necessity in the era of advanced technology, shaped by rapid transformations in the field of education and evolving market demands. This approach involves the use of diverse digital tools and platforms to attract and inform prospective beneficiaries about the educational offering.

Beyond adapting to emerging technologies, educational institutions must enhance their visibility and attractiveness through well-designed digital marketing strategies. Search engine optimization (SEO), social media advertising, and video content represent only a few of the instruments that, when employed effectively, can engage diverse audiences and foster a dynamic educational community [9].

At the same time, the creation of relevant and valuable content is essential to addressing students' needs and to building a relationship of trust between institutions and prospective learners. Accessibility and inclusion likewise constitute key components of this transformation, ensuring that all users, regardless of their abilities, can benefit from the available educational resources.

The continuous evaluation of the impact of digital marketing strategies is vital for the adaptation and ongoing improvement of these initiatives. By leveraging web analytics and user feedback, institutions can respond promptly to shifts in consumer preferences and optimize the educational experience they provide. Thus, within this continuously evolving educational landscape, institutions that adopt a proactive and innovative approach will have the greatest prospects for success [8, p. 59].

Therefore, the promotion of educational services in the digital context represents an imperative and complex process, requiring the consideration of multiple *dimensions,* including:

- *Continuous professional development of teaching staff* represents a strategic pillar in the promotion of educational services within the digital context, as it ensures the ongoing updating of technological, pedagogical, and communication competencies necessary for the effective integration of digital tools into the educational process. It encompasses not only the use of technology, but also the development of educational marketing skills, the construction of a relevant online presence, and the creation of interactive content capable of attracting and sustaining students' interest. Participation in specialized courses and workshops enables teachers to capitalize on learning platforms as flexible and collaborative environments, thereby increasing student engagement and motivation. At the same time, investment in continuous professional development contributes to strengthening an organizational culture oriented toward innovation, quality, and adaptability, with a positive impact on academic performance [3].

- *The creation of a digital educational ecosystem* entails the development of an appropriate technological infrastructure, characterized by reliable internet connectivity and access to modern devices–essential conditions for the effective delivery of online educational activities. Such an ecosystem integrates accessible, user-friendly, and adaptable educational resources that allow for the personalization of the learning process according to students' diverse needs and learning styles. By fostering collaboration and interaction in the digital environment, it creates opportunities for more dynamic and inclusive education. The implementation of a coherent strategy in this regard contributes to the formation of an active educational community and to preparing students for the demands of an increasingly digitalized society [5].

- *Community engagement and the development of strategic partnerships* constitute an essential dimension in strengthening the capacity to promote educational services in the digital environment, by facilitating access to complementary resources, expertise, and perspectives. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations can support initiatives related to digital inclusion and lifelong learning, while partnerships with the private sector may provide the technological and financial support necessary for the implementation of innovative solutions. Moreover, cooperation with other educational institutions encourages the exchange of best practices and the professional development of teaching staff within a collaborative framework. Through such an integrated approach, a dynamic educational ecosystem can be established, capable of responding to current challenges and generating sustainable solutions [6].

- *The use of digital marketing* in promoting educational services involves the strategic capitalization of social media platforms and online tools in order to build an authentic and sustainable relationship with the target audience. In an increasingly competitive educational environment, the personalization of messages according to students' characteristics, interests, and behaviors becomes a decisive factor in communication effectiveness. The collection of feedback through surveys and digital interactions enables the continuous adjustment of campaigns and enhances the relevance of the transmitted content. Thus, digital marketing extends beyond mere promotion, contributing to the development of active educational communities and to strengthening the institution's competitive positioning in the market [4].

- *Impact evaluation and the systematic integration of feedback* form the foundation of a sustainable strategy for promoting educational services in the digital context, as they enable the assessment of implemented actions and the identification of areas for optimization. The use of analytical tools facilitates the collection and interpretation of data regarding user engagement, message visibility, and content relevance. At the same time, direct feedback from students and other beneficiaries provides essential qualitative insights for refining strategies and improving the educational experience. By establishing a continuous mechanism of monitoring and adaptation, institutions consolidate trust-based relationships with their communities and ensure the long-term effectiveness of their educational initiatives [1].

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the promotion of educational services in the digital context involves multiple dimensions that leverage technology to enhance accessibility, relevance, and the effectiveness of communication with prospective beneficiaries. Adaptability to emerging technologies and the continuous assessment of impact are essential for the success of these initiatives.

Particularities of Teachers' Competence in Promoting Educational Services in a Digital Context

The explosive global development of information and communication technologies presents educational institutions with multiple challenges that cannot be ignored. As a result of technological advancement, a generation has emerged that is more modern (neoteric) than previous ones. Generation Y is now being replaced by Generations Z (born between 1995–2010) and Alpha (born between 2011–2025), which are "technology-savvy" generations [12, p. 89].

Currently targeting Generation Z representatives–nicknamed "digital natives"–educational institutions are still in the process of adapting their strategies to the behavioral characteristics of this generation. Their modes of interaction, learning habits, and values have changed significantly. They are accustomed to rapid information flows and process information differently. Their learning is characterized by a preference for speed, nonlinear processing, multitasking, efficient use of technology, individualism (versus teamwork), and personalized work [13, p. 206].

Although still insufficiently studied, Generation Alpha is, according to researchers, quite distinct from previous generations, mainly because their reality and all aspects of life have been dominated by technology [14, p. 784]. Such heterogeneity among beneficiary segments poses a series of challenges for educational institutions, related to diversifying educational offerings, delivery methods, and the promotion of educational services, thereby requiring financial, logistical, managerial, and marketing decisions at the institutional level.

In this context, the competence to promote educational services in a digital environment becomes imperative.

The design of educational service promotion in the digital context involves planning and delivering marketing communication (online) aimed at persuading beneficiaries (students, parents, etc.) to engage with educational offerings, by combining the following **components** of educational service promotion:

1. **Identifying the target group** involves a deep understanding of the characteristics, motivations, and digital behavior of beneficiaries, such as students and parents. This includes demographic, psychographic, and lifestyle analysis, as well as online consumption habits. By clearly segmenting the audience, marketing messages can be tailored to resonate with the specific needs and expectations of each group. For example, students may be attracted to interactive content or educational apps, while parents may respond to safety assurances and tangible results. This approach increases communication relevance and the effectiveness of campaigns.

2. **Creating the marketing message** entails developing clear, attractive, and persuasive content that highlights the benefits of educational services, combining rational and emotional elements with an effective call-to-action. The message must be adapted to the specific audience and communication channel. For example, promoting an innovative program can combine student performance statistics with inspirational stories. For flexible programs, messages can emphasize the advantages of online or hybrid learning and personalized learning opportunities. Thus, the message becomes a strategic tool that drives engagement and enrollment decisions.

3. **Selecting communication channels** requires careful analysis of the target audience's preferences and behavior to maximize message impact. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook can be used for visually engaging content for students and detailed information for parents. Google Ads and SEO facilitate capturing search intent and quick access to relevant information. Webinars, educational videos, and partnerships with influencers or educational blogs enhance credibility and engagement. A multiplatform strategy ensures efficient coverage and adapts messages to each audience segment.

4. **Integrating feedback** involves collecting and analyzing beneficiary opinions through surveys, reviews, comments, and online interactions. This information allows for message adjustments, channel optimization, and improvement of educational services. For example, questions or suggestions received on social media can be used to clarify and refine promotional content. Direct interactions, such as live chats, enable personalized communication and rapid response to beneficiaries' needs. In this way, feedback becomes a vital tool for the continuous improvement of digital marketing strategies.

The structural components of the competence for promoting educational services in a digital context are based on a system of approaches from the fields of marketing and educational management, such as: the Kano Model, the "3I" Theory—interest, initiative, image, Social Exchange Theory, and others.

Developing the competence to promote educational services in a digital context is a complex process that involves teachers in specific training contexts, aiming at acquiring a set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes (Table 1).

Table 1. Structure of the Competence for Promoting Educational Services in a Digital Context among Teachers

Components of Promoting Educational Services in a Digital Context	**Dimensions of Competence**		
	Knowledge "Knowing"	**Skills "Knowing How to Do"**	**Values and Attitudes "Knowing How to Take a Stand"**
Identifying the Target Group	- possesses knowledge regarding the demographic and psychographic characteristics of potential students; - recognizes the psychobehavioral patterns of the target audience in the digital environment (platforms used, ways of interacting with educational content, etc.).	- collects feedback from various sources (surveys, discussions, focus groups) in order to better understand the expectations and needs of potential educational stakeholders; - selects and/or applies specific tools for identifying the target group in a digital context.	- demonstrates openness and curiosity toward the use of digital platforms to identify the needs of the target group (students, parents, etc.); - shows flexibility and adaptability in situations involving the identification of the target group through digital means.
Creating the Marketing Message	- possesses knowledge about the structure of a promotional message and educational services in a digital context; - distinguishes the types of elements in a marketing message in online communication.	- designs persuasive, clear, and attractive online marketing content; - adapts the marketing message to the specific needs of the target audience (demographics, behavior, preferences).	- demonstrates motivation in disseminating promotional messages about educational offerings in a digital context; - provides evidence of accuracy and relevance in the process of creating the marketing message in a digital context.
Selecting Communication Channels	- possesses knowledge regarding accessible communication channels and the interests of the target audience; - identifies online communication channels relevant for delivering marketing content in a convincing and attractive way.	- observes the effectiveness of different online channels and adjusts communication sources based on communication efficiency; - participates in transmitting messages about educational offerings in a digital context.	- shows initiative in promoting educational offerings in a digital context; - demonstrates critical thinking in the process of selecting communication channels for promoting educational services in a digital context.
Integrating Feedback	- possesses knowledge about methods of collecting feedback online from students, parents, etc., regarding educational offerings; - distinguishes techniques and methods of feedback in online marketing communication.	- designs feedback collection situations in a digital context; - optimizes communication channels regarding educational offerings based on the feedback received from the target group.	- demonstrates responsibility in utilizing feedback provided by students, parents, etc., with the aim of improving the promotion of educational services in a digital context; - exhibits a tolerant attitude focused on the opinions of the target group.

The development of competencies in promoting educational services in the digital context represents a crucial factor for the ability of educational institutions to respond effectively to current challenges and trends in the educational market, ensuring visibility, relevance, attractiveness, and continuous adaptability to the diverse needs of beneficiaries, as well as competitiveness in the contemporary educational environment.

Strategies for Developing Teachers' Competence in Promoting Educational Services in a Digital Context

To support the development of competencies in promoting educational services in the digital context among teaching staff, a series of specific strategies have been developed, presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Strategies for developing competencies in promoting educational services in the digital context among teaching staff

Component 1. Identifying the Target Group		
Strategy	**Goal**	**Example of Activities** *(name and outcome)*
Strategy: Digital Observer	Enhancing the ability to identify and interpret the expectations, needs, and psychobehavioral patterns of the target group in the digital context.	"Five-Second Test – Instant Digital Impact" Outcome: Practicing the ability to quickly assess the impact of a digital post (poster, video, text) on the target group (students, parents, etc.). "My Audience's Digital Profile" Outcome: Understanding audience segmentation (students, parents, etc.) and adapting messages to their needs and psychology.
Strategy: Application of Tools for Identifying the Needs and Interests of the Target Group in the Digital Context	Developing the ability to use relevant tools to identify the needs and interests of the target group in the digital context.	"Digital Radar – What Signals Do Parents and Students Give Me?" Outcome: Identifying subtle cues in online comments, reactions, and questions that reflect interest, hesitation, or rejection. "Digital Mini-Survey – What Does My Audience Want?" Outcome: Becoming familiar with tools for collecting data on the expectations and needs of students and parents (e.g., Google Forms, Mentimeter, Slido).
Component 2. Creating the Marketing Message		
Strategy: Crafting Educational Marketing Messages	Developing the ability to craft educational marketing messages.	"Scroll Like an Observer – What Catches the Eye, What Causes Rejection?" Outcome: Developing the ability to interpret the (visible and invisible) reactions of the target group to digital educational content (posts, posters, announcements, campaigns). "Write Your Message" Outcome: Practicing the creation of relevant and persuasive messages for the target group.
Strategy: Strengthening the Ability to Design Educational Marketing Messages in the Digital Context	Enhancing the ability to design educational marketing messages in the digital context.	"Anatomy of an Effective Digital Message" Outcome: Evaluating educational marketing messages in the digital context to identify the elements that make them effective and applying these criteria in creating one's own messages. "From Idea to Message – Designing Digital Content" Outcome: Practicing the process of creating a digital educational marketing message.

Component 3. Selecting Communication Channels		
Strategy: Developing Critical Thinking in Selecting Digital Communication Channels	Enhancing critical thinking in the selection of digital communication channels.	"Exploring and Analyzing Digital Communication Channels" Outcome: Identifying the main characteristics of digital communication channels and selecting them according to the purpose of promoting the educational offer. "Analyzing a Digital Educational Marketing Message: What Makes the Channel Appropriate?" Outcome: Analyzing the impact of communication channels on the effectiveness of a digital educational marketing message.
Strategy: Persuasive and Engaging Distribution of Educational Marketing Messages in the Digital Context	Developing the ability to distribute educational marketing messages persuasively and engagingly in the digital context.	"Creating Educational Marketing Messages That Inspire and Attract" Outcome: Enhancing the ability to create educational marketing messages that capture attention and motivate the target group to engage with educational offerings. "Developing a Multichannel Distribution Plan for an Educational Marketing Message" Outcome: Developing the ability to create a distribution plan that incorporates multiple digital communication channels to maximize the impact of the educational marketing message.
Component 4. Integrating Feedback		
Strategy: Applying Feedback Tools in Online Marketing Communication	Developing the ability to apply feedback tools in online marketing communication.	"Introduction to Feedback Tools in Online Marketing" Outcome: Familiarizing participants with various feedback tools used in online educational marketing. "Collecting Online Feedback to Improve the Promotion of Educational Services" Outcome: Developing the ability to use online tools to collect feedback from students, parents, and other participants in order to evaluate and improve the promotion of educational services.
Strategy: Leveraging Positive and Feasible Feedback in the Digital Promotion of Educational Services	Improving the ability to evaluate and leverage positive and feasible feedback in the digital promotion of educational services.	"Analyzing Feedback from Online Comments and Reviews" Outcome: Understanding the importance of feedback from online comments and reviews for improving educational marketing messages. "From Feedback to Action – Responsible Decision-Making in Educational Promotion" Outcome: Developing teachers' responsibility in using feedback from students, parents, and other stakeholders to enhance the promotion of the school's educational services.

These strategies constitute a guiding framework for the continuous professional development of teaching staff, facilitating the integrated development of the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for the effective promotion of educational services in the digital environment.

Conclusions

Promoting educational services is a complex and dynamic process based on the application of educational marketing theory, aiming to attract, inform, and motivate beneficiaries (students, parents, communities) to access and benefit from the institution's offerings, through the diversified use of digital and traditional

communication channels, with the goal of strengthening the institution's image, increasing visibility, and differentiating itself in the educational market.

The competence of promoting educational services in the digital context involves a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, which include correctly identifying the target audience, creating persuasive and relevant messages, selecting and appropriately using digital communication channels, as well as continuously evaluating and adjusting strategies based on received feedback.

Accordingly, to develop competence in promoting educational services in the digital context, a set of strategies based on the four components of educational service promotion is proposed. At the same time, the following **are recommended for teaching staff:**

- Participate in continuous professional development programs dedicated to the use of digital platforms to develop competence in promoting educational services.

- Develop the ability to identify the needs and interests of the target group through the use of digital tools and the analysis of the data obtained.

- Strengthen skills in drafting and creating attractive and relevant educational marketing messages for different digital channels.

- Practice selecting and efficiently managing online communication channels to maximize the impact of promotional messages.

- Leverage feedback received from the target group to adjust and optimize digital promotion strategies for educational services.

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